Stalking the Atmosphere

Journeys into the Hoo Peninsula Through a Multi-Disciplinary Fine Art Practice

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Brighton for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (University for the Creative Arts: Canterbury)
March 2021

Abstract

This thesis argues for ways of experiencing the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula, developing methods to represent the tangibility of the phenomenon. Through a practice-based approach and research, I investigate the presence of an atmosphere and how it manifests itself in this particular landscape: a coastal area at the edge of the Thames estuary in North Kent. Using a means of site-analysis that locates my body at the centre of the research, I encounter atmosphere through a psycho-geographic methodology, immersing my body in the field of study. Whilst atmospheres are airborne and hard to fathom, this research aims to make the phenomena tangible through a multi-disciplinary fine art practice.

The research draws upon a wider field of information reflecting upon evidence from or about the Hoo Peninsula which, when seen as a cumulative body of data and reflections, articulates how the atmosphere can be evidenced (historical material and archaeological matter, as well as intangible, elusive and ephemeral materials such as the effects of weather, mists and memories on the atmosphere).

A psycho-geographic approach through walking is key to the research, a solitary pursuit that brings my position as a female figure in the landscape, into the frame of the research. On foot in the peninsula, my identity raises the question of how atmosphere may be activated and experienced through my gender and this is further implicated by walking in character, as the fictional Edwardian amateur archaeologist, Louisa Cornford. As a result of these journeys, a number of artistic works have emerged, primarily *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere*, an archive built upon a collection of found objects from the peninsula which have attributes of atmosphere.

The research also develops enquiries into mapping as a visual means of cognition to locate atmosphere; the post-phenomenology of the camera lens as a provocateur or fogging device that may reveal or obscure atmosphere; and how formative childhood experiences of atmospheres lay dormant and were re-ignited by this landscape.

Ultimately, the research aims to make an original contribution to knowledge by identifying the particular and unique atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula, by noting how atmospheres are important contributions to our understanding of landscapes and presenting the findings through a creative body of work that centres upon an *Archive of Atmosphere*, where the sensory and phenomenological aspects of atmosphere conceptually exist as tangible materials.

Fig. 1 *Untitled* (Anna Falcini: 2015)

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Figure. 11. Falcini, A. (2017) *Untitled*. [Photograph, drawing made from boat fragment, White Indian ink on tracing paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 12. Falcini, A. (2016) *Welfare Unit*, *The Isle of Grain.* [photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 13. Falcini, A. (2016) *Looking through a Steel Gate, Towards the Extensive Site of Grain Power Station*. [photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 14. Falcini, A. (2016) *Walking with Polly Binns at Blakeney, Norfolk.* [photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 15. Falcini, A. (2018) *Illustration of the Zone of Research* [Digital Illustration] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 16. Falcini, A. (2018) *Coastline at Allhallows looking towards Essex with the tide out*. [photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 17. Falcini, A. (2017) *Nightwalk, Cockleshell Beach, Grain*. [photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 18. Falcini, A. (2017) *Night Drawing* [Photograph, Pencil drawing on translucent paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 19. Finch, S. (2013) *Walden Pond (Surface/Depth).* [rope, cloth, twine, 298 watercolours on watercolour paper] In: Cross, S. (ed.) (2016) *Spencer Finch: The Brain is Wider than the Sky*. Much: Prestel. p.164

Figure. 20. Finch, S. (2013) *Walden Pond (Surface/Depth).* [rope, cloth, twine, 298 watercolours on watercolour paper] In: Cross, S. (ed.) (2016) *Spencer Finch: The Brain is Wider than the Sky*. Much: Prestel. p.165

Figure. 21. Falcini, A. (2018) *Nicky's Hard Hat* (2018) [Photograph, found object] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 22. Falcini, A. (2018) *Vinyl Material (Detail).* (2018) [Photograph, found object] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 23. DeNasty, M. (2015) *Charred Object*. [Photograph, found object] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 24. DeNasty, M. (2015) *Glove*. [Photograph, found object] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 25. Falcini, A. (2020) *Index card and Nicky's Hard Hat.* [Photograph, found object and handmade index card] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 26. Falcini, A. (2020) *Index Cards.*[Photograph, Hand-made index cards, archival paper, ink, watercolour, tracing paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 27. Falcini, A. (2020) *Catalogue for 'Archive of Atmosphere*' [Photograph, Wood, metal, glass, hand-made index cards] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 28. Falcini, A. (2020) *Detail of Index card and Nicky's Hard Hat* [Photograph, found object and hand-made index card] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 29. Falcini, A. (2020) *Orange Coloured Wood and Index Card* [Photograph, found object and handmade index card] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 30. Falcini, A. (2017) *Harbouring Memory (Blackened)* [Photograph, Black Indian ink, paper and found object] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 31. Falcini, A. (2017) *Harbouring Memory (Blackened)* [A4 printed paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 32. Falcini, A. (2019) *Louisa Cornford Performing the Archive of Atmosphere* [Documentary photograph of live performance] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 33. Falcini, A. (2019) *Louisa Cornford Performing the Archive of Atmosphere* [Documentary photograph of live performance] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 34. Falcini, A. (2019) *Objects from the Archive of Atmosphere* [Photograph, Found objects, black cloth] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 35. Falcini, A. (2019) *Louisa Cornford at her desk, studying Nicky's Hard Hat* [Documentary photograph of live performance] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 36. Falcini, A. (2019) *Louisa drawing out an index card during 'Performing the Archive' at Herbert Read Gallery, UCA Canterbury* [Documentary photograph of live performance] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 37. Falcini, A. (2019) *Louisa performs with 'Liquid Histories'* Documentary photograph of live performance] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 38. Falcini, A. (2019) *Liquid Histories*, *The Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury* [Photograph, Antique bottles, water and hand-made cards] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 39. Falcini, A. (2018) *Shed at Cooling Rd, Cliffe: Interior*. [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 40. Falcini, A. (2018) *Shed at Cooling Rd, Cliffe: Exterior*. [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 41. Falcini, A. (2018) Interior of Barn, Dalham Farm, High Halstow. [film still] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 42. Falcini, A. (2002) *Contact Sheet of Container at Cliffe Pools.* [Photograph, contact sheet] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure.43. Falcini, A. (2018) Detail of Cloth Tape Measure on the Barn Floor, Dalham Farm, High Halstow. [photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 44. Falcini, A. (2015) *Black Spot.* [Photograph, Gouache on layers of tracing paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 45. Falcini, A. (2016) *The London Stone*. [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 46. Falcini, A. (2016) *Glistening Black*. [Digital image and text] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure.47. *Great Expectations* (1946) [Film still taken by author] In: Great Expectations. UK: Cineguild.

Figure. 48. Eliasson, O. (1993) *Beauty*. [Photograph of installation by Anders Sune Berg, 2015] At: https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK101824/beauty (Accessed 25/11/19).

Figure. 49. Eliasson, O. (2003) *The Weather Project*. [photograph by Andrew Dunkley and Marcus Leith] At; https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series/unilever-series-olafur-eliasson-weather-project (Accessed 25/11/19).

Figure. 50. Falcini, A. (1990) *View of the Hoo Peninsula from the Dutch Barge, Bema*. [35 mm slide Image] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 51. Gray, D. (1960s) *The author's Grandparents house. The top bay window is the studio/bedroom of her Grandfather*. [35mm slide Image] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 52. Gray, D. (1960s) *The desk and tools of the author's Grandfather*. [35mm slide] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 53. Rowntree, K. (1940) *Underbank Farm, Woodlands, Ashdale, Derbyshire*. [Watercolour painting] In: Clark, K. Recording Britain. Photo Credit: V&A. *Permission to reproduce "Underbank Farm, Woodlands, Ashdale, Derbyshire" has been granted by the V&A under their terms of non-commercial use.*

Figure. 54. Gray, D. (1947) *Winter, Basingstoke Canal, Byfleet*. [Watercolour] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 55. Gray, D. (1966) *The author's grandmother and brother at Newlands Corner, Surrey*. [35mm slide] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 56. Gray, D. (1966) *The author's grandmother and brother at Newlands Corner, Surrey*. [35mm slide] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 57. Falcini, A. (2018) *Archaeological Investigation at St Mary's Bay*. [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 58. Derges, S. (1997) *Susan Derges River Taw.* [Lambda C-type print from dye destruction print, Edition of 5, 170 x 61 cm] At: http://www.purdyhicks.com/display.php?alD=116#5 (Accessed 25/11/19) *Permission to reproduce "Susan Derges River Taw" has been granted by Susan Derges.*

Figure. 59. Kander, N. (2015) *Water I part 3 (Shoeburyness towards The Isle of Grain) England*. [photograph] In: Kander, N. (2017) *Nadav Kander: Dark Line: Thames Estuary*. London: Flowers. *Permission to reproduce "Water I part 3" has been granted by Nadav Kander.*

Figure. 60. Kander, N. (2015) *Time II, 'Watch Over Me', (Allhallows towards Canvey Island), England*. [photograph] In: Kander, N. (2017) *Nadav Kander: Dark Line: Thames Estuary*. London: Flowers. *Permission to reproduce "Time II, Watch Over Me" has been granted by Nadav Kander.*

Figure. 61. Barton Willmore (2018) *Thames Estuary 2050: A Strategic Plan for North Kent? North Kent Infrastructure Projects*. [Digital Image] At: http://www.bartonwillmore.co.uk/BartonWillmore/media/Main/news/intell/2018/Thames%20Estuary%202050/BW-Ebbsfleet-brochure-13.pdf (Accessed 25/11/19).

Figure. 62. Falcini, A. (2016) *Looking towards Grain LNG Gas Terminal, The Isle of Grain*. [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 63. Falcini, A. (2020) *Objects from the Archive of Atmosphere (Clockwise from top: Iron Bolt, Fragment of clothing, Mullein, Dehydrated rosehips and Orange painted wood).* [Photograph, Found objects] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 64. Falcini, A. (2020) *Louisa Cornford performs the Archive of Atmosphere* [Photograph, Live performance, found objects] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 65. Falcini, A. (2020) *Archive of Atmosphere: Index* [Photograph, Wooden cabinet and hand-made index cards] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 66. Falcini, A. (2018) *Areas of Atmosphere: The Isle of Grain* [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 67. Falcini, A. (2020) *Encyclopaedias of Atmosphere* (2018) *at the Herbert Read Gallery, UCA Canterbury* [Photograph, Hand-made books] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 68. Falcini, A. (2020) *Liquid Histories* [Photograph, Antique bottles, water and hand-made cards] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 69. Falcini, A. (2020) *Detail of Maps without Beginnings or End, Maps to Find Atmosphere* 2017-20 [Photograph, White Indian ink on tracing paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 70. Falcini, A. (2018) *Night Drawing* [Photograph, Pencil on confectionary paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 71. Falcini, A. (2018) *Film Still: Measuring the Atmosphere* [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 72. Falcini, A. (2018) *Great Expectations, Herbert Read Gallery, UCA Canterbury* [Photograph] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 73. Falcini, A. (2017) *Studies of Charred Objects from Grain Tower* [Photograph, Drawing, black gouache on layout paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 74. Falcini, A. (2017) *Studies of Charred Objects from Grain Tower* [Photograph, Drawing, black gouache on layout paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 75. Falcini, A. (2016) *Black Spot 1* [Photograph, Installation] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 76. Falcini, A. (2015) *Black Spots* [Photograph, Drawing on tracing paper] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 77. Falcini, A. (2016) *A Guide to Kent* [Photograph, Antique book and black card] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 78. Falcini, A. (2016) *Detail from Black Spot 2* [Photograph, Installation] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 79. Falcini, A. (2016) *Coming Out of That Past into Glistening Black* [Photograph, Film] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 80. Falcini, A. (2016) *Black Spot 2* [Photograph, Installation] In possession of: the author: Wales.

Figure. 81. Falcini, A. (2016) *Detail from Black Spot 1* [Photograph, Installation] In possession of: the author: Wales

Figure. 82. Falcini, A. (2016) *We Drill for Oil* [Photograph, Drawing on confectionary paper] In possession of: the author: Wales

Figure. 83. Falcini, A. (2016) *We've Come Out of That Past That's Laid Beneath the Churchyard's Weathered Stone* [Photograph, Drawing on confectionary paper] In possession of: the author: Wales

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PREFACE

It is 6:30 am on a Sunday morning in 1978 in East Molesey, Surrey. I am eight years old. My brother is twelve.

The whole of the previous day, a Saturday, we had planned and plotted to leave our father's house in East Molesey and walk to our family home in Weybridge; back to our mother. We possess no map but we know that the River Thames passes near to East Molesey and leads to Weybridge. Waking in the early hours of Sunday, we leave the house and walk for hours, stopping only for short refreshment breaks and with a relentless pace, in case our secret is discovered and a fuming father is on our trail. The route along the river provides adequate seclusion and hideouts for us, an unassuming meandering stretch of water; a place for the domestic pleasures of boating and family activities. I begin to experience an intimate emancipation; a feeling of weightlessness, exhilaration and connection to place. We are moving upriver, against the natural flow of the water to the sea.

It would be twenty years before I would go the other way and follow the water to the North Kent shore of the Thames estuary, to locations that replaced pleasure boats with thudding great container vessels and family outings with fly-tipping.

This outer reach of the Thames, where the water enters a transitional situation between river and sea, has compelled me to make a substantial study through creative and textual means over a period of 20 years. This was initiated by the decision to move the Dutch barge I was living on with my young family in the 1990s to a more affordable mooring on the River Medway in Rochester. I had

moved downriver, away from the familiar Thames of my childhood and found another side to the river; a psychotic, dissonant and inherently darker place.

A family bike ride on a summer's day to a small village called Cliffe to explore the protruding lump of land opposite the oil refineries of Corringham in Essex, seemed straightforward enough. The O.S. map 178 offered a generous, unpopulated and underdeveloped escape from the close proximity of the Medway towns. The ride, however became increasingly frustrating and difficult, with our path being constantly thwarted by drainage creeks, private land and eventually getting completely lost. Nevertheless, the land was intriguing; coercing and heckling its way into my skin through the occupation of a past that archaeologically surfaced underfoot (metal tramlines in reclaimed marshland) and an uneasy presence of industrial projects that were under stays of execution (Grain Power Station). At Cliffe, I found a site of extraordinary ruins that I later discovered were the remains of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory, a munitions operation from the early 20th century. This became the subject of my first creative project in response to the Hoo Peninsula and from where the fictional character Louisa Cornford emerged.

The creation of Louisa Cornford was a critical point in my art practice in 2002; a moment of before and after Louisa. As an M.A. student at Goldsmiths College, I had found myself drawn back to the Hoo Peninsula after a lengthy period of physical absence from it and began to make day trips down through the Blackwall Tunnel and down the A2. Taking on the persona of Cornford, an Edwardian woman, was a method for investigation that circumnavigated existing means of knowledge retrieval such as archaeological or geographical processes. I wanted to understand the landscape and so I picked over the remains of the Explosives Factory whilst in character and dressed in period clothing.

I determined that Louisa was an amateur archaeologist and carried a tan brown antique leather case. The case, often empty, became an anticipatory object for uncovering and collecting artefacts of interest. (These potential 'artefacts of interest' importantly, remained firmly outside traditional archaeological parameters of value). The case was also a physical prop that prompted walking excursions in the landscape; a beacon for walking tours of the Explosives Factory site.

I acted as Louisa, performing in the landscape. I captured myself/Louisa on 35mm film shot on an old Nikon SLR and then processed the material in the university's dark room, arresting images in the media of choice for what Susan Sontag described as "an encounter" (Sontag, 1979:11). Floating in the chemical bath, Louisa's image in the landscape authenticated her existence and posed questions of provenance. She seemed to have always existed there and the black and white photographs were unreliable sources of evidence that pointed to this notion. At this moment, Louisa Cornford was interfering and disrupting the Hoo Peninsula as a means of penetrating the atmosphere.

The barometric needle of my practice was now pointing firmly towards the persistent desire to understand the need of my continual returning to the Hoo Peninsula and the magnetic pull it had for me. As a landscape it was undesirable in populist terms, it was an outpost of the Medway towns and served mostly as a functional place for industry and agriculture. Yet I was drawn to it, from my new home miles away on the borders of England and Wales. I migrated back there. Regularly. The backbone of my creative practice continued to be generated through those encounters; a re-reading of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* for example, began a series of repetitive, linguistic drawings that lingered on phrases from the book that captured the landscape so poetically ("marsh mist was so thick", "a grimy morning") (Dickens, 1868: 14). I ground the words into the nap of the paper with graphite until they

became like the marsh mists themselves, obliterating the words and leaving a lead shine to the paper. In a contemporary Cornford-like mode, I milled up and down a section of the shoreline, Lower Hope Point, photographing the tidal surges of objects that were beached there, carefully making precise, anatomically correct drawings of an old mattress, a fire extinguisher and a baseball cap, for example. These were incorporated into a book with alternating pages of the names of cargo ships that were travelling into Tilbury Docks becoming the subject of the project, *Estuary Dialogues*.

As my creative practice intensified upon a visual researching of the Hoo Peninsula, it became apparent that there was an atmosphere that was pulling me to the place and informing my sense of that space. The continued fascination that kept drawing me back was a means of exploring atmosphere and became the basis of this PhD project.

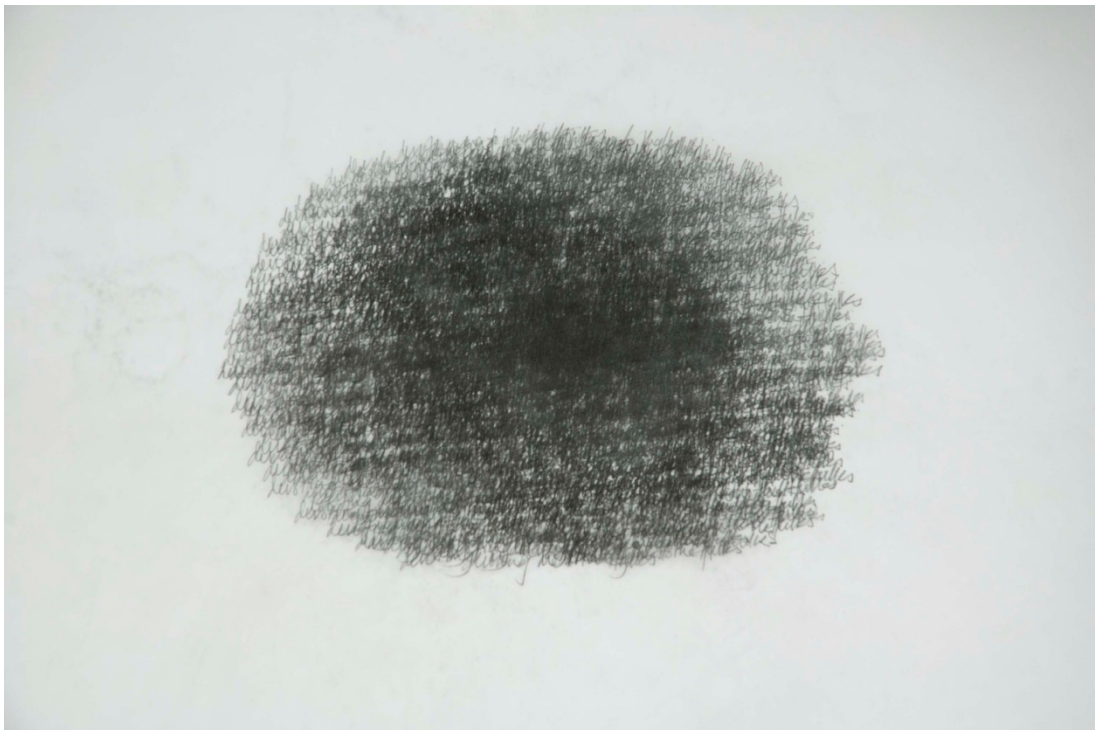

Fig. 2 *Devoting Me to the Hulks* (Anna Falcini: 2012)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude to the guidance in the journey of this Ph.D. project by my supervisors; Terry Perk, Andrew Kötting and Mary-Lou Barratt. Thank you, Terry for taking up the reins in the early days and being a kind and compassionate guide, always encouraging me until the end. Thank you to Andrew, for encouraging me to resurrect Louisa Cornford and for all of our memorable journeys on foot in the Hoo Peninsula. Thank you, Mary-Lou, for your inspiring voice in this research.

I would like to thank the staff, at the Research Office at University for the Creative Arts for all their guidance and support, as well as the Library Services staff. I was extremely grateful to receive support from the Student Support Fund to attend a conference and for financial help towards the cost of producing work for my final exhibition.

I would like to thank a number of individuals who have helped me with my research along the way. To Ed Carpenter at Historic England who was so generous with his knowledge and time. Thank you to the artist Polly Binns for inviting me to walk with her at Blakeney, Norfolk and sharing her wealth of experience. I am grateful to Sharon Elliott for her spiritual enlightenment. To Iain Sinclair and Clio Barnard for walking with me on The Isle of Grain and Allhallows and allowing me to record their words. To Phil Smith for connecting me to his network of fellow psycho-geographers. To Rick Goldsmith for our shared estuary memories and conversations.

I'm indebted to a number of individuals in the Hoo Peninsula who gave so generously of both their time and knowledge including; Keith Gulvin, Veronica Cordier, Carole Donaldson and Mark Loos. A special thank you to Michael Dale who imparted such enthusiasm for The Isle of Grain.

Finally, my gratitude and love to my family and friends who've continually shone a light on the path for me. In particular, to Peter, Francesca and Brigitta who shared the early years of adventure on board our Dutch barge, *Bema*.

To my mother, Anna and her father Denis, I owe so much but above all thank you for introducing me to atmospheres.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed 

Dated 05/03/2021

Sheet 0 TQ 7773 Allens Pond: INTRODUCTION

This practice-based research will identifiy and investigate the presence of an atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula, developing methods and artistic works as a means of articulating how it is experienced in this landscape. The thesis sets out what an atmosphere is as it pertains to a theory of place. It argues for an abstract method of cartography and psycho-geography that foregrounds the visual, as a means to articulating aspects of experience that are often ephemeral and transitory, but underpin the value of our experiences in specific locations that disciplines such as geography, archeaology and history are unable to do independently.

The research explores not only its presence but the particular qualities of atmosphere that appear to be characteristic and unique to this estuarine setting. In order to do this, I place my "walking body" at the centre of the research, moving through the landscape on foot, to feel and sense the atmosphere (Billinghurst *et al.*, 2020:vi). It is by being immersed in the landscape that I am able to feel where atmosphere exists and the "affective quality, or tone", the subtle variations that occur in particular areas of the Hoo Peninsula (Anderson, 2014:137).

The key outcome of this research is the development of *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere*, a collection of found objects that are recovered from sites of atmosphere or that are identified as having atmosphere within their material bodies.[1] Collected by the fictitious character Louisa Cornford, each object is meticulously catalogued through *The Cornford Analytics*. The system is part of the character's modus operandi and is devised as a way to measure the atmospheric conditions of the objects, incorporating data such as the

[1] The *Archive of Atmosphere* began conceptually in 2002 during the *Marsh* project but was realized as a material body of work from 2014.

scene of the found object, the atmospherics of the location and the scent of the object; defining characteristics that traditional museum practice may not capture.

The practical outcome of the research is a series of works based upon *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere* and includes the works *Performing the Archive* (a performance of the objects by Louisa Cornford), *Night Drawings* (a collection of drawings made at the edge of the seawall at night) and the audio work *Spiritual Conversations* (exploring my relationship to the peninsula through past association guided by the spiritual counsellor, Sharon Elliot).

Atmospheres are, by their very nature, elusive and hard to pin down yet they are resonant, strongly felt and envelop us in a range of sensations. Whilst the knowledge of landscapes has been understood through the disciplines of geography, cartography, archaeology, history, literature and art, for example, it has not been looked at through the lens of atmosphere. In this research, I have focused exclusively upon how atmospheres reveal other relationships and experiences of landscapes through a site-specific study of the Hoo Peninsula.

It is acknowledged that the information, techniques and processes of disciplines such as geography present a body of existing knowledge that is useful to the understanding of atmosphere but they are not the main focus of this research. They rarely identify or capture the sense of something in a landscape which we can attribute to atmospheric properties, and it is these gaps of knowledge that have led me to develop the methodologies and new research in this thesis. Where the data gathered by cartography or archaeology, for example, articulate knowledge through physical evidence of sites and scientifically proven outcomes, at the centre of this investigation is a sensing body (mine/Cornford's) navigating towards pathways of atmosphere that are largely immaterial and "turbulent" (Anderson, 2014:139).

Atmospheres make important contributions to the knowledge of landscapes because they reveal an “affective quality” through the dimensions of the body (ibid., 137). In effect when a body moves in landscape, it becomes a barometer of sensitivity responding to that site and moving through air whilst treading on firm ground. In other words, atmospheres matter because they affect our wellbeing and produce important relationships between human bodies and sites that may be overlooked, but they are important indicators of emotional discourse, affecting how we feel in the world.

The subject matter, however, presents us with the problem of how to articulate these responses to atmosphere of “definite and indefinite” powerful experiences that often linger vividly in our memories, yet are aloof at the same time (ibid.). Identifying my own experience of the magnetic pull to the Hoo Peninsula has led me to consider how to explicate my own experiences that were presented early on. From these first wanderings on the marshes has emerged a highly tuned response to the frequency of atmosphere and a quest to unravel the mysteries of it, exploring the atmosphere through this practice-based research.

In response to the problem of how to identify and articulate the atmosphere that is experienced in the Hoo Peninsula, the research is approached through a psycho-geographic methodology that places the emphasis upon the more sensory aspects of the phenomenological body in response to the atmosphere of this landscape. In essence, this means that I have immersed myself in the landscape through a psycho-geographic approach where walking is at the core of the research in order to identify and pin down the atmosphere. This allows for the primary focus to be upon the experiential effects of the “geographical environment…on the emotions and behaviour” whilst walking in

the peninsula, underpinned by the theoretical work of Gernot Böhme, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Don Ihde amongst others (Coverley, 2006:90).

It is important to note that gender comes into the research here as my responses to the atmosphere are also affected by the implications of walking as a woman in a remote landscape. How this affects my responses to the atmosphere is discussed further in *Sheet 4 TQ 7979 St Mary's Bay: Psycho-Geographic Wanderings in the Marsh*. I note how important it was for me to walk alone so that I could tune in to the atmosphere, but this added a layer of anxiety grounded in issues of entrenched negative cultural associations with women walking alone. Rebecca Solnit argues that

> "Women have routinely been punished and intimidated for attempting that most simple of freedoms, taking a walk, because their walking and indeed their very beings have been construed as inevitably, continually sexual in those societies concerned with controlling women's sexuality" (Solnit, 2001:233)

Further implications to this issue of walking as a woman in a remote area were also raised by the act of walking in character as Louisa Cornford. As I explain in *Sheet 4*, walking in costume as Cornford resulted in a heightened self-consciousness whilst also providing a type of defensive armour that empowered me.

The research seeks to explore the subject of atmosphere by locating it within specific areas of the Hoo Peninsula, from a northern section of land adjacent to the sea that incorporates Cliffe Marshes, Halstow Marshes, Allhallows and ending at The Isle of Grain. This area has been identified because I am arguing that it offers a particularly dense, rich and variable source of information from which to explore the question of whether and how a distinct atmosphere exists

and can be defined in a specific location. The villages of Cliffe and The Isle of Grain are principle areas for the research because they exist on the same peninsula but are radically different in their characteristics and offer variants in how one can experience the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula. Similarly, Halstow Marshes and Allhallows present different characteristics of atmosphere to both Cliffe and The Isle of Grain.

Fig. 3 *OS178: Thames Estuary Map showing key areas of study. A) Cliffe Marshe; B) Halstow Marshes; C) Allhallows; D) The Isle of Grain* © Crown copyright and database rights [2021] Ordnance Survey

Geographically, the Hoo Peninsula is located 30 miles to the east of central London, delineated by the River Thames to the west and north and the River Medway to the south and east. Although much of the Peninsula is characterised by arable and marshland pasture, mud and salt flats, it also has an industrial legacy that is dormant in some parts but continues to operate and

is physically dominant in the areas of the Isle of Grain and Kingsnorth (Newsome *et al*., 2013:9, 13). The Grain and Kingsnorth power stations were a sustaining visual feature of this landscape until their decommission by E.on and a deep seaport still operates on Grain, replacing the defunct B.P. Kent Oil Refinery.

The village of Cliffe is one of the key locations in this thesis and body of work for a number of reasons; it was the first point of interest when I began responding to the area as an artist in 2001; it has a unique mix of village, industry, vast open marshland; it is a site for rare birds such as the egret (RSPB); it has a rich history and dynamic local history groups. Cliffe has a primary school, an active church, a pub and a number of surrounding farms. The origin of the name Cliffe derives from its geographical location, elevated on a chalk cliff, some 10 metres above the marshland below. This cretaceous chalk forms the 'oldest geographical deposit on the peninsula' (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:9). Underneath this elevation lies Cliffe marshes, a vast area that stretches out to the southern shoreline of the Thames estuary culminating at Lower Hope Point. This area of land serviced the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory from 1820-1921 (Pullen *et al*., 2013:41-45) and the remains of the factory are still physically evident, however, the land is largely used as grazing for cattle, sheep and horses (Pullen *et al*., 2013:8).

Halstow Marshes is one of the most remote areas in this study, with little human presence in its agricultural and wilder marsh areas. Out of all the areas in the Hoo Peninsula, it is the most reminiscent of the writing of Charles Dickens as depicted in scenes from *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1868). Although this is a fictional account, we know that Dickens was very familiar with the area and his descriptions are convincing (Tomalin, 2011:314). One can still sense "the dark flat wilderness" and "the marsh-mist…so thick" (Dickens, 1868:3, 14).

The village of Allhallows has a riverside static caravan park and handful of wooden chalets and large pub that was intended to serve a thriving tourism industry and create a seaside resort for Londoners in the 1930s. Development however, was halted and its bays and small beaches have remained isolated and relatively untouched by economic growth. Its creeks and marshes are wild spaces that attract heron, egrets and wading birds. At the edge of Allhallows lies Yantlett Beach, the location for the London Stone, the official marker for the Port of London.

In contrast to these areas, The Isle of Grain, is positioned at the tip of the peninsula, the furthest easterly point and is characterised by its unique setting between the Thames estuary to its northern shoreline and the Medway estuary to its easterly shoreline. This precarious location has defined The Isle of Grain both physically and culturally. It is notable for an industrial legacy, both past and present, that has physically shaped the landscape and the rhythms of the place. The approach to the village is through a large industrial zone of gas cylinders and the deep seaport, with heavy traffic of lorries. Adjacent to the main road runs the only rail line in the peninsula, serving goods trains only. Historically the status of The Isle of Grain has shifted between an isolated position and one of connection, from an island status, separated by Yantlett Creek, to connection by bridge and roads to the bulk of the peninsula.

0.1 Definitions - What is an Atmosphere?

This thesis seeks to establish the nature of the atmospheric properties of the Hoo Peninsula, on the north Kent coast of the Thames and Medway estuaries. In the quest to identify a set of particular atmospheric properties that are present in the peninsula and how they can be effectively articulated through an interdisciplinary fine art practice, I will explain the context for how I will explore

the atmosphere and then make tangible the phenomenon, through an archival approach.

The origins of the word atmosphere stem from the "Greek *atmos* 'vapour' + *sphaira* 'globe'" (Soanes, 2001). The definitions that follow in the Oxford Dictionary foreground the scientific expression of the word through the "gases of the planet" and the "quality of the air in a place" (ibid.). Only further down does the definition edge into the territory of atmosphere that is at the centre of this research; "an overall tone or mood" (ibid.). Even then it is ambiguous and therefore has to be followed up by an italicised example: "*the hotel has a friendly atmosphere*" so that we may quantify the concept in our minds. Consequently, the pragmatic tools of the dictionary cannot pin it down convincingly and instead, we see how elusive the phenomenon is. In this thesis, I am specifically referring to atmosphere in this context; as a phenomena of "feelings in the air", that one senses in connection to a specific place (specifically the Hoo Peninsula) informed by the philosophies of Herman Schmitz and Rudolph Otto (Böhme *et al*., 2014).

I am arguing that the atmosphere is present and, like a figure lingering in the background, appears to haunt the place. It's palpable. Otto identified the presence of atmospheres "overcoming us" with "godlike powers". Schmitz aligned his own research on atmospheres along these lines, theorizing the "aesthetics of perception" (Böhme *et al*., 2014:91). Whilst I am not limiting my position to this singular aspect of what an atmosphere is, it is, nonetheless, a key concept that is integral to my approach to the question of the thesis. Other theorists such as Yi-Fu Tuan who similarly explore the "experiential properties of space" will also be cited to introduce what the geographer Phil Hubbard describes as "humanistic notions of place" (Hubbard, 2005:41-47).

The research is also attempting to extract and determine the complexity of what is ephemeral and elusive from the atmosphere; the ‘sense’ of something. As such, the research embodies a set of strategies for making such ‘sense’ tangible as the object of study. I am arguing that the sense of atmosphere is complex and informed by a multitude of factors that are contributory to the overall experience. Therefore, I am adopting a methodology that allows for a variety of evidence to be scrutinised. At the core of the practical work, for example, is an archive where found objects are deposited. These will be gathered from the landscape from sites of interest (forts, the shoreline, fields etc.) where atmosphere is present. These sites may have manifestations of memory, experience, mystery and potency and the objects found in these places either have atmosphere within them or conversely may impart their atmospheres into the landscape.

The thesis is also arguing for a methodology that allows one to measure and establish if an atmosphere exists in the Hoo Peninsula through other practical means. I will test the theory of an atmosphere by scrutinising the materiality of the place; that is, the surfaces, textures and placement of the landscape, its natural and manmade additions. I have physically immersed myself in the landscape and studied the historical, archaeological and anthropological relationships to the site. The research questions the specificity of the atmosphere, i.e., how does the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula differ from that of similar topographies such as Romney Marsh in Kent or Blakeney in North Norfolk. It can be argued that these sites have their own unique atmospheres that differ from the Hoo Peninsula, but also may share similar properties i.e., flat, open vistas and coastal aspects (Binns, 2016).

In addition, I examine the subject through physical and human geographies; how the environment is shaped by its geographical features and how human development has impacted the landscape. Physical geography defines

atmosphere through predominantly scientific terms, referring to the subject through the "layer of gases surrounding our planet" and through tropospheres (the lowest layer of atmosphere where weather occurs), the stratosphere (above the troposphere and the location of the ozone layer), the mesosphere, ionosphere, etc. (National Geographic, 2011). Although aspects of this information are useful, for example, when considering the effect of weather on the Hoo Peninsula (a dominant feature of perceptions of the place and noted in the writing of Peter Ackroyd and Charles Dickens in their accounts of the peninsula[2]), the theories in human geography and social sciences are more relevant and useful in the particular context of this body of work because they consider the 'experiential perspective' and they bring into play the psycho-geographic aspects of this thesis. The psycho-geographic is a fundamental method in this project and is synonymous with contemporary writers and artists such as Iain Sinclair and Patrick Keiller, both of whom provide important modes of engaging with landscape. I use psycho-geography as a way of surveying the landscape, more closely aligned to the methods of Keiller than Sinclair. Keiller's construction of a fictional character Robinson, through whom he explores the potency of places and the wider political and economic entanglements, are reflective of my early wanderings in the Hoo Peninsula, in the guise of Louisa Cornford. The inspiration for Guy Debord's psycho-geography, Baudelaire's flâneur or "urban wanderer", reappears in the Hoo Peninsula, as a female wanderer, treading upon turf instead of cobblestones (Tate, 2012).

[2] The report by English Heritage of The Hoo Peninsula discusses a range of literary perceptions of the peninsula including those of Ackroyd and Dickens that reference weather conditions typical of the flat marsh landscape (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013). Peter Ackroyd discusses the "fogs and damps" and consistently notes a feeling of melancholy (Ackroyd, 2008:395-400). This is drawn out by the English Heritage report when they attribute Ackroyd's association of melancholy to the peninsula to the "estuarine mists and fogs" (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:14).

0.2 The Meridian of Atmosphere

Like the Meridian Line, I experience the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula as a constant element, similar to the circular longitudinal line that penetrates the earth's surface. It is ever-present but equally elusive. The theories of phenomenology and post-phenomenology, in particular Merleau-Ponty's experience of the perceived, his *Reflex and Gestalt Theory* and development of theory around the "macula" and the "object" (Merleau-Ponty, 1965:36, 185) are natural points of reference when considering if and how an atmosphere might exist in the Hoo Peninsula and how that is mediated through my body. It is impossible to consider the subject without also taking a post-phenomenological position. In this instance I am referring to Ihde's work on post-phenomenology and his positioning of phenomenology with the "philosophy of technology" (Verbeek, 2005:1). Ihde acknowledges the underpinning of phenomenology in his theory but argues that there is "a deliberate adaptation or change in phenomenology that reflects historical changes in the twenty first century" (Ihde, 2009:5). Ihde argues that it is impossible to consider the philosophy of phenomenology without considering the impact of science and technology on our consciousness (Ihde, 2009). An understanding of the "hermeneutic" relations and the mediation of artefacts to the perceptions and alterations of the atmosphere adds a further complication to deciphering the atmosphere. For example, at the beginning of the project the Power Station on The Isle of Grain dominated the landscape as a looming presence of large scale, but during the project it was demolished and this altered the physical and visual aspects of my experience in this part of the peninsula. It changed how I experienced the atmosphere from a landmark that exerted a dominance over this flat landscape to one of decline and instability as the power station literally crumbled down to rubble. Driving to the peninsula is mediated through the car windscreen, that puts at distance particular sensations until

the car is parked and I go on foot into the landscape. My experience is, however, mediated by another tool, that of a map.

0.3 The Ruin

As I have discussed, atmosphere is an elusive, ephemeral experience and can be hard to pin down. However, there are examples of physical attributes in the Hoo Peninsula that have shaped the landscape in such a way that marks it out as unique and contribute to its atmosphere, such as a series of ruins.

Aside from the main villages on the peninsula there are large open spaces, yet within these are a significant number of ruins and abandoned buildings. For example, as I previously discussed (and later in this thesis), the site of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory on Cliffe Marshes is a vast area of ruined buildings, tram tracks and disintegrating jetties that once serviced the works. There are also numerous abandoned forts and military defences scattered over the peninsula and examples of contemporary ruins of power stations and oil refineries at the Isle of Grain. A series of nuclear bunkers are also dotted about the peninsula. These examples of remains perform as "active agents" in the atmosphere triggering "feelings in the air" by way of things deceased or in ruins (Borch, 2014:93).

The ruin has been a provocative image since the Renaissance period, gaining momentum in the eighteenth century through the picturesque, sublime and gothic representations (Dillon, 2011:12). More recently it has come to symbolise the precariousness of industry, its collapse and its resulting economic impact upon communities. The industrial ruin is a heavy presence in the work of artists such as Stuart Whipps who documented the

closure of the Rover factory at Longbridge Birmingham in 2004-05 (New Art Gallery Walsall, 2008). The artist duo, Jane and Louise Wilson's practice has explored the ruins of former communist states such as Stasi City (1997) and more recently they have focused upon the sites and artefacts of the US nuclear weapons and space programmes in the *Center for Land Use Interpretation* project (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019; Dillon, 2011:16).

Many areas of the UK have sites of ruins which are attractive to visitors. For example, ruins of castles and abbeys pepper the borders of England and Wales and are endlessly fascinating. In the peninsula, however, the ruins are predominantly industrial or defensive and, consequently, public access is limited. There are no maps or audio guides, no gravel paths or grab rails to assist the visitor. Instead, they are usually out of bounds, condemned as dangerous and in remote parts of the peninsula.

In his work on the subject of the eerie, Mark Fisher has noted how "we find the eerie more readily in landscapes partially emptied of the human" (Fisher, 2016:11). Although Fisher is focusing specifically upon the un-nerving qualities of the weird and the eerie, these sensations are important aspects of the atmosphere that is felt in the peninsula and these darker sides of atmosphere reside in its ruins.

0.4 The Map

Mapping is used as a tool for locating the body in the landscape and to articulate the geographical features through a visual means of cognition. The map is an inherent feature for understanding physical environments and it has been critical in this project, initially during the early period of investigating the Hoo Peninsula, showing permissive routes or revealing resistances in the progress of a journey (for example, complex systems of

drainage ditches are an inherent feature and can involve circuitous routes without the aid of a map).

Maps are used to document the peninsula's historical transitions that are evidenced in the landscape; the eruption of cement production at Cliffe in the Victorian period or the bustle of commerce along the shoreline served by numerous piers that have since fallen out of use and disintegrated. An overview of the physical changes in the peninsula's landscape not only reveal episodes of physical disturbances but also provide a context for understanding the resulting narratives that lay dormant yet are contributory to the atmosphere. In the Hoo Peninsula I have walked on top of histories, on previous footprints that have manipulated and shaped the place.

Alongside the conventional function of the map, I also address the metaphorical and cognitive ideas of mapping in relation to atmosphere (Cosgrove, 2005:28). The map is a useful tool to gather complex information and visually arrange that in a coherent way through the metaphorical use of mapping. I present a range of materials; found objects, weather patterns, lists of plants, words etc. within the parameters of the map. I explore the use of cognitive mapping as a means of interrogating the atmosphere, noting my "spatial behaviour" (Cosgrove, 2005:30). This theory overlaps with the phenomenological approach that I refer to in this thesis, accounting for how perceptions in space are informed by a complex range of experiences, perceptions and mental images of place.

The theoretical research has led to an awareness of mapping as a key subject area for the thesis and the versatility of cartography has provided a natural inclination to use mapping as an artistic tool, incorporating visual references to maps in my practice and adopting metaphorical and cognitive mapping as starting points for creative investigations.

How other artists use mapping in their work provides a context for developing a variety of creative methodologies. The divergent uses of mapping to re-appraise the spatial relationships and geographies can be seen through the work of a number of artists including Mona Hatoum, Richard Long, Emma Raban, Rita Donagh, Layla Curtis, Grayson Perry, Kathy Prendergast and Chris Wilson. From Prendergast's *City Drawings* (1997), "hesitant", "evanescent" pencil drawings of capital cities to Mona Hatoum's maps that threaten to melt or shift due to their unstable materials, the practice of mapping for artists has been a consistent source of engagement (Moroney, 2007:37-59).

0.5 Tethering the Research

The research has emerged from an initial unconscious meeting of the Hoo Peninsula through a domestic walk and a stumbling, naive gallivant, one summer's day in the early 1990s. A series of dead ends, routes cut off by drainage ditches and the boundaries of access to land, exhausted and frustrated me as the flat vista invited travel towards the shoreline, but it also piqued the interest. The difficulties, the barriers and resistance were a means for returning, for migration rather than abandonment of the place. I developed two significant visual projects at Cliffe Marshes; *Marsh* (2001-02) and *Flight & Myth* (2002-03), followed by fluctuating attempts to regain a foothold in the area through creative work. I knew the place was personally significant, that I kept migrating back when feasible to do so, but I had not connected the reasons why. The responses were through visual art and leisure but underlying them were physiological responses; phosphorescences of feeling. This led me to start thinking about a theoretical framework that would define the specificity of the atmosphere, in terms of a series of interconnected and disparate reactions.

The theoretical framework I set out in this thesis provides a scaffolding for considering the importance of atmosphere and its unique embodiment, not just in the Hoo Peninsula, but in other landscapes. For example, the research provides a set of tools and methodological approaches for organisations, academics, geographers and communities that can be applied to other kinds of landscapes to identify similarly unique atmospheres. This approach may enable landscapes to be valued in a wider variety of ways such as places that bring emotional and physical well-being into view.

It is important to note that I am not testing the atmosphere through a scientific process of measurement such as meteorology. I am also not overtly concerned with atmosphere in the context of "a powerful atmosphere of a work" (of art), or "a friendly atmosphere" in a room (Böhme, 1993:113). I am not excluding them from my research as being additive per se, but the study is from the main core of "feelings in the air" (Böhme, 2014:91). The work is to be a compendium of different kinds of material and knowledge gathered from the formal and general overview (phenomenology) to the intricate and local (an object, an event on the peninsula). The objects in the *Archive of Atmosphere* are material memories of the atmosphere that is felt in particular areas in this study and have been identified as either having atmosphere in their material bodies and/or collected from an area of intense atmosphere. The broader practical output of work situates itself across an interdisciplinary span of production; drawing, audio, archiving, writing, film, performance and photography, for example. This method allows for a versatility in traversing the subject.

The practical and written work are presented as an 'archive of atmosphere'. The archive is the end result of this research and is intended as a unique collection of both creative materials and this written thesis that are a presentation of information about the articulation of particular atmospheric

properties in relation to the Hoo Peninsula. The body of work takes a steer from the continuing dialogue with landscape by Patrick Keiller that has been realised through various projects including *The Robinson Institute* presented at Tate Britain in 2012. The mode of investigating, responding to and presenting his findings to a visual audience to landscape provides a useful point of reference for my own research around the Hoo Peninsula (Tate, 2012).

0.6 Chapter Overview

In cartography, maps are physically unfolded into sheets of paper to survey the detail of the landscape. In the Ordnance Survey body of maps, sheets of paper contain a section of the landscape and they link up with subsequent sections of maps to continue the visual documentation of the landscape. These maps are thus identified as a sheet and given a unique number. The Explorer Ordnance Survey map of Gravesend and Rochester, which covers the Hoo Peninsula, is labelled Sheet 163, for example. Its neighbour, 162, covers Greenwich and Gravesend. This structure and terminology are adopted in this thesis and each chapter is numbered using this format as sequential sheets using the coordinates from the OS Map of the Thames Estuary i.e., Chapter 1 is *Sheet 1 TQ 7873 Cliffe Marshes: Contextual Review*. This particular coordinate marks the point on the map of Cliffe marshes, a place important in early work in the peninsula. Subsequent chapters will follow this pattern with each coordinate identifying a place on the map of significance to the research. Each chapter in the text is representative of one piece of a reconstructed map of the atmosphere of the peninsula.

The written and practical work concludes in an *Archive of Atmosphere* and all of the sheets (chapters) can be viewed as contributions to the archive and as a literary map. The written thesis is ultimately destined to be placed

into the archive to become a central feature similar to the positioning of Carl Jung's *Liber Novus* or *Red Book* in the Central Pavilion of the Giardini at the Venice Biennale in 2013. The theme of the Biennale *The Encyclopedic Palace* referenced Marino Auriti's *Il Palazzo Enciclopedico,* an imaginary museum that was to "house all worldly knowledge" which was also influential in the conceptual idea of the *Archive of Atmosphere* (Gioni, 2013:23-25).

Sheet 1 TQ 7873 Cliffe Marshes: Contextual Review, will present an overview and introduction to the Hoo Peninsula, its character, geographical location and history. It will identify selected observations of atmosphere connected to the peninsula recorded and documented by a number of writers and artists such as William Lambarde, Hillaire Belloc, Charles Dickens, Andrew Kötting, Stephen Turner, Peter Ackroyd and William Raban. It frames and contextualises the academic and practice of the project, positioning work in relation to theoretical frameworks, related literature and contemporary fine art practice. I will examine how this material contributes to the subject and sets the scenes for my own investigations into the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula.

In *Sheet 2 TQ 7977 Egypt Bay: Methodology*, I then focus on the overarching framework of two fundamental ideas; archival and cartographic processes. The appropration of these processes are intentional and are used to determine an atmosphere through recognised, respected methods of information collection and taxononimcal arrangements. Developing an *Archive of Atmosphere* of the Hoo Peninsula will provide a method of collecting objects and information about atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula along the principles of a museological practice whilst adopting a nuanced sensibility and a tinkering with the boundaries of an archive or museum in the mode of Michel Foucault's "historical a priori" (Bate, 2007). Cartography

similarly provides a method of laying out information both theoretically and in practice. Maps present complex information with a visual clarity and are “the gestural re-enactment of journeys” (Ingold, 2007). They translate experience and memory and are also “active agents” (Harper, 2016). Cartographic processes are a useful methodology for the elusive notion of an atmosphere, overlaying sites on conventional mapping with recorded sites of atmosphere, for example. Whilst it is inevitable these will shift and change, they can be updated and added to over time, creating a graphic history of atmosphere, much as a conventional map tracks changes to the physical landscape over revised editions. In this way we can begin to appreciate the way atmospheres affect the Hoo Peninsula and where they are most vivid.

In *Sheet 3 TQ 7776 Cooling Marshes: Mapping as a Tool for Locating An Atmosphere*, I will lay out the proposition of the mapping technique as a means of extrapolating the atmosphere of the peninsula. The kinds of mapping that have been applied to the project both reveal and calculate the atmosphere in subjective and objective terms. Mapping as a source of layering and configuring meaning in atmospheric terms will be unfolded through a number of scholars in the field including the geographer Denis Cosgrove’s expansive work on how maps extend beyond the purely logistical.

The map as a tool for investigating the landscape, then leads into the physical research through a psycho-geographic methodology that is conducted on foot. Walking will be imperative in sensing and understanding the atmosphere and in *Sheet 4 TQ 7979 St Mary’s Bay: Pscyho-geographic Wanderings in the Marsh* we will see how the atmosphere is revealed through this immersion in the landscape with a focus upon the area of The Isle of Grain at the easterly point of the peninsula. Although psycho-

geography is an established field of research I observe how there is an overriding male perspective that often occludes a female one. The lack of discussion around a female presence brings into the foreground how a female perspective in this research is critical in understanding how the atmosphere may be received by myself and future researchers. In this sheet, we see that whilst human bodies are in general perceptive to atmosphere, as a woman, I experience the atmosphere differently through my gender. This is further complicated when I walk in character as Louisa Cornford.

In *Sheet 5 TQ 7778 Old Sea Wall: Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere* the cartographic and psycho-geographic research develops into the materialising of the atmosphere through the collecting of found objects and materials at sites that I have identified in the Hoo Peninsula as having a particularly dense atmosphere. These materials will become the basis for *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere* an unconventional museological collection of objects that, unlike conventional museum practice, will consist of unstable materials that are liable to breakdown and disintegrate. As opposed to being seen in negative terms, these conditions, I will argue, are imperative to understanding the phenomenon of atmosphere. In this sheet I also consider three archival collections already in existence in the Hoo Peninsula and compare these to *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere.*

In *Sheet 6 TQ 7688 The Isle of Grain: Re-illuminating the landscape of the Hoo Peninsula through the Media of Film (the Porousness of Past & Present)* the writing develops the argument for how the peninsula was perceived through largely negative impressions and how these perceptions shaped opinions of the landscape and its representation, through the mediums of painting and film. I will argue that the Hoo Peninsula was generally omitted as a subject in landscape painting of the 1800s but it subsequently became the subject matter of film. In particular, I identify how film makers as diverse as

Stanley Kubrick and David Lean employed the peninsula as a backdrop for scenes in films such as *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987) and *Great Expectations* (Lean, 1946). Referencing Giuliana Bruno's work *Surfaces* I will frame an inventory of techniques that capture or absorb atmosphere through filmic devices, proposing that the lens is both a provocateur and fogging device in the peninsula (Bruno, 2014). I build on the previous chapter's phenomenological thread of investigation, introducing a further layer of post-phenomenological enquiry into the embodied, cultural and experiential relationship, informed by the work of Ihde, particularly around mediated perceptions and hermeneutic relations.

In *Sheet 7_TQ 7681 Ratcliffe Highway, Allhallows: Daydreams, Snowshoes, Mirrors and Lenses* I will consider the reasons why I have been specifically drawn to the Hoo Peninsula and its atmosphere. This complex question turns to the phenomenological and Merleau-Ponty's work around the perceived and the body as a ground for experience. Childhood encounters of the Surrey landscape I grew up in are in stark contrast to that of the Hoo Peninsula and so I will dig down into the formative experiences of landscape to see how these have shaped my subsequent relationship to the peninsula. In particular, I will reflect upon the houses of my daydreams and will study how my early subconscious was drawn to atmospheres.

Finally, *Sheet 8* will conclude the thesis with findings and outcomes from the practical and theoretical investigations and considers the original contribution to knowledge.

A summary of artworks follows the conclusion with descriptions and illustrations of key works of art made during the Ph.D.

Sheet 1 TQ 7873 Cliffe Marshes: Contextual Review

Contextual Review

In this thesis, I am referring to the term atmosphere primarily through a perceptive approach, underpinned by what Hermann Schmitz has described as sensing of "feelings in the air" and what Rudolph Otto articulates as "ideas of the numinous" (Borch, 2014:91). Böhme states that not only are atmospheres "numinous" but "they are also subject to being produced by us" (Borch, 2014:91). So affective are they to the human condition that atmospheres are produced in areas such as architecture, theatre, design or marketing. At its core however, the phenomenon is felt and intuited through the body and "is a basic competence of human existence" (Engels-Schwarzpaul, 2017:10). As Böhme reiterates, "bodily existence is certainly poured out in space, atmospherically affected and in bodily communication with other beings" (Böhme, 2017:42).

In this research, I draw primarily upon the principles of sensory and phenomenological perspectives of atmosphere as laid out by Schmitz and in this context, it is largely experienced as immaterial and reliant upon my body as a conduit for feeling it. That is how I first encountered atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula and it continues to be the principal method in my research for understanding it. Whilst this "humanist bias" was (and is) the first point of experience it should not exclude other factors that contribute to the encountering of atmosphere in the peninsula (Shyldkrot, 2019:151). The "social, cultural, political …contexts" that have shaped this landscape, and continue to do so, are also important considerations for how the atmosphere is felt (Shyldkrot, 2019:161). As I explain in Section 1.1, the Hoo Peninsula has largely been characterised by a series of writers throughout history within a cultural legacy of melancholic, dark episodes (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:14).

The phenomena of atmosphere generally is, by its very nature, ambiguous and has led to a wide ranging and multivariate set of theories. As Ben Anderson concludes, atmosphere finds itself conceptualised by a number of experts in the field as an "impersonal/transpersonal intensity",(as a) transmission of the other's feelings… (a) tone in literature…(a) qualified aura…(and)… mimetic waves of sentiment" (Anderson, 2014:137). He also proposes that atmospheres have a "strange materiality" by way of their "element of air or the state of a gas" (Anderson, 2014:140). Anderson argues for atmosphere being experienced as a material matter in addition to its more ethereal elements. In his work *Aesthetics of Air* (2013), Malte Wagenfeld specifically addresses the visualisation of atmosphere and an "ongoing exploration into atmospheric atmosphere", raising the question of whether atmosphere has a materiality through a series of experiments (Wagenfeld, 2015:9). "Air" he notes "is essentially immaterial and invisible" but through various "methods and techniques" he attempts to expose atmosphere as "an observable material" (ibid.). His early observations began with identifying "the phenomena that make the perception of air on a pleasant day so sensuous" at the Melbourne Botanical Gardens, Australia. Later on he used a fogger illuminated by "specially built laser scanners" to visualise the "atmospheric phenomena" (ibid., 10-11).

Critically, Wagenfeld's purpose was not to demonstrate a materiality of atmosphere, or as he states "not to reveal the "look" of atmosphere" but to explore atmospheric forces – how they behave, how they move directionally and temporally, what qualities they possess, and what perceptual information they carry" (ibid., 14).

As Wagenfeld suggests, atmospheres are immersive and experiential; "delicate, ambient and poetic" (ibid.). In this opinion, I agree and this is

reinforced by my own experiences of the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. I argue that it is immaterial and whilst these particles of air or gas that Anderson mentions come into contact with material things and manifest themselves into objects or materials, they are not, in their origin, material. For example, in *Sheet 6* I specifically discuss the possibility of the transmission of atmosphere into material beings through the process of film production, but my own opinion is that at the core of the peninsula's atmosphere is its immaterial nature.[3]

Aside from the example I mention above in *Sheet 6*, it is important to note, however, that whilst the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula is largely a perceptively felt phenomena as Wagenfeld discusses, it is not experienced in isolation from its material parts. Certain qualities of materials and the materiality within the landscape are, in fact, critical to its understanding and the production of its unique feeling. For example, large areas like Halstow Marshes that are inhabited by marsh grasses contribute materially through this biodiverse plant group, creating an ever-changing picture of movement, colour and smell depending on the seasons. The exposure to the estuary weather animates the grasses which undulate into different formations in the landscape and provide a very specific experience. They are the "physical traces" of an invisible phenomena (Harris, 2015:9). Not only does the material quality I describe above provide a number of sensory experiences but it also triggers other thoughts of absence and isolation which have long been a consistent feature in historical observations of the Hoo Peninsula.

The weather experienced in this estuary location, is a product of the coastal situation of the Hoo Peninsula and its edge-ness, where it is not only

[3] For further information please see pages 145, 150-165.

vulnerable to strong winds but also sea mists, haze and inclement weather. It is the first port of call for storms, rain or winds from the North Sea that may peter out as they drift inland. This is also felt more intensely than further inland due to a lack of protection in the form of trees, hedges or buildings. Weather is something that writers and artists have long been intrigued with and, as I noted in the introduction, the word atmosphere is meteorological in its origin (Harris, 2015). It is perhaps no coincidence that an atmosphere exists so evidently in the peninsula where its weather is felt so acutely. Derek P. McCormack foregrounds the "affective potential of meteorological forces", identifying "a meteorological sense of atmosphere" and Shyldkrot concludes that, "weather – even if not 'visible', through temperature, humidity and air pressure – can affect how we make sense or feel in a particular space and time and, therefore, contribute to the emergence of atmospheres" (McCormack, 2015:86; Shyldkrot, 2019:150).

As with examples of acute weather, there is a dilemma that occurs when articulating the concepts of atmosphere rooted in a temporal nature, in contrast to the lasting effects from the powerfully, charged experience it can produce. What we find is that on the one hand it can be hard to define, whilst on the other, the atmosphere is a simultaneously forceful phenomena. There are both subtleties and strong effects at play and in the case of the Hoo Peninsula these two perspectives of atmosphere are fluid, dynamic and interchangeable. Furthermore, not only are we dealing with an invisible aura but one that is contingent on its material surroundings. This, according to Anderson, is an affirmation of a "singularity", inseparable from the sources of atmosphere (Anderson, 2014:140). Consequently, there are a multitude of conflicts surfacing when we apply the subject of atmosphere to the Hoo Peninsula.

A further complication is introduced to the subject of atmosphere when we

then think of what Böhme has articulated as the perceived and the perceiver. Atmospheres are reliant upon the human figure perceiving and responding to them which brings into play the “memories, imagination, emotions” of an individual (Shyldkrot, 2019:149). As Yaron Shyldkrot identifies, we as individuals are intertwined with atmospheres and have the “capacity to impact - and be impacted” by them (ibid.) McCormack outlines how the interrelationship of site and body is integral to a co-production of atmosphere, where bodies are “air-conditioned…shaped as much by what is in the air…[as] what is on the ground” (McCormack, 2015:82). The relationship of self and the atmosphere is something that I investigate in *Sheet 7* (pp.165-198). The identification and continued magnetic pull to this particular atmosphere is bound up with reflections of my own younger life and events which are triggered by aspects of the peninsula’s atmosphere.

The contextual review investigates the perceptions of the Hoo Peninsula through literature from the past to current writing. It establishes a canon of writing that has consistently articulated a language that situates an atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula, from the 16th century to contemporary examples. It sets the scene for how literature has documented and utilised concepts of an atmosphere. This is then extended to other examples of writing about landscape that capture their particular identity and qualities. It further develops into how an author’s intimate perception and understanding of the landscape are altered if they are non-inhabitants and more itinerant visitors.

Navigating the Hoo Peninsula is considered through both the sensory/perceptive and the definitive. The review looks at key concepts around atmosphere that are elusive and then introduces ideas around cartography; traditional techniques and imaginary modes of mapping as useful methods to evoke it.

The review then considers the idea of an atmosphere from an embodied position, underpinned by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theories and Ihde's work on a post-phenomenological position.

Perceptions of scale are introduced through Gaston Bachelard's chapter on 'Immense intimacy' in his work *Poetics of Space*. These perceptions of scale lead to a personal reflection on my early experiences of landscape through the mediums of watercolour and photography. These meanderings around the watercolour coincide with Lucy Lippard's recollections of her family's observations of the Maine coastline through the same medium and open up a seam of investigation into the connections to a landscape formed through this activity.

The review then addresses how artists have worked directly with or from the Hoo Peninsula and brings in the intimate knowledge of local inhabitants. Although it is not clear whether they specifically recognise an atmosphere exists, they do believe the peninsula to be a unique and sometimes misunderstood place. Michael Dale, a retired police officer who was stationed at The Isle of Grain has frequently identified elements in the area that are atmospheric such as the unique sounds that are experienced when walking on the cockleshell shingle of the beaches.

How the practice builds up an archive of atmosphere is then discussed and broadened out to integrate examples of work by artists who are working with archives in their practices. Questions of taxonomy and museum practice are explored against these dynamic approaches.

Finally, the review looks at how the magnetic pull of specific places has engaged other artists to work consistently with a landscape, using the examples of artists such as Naiza Khan and her journey to the island of Manora.

1.1 Capturing an atmosphere through literature

The notion of an atmosphere in the peninsula has been acknowledged by a series of writers, artists and archivists (English Heritage, William Lambarde, Hilaire Belloc, Iain Sinclair, Adam Chodzko etc.).[4] Predominantly these observations have been limited and only partially referenced in their work.

A major report by English Heritage in 2013, the *Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project*, drew upon 400 years of evidence about the place, incorporating within its findings written evidence (documentary and works of fiction), film and sound recordings. In the chapter *Past and Current Perceptions of Hoo*, the report found that much of the written accounts studied from Lambarde in 1570 to Peter Ackroyd in 2007 had melancholic overtones and used language often associated with liminal spaces. The report noted that Ackroyd attributed words such as "uninhabited", "menacing", "desolate" and "wild" to descriptions of the marshes on the peninsula and Hilaire Belloc also used remarkably similar words about the marshes in a journey he made in 1912 (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:9-14). Whilst it may be hard to argue that writers who visited the Hoo Peninsula were writing in complete isolation and were unaware of the murmurings that incorporated a vision of the morass and desolation of the Hoo Peninsula

[4] The English Heritage report on the Hoo Peninsula cites how, in the works of Ackroyd, Belloc and Lambarde, there is "a discernable common thread in the tones of the vocabulary used" (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:13). These descriptions and personal accounts are often words that suggest an atmosphere (melancholy, eerie, morass, desolation etc.) (ibid.). Iain Sinclair discussed the atmosphere in a walk on the Isle of Grain in 2015 (Sinclair: 2015). An atmosphere is demonstrated through Adam Chodzko's work *Ghost* (2010) when the artist ferried people on a kayak to Deadman's Island in the Thames estuary (Chodzko: 2017).

and thus were influenced in their own responses to the place, it is surely not a coincidence that a consistent lexicography has emerged to describe the place (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:14-15).

When considering this collective description that predominantly hones in upon the marsh areas of the peninsula, it is important to note that these writers are visitors and not inhabitants. They are spectators, responding to a place that is unfamiliar through intermittent and irregular excursions. This detached position brings into focus characteristics that are unremarkable to the local inhabitant, yet to the visitor they are identified as unique and attributable to the place. Even Charles Dickens, who had an intimate knowledge of the North Kent marshes, was, in effect, a peripatetic resident (Watts,1989).

This returns us to the original question of whether the Hoo Peninsula does have a particular atmosphere or whether an atmosphere is experienced through an unfamiliar relationship to the landscape, where routines and patterns of lives of individuals are left at another place? Have those routines driven the desire to seek out places that are far removed from an individual's experience? This is an important question that I discuss in more detail in *Sheet 7* (pp.216-249) but briefly, in this thesis, I focus on my own embodied experience of the atmosphere whilst taking into account historical perceptions of the site.

When walking with Iain Sinclair in November 2015 on The Isle of Grain, I asked him about his first encounters with the Hoo Peninsula and what had attracted him to visit it. Sinclair declared that two things had brought him to the peninsula; a vast open space that was the very opposite of a compressed London and as the setting for a fictional storyline, sensing that the peninsula was the perfect place to hide out (Sinclair, 2015).

Sinclair mines the melancholia of the bleak end spit of the Thames estuary and drags it upriver to East London in his breakthrough book *Downriver* (Sinclair, 2004). A book of 12 stories published in 1991, the watery travelogue with the Thames at its core is a series of "swirls, eddies and undercurrents" as unpredictable as the marsh mists of the Hoo Peninsula (Carter, 1991). The book reaches Gravesend in the penultimate chapter, the start of the Hoo Peninsula where "The marshes, to the North are the training ground for a pack of rat hunting undead; who are armed with nothing worse than lead-tipped clubs and rusty forks" (Sinclair, 2004:462). The landscape provides the perfect setting for the complex narrative that unravels like knitted stiches off a needle rendering the cumulative efforts obsolete. Sinclair clearly has an in-depth knowledge of the Hoo Peninsula as he plucks out lesser-known places along the shoreline; Lower Hope Point, Egypt Bay, Allhallows and evokes dense descriptions of the place in the final chapters. His narrative eventually overshoots the Hoo Peninsula and ends up in Sheerness where Sinclair appears as a 'third person' in the final chapter, an out of body experience as the author floats away in the Swale via Leysdown (Sinclair, 2004:462).

The encounters in the Hoo Peninsula are also situated in relation to other contemporary works that converse with similarly potent landscapes through pseudo-scientific or fictional strategies. The thresholds between travelogue, historical novel, biography and memoir emergent in the literary works of authors such as Geoff Dyer, W.G. Sebald and Iain Sinclair, that are rooted in geographies (W.G. Sebald's *Rings of Saturn* set in Suffolk, for example), are important in considering the proposition of how the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula is firstly, experienced and secondly, digested and responded to (Dyer, 2011:75-6; Sebald, 2002; Sinclair 2006).

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens is a key text that has been imperative to this research. Whilst I developed my own intuition to the subject independently, before reading the book, the work has nonetheless consolidated my own responses to the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula. Its early chapters that introduce the North Kent marsh area to the reader are suggestive of an atmosphere that, although is never directly attributed to the Hoo Peninsula in the book, is known to be based on his intimate knowledge of the marshes (Tomalin, 2011:309). The words and construction of language of *Great Expectations* have been provocations for my visual work (drawings, film) and for my writing strategies.

One of the writing strategies that I have used to describe the experience of encountering atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula is through the index cards of *The Archive of Atmosphere*. I describe in more detail the purpose of the index cards in *Sheet 5 QT 7778 Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere* (p.106) within the context of existing museum systems, but here I want to explain in more detail the methodologies of using language in this research as a means of describing atmosphere and within the context of past narratives and discourses about the peninsula.

In brief, *The Archive of Atmosphere* is a collection of found objects from the Hoo Peninsula, collected and curated by the fictitious character, Louisa Cornford. Each object has an index card with illustrations in ink and watercolour attached to each front piece with a simple practical description and summary of the object. On the reverse of the card is information about the object such as the type of surface it was resting on, the atmosphere at the time of being found, the scent of the artefact and the location. The use of language is evocative in nature, employing expressive, descriptive and emotive tones. Often it is meticulous in its detail in recounting an object's profile, paying attention to the types of materials, their damaged and degraded surfaces, the

residual materials it has accumulated, how it has been shaped by exposure in the peninsula.

The index cards are created and written by Louisa Cornford and the objects are presented through her perspective expanding the writing within a partnership of author and character as Dickens so effectively demonstrates in *Great Expectations* with the character of Pip. In Claire Tomalin's biography of Charles Dickens, she notes how "Pip's narrative is full of mysteries, not all of which are explained" (Tomalin, 2011:311). One example of this is of Pip's "two visions of Miss Havisham hanging from a beam" (ibid.). We also see in the first few chapters of the novel, Dickens' great skill in evoking a powerful sense of atmosphere in conjuring the marsh's bleakness and inhospitable terrain through his own evocative use of language (Dickens, 1868).

This example of Dickens' use of characterisation demonstrates how, more readily, the fictional character is able to take on what the artist Marina Abramovic has called our "non-rational capacities" (Abramovic, 1992:212). The artist mourns the loss of the 'non-rational' that is prevalent in childhood but is often later lost in adulthood in Western culture, where things that are not easily explained are mistrusted, seen as threatening and therefore diminished or dismissed as eccentric (ibid.). The use of a fictitious character is a tactic to explore how atmosphere feels and how it is affecting the body whilst in the peninsula without some of the constraints of this more rational opinion. Whilst it does not replace the philosophical explanations of Böhme and other academics, it works in parallel as an expressive tool to communicate on a deeper level about how atmosphere is felt.

As Louisa, I put myself into a position of open speculation about the sensations and experience of atmosphere in the landscape. The methodology I have adopted is to use a notebook, describing the atmosphere in situ through

Louisa's character, without editing or judgement but by purely responding to what is being directly experienced. This intuitive response is what Marina Warner describes as the "crackling and sparking of consciousness"; an emotional response of the body to the atmosphere whilst observing the details of the site (Warner, 2000:217). Like Dickens conjuring up the marshes and the scenes in *Great Expectations*, I am trying to describe the atmosphere, how it feels to be present, on site, paying attention to the detail of it. Sometimes this proceeds towards the gestures of handling the objects and how that evokes atmosphere. For example, for the index card cataloguing 'Nicky's Hard Hat', a red, plastic protective hat used in the construction industry, the written description under section '8. Nascent and Enhanced Information' explains how Louisa traces the letter 'N' in the name Nicky scratched into the hat by a previous owner and how she tries to connect with them; "I placed the hat on my head. A wearing of this atmosphere, conducting into my body" (Falcini, 2019-20). There is a suggestion here of Louisa's attempt to re-ignite the atmosphere as if she was able to conjure it up again through this object as an alchemical action.

The language attempts to unravel the feelings of atmosphere that are being experienced each time an object is found. The objects have drawn me to particular sites in the peninsula that are layered with atmosphere and the expression of language aims to describe in detail the more visceral, felt elements of the phenomenon. As I laid out earlier on in this sheet, my own definition of atmosphere is grounded within a site specific and experiential perspective that is felt through the body in an immersive process. The language of the index cards underpins this definition and by using evocative language it is reminiscent of a key concern of this research about how the individual body and an atmosphere collide and create a reaction. This is the question that I pose in *Sheet 7 TQ 7681 Ratcliffe Highway, Allhallows: Daydreams, Snowshoes, Mirrors and Lenses* (p.165) where I question how I

personally have become so strongly intertwined with the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula and the extent to which my own memories and histories are implicated in my response to the atmosphere. Are there sensations, experiences, interactions that are revived by elements of the atmosphere in the peninsula? Is it, as Herman Schmitz suggests, a “visiting” or “haunting” of the body by atmosphere (Böhme, 2013:119)?

It is also useful to acknowledge how other authors such as Thomas Hardy build the sense of an atmosphere. In Hardy’s work it is in the fictional Wessex where the landscape becomes the present, determining the psychology. In *Far From the Madding Crowd* Hardy evokes the mysterious power of the landscape using florid and evocative language to create a spectral scene (‘keenest blasts”, “weakened moan”, “rattled”, “wailed”, “chanted” etc.) (Hardy, 1874:8). He layers the language, setting the atmosphere for the stories to unfold.

In this thesis, I am referring to the term atmosphere primarily through a perceptive approach, underpinned by what Schmitz has described as sensing of “feelings in the air” and what Otto articulates as “ideas of the numinous” (Borch, 2014:91). In relation to this sensory perspective, I will be exploring the peninsula as a location whose specific features such as the defunct B.P. Oil Refinery perform as “active agents” in the atmosphere (Borch, 2014:93). What I mean by this is that along with unseen elements that trigger the “feelings in the air” are also things deceased or in ruins (Borch, 2014).

The conflation of these sensory, perceptive responses on the one hand, and more definitive physical occurrences on the other, will establish the context of atmosphere in my research project. In this context I will employ cartographic processes (implementing both traditional and imaginary modes

of mapping) to reveal, explore and articulate sets of perceptual, experiential and historical relationships to the site.

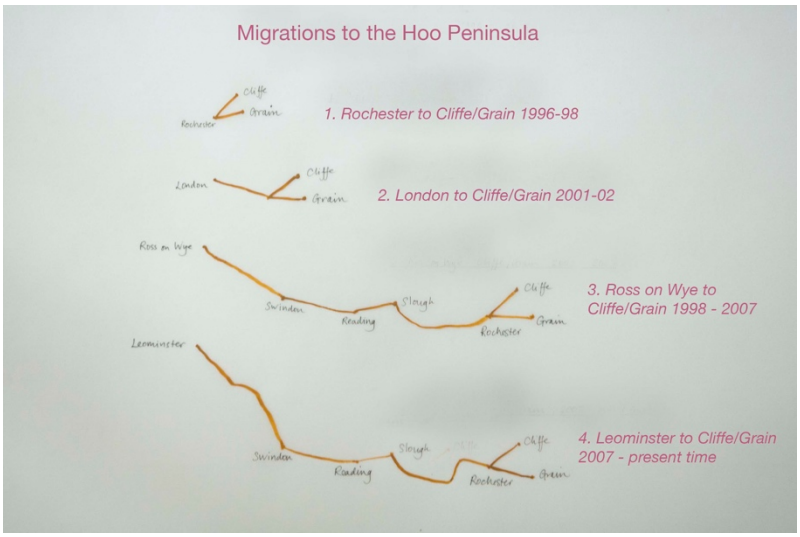

Fig.4 *Migrations to the Hoo Peninsula* (Anna Falcini: 2015)

This use of mapping will attempt to unpack the complexities of the atmosphere encountered on the peninsula, plotting the findings as a starting point to visualise the ephemeral nature of atmosphere. The work of the geographer Denis Cosgrove and academic Jerry Brotton in the area of maps give a background into the map as a device for interpreting spatial concepts. For example, Cosgrove states that “maps may be treated as cultural negotiations between cognitive subjects and material spaces” and that “‘maps’ or spatial representations produced by ordinary subjects, and therefore not subject to the conventions of scientific cartography, allow insights not only into human perceptions and affective relations with space and place, but also into imaginative and aesthetic aspects of human spatiality” (Cosgrove, 2005:27-33).

Mapping is both a language of precision, a tool to help visualise landscape expressing ratios and distances, and, conversely, of imaginative and dreamlike constructions (Smyth, 2007:4-14). These methodologies (of drawing, measuring and imagining) are starting points in which to attempt to map the

atmosphere. The metaphor of maps have been readily accessed by artists such as Mona Hatoum, Emma Raban, Rita Donagh and Chris Wilson to express “inner and outer worlds” (Smyth, 2007:4-14).

The research around the subjective nature of an atmosphere will be underpinned by a phenomenological process informed by Merleau-Ponty’s writings on the experience of the perceived and Ihde’s writings on post-phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty’s assertion that the world and the self are inextricably intertwined and that the body is a ground for experience is a starting point for theoretically framing the physical wanderings in the Hoo Peninsula (Toadvine, 2008:20). In his book, *The Structure of Behaviour*, he notes that “..the body appears capable of fabricating a pseudo-perception” and that “the body must be the necessary intermediary between the real world and perception which are henceforth disassociated with each other.” “The body”, he notes, “has become a material mass and, correlatively, the subject withdraws from it to contemplate its representations within himself” (Merleau-Ponty, 1965:190). In this context, my body will take the position of ‘the intermediary’ and oscilate between these two positions of the real and the perceived in the peninsula as a starting point for the research.

Merleau-Ponty’s *The Reflex and Gestalt Theory* will inform investigations around the “macula” and the object (the lens; of the eye/camera/peninsula). Where he refers to the “lumina” or the gaze, noting that “the eye always places itself in such a way that it receives the richest possible stimulations from the object looked at”, raises the question of how this is altered with the appendage of a viewfinder attached to the eye when looking at the peninsula (Merleau-Ponty, 1965:36, 185). It became apparent that by underpinning the research with the philosophies of Merleau-Ponty’s *Reflex and Gestalt Theory* then it is critical to consider the post-phenomenological work of Ihde’s technoscience that, to a certain extent, builds upon Merleau-Ponty’s work. Encountering the

landscape is mediated through technology; the car windscreen, eyeglasses and the camera lens are the immediate examples of this and it is impossible to ignore these technologies in the question of experiencing an atmosphere. The stills camera is a technology that is particularly pertinent to this research as I discuss later in *Sheet 7 TQ 7681 Ratcliffe Highway, Allhallows: Daydreams, Snowshoes, Mirrors and Lenses.*

Ihde lays out the "dimensions of experience" in what he terms as "microperception" (a sensory perception of the body) and "macroperception" (where these bodily perceptions are given meaning through a "cultural context"). Ihde develops his theory of interrelation of human beings to technologies through three positions: mediated, alterity and background relations (Verbeek, 2005:122-145).

All of these positions are of significance when considering how one encounters the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula, but the position of mediated perception is of perhaps the most immediate interest. Through this position, I am investigating the impact of technological artefacts on my understanding of an atmosphere and, subsequently, if it is "extended or stretched out through artefacts" (Verbeek, 2005:122-126).

Gaston Bachelard's work, *The Poetics of Space*, specifially his chapter on 'Intimate immensity', will provide a context for experiencing the scale of the peninsula. Bachelard states that immensity can be understood as a philosophical "daydream" which "contemplates grandeur". He further develops an argument of the immense through the word 'vast', citing the example of the poet Baudelaire. The word 'vast' "transmits to our ears the echoes of the secret recesses of our being" (Bachelard, 1994:196-197). These "resonances of grandeur", contemplations of external experiences, harboured within the body, are a locus in which to experience the wide open spaces of the

peninsula, absorbing those visions in storage for deeper, ‘mystic’ perceptions of the artist in the peninsula when adrift from it.

The ‘Intimate immensity’ may be turned inside out, however, in a reversal of Bachelard’s concept. The scrutiny of contained sections of the landscape or its relics offers immense intimacy. For example, adopting archival methodologies (i.e., detailed close-up examination), these things that are diminished and overlooked through the distant gaze become abundant with information and begin to occupy the territory of the ‘vast’.

Concepts of embodiment, the gaze and an experience of immensity are processes of investigation that extend the boundaries of the research project to calibrate and locate the senses of the body to place. These will be used to digest the particularity of responses to the specificity of the Hoo Peninsula, through philosophical perspectives. The complex and abstract arguments of how one might respond to a landscape, whether one is able to approach a place through philosophical perspectives neutrally, or whether formative experiences and expectations determine the individual’s response, will be explored through a number of philosophical approaches. Whilst these concepts are critical to understanding the collective conscious and experience of the Hoo Peninsula, individual motivations that generate persistent visitations draw upon early fundamental experiences such as the spontaneous childhood act of walking from my father’s house early in the morning, along the tow path of the Thames. This critical memory lays the foundations as a significant episode in my latent curious attraction to the Hoo Peninsula, prompting an introspective position in a returning back to the Thames in adulthood.

Early experience of a local landscape through the mediums of photography and watercolour are contiguous to the central concern of the research;

atmosphere. Both mediums have been the subject of scrutiny and mistrust by the artworld, photography for duality in being an “endless manipulative medium” and yet as a witness to scenes, providing visual evidence (crime scenes, war photography etc.) (Lippard, 1997:20) and watercolour for its enthusiastic adoption by the hobbyist and its emerging suitability in the 19th century as an appropriate medium for women (Tate, 2011). The former, photography, has hovered like a dark cloud, puncturing holes in a personal vocabulary of landscape, insisting upon recording miliseconds of scenes that linger for the life of the film stock. Watercolour as a medium is similarly fraught with anxieties, suscipsion and misconceptions perhaps because it was used to make sketches and preliminary studies that would later be worked up into oil paintings?

The art writer, Lucy Lippard described her childlike self as a “Sunday painter” accompanying her family along the Maine coast as they observed the landscape through watercolour. Lippard lays claim to this experience as being fundamental in her work in her seminal book *Lure of the Local*. Lippard’s investigations of place, landscape and space are a key text in this research, underpinning concerns around the bonds that are formed between a person and place, the returning to, the layered locations “replete with histories and memories” (Lippard, 1992:6-7). The question of whether the Hoo Peninsula can be collectively experienced through atmosphere or whether, as an individual, one can connect with it through an alchemical process (i.e. whether one’s personal history, language and experience align with the peninsula’s set of conditions) will be addressed through Lippard’s own interrogations of this subject.

Artists who are working or have worked with the Hoo peninsula will also be integral to the contextualisation of the project, including Stephen Turner who has made work in situ and in his studio and Frank Watson and Germander

Speedwell who work within the *Soundings of the Estuary* project (Turner, 2017; Soundings of the Estuary, 2014). Their work demonstrates a number of excellent examples of responding to the peninsula and provoke investigations for expanding my own practice, to make new responses.

The artist Polly Binns will provide an alternative view for the motives of working with liminal spaces in a durational manner through her long assocation with the North Norfolk coastal area of Blakeney (Binns, 2016). This coastal area, located above the North Kent coast, is a naturally useful source of comparative data, particularly when considering that archaeological evidence suggests that the southern North Sea was a prehistoric submerged landscape and thus the Hoo Peninsula and Norfolk coast would have been part of the same land (Murphy, 2007).

Working along that same North Sea coastal area was the writer W.G. Sebald. The complex prose of his book *The Rings of Saturn*, knits together histories, observations and personal anecdotes alongside black and white photographs (visual anthropologies) re-illuminating the lost and forgotten (Sebald, 2002). Sebald's journey bristles with the darker resonances of his German heritage that are contingent on the perambulations of the locale of Suffolk. These scenes of rural Eastern England fringed by the North Sea are triggers for a digging down into histories. The parallel that I want to draw upon here is the way the Hoo Peninsula sits plump with its own histories, memories and objects as the stretch of Suffolk does that Sebald encounters, and how it triggers my own pathologies. The question is whether that places me in a critical position to respond to the atmosphere?

The peninsula's bleak, open expanse, which is similarly exposed to the North Sea, presents a physical experience of atmosphere (the weather, vistas, emptiness). Digging down into its heritage also reveals very particular

strands of its histories that, like Sebald's Suffolk, connect to both domestic stories and global ones. At times the Hoo Peninsula does resurrect actual histories for contemplation and consideration in how they may alter by degrees, the aura of the place, but my interest in them is only contingent on their connection to the actual location that I am researching. I do not use the landscape as a point of departure into the historical as a means in itself. The history of the prison hulks in the eighteenth century, for example, is well documented and is a story that is of interest in this research and lends itself to dark, melancholic impressions felt in the peninsula but the history of Roman salt production is not a valid line of enquiry (Carpenter *et al*., 2013: 43).

Whilst I am conscious of a rigorous history attached to the peninsula, there also exists a seam of uncorroborated material, rumours and amateur archives that are kept by inhabitants or individuals connected to the Hoo Peninsula that contributes to the research; for example, an archive of Cliffe (one of the villages on the Hoo Peninsula) created by local residents Joan Darwell and Gill Moore.[5] These materials reveal the overlooked and the insignificant, but act as specks of dust on a lens (an irritant to the 'purity' of history). This vernacular material receives equal attention and, in some cases, overrides the familiar, tested academic histories of the place in the quest to understand the central concern around atmosphere.

The research output will be developed into a pseudo-archival collection in the form of an archive to incorporate original works of art and a collection of objects pertaining to atmosphere. The *Archive of Atmosphere* whilst purporting to museum conventions also cuts loose from these archival conventions to re-present ephemeral and intangible 'artefacts' in ways that

[5] During the course of this Ph.D. research, Gill Moore passed away.

can either conserve or provoke the atmosphere to re-appear in the objects. For example, performative processes will be explored as methods in this objective.

I will reference the rich territory of artists working with archives such as the Indian artist Dayanita Singh whose recent work is a D.I.Y. curation system in custom made portable, museological cabinets (Tate, 2015). Such archives and the act of collecting, categorising and labelling found materials are a recurring seam of evidence. Amateur archaeological processes, practised by the fictional character Louisa Cornford (see introduction), will be adopted where necessary. How the formal and informal meet and depart will be laid down through the cultural institution of the museum, observing how once objects are removed from the peninsula, they become encased, preserved and objects of authority. Lucy Lippard's chapter *Under the Surface* presents the dubiousness of archaeology as a tool in re-enforcing notions of power, gender and racial superiority but more significantly the writer prods at how the ordinary becomes extraordinary when "endowed with a whole context in time" (Lippard, 1997:115-122). Lippard picks over the value and emphasis placed upon the buried histories of archaeology in a Euro-American perspective, suggesting that the local is indispensable when considering the past and present occupations of space (Lippard, 1997).

A key concern of this research project is how objects retrieved from the Hoo Peninsula with little historic value, impart a haptic interplay of others experiences, substituted histories and specific visual cues that act out aspects of its aura (these are reminiscent of the rarefied languages in Susan Hiller's *The Last Silent Movie*).

Fig. 5. *Installation View, Dayanita Singh Go Away Closer* (Dayanita Singh: 2013)

Giuliana Bruno's writing around the synthesis of the cinema and the museum "as sites of exhibition and archival fabrication" bring to attention the cultural memory of the Hoo Peninsula in film, through numerous amateur films, in fictional cinematic works (*Great Expectations*, *The Long Memory*) and in commercial works such as the B.P. commissioned *The Island* and *Speaking to America*. *The Island*, a film that documented the emergence of B.P's Kent Oil Refinery on the Isle of Grain in 1952, is a particularly visceral material that is

burdened by its story of industrial dominance, yet is tenuous and seductive through what Bruno describes as “the material history of light” (Bruno, 2014:149).

Similarly, Tacita Dean’s oeuvre provides a syntax to appropriate small fragments of material and reignite them. How she captures the metaphysical and elusive phenomena of her subject matter will be a key reference point in terms of how I might respond to the elusive nature of the atmosphere in landscape (Royoux, 2006:49-101). Her practice will be a touchstone for how I might capture materials, transforming them into artworks.

The action of the lens as a capturing mechanism or, conversely, as a filter for potentially obscuring any findings around atmosphere will be a central seam of the project. The lens will provoke questions of scale; from immensity to the macro, important physical attributes in sensing atmosphere in the peninsula (Bachelard, 1994). I will argue that these lenses often act as filters; becoming an extension of my own perceptive filters in the application of visual art development, obscuring all but the selective and isolated absorptions of my gaze/stare. What may be returned is a corrupted scene or glimpse that disengages with the expanded image but which, nonetheless, are vivid. *Proton, Unity, Energy, Blizzard* (2000) a film by Jane and Louise Wilson about the Russian Cosmodrome Centre in Kazakstan, is an example of how a lens becomes a forensic tool, seeping into crevices, unravelling strange auras, oscillating between immense and intimate zones.

Unearthing the desire, and one might say the fetishisation, of the Hoo Peninsula to my position as an investigator and artist, the research will consider that the peninsula resists clear geographical definition, allowing the conditions for an atmosphere to rupture the surface. The films of Patrick Keiller, including *Robinson in Space* and *Robinson in Ruins*, ‘essay-fictions’ that conflate

fictitious narrations and lingering shots of landscape, are useful reference points for the subjective nature of the atmopshere in the Hoo Peninsula. Keiller's "spacey travelogue" and static shots trap the material of his concerns like a butterfly pinned for forensic investigation (Dillon, 2010).

Fig. 6 *Shell Homes* (Naiza Khan: 2009)

Naiza Khan's work with the Island of Manora, near Karachi in Pakistan, is a useful framing for the repeated migration of the artist to a particular location to capture material. Khan describes Manora as "a porous place" (Art Dubai, 2010). There are also resonaces with the way in which archival matter can subtly accumulate in a place through Zarina Bhimji's film *Yellow Patch*, a film that has the undertow of colonial histories yet is visually rich with the accumulation of those archival materials (Whitechapel Gallery, 2012).

Jananne Al Ani's *Shadow Sites II* reflects the use of aerial photography of the Hoo Peninsula. In Al Ani's film it reveals the latent held in the landscape and that at ground level are memories of the past, yet these are reframed from aerial perspectives. This work will help frame the use of the aerial photographs from the English Heritage collection of the Hoo Peninsula and touch upon how

latent properties fester below the surface.

The thesis will be a culmination of both practical and written work experienced through the *Archive of Atmosphere*, operating within non-traditional parameters of museum practice. At the core of the archive will be collected objects and original works of art, curated by Louisa Cornford.

Fig.7 *Aerial I: Production Still from Shadow Sites II* (Jananne Al Ali: 2011)

Sheet 2 TQ 7977 Egypt Bay: Methodology

Methodology

In order to articulate the particular atmospheric properties of the Hoo Peninsula, a methodology has been primarily established, at the core of which are a set of relational situations; the relationship between the landscape, the matter within the landscape (objects, detritus, buildings, infrastructure etc.) and the body in the landscape (myself). This complex series of interactions calls for a philosophical approach that goes beyond a Cartesian framework and has engaged the theories of phenomenology and post-phenomenology through the theories of Merleau-Ponty and Ihde. Merleau-Ponty's position of the embodied is a key part of the methodology in grounding the body in the landscape, whereas Ihde extends the methodology to incorporate "dimensions of experience" taking into account both the "bodily dimension of sensory perception" (microperception) and the "contextual dimension" of experience (macroperception) (Verbeek, 2005:122). Ihde introduces the idea of "alternations" which he explains are "distinct variations" of one phenomena and what he calls "multistability"; the ways in which some sounds and images are experienced, particularly when mediated through technologies (Ihde, 2009). Ihde's "multistability" can be applied to the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula and understood through a multifarious positioning and how the atmosphere can be further experienced through technologies (sound recorders, stills camera, maps, for example). Geographers, historians and archaeologists may read the landscape through a focused disciplinary approach, rendering a specificity of knowledge, but the line of enquiry I have developed is to take those variants and move between the singular disciplines, taking a cue from Ihde's multistability (Ihde, 2009:12).

I have attempted to make the particular properties of atmosphere "perceivable" through the methods of theory and practice, as Ihde suggests that science must do, in the form of "measuring technologies or instruments" (Ihde, 2009:32). My method is to survey the landscape and measure it, taking a cue from geometry with the tools of delineation and measurement (rope, pegs, compass, ruler, builder's square) but using alternative tools to measure such as the camera lens, pencil, casting materials, walking shoes and extended geometry (weather reports, maps, tidal charts etc.) (Ihde, 2009:28-37). Ihde argues that the "technologies of measurement through instruments" contributes to "a constructed lifeworld" (Ihde, 2009:31). In using an alternative range of tools and processes to measure the atmosphere I am constructing a lifeworld, but I have adopted a model that is less calculated and advocates an altogether more hesitant position that may be described as stumbling.

I am also overlaying a psycho-geographic formula where I consider the psycho-geography of things, unlike contemporary practices such as those of the writer Iain Sinclair that are articulated through words. I am not dismissing the importance of writing to this research, however, because writing contributes significantly to the methodology in a myriad of other ways; it is observational, taxonomical and of a narrative persuasion. Ihde states that writing "is itself a technology" and he draws upon Husserl's notion that writing "sediments meaning and as in all sedimentation, the presentation is thus passive, but in reading, the reactivation of signification is an activation" (Ihde, 2016:53).

In recording observations of the Hoo Peninsula through writing, for example, I engage in a post-phenomenological way, through the tools of writing (pen, paper, keyboard). I disseminate information and experiences by hand or digitally and these are mediated without voice to others (Ihde, 2016:53).

Fig. 8 *Untitled: Image from the Marsh Project* (Anna Falcini: 2001)

The act of collecting, categorising and labelling found materials are a recurring seam of evidence. How the formal (analysis of cultural materials) and informal (selection of objects with little archaeological value) meet and depart will be scrutinised against the bedrock of existing museum practices. Once objects are removed from the peninsula, they may mimic museological artefacts, adopting a tone of authority and ultimately offering a contribution to the central question of this thesis as to whether a distinct atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula can be articulated.

These material examples are physical determinants that offer clues as to the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula from the ground, the lived experience of the place. These objects can be potent and problematic and Cornford suggests that they can only be shown at set times and locations in small arrangements.

The objects were not only problematic in how they should be handled and

displayed but also how they were then examined and archived. Thinking about my very early excursions in the peninsula led me to establish a unique system for cataloguing the objects called *The Cornford Analytics*. These were a set of amateur archaeological processes, practised by the fictional character Louisa Cornford, that had been adopted as a resistance to accepted codes of conduct and working methods for the heritage industry (Marstine, 2006:1).

The origins of *The Cornford Analytics* were developed during the making of *Marsh* (2002), one of the first works where Louisa Cornford emerged as a character. Her initial experiments in the field would begin with detailed writing and notes documenting the location, the weather and information about any objects that she collected from the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory site at Cliffe Marshes. However, it was not just the notes of the environment that led to *The Cornford Analytics*, but perhaps more critically, the method of self-analysis about what she was thinking or feeling that created a more dynamic set of criteria by which to measure the atmosphere. These early written notes were the basis for *The Cornford Analytics* but, perhaps more importantly, also established a key method of the research by putting the body at the centre of understanding the atmosphere.

The original methodology of *The Cornford Analytics* are:

1. Surfacing - Locating the majority of objects from surfaces of the landscape, akin to open cast mining, as opposed to a physical digging down (a deeper digging into strata of the peninsula is activated through other evidence – historical, imaginary, personal accounts etc.).
2. Curiosities - The range of objects gathered are from manufactured

and processed sources, i.e., functional objects, hand crafted in an amateur way for essential use, re-purposing materials for a secondary life on the peninsula that contributes to the visual appearance of the place.

3. Natural Items - Samples including seeds, plants specimens, phials of water from creeks, pools and the estuary, miscellaneous materials from animal sources such as bones, feathers, nests etc. have been collected.
4. The Cornford Analytics - a process of labelling and documenting objects that resists an archaeological dating and origin of items but instead attributes other data to the object itself and the scene of a found object such as sensory attributes (sound and scent of object/location), the atmospherics of the location (weather, type of place, textures & surfaces etc.), the situation of Cornford at the time of discovery (clothing worn, food consumed).
5. Clustering - determining set locations for gathering materials such as the banks of drainage creeks, defensive buildings in the peninsula, routes for the incarcerated, black spots in Grain (disease and oil refinery).
6. Nascent and Enhanced Information - The objects are generally presented and displayed upon the peninsula soon after discovery, gathering responses from members of the public. These 'interpretations' are speculative in most cases but do occasionally offer insights into the character of the objects, eliciting further stories or connections.

As the collecting of objects evolved into the *Archive of Atmosphere* and took on a more formal system, the catalogue of all the objects was established with an index of each object. The index consisted of individual cards for every object collected and the information entered onto these

cards was guided by a refined version of *Cornford Analytics*. The list of categories on the index cards are as follows:

1. Surfacing;
2. Curiosity Type (sic.);
3. Location of Artefact;
4. Scent of Artefact;
5. The Atmospherics of Location;
6. The Archivist's Situation;
7. Clustered or Singular Setting;
8. Nascent and Enhanced Information.

Every object was catalogued using these categories and this system is now the standard one for the *Archive of Atmosphere*. A more detailed analysis of the catalogue and categories of *The Cornford Analytics* is given in *Sheet 5 QT 7778 Old Sea Wall: Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere*' (pp.133-166).

Mapping affirms an overarching concept for the project. This spatial conceptualisation of space is addressed through both scientific evidence and further explored through the rich body of artistic practice that uses cartography. This method is a useful research methodology for laying out information of an ethereal nature. The peninsula has been mapped using O.S. maps, navigation maps and historical maps which all interweave as physical gestures and underpin the objective strand of the research. I have used maps to physically manoeuvre around the landscape, as a palimpsest to reveal layers of activity that have since disappeared and as a device to track geographical/ industrial/ architectural changes. This close inspection of territorial change through mapping is revealing of both planned and evolved landscape and shows the loss and gains of the peninsula, which stimulates a rich layering of histories that underpin the sense of atmosphere

(Smyth, 2007:4-14). Maps are also a strategy for making imagined routes and journeys in the peninsula.

As part of the research, this took the form of a map constructed of different facets or sections and that folded out into different arrangements. The map was non-operative and in fact useless in this context as a means of travelling in the peninsula, but it was an attempt to map the atmosphere and its purpose was to locate different notions of an atmosphere residual in the peninsula.

A series of material objects such as drawings, artist made books, hand-printed flyers were also constructed as and when they were needed and kept or discarded as appropriate to the final criteria of the archive. Research through collections of materials such as maps of the peninsula and the estuary waters held at Greenwich Maritime Museum and local materials at Kent Archive in Maidstone, Kent were also drawn upon. An existing close relationship with Historic England to access their extensive materials and knowledge, particularly their collection of aerial photographs, was also utilised. Surveying the landscape through photographs, maps and plans provided information of landscape features; for example, the relationship between the estuary and the land and how that intersection affects the atmosphere.

Oral work was conducted through interviews with inhabitants of the peninsula including Keith Gulvin (Allhallows), Michael Dale (The Isle of Grain) birdwatchers like Jonathan Mycock of RSPB and ecologists (Carol Donaldson & Mark Loos), alongside writers (Iain Sinclair), film directors (Clio Barnard), musicians (Simon Crozier) and artists (Germander Speedwell & Frank Watson). These interviews explored their own responses to the atmosphere.

Sheet 3 TQ 7776 Cooling Marshes: Mapping as a Tool for Locating Atmosphere

Overview

In this sheet I establish how the map has acted as a critical tool in this research project and how it has been a significant material that has grounded me in the landscape. Primarily the map has acted in its conventional form as a guide to understanding and navigating the physical environment of the Hoo Peninsula, particularly in the early period of my discovery and enquiry of the landscape. The works of a number of eminent scholars on the subject of mapping including the geographer Denis Cosgrove and the academic Jerry Brotton who foreground research into the map, informing the context of this study as a device to lay out the geographical territory that is contingent to particular atmospheric conditions.

Cosgrove's work on mapping and cartography is extensive and builds upon multifarious concepts; from the scientific and geographical to cognitive mapping and the overarching principles of cartography as a concept for mapping "the human genome", for example (Cosgrove, 2005:28). These are essential theories when considering the fundamentals of mapping and how it is used in this project as a tool for locating and understanding the particular aspects of atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula.

W.J. Smyth's work *Map-Making and Ireland: Presences and Absences* (Smyth, 2007) provides a useful counterpoint to considering the specificity of the map to a particular landscape and its implications in its cultural understanding. In particular, Smyth brings to our attention an awareness of what is excluded and overlooked in mapping landscapes. For example, he is acutely aware of the deficiencies of the map to acknowledge the multifaceted aspects of a landscape, asserting that "it is important to recognise the sensualities lost on

the geometric map" (Smyth, 2007:5). This acknowledgement is a crack in the armour of the map as an authoritative object that reveals a landscape. In fact, Smyth's writing is a starting point to review the use and format of the map so that it may be extended to other aspects of the landscape that are less visible such as its atmospheres.

In this sheet I further develop the proposition of the model of mapping as a useful methodology for extrapolating the atmosphere of the peninsula through James Corner's essay *The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique, And Invention*. This is a key work that revises the map as a "collective, enabling enterprise" and firmly situates it as something that can be utilized in new, diverse ways to reveal previously "unseen or unimagined" aspects of place (Corner, 2014:197).

The relationship between the graphical renderings[6] of the peninsula through cartographic principles and experiencing the landscape first hand are built upon in a symbiotic relationship where one informs the other, developing a comprehensive overview of the Hoo Peninsula from the minutiae to the expanded. I explore this relationship and consider how each position, studying the OS maps of the Hoo Peninsula and a cognitive mapping that occurs in situ (in the landscape itself), are methods to plot the occurrences of atmospheres. I unpack this later in the sheet through the example of the remains of an administration building at Cliffe that was once part of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory and the OS Landranger 178 (OS: 1990).

Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (Lynch, 1960) looked at how spatial imagery imprinted in the mind "guide[s] spatial behaviour" and although his work focused on the urban environments of American cities, it provides a

[6] Graphical renderings are the formal graphic layout of a map including "the grid, the contours, shading and colours, symbols and place names etc." (Cosgrove, 2005).

template for cognitive mapping in the peninsula, considering the interplay of existing knowledge and instinctual behaviour that are affected not just by the image of a place, but by other phenomena such as sound (Cosgrove, 2005:28). In this sheet I explore this text further with reference to the work of 'The Situationists' and how the practice of psycho-geography has encompassed cognitive approaches.

Later in the sheet I will go on to propose that the physical map offers a different means of visualizing the peninsula through imaginary processes, much in the way that Gaston Bachelard suggests in his chapter *Intimate Immensity* in the *Poetics of Space* (Bachelard,1994:182 -210). There is a curious alchemy that occurs when studying the gridded areas of the map that coalesces with the memory of the place, whittling away the information into the most charged areas of atmosphere.

I will also consider how the map is a tool for locating the post-phenomenological body at the centre of our experience in the landscape. Ihde discusses how the written document is a tool for mediating information without the need for spoken communication in *Husserl's Missing Technologies* (2016) and similarly the map can be set within these parameters as a tool for communicating information (Ihde, 2016:53).

3.1 The Hoo Peninsula: Geographic Territories on Paper

In the introduction to *Mappings* (Cosgrove, 1999), Denis Cosgrove suggests that "the map is both the spatial embodiment of knowledge and a stimulus to further cognitive engagement" (Cosgrove, 1999:2). He argues that the graphical map is a capsule of knowledge that locates and grounds one, and it has become increasingly bound up in the cultural understanding of place (Cosgrove, 1999:2).

When I first encountered the Hoo Peninsula, I used the OS Landranger 178 (OS: 1990) map of the Thames Estuary to understand the landscape geographically, in the context of Cosgrove's spatial knowledge. The map was both a precursor to visits and also a tool of reaffirmation; a type of post-investigative survey of the day's excursions, laid out in neat graphics and semiotics on the dining table.

In those early days of exploration, the landscape was unfamiliar and the map was necessary to both enter and leave the place through identified routes. The landscape with its flat, large expanses of marshland, often overwhelmed and confused me and a map was a vital tool. The map was explanatory; clumps of grass at regular intervals near Cliffe were not the presumed archaeologically sensitive features but instead were the "earthwork traverses", remains of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory from the early 1900s[7] (Pullen *et al*., 2013:2).

The map was integral to the foundation of my personal knowledge and understanding of the Hoo Peninsula that formed and shaped it at this time, around the early 2000s. However, it was through a 'cognitive engagement' that the Hoo Peninsula became a significant place. Where the OS map petered out into white empty areas around Cliffe and Cooling marshes, in reality, they were dense with visual information and palimpsests of histories (OS, 1990). Not only were they irrelevant to the plotting of conventional mapping, the graticule of the map was simply too small to describe these features. In *Mapping/Cartography* Denis Cosgrove describes cognitive mapping as carrying "spatial images in our heads that serves to guide spatial behaviour" (Cosgrove, 2005:30). This type of mapping is instinctive and intuitive, relying upon the senses rather than

[7] Historical information was revealed through studying maps of different time periods. The current OS Explorer 163 Gravesend and Rochester does not show this feature.

mathematics. The social anthropologist Tim Ingold discusses the "wayfarer" describing their movement in landscape as "a mesh of interweaving lines rather than a continuous surface" (Collignon, 1996 cited in Ingold, 2007:75). There is a complex series of tracks adopted by the wayfarer moving over landscape that would confound the conventions of a Western traveller with a map in hand. Ingold separates these out into "wayfaring" and "transport" (Ingold, 2007:75). His work as an anthropologist presents the minutiae of these intermediary travels over territories from an ethnographic perspective citing the Inuit and the Batek (Ingold, 2007:76).

The permissive routes on the OS map were largely linear, agricultural footpaths and "routeways", established from past points of "access between the peninsula's farming settlements and the resources they relied upon" (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:117). At Cliffe, for example, numerous routes led towards the River Thames, a source of industry and commerce that has since vanished (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:117). Initially I would 'travel' according to the OS 178[8] map, inevitably toward the estuary shoreline, but then I began to adopt the wayfaring method using a rhizomatic movement to wander over the marshland of the peninsula. These cross threads revealed portals of atmosphere that were lacking on the identified mapped routes. This focus of this rhizomatic wayfaring came into focus at Cliffe in particular.

3.2 Presences and Absences: What mapping overlooks

The landscape of the Hoo Peninsula is a predominantly open and flat marshland, where cattle and wild horses graze. Cliffe is threaded through with

[8] The *OS 178 Thames Estuary: Rochester and Southend* is part of the OS Landranger series, 1:50,000 (4cm on the map = 1km of land). The OS Explorer series of which *OS 163 Gravesend and Rochester* is part of, are more detailed at 1:25,000 (2cm on the map = 1km of land. Early on I used the OS 178, later moving onto the OS 163.

a network of ditches and fleets and has a large area of open inland water known as Cliffe Pools, excavated for the aggregates industries. A rough road leads to Lower Hope Point on the seawall and from this route other paths can be explored. These capillaries lead into an open expanse of land where an example of these repositories of atmosphere can be experienced.

Just off of this rough track, is the site of the former Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory, a highly productive factory producing gunpowder, blasting gelatine, cordite, Cliffite, Super Rippite and fuses for shells etc. (Pullen *et al*., 2013:287). Over 128 hectares remain from these industries and include; buildings, concrete foundations, "earthen tram-beds and narrow drains" and mounds of "earthwork traverses (blast protection mounds)" (Pullen *et al*., 2013:287).

In early walks when I was unfamiliar with the landscape, I discovered a "brick built administration building", a central hub of the factory, now a roofless structure standing at the periphery of the main site. To reach it, I had to leave the footpaths indicated on the OS map and walk along sheep tracks. The building, a late Victorian design, was small with two rooms, each with a fireplace and painted walls. Through open window frames, I could see in the far distance the seawall and container ships silently moving along the concrete line. To the side, a mature willow tree, constantly shifting in the wind. There were a number of elements here that contributed to a density of atmosphere; its abandonment, the domestic features, the internal and external and the crumbling of the building. Without knowing its biography, I sensed evidence of histories and memories as I stood in the rooms that looked out onto the North Kent marshes.

The administration building is marked on the OS map as a simple square outlined in black with a matrix patterned interior. It is from a bird's eye

perspective, rendered through numerous degrees of separation from the original structure; through previous maps, fieldwork, GPS technologies and Lidar imagery from aircraft (Moroney, 2007:41). The void of information on the map is a visual silence where the building and other areas of potential sites for atmosphere remain oblique. This lack of information on the map evoked a more intense experience once I was at the site of the building itself. The artist Jananne Al Ani's *Shadow Sites II* is a film that captures this interplay between intangible objects at distance and the encounters of things at ground level (Edge of Arabia, 2007-17). The artist explores an aerial perspective of a Middle Eastern landscape, a largely harsh desert environment with ancient and modern buildings scattered below. The camera lens insists on zooming in, burrowing down at regular intervals until the abstract begins to take on recognizable forms and shapes. There is an antithetical seam constantly running through the film that evokes the interplay between the map and the live encounter. It demonstrates the presence and absences, the deficiencies that mapping encounters.

William J. Smyth takes Eavan Boland's poem *That The Science of Cartography is Limited* to emphasise the "limitations of the cartographic technique" (Smyth, 2007:4-5). In this example, Boland points out the ineffectiveness of the "map maker" to record the death, suffering and displacement of Irish citizens during the "Great Irish Famine 1845 – 1851" (Smyth, 2007:5). Smyth declares the "map-maker's pen is mute in relation to the pain endured" (ibid., 5). Large scale tragic events such as those in Ireland are incomparable to the Hoo Peninsula where over a million of the population of Ireland perished from famine and many were forced to flee, but it is known that diseases such as malaria impacted the area and ultimately, its perception as a place to avoid. They are part of the fabric of the atmospheric conditions that I am identifying, yet there was a muteness of the map to convey or suggest social histories and their impact on an atmosphere. Traditionally, cartography has been a functional tool,

"reducing (and) simplifying" information to deal with borders, movement and access or limits to land but maps are broadening out into more creative and flexible uses. Whilst they reveal hidden worlds, equally, they can also 'obscure' things such as atmosphere. This I experienced from the OS map and its depiction of the site of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosive Factory and walking around the site (ibid.).

Another poet who has similarly delved into the detached position of the map maker is Kei Miller. Miller's poem *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion* (section iii), declares the cartographer as a pedantic jobsworth

"I never fall in love. I never get involved
with the muddy affairs of land.
Too much passion unsteadies the hand.
I aim to show the full
of a place in just a glance."
(Miller, 2014:18)

To execute maps of strategy and pure graphical representation, it appears that Boland and Miller suggest the cartographer remains at distance from any narrative in the landscape. The only histories are those of boundary changes and shifting territories.

3.3. Between the Folds of the Map are Atmospheres

"A map is simultaneously both a physical object and a graphic document, and it is both written and visual: you cannot understand a map without writing, but a map without a visual element is simply a collection of place names" writes Jerry Brotton in his book, *A History of the World in Twelve Maps* (Brotton, 2013:5).

The Brazilian artist Waltercio Caldas did exactly this when he made a series of maps that were large empty spaces, visually minimal, except for “some very small inscriptions and numbers” (Corner, 2014:203). Caldas presented the ‘maps’ with the conventions and language of traditional mapping, but the void of information left a barren plane that disrupts the traditional concept of a map. Brotton refers to the conventional type of map and in this context its purpose is certainly undone when key elements are removed; it becomes un-useable for the task it was designed for.

Historically, the map has developed as a comprehensive geographical survey of landscapes and as a means to navigate them. Maps are also visual delineations of land, defining the divisions of ownership, regulating the public or private (Cosgrove, 2005:27). The writer James Corner argues, however, that the conventional map, is a rigid and immovable object that constrains and is reductive rather than full of possibilities.

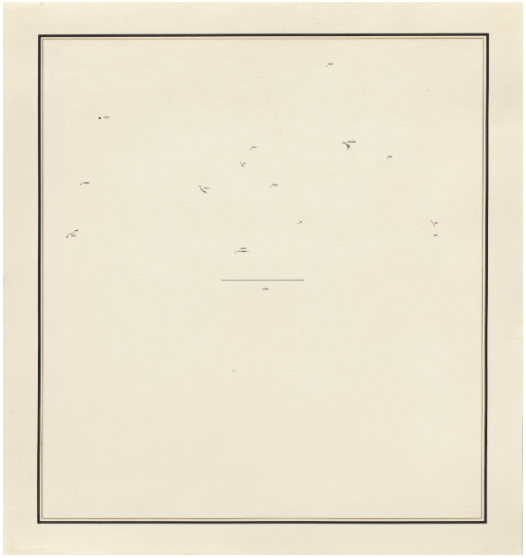

Fig. 9 *Japao* (Waltercio Caldas: 1972)

In his essay *The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention*, Corner re-frames the purpose of the map, from a paper document that is functional and utilitarian to one that is enabling, exploratory and re-evaluates “exhausted grounds” (Corner, 2014:197). Frustrated by the dogmatic approach to mapping in conventional terms by urban planners, architects and designers, that he believes to be limiting, he instead regards the map as something that “unfolds potential” (Corner, 2014:197). He argues that mapping

allows “for new eidetic and physical worlds to emerge” and “mappings discover new worlds within past and present ones”. In this, his theory draws on the writing of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

Corner repeatedly applies the verb ‘unfolding’ throughout his essay as in the example above. It is not that Corner lacks the imagination to use other metaphorical references but that the word is weighted with significance in the context of the map. Maps are physical, mobile pieces of paper that are unfolded in order to scrutinize the land being studied. Through this physical action, maps literally unfold information and then it is re-folded into a neat rectangle, a re-compression of data.

The *OS Landranger 178: Thames Estuary: Rochester and Southend on Sea*, is the very first map I purchased to use in the peninsula. It has become dog eared and worn by the continual motion of folding. At 1:50 000 scale, the complexities of the land shift between the geometrical and the geological. The map as a tactile object animates the landscape through a gestural action of folding and unfolding. This compression and de-compression of the drawn landscape become acts that are continuous and repetitive. As the physical maps go through these movements, they begin to absorb the conditions and atmospheres of the landscape becoming bodily witnesses to the particular atmospheres. The paper’s cellulose structure attracts the moisture and the olfactory elements of the peninsula (Armistead, 2017:30). Their material structures begin to weather and soften as the paper surfaces are continuously exposed to a finger demarcating a line on the page, elements of the peninsula in all weathers and the repetitive gestures of insertion and removal from a coat pocket or rucksack. It is between these folds where atmospheric properties are stored, small containers for the auras of the peninsula. In these pockets of fog, the seams of atmosphere might begin to take shape.

Brotton precisely dissects the map into its component parts and is well aware of its limitations when solely considered as a graphical object. When simultaneously moving between the map and the actual landscape it becomes evident that the map operates within a narrow frame of reference. As I have stated, the map has been a vital tool in walking this landscape and taken me in linear perambulations over permitted sections of the place, but I also believe it has the potential to stifle and repress knowledge and experience.

Fig. 10 *Detail of 'A New Philosophico Chorographical Chart of East Kent',* (Christopher Packe: 1743)

Corner articulates convincingly the repressiveness of the map and its acute dullness if one is to always move along the same trusty pathways or for planners to use it merely as "an inventory and geometrical measure" (Corner, 2014:208). When one considers the exquisiteness and artistic imagination of the *Mappa Mundi* in Hereford, for example, that Brotton describes as "an almost organic aura, embodying a chaotic, teeming world, full of wonders, but also edged with horrors" it is apparent that the scope of maps is diverse (Brotton, 2013:85). Similarly, the maps of Christopher Packe, who in 1743 created what he phrased as "A New Philisophico Chorographical Chart of East Kent" from an "innovative viewing station" that he constructed on scaffolding in the tower of Canterbury Cathedral, while they were serious endeavours in geomorphology, were principally works of art underpinned by measurement

(Charlesworth, 1999:110-114). For example, Packe deliberately left out roads, concerned that their inclusion would "*Deform* and confound this beautiful *Plan* of more Delicate Delineations" (Charlesworth, 1999:115).

The thesis investigates how the Hoo Peninsula's particular atmospheric properties can be effectively articulated through an interdisciplinary fine art practice and I propose that mapping is one of the methods that can articulate these concerns. James Corner states "how the map permits a kind of excavation (downward) and extension (outward) to expose, reveal, and construct latent possibilities within a greater milieu" (Corner, 2014:208). He further develops this line of enquiry when he states that the map has "enormous potential for the unfolding of alternative events" (Corner, 2014:208).

Although Corner is constructing his arguments based upon traditional notions of mapping, he does so with an alternative vantage point, rather like Packe's perch above Canterbury. He suggests ways to extrapolate and draw upon the existing format of the map that flip it on its head. He advocates re-working what he identifies as the "field", that is, "the continuous surface, the flat bed, the paper or the table itself", it may also be the "graphic *system*" (Corner, 2014:213). He states "a field that breaks with convention is more likely to precipitate new findings than one that is more habitual and routine" (Corner, 2014:213). What can be concluded is that, technologically, maps in the industrialised community have vastly developed, but their creative and imaginative capacities appear to have diminished.

As Michel de Certeau claimed "beneath the fabricating and universal writing of technology, opaque and stubborn places remain" and it is these "opaque" places of atmosphere on the Hoo Peninsula that became increasingly visceral and attractive to me (Coverley, 2006:107). In order to begin articulating

particular atmospheres in the Hoo Peninsula the theory of psycho-geography in combination with a mapping process became a critical methodology. Using conventional mapping and a psycho-geographic approach I located specific places where the atmosphere was most apposite. I deconstructed the conventional format of an OS map and instead curated maps of atmosphere of the landscape using drawing processes to re-work sections of the map. For example, I laid tracing paper over the map and picked out the sections of significance to me in the quest to locate areas of atmosphere.

Corner describes the "things…observed within a given milieu and drawn onto graphic field" as "extracts" and it is these which I have "deterritorialized"[9] by taking, for example, inventories of the material and immaterial things present at the administration building of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory at Cliffe Marshes. These inventories include the square footage of the building, its use, regulated observations at set times, weather and temperature (Corner, 2014:213). There are other methodologies that I have developed to re-think the actual "field" itself (Corner, 2014). For example, I have created audio maps of particular locations in partnership with the musician Simon Crozier. I have collected sounds from specific locations and Crozier has edited and produced them into soundscapes.

At a different site on the peninsula, The Isle of Grain, I recovered a large fibre glass fragment of boat that had washed up on the shoreline (map reference TQ 89:75) (OS, 1990). This section of land has a rich and complex set of atmospheric properties underpinned by its geographical location. It is at the cusp of the mouth of the Thames estuary where the river officially flows into the

[9] Corner uses the term "deterritorialized" to describe, in mapping, how things that are "observed within a given milieu and drawn onto a graphic field" and are then "selected, isolated" essentially presenting a specific kind of "field system" (Corner, 2014:213).

North Sea and is the definitive point of land that separates the Rivers Thames and Medway. Its geographical position has been a critical entry and exit point for a series of ports including London, Sheerness and Chatham. It has witnessed prison hulks moored off of its shoreline and the later transportation of convicts to Australasia in the Victorian period. In more recent times sections of the shoreline have been commandeered for industrial concerns such as the B.P. Oil Refinery in the 1950s, making areas closed off for public access.

The boat fragment was found close to this locked down area of the shoreline, where a concrete pier demarcates the line of potential trespass with ominous signs deterring the atmospheric interloper. I recovered the fragment taking it back to the studio. The surface was cracked into numerous rhizomatic lines that were reminiscent of the routes of the OS map (OS, 1990). Its boundary edge had been violently shaped through its river journey, resembling a peninsula of a synthetic "field" (Corner, 2014:213). I lay light paper on to the surface and with a dense soft leaded pencil began to make a rubbing of it, transferring the 'map' back onto the traditional, familiar paper format. Placing tracing paper over the rubbing I extracted the lines and marks of the cracked surface using pen and white ink. The results were a crisp series of graphical marks that seemed to depict strange collections of routes that never went anywhere or a hub of specks that appeared to be an inland beach of shingle.

The process of investigating this object as a fragment that appeared to both hold atmosphere in its very fabric and that pinpointed, geographically, a site of atmosphere on The Isle of Grain was developed in the language of mapping, but that bore none of the logic and careful measurement applied to traditional maps. This alternative mapping process can be framed in terms of a type of filtration, whereby the network of marks were revealed by the surface renderings, drawing out at each stage of the process the delicacy of marks made through the forces of tides and weather patterns. Rather than record

faithfully what is there, this more abstract process of mapping hinted at de Certeau's "opaque" places (Coverley, 2006:107).

Fig. 11 *Untitled: Detail of a drawing of a Boat Fragment* (Anna Falcini: 2017)

3.4 Between Imagination and Function: The Map as a Technology (Don Ihde and Gaston Bachelard)

The attempt to map the atmosphere on The Isle of Grain through the boat fragment produced a visual artwork that was non-functional and of no use as a tool for directing one around the area. This, of course, was the point of the work; to produce a way into to the landscape through its atmospheres which, being ephemeral, reduces the need for a logical type of map. The OS map, however, has been imprinted on my mind (OS, 1990). It preceded the

experience of the landscape and therefore produced a precedent for understanding the Hoo Peninsula. The map was a scaffold laying underneath the ambition of the project to identify the particular properties of atmosphere in the landscape.[10]

As I explored the map before visiting the peninsula, I traced a line under the index finger, connecting the imagined journey to the brain via the map. Lucy Lippard noted that the contour lines of maps are like the human fingerprint and that "we read maps with our fingers" (Lippard, 1983:121). These tracings, according to Edmund Husserl, became activated through a reading of them and then, furthermore, through activating them in the landscape. Ihde concludes that Husserl identifies "a material technology and its praxis playing a role in which meaning-structures are not alienated from life-world praxis". By activating the map, its "meaning-structures [are] available to bodily humans" (Ihde, 2016:53).

3.5 Conclusion

In this sheet I have discussed the way mapping has been a key methodology and source for locating the atmosphere in the peninsula. Essentially, the relationship I have developed with the Hoo Peninsula has been grounded and mediated through mapping and has been influential in the question of whether the Hoo Peninsula has particular atmospheric properties. It has been invaluable as an aid to work out routes, landscape features and my relationship to and in the landscape. The map has enabled observations of the peninsula through a

[10] Before the first visit to the Hoo Peninsula, I had observed it on the map. Even though this was a fleeting glance and not studied at length, it nonetheless gave me the first, initial impressions of the peninsula. I had also observed it via a shipping chart, some years before I was aware of its existence when sailing past it with our Dutch Barge, Bema.

bird's-eye perspective, in a similar way to Janane Al Ani's film *Shadow Sites II* (Edge of Arabia, 2007-17). This has put the landscape into a contextual framework, opening up the territory in relation to neighbouring Kentish and Essex landscapes. At this position the landscape seemed readily accessible and "reduced to a measured and manageable scale" (Cosgrove, 2005:27).

The panoramic perspective goes beyond the possibilities of the human vantage point that is limited without the facility of technologies. The map has a cinematic quality akin to the film camera that operates at multiple positions but is condensed into one screen, allowing the audience to observe a plot in a manifold way, and this potential parallel to film is connected with the peninsula through the medium of the map (Colebrook, 2005:33).

In this chapter I have revealed how the desire to understand the geography of the Hoo Peninsula and its potential for atmospheric phenomena has been studied, not just through the cartographer's bird's-eye view, but also at ground level. Where the bird's-eye view is ordered and infers a mode of exploration or "transport that is destination orientated" the work at ground level has adopted the mode of "wayfaring" (Ingold, 2007:75-77).[11]

As I have discussed, the map became a starting point that allowed for a rhizomatic approach, enabling a subtle network of "diverse entryways" into the landscape (Corner, 2014:228). In this sense, mapping was a tool for meandering and encountering atmospheres. In the section, 'Presences and Absences – What mapping overlooks', I explored how conventional maps were

[11] Tim Ingold differentiates between "two modalities of travel"; "wayfaring" and "transport". "Wayfaring" is a crisscrossing continuous motion and Ingold gives the example of the Inuit who understand the land as "a mesh of interweaving lines" and this way of travelling as being integral to their lives. "Transport" on the other hand is about moving between A and B, through direct routes and with less regard to the journey itself but more about arriving at the destination (Ingold, 2005:75-77).

potentially limiting and left out the textural, imaginative, aural, olfactory elements (Smyth, 2007). The opportunity for the map to be expanded rather than compressed, opened up crevices for atmosphere to be considered and not pressed rigidly into the pages of the folded map. James Corner's essay *The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique, and Invention* was a critical point in reconsidering the breadth of mapping as a means of unveiling the atmosphere.

Conflating the template of the map with devices in the creative work such as the boat fragment on The Isle of Grain were strategies for identifying and harnessing places of atmosphere in the peninsula. For example, the transference of the physical surface of the boat fragment revealed, and literally drew out, the histories and memories of the object, transmitting those to paper.

I argued that the physical gestural action of folding and unfolding a map animated the landscape through this motion, and the term unfolding was both gestural and metaphorically used (Corner, 2014). The map in this respect became an extension of the body in a post-phenomenological way and, as Edmund Husserl noted, is activated through both a reading of it and using it in the landscape (Ihde, 2016:53).

Mapping is a shadow cast when the light is shone and illuminates its presence. In this way, mapping, the map, cartography and the cartographer bear down upon the investigation of atmosphere on the Hoo Peninsula as both a functional object and creative methodology to identify the auras that are harboured in the places in this landscape.

Sheet 4 TQ 7979 St Mary's Bay: Psycho-Geographic Wanderings in the Marsh

Overview

In *Sheet 4* I examine a psycho-geographic methodology and consider how an atmosphere may be articulated through it. Using a method of cartography and psycho-geography, I foreground the visual as a means to articulate aspects of experience built upon traditional disciplines of knowledge such as geography, history and archaeology. In the context of the visual, my research consists of an 'Archive of Atmosphere' that I later describe in detail in *Sheet 5*, along with other works of art that convey the experience of atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. In applying the disciplines of geography, history and archaeology with a visual arts methodology that includes drawing, film and photography, I implement a tangibility upon the more elusive aspects of atmosphere.

At the beginning of this sheet, I reflect upon how the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula is revealed through an immersion into the landscape. I then look more closely at The Isle of Grain, a site where the atmosphere is frequently experienced. I reveal how the site has periodically drawn me back and where I have investigated the edges of its industrial sites, most notably Grain Power Station. Grain has historically been a place of ambitious buildings that have rapidly declined and become ruins. The landscape is abundant with them and the power station is just one of many sites to have fallen into a ruinous state. The context of the ruin, I argue, adds to a significant atmosphere in this geographical edge of the Hoo Peninsula, and the impact of invariably large-scale sites like the power station in ruins, cannot be underestimated. I therefore investigate wider debates about the subject of ruins, touching upon how the subject matter is at the heart of contemporary artists such as Jane and Louise Wilson.

To reach this edge of the peninsula it is necessary for me to drive to Grain, but on arrival, I then track around its industrial boundaries on foot. As we will come to see in this sheet, walking is the principle mode of my psycho-geographic methodology. In the section 'Perambulations in the Hoo Peninsula' therefore, I establish the criticality of walking as a means of doing; of actively researching the Hoo Peninsula through a psycho-geographic methodology. To get a grasp on this complex field of knowledge, I investigate a number of artists and writers who have engaged with walking to permeate place and space, including Iain Sinclair, W.G. Sebald, walkwalkwalk, Janet Cardiff, Sophie Calle and Kinga Araya.

I consider the anthropological theories around human developments in walking, particularly ideas relating to walking and gender, a subject that Rebecca Solnit discusses in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (Solnit, 2002:34-44). By examining this material, I aim to establish the context of a female figure in the landscape; parting the waters of the murky brackish zone that moves between conjecture and truth, disregarded and re-appraised in regard to a female walker/psycho-geographer (Smith, 2010:111).

I argue that this female perspective is imperative in understanding an atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula, through my position as a woman in the landscape. It raises a question, of whether I encounter an existing atmosphere, or whether my solitary position as a female in the landscape activates it?[12] The subject of the female figure in landscape remains theoretically underdeveloped, with examples of male figures in the landscape very often central to discussions. The debates about how women may encounter and experience

[12] I assert that the atmosphere is continuously present in the area of study although it is not static and fixed i.e. it it may increase or decrease in intensity according to conditions such as weather, events, seasons etc. Further information is found in Sheet 0, pp. 22-24.

atmospheres in landscape have been relatively absent in academic studies. In this regard, I have drawn upon first hand research through an interview in the field with artist Polly Binns in Blakeney, Norfolk, and with the conservationist and writer Carol Donaldson in the Hoo Peninsula.

I address this absence of women's relationships to atmospheres in landscape in the final section as I draw upon my own experience of atmosphere in the peninsula. I analyse the sensory receptors of it through smell or sound, for example, and present a case study exploring the atmosphere through a series of night drawings, where these senses are amplified over that of the visual.

4.1 The Digesting of Grain, From Inside Out

The atmosphere is experienced and felt by being in the landscape. It is unlikely to be a fleeting visit that unearths such an atmosphere, neither can it be expected to turn up at set times or places. For example, one cannot simply take a guidebook of atmosphere (if there were such a thing) into the Hoo Peninsula and arrive directly at a located spot expecting to find atmosphere. The atmosphere in the peninsula is revealed through an acclimatisation of the body to the space, a delicate process which requires the individual to shift gears downwards, to leave behind the baggage of life at one's departure point and to be patient and attentive to it without an expectation of receiving it.

It is advisable to loosen the constraints of any plan and be prepared to circumvent those. Perhaps a vague sense of getting from point a to z by way of s is enough of an itinerary and can avoid what Rebecca Solnit describes as "the rhetoric of efficiency" that has become the driving force for human travel aided by technologies such as GPS systems. She advocates focusing upon the travel rather than the destination, reviving the lost pleasures of "wool gathering, cloud gazing and wandering" (Solnit, 2001:10).

Wandering in the marshes of the Hoo Peninsula is, I would argue, where interesting matter is revealed; through a psycho-geographic perspective, the things that one is not actively seeking begin to appear as tangible curiosities or phenomena that hang thickly in the air. I propose that this is one of the situations where the atmosphere in this landscape develops. It is contingent upon things that are strange, curious, abandoned or obsolete and these things are plentiful in this landscape, particularly at the edge of peninsula in The Isle of Grain.

On a journey there in 2016, I "beat the bounds" of Grain Power Station, at the limits of its edges where some of the most interesting material rose up, a latter-day parochial official in the form of a *stalker of atmosphere*. This was in the twilight years of the power station, when it was mothballed and being dismantled. What had once been "the biggest oil-fired power station in Europe" was now being systematically disembowelled, with demolition companies consuming its internal materials at a faster pace than its ill-fated lengthy construction (UK Houses of Parliament, 1980).

To arrive at the power station was the final destination of a modernist industrial pilgrimage where a sacred site was replaced by a 244m chimney and one of the largest coffer dams in the world (Carpenter, 2014). I noted in a previous visit in 2005 that "The road to Grain is a finite journey. You do not pass through Grain...you have to want to go to Grain' (Falcini, 2015:3). The power station chimney was a latter-day beacon that drew one to the final destination of terra firma before a watery edge.

Since its construction between 1971 - 1982, and before its demolition in 2016, the chimney, seen for miles, had dominated the landscape. Its sulphuric smoke would taint the laundry and lungs of Grain's population and its lofty position

would mark the place of industrial disputes, low productivity, 60-minute tea breaks, and its unforeseen entanglement in the miners' strike in 1985 (Speedwell, 2009; UK Houses Of Parliament, 1980).

Like the electricity it had generated, the power station left a static of atmosphere fizzing in its aftermath. Its formidable physical presence in the remote Isle of Grain along with its national importance as a provider of electricity have become evocative symbols of loss and collapse of a post-industrial world. As I suggested earlier in 'Introduction: 0.3 Ruins' the loss of former industrial buildings in the Hoo Peninsula has left not only physical marks but a strong sense of atmosphere. The remains of this recent industrial site, are a recent example of this and furthermore, its inaccessibility and secrecy, have provoked unsettling responses because its histories are not transparent but guarded. The atmosphere of the power station is pervasive because it had a commanding presence through its sheer scale and impact in Grain in its original working condition. Its brutal deconstruction has failed to erase its memory and a strong sense of its presence still remains.

There is a persistent memory of its existence, with its remaining body in rubble, amidst a rich, bio-diverse area of plants and insects left to their own devices. Its chimney, that was detonated and collapsed downward, was never fully destroyed. The iconic top section of the chimney, that was a marker for miles around, has remained intact, failing to crumble into rubble; instead, it remains where it fell, a digit of concrete whose arteries have been forever severed.

In *A Short History of Decay*, Brian Dillon suspects that the "ruined building is a remnant of, and portal into, the past". He articulates how ruins are a way of "loosening ourselves from the grip of punctual chronologies, setting ourselves adrift in time" (Dillon, 11:2011). These are the levers that motion the atmosphere into being at Grain, the 'punctum' that works its way into my

consciousness and not only triggers the interconnected post-modern past but my own individual past of personal ruins (Dant and Gilloch, 2002).

As we can see when we observe the work of the artists Jane and Louise Wilson who “are attracted to places of power and control, but only when those in command have left the site”, the ruin of the power station imparts a powerful atmosphere because it has these same characteristics of diminished power and control housed in a once monolithic building in a visually empty landscape (Dillon, 2011: 77). The evident mortality of this building, whose output contributed to a consumerist production that now seems broken amidst the tatters of global economies and climate change, is another ruin of the landscape, sinking back to the ground, below sea level it had previously been raised above.

On a visit to the site, I observed how metres of chain link fencing around the site were increasingly straining to keep the boundary in check; holes were regularly punched in them, sections were rolled up like a window blind for slithering bodies to crawl underneath, plants were consuming the mesh at alarming rates and becoming alive with the susurrations of birds. I walked between these perforated boundaries on a redundant service road that wound behind the power station’s main bulk and skirted the old Coastguard Cottages “designed to combat smuggling” (Carpenter, 2013).

I arrived at a defunct car park, one that had housed large numbers of employee’s vehicles. It was a vast area of hard standing with flaking white lines demarcating spaces long since departed. I had originally visited the site in 2005 when much of the power station had already been shut down and a new cleaner and more efficient power station was replacing it (Power Technology, s.d.). During that previous visit, I had found in a corner a lone car, burnt out and left to rust, its internal components having been ripped out. The car was

part of a familiar pattern at Grain of consuming things from the inside out (cars, gravel pits, fleets, power stations) that could be traced back to the seventeenth century, when the bodies of particularly heinous criminals were tarred and then left to decompose and swing inside cages attached to the gibbets positioned in full view between the low and high-water line of the tides. A limbiotic and cruel state periodically cleansed and swept away by the estuary waters (Taussig, 2002:16).

Of that early car park exploration, I had noted the space was “hemmed in by grassy banks, no longer accessible by car” and was becoming “an island in an island”. I mused further on

“the lost daily rhythms and activity of cars and people that had existed here once, the opening and closing of car doors, clicks of seat belts, revs of engines, chokes pulled out on cold misty nights, banter of work colleagues…” (Falcini, 2015:11-12)

Returning to the car park in 2016, the body of the car had disappeared like the undesirable bodies of criminals, a partial cleansing of this industrial site but with telling flakes of rust on the ground, a reminder of the permanent stain upon The Isle of Grain, of its grittier histories.

I walked on through the vacant car park, towards the sea wall and double backed on myself, following the coastal path in the direction of Allhallows. I then turned inland again and found an isolated Portacabin with the words ‘Welfare Unit’ on the side of it, just inside the boundary marker of the chain link fence.

The cabin, a refuge for the demolition workers, was closed up and sat in a rough piece of land overgrown with brambles, enclosed by fencing with a

dangerous pit to the left of it that had been sealed off with scaffold poles. The scene was reminiscent of Tarkovsky's film, *Stalker*, a film I became familiar with in 2002 when I began making the work *Marsh*. The film follows three characters; 'Writer', 'Scientist' and their guide 'Stalker' as they navigate their way to a restricted site known as 'the zone', where "the object of the journey is obscure" (Le Fanu, 1987:92).

As Stalker, Writer and Scientist move across the railway tracks and through an automatic barrier towards the zone, they come under fire from border guards. Where the lens of Alexander Knyazhinsky's camera achieves a strange beauty in presenting the landscape in *Stalker* with lush greens of the grass and mosses in the zone, similarly, a wilderness of common plants and weeds have enshrouded the edges of the welfare unit (Le Fanu, 1987:101-103).

The contrasting blend of post-war ruins and "strangely beautiful" foliage, whose colours are intensely green in Tarkovsky's film, evoked what I was experiencing at The Isle of Grain, not just visually but through a strong sense of a feeling of something. I realised that the film was an early affirmation of an awakening to the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula and led to its reference in the main title of the thesis; 'Stalking the Atmosphere: Journeys into the Hoo Peninsula Through a Multi-Disciplinary Fine Art Practice'.

The word 'stalker' may have negative overtones of unwarranted, predatory attention in a contemporary context, but in the example of Tarkovsky's character, it describes someone who is an expert in navigating the unpredictable and, at times, dangerous landscape using intuition and self-knowledge. He is someone who is tapping into the feelings in the air to navigate the "Invisible pockets of radioactive land" (ibid.,102). Stalker's acute sensitivity to the landscape and his unconventional methods for mapping it, provided a useful prototype for my own creation of Louisa Cornford, enabling

her to transcend the atmospheric gaps of the peninsula and reveal the more ambiguous and subtle elements of atmosphere, particularly in the latent industrial zone of the Isle of Grain.

A repetitive motif of this part of the Hoo Peninsula seemed to be the island in the island, as had been previously witnessed in the car park. The Welfare Unit became another such island; an impossible refuge that could not be reached. Locked and impenetrable, one imagined that stored within it were memories and a vacuum of atmosphere that lay thickly dormant like a heavy fog. Its very isolation suggested the potentiality of atmospheres.

Fig.12 *Welfare Unit, The Isle of Grain*, (Anna Falcini: 2016)

As Mark Fisher discusses in his book *The Weird and the Eerie*, “there is no doubt that that the sensation of the eerie clings to certain kinds of physical spaces and landscapes”. Because this site was also out of tangible reach for

investigation, it raised further the intensity of the eerie through what Fisher notes as important contributions to the feeling of “speculation and suspense” (Fisher, 2016:61-62).

What this scene had suggested was a space that in many other places would be unfamiliar and out of the ordinary. In Grain, however, it fitted in with the incongruent characteristics that had developed over the centuries. The Welfare Unit was continuously temporary and unstable, awaiting its next destination. Even the supposed permanence of such large-scale industrial projects like the power station and the oil refinery on Grain fell into instability; a continual hum in the background threatening to implode at any moment.

This is where we might begin to understand, how potent the atmosphere is on The Isle of Grain and why it is present here. Geographically, Grain has existed at the edges, in between the mouths of the rivers Thames and Medway. Strategically, it has been a critical point of entry to the capital or to the naval resources at Chatham. From this very perspective of its geography, it has been continuously vulnerable to attack and was subsequently heavily fortified from the 17th century with Grain Tower, Grain Fort and Grain Battery (Carpenter, 2013).

Its precarious geographical position has also made it vulnerable to the weather and the coast. Offshore from Grain is the notorious Nore sandbank that shipwrecked many vessels until a lightship was installed. Like much of the coastal area on the peninsula, it was a rich territory for smugglers and preventative measures were put in place such as the coastguard cottages. Grain would have been an ideal landing stage for smuggled goods with many inlets and creeks that could be accessed. As we will discover later in *Sheet 6*, the account of a brief visit to Grain by Dr Johnson, a seventeenth century apothecary, recalls how inhospitable he found Grain and how he was thwarted

by its impenetrable marshes (Carpenter, 2013). We know too that disease was rife across the peninsula and in this most easterly point, it would have been hard to administer medication to the sick and dying of the community. Life would have been extremely tough on The Isle of Grain.

From these examples have risen the conditions for its eerie and peculiar atmosphere and one of those strongest indicators is its strange polarity of beauty and disfigurement that arises from its distinctive marshes and coastline and its scarred areas of industrial activity. As I have mentioned above, Grain is a place where we have seen examples of things ravaged from the inside out, and no greater example of that is its twentieth century landscape whose interior has been eaten away, in particular, by the energy industries to supply oil, gas and electricity.

This industrial area where much of the energy industry has been embedded, is a zone that one must pass through in order to reach the village and coastal area of Grain. One can readily become a Dr Johnson or a Stalker in this space. I have experienced interrogation and near arrest in this zone by the police, as I stood on a public highway in 2016 and photographed the remains of an old orchard, at the edge of the E:on site (Power Technology, s.d.).

The image of a few remaining apple trees hemmed in by concrete and steel encapsulates in microcosm not only the rapid changes of the isle but also the resistance to change the landscape held. These tensions of time where the past refuses to be buried and is ready to rupture the surface, are repeated continuously over the isle. For example, we can witness the hole at the bottom of a steep wooded hill that is the hidden entrance to Grain Fort or the tank traps that protrude from Cockleshell beach. Shallow graves of atmosphere exist all around this space.

It is not long before these shallow graves will be disturbed and the atmosphere comes into play. Although an atmosphere penetrates the human body through motorised vehicle and feasibly enables one to cruise around as an ambient tourist, it really is only through actual, bodily engagement with the landscape that one will begin to truly sense a site of intense atmosphere. This can be no more than opening the car door and standing in the Beach Road car park, looking out across the mudflats.

If one leaves the Beach car park and begins to walk around the limits and the edges, however, it allows the *punctum* to be 'sparked' where a shift from the *studium* of Barthes' "unmoved Spectator" to being pricked by the fragments engages the sensing process of atmosphere (Dant and Gilloch, 2002) (in this case the fragments can be anything from the particles of rust of a dead car, the collected organic matter in a pill box, estuarine birds or the ambient sound emitting from the cooling channel pump).

There are many limitations in The Isle of Grain that prohibit access for the walker and one is literally hemmed in at certain points. This can lead to repetitively walking the same routes whilst gazing across places that are always out of bounds. Arguably this can result in microscopically observing the same parts of the land and becoming highly sensitised to it, whilst also reinforcing the eerie nature of an out of reach place.

Sensing the atmosphere becomes a complex blend of acute knowledge and abstract, imaginary thoughts, where things are not systematic but more rhizomatic, triggered by these formatted routes. How to grapple with the ephemerality of these sensations of atmosphere are explored in the next section where I scrutinise in more detail the methodology of psycho-geography, its origins and how I have applied it to my research.

Fig. 13 *Looking through a Steel Gate, Towards the Extensive Site of Grain Power Station*. (Anna Falcini: 2016)

4.2 The Footprints of Psychogeography in the Hoo Peninsula

> "Psychogeography: The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals" (Coverley, 2006:90)

This definition of psychogeography appeared in the glossary of the *Situationiste Internationale* under the editorship of Guy Debord (Coverley, 2006:93). The Situationists were a group that developed from the streets of Paris in 1957 from a merging of two "political and artistic avant-garde movements" the Lettrist International and the Imaginist Bauhaus. Guy Debord was the key protagonist of the group and through a number of journals and publications the group advocated a series of radical ideas for experiencing urban spaces through "a variety of liberatory practices". Psycho-geography was an idea that

had been burning in the embers of these former groups with its roots being traced back to the flâneurs of the nineteenth century, the Dadists and the Surrealists (Bassett, 2004:400).

Paris became the hub where these ideas would converge and cross-fertilise, breeding new strains of investigation. Hannah Arendt suggests that Paris articulated a “trip in time”, from the twentieth century backwards to the nineteenth century. The period had given a certain freedom for those of moneyed means to wander without purpose amongst the architectural backdrop of Haussmann’s designs.

As Arendt notes, Paris was both contained within an old medieval outer wall, providing a protected interior, yet its streets were also generous and opened up to the sky “like a majestic ceiling above it” (Benjamin, 1999:24-26).

The Hoo Peninsula is far removed from the traditional psycho-geographic spaces of cities and urban spaces such as Paris. Within its original context, psycho-geography was a resistance against the compression and tight structures of the city; Debord wanting to “drift” “destinationless” through it (Smith, 2010:104). The peninsula, in contrast, has an open aspect with minimal areas of development or infrastructure. Where the methodology of psychogeography is useful to understanding and negotiating the rural, is in its potential to identify the non-material qualities of a place; the “sensing, feeling and experiencing…spaces differently” and relinquishing oneself to “the encounters [one] finds there” (Pinder, 2005:386; Bassett, 2004:401).

Psycho-geography is, according to Debord, a pure science and, like the skilled chemist, the psycho-geographer is able both to identify and to distil the varied ambiances of the urban environment. Coverley concludes that “Emotional zones” that cannot be determined by architectural or economic conditions

must be determined by following the aimless stroll (dérive) (Coverley, 2006:90).

Although Coverley does not fully explain what an “emotional zone” is, (other than what it is not, “architectural” or “economic”) he does refer to Debord’s quest to register the auras of the urban space (Coverley, 2006:90). The formalities of geography, however, are never far away. We must think of “zones”, “regions” or “physical contours” (Coverley, 2006:90-91). These ephemeral feelings and responses are caught up in the net of measuring and calculating, as one moves through a place and becomes what Ihde refers to as “Husserlian “essences”” (Ihde, 2009:12). Debord even insists on an alternative kind of map, not to orientate but to disorientate.

The form of psycho-geography that I use in this body of research picks from “the corpse” in the “Paris gutter” that Debord had declared dead by 1972 and borrows from the contemporary dérives and “anglo-psychogeographical literature” such as that of Iain Sinclair (Smith, 2010:103-6). The forms of contemporary activities of psycho-geography, as I’ve identified, tend to operate within urban locations, particularly cities, and the setting in which I am using it is a distinctly unfamiliar territory of psychogeography. The Hoo Peninsula, as I established in the abstract to this thesis, falls between a crack of being an urban and a rural site. Using psycho-geography is not, however, to the detriment of the effectiveness of this particular form of research or irrelevant in the study of this particular location, but is, in fact, a flexible and helpful methodology. It is an approach that enables the subject of an atmosphere to be examined and articulated in a number of ways that might otherwise be restricted using other methods. It is as though a mirror can be held up to see the back of a head reflected in another mirror, thus opening up previously hidden materials and concealed avenues of information.

Practically, I am on foot, drifting (but always with a map in my bag), sensing the sites of particular atmosphere through intuition, building an atlas of those locations which I can then return to. Thus, I am not always making fresh 'travelogues' but marking out places like a fox or dog, scenting the site, not with bodily fluids but notes, markers, photographs and memories of place in which to return to (Ho, 2006:109). I am often giving up to conscious control on a controlled mission (for example, I locate a site of museological interest but will allow for a mini-series of drifts and derives around that route). I enact Debord-like 'transgressions', most frequently entering buildings or land that are restricted and precarious but that present opportunities to experience the atmosphere, for example, Grain Fort, an abandoned military building which is not in the public domain and is only accessible by a causeway at low tide.

The picking over and sometimes salvaging of objects for the *Archive of Atmosphere* in these drifts and transgressions, has its origins in the early roots of Psycho-geography with Benjamin's *Arcades* project, where I become both the archaeologist and collector; the archaeologist "excavat(ing) the past, whilst the collector wrenched objects from their contexts, reconstituting them to reveal their hidden truth" (Bassett, 2004:399). In these roles I adopt the character of Louisa Cornford, an Edwardian amateur archaeologist, which activates and problematises the traditional gendered position of the male psycho-geographer. The characterisation of the researching role (as Louisa) becomes one stage removed from the study of the subject and I experience the atmosphere in this position through a fictitious character enabling me to destabilise but also open up the possibilities of experiencing the atmosphere.

I am drawing upon the strategies of artists like Cindy Sherman, who acted out and photographed herself in a series of female roles from films of the 1950s and 1960s in her work *Untitled Film Stills (1977-1980)* and Gillian Wearing who, in her 2003 work *Album*, "reconstructed old family snapshots" and used

silicone prosthetics to inhabit her younger self or her mother, father, brother and uncle (Liu, 2010:79-89; Guggenheim, s.d.). Both artists have embodied their characters, but also through their processes have become the spectators of their subjects. This further distinguishes my psycho-geographic methods to those of the existing branches of it. What I am doing is compiling a bricolage type of framework which is akin to a handy(wo)man resourcing things in a D.I.Y. manner, or re-purposing materials so that they have familiar tropes but are also at odds with the customary territory of psycho-geography.

4.3 Psycho-geographic Wanderings: 'Woman as Gatherer' (Part 1)

The late 1990s were the early days of my relationship with the peninsula and the unfamiliar landscape activated the psycho-geographic approach. The open, flat plains of the peninsula invited a drift and, significantly, its seawall and coastal edge was like a hidden decoy in the distance, luring Louisa as its victim who would get snagged on covert ditches and creeks. An OS map would initially orientate the journeys but would often be discarded when something piqued my/her interest and necessitated crossing private land to a strange fossilized tree or a lump of concrete imploding from the marsh. It was a fuzzy form of psycho-geography, rooted in a series of intuitive actions that became a methodology to study the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula, and to make it perceivable through various material investigations.

The principles of psycho-geography developed a broader set of secondary research methods including the study of old and contemporary maps, historic and county archival research and natural history. Primary investigations into the landscape, where something is noted as a particularly intense area of atmosphere, could then lead onto supplementary research around that subject. For example, in 2002 a walk at Cliffe Marshes across restricted land led to the ruins of a building and as I came towards it there was an expansive site of

concrete ruins that mystified me. Further research revealed the origins of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory from the early 1900s. Although these secondary, more factually based investigations clarify and calibrate the findings of the landscape, it doesn't explain the auras or "emotional zones" (Coverley, 2006:90).

Walking, as a fundamental human activity and way of interacting with the environment, has attracted the attentions of poets, essayists, artists, philosophers and social theorists (Bassett, 2004:398). Bassett asserts how the activity of walking has been a key mode of exploration in landscape. In his article *Walking as an Aesthetic Practice and a Critical Tool: Some Psychogeographic Experiments*, he reflects on how he takes a group of human geography students to Paris, investigating social theory and the practices of the Situationists through fieldwork. The students studied the methods of Debord's group, introduced their own experimental processes and were encouraged to experience "the hard and soft phenomena of the city" (Bassett, 2004:498). They were asked to consider "possible gender dimensions" and how this might affect their fieldwork (Bassett, 2004:405). Unfortunately, Bassett does not include any outcomes from this particular question, but it does raise the crucial point of the traditions of the flâneur and how this space has been occupied largely by the masculine figure.

The writer Rebecca Solnit is hard pressed to find a definition of a flâneur but eventually settles upon "a primeval slacker to a silent poet...an observant and solitary man strolling about Paris" (Solnit, 2002:198). She attributes the popularization of this figure to the German émigré Walter Benjamin in his unfinished work *The Arcades Project*. The Arcades were the covered passageways that connected the Parisian boulevards, emblematic of the city through their simultaneous internal and external positioning where Benjamin's flâneur would escape the flurry of vehicles on the confined streets. (Arendt,

1999:26; Solnit, 2002:199).

At the heart of flânerie was the physical motion of walking; not in the sense of an active walk but of a leisurely pace prescribed by the poet Baudelaire. It was noted that Benjamin had a peculiar gait, “at once advancing and tarrying, a strange mixture of both” (Benjamin, 1996:27). The city was predominantly a male privileged space, yet women were an important part of the city, as Elisabeth Wilson notes, visible on the streets and in cafés in the early 1900s (Tamboukou, 2010:116). Single women were, however, vulnerable to male attention as the Welsh artist Gwen John, living in Paris from 1904 till her death in1939, noted: “I am obliged to walk very quickly, so that men will not talk to me” (Tamboukou, 2010:116). Walking without regard for their safety was not an option for women at this time.

Psycho-geography as a predominantly male pursuit has been infiltrated by a growing presence of women involved in such activities. The East London based group walkwalkwalk, for example, are a collective of three female artists, Gail Burton, Clare Qualmann and Serena Korda, who developed walks around Bethnal Green and the surrounding area initially for their own excursions but later designed for collective walking activities (Burton *et al*., 2006). Janet Cardiff creates walks that are constructed psycho-geographies; routes that she maps out and provides an accompanying composed soundtrack and narration for. Producing work from a female perspective makes Cardiff a rare species in the field that is largely dominated by the male voice.

In the U.K. contemporary psycho-geography has been led by figures such as Will Self and Iain Sinclair, the latter is described by Scalaway as a “‘flâneur-construct’...characterized by its ‘invariable masculinity’” (Bassett, 2004:403). Sinclair himself, identifies “the stupidness of the male idea of plodding forever forwards, flat and grinding to the ground” as he alternates between a swan

peddaloe and walking. With the filmmaker Andrew Kötting in the film *Swandown* (Kötting, 2012), Sinclair does at least partially accede to his male position, but as Scalaway and others like Bridger identify, there is a wider problem in psycho-geography of "masculine and heterosexist assumptions" both in the collection of this material and its consumption (Bridger, 2013:289).

The tensions that arise for women to walk in a variety of spaces from urban to rural landscapes are abundant and have been contested, even in anthropological studies of the subject. In 1981, Owen Lovejoy's article *The Origin of Man* posited a number of theories for why the human body walks on two feet rather than the more stable position of moving on all fours as primates do. A specialist in studying human anatomy, Lovejoy's theory was that our male ancestors had taken on the role of provider, freeing the females to focus upon child rearing. He concluded that bipedalism thus freed the male to use his hands to carry more food back to his dependents and it created a reliance for females upon male partners as providers. Rebecca Solnit's conclusion of this theory is that it creates the roots for the "stay at home" hominoid Mum whose male counterparts are mobile and free ranging whilst the female equivalent is passive and boundaried by her role (Solnit, 2002:37).

These arguments of female dependency and the critical role of men as providers, had emerged from a long history of cultural bias. As the anthropologist Adrienne Zihlman noted in her chapter *Women As Shapers of the Human Adaptation* in the book *Woman the Gatherer*. Beginning with Darwin's discussion of human evolution, the theme of male dominance and female passivity and the use of tools as weapons has run through thinking about evolution (Zihlman, 1983:76). Zihlman is sceptical about theories that reinforce the gender divisions, i.e., that men hunted and protected whilst women gathered plants and reared children. She states that "we cannot assume a division of labour such as occurs in living peoples to apply

automatically to the ancient past" (Zihlman, 1981:105).

In the late 1990s, I drifted into the Hoo Peninsula and settled into a rhythm of wanderings that continued over a period of years. I was dragging with me an embodied female position that leant into the past of both female mobility and dependency, leaning towards one and then another in an irrational type of behaviour. To test and exercise these ancient muscles I walked alone, as I felt at times that walking with others was useful, but an unnecessary distraction to the activity.[13]

Walking as Louisa Cornford, I was getting my bearings in the landscape from a particularly obscure viewpoint; not only as a woman but one in character and of a different time period. This complicated the existing weight of emotions, feelings, beliefs and real threats that confront female figures walking in landscapes. The artist Elspeth Owen whose creative practice is embedded in long distance, durational walks, admits her "acute sense of fear when walking in unknown places – a fear that she acknowledges, confronts and overcomes with every walk completed" (Heddon and Turner, 2010:18-19).

In the early explorations of the Hoo Peninsula, I was fearful and unsure of walking alone in the landscape but, like Owen, I found strategies to limit those concerns. Walking in character as Cornford made me initially uncomfortable and self-conscious but it also gave me a physical distance from my own insecurities and an incentive to walk alone in a remote place. Essentially inhabiting the character of Louisa was like wearing protective clothing or

[13] From 1997-98 I began to visit the Hoo Peninsula and walk alone. I moved away, ceased the walks, but I returned in 2002 during my M.A. in Textiles at Goldsmiths College, London, walking alone as Louisa Cornford and creating *Marsh*. I walked infrequently from 2003 – 2010, making more regular visits after this period. At the start of this research in 2014, I made regular solo walking journeys 8-10 times annually.

armour. It had the unusual effect of simultaneously disarming people and empowering me to walk in this remote area.

Walking in character often led to some startled and confused fellow walkers. Drifting around the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory site with my camera equipment, however, meant I was off the hook in terms of gender and walking, as my artistic activity settled most questions of what exactly I was doing in costume in the middle of a marsh. I even managed to ward off the potentially angry farmer whose land I was trespassing on in my psycho-geographic dèrive of the factory's ruins who had surely not expected to encounter the Edwardian figure of Louisa Cornford whilst inspecting his sheep? Not only did these unpredictable incidents divert my attention from the fear of walking as a woman but they were productive methods in navigating the more complex metaphysical elements of the factory site that went beyond just the historical and archaeological.

"Have you ever had the urge to disappear, to escape from your own life for just a little while – like walking out of one room, then into a different one" (Cardiff, 2005:18)? The artist Janet Cardiff's voice falls into the listener's ear in her work *The Missing Voice, Case Study B* and contemplates the imaginary drift out of the deep grooves we may find ourselves in. I subconciously wanted to exit the place I was occupying (a daily routine, a primary position as a mother). Walking in this place was, initially, about disappearing momentarily from that situation. As Bridger notes in his work *Psychogeography and Feminist Methodology*, the practice of psychogeography "is a practice [where] the gendered body is therefore like a 'vehicle' through which the person experiences and makes sense of their relation both to others and to place" (Bridger, 2013:288).

When walking with the artist Polly Binns in 2016 in Blakeney, Norfolk, Binns

described how in this landscape where she has worked for years, she is able to shed the “self-aware femaleness [of] being in a city, being out and around at night, all those self-defences that you have absolutely imbued into you, I realise I lose that…[and that] through the rhythm of my walking…[I can] forget my body” (Binns, 2016). The subtext here is that Binns intuitively moves through many spaces as a woman and on the defence. She can only shake off that cloak of resistance in Blakeney, where her creative work becomes the focus of her movement. Walking, drawing and photographing Blakeney are a triumvirate that turn the volume down on her gender.

Fig.14 *Walking with Polly Binns at Blakeney, Norfolk* (Anna Falcini: 2016)

The Hoo Peninsula, at face value, was a place to immerse myself and get lost in, as Binns said, to shed skin in. Like her, I had also learned to move in streets and landscape in a way that was discreet and self-protective. I am not

suggesting that women are unique in the way they walk in spaces and that issues of varying kinds will and do affect any number of individuals or groups in society, but that in a particular way in the beginning of this research, a female position was at the very heart of it and was the trigger that fired the arrow from the gut of the domestic toward the unfurling marsh.

Once that arrow was released, however, it articulated a zone (Figure C) that was unexpected; a unique intersection between Figure A (Falcini) and Figure B (The Hoo Peninsula). The zone I refer to here, is the confluence between me and it; of my stepping onto/into the peninsula and its very unique geography. Few other places have elicited the same reaction for me. Outside of this physical interaction the experience of the peninsula is essentially dormant; something I look at on the map, view in a photograph or read about in literature. The moment I physically enter the peninsula it activates the zone.

In this landscape there is no one to care about my identity, my anxieties or any of the late 20th century battles of feminism. Predominantly what is there are acres of arable, scrubbier marshland and numerous sandbars below the estuary waters. Unexpectedly, what emerges from this point between A & B, ‘the zone’, is a seam where I begin to experience the unique atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula.

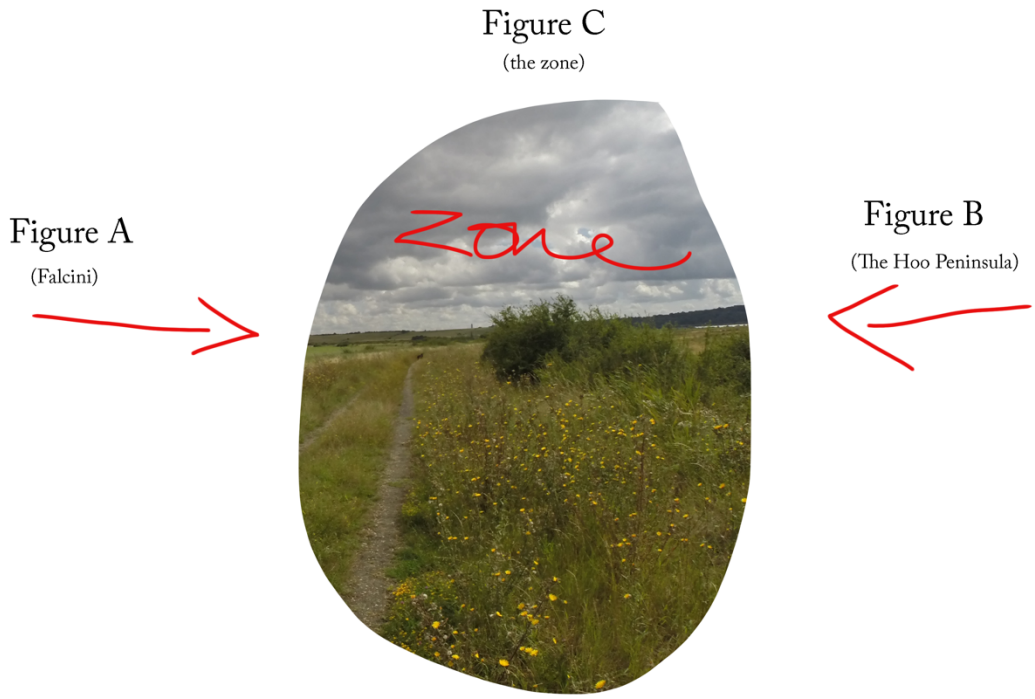

Fig. 15 *Illustration of the 'Zone' of research* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Although the issue of gender sparked the initial connection to the Hoo Peninsula, it reveals a more pressing interest that superseded it; the investigation of an atmosphere. The consciousness of the research is pricked by specific concerns of the feminine (the out of place, perceptions of vulnerability, consciousness of heightened danger etc.) and I readily experience these perceptions in the Hoo Peninsula.

These things present themselves in varying degrees in the landscape and have been well documented historically by numerous individuals, perhaps most notably by Charles Dickens in his novel *Great Expectations* (1868): "in the bitter cold of winter, he thinks what it might be like to die on the marsh" (Tomalin, 2011:314).

Whether male, female or gender neutral, one can feel vulnerable there. As Dickens' pen so eloquently expresses, simply through walking across a marsh on a winter's day the relative remoteness and exposed, open terrain, provides the conditions for vulnerability. The peninsula is experienced at a more visceral level and this begins to reveal the atmosphere.

Böhme cautions that to be open to atmospheres "we must abandon the idea of the soul in order to undo the 'introjection of feelings'". He encourages a focus upon the body, of being "bodily aware" whilst also being conscious of "the awareness of my state of being in an environment, how I feel here" (Böhme, 1993:120). Although I enter the peninsula as a woman who has emotions, thoughts and knowledge, I have to negotiate the ontological in order to be receptive to the atmosphere.

4.4 Psycho-geographic Wanderings: 'Woman as Gatherer' (Part 2)

As a modern-day female gatherer in the Hoo Peninsula, I have fallen far from the tree and if there were any useful trees on the peninsula my lack of primate climbing skills would keep me firmly at ground level. Dimmed by technology, my bodily instincts are less attuned with the environment for survival and instead I am occupied by collecting an array of found objects that I then drag back to my Welsh studio. There they create a fug of 'eau de marsh' as they emit their atmospheres into the crisp Black Mountain air where I live. A telepathic scenting and marking of territory.

Despite this evolution of human deficiency, and in order to understand the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula, it is necessary to begin by being present in the landscape and to adopt a series of investigations on foot. Beyond the main arteries of roads, lies large sections of land that can only be accessed through

walking, on a bicycle or on horseback. Walking is advantageous for a number of reasons. Firstly it is unencumbered by anything which enables the individual to drift away from set pathways or to navigate obstacles such as gates. Secondly, the pace of walking is steady and the body is able to sense subtle shifts and changes in the atmosphere or connect directly to the ground. Thirdly, the walker is arguably more vulnerable and this confronts them "allowing something 'other' to emerge" (Pinder, 2005:387). The Dadaist André Breton suggests that the figure adopts an "'ultrareceptive posture'...so that something will happen" (Bassett, 2004:399).

Walking entails staying at ground level and because of the flatness of the land this results in a constant perspective with few degrees of variants. In one sense this encumbers the walker and the flatness literally flattens the experience. This is not to imply that the experience is unrewarding, but that the figure is perpendicular to the ground and in being so she feels the atmosphere at this axis. Feet rooted on the ground is a common principle in the mountain pose, a standing position that is found in spiritually based exercises such as yoga. A spiritual counsellor, Sharon Elliot, implored me to put my bare feet on the soil of the peninsula, in order to "connect with the land, with the spirits and ancestors" (Elliot, 2018).

At this level, I am in close contact with elements that might trigger any of my receptors; smell, hearing, taste, sight and touch. Smell, for example, records a unique range of scents including salt, seaweed on the shoreline, marsh grass, plants, mud, apple blossom, stagnant water and marine diesel. Smell is invisible yet is present through the elements, plant-based or man-made materials, so it is grounded but elusive. As Böhme notes, atmospheres are "tinctured through the presence of things" (Böhme, 1993:121). He argues that "the form, the colour, even the smell of a thing is thought of as that which distinguishes it, separates it off from outside and gives it its internal unity" (ibid.,

120).

These smells in the Hoo Peninsula are distinctive, unique to the place and important factors of its atmosphere. Böhme describes these as “determinations” of a thing (ibid.). A smell is one of the elements of a thing which is attributed to it, which makes it specifically something (an apple tree, for example) and is a determinant of it. Böhme suggests that atmospheres are spaces “tinctured” by these elements such as smell that are “ecstasies of the thing”. In other words, they are not the form or volume of an object itself but a “quality of a thing” and “something that proceeds from and is created by things, persons or their constellations.” He concludes that “things articulate their presence through qualities - conceived as ecstasies” (ibid., 122).

What he means by “ecstasies” are how a thing “goes forth from itself”, how it is extended beyond its immediate position through “secondary qualities”. He also encourages us to think about how the “primary qualities” may in themselves be “ecstasies” and how they may “exert an external effect” and [radiate] as it were into the environment” (ibid., 121).

Böhme notes that

> “Atmosphere is the common reality of the perceiver and the perceived. It is the reality of the perceived as the sphere of its presence and the reality of the perceiver, insofar as in sensing the atmosphere s/he is bodily present in a certain way” (ibid., 122)

There are examples where the sphere of the atmosphere's presence is particularly strong in the Hoo Peninsula. For example, making the series *Night Drawings* in the area brings me into contact with the marsh at night. Making drawings on the shoreline onto paper with pencil, impaired by the pitch black of the night, plotting the view across the estuary towards Southend and Canvey Island in Essex onto the paper's surface. Placing the body into this disoriented position, where the familiarity of the daytime landscape has significantly altered, heightens the qualities of things which give rise to the distinct atmosphere. For example, the loss of visual motifs brings the sounds of the peninsula into sharp focus; the estuary water's encroaching tide, lapping near my feet or the gulls and wading birds calls echo more sharply in the darkness. These auditory phenomena build up pockets of atmosphere that are specific to the peninsula.

Fig. 16 *Coastline at Allhallows looking towards Essex with the tide out*. (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Night Drawings were predominantly made on the shorelines of Allhallows and The Isle of Grain, as a method of investigating atmosphere from an alternative perspective than the familiar one of daytime. In daylight there were a number of visual qualities that were more influential in how I studied the atmosphere; the flat, exposed perspectives, for example. Walking at night would provide information about atmosphere that so far, I hadn't experienced. This instinct proved right and led to an expanded reading of atmosphere that I discuss later in this section. To complement the night walks, I elected to apply the technique of drawing as a methodology to record the outcomes of an atmosphere.

I focused to walk along the shoreline of The Isle of Grain and subsequently Allhallows. In the daylight I had an inclination to walk there, drawn by the "extremity" of the landscape (Banks, 1955:75). As I explain in detail in *Sheets 4,*

6 & 7, these locations have distinct components of atmosphere that I experienced in the daylight. In brief, they are located towards the easterly point of the peninsula where the landscape is exposed, the estuary widens out towards the sea and whose views across to Essex are illuminated at night by the denser infrastructure of the peninsula's near neighbour, invisible in the daytime. Understanding their particular atmospheric qualities in a daylight situation had established a reference point that would be a framework for looking at the subject through the lens of the night. In essence, I was testing how this area of the peninsula differed or remained the same in the periods of daytime and nighttime.

Fig. 17 *Nightwalk, Cockleshell Beach, Grain* (Anna Falcini: 2017)

Initially I took paper and drawing tools with me on a night walk along the beach at The Isle of Grain with the purpose of making instinctive drawings based upon emotional, phenomenological responses rather than observational work. I walked west from the more pedestrian visitor beaches in the direction of Cockleshell Beach and Lee Marshes where the coast had the remnants of Second World War defences. These included a series of steel rebar that protruded out of the shingle and were deadly traps in the pitch black. Walking on the beach was significantly different in the dark and the atmosphere began to reveal itself through both aural and olfactory senses.

Getting caught a few times on the steel rebar and cautious of serious injury, I decided to remain static and produce drawings in situ, rather than as I walked. The initial drawings navigated what I already knew visually of the beach; the architectural concrete defences, the steel rebar, the shells and stones. The results were predictable and disappointing, however as soon as I realised how my previous visual knowledge was clouding my ambition for this research task, I persevered with the more intuitive response. Turning my gaze out towards the distant lights on the Essex shoreline, I began plotting a series of dots and marks onto the paper with a pencil or fine black pen, looking only at the pattern of lights that glimmered from Southend on Sea. As I focused on the shapes, position and intensity of the lights, I became more attuned to the sounds and smells; the subtle particles that were informing the atmosphere. Working in complete darkness I had no idea what the drawing looked like and only when completing the drawing would I then use a torch to illuminate the paper and see the results.

This methodology of this research led to a number of interesting outcomes. Visually, the drawings were composed of sequentially arranged dots, reminiscent of routes and pathways on the maps that I had been studying. I concluded that these were instinctive maps of the atmosphere developing on

from the rhizomatic drawings of the boat fragment. The experience of atmosphere as a phenomenon was significant in its heightened attention to the sounds and smells of the landscape. Making the drawings meant being static in one position for a period of time and this allowed for a more immersive experience to happen. The longer I sat, the more I heard a subtler range of sounds and I became more attentive. Similarly, with the olfactory; the lengthier period of time allowed for an awareness of scents unfolding and for their complexities to be revealed. As I suggest in *Sheet 4* (p.89), being in direct contact with the landscape at ground level is a space where a comprehensive range of smells are experienced in the peninsula and this element is a critical yet subtle aspect of atmosphere, as Böhme has identified (1993:121).

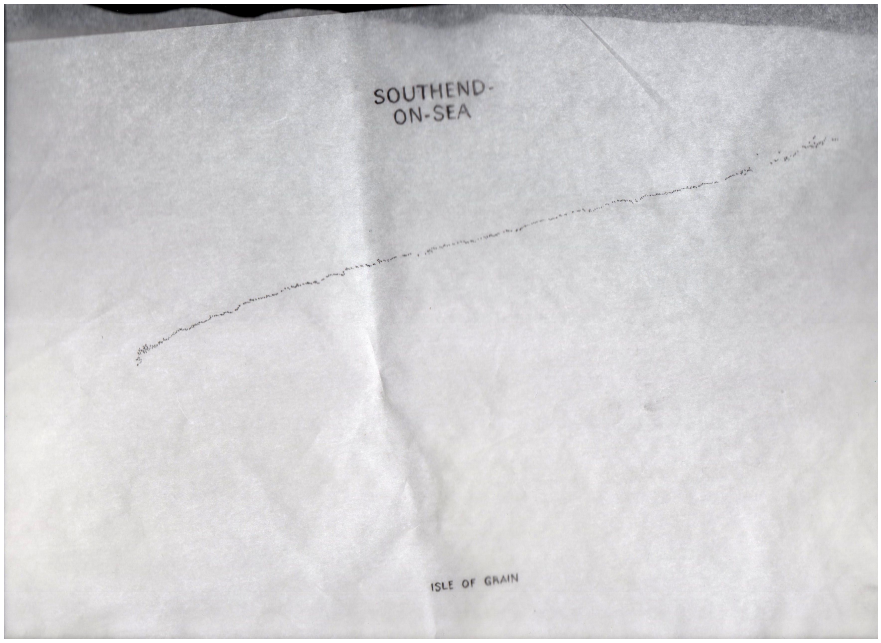

Fig.18 *Night Drawing* (Anna Falcini: 2017)

In addition to these senses, other things that were invisible in the daylight came into play at night, such as the movement of the estuary waters in the dramatic darkness, the ghostly figures of ships moving mysteriously on the horizon, the illumination by the moon of the cockleshells on the beach, the sounds of wading birds feeding on the shore as light fades to dark and the vivid

sensations underfoot of walking over cockleshells and shingle (the shattering of shells and soft impressions of feet as they sink into the shingle at each footstep).

The outcomes of the drawings were surprising and varied. The more spontaneous drawings were usually the more successful and subtle, particularly those made on the first evening of the night walk when I had recognised the laboured efforts of capturing the material surroundings of the beach to the more intuitive ones. Later night walks that were planned in advance, disappointingly could result in more laboured outcomes. For example, a night walk at Northward Hill, Cooling in 2018 was less successful. The route was some distance from the shoreline and offered a higher viewpoint with a more panoramic perspective, but it lacked the visceral qualities of sound and smell of the coastal areas closer up. I also used larger sheets of paper to make drawings, incorporating more visual information and working for a longer time frame. The outcomes became more contrived and lacked a feeling for the atmosphere.

I returned to the more successful smaller scale and coastal pathways when I visited a site at Allhallows, walking from the edge of the Allhallows Leisure Holiday Park toward Yantlett Creek, on the periphery of The Isle of Grain. On this particular excursion I produced a number of drawings, some made sequentially in the same spot and others at different sections of the coastal walk. The drawings were created in parallel to the extraordinary sense of atmosphere along this particular section of the peninsula at nighttime (these drawings later became an edition of drypoint prints).

In the daytime, the pathway overlooks a dramatic sweep of shore with the route to Yantlett Creek and the marker of the London Stone, the official jurisdiction of the Port of London. At low tide, the retreating water evaporates

to reveal an expanse of mud flats pitted with the physical memories of the water on its undulating surface. Some of these qualities melted away as the light faded whilst others rose up. As before, the sound of wading birds was a distinct chorus of calls, piercing through the palette of inky blues. Unfamiliar broken pathways of post war concrete erupted and then disappeared underfoot. The seawall had been overtaken with wild plants whose smells leaked into the night. The water lapped rhythmically on the edge of the shore, gently tapping the reinforced concrete tiles. Rounding a bend, I came across the small inlet of a protected beach of intimate proportions full of cockleshells that glimmered in the moonlight and whose golden sand was soft and fine. First of all, I sat on a lump of concrete left on the beach, then lay down in the sand and shells, looking up at the sky. Clouds were racing past, cyan tinted white against the black blue ground. Stars shimmered or sparkled. I felt as though the sky was falling down on me.

These sensations of touch, texture, scent and sound, perhaps unremarkable at first impression, were all important components of atmosphere that collectively and circumstantially, contributed to another narrative about the subject of the research. Things that had been walked in, on or over in daylight without note became important in the dark. As the senses of the body were on heightened alert with the night closing in, things that had sunk without trace in the light, rose to confront me in the dark, the eerie becoming more eerie.

The writer Henry David Thoreau responded to the spheres of atmosphere at Walden Pond in Massachusetts in the USA between 1845 - 47. Living in relative obscurity, he became increasingly fascinated with the qualities of the pond, “its depth and purity” (Smith, 1995:114). Surveying the pond, he found “its deepest point was 102 feet” (Cross, 2016:164). He studied the qualities of light and colour in the pond’s waters, discovering inexplicable colours, declaring how he had “discerned a matchless and indescribably light blue such

as watered or changed silks…more cerulean than the sky itself" (Smith, 1995:115).

In 2013, the artist, Spencer Finch re-imagined these phenomena of colour and volume in his work *Walden Pond (Surface/Depth)*. On a rope that Finch had measured the pond with, he attached at intervals, paper tags each with a GPS measurement of the lake and "a dab of paint that matched his observations of the water's color [sic] at each position" (Cross, 2016:164).

The "mysteries of color" is a subject matter that the artist frequently returns to in his work, attempting to recreate incidences of "sensory experience" that often refer back to "a romantic impulse to see what others have seen" (Cross, 2016:7-13). In doing so, he presents an interpretation of those past incidents but, as Cross notes, it acknowledges "what we can share and what we know we see" but he suggests that "at the same time, it strangely suggests the possibilities" (Cross, 2016:13).

Fig.19. *Walden Pond (Surface/Depth)* (Spencer Finch: 2013)

Fig. 20. *Walden Pond (Surface/Depth)* (Spencer Finch: 2013)

Conclusion

As we can see from the examples of Thoreau and the work of contemporary artists such as Spencer Finch, there continues to be an innate fascination with ephemeral phenomena. In the case of Thoreau and Finch, the phenomena of colour have remained enigmatic, despite scientific explanations and knowledge of colour theory (St Clair, 2016). The writer Maggie Nelson acknowledges the miracle of metaphysics from "the confusion about what colour is, where it is, or whether it is persists despite thousands of years of prodding at the phenomenon" (Nelson, 2009:19).

Whereas colour is visual phenomena that is evidently seen with the eye despite its metaphysicality, atmosphere on the other hand, is invisibly present. It is often felt and largely intuited by the individual to a space/place but unlike colour, is without clear explanations. It is felt through predominantly emotional responses and therefore is more problematic. There is little in the way of scientific evidence to articulate it and so other kinds of methods are required. For many years, I have visited the peninsula and experienced an atmosphere but had not found a suitable method to identify it until I had applied a psycho-geographic methodology that has drawn upon traditional disciplines of cartography, history etc. At the core of this has been the mode of walking which I have discussed in this sheet.

As I commented at the beginning of this sheet, immersion in the landscape was critical in experiencing an atmosphere and walking was a crucial method for attuning my body to it. Through walking, I have discovered what I determine as certain signifiers of the atmosphere; odd buildings, sites of activity, plants, smells. This mixture of objects/things and phenomena, material and immaterial, are triggers for experiencing the atmosphere, rather like the wavelengths that hit the retina of the eye in the visible light spectrum (St Clair, 2016). The

interrelationship of the material and immaterial in this research are like tramlines that run in parallel. One relies upon the other and they are inseparable.

I have argued in this sheet for a re-evaluation of a female figure in the landscape and, in my own specific case, I have noted how my experience of atmosphere was influenced by my gender. Traditionally, psycho-geography has been practised and identified as a largely male dominated field which has led to a biased reading of the subject, yet there are a numerous contemporary examples of women (Rebecca Solnit and Janet Cardiff, for example) who are exploring landscape in innovative ways and adding to the outcomes of knowledge in this area.

I have focused upon how my female identity in the Hoo Peninsula had initially sparked the awareness of an atmosphere and how it had connected to the landscape. It brought into play a number of feelings including vulnerability, a consciousness of danger and a feeling of being 'out of place'. The psycho-geographic methodology that I created was a means to articulate the complexities of atmosphere in the peninsula, and in *Sheet 5* we will see the results of this, through the creation of the character Louisa Cornford and *Archive of Atmosphere*.

Sheet 5 QT 7778 Old Sea Wall: *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere*

Overview

As I have demonstrated in *Sheets 3 and 4*, cartographic and psycho-geographic methodologies have been imperative in researching the ephemeral nature of atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. These methodologies have their roots in the disciplines of archaeology and geography and I have unearthed the atmosphere through adapted archaeological processes, a "longitudinal acquisition" [1]of objects, oral histories, perambulations in the landscape and observations (Pearce, 2005:158). The culmination of these activities has been a collection of found objects from the Hoo Peninsula that I identify as the *Archive of Atmosphere*.

In *Sheet 5* I will unfold the *Archive of Atmosphere* through the formal and informal framework of museum practice in section 5.2 *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere*. The section considers the origins of the museum collection and its systematic formalization through the work of Susan M. Pearce. Caitlin DeSilvey's essay, *Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things* is a counterpoint to that formal taxonomy and investigates the wholesale archaeology of a derelict homestead in Montana with unstable artefacts.

Whilst the archive of material from the Hoo Peninsula is arranged using some of the principles of museum practice, ultimately it must break rank from these conventions and work within its own thresholds. As we will come to understand in this chapter, archiving atmosphere is extremely problematic and requires a distinctively unconventional approach, to which DeSilvey's work shines a light in the darkness of intangibility and disintegrating materials.

At the forefront of this alternative museological syntax is its curator, Louisa Cornford. As I briefly mentioned in the Preface and *Sheet 2* (Methodology) of this thesis, Cornford is a fictitious character whom I created in 2002 in an attempt to make sense of the conflicting evidence of materials that I found at Cliffe Marshes on the peninsula during my early work there. I will discuss in more detail the origins of Louisa Cornford and how she has subsequently re-emerged in this research in section 5.1 *The Birth of Louisa*.

Cornford's methods and processes are then examined through a detailed analysis of a number of artefacts she has collected and stored in the *Archive of Atmosphere*. In section 5.4 *Operational Procedures of the Archive of Atmosphere,* the way in which archive is presented and experienced is explained through two case studies; *Measuring the Atmosphere* and *Performing the Archive*.

The chapter is concluded through the investigation of pre-existing archives that I have found in the peninsula at Cliffe and High Halstow; a shed and concrete barn situated on the peripheries of farmland and marsh, and a shipping container at Cliffe Pools which has mysteriously disappeared. These archives of materials, objects, used and abandoned machinery are counterpoints to the Cornford archive, where Louisa steps into ready-made collections, housed in museums of concrete, steel and corrugated iron and experiences atmosphere in a multi-dimensional way.

5.1 The Birth of Louisa

In a forerunner to this project, in 2001-2, I created the character of an amateur Edwardian female archaeologist Louisa Cornford. Her role was to investigate the site of Cliffe Marshes armed only with the rudimentary tools of an SLR camera, tripod, old leather case and plastic bags for collecting objects.

Dressed in costume of the period, I enacted Louisa, “her name concocted from gravestones at St. Helen’s Church in Cliffe Village” and headed out “towards the inhospitable marshes to seek out answers to the written past” (Falcini, 2002).

I have lost the original thread of why I decided to become Louisa (other than to make sense of the remains of the buildings at Cliffe Marshes) but in a box file of notes from 2002 I unearthed an in-depth biography of Louisa that I had carefully constructed, her back story underpinned by a mother and siblings who had died from marsh fever, leaving her and her father. Louisa, I had noted, was taken over by unidentified forces on the marshes propelling her towards a series of strange buildings and ruins in Cliffe Marshes. The biography is partly autobiographical; my own story of tumbling back into this landscape into its depths, captivated by its intense aura that contrasted with the sedentary Herefordshire market town I had moved to, leaving me with a longing to return to the estuary landscape.

The body of work I made, titled *Marsh* was compiled of a film that stylistically referenced Chris Marker’s film *La Jettee* (1962) through a composition of still shots and a number of black and white photographs. These photographs were compositions of Louisa’s archaeological activities, set within the buildings and ruins around Cliffe Marshes. In a section of my handwritten notes I describe this as a “Post-mortem - an archaeological survey by Louisa Cornford” (Falcini, 2002). It further emerges from my notes that Louisa was to be a kind of divining rod.

Acting within a reduced code of knowledge enabled her to work at the boundaries of existing archaeological techniques and knowledge; a process that attempted to unearth overlooked or new knowledge. Cornford’s methodology was to experience the site through the act of her own

archaeology of the place whose focus was not to apply the conventions of museum practice in identifying and cataloguing specific objects, but rather to construct an alternative reading of the site. There would be no systematic surveying of the site or working at the boundaries and into the site. Instead, Cornford would drift around the area and allow herself to be drawn to spaces that had intense atmospheres and which then further revealed themselves through their architecture and objects.

In close proximity to these spaces, the discarded objects and the earth and vegetation around the buildings, Louisa became entangled in the atmosphere that existed there. It is hard to reiterate how affected by atmosphere the landscape was here. Perhaps I have never experienced in quite such an intense manner this original sensation, since being in character as Louisa Cornford at Cliffe marshes in 2002. There may be a number of reasons for that but upper most in my mind is the thought that it was my primary experience of becoming Louisa Cornford; of a transformational experience into an altered state that somehow gave access through a secret passage into unconscious experiences. By moving into that psychological space, I became more disposed to the atmospheric powers. In becoming Louisa I was floating in a suspended state.

The ability to succumb to more unconscious principles and to have a heightened experience of the atmosphere at Cliffe marshes was also to do with resisting formal knowledge of the place such as reading local history books or studying maps of the area. This suspended knowledge was critical in the precise formula for a) experiencing the atmosphere and b) in Cornford's methodology of collecting objects and observing curious spaces. It was a bypass of the formalization of knowledge of and about the place which would only be explored after those primary investigations.

Soon after this initial series of works were being developed, I did begin to dig into the local archive held by Strood Council, principally to study Victorian and later maps of the site. I then found information in the local history section of the library detailing the industries that had taken place there, including the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory.

The information enabled me to structure a chronological history of the Victorian period of the site onwards but did it also hinder and stall the work around Cornford's archive? Once those black and white historical photographs from the local history books are embedded in the mind, for example, it is hard to reverse back into a more suspended state where atmospheres are not drowned out by more conventional information. As Susan Sontag notes "photographs furnish evidence" yet they are notoriously fickle and early photography, scientifically in its infancy, was highly sensitive to movement and light (Sontag,1979: 5). Moving figures would become distorted into blurs and shadows, rendering them into ghost like presences in photographs of this period which is when the Curtis's and Harvey site became established and documented photographically (Parry Janis, 1989:8-29).

The series of black and white photographic images that I produced in 2002 were reminiscent of this period of photography but disrupted any assumptions of their authenticity through contemporary objects caught in the frame. In one image Louisa was photographed standing on an orange milk crate. In another she was tenderly touching old iron and concrete bars with her gloved hands as though it were a priceless antique. In these early photographs we are introduced to Louisa's work at Cliffe marshes and to the beginnings of her unconventional archive that would eventually evolve into the *Archive of Atmosphere* and become a key work of this thesis.

5.2 Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere

The creation of Louisa Cornford as an Edwardian figure developed as a result of the work *Marsh* (2002), set against the backdrop of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory on Cliffe Marshes that originated in 1892 and ceased production in 1921. The work explored the site through Louisa's character, within the historical Edwardian period of 1901-10 (McDougall, 2021). *Marsh* was created in response to the extraordinary ruins of the factory, many of which were still intact and dotted over a large area of the marsh, that I had discovered when I re-visited the area during 2002.

When I first encountered the ruined site of the factory I had no knowledge of its history and I found what appeared to be Victorian buildings of an earlier period, with a cluster of buildings that, due to their more modern concrete construction, I assumed were constructed at a later period, possibly the 1950s. The Victorian buildings were made from a clay brick construction, some of which later research revealed were offices for administrative and domestic use, whilst a series of hexagonal and round structures with "domed earthwork mound(s)" were part of a "nitroglycerine group" constructed between the early 1900s and the start of the First World War (Pullen *et al.*, 2011, vol. 1:118-123; 195-200).

There were different phases of the factory's development with the concrete buildings I had seen, established as "HM Cordite Factory development" around 1916 at the peak of its output. The buildings, used for "Cordite Blending, Drying and Storing" were constructed from a new material of the period called "ferro-concrete", an early example of reinforced concrete (ibid., 2-4; 227-233). The material "had a very limited uptake" and consequently these cordite buildings were a rare example of its use. The assumptions I had made about the dates of construction in both examples of brick and concrete buildings surprised me and triggered my exploration, not only into the presentation of

misunderstood information but also the gap of knowledge that allowed for more mythical stories to unfold. It was this “sense of order” that was subsequently turned upside down and “thrown into doubt” that had led to the creation of Louisa Cornford and her profile as an amateur female archaeologist who could explore the site, expand the potential of conflicting information and explore more “liminal” subject matter (Morgan, 1996:82).

The word liminal is pertinent in describing the initial realisation of something unique and uncanny about the landscape that warranted further investigation. The roots of the word liminal are often associated with religious ideas of transcendent states, of passing into a metaphysical space “beyond or hidden within the ordinary, sensuous world” (ibid.). There appeared to be an in-between space within the buildings and the landscape of shadows, whispers and unidentified feelings that necessitated an alternative method of research. This was the beginning of how I created and applied the character of Louisa Cornford as methodology to explore this strange liminal state.

At the very beginning I had decided to situate Louisa Cornford in the Edwardian period, to coincide with the emergence and rise of the Curtis’s and Harvey Ltd Explosive Factory’s production. Inspired by the miscalculation of time I had originally attributed to the materials of the factory ruins, this led me to the concept of presenting information gathered by a woman who had emerged from the time of the factory’s existence yet was operating within a twenty first century period; a woman caught in the transcendent spaces who would be perfectly at ease moving between past and present. Through the use of black and white photography, images of Louisa emerged investigating the ruins of the factory and throwing into doubt whether these were period images or contemporary ones.

Louisa was tasked with investigating the factory site as a ruin and although she

was inspecting the remains of buildings, studying materials and debris, she was immersing herself in the spiritual, transcendental and atmospheric encounters. I had sensed the landscape was eerie and melancholic in the early walks of the 1990s that I had made in the peninsula but it was inhabiting the character of Louisa and becoming the amateur archaeologist that I began to tune in more sensitively, to the atmosphere.

Unlike professional archaeologists, who might have sought out “moveable piece(s)” of Neolithic, Roman, Saxon and Medieval origin that could be placed into a museum, Louisa would delight in finding curious objects and common marsh plants that lay both around the exteriors and interiors of the buildings and that would be unlikely to grace the precious back rooms of museums or even their exclusive front of house displays (Pearce, 1993:10).

Being in character, in costume, was like wearing protective clothing or an armour, not only against my own fears and insecurities of working in a lonely place but also as a way of navigating the more complex elements of the factory site that went beyond just the historical and archaeological. I understood that this place was extraordinary but I didn’t know how to respond to that, or to formulate a creative response that would move away from the more obvious things such as the physical ruins and the social history of the factory. The site “crackled” and fizzed with an intangible feeling, influenced by the remains of the site but also of something that was present but invisible (Warner, 2000:217).

There was also a sense that Louisa Cornford presented an ambiguity and absurdity that aligned itself with the liminal states of the factory site. As an Edwardian woman she evoked a past where women were often placed into passive roles and I incorporated this enforced passivity into her biographical details. Her education and opportunities were limited by her circumstances, she was overlooked and therefore given little credit for any work of value. By

existing in the margins that the period had largely reduced women to, and in the spirit of the uprising of women of the period such as the Suffragettes, I was keen for Louisa to subvert and bypass forms of knowledge that were valued for their factual and proven outcomes. Instead, she was able to encounter more metaphysical phenomena that emerged from the site, digressing into more interesting methods and enquiries of the Hoo Peninsula. In effect, she could disrupt existing lines of enquiry by creating her own methodology and archive of materials, objects, writing and sounds.

In order to look more closely at the work of Louisa Cornford and to establish how she has constructed an *Archive of Atmosphere*, I will first expand upon her unique methodology, *The Cornford Analytics*, and identify four artefacts from the archive that are primary examples of atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. I will then develop the more general functions of the archive and how it operates in contrast to traditional archives.

Methodology

The Cornford Analytics is a system devised by Cornford that measures objects and other materials (plant specimens, liquids, powders etc.) through a process of labelling and documenting using data attributes such as the scene of a found object, sensory conditions (sound and scent of object/location), the atmospherics of the location (weather, type of place, textures & surfaces etc.) and the situation of Cornford at the time of discovery (clothing worn, food consumed). Most of the material was recovered through 'Surfacing' where the majority of objects were retrieved from the surfaces of the landscape, akin to open cast mining, rather than a physical digging down. Deeper knowledge was gained through other (immaterial) methods; historical, imaginary and personal accounts, for example.

The artefacts that Cornford gathered are described as 'Curiosities' and derived from manufactured and re-processed sources. For example, post-industrial functional objects produced in factories, objects that have often fallen out of use and have either been cast out or may briefly have been given a second/third life and subsequently thrown away. There are also the hand-crafted objects, re-purposed for specific work (maritime activities, for example) from existing materials/objects; actions of resourcefulness and economic necessity on the peninsula.

These objects have come to rest on the peninsula through a number of possibilities; they have been discarded, washed up, abandoned, lost, forgotten, become function-less and useless. Largely they have no economic value and as Tim Edensor states, have been replaced with up-to-date models or more fashionable items (Edensor, 2005). These curiosities are unpredictable and are adrift from their "ordered settings" and in a limbiotic state, "a threat to good order" and "objectionable" in their original setting/s. As they come to rest in the peninsula, they are impure things that have lost their danger and cease to threaten the "intensively policed" material worlds of home and work (Edensor, 2005; Douglas, 1966).

The peninsula's schistic[14] temperament provides a situation where these objects come to rest indefinitely and where they are likely to remain for sustained periods of time. As they do so, they become "mutable" (DeSilvey, 2012: 261). Through their materiality they are vulnerable to "decay and revitalization" and in this state they are perceptive to the atmosphere of the peninsula, absorbing it through their fragmentation and desiccated surfaces, becoming patinated and worn by the elements and gradually ingesting these and the surfaces they rest upon (Ibid., 261) Not only are they an ingresses for

[14] This relates to the word 'schist', a layered rock of different minerals (Soanes, 2001)

the atmosphere but they also bring their existing matrices of experience to the peninsula, thus I am arguing that a symbiotic cross contamination can take place. As the materiality of physical objects/curiosities breaks down, I propose that it begins to both emit and absorb the phenomenological states of atmosphere and it is this which Louisa has collected and harboured in the *Archive of Atmosphere*. [15]

In *The Cornford Analytics*, the term 'Clustering' identifies locations for gathering materials such as the banks of drainage creeks, defensive buildings in the peninsula, places of ghostly spectres such as anchor points for prison hulks and other repugnant histories of disease and oil, for example.

Investigations for this clustering have increased from the original site of Cliffe in 2001/2002 to three other sites: Halstow Marshes, Allhallows and The Isle of Grain. The initial examination of Cliffe revealed the area to be rich and complex, leading to a genealogical approach of reaching back into the historical archive to unearth maps that plotted the landscape's development from marsh to a fully functioning site of explosive production in the early Edwardian period. Maps unveiled an expanded view beyond the immediate area of Cliffe. At ground level Louisa's vision was limited but maps suggested further exploration of the peninsula, stretching eastwards, towards the mouth of the estuary. In this direction the landscape became more remote, with few inhabitants and an increasingly inhospitable terrain of creeks, "danger areas" and old cement workings (Gravesend and Rochester, 2015).

At the furthest extreme of this easterly section was The Isle of Grain and this became the next area to explore. Due to the geographical setting of Grain, on the cusp of the mouth of the Thames and Medway estuaries, it had a deep

[15] Whilst the atmosphere exists before the objects have come to rest in the peninsula, they contribute to and potentially absorb it.

seam of potential for the *Archive of Atmosphere* through its histories of military defences, deep channels for shipping, treacherous waters and ready use for the energy industries (oil and gas).

Early on in this research I classified it as a 'black spot', referencing the historical term used for marsh parishes and the B.P. oil refinery sited there in the 1950s and whose portals of oil storage were seen from aerial photographs as black spots on the landscape (Carpenter, 2013). The Isle of Grain proved to be a rich site for examples of atmosphere on the peninsula and its materials contributed significantly to the *Archive of Atmosphere*.

Between Cliffe and the Isle of Grain, lay the remaining two locations of Allhallows and Halstow Marshes. Although the former locations perhaps are the lynch pins of the research, with sites that concentrate zones of atmosphere, the latter also drew the attention of Louisa; Halstow Marshes for its remoteness, wild plants and two large bays (St Mary's and Egypt Bay) and Allhallows for its faded collapse of post war promise and a golden, sandy beach filled with bleached cockleshells.

5.3 Four Artefacts: Nicky's hard hat, a single glove (turned inside out), a piece of vinyl material and a charred thing

In this section I will present and analyse four artefacts that have been found in the Hoo Peninsula that I have identified as primary examples of atmosphere. Each of the four artefacts; Nicky's hard hat, a single glove (turned inside out), a piece of vinyl material and a charred thing, demonstrate that not only do they possess atmosphere in their object-ness but they have come from places in the peninsula which are dense in atmosphere.

Nicky's hard hat is a red protective hard hat recovered from the shoreline of

(Clockwise from Top Left) Fig 21 *Nicky's Hard Hat* (Anna Falcini: 2015); Fig. 22 *Vinyl Material (Detail)* (Anna Falcini: 2018); Fig. 23 *Charred Object* (Anna Falcini: 2015); Fig. 24 *Glove* (Anna Falcini: 2015)

The Isle of Grain with the name Nicky scratched into its peak. A single glove (turned inside out) was found at Grain, on the marshes. A piece of vinyl material is a scrap of vinyl, partially rolled which was located at Dalham Farm in High Halstow and a charred thing is lump of mixed fibre wood with 4 screws embedded in it found at Grain Tower, a three-storey oval artillery tower off the coast of Grain.

These particular artefacts draw attention to a variety of questions and

theories around atmosphere, notably that objects with familiar forms such as the glove and hard hat, begin as familiar and purposeful things with "object narratives" that when dislocated in such a landscape as the Hoo Peninsula, evolve sensations of the uncanny (Turkle, 2007:307). They work as artefacts that have had ownership and, in the specific case of the glove or hard hat, have been intimately connected to a human body/bodies.

Rather than being from ancient pasts and at some distance from our present lives, they hold much more recent pasts and this sense of being in touching distance of their histories provokes an essence of "spectrality" emanating from these particular artefacts as Jacques Derrida notes in his work *Archive Fever*:

> "the structure of the archive is spectral…neither present nor absent 'in the flesh' neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met" (Derrida, 1998:84)

In this glove/hard hat example, these are vagrants upon the shoreline that have lost connection with ownership and are now loose upon the estuary landscape. As Louisa discovered them and placed them into the archive they became re-purposed and valued. Our eyes will never meet the owners; only through the object will we tentatively make some assertions as to their histories (the type of fibre the glove is made from, or the wear and tear of the hard hat). Thus, the objects become all powerful and the fact of their obscure histories, places them into the archive as doorways into and out of the peninsula's atmosphere.

Noting Derrida's ideas around the present/absent and visible/invisible, these artefacts hover between these concepts. They are identifiable and easily categorised in their functional capacities through their material presence, yet their mysterious presence in the peninsula, being out of place or useless in the case of a single glove, presents the intangible qualities that fall into the absent and invisible.

Addressing the other two artefacts, the vinyl sheet and the charred object, I note they are objects in flux, slippery and indeterminate, seeming to be dislocated and unformed into a recognisable or purposeful thing. They may be the off casts of other materials, separated from the corpus of a larger body and, in both examples, have undergone violent processes of cutting and burning. They are further adrift from what Tim Edensor has described as "schemes of material order" where a system of organising and distributing objects places them into "assigned spaces". These are interlopers in the order of objects and have become "unusual or exotic artefacts", slipping out of "containment" (Edensor, 2005:312).

The charred object, in particular, is one of the most potent artefacts of atmosphere in the archive for a number of reasons, including its precarious physical state, its unidentified status and the site of its discovery. The artefact is fragile and degrading on a daily basis. Its carbonized state continuously drops tiny fragments from its corpus, leaving charred particles like a shadow of itself wherever it is situated. In its acutely fragile situation it becomes powerful; presenting a dilemma of whether to arrest further degradation and provoking anxiety at its very visible shedding of itself onto any surface on which it is placed. It presents major conservation issues and in the care of a public museum, would be subject to processes to prevent this degradation. However, I would argue that it is this epidermal moult that releases the atmosphere contained in the object that it has been absorbing over time. In contravention

of museum practice to preserve it and halt its condition, it is instead actively disintegrating and in doing so is releasing the faintest particles of atmosphere. The resulting waste fragments are the physical evidence of atmosphere, similar to Thoreau's rope that measured the unfathomable depth of Walden Pond, plumbing the depths of the dark mysterious space of atmosphere (Cross, 2016:164).

The artefact was discovered in "a three storey roughly oval artillery" tower off the coastline (Carpenter *et al*., 2013: 66). Grain Tower (1855) possesses a particularly strong example of atmosphere. The tower is accessible only at low tide across a causeway and then one must climb up an aluminium ladder tied with rope to get into the entrance. Its solid Napoleonic walls have narrow staircases that follow the circular structure and open out into a series of rooms and chambers with remnants of the smooth bore weaponry it once held. This is interwoven with debris from itinerant visitors, with openings that look out onto the estuary waters, towards the sea.

Before its demolition the tower had a direct ley line towards Grain Power Station and in the past, it has witnessed the quarantining of diseased ships on islands nearby, the wrecking of ships on the Nore sandbank and the sounds of oil being pumped into Grain for refining. The eeriness of the building, so close to the main channel of the estuary waters flooding in and out, and being out on a limb, are imbued in the actual experience and subsequent memory of collecting the object. The building's odd shape and redundant purpose, fortified for attacks it never witnessed, is an anticipatory space that failed to actually fire a shot from its guns (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013).

The artefact can be (and has been) displayed without the knowledge of its setting and, I argue, can still operate within the boundaries of atmospheric properties. Its carbonate shadows which it drops like pine needles from a dry

Christmas tree, its charred and salt smells, its odd structure pierced with 4 screws reminiscent of a saint's relic, all contribute to its atmospheric properties, but when coupled with the setting of its discovery its significance in the *Archive of Atmosphere* is heightened.

Therefore, to examine the atmosphere of the object the locale of the artefact's setting is a further supporting factor in unravelling its puissance. As this body of research has progressed, areas of the peninsula have been discovered that have intense feelings of atmosphere. Objects collected from those areas, had potentially accumulated the atmosphere from contact with the area. It is quite possible that some objects were also imbued with their own atmospheres and contaminated the areas, as with the examples of the single glove and hard hat discussed above. The glove not only suggests recent human activity in the peninsula and contributes to the "unique information about the nature of man in society", it also directs us to an ontological status and further provokes the olfactory essences of atmosphere through smell or colour, for example (Pearce, 2005:125; Böhme, 2017:22, 42).

The site of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory on Cliffe Marshes is another useful example of a site of atmosphere; its remains and curious structures set in a remote location within a stone's throw of the seawall, are intensely atmospheric. Uncovering objects and materials here ruptures and unearths the dormant atmosphere where things have settled into the fabric of the landscape for years. The landscape's change of use to agriculture with sheep, temporary animal pens and feeding troughs suggests a heritage that is neglected and therefore insignificant. This inverse perspective obscures the historical and cultural value leaving a space for atmosphere to rise up.

The provenance and significance of the museum industry's artefacts are well trodden paths of course and are often used to activate the displays of dormant

objects for the public's imagination (Pearce, 2005:129). Fragments of the Berlin Wall, for example, become less significant without the context of their situation and a cottage industry has subsequently grown up around the marketing and selling of these fragments (Van Der Hoorn, 2003:191). The standard of the museum industry in identifying locations connected to the artefact contextualises and places it within a set of criteria that both communicates its importance and contributes to justifying its selection for display on a plinth in a public building.

5.4 Operational Procedures of the Archive of Atmosphere

As I have alluded to in the previous sections of this chapter, the *Archive of Atmosphere* is rooted within a museum culture, notably classifying, analysing and interpreting the found objects which are accessioned into the archive (Pearce, 2005). Typically, the model for museum artefacts is to scrutinise the materials, histories, environments, and significance of items, but in the *Archive of Atmosphere* found objects are subject to an alternative set of criteria and catalogued under the *Cornford Analytics* as described in the Methodology section (Sheet 2, pp.68-71). Whereas museums are keen to distinguish between categories of "artefact" and "waste" the *Archive of Atmosphere* values items on their atmospheric properties regardless of their material or historical significance (DeSilvey, 2012:256).

The archive shifts further from museological concerns into a schismatic one by being overseen by a fictitious curator who is peripatetic, untrained and motivated by a "sense of something in the air" (Böhme *et al*., 2014). In a traditional museum, it would be inconceivable to employ untrained staff to conserve and curate its contents. Archives generally adhere to a set of regulations and protocols laid out as an industry standard and are highly ordered places. There is a weight of responsibility in caring for historical and

culturally significant objects for future generations.

In the *Archive of Atmosphere* the focus is concerned with atmospheres and the material bodies in which they are present. The preservation of these atmospheres in their pristine states is, however, potentially exhaustive and counterproductive. Returning to Böhme's analysis, they are "indeterminate, diffuse" and are reliant upon a "rich vocabulary [of language]" to explain or determine them. To archive them within current museological practice and standards would be ineffective as most museum archives and collections centre around how objects relate to the anthropological, time-based development of humans. In this traditional context objects are the first point of interest, with analysis of their construction, fabrication, decoration, archaeology and recovery etc. (Pearce, 2005).

The museum artefacts substantiate theories and knowledge, connect us to, and are evidence of, our ancestors, placing us within touching distance of them. These objects are physical links to ancestral life, rituals and human life. As Patricia Davison argues, "museums give material form to authorized versions of the past, which in time become institutionalized as public memory (Davison, 2005:186).

In the *Archive of Atmosphere*, objects probe some of these perpetual questions of human existence, particularly in relation to my own "locus of desire" and being drawn back to the peninsula (Lippard,1997: 4). Beyond this "desire", however, is a reversal of the standard museum methodologies outlined by Pearce, concerned with the experiential in connection to the specificities of the Hoo Peninsula and the agency of the object to the landscape.

The object predominantly is a vessel or a host for the containment of

atmosphere, a ‘Curiosity’ recovered through the method of ‘Surfacing’ (Falcini, 2020) often in places which have been identified as having particularly strong atmospheres. As soon as ‘Surfacing’ begins, the atmosphere is vulnerable to being weakened or disintegrating completely. The object is extracted from the site and removed to storage in my studio where it is vulnerable to other environments and atmospheres, particularly when kept in the rudimentary materials of the amateur archive; a cardboard box and acid free tissue papers (Ibid., 2020).

The objects can be stored for some time like this. Often, they are not immediately catalogued and studied and are placed directly into storage in the archive. This is unusual though and generally the items are unpacked on their arrival at the archive (a corner of the studio, under a table). Artefacts are all catalogued using *The Cornford Analytics* system, measuring objects and other materials (plant specimens, liquids, powders etc.) through a process of labelling and documenting using data attributes such as the scene of a found object, sensory conditions (sound and scent of object/location), the atmospherics of the location (weather, type of place, textures and surfaces etc.) and the situation of Cornford at the time of discovery (clothing worn, food consumed) (Ibid., 2020).

5.5 Designing a Catalogue System and Index Cards for the Archive

At the core of the Archive of Atmosphere is a catalogue and indexing system where each artefact is listed and then catalogued onto individual cards. The cards are housed in a bespoke wooden cabinet under the title *The Archive of Atmosphere* and organised into four sections: 1. The Isle of Grain; 2. Allhallows; 3. High Halstow and Halstow Marshes and 4. Cliffe Marshes. The provenance of each object determines where the Index cards are to be placed. For example, Nicky’s Hardhat, the red safety hat recovered from Cockleshell

Fig: 25 *Index card and Nicky's Hard Hat* (Anna Falcini: 2020)
Fig. 26 *Index Cards* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Fig. 27 *Catalogue for 'Archive of Atmosphere*' (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Beach on The Isle of Grain, is located in ‘1. The Isle of Grain’.

The construction of the cabinet is made to the exact measurements of the handmade index cards (12 x 18.3 cm) and is designed to reflect the features of old museum cabinets, often wooden and with long thin drawers that would hold large numbers of index cards. The catalogue and index are based upon traditional manual cataloguing card systems of the twentieth century; a system that postdates “handwritten entries in ledger books” and predates “online catalogues” (Greene, 2016:155; Lejeune, 2007:79). In the index cards created for the *Archive of Atmosphere* I selected both a combination of printed and handwritten texts.

The process of keeping a ledger was initially considered and an antique ledger type book was purchased. The ledger, produced by the London County and Westminster Bank Limited, and made by Hudson and Kearns Stationers of Stamford Street, London, appeared to present an inflexibility that separate cards did not. The format of the pages, however, with their graphic blue horizontal lines and pink vertical columns were ideal for arranging the

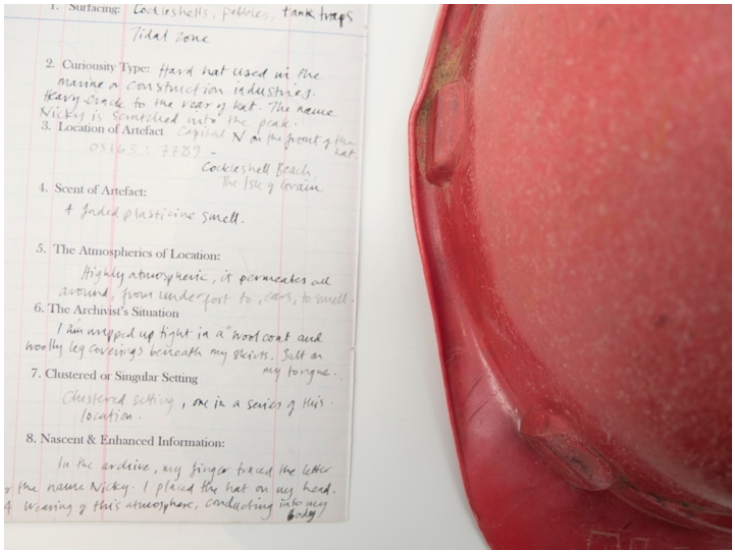

Fig. 28 *Detail of Index card and Nicky’s Hard Hat* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

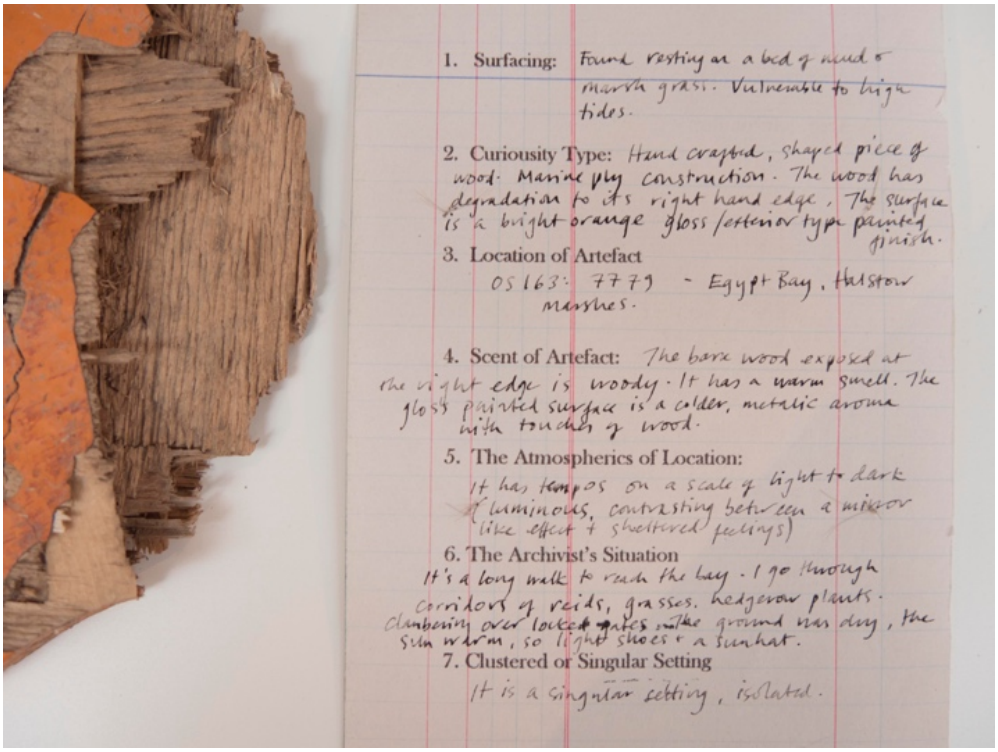

Fig. 29 *Orange Coloured Wood and Index Card* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

information and categories. By unbinding the ledger and separating out the pages, they could be used as index cards whilst still referencing ledgers with their feint lines and ordered columns. Using these repurposed sheets as index cards referenced the period of Louisa's character, whilst tropes from the card systems of early to mid-20th century museum practices could be adopted that enabled the information to be used more expansively; cards could be handled, laid out with the corresponding objects, displayed as art works in themselves, be performed etc.

Generally, the orientation of index cards is landscape and their sizes are similar to those of a postcard. Information for cataloguing is, in general, text based. The Natural History Museum's Etymology Department's Lepidoptera collection, for example, is catalogued through a manual system of typed cards with some

290,000 cards in 265 metal cabinets and, similarly, The Pitt Rivers Anthropological collection in Oxford partially uses this kind of filing system on cards alongside an eclectic range of methodologies including notes on the artefacts themselves and handwritten metal edged tags that are attached to some items (Natural History Museum, 2003; Petch, 2013). Within the Pitt Rivers catalogues is also an unusual example of a set of accession registers compiled by Ernest Seymour Thomas in the 1920s where ink line drawings of artefacts accompany the written entries.

The majority of museum collections now operate with both existing manual systems and more advanced digital models for databases of artefacts which enables far greater accessibility for users and researchers (Lejune, 2007). Digital catalogues frequently attach photographic images of artefacts alongside textual information which makes their format popular with researchers, although “a lack of resources or copyright issues might prevent images being put online” (Lejune, 2007:82-3).

The creation of both text and illustrations describing the materials were integral to the format of the *Archive of Atmosphere’s* cards. Similar to the example from the Pitt Rivers Accession books of the 1920s, the illustrations were to be studies made of the items in pen but with the addition of watercolour. This application of drawing corresponded to how Louisa studied each object at her desk and was critical in revealing further information about the objects. Details of marks and shapes that might have been missed otherwise were keenly observed through the subtle nature of the watercolour medium. I discuss the technique of watercolour as a medium for research in more detail in *Sheet 7*.

From the beginning of creating a catalogue, a digital version was considered but ultimately rejected in favour of a manual one. The very nature of a manual catalogue; of having to search the catalogue in order to track down an object’s

index card, suggested the expeditions of Louisa to trace the elusive atmosphere of the peninsula. The tactile process of opening the catalogue drawer, leafing through the index cards to find an object's corresponding information, the handling of that card and then replacing it was also an important factor in the choice of a manual system. It reflects on my own experiences of pulling out a card of information in a local archive and seeing how that information materialises into an historical map, an embroidered smock or a handwritten letter of private correspondence, for example. The handling of these cards and of the objects themselves are in contrast to the immateriality of the atmosphere itself. There is a summoning through the hands, to the potentiality of active particles of atmospheres that may be within the objects. These actions are part of a performative thread integral to the practical research and are developed through Louisa performing the archive which I discuss in more detail later in this sheet.

An Index for Louisa

The decision to create a catalogue and index of the artefacts for the *Archive of Atmosphere* began with detailed written notes during expeditions in the field and later back in the studio. These notes would document the location, the weather, information about the object and the surfaces where it lay. Written notes were also important in developing Louisa's characteristics and situation, in articulating what she was thinking, what her motives were and how atmosphere was manifesting itself. These were early attempts at investigating atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula through material (found objects) and non-material (surfaces, air) matter.

This later developed into *The Cornford Analytics*, a unique system that measured objects and other materials (plant specimens, liquids, powders etc.).

The objects were analysed according to data such as the scene of a found object, sensory conditions (sound and scent of object/location), the atmospherics of the location (weather, type of place, textures & surfaces etc.) and the situation of Cornford at the time of discovery (clothing worn, food consumed) (see pp.54-55).

Looking at the cards in details

To explain this process in more detail I will now present a case study of the artefact 'Nicky's Hard Hat' and the corresponding index card. I will describe each category on the card, how it has been applied to the object in question and its relevance to the overarching aim of capturing atmosphere through the format of an archive.

Every index card in the catalogue has two sides of information. On the front of the card are the description of the artefact, the accession number and the dimensions. Attached to the front is also the ink and watercolour illustration made on a small section of tracing paper (6 x 8 cm) and secured with invisible thread at four corners. The description of the artefact gives an overview of the object and the dimensions are made in centimetres.

The accession numbers are devised through a system of letters and numbers. For example, this card relating to 'Nicky's Hard Hat' has the accession number I.O.G.: 228001. The letters I.O.G. are abbreviations for The Isle of Grain (the location of the object) and the numbers 228 are taken from the number of the main A road into The Isle of Grain (A228) and the final numbers 001, are the sequence of objects in that category. In this example, 'Nicky's Hard Hat' is the first object in this section of the index so is allocated the number one. The accession number on an artefact from Cliffe Marshes, a fragment of a cloth belt, has the number C.M.: 200003. The letters C.M. indicate the location of the belt

from Cliffe Marshes, the number 2000 is an abbreviation of the main B road to Cliffe (B2000) and the final numbers 003 is the sequence of the object in this section. The sequencing of objects is generally arranged by the dates of when the objects were collected; 'Nicky's Hard Hat' was one of the first objects to be collected from The Isle of Grain. Objects were almost always gathered in numbers rather than singly so this rule has to be applied with a moderate degree of flexibility.

On the rear of the cards are eight categories that form the basis of *The Cornford Analytics*. These categories are:

1. Surfacing;
2. Curiousity Type (sic.);
3. Location of Artefact;
4. Scent of Artefact;
5. The Atmospherics of Location;
6. The Archivist's Situation;
7. Clustered or Singular Setting;
8. Nascent and Enhanced Information.

These categories allow for a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the artefact and its potential source of atmosphere as well as Louisa's personal observations and circumstances at the time of the artefact's discovery. I will explain each of these categories in detail below, showing the handwritten descriptions of this card in italics, followed by an analysis of the language and style used and an explanation of the descriptions.

1. Surfacing: *Cockleshells, pebbles, tank traps, Tidal Zone.*

'Surfacing' as I outline in *Sheet 2 TQ 7977 Egypt Bay: Methodology* is the method of collecting objects and materials from "the surfaces of the

landscape…as opposed to a physical digging down" (Falcini, 2019:54). What I mean by that, is that Louisa engages in objects that appear on the top of the landscape rather than those that are hidden below the surface or that are buried deep underground. The reason for her focus on the surface is twofold. Firstly, Louisa abandons traditional archaeological techniques in favour of unconventional methodologies in order that the subject of atmosphere can be at the forefront of her work. She is less interested in the value of treasures and historic things. Whilst atmosphere is not ruled out in the ethnographic materials of archaeological significance, the found objects/materials that are at ground level, are more readily exposed to atmosphere. They are also capable of contributing to it in ways that with buried antiquities are more limited. For example, because materials have come to rest on the surface or may self-seed and grow at a surface level, they become integrated into the landscape but are never fixed. They are always subject to movement, change, breakdown, rupture; an instability that corresponds with the quality of atmosphere. This strange mix of estuarine marsh and post-industrial debris is one of the aspects of atmosphere that exist here.

The second point of this argument is that the objects which are found on the surface are often the "rejected bits and pieces", the "waste matter of industrial ruin", they become, as Tim Edensor notes, bound up with the absence of those who have interacted with them in any number of ways (Douglas, 1966:161; Edensor, 2005:311). Through this very absence and loss of human interaction they become possessed of powerful feelings and associations that when situated in a lonely and largely unpopulated landscape, provide a strange frequency that can be felt in the air, working their way into the atmosphere.

The description of the surfaces where the artefacts are collected from are important records of information because they may offer further clues to the atmosphere of either the locations or the objects themselves. In the example

above the surface consists of “Cockleshells, pebbles, tanks traps (and a) Tidal Zone”. The cockleshells and pebbles are a feature of the beach areas around The Isle of Grain and their white reflective surfaces of the shells give a unique light to this coastal area in sunlight. Walking on the cockleshell surface creates a particular rhythm and choreography of sounds underfoot. In addition to this are the numerous tank traps, steel rebars that remain dotted on more remote beaches similar to the one where I found the hard hat. This being the edge of the land, it is also a tidal zone where the sea is constantly in motion, where waste materials and objects get washed up and remain on the shoreline for a period of time. In this example, the surface is contributing to the atmosphere through sound, sensations underfoot and light reflection.

2. Curiousity Type (sic.): *Hard hat used in the marine or construction industries. Heavy crack to the rear of the hat. The name Nicky is scratched into the peak. Capital N on the front of the hat.*

A curiosity in the dictionary is described as something that is “an unusual or interesting object” and the term enters into Louisa’s analytics to allow for a broad range of objects to be considered (Soanes, 2001:210). Within *The Cornford Analytics* it gives expression to objects from “manufactured and processed sources, i.e., functional objects, hand crafted in an amateur way for essential use, re-purposing materials for a secondary life on the peninsula” (Falcini, 2019:55). The definition specifically considers the value of objects for their atmospheric potential, that could otherwise be disregarded as “waste matter”, clearly defining them from objects of archaeological interest (Edensor, 2005). As I discuss earlier on in this sheet these curiosities begin to take on a life of their own when separated from their desired settings and functions. The processes of degradation and breakdown of an object enhances its ambiguity, entering a “threshold to other ways of knowing” (DeSilvey, 2012:256). One of these “ways of knowing”, I argue, is to bring to light the atmosphere felt in the landscape through these curiosities.

The description of ‘Nicky’s Hard Hat’ under ‘Curiosity Type (sic.)’ explains its functional purpose but then continues with observations of its current condition, including how it has been personalised by its owner (the name Nicky scratched into the peak) and how it is materially transformed through immersion in the estuary waters (the plastic surface grazed and cracked). We see here how the very function of the hat to protect and resist physical threats for its wearer are unable to resist the landscape’s elements and have fallen into a pattern of degradation, whilst the memory of its owner continues in a capital N and the name Nicky.

3. Location of Artefact: *OS163: 7789 – Cockleshell Beach, The Isle of Grain.*

The grid reference for the artefact is given according to the Ordnance Survey format and sometimes the name of the specific location, if known or identified, is also documented.

4. Scent of Artefact: *A faded plasticine smell.*

Catalogue indexes invariably present a “classification of the properties of an artefact” with key pieces of information such as date, origin, material and consideration given to their symbolic significance or cultural status (Pearce, 2005:126). Why and how things were made are often of primary importance in museum archives, contributing to a larger picture of “material culture” (Pearce, 2005:127). The aim is to identify critical information and gain clarity on “objects made by man through the application of technological processes” (Pearce, 2005:125).

Within *The Cornford Analytics* are a range of different enquiries about the artefacts. What, for example, are the more complex, perceptive effects generated by material objects and their capacity to contain and/or to re-ignite

the atmosphere? In order to explore this, it is necessary to move beyond the physical, material and cultural analysis and investigate the sensory attributes of artefacts such as the feel of them on the skin, the sound or scent. Juhani Pallasmaa in the chapter *Architectures of Hearing and Smell* outlines the way scent is “the most persistent memory of any space” and that childhood memories of place are deeply rooted in these (Pallasmaa, 2012:58-59).

As I stated in *Sheet 4*, smell appears in a variety of guises and has a strong presence in the peninsula. Böhme, as discussed in that sheet, sees smell as an essential element of atmosphere (Falcini, 2019:99; Böhme, 1993:120-21). It is therefore a useful and pertinent tool in the index catalogue and for this research in general. There are contentious issues in the field of olfaction itself that wrestle between the nature of scent as an “olfactory objecthood” or as “olfactory experiences [as] merely sensational. “Olfactory objecthood” refers to the way we can connect an object via its scent as a “distal object” or through “volatile chemicals/odour”. Other philosophers suggest that “olfaction makes us aware of our own experiences rather than properties of or objects in, the world” (Millar, 2019:4283). Using the scent of objects for the purposes of indexing the catalogue of this particular archive, falls somewhere between these two theories. The objects/materials gathered for the archive are the focus of the scent and are examples of the “olfactory objecthood”. At the same time, these “olfactory experiences” are contributing to the sensory encounters of the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula (Millar, 2019: 4280-83).

The objects/materials that are on the surface in the landscape, largely have their own distinct smells combined with those found within the place. For example, a buff coloured garment fragment (H.M.: 149002) has absorbed the smell of the marsh grass and mud it was lying on, whilst a number of rosehips (H.M.: 149003) have their own inherent scent of acidic notes.

The nature of scent as an elusive element, however, means that it often disperses quickly after an object leaves the peninsula and may well fade over time. Alongside that is the potential for cross contamination with other artefacts. It is a “molecular cloud of volatile particles” that without advanced archival storage facilities is problematic for capturing and maintaining this olfactory phenomena (Millar, 2019:4283). For the archive, it is therefore important to note the scent of an object immediately on retrieval from the landscape and follow up with further studies to see how the scent changes and what remains.

Considering all of these difficulties and the very ambiguous nature of scent, makes this particular classification complicated. How for example, do we use a reliable vocabulary to describe what we are smelling? There were familiar words related to scent that could be employed such as woody, musty, metallic, for example, but often the smell would present itself as unclassifiable in terms of language. In the example of ‘Nicky’s Hard Hat’, the initial scent was from the immediate environment of its discovery; a beach with the predominant smell of estuary seawater, mud and seaweed but as time faded that initial scent the origins of its plastic material became more distinct. The final description is “A faded plasticine smell” because it was the closest description that could be applied with its mellowed plastic and estuary tainted smell.

To complete this category, it is useful to reiterate the importance of scent and the sensory elements to the potential capturing and experiencing of atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. Using Louise Richardson’s idea of “orthonasal olfaction” where the “olfactory stimulus is brought in through the nostrils by breathing or sniffing” we can begin to see how significant scent is for the body to connect with this strand of atmosphere (Richardson, 2013:403). Through the action of smelling or sniffing scents directly connect to the body’s receptors and is a powerful gauge of atmosphere.

5. The Atmospherics of Location: *Highly atmospheric, it permeates all around, from underfoot to, ears, to smell.*

In *The Cornford Analytics*, this category investigates a number of factors including the "weather, type of place, textures and surfaces etc." (Falcini, 2019:55). Surfaces in this context differs from the first category on the cards dedicated solely to 'Surfacing' and is not to be confused with it. In this category it is part of the consideration of the atmospherics, whereas in the first category it is implicit in the method of collecting objects and is a record of where objects had come to rest. This category studies a range of characteristics that affect the site's atmosphere, some of which may be more overt than others. The nature of the exposed landscape reveals the weather in highly atmospheric terms and being coastal, it receives the weather more specifically and intensely. Particular conditions are frequently experienced including marsh mists and strong winds that move across the marsh without the impediment of trees, walls or buildings.

The coastline is a constant motif in the peninsula, whether at distance or close up, is imbued with ideas of arrival and departure, of a temporality and instability and is "a dialectic between the seen and the unseen" (Carter, 1999:136). The atmosphere is invariably felt more intensely here and if an object is collected by the shoreline during high or low tide, it will have a significant impact on its collection. Objects are in flux and subject to tidal patterns; left stranded by high tides on shingle and soft, grey mud indefinitely, until a future tide pulls them back into its watery void.

The description for the atmospheric location of 'Nicky's Hard Hat' is "Highly atmospheric, it permeates all around from underfoot to ears to smell." As we know, the artefact was recovered from a significant area of the Hoo Peninsula (Cockleshell Beach) and its remnants of military defence and due to its position in close proximity to a coastal setting, this would explain the inclusion of the

wording “Highly atmospheric”. Similarly, the textures and scents of the beach are viscerally felt here with its layers of cockleshells and plant/saltwater smells.

6. The Archivist’s Situation: *I am wrapped up tight in a wool coat and woolly leg coverings beneath my skirts. Salt on my tongue.*

When collecting the objects it is in the guise of the archivist Louisa Cornford, a character developed as a resistance to the standard practices of the heritage industry and as a methodology to discover new knowledge specifically relating to the atmosphere. The ‘Archivist’s Situation’ is therefore a category that is largely fictional but rooted within authentic experiences. These are fictional descriptions but an element of truth also underlies them based upon my own experiences of the landscape.

In this index card Louisa reveals how she is “wrapped up tight in a wool coat and woolly leg coverings beneath my skirts.” A further comment that she has “salt on my tongue” is ambiguous and may refer to the weather being particularly damp and salty or it may refer to her assessment of objects through taste. This particular object is explored through taste in the performance element of the practical work which quite possibly emerges from a method Louisa applies in a number of initial collections of objects.

7. Clustered or Singular Settings: *Clustered setting, one is a series of this location.*

Clustered settings refer to the areas in the peninsula that are “set locations for gathering materials” including “drainage creeks, defensive buildings…routes for the incarcerated (historic sites of criminal incarceration i.e., prison hulks)” (Sheet 2, 70). They are referred to as clustered settings because of their unique and specific characteristics, which, in turn reveal potentially unusual and interesting objects or specimens. Drainage creeks, for example are a familiar feature of the marshes with rare and diminishing plants like reeds that used to

be abundant in the U.K. but have continued to decline with the loss of wetland habitats.

Singular settings by contrast, refer to areas that have more general characteristics and that are less dense with specific details, materials, histories or geographical features. They are usually settings that may be familiar in other kinds of landscapes i.e., a stream or a copse.

The entry on this index cards is for a clustered setting because of its distinctive beach with cockleshells and military remains.

8. Nascent and Enhanced Information: *In the archive, my finger traced the letter 'N' & the name Nicky. I placed the hat on my head. A wearing of this atmosphere, conducting into my body.*

According to the Oxford English Dictionary the definition of nascent is "just coming into existence and beginning to develop" and enhance is to "increase the quality, value or extent of" (Soanes, 2001:591, 292). The purpose of this final category was to allow for a broader speculation of objects outside of the information already gathered. Nascent and enhanced are propositions for the objects to be considered beyond the physical limits of their materiality, to allow them to exist as instruments of measurement and information about atmosphere. In the example of 'Nicky's Hard Hat', it is an abandoned or lost object that once had a clear purpose but re-contextualised it has become empowered by way of its disconnection from its previous use/owner. Immersed in the estuary waters and washed up on shore, it has absorbed the atmosphere from its beach location. The hard hat is an active artefact in the archive, becoming a crucial part of the performance work of Louisa Cornford in reactivating the atmosphere.

As Louisa comments in the category on the index card for the hard hat, “my finger traced the letter ‘N’ & the name Nicky. I placed the hat on my head. A wearing of this atmosphere, conducting into my body.”

Once collected, the objects become artefacts and have crossed the threshold into the archive. They then go into permanent storage, remaining there until being required for cataloguing, study or display. They may be temporarily laid onto a sheet of white paper for analysis, subsequent cataloguing and observation of their atmospheres. Artefacts may be studied singly or often they are grouped with a number of other artefacts from the collection, to understand the dynamics between artefact/atmospheres.

Public displays of the archive occur on a temporary basis, with no permanent display available, and the atmospheric conditions of each artefact become vulnerable to the environment of their display. Specific questions around the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula are useful in exploring the atmosphere on a more active basis; for example, can the atmosphere be measured or can the archive be performed? These questions formulate how the archive may be curated and displayed on an ongoing basis with a continuously evolving set of curatorial decisions.

5.6 Performing the Archive

One of the unusual features of the archive is that it is activated through performance. Whilst objects are displayed akin to traditional museum items, they also become subject to exploration through performance. In this following section I introduce why and how the archive is performed, looking at the roots of the performance element, its development and then give a detailed analysis of how a number of objects are performed.

Fig. 30 *Harbouring Memory (Blackened)* (Anna Falcini: 2017)

The origins of the performance element of the research developed from the focused study of an object from the archive, a piece of charred wood; a small rounded piece of wood, charred by fire, with a series of screws embedded in one end. A study of the object developed as *Harbouring Memory (Blackened)*, an active research project during the Ph.D. group exhibition *Somatic Shifts* at The Zandra Rhodes Gallery, UCA Rochester in 2017.

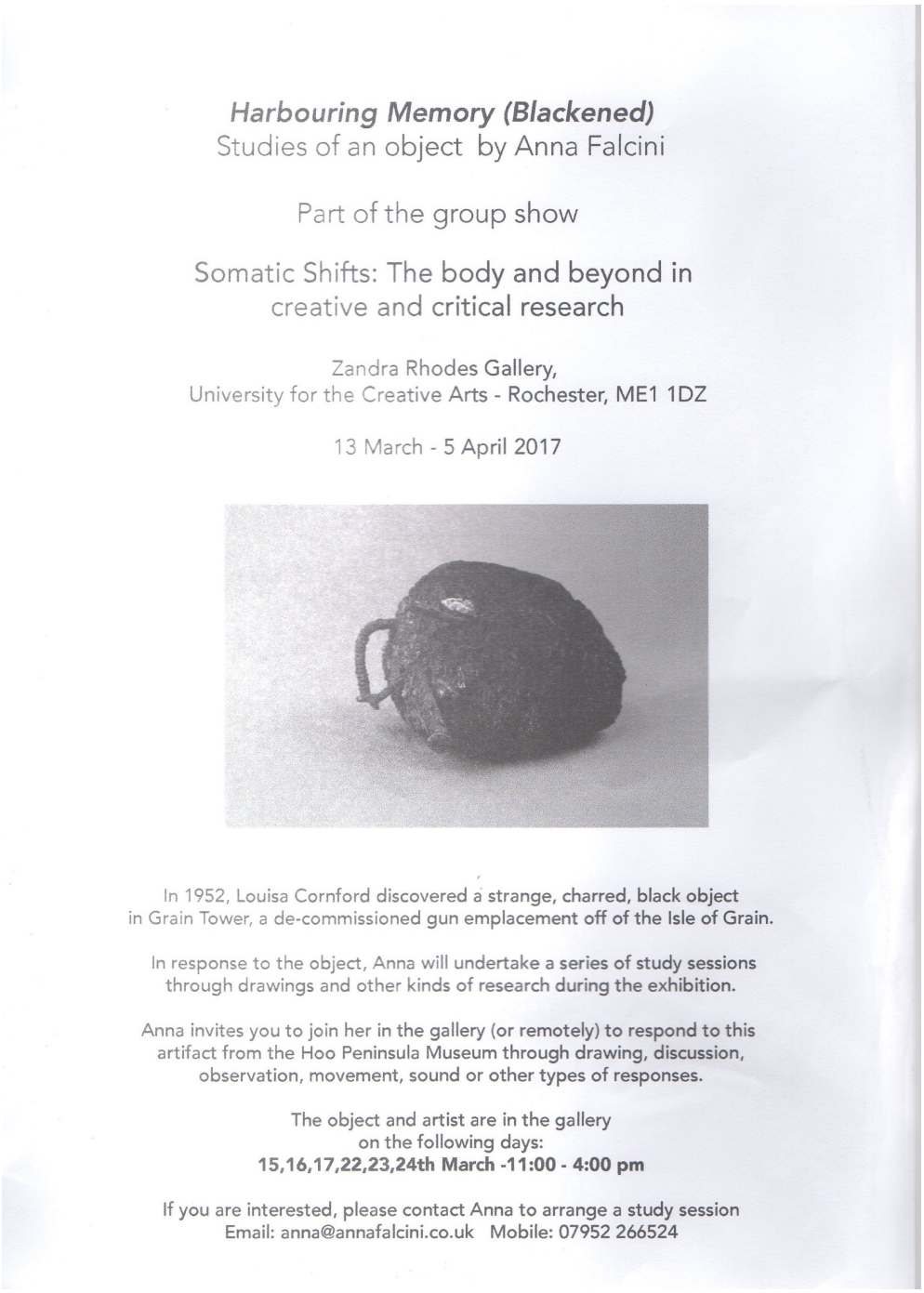

Fig. 31 *Flyer inviting participants to Harbouring Memory* (Anna Falcini: 2017)

The object was recovered from Grain Fort, a former Napoleonic gun battery located off of the shoreline of The Isle of Grain and only accessible at low tide across a causeway. The fort had a particularly intense atmosphere for a

number of reasons. It was an abandoned building, off limits to the public but had a makeshift ladder to gain access. The fort could only be reached between tides and the causeway was a distance from the shoreline on a crumbling path. Once inside the fort, the original round structure was distinctly eerie with the remains of the old gun machinery and equipment, heavy chains, and a series of chambers and passages that were damp and often dark. Narrow steps led up to platforms that overlooked the estuary mouth where one felt the edge-ness of the place.

The charred piece of wood had a macabre feeling that resulted from its abstract form and attempted destruction, either deliberate or accidental. It was a section of a wooden pallet that had most probably survived a fire through its composition of mixed particle fibre. The location and its condition led me to consider a number of methodologies for revealing its potential for harbouring atmosphere (and memory). During the period of the exhibition, I spent time with the object, studying and making drawings from it. I invited individuals, some of whom had spiritual expertise, to interact with it and to see if they may experience any symptoms and effects of atmosphere from it.

These experiments developed into the concept of performing the archive and actively engaging with the objects. Studying the object, in its “precarious physical state”, resulted in its physical deterioration that occurred every time it was handled and manoeuvred (Sheet 5, 145). The object would shed particles of charred wood and this led me to consider how the objects in the archive held atmosphere within their material bodies, how these fragments could potentially trigger the dormant atmosphere within them and how, through physically performing with them, it could stimulate the atmosphere to be re-kindled. Louisa became the central figure who would perform this alchemical act, having already been established as the character in the early work of 2002.

In that work, Cornford's role played out in a documentary format whereas this development called for a series of live performances.

How it was improvised

As we have seen, the charred object led to the consideration of its atmosphere through the fragile, physical condition of shedding particles of burnt wood. Other objects in the archive were also similarly vulnerable to the shedding of their material bodies. This characteristic became one of the ways to explore their atmospheric properties, by disturbing that material body and exploiting the further fragmentation of them. There were other qualities in the objects to consider through performative processes; whether objects had a functionality, did they have acoustic powers, textural and tactile elements, residues of atmosphere, geographies of objects and the re-enacting where and how objects were found, re-enacting the atmospheric conditions at the time objects were found such as the weather and imbibing atmosphere by tasting, eating, licking or breathing in the vapours of atmosphere from objects.

Figs. 32 & 33 *Louisa Cornford Performing the Archive of Atmosphere* (Anna Falcini: 2019)

From the larger collection of objects, a number of them were selected for the first performance during the exhibition *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere* at the Brewery Tap in Folkestone, Kent (June 2019). The selection of up to twelve objects was based upon each object displaying one or more elements of the criteria above; that an object had a strong vapour of atmosphere if it was sniffed or that it was curiously tactile and atmosphere may be felt through the handling of it. Through an unconscious process, a variety of objects soon became the key figures in the performance.

Below is a list of the items selected for the performance followed by a table that sets out information about how precisely each object was selected, how it was performed and what the purpose of that action was in the overall exploration of atmosphere.

1) Nicky's Hard Hat
2) Orange plastic box containing screw bit set
3) Orange piece of wood
4) Rosehips
5) Synthetic cloth
6) Scrap of canvas cloth
7) Metal bolt
8) Cockleshells
9) Boat Fragment
10) Map
11) Tracing paper submerged in the estuary
12) Mullein plant

Object	Action	Purpose
1. Nicky's Hard Hat A protective Hard Hat used in the construction/marine industries. The hat was personalized with the name Nicky and an N scratched in the peak.	Louisa picked up the hat from the table, studied it before putting the hat on. She then walked around the table in a circular motion. Coming back to the starting point, she took the hat off and licked the surface of it. She replaced the hat back.	Wearing the hat to a) stimulate memories of its use and previous owner/s and b) see if atmosphere could be felt. Studying the hat at close proximity to note its marks, wear and tear of being exposed to the atmosphere. Licking the hat to taste atmosphere.
2.Orange plastic box containing screw bit set. The plastic box was one half of an original set of two pieces, hinged that had opened up. Only a few screw bits remained intact in the box.	A screw bit was selected, studied and tested on paper to see what mark it might leave.	Taking out one of the screw bits enabled close study and experimentation to determine any possible residues or marks of atmosphere.
3. Orange piece of wood A flat, piece of marine plywood specifically shaped, to fit into a structure, such as a boat? Painted in gloss orange with some weathering at one edge.	The wood was lifted up at one edge until at a right angle to the table and then dropped from that height to create a heavy weight on the table.	Exploration of auditory qualities and testing of its fabrication
4.Rosehips Rosehips gathered from Halstow Marshes the previous summer and dried.	The rosehips were arranged on a cloth on the floor. Louisa lay down close to the rosehips, smelling them, picking them up to look closely at them and then biting into one to taste.	The action of smelling them brought back memories of collecting them on Halstow Marshes. Biting into the dried flesh revealed a sour, intense flavour of rosehips that released what Böhme describes as the "tinctures" of

		atmosphere (Böhme, 1993:121).
5. Synthetic Cloth Fragment. Pleated, multi-coloured and patterned piece of polyester cloth tied with a series of knots.	The fragment was part of a number of objects on black cloth laying on the floor. Louisa lay down near the cloth, picked it up, raised it above her head to study it before laying it over her eyes. Holding it over her eyes, she then got up and walked blindfolded towards a blank piece of paper where she re-enacted a series of night drawings that were made in the peninsula in complete darkness.	The fragment of cloth was used to improvise the night walks made along the coast where a series of night drawings were made. The action brings back to life the intense activity of the night walks and night drawings and the outcomes of experiencing atmosphere in darkness. The result was that the atmosphere was experienced more acutely through sound, touch and smell.
6. Scrap of canvas cloth Light khaki coloured cloth, twill patterned weave. Identified as a section of men's trousers.	Louisa laid her face directly onto the cloth and inhaled at length.	The long inhalation of the textile fragment stimulates the memory of its atmosphere through the scent. This is a key element of Cornford's Analytics.
7. Metal Bolt Heavy iron bolt recovered from Egypt Bay. Its length and weight indicate it was probably used in jetties or marine structures.	The bolt was part of the objects on the floor. As the bolt was in a state of corrosion, Louisa, put on white conservation gloves, then picked up the bolt and lay it across her arms. In this position, she walked in a circular motion to analyse the feel and heft of the bolt. Coming to a halt she then squatted close to the floor and let the bolt gently roll off of her arms to the floor. As the bolt came into	Louisa was addressing the fragility and solidity of the bolt with these actions. The close bodily contact with the bolt was an expression of re-visiting the site of its discovery at Egypt Bay on Halstow Marshes. This small inlet is a particularly atmospheric site on the peninsula, close to the Old Sea Wall and Decoy Fleet, historic parts of the estuary. The action of rolling the bolt to the

	contact with the floor, particles of rusted metal shed from the bolt. She then took the bolt and lay down on her back in a full body position and brought the bolt to lay parallel on her chest, holding it close to her body.	floor and the resulting shedding of particles suggests the possibility of the object releasing its atmosphere into the air. The bolt is an example of "continual cycles of articulation and disarticulation" (DeSilvey, 2013:266).
8. Cockleshells Cockleshells were collected from Cockleshell Beach on The Isle of Grain	The shells were arranged in a linear formation on a slim shelf in the gallery space. Handfuls of shells were picked up by Louisa and then dropped over her bent head in a type of self-baptism of cockleshells. She then took another handful of shells and dropped them to the floor, walking purposely on them.	Louisa's action to immerse the shells into her hair, was a reference to their birth in the estuary water. Walking on the shells she had purposely dropped on the floor, created the crushing sound and sensation underfoot that was experienced on the beaches around Allhallows and The Isle of Grain.
9. Boat Fragment A fiberglass boat fragment was collected from an area of coast known as Cockleshell Hard on The Isle of Grain. The fragment was weathered, and its surface had a series of map-like marks. The fiberglass was held between two rigid wooden posts	The fragment stood upright on the two wooden posts, with the fibreglass surface resembling a sail cloth. In the performance, Louisa placed a piece of paper onto its surface and made a rubbing, then slid underneath the fragment where there was a gap. Lying on the floor under the fragment, she then lifted it and held it over her body before replacing it.	Taking the rubbing of the surface is a re-enactment of an original drawing that was made from using the fragment which began with a rubbing of the whole object's surface. The act of sliding underneath the fragment and then holding it over her body, is a method for intimacy and close proximity to the object, investigating the embodied position.
10. Map The ordnance survey	The map was actively used in the first performance. It became	Louisa picked up the map as she walked around some of the

map, Sheet163, Gravesend and Rochester is a map of the Hoo Peninsula.	a prop only in subsequent performances.	objects. She was identifying areas on the map where objects had been found. Latterly the map was not active in the performance but became a prop on Louisa's desk which sat to one side of the archive.
11. Tracing paper submerged in the estuary	A piece of tracing paper had by chance, floated into the estuary water during a night drawing activity. As an experiment, I had compressed it and let it dry in that shape. On opening it out it had many creases and folds, and the surface resembled a 3D map. The object was placed at the top of a stepladder where Louisa climbed and lifted the paper up above her head. In doing so, the light filtered through the folds. In this position, she then let the paper drop and it floated to the ground. This action was repeated.	Lifting the paper up to the light signified the importance of the light in the estuary and how it affects the atmosphere visually. As a coastal location, the light is more intense and even if it is cloudy, the light is still more resonant than inland. As the paper floated down from a height, it suggests the wind and continual movement that exists on the flat, open landscape.
12. Mullein Plant The mullein (Verbascum Thapsus or Aarons Rod) is "an erect biennial forming a rosette of large grey-hairy ovate leaves in its first year, with an erect stem bearing a succession of light yellow, saucer-shaped	The mullein was placed at the centre of a table where it was picked up and held horizontally to keep the plant and its seed head stable. It was carried over to the drawing made previously with the synthetic cloth fragment	The technique of carrying the mullein, horizontally and with great care, reflected both its fragility and its value as a medicinal plant. The journey to the destination of the drawing mirrored its own journey from Halstow

flowers 3cm across in the second year" (R.H.S., 2020). It grows in abundance at Halstow Marshes and at the end of a summer period, the plant was collected and dried out. Its stem turned from flower into seed pod with thousands of seeds. The length of the whole specimen is 130cm. Mullein is a medicinal plant used for "the respiratory system", "calms and strengthens the nerves, digestion and urinary system. It is good for swollen glands and helps relieve pain in general" (Bruton-Seal and Seal, 2017:112).	(5) and held in its horizontal position over the white paper of the night drawing. Louisa, very gently tapped the flower head, releasing a number of tiny black seeds.	Marshes to the archive where it has continually shed organic matter and seeds. Tapping the seed head and releasing the seeds marked the paper with tiny black dots, matching the style of the original night drawings and was an activation of atmosphere.

Fig. 34 *Objects from the Archive of Atmosphere* (Anna Falcini: 2019)

Evolution of the Performance

The table above gives a detailed analysis of the items selected for the performance at *The Brewery Tap Gallery* in Folkestone, Kent (2019), how and why they were performed. The performance was centred around Louisa's role as the archivist which was reinforced by the presence of a wooden desk and a shelf with a set of four books; *The Encyclopaedia of Atmosphere* (2019). Each book had a cover illustrated with an image taken at the four locations of study and inside were blank pages. During the exhibition, objects were studied by Louisa and

Fig. 35 *Louisa Cornford at her desk studying Nicky's Hard Hat* (Anna Falcini: 2019)

information was entered into the corresponding book. In the illustration above, Louisa is studying 'Nicky's Hard Hat' and a series of drawings developed in the Grain section of the *Encyclopaedia* that were self-portraits wearing the hat with notes about the experience. The shelf that the *Encyclopaedia of Atmosphere* were presented on is a piece of wood salvaged from a shed at Cliffe on the Cooling Road (pp.191-192). The desk belonged to Denis Gray, my grandfather, and is the desk specifically designed and hand made for him by his father-in-law for the purposes of his artistic work. It has an angled tabletop that can be

moved upright for close up work, drawers and cupboards to contain art materials and a pull-out shelf to hold water for washing brushes.

Whilst this performance started and finished at the desk, the desk became obsolete at further performances. A new piece of furniture was introduced into the archive; the index catalogue, which I outline in detail in the section on the index cards.

Whilst it had not featured in the performance at the *Brewery Tap Gallery* in 2019, as I had not fully developed it, the index catalogue became a critical element of future performances including the final viva exhibition *Performing the Archive* at the Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury in 2020.

Fig. 36 *Louisa drawing out an index card during 'Performing the Archive' at Herbert Read Gallery, UCA Canterbury* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Where the archive featured in further events, it became re-displayed each time depending on the space and kinds of presentation surfaces used. This naturally changed the dynamic of the original sequence of the performance and activated not only refinements of the existing actions but also introduced additional elements into the performance. A new work *Liquid Histories* (2020) consisting of 5 antique glass bottles with liquid collected from the significant sites of Cliffe Marshes, Egypt Bay, Decoy Fleet, Yantlett Creek and the Cooling

Fig. 37 *Louisa performs with 'Liquid Histories'* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Channel of Grain Power Station with 5 accompanying index cards became part of the performance. It evolved from a small vial of estuary water that was collected from The Isle of Grain and performed at the *Brewery Tap*, where Louisa undid the vial and tipped out a small drop of water onto her forefinger and anointed her forehead. With *Liquid Histories* Louisa repeats that action from one of the five bottles of water and extends the action from forehead to chin.

Whilst Louisa is in her original costume, some parts of it are now lost, worn out or misplaced. The Victorian style ankle boots that were worn during the 2002 images on Cliffe Marshes were worn through and were replaced with some low-heeled shoes with a period style. Her straw hat with a flower decoration has gone and the case she carried during the 2002 works was lost and is replaced by a much deeper case of the period.

As we can see, the performance has evolved throughout a long period from a more static, composed set of photographic works of *Marsh* (2002) to a live performance that actively engages with *The Archive of Atmosphere* and has evolved into the fully-fledged work *Performing the Archive*. The re-emergence of the fictitious character Louisa Cornford has been critical in how atmosphere has been explored and articulated for this research. The performance has shifted the objects from static museum-like pieces to ones that are active. The contents of *The Archive of Atmosphere* have speculated upon the potential for atmosphere to exist within their material forms through this act of performance.

Fig. 38 *Liquid Histories*, *The Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

5.7 A Sea Container on Cliffe Marshes and Other Existing Archives

I have discussed in some detail the creation of Louisa Cornford and her *Archive of Atmosphere*, but there is another branch of the archive that is significant when considering the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. A number of collections of objects accumulated by strangers have been discovered in the peninsula. I have identified three such collections; one is housed in a makeshift shed in Cliffe, on a piece of farmland adjacent to the Cooling Road, another is in a concrete barn at Dalham Farm, also on the Cooling Road but at High Halstow and the final one, no longer in existence, is a sea container by Cliffe Pools. It is this collection that I will start with.

Fig. 39 *Shed at Cooling Rd, Cliffe: Interior* (Anna Falcini: 2018); Fig.40 *Shed at Cooling Rd, Cliffe: Exterior* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Fig. 41 *Interior of Barn, Dalham Farm, High Halstow* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Fig. 42 *Contact Sheet of Container at Cliffe Pools* (Anna Falcini: 2002)

Amongst my ongoing research materials that I have accumulated since the early 2000s is a contact sheet I made at Cliffe Marshes, probably in the early summer of 2002. The sheet has a series of 31 black and white thumbnail images. The first strip from left to right are of a close up of a hole in the side of a shipping container that was on the site, three shots inside the container and a series of establishing shots of the container at a distance in the landscape. The rest of the images on the contact sheet are of a number of burnt-out cars close by to the container and then shots of the seawall and clouds. In many of the shots Louisa Cornford is present; an eerie decapitated head above the parapet of the concrete seawall or picking over the bones of a Toyota Corolla. What I am most drawn to though is the first strip of images of the sea container, for its discovery and subsequent exploration is still vivid in my mind as one of the primary experiences of atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. It is also an example of a ready-made archive.

The container was located by Cliffe Pools, a site that had just been newly acquired in 2001 by the RSPB, preserving the area as a nature reserve for over wintering wading birds and colonies of spring breeding birds. When I came across the container in 2002, the site was still a neglected wasteland and a hazardous area of fly-tipped rubbish that had not yet been remodelled into a reserve (RSPB, s.d.).

At the time in 2002, it appeared as a series of pools, the result of the excavation of the Victorian aggregate & cement industries that had fed the constructions of engineering projects including a series of famous lighthouses such as Eddystone and the Needles (Cherry, 1991:0). In character as Louisa Cornford, I had been drawn to a series of burnt-out

cars that lay one after another, all in various states of decay. The carcasses of these scrap cars suggested disturbing scenes of violence and petty crime but also a warped motoring museum gone wrong; the antithesis to the traditional veneration of the motor vehicle on the neat lawns of Beaulieu's National Motor Museum, for example (Beaulieu Enterprise Ltd, 2019).

At the end of this dusty road of collapsed metal was the shipping container whose doors were unlocked. Inside the container were numerous objects; items of furniture such as an old office chair, wide gauge rubber tubing, an improvised metal plinth propped against the wall, a ream of old A1 paper, a hand-made painted sign and a basket that was unravelling. These were just some of the items in the front of the container. There was an anteroom at the back whose contents I have now forgotten. Numerous questions circled around me; whose container was it, how did it get here, why was it here etc.? Although it appeared to be a random assemblage of rubbish, the items inside had an odd rhythm and co-dependency on each other. The home-made plinth for example, propped on a sturdy steel tube leg and with its slim rectangular top appeared to have been fashioned to fit the container.

It is this status of indeterminacy, of seeming to be gathered and kept for a purpose and not discarded, that was intriguing. In the shipping container, Louisa immediately became a "garbologist" carefully dusting away the metaphorical dirt to singularly catalogue the items (Hawkins and Muecke, 2002:9). Instead of regarding this scene as one of rubbish, and therefore of no economic or cultural value, it became a

Schatzkammer of A.T.M.O.S.P.H.E.R.E.[16] (Miller, 2017).

In her book *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts and Pollution and Taboo*, Mary Douglas states that

> "rejected bits and pieces go through two stages. First, they are recognisably out of place, a threat to good order, and so are regarded as objectionable and vigorously brushed away…This is the stage at which they are dangerous; their half-identity still clings to them and the clarity of the scene in which they obtrude is impaired by their presence" (Douglas, 1966:161)

Douglas argues that once the "rejected bits" have been through the

> "process of pulverizing, dissolving etc. they become unrecognisable and conglomerated into a meleé of matter and once identity is absent, rubbish is not dangerous" (Douglas, 1966:161)

In the shipping container, Louisa was raking over objects that were dispossessed, the open door of the container inviting inspection and suggesting that their creator/owner may have lost interest or disappeared. They had not fallen into the second stage of Douglas's unidentifiable rubbish, nor were they objects that were in their original contexts either; they had an

[16] Addition of capitals and full stops to the word 'atmosphere' by Falcini

identity but they fell into an odd space where their immediate purpose was uncertain and therefore, they had become unstable objects. The fact that there was a limited amount of objects, of which most were intact and of a largish size, suggested principles of the ordering of objects in the museum where "procedures are mobilized to place and contextualize objects" (Edensor, 2005:312). In this sense, Louisa was archiving the archive.

The sea container's collection was at two ends of the spectrum by a) touching upon memories of place and familiarity, perhaps that of the museum in its collection of items (and museums are surely in the business of serving up "commodified memories") and b) the objects were degrading but were "ruinous matter" not yet "consigned to burial or erasure" (Edensor, 2005:317). They still had potentiality and therefore were not ready to be catalogued in a traditional museum or dumped in a tip.

Perhaps it is also worth noting here the "spectral" quality of the objects, arising from their connections to the human hand but long since removed from human interactions that produced a ghostly presence (Edensor, 2005:329). What may linger on are the "object-presences which conjure up the absence of those who wore, wielded, utilized and consumed them" (Edensor, 2005:328). These absences hover intensely, creating an eerie feeling. As Mark Fisher notes in his book *The Weird and the Eerie*, the eerie can be where "there is nothing present when there should be something". Fisher draws the eerie in particular to a feeling that "pertains to ruins or other abandoned structures" (Fisher, 2016:61-62).

The sea container presented multiple absences; objects that were de-contextualised and an "abandoned structure" which all have ghostly associations (Fisher, 2016:62). Objects that were owned and handled, manufactured and fabricated were found inside a container that is adrift from

its shipping routes, ports and regulatory infrastructures of a global industry whose primary objective is shipping new goods around the globe. The container and its contents were ruthless outcasts from “consumer capitalism” marooned and beached inland, as though caught on a freak tidal wave and washed ashore (Edensor, 2005:315).

A decade later I returned to look for the shipping container but it had disappeared along with the burnt out cars, removed when the land transformed into a nature reserve. Instead of tired carboretteurs and coils of rubber tubing, the visitor could find Shelduck, Curlew and Black Tailed Godwits. “Regular guided walks” and “safari fun days” replaced the boy racers and clandestine activities of old. The evidence of a more haphazard past had been largely erased and smoothed away, with no immediate clues for the contemporary visitor of this past life (Nature Conservation, s.d.).

An atmosphere of a different kind had superseded the one that emanated from faded objects; an orchestra of birds whose audience pulled up to a managed neat car park with accessible trails and clear visitor paths. The eeriness of the shipping container was never far from this scene cleansed of its unsavoury post-industrial past. The re-presentation and marketing by RSPB to attract (manufacture) bird populations to the old cement pools does not fully erase the old atmospheres which threaten to leak out at any moment. New atmospheres must rise up. Whilst the shipping container has long since drifted away, its memory has a potency that, I argue, has a particularly powerful atmospheric affect made all the more notable for its absence. It has become a talisman of atmosphere for Louisa.

Where the sea container became a cold case, deterritorialized and

disappeared without trace, two other existing archives of atmosphere remain in situ in the peninsula; a shed on the Cooling Road at Cliffe and a concrete barn at Dalham Farm on the Cooling Road at High Halstow. Both are structures in agricultural settings; the concrete barn at Dalham Farm is of a prefabricated concrete structure whereas the shed at Cliffe is constructed from materials salvaged from the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory at Cliffe marshes.

The Cliffe shed's inner skeleton of wooden beams and trusses are covered with corrugated sheets of metal and double wooden doors at the front, so deeply corroded that they no longer open and shut. Whole sheets of metal are missing and others are a filigree of iron oxide rust. The shed sits on the edge of a large arable field close to the road that goes to Cooling. Everything is precarious about it; the location, the handmade structure, its disrepair. It is deeply unstable and liable to collapse at any moment. Its contents are of building and farming materials; large numbers of planks of wood laying on the ground or stored in the rafters of the roof, old window frames, roof tiles, corrugated metal sheets, insulation and guttering. On the face of it, this is nothing more than a tumble down shed in an unremarkable field, some distance from the key locations of this research. The materials and objects inside appear to hardly merit discussion; unlike the sea container, they are piled into the shed with no apparent care or order.

Why should this shed be the focus of discussion, as a ready-made archive that contributes to the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula? The first thing to consider is the structure itself and its origins. Who constructed it and who has owned it is not known, yet it has clearly been made with a great deal of skill as observed

by the structure of the kingpin trusses in the roof, for example. Most significant of all is the repurposing of materials from the site of the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory at Cliffe Marshes (Jones and Keates, 2016). This marks out the shed as one which has agency and a potency; of ghostings from the past, whose exterior material is saturated with "enigmatic traces" pulled from the marshes at Cliffe (Edensor, 2005:328-30).

This exterior is in flux as it visually degrades without regular upkeep, paint flaking away, ridged metal turning to red brown rust, whole panels falling off. Simultaneously an occupation of new materials arrives to lightly mothball the shed with gossamer threads of cobwebs, creeping tendrils of ivy and the cryptogamous plants including mosses, lichens and algae (Büttner, 2014:1). Where its materials once formed structures for the manufacture and storage of chemical powders for munitions to invade overseas territories, these natural species are reverse engineering the structure and invading on a micro scale.

The ambiguity of this space, its relocation of materials, its strange gesture of sag and unravel, are topics for the eerie; not quite the ancient mound of Sutton Hoo in Mark Fisher's definition of "an eerie site in its own right", but one that certainly can fit the brief of "desolate, atmospheric, solitary" (Fisher, 2016:77). Its situation of slump and collapse suggests a watery end like the bones of hulks and wooden sailing vessels that litter the mud of the estuary some five miles away. A sound recording, I made in 2018 as I sat inside the shed captures creaks, little taps and knocks that are reminiscent of a vessel, slack on its mooring as it is lightly buffeted by the tide and wind, secured by its ropes.

The sound recording demonstrates how the building is a flexible and multi-dimensional structure and how it is active even as it appears static. The eerie can be felt through the sound of the shed and charges the space with a very

particular atmosphere by “the failure of absence” and “the failure of presence” (Fisher, 2016:61). Here the “the failure of absence” draws upon the creaks and little taps to speculate upon where those sounds are emanating from. “The failure of presence” suggests the abandonment and decaying fabric of the shed. The questions posed previously of whose shed it is, its purpose, geography and history etc., trigger the eerie in this context and subsequently build the atmosphere into a denser substance.

The concrete barn at Dalham Farm, further along the same road at High Halstow, shares many of the characteristics of the shed at Cliffe. It too is filled with an array of materials for construction or agricultural uses, its main door is hanging on its runners and creaks every time the wind gusts through the building. Sited by the road, surrounded by fields, it differs in its construction, being made from a precast concrete, post 1950, with iron roof girders and is much larger in square footage and height than the shed at Cliffe.

It nestles in between road and fields, yet it is set higher and commands a view of the estuary’s shipping and oil refineries at Coryton in Essex. Its unglazed windows offer up vignettes of marshes, vulnerable to the “rimy mornings” and droplets of “clammy…marsh mist” that Dickens evokes in *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1992:14). Moisture, which is continually present in the peninsula and is regarded as unhealthy in contemporary buildings, was seen as “a vital living sap” by the Greeks and was bound up with ideas of “strength” and also “debility”. Later, in Judeo-Christian beliefs it had deep implications for the male, of a vulnerability bound within phallocentric notions and of a “wounding...through moisture’s escape: dissolution and loss of identity” with the female sexual organs being the cause of such male angst (Thistlewood, 1995:84-5). Moisture then is another hazard in the peninsula, rather like Douglas’s discarded objects in a half state of recognition, contributing to the miasma.

The building could be a refuge for Dickens' Magwitch or Phillip Davidson, the wronged man out for revenge in *The Long Memory* (IMDb, 1990-2019). And there is an interesting point about its atmosphere, it is menacing, whether you are inside or out and whilst the interior of more complete buildings would provide refuge, inside the perforated barn I experienced both being "enclosed" and exposed simultaneously (Zumthor, 2010:44). Both conditions are uncomfortable yet this tension creates adrenaline and tips my body into a highly sensitised state, one where it operates at an optimum level for tuning into the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula. This appears to be a landscape, whose conditions are triggers for this state.

Within the barn were objects and unlike the contents of the shed at Cliffe, which were compressed into the space with no room to move around, where Louisa would clamber over and ferret around, here materials were scattered around in heaps or bundles with leisurely steps to be taken between these clusters. A number of the objects were no longer "dangerous" but had fallen into the meleé of pulverised or dissolving objects (Douglas, 1966:161). Objects were evidently breaking down as the floor of the barn testified, with, arguably, one of the most interesting surfaces in the peninsula. The floor was a terrazzo-like mix of rich organic matter of earth, leaves and bark, laid on concrete with the crumbs of flaking materials added into the mix. As decay had taken place, a collapse of objects had led to this surface of chips, fragments and particles underfoot. Murmurings of gravity had magnetically pulled the physical objects back to the earth, whilst the ephemeral and particulars of the object, floated into the barn's space. This I argue, is a process of atmospheric release where the objects emit their matter into air. As DeSilvey notes "the death of the object allows for the continued animation of other processes (DeSilvey, 2012:258).

Fig. 43 *Detail of Cloth Tape Measure on the Barn Floor, Dalham Farm, High Halstow* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

DeSilvey uses the term “animation” in exploring the physical degradation of the object through neglect and effects of the environment on them, so that they eventually break down (DeSilvey, 2013: 258). Although this process was happening in the barn, I suggest that DeSilvey’s animation, is more literally applied. As the objects appeared static some moved involuntarily; a long plank balanced on top of others, see-sawed in the wind; the opening of a yellow builder’s bag weighted with rubble, flapped back and forth; two cloth tape measures unspooled from their leather cases, wrapped around the iron girders, swung from side to side.

The tape measures represented the fundamental question of Cornford’s *Archive of Atmosphere*; how to classify the ephemeral nature of the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula. They reinforced the slippery nature of the

atmosphere and the question of whether the atmosphere can be measured. Whilst being tools of precision they were lashed precariously to the iron girder, the central support structure on which everything in the barn hinged. Iron was the material that Joseph Beuys would use in his *Spade with Two Handles* in 1965; simultaneously a tough and vulnerable material, that Beuys registered as both “hard” and “flesh” and furthermore, “as a metaphor for the heart...and to breath” (Thistlewood, 1995:82-83). In this one anonymous act of abstract calculus I understood the barn was a seam between the animate and inanimate where atmosphere existed.

Conclusion

This sheet has discussed the creation of the amateur Edwardian archaeologist Louisa Cornford in 2002 and her re-emergence in this research project. It has examined how through her unorthodox approach I have immersed myself into the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula, through the alter ego of Cornford.

From this starting point we have seen how the figure of Cornford has been a device for navigating the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula and observed Cornford’s archaeological practice through the *Archive of Atmosphere*, a unique archive of found objects using the system of *The Cornford Analytics*. This has been compared to established museum practices, where I have differentiated between the purposes and outcomes of both these approaches. In doing so, I have identified that the objects which Cornford has collected are specific to the harbouring of atmospheres or may be found in locations of intense atmosphere. By contrast, I have argued, objects that enter traditional museums do so through their historical and social value. I have further discussed how the *Archive of Atmosphere* is stored, catalogued, displayed and experienced.

Finally, I have presented three examples of established or pre-existing archives on the peninsula, two of which are in situ at Cliffe and High Halstow and one of which, a Sea Container at Cliffe Pools, is no longer in existence. How these kinds of structures were experienced was through an intimate psycho-geographic journey; one that became a personal exploration for me into the atmosphere of the landscape through its artefacts. Whether they could provide experiences of the atmosphere to a wider audience is an interesting question. By locating and identifying them to a wider audience as examples of sites of atmosphere, may in fact, be counterproductive because of the nature of how atmospheres are largely intuitive and felt. By pointing people in the direction of specific combinations of place, site, objects they will anticipate atmosphere rather than feel it and sense it as if they had stumbled upon it independently. My own experience of a psycho-geographic approach is borne out in the anticipatory nature of discovering these kinds of sites and of a gradual revealing of their atmospheres.

As I have discussed in this sheet, these objects contained in the pre-existing archives in larger numbers create forceful atmospheres that are further re-enforced by the structures that contain them and their locations. In the case of the Sea Container that has since disappeared, the memory of its atmosphere remains through the photographic image on a contact sheet, speculating upon the dispossessed and the disappeared; metaphorical reflections upon the elusive atmosphere itself.

Sheet 6 TQ 7688 The Isle of Grain: Re-illuminating the landscape of the Hoo Peninsula through the media of film (the porousness of past & present)

Overview

In the thesis so far I have demonstrated how atmosphere has been investigated through a number of threads, including cartography, psycho-geography and archives. In this sheet, I will determine how perceptions and cultural knowledge have shaped opinions of the peninsula and its representation, through the examples of painting and film.

As I will reveal in this sheet, these perceptions and cultural ideas have influenced the visual representation of the Hoo Peninsula and these images, in turn, reinforce these perceptions and ultimately contribute to the understanding of atmosphere, the anticipation of it, and how it may be experienced.

Initially the sheet lays out how the landscape of the Hoo Peninsula was rarely the subject of serious painting. It argues that when artists were venturing out 'En Plein Air' and capturing the sublime this particular estuarine landscape remained stubbornly invisible (Bermingham, 1989:70-71). The rising wave of voices that influenced the perceptions of the peninsula (Carpenter *et.al*., 2013), validated the reasons for painters not to brave the precarious and unhealthy landscape but to instead, sail past to other more palatable coastal environments such as Margate (Blayney Brown *et al.*, 2014).

As a result, this landscape remained a mute source for painting, but it later emerged as a consistent subject matter in the media of film. It was the backdrop in David Lean's *Great Expectations* (Lean, 1946); appeared as a pseudo-Vietnam in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987); and was the subject of a film made in 1952 called *The Island* (Ingram and Pickering,

1952) to promote B.P.'s new oil refinery in the area. These three examples of film draw from both fictional narratives and real incidents (although these were somewhat veiled in the illusory). We therefore see how the peninsula became "mutable" (DeSilvey, 2012: 261).) and could adapt to become a warzone (Kubrick), a fictional location for a Dickens' novel (Lean) and as a setting for the creation of the Kent Oil Refinery (Ingram and Pickering).

A parallel can be drawn here to the "mutable character" of the material objects collected in the *Archive of Atmosphere* as discussed in the previous sheet. These objects were unstable but contained "transformative powers" and as *Sheet 6* develops we see how pronounced this mutability is in the visual landscape (DeSilvey, 2012:261). Where the omission of the Hoo Peninsula, with its persistent, "brackish zone" of marshland and estuary waters, was redundant in painting, this mutability became ripe territory for film (Ackroyd, 2008:395).

With reference to these films, I then propose that the camera lens is a technology which has mediated the atmosphere through a post-phenomenological position, primarily as a medium that revealed the landscape through multifarious perspectives and in doing so reinforces this mutability and instability that have so far been uncovered through the psycho-geographic and archival approaches. Where painting was reliant on one angle, film could present multiple viewpoints simultaneously, echoing how atmosphere is not just found within one phenomenon.

In order to establish how the Hoo Peninsula is re-illuminated through the media of film, I situate the proposition through the introduction of Ihde's work on post-phenomenology, specifically his writing on *Imaging Technologies* (Ihde, 2009:45). Ihde acknowledges that "lens technologies produced a new, mediated form of human vision" (Ihde, 2009:51). The example that Ihde uses is

the telescope, invented in the early seventeenth century, which admittedly is some historic distance from the invention of the film camera in the late 1890s. This synaptic time lag eventually works its way from a static lens that seeks out celestial information far beyond human knowledge of the time to a moving lens that captures and alters the human perception of "thinking and imagining" which Deleuze notes in his work on cinema (Colebrook, 2002:29).

To pause momentarily upon Ihde's work around this optic technology, it is worth reflecting upon how, as the mysteries of astronomy were being revealed, landscape painting was emerging as a tour de force. However, technology was already looming in the background, ready to snatch from the jaws of painting methods that expressed human experience, opening up unknown worlds for speculation.

I then go on to develop a theory where the intangible and tangible of atmosphere converge through the actual materiality of analogue film. Taking a cue from Giuliana Bruno's work *Surfaces*, I explore the potential for celluloid film to absorb particles of the atmosphere through its reaction to the light of the peninsula and how the projection is a "revivification" of not only the images of the landscape but also of atmosphere coming to life (Dean, 2011:11).

Further on in the sheet I compare the multisensory encounters of film with how atmosphere is experienced through the sensing body, both rooted in the engagement of a number of senses and perceptions and as opposed to a single phenomenon (Bohme, 2017:14). In this regard, film mirrors the "atmospheric effect" and projects the variable characteristics of the Hoo Peninsula. I argue, that where a unique synthesis of the real and the imagined emerges in films of the Hoo Peninsula, it re-illuminates the black spots of the past and shines a light upon the atmosphere that resides in the landscape.

6.1 A Black Spot

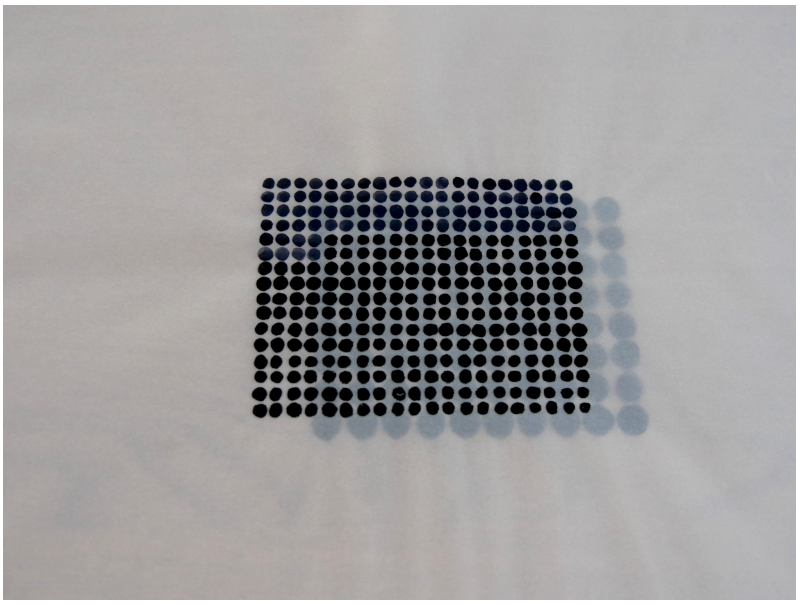

Fig. 44 *Black Spots* (Anna Falcini: 2015)

As early as the 16th century the peninsula was regarded as an "unpleasant and unhealthy place" and the word "unwholesome" was used to describe it by William Lambarde in 1570. According to the academic Mary Dobson, marsh parishes such as those in the Hoo Peninsula, were "the most notorious black spots during the early modern period" (Carpenter *et.al*., 2013:15-16). These black spots were often the result of malaria known locally as marsh fever or the ague and were the breeding ground for mosquitoes due to the continual flooding of the land that breached ineffective sea defences, in the 16th century. The fleets and ditches, characteristic of the peninsula, continued to provide perfect breeding grounds for malaria with the last case being reported in the 1950s. (Even as late as the 1980s loft spaces of houses in the Isle of Grain were routinely sprayed to eradicate mosquitos)[17].

[17] An elderly resident from The Isle of Grain, related this story of loft spraying to me during my research.

It is within this context that one can begin to identify reasons why the landscape of the Hoo Peninsula were omitted from the great period of landscape painting in England. Edward Hasted noted that even vicars would not live in these marsh parishes and so it was hardly the picture of pastoral England that might attract the artist (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:15-16). Arguably, apart from its coastal activity, the landscape itself also lacked the features that would attract the painter of the picturesque or sublime of the period. Borrowing from Ann Bermingham's writings, it could be concluded that there was a decided invisibility of Horace Walpole's "arrant strollers" gallivanting across the peninsula who might stumble upon an example of William Gilpin's perspectives and prominences (Bermingham, 2002:87).

With the exception of Cliffe (whose name is derived from its 'cliff top position' 10m above sea level) and Northward Hill at High Halstow that overlooks Cooling and Halstow marshes, there were few elevated perspectives from which to view the largely flat, marginal landscape from (Pullen *et al*., 2011:8; Gravesend & Rochester, 2015).

The peninsula appeared to slip through the net of what had come to be defined as landscape that began to emerge from the eighteenth century onwards. Lacking either charming vistas or pleasant agrarian scenes of farming, it repelled these existing ideals of landscape. Its proximity to London did not even draw citizens from that city to dwell upon its unpopulated marshes. The natural philosophy that determined the "aesthetics of nature"; "harmony, order, design and beauty" were evidently amiss in the Hoo Peninsula (Bermingham, 1989:182).

It was neither a "cultivated landscape of ordered farmland" or Ruskin's misty eyed "untouched pristine wilderness" (Harman, 2009:2-5) but a place repeatedly documented as "featureless" (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:19). In a

particularly low point for the peninsula, the apothecary Dr Thomas Johnson, who set foot from a boat on The Isle of Grain in 1629 to seek out plant specimens, noted its “inhuman wilderness” and he and his group of companions found little to “arouse our fainting spirits to any breath of hope” (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:18).

This perspective of a dark and untrustworthy place maintains a currency in the cultural psyche and the writer Peter Ackroyd in his 2008 book *Thames: Sacred River* reflects upon how “it exerts a primitive and still menacing force, all the more eerie and lonely because of its proximity to the great city” (Ackroyd, 2008: 396). At the boundary of this “great city” is an obelisk, the London Stone, which rises out of the mud and is located on Yantlett Beach between Allhallows and the Isle of Grain (Ibid.). At low tide, it gives the impression of being marooned. Close to London, it marks the spot where the river meets the sea in the Thames Estuary, and yet it is strangely distant. A long way from anywhere and yet connected through the imaginary line that

Fig. 45 *The London Stone* (Anna Falcini: 2016)

stretches from Crow Stone on the other side of the Thames in Essex, it is a solitary reminder of the bleak landscape.

This strange spur of land that gave the peninsula its name of Hoo, unearthed a set of cultural and visual encounters that were distinctly different from the main corpus of England and problematic for the subject of landscape painting. Within this cannon of historical and contemporary observations, the Hoo Peninsula was (and to some extent, remains) a difficult terrain that exists at the periphery of a contemporary culture and was hardly worth getting a pencil out for let alone the comprehensive paraphernalia of the painter.

In this section, I have suggested reasons for why the Hoo Peninsula was disregarded as serious subject matter for the landscape painter and the implications for its cultural status, resulting from its conception as an unaesthetically pleasing landscape. These perceptions reinforced the idea of the peninsula as a dark, eerie and melancholic place that was to be avoided by the visitor.

The cumulative effect of such impressions contributed to the physical development of the landscape, where it remained at the edge of society and would be put to work as agricultural land, for industrial projects and as a strategic place of defence rather than as a place of leisure. It was thus further ingratiated with hazardous activities (the Curtis's and Harvey Ltd Explosives Factory in the 1900s, for example) that precluded the visitor. This left large areas of inhospitable and treacherous land in the peninsula, "emptied of the human" and the agency of uncertainty (Fisher, 2016:11). From these conditions emanated the "physiognomic traits" of atmosphere that were likely to be disputed in the eighteenth century as belonging to atmosphere (Böhme, 2017:24-39). Atmosphere was only framed within a limited number of

characteristics; “the beautiful, the sublime (the Picturesque)…[and] the aura (ibid.). As Böhme argues, the field of study “had extraordinary limitations” and ignored “the many more atmospheres” that were available including those less pleasurable ones (ibid.).

With this prevailing picture of the peninsula’s imagery, we can begin to identify how, culturally, a strong sense of atmosphere developed in spite of its myopia. The atmosphere would have to fester away, however, until later more enlightened opinions and progressive research would emerge.

6.2 The Island: Memorising the landscape through filmic methodologies

In this next section I discuss how the atmosphere that accumulated over time in the landscape attracted film makers whose narratives could be unfolded through the setting of the Hoo Peninsula and how the landscape was articulated and re-illuminated through the medium of film, within a porousness of past and present.

Film is a technology and as such, it has radically changed our perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is here, in this use of film as both a physical cell of time and a new visual technology that supersedes painting, where it comes into contact with the Hoo Peninsula. The Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky regarded it as a unique medium, able to “imprint time” (Greenhalgh, 2003:98).

The Hoo Peninsula was largely ignored as a subject matter in the depiction of landscape painting yet it was later a vehicle for film, a number of which I discuss here. It featured as a backdrop to a storyline (in *Great Expectations* and *Full Metal Jacket*) and as a subject matter that was central to *The Island* (Lean, 1946; Kubrick, 1987; Ingram and Pickering, 1952).

The Island was the result of B.P.'s decision to construct the 'Kent Oil Refinery' on The Isle of Grain in 1952. To allay the fears of the local communities nearby and to promote its construction, B.P. commissioned a film that would document the refinery's development and subtly embed the message that change was inevitable and that progress for Britain was dependent on oil (Piers-Taylor, 2003-14).

The film tells the story of the refinery through a tightly scripted narration using a

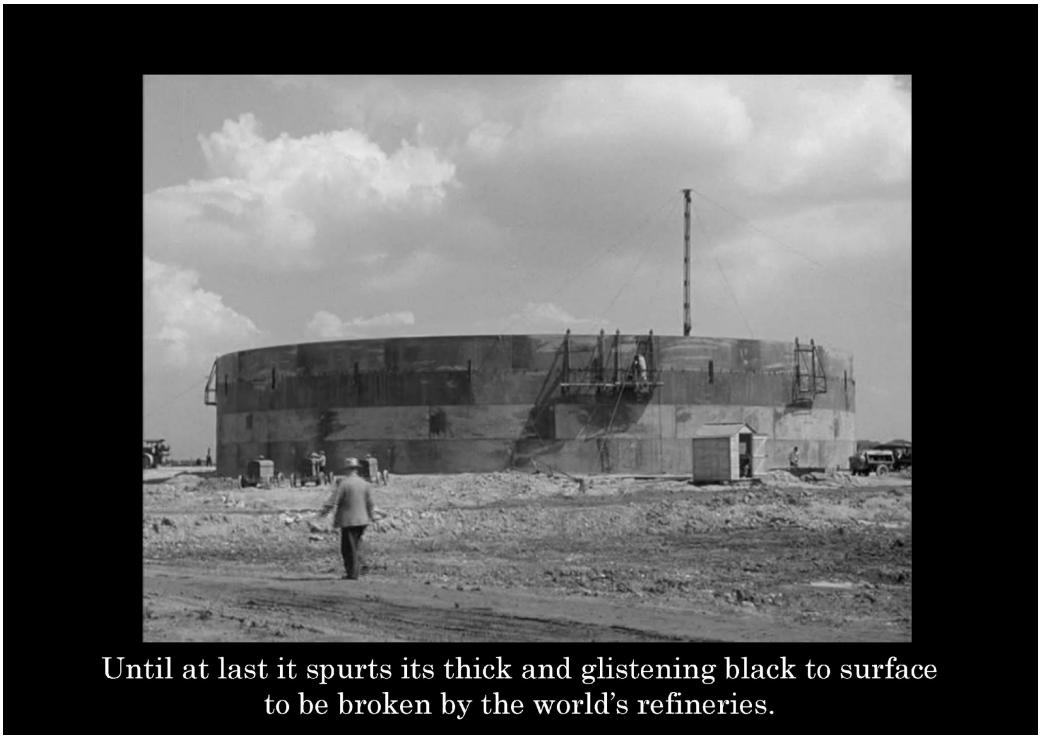

Fig. 46 *Glistening Black* (Anna Falcini: 2016)

series of characters including the construction manager, workers, local farm labourers, and the Parish vicar[18]. Directed by John Ingram and Peter Pickering, *The Island* is an artistically constructed film that cleverly manoeuvres the film

[18] Many of these characters were, in fact, inhabitants drawn from The Isle of Grain. The character of the vicar, for example, was played by the real vicar.

camera between industrial progress and ancient landscape, persuasively presenting the argument that progress inevitably takes prominence over the irrevocable loss of landscape.

Through numerous visits I had become familiar with entering Grain through the threshold of industry before arriving at the village or coastline. I traced a pathway around the shoreline and came up against a whole section of ancient marsh compressed under concrete. The marsh, that had existed for thousands of years, was superseded by an oil refinery that existed for only thirty years and whose concentric pools of black liquid were reminiscent of the black spots of disease that had earlier existed in Dobson's marsh parishes.

Initially, *The Island*, inhabits its purpose as a marketing tool for an oil company wanting to smooth the way for this "80-million-pound job with 80 million headaches" (Longhurst, 1959:165) The film, undoubtedly successful in its purpose of justification for an oil refinery being situated in the peninsula, was strangely captivating to me. I viewed Grain through a camera lens, as a landscape in transition that captured the memory of it at a critical point of change. As the camera lens recorded the activity, the memory of it became indelibly imprinted onto the celluloid, absorbing the transformation of landscape.

In the film there is a porousness of both past and present, between scenes where the landscape has changed very little in The Isle of Grain, contrasted with scenes where the landscape is mechanically manoeuvred into new geographies. The physical impact upon this part of The Isle of Grain was significant; fleets were filled, land was drained, earth was shifted, roads diverted and some areas became inaccessible and boundaried. The large infrastructure of the oil refinery emerged in the numerous oil tanks and other machinery that appeared. From a position of posterity and time past, the

immateriality of film has captured a landscape that is evocative and provokes the palpable.

In his chapter *Film as Spatial Critique*, the artist Patrick Keiller discusses how film

"offers possibilities…to experience spatial qualities no longer encountered in ordinary experience…because they no longer exist. Spaces that no longer exist may still exist physically but not socially or they may no longer exist at all" (Keiller, 2013: 147-8).

Keiller suggests that film has a capacity to offer the possibility to "experience spaces of the past" (Ibid., 148). My encounters of The Isle of Grain were redrawn beyond what Keiller defined as "ordinary experience". Through the medium of film, I could go beyond what I knew into an expanded experience; that of the place that Keiller understood as long since existing from the Deleuzian position of a "single observer", into the multi-faceted potential of the cinematic (Colebrook, 2002: 31).

Entangled in the 26 minutes of irreversible change to Grain, I am suspended into in-between-ness that is a rhizomatic network of memory, of the miss-remembered, of archaeology and of the primary experience. It first manifests itself through a faded industrial past (the oil refinery being constructed in the film but now long since closed) and then a past/past of the pastoral before industry (landscapes of birdwatchers) set against my more recent timeframe of light/past experience in the landscape where changes continue, such as the recent demolition of Grain Power Station and it creates an altered "possible perception of life" (Colebrook, 2002:31). The effect is to linger (and toil) in this space of that which is experienced through the film, set against the embodied

in the landscape and bringing these two things in parallel with each other at a jaunty angle.

The point here is that the scenes in *The Island* are temporally mobile even if they are visually static. Of the few scenes where the camera is still, the landscape is in motion even if not visibly so. The film's mobility, between scenes of disruption to the landscape in both the semi-permanent (the building of the refinery) to the settled and rooted (ploughing of a field) is an encounter through the film camera that pinpoints not only the phenomenon of time but the mutability and instability of the landscape that I identified in the introduction. Through the film we witness directly evidence of its instability through its physical transformation. "Every time the projector is switched on and these images are summoned back to life once more" there is a "revivification" and the landscape appears to be indelibly tainted by an atmosphere that cannot be erased and, in fact, intensifies (Cullinan, 2011:11).

6.3 The Peninsula as a Backdrop: Setting the Scene for Dark Episodes

The positioning of the Hoo Peninsula appears as a setting in two feature films; *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987). Where landscape painting in the 18th and 19th centuries was excited by the Claudian prospects and panoramas and later what Ann Bermingham describes as "intimate and occluded views that presented nature as rough, shaggy and humble", the estuary's stark, uncompromising, windswept extremity could be put to good use for settings of dark and obdurate narratives (Bermingham, 2002:81).

In the novel *Great Expectations* (1868), Dickens builds a vivid visual image of the marshes in the opening chapters of the book through the climatic phenomenon of fogs, bitter winds and mists that are familiar motifs of the North Kent marshes. Dickens writes that the "the dark flat wilderness beyond the

churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the lower leaden line beyond which the wind was rushing, was the sea" (Dickens, 1868: 3) The few landmarks Dickens describes in this flat place fall to a beacon to guide ships and a gibbet to hang criminals from as an example to others.

In 1946 David Lean created a film of the story and in the opening shot we observe the central character, Pip, running along this "low leaden line" with an aural soundscape of an eerie wind, menacing music and birdsong (Dickens, 1868: 3). Lean faithfully recreated Dickens' evocative prose in this opening scene and although I recognize the territory of the marshes, it appears as a disembodied and distinctly constructed image.

Fig. 47 *Great Expectations* (Cineguild: 1946)

Where the real and the imaginary begin to synthesise is in a scene between Pip and Biddy, who comes to run the Gargery house when Pip's sister dies.

Lean has embedded the subtleties and details of the place into the scene that are resonant in the contemporary landscape: the activation of the landscape by the continual wind across the flat marsh, the very particular birdsong that you hear in the Summer period, the light on Pip and Biddy's faces, the large open skies and the line of reeds behind Pip[19].

In contrast to *Great Expectations*, where the location is critical to the story, the Hoo Peninsula featured in the film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) as a stand-in for Vietnam. The director of *Full Metal Jacket*, Stanley Kubrick, was meticulous in his work and sourcing the right locations was critical. The choice for Kubrick to use Cliffe, the wide-open expanse of marsh in the Hoo Peninsula, in one section of the film, seems pertinent. It was an area that he readily transformed into scenes of rural Vietnam and which fitted his original intention to film the real landscape of Vietnam[20].

In one particular scene, the camera frames 3 soldiers inside a military helicopter as one of them fires at innocent civilians below running over the terrain. The scene is one of violence and menace which Kubrick weaves into a binary image through the compression of the interior and the expanse of the exterior's flat landscape below. The multiple framing of the camera's lens, the helicopter door, and of cinema screen sets the landscape into an ambiguous position. I try to lay my own memory over the image from the screen, to visually register the Cliffe of Kubrick with my own mental images, never quite lining up the register perfectly, creating a double image that blurs at the edges[21].

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[19] Timecode for scene: 0:32:40 – 0:33:47 (Lean, 1946)

[18] In notes and correspondence about the making of *Full Metal Jacket* at the Kubrick Archive at UAL, Kubrick proposes filming this scene in Vietnam and razing farmland to make it authentic to the original scenes of the Vietnam War.

[21] Timecode for scene: 0:56:11 – 0:58:15

Viewing the scene, I experience this duality of intimacy and distance as the camera becomes what Giuliana Bruno describes as “filament of visual existence” as if the camera was a speck of dust inside the helicopter and yet views the scene of Vietnam/Cliffe marshes below its aperture (Bruno, 2017).

Kubrick frames the scene as though it is seen through the soft glow of a Claude glass and he achieves what Alexandra Harris in her book *Weatherland* attributes to the device as “an atmospheric viewing” of Cliffe. The Claude glass was surely a filmic device in its infancy with its many ranges of tinted glass for all different scenes, with viewing strategies that distanced the viewer from subject matter and created illusions of landscape (Harris, 2015:192).

The Claude glass, the painter’s convex blackened mirror held up to the eye in order to view the landscape behind the user’s head, is an early lens technology which “mediate[d] human perception in a new way” and chronologically sits somewhere between the invention of the telescope and the film camera (Ihde, 2009:51). All of these lens devices became articulated by the body and situated the viewer in an embodied position.

Giuliana Bruno says that “film literally comes to life as light dancing on a surface-screen” and she cites Peter Greenaway’s words that “cinema is the business of artificial light…catching or trapping the light permanently on a surface” (Bruno, 2014:55). I can play this scene repeatedly and bring alive through luminosity this particular section of the Hoo Peninsula.

This is where I argue that atmosphere lingers between immaterial and the material. These are traces, or particles, suspended in the frames of the film that are revived and reconnect the landscape through the overlay of past and present. The film holds them in suspension as though archived and then in a

"revivification" they are transversal (Cullinan, 2011). Here, the methodology of film allows for a multi-sensory reading through the visual, audio, imaginary and real onto a medium that is immaterial and which relies upon a series of actions and strategies to view the work. In the space of the cinema, the viewer is suspended momentarily and immersed into the scene with the cinema screen and the canvas becoming resonant surfaces that hold the visual.

6.4 Trapping Particles: The Post-phenomenological Perspective

Up to this point, I have focused upon how the perception of the Hoo Peninsula led to its omission as a subject for the period of landscape painting and how it was later encapsulated as a backdrop for film. In this final section of the sheet I explore the implications of what Ihde identified as "lens" and "optic" technologies, how this entangles the post-phenomenological body and subsequently affects the atmosphere. Later in *Sheet 7* I reference Ihde's theories on this matter from the perspective of the stills camera, but I begin here with the effects of film and how the "cinematic" experience interweaves with the atmosphere.

The film camera is a lens technology that has revolutionised human perception through its use of moving image. From the embodied position, where we observed things from our own rooted perspectives, film has liberated that position and allowed a re-reading of perceptions; seeing an object magnified from a distance, multiple angles that the camera navigates, or a moving between time periods are just some examples of this transformation (Colebrook, 2002:31).

It is a unique technology that doesn't just inform us of things previously hidden or out of our perceptive capabilities but is a medium that lingers within the imaginary. As the German Cinematographer Günther Rittau describes it, "the

lens is our etching needle. We turn backwards and sweep along the avenues of time; we observe humanity in all its moods - discover a new physiognomy" (Greenhalgh, 2003:95). Perhaps put more directly by Ihde, knowledge in the post-phenomenological age is reliant upon the instruments of discovery and, furthermore, as argued by the scientist Alfred North Whitehead, it has led to a "higher imaginative level" and "a transformation" (Ihde, 2009:46). Has this now opened up a re-consideration for the evidence of atmosphere in new areas, as Böhme identified (Böhme, 2017:24-39)?

In Ihde's opinion, however, knowledge in the post-phenomenological age remains reliant upon "*human embodiment"* and the dynamic between "bodily action, perception and praxis" and within film this is particularly true (Ihde, 2009). It is not necessarily mediating the unseen as the telescope or x-ray machine did but is directed by the cinematographer to capture numerous scenes that will later be edited, arranged and compiled into a sequence of images to convey a story or event.

We can surmise that the lens in all of these lens technologies is an extension of the eye, what Ihde determines as the "eyeball-plus-optics" but with the film camera this is particularly true (Ihde, 2009:60). The cinematographers who captured the scenes of the Hoo Peninsula such as Guy Green in *Great Expectations* would observe it via this "mediated vision" (Ihde, 2009:52). Rather than the naked eye seeing one continuous scale and vision, the "eyeball-plus-optics" would be an opportunity to zoom in, pan the camera, adjust lighting, apply filters etc. The cinematographer's visual skills and sensitivity to the scene being filmed then is imperative, and their eye is enriched both by the mechanics of the lens and what is beyond that lens.

This is where I want to propose that atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula is captured via lens technology and becomes a critical element of the films I have

discussed. The camera lens has settled upon ‘things’ either the landscape itself or activity and objects in it. It is concerned with something otherwise it would be a blank space of little interest or use. In focusing on things, on the material, what emerges is the immaterial, the ‘ephemeral’ and the ‘indeterminate’ substances of atmosphere and the feelings evoked from these camera shots; the backdrop of reeds moving in the breeze in the scene between Pip and Biddy in *Great Expectations* and the wide expansive shots of the marshes in *The Island* as the surveyor’s Landrover drives towards the horizon evokes atmosphere (Böhme, 2017:39).

The film camera synthesises its mechanical processes with those of atmosphere and what emerges is the dialectical multifarious nature of both film and atmosphere. It achieves a visual compilation of what Deleuze identified as “singularities”; “colours, movements, sounds, textures, tones and light” (Colebrook, 2002:33). These are both the components of film and of atmosphere in the peninsula. They are. however, complicated and overlaid by the narratives of the films such as *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987).

Perhaps we can reflect upon the choice of the Hoo Peninsula as provocations for scenes in these films? That it was a pertinent choice because it had atmosphere and “a particular kind of aesthetic experience” (Fisher, 2016:61). As with the eerie, atmosphere is provoked by “certain tales, certain novels [and] certain films” (Fisher, 2016). As Greenhalgh notes, the cinematographer’s art is to make “images [that] do not just look, they feel” and in this ambition, the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula is, I argue, critical to the purpose of its setting in these films (Greenhalgh, 2003:97). The atmosphere in varying levels has played a crucial role in augmenting the narrative of these three films I have pinpointed.

It is important to note here that although these films cannot faithfully re-produce the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula as it would be experienced in an embodied position in the landscape, they nevertheless capture the particles and traces of the phenomenon and are reprised through a post-phenomenological experience. Taking both the embodied and post-phenomenological positions together, however, atmosphere becomes highly potent through these dual positions. If we consider Ihde's position that it is impossible to detach ourselves from a mediated vision, then it could be concluded that film is a particularly strong experience in the postmodern human experience and, in the context of this sheet, has an indelible effect upon how the phenomenon is experienced in the Hoo Peninsula.

Conclusion

In this sheet, I have explored how perceptions and cultural ideas that influenced the visual representation of the Hoo Peninsula, whilst being omitted in the period of landscape painting, emerged through film. I have identified how these images, or lack of them, reinforced those perceptions and contributed to particular types of interpretation of the atmosphere. These, I argued, became essential components for an anticipatory perception of it, and determined to some extent what one could expect when visiting the Hoo Peninsula.

Firstly, I addressed how the landscape was disregarded as a subject for landscape painting, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, and that through its incidents of disease, geography, and inclement weather, for example, it failed to attract the attentions of the landscape artist. As a result, the peninsula was overlooked and this contributed, along with written accounts, to its negative perceptions of being a lonely, dark and unpleasant place. In turn, these perceptions provided further evidence for an often-negative idea of

atmosphere that has continued to this day and is repeated verbatim (Jack, 2012).

Working in close proximity with the landscape of the Hoo Peninsula through painting would have presented a number of physical and cultural hurdles to overcome, that an embodied position of the film lens could navigate more fluidly. As a subject matter for painting the Hoo Peninsula was too dull, too diseased, too dark, too incomprehensible, but cinema could embrace these negatives and exploit them for dramatic purpose.

The landscape remained overlooked as a subject for painting, but it featured in a number of significant films either as a backdrop or as centre stage. The peninsula was in this sense mutable and I argued that its unstable characteristic grew in its favour as a useful location for motion pictures. I contrasted how it appeared as a backdrop in *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) and as a key location for *Great Expectations* (1946) and *The Island* (1952).

The three films I discussed featured the Hoo Peninsula in various situations; as a key landscape for the story of a boy who becomes a gentleman in *Great Expectations*, the place where change is inevitable in *The Island* and as a fictitious Vietnam in Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*. In these examples the Hoo Peninsula appears as both a backdrop for fictional stories and as real place. The camera lens was able to navigate both of these expressions of the landscape convincingly and the qualities of the imagined and the real became fluid and interchangeable.

As an embodied medium, film produces an "instrument-mediated vision" going beyond what could be captured in one single moment by the eyes (Ihde, 2009:52). Where the naked eye has a fleeting chance to take a snapshot of visual information, the camera has an ability to retain the information, to show

things missed by the human eye and then to replay that information. It can, as Deleuze asserts, use multiple angles, cuts and construction to create a structured imaging of a scene. This is where I am arguing that the camera lens becomes a memory tool and where the synthesis of the real and the imagined can operate and that atmosphere flourishes. (For a viewer unfamiliar with the Hoo Peninsula and its atmosphere, these examples of film may be introductions to the concept appearing in the landscape, but I would argue, that to experience a sense of an atmosphere through these three films can only be fully realised through an immersion of the site itself).

I noted how the dialectical nature of film was also ripe territory for the atmosphere; a counterpoint to the multisensory attributes that atmosphere operates within. I argued that the unique ability of film to oscillate between the material and immaterial were critical elements in analysing the atmosphere. Exploring how the process of film captured the landscape, I argued that that the camera lens was a memory tool that directly printed onto film tape and trapped the image of the place onto the material, whilst also being a medium that entangled the fictional.

The “fabrication” of the film process is where the physical moment of time is captured onto the celluloid of Ingram and Pickering’s film stock and is re-ignited by artificial light, activating the lost landscape buried underneath the oil refinery’s concrete tanks (Bruno, 2014). Bruno suggests that there is a fascination with the surface that came to prominence in modernity and which re-emerges today. The cinematic surface allows for the landscape of the Hoo Peninsula, through the filmic play onto surfaces, to be re-illuminated so that through a variety of visions, perspectives and treatments, the subject matter evolves through the porousness of not just past and present but fictions and narratives. The treatment of it in these fictions is at the margins, authentic to its geography and to its memory in cultural terms. Caught in this obscure creek,

the Hoo Peninsula remains elusive and ambiguous and continues to evoke atmosphere through the particular lens of its darker histories.

However, as I suggested, these materials are not faithful reproductions or presentations of the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula. From my own embodied position, when I work with the camera lens it is a filter with which to organize the complex material of the landscape and through this filtered viewpoint what may be returned back to my own eye is an altered perspective of the scene. For example, it cannot capture the clamminess of a marsh fog or the smell of the estuary's salty mud in Egypt Bay but it can record multiple scenes that can be compressed into a film and then replayed. The result of this is to record the atmosphere, contain it and replay it, so that we encounter it in cinematic terms through a post-phenomenological experience, triggering the embodied position. In doing this, the two experiences of atmosphere briefly synchronise and collide with intensity.

Sheet 7.0 TQ 7681 Ratcliffe Highway, Allhallows: Daydreams, Snowshoes, Mirrors and Lenses

Overview

The question of this thesis set out to identify why the Hoo Peninsula has a particular atmosphere. Key to this, in terms of the artistic methodology I've used to research the location, is how I personally became drawn to it. The atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula has exerted a tangible hold on me. As I have argued, others have felt similarly drawn to the Hoo Peninsula, including Iain Sinclair, Charles Dickens and photographer Nadav Kander (Sinclair, 2004; Tomalin, 2011; Kander, 2017). What I have set out in the previous sheets are methods that led to investigations into the peninsula through cartography, walking and archiving. What has not been explored so far is the fundamental question of the inherent pull of the landscape that is evidently so magnetic and unique to this landscape.

In this sheet I aim to identify the circumstances that have led to this point, where I have become absorbed and entangled by this landscape, having no previous connection to it before my twenties; a place that is the opposite of the familiar places of my childhood in leafy, suburban Surrey. Navigating my way through these entanglements is important to understanding a number of questions; why the Hoo Peninsula has attracted me; what the origins of this connection are; whether my experience of the atmosphere collides with my own histories, memories and experiences and the extent to which the affects of the peninsula infiltrate into me and implicate the depth of relationship to it.

In order to disentangle this knotty problem I reflect upon early fundamental experiences in childhood. I also study the early houses of my daydreams, some of which were stormy and unpredictable (Bachelard, 1994:10-13).

Although the root of this analysis emerges from responses to landscape, I focus on my body in these spaces, the feelings that emerge and how my subconscious is perceptive to atmospheres. In this set of reflections, I build the early appearance of atmospheres in my personal language that reappears strongly amplified in the Hoo Peninsula.

To do this I turn to phenomenology, the branch of philosophy that foregrounds the subjective experience of the world, an explication of our being in the world. In particular, I adopt Merleau-Ponty's branch of philosophy, putting the individual at the centre of perception and "direct experience" and I put my own body at the forefront of this enquiry, studying and analyzing my responses to the atmosphere (Matthews, 2010:16).

Explicatory facts and scientific data about an atmosphere, whilst useful for seeking certain knowledge, would focus purely upon objective evidence and occlude the subjective. It may, for example, help prove certain criteria; how geographical features have made the land prone to floods and tidal surges. This created pockets of stagnant water and problems for land usage (domestic, arable use, development) and subsequent water borne diseases on the peninsula that contribute to a perception of a dark, unhealthy place (Ackroyd, 2008:395).

These characteristics cannot be overlooked or dismissed and provide evidence for explaining the literal groundwork that contributes to its unique atmosphere, but what empirical ideas fail to address are the individual's experiences, and the sensations that are felt through both a consciousness and subconsciousness. It is what Mark Fisher in his introduction to his work *The Weird and the Eerie* identifies as "that which lies beyond standard perception, cognition and experience" (Fisher, 2016:8). Using Fisher's framing of standardization of perception/cognition etc., I argue that the experience in the

Hoo Peninsula also falls outside of this “standard perception” and emits feelings that are at the edge of “standard perception”.

7.1 The Collective and the Singular: experiences of atmosphere

In 1993 the artist Olafur Eliasson made a work of art called *Beauty*, a reconstruction of a rainbow using water droplets and light in a room. He describes it as an attempt to “make a rainbow” and in doing so, to materialize its presence. It relied upon the ability of the viewer’s eye to capture the correct

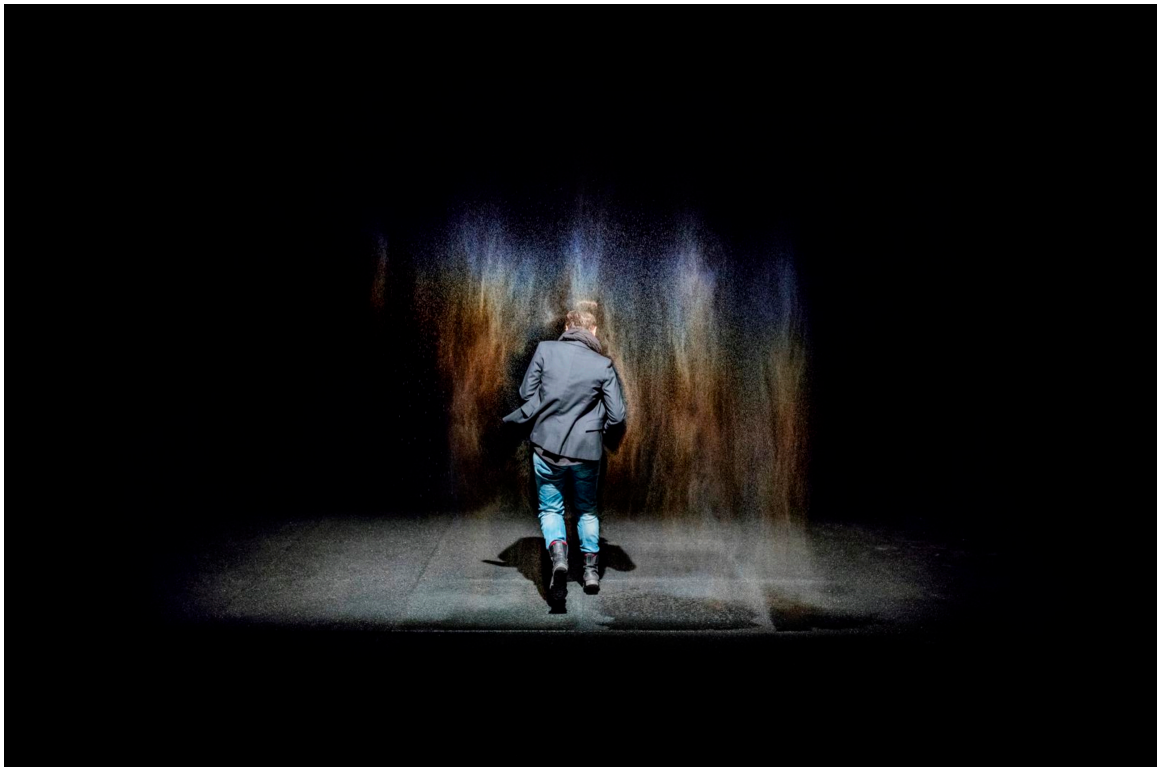


Fig. 48 *Beauty* (Olafur Eliasson: 1993)

angle where the rainbow would be revealed to their vision. (Abstract: Series 2, Episode 6, 2019).

Although the rainbow was the conclusive outcome, the critical point of the work was to make sense of the air in the room (Abstract: Series 2, Episode 6, 2019).

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Herman Schmitz has attributed one aspect of atmosphere to "feelings in the air" and in this context Eliasson's work can be said to construct and capture an atmosphere of the space (Böhme *et al*., 2014). By the very nature of re-constructing a rainbow, a common phenomenon in an unfamiliar interior space, he immediately altered the atmosphere of the room, from one of utility to that of *Beauty*.

Eliasson's practice has continued to experiment with making tangible and prominent the invisible. As Merleau-Ponty has identified, "the perceptual world is…largely unknown territory as long as we remain in the practical or utilitarian attitude" (Matthews, 2006:26). Contemporary human experience is continuously mediated to the point of being "contextual and constructed" so that the body is more detached from opportunities to experience the perceptual worlds that Merleau-Ponty describes (Perk, 2008:94).

It is the perceptual, the "indeterminate and ambiguous" that are at the forefront of this enquiry into the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula and Eliasson's work serves as an entry point into the idea that "atmospheres are obviously what is experienced in the bodily presence of humans and things, or in spaces" (Böhme, 2017:20). Eliasson is creating spaces to experience phenomena and as a result the audience experiences this on an individual and a collective basis. For example, in a later work *The Weather Project* (2003) a huge glowing semi-circular yellow light was mounted at the end of the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern against a mirror to giving the illusion of a circle. Haze machines emitted a fine mist resulting in a strange, freak of weather as potential sun and rain merged. Experienced in a large interior space, it resulted in an even stranger perception

of this scene of manufactured weather so one became initially conscious of its oddness but after a while in the space, acclimatized to it.

Like his earlier work *Beauty* the space had an atmosphere; staged and choreographed by the artist. Eliasson was interested in the weather as a "communal" event and "a topic of experience…we all share in a society and culture" in which he argues "sharing seems radical" (Perk, 2008:88-89). He has emphasized that the work is dependent on the audience and their "co-collaboration" (Abstract: Series 2, Episode 6, 2019).

The concept of weather as a universal subject that is relatable across all humans translates into the gallery space where the audience literally bathed in the "vast duotone landscape" similar to how individuals race to cluster with others on the beach on a rare sunny bank holiday from towns and cities (Tate, 2003). At the same time, however, it was necessary to experience the atmosphere in the space as an individual, not so much to find an isolated spot away from the collective audience, but to absorb the yellow mono frequency light through the eyes or the mist through the skin, just as in *Beauty* where the angle of the individual eye would catch the moment where the rainbow beamed out from the confluence of light and water (Abstract: Series 2, Episode 6, 2019).

Fig. 49 *The Weather Project* (Olafur Eliasson: 2003)

The collective auratic experience of the space was affirmed by the other members of the audience whose behaviours would reflect or mimic each other. For example, it soon became perfectly acceptable to lie prone on the floor for long periods of time to allow for a more immersive experience, whilst others walked around or stepped over these figures, a complete antithesis to usual behavior in a white cube space. This shared behaviour validated the experience and demonstrated the effect of the atmosphere of the work on the audience. It also began a chain reaction of ways in which to behave, creating a

cultural code of conduct that then became standard behaviour and negated the individual.

This is, however, an example of where the individual experience of atmosphere is confused by the collective response and calls for the body to be unencumbered by others. I would argue that the sensing body must engage with complete focus and without distraction or influence to effectively sense atmosphere, otherwise their experience is in danger of becoming influenced by a group mentality.

The idea of a collective response does not necessarily have to happen in a gallery space concurrently with other human beings. It could be argued that the Hoo Peninsula has historically gathered accounts of its atmosphere and thus these could infiltrate the delicate calibration of the “indeterminate” and “ambiguous” experiences of atmosphere, if they are known about (Böhme, 2017:14).

This collective knowledge from William Lambarde, Peter Ackroyd, Charles Dickens, Andrew Kötting to Iain Sinclair develops anticipatory concepts of the existence of it but precisely because these figures are not all lying down simultaneously on a marsh in the peninsula, their accounts of an atmosphere are more liable to be original and unique.

The atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula, therefore, has been noted and documented although manifested in these and other individuals to create remarkably rich and interesting responses. Whilst this is not an empirically driven or meticulous case study that is measurable, for the purpose of this research it is evidence that something intangible, an atmosphere, has been noted and recorded.

When I first walked in the peninsula I had no formal knowledge of the location and my responses were from a phenomenological position, untainted by opinions or scholarly debate. It is inevitable that these literary and artistic works do influence the subsequent research into the atmosphere, and they are vital in analysing the evidence and information. What remains at the centre of the research, however, is the question of the physical experience of space when immersed in this landscape that tunes into the very specific atmosphere.

This brings me back to my earlier comment at the beginning of *Sheet 4* that "atmosphere is experienced and felt by being in the landscape…revealed through an acclimatization of the body to the space" (4.1, p.70). I explained that by adopting a psycho-geographic position "interesting matter" was revealed, such as the intangible (strong feeling of something in the air) or the tangible (an object on the ground that is curious and totemic that contributes to an atmosphere) (4.1, p.70).

The body must be in a position to absorb these contributions of atmosphere and it is only when my own body has repeatedly entered this situation that it begins to operate as an intermediary where the body and space become inextricably intertwined (Pallasmaa, 2014:18-42). This concept is one of the principles of Merleau-Ponty's work on the *Relations of Soul and Body* where he states that

> "the body must become the necessary intermediary between the real world and perception which are henceforth disassociated from each other. Perception can no longer be a taking-possession of things which finds them in their proper place; it must be an event internal to the body and one which results from their action on it" (Merleau-Ponty, 1965:190)

Merleau-Ponty privileges the body as the metamorphosis that processes perceptions and the real world. My body in the Hoo Peninsula experiences atmosphere as "part of a world…and its character is affected by its relations to other parts of the world" (Matthews, 2010:29). Compared to the imagination, which is limited and confined, Merleau-Ponty states the real world is infinite. Adopting the phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty and rooted in this psycho-geographic response to the place that I am referring to in North Kent, is the (my) sensing body. It winkles out the atmosphere that so often has been entangled in the relationship of the objective and subjective where it hovered lonely and adrift to become, in this example, the shared reality of the perceiver (myself) and the perceived (the Hoo Peninsula) (Matthews, 2010:24,51: Böhme, 1993:122).

"It is the reality of the perceived as the sphere of its presence and the reality of the perceiver insofar as he or she, in sensing the atmosphere, is bodily present in a particular way" (Böhme, 2017:23-4).

I have established that I am sensing the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula and that, accordingly, others have also sensed the atmosphere in varying ways and noted it in their writing and artworks. Some of those individuals have been repelled by the peninsula notably William Lambarde (1536-1601) who falsely lays claim to the meaning of Hoo as the word for "sickness or sorrow" (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:15). The concept of the peninsula as a dark and diseased place has lingered and contributed to the myths and rumours that circulate about it, but these are mixed opinions based partially on some truths (the ague, or marsh fever) and on perceptions. From the 15th century to this current period of the research, conditions have changed dramatically with industrialization and modern healthcare, employment opportunities and the elimination of dangerous waterborne diseases like typhoid and malaria.

7.2 Liquid Histories: Two Viewpoints of the Hoo Peninsula

The liquid history of the Hoo Peninsula is never far from the surface of its narrative, a key element contributing to its atmospheric phenomena. It was from the water that I first saw the peninsula in 1990, as we sailed our seventy foot Dutch barge 'Bema' across the channel, into an overnight berth at Hoo St. Werburgh on its maiden voyage to the U.K.. Recently purchased in the Netherlands as a live-aboard boat, we approached the estuary, at a steady speed of 9 knots with the tide behind us and my eyes scanning the scene before us. As the boat sailed close to the shoreline the creeks, inlets and the edgeness of the "dark, flat wilderness" came into view (Dickens, 1992:3). The

Fig. 50 *View of the Hoo Peninsula from the Dutch Barge Bema* (Anna Falcini: 1990)

boat was undulating in the rough water of the estuary, a rhythm of waves

continually beating against its flat hull, intermittently propelling a salt spray onto my face like the mist of Eliasson's *Weather Project*. This was the primary exposure to the Hoo Peninsula and as I sailed up the Thames shortly afterwards to our residential mooring on the upper reaches of the river, I was unconscious of the seed that would gestate over a four-year period until we sailed back down river to cheaper moorings in the River Medway.

In 1994, settled on this more economic mooring at Rochester on the River Medway, I drove out on the Ratcliffe Highway, a road off of the A228, that leads to the village of Allhallows. Through the windscreen a birds-eye perspective of the same land came into view but from terra firma. As the road drops down to Allhallows there is a point where the viewpoint looks out to the Thames and Medway rivers. It is a breathtaking view where the landscape unfolds into agricultural fields, orchards, industry and remote clusters of houses. Beyond are the two rivers that flow into the North Sea with cargo ships sailing back and forth delivering goods.

These two visions of the landscape were instrumental in how I came to perceive and experience the peninsula and they began in and with "the immensities of the sea and land", elements that were intertwined and co-dependent on each other (Bachelard, 1994:182). The aqueous nature of the first encounter is imperative in the unfolding of this attraction to and absorption into the landscape and its subsequent atmosphere.

In this first experience of the peninsula, I was, in a boat that would become my family home for the next eight years, moving with the tide towards land, yet even on a mooring the home would never be settled but always transitory. Whilst the interior of the boat was the temporary shelter for life, a place of Bachelard's dreamer that "allows one to dream in peace" the exterior was

exposed and vulnerable to the elements and dangers of the tidal river (Bachelard, 1994:6). The interior was a compression, where life as a young mother reverberated whilst the exposed exteriors became a comfort to me. I liked it best when the boat rose on the tide at night and the chains of the anchor clanked on the hull, hammering the tension out again and again.

Rising up on the land where the rivers could be seen in the distance near Allhallows, I sensed a landscape that drew me to its strangeness. It possessed the feeling of being what Freud termed “unheimlich”, that Mark Fisher translates to “unhomely” (Fisher, 2016:9). Amongst the fields and large skies were the “mechanical entities” of the power stations and cranes of the ports, an unsettling, human-like prostheses of Freud’s theory (Fisher, 2016:9). Instinctively I was drawn to the landscape in front of me. It appeared to me as mysterious, strange and unfamiliar; so far removed from the Surrey Hills and woods of my childhood associations with land.

Gaston Bachelard recalls the house as an imperative refuge that “shelters daydreaming” and from where the emotions and memories that were imprinted on us in our early years resurface from. He states, “the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows us to dream in peace” (Bachelard, 1994:6). If I recall my own dwellings of childhood (mother’s, father’s, grandparent’s, best friend, aunt and uncle’s) few were safe, all tinged with unease and dislocation. Perhaps the safest elements were zones, such as the garden shed, my bedroom at my mother’s house, the willow tree at my close friend’s house, my grandfather’s studio/bedroom.

I recall the potency of memory related to this last space. It was here my grandfather projected the slides of British landscapes that he photographed so avidly, often on his beloved bicycle trips and where he produced his watercolours depicting fading scenes of pre-war Britain.

Fig. 51 *The author's grandparents' house. The top bay window is the studio/bedroom of her grandfather* (Denis R. Gray: 1968)

In his room was a mirror whose sides folded inward, above a slim wooden shelf with objects arranged on the surface; a pair of old snowshoes, a polished animal horn with its moiré pattern of bone, a Hepworthian abstract wooden sculpture my grandfather had carved, a photographic self-portrait of him with his pipe. I would often sit at the shelf and contemplate the objects through "multi-sensory" investigation; the pungency of the wood still evident to my smell or the curious texture of the rattan woven soles of the snowshoes in contact with the soft skin of my fingers (Pallasmaa, 2012:44).

Fig. 52 *The desk and tools of the author's grandfather* (Denis R. Gray: 1968)

Looking into the mirror one day, I folded the sides in, reflecting multiple images of myself. At varying angles, I captured my profile or the back of my head. These were pivotal moments; I was experiencing Merlot-Ponty's idea of the world doubling. I realized there was the world as it appeared to me internally and there was the world "outside my body" that externally was different (Merleau-Ponty, 1965:190). This room was a formative space for experiencing the world through the "interaction of all sense modalities" and where the room was a "ground for perception and the horizon of experiencing and understanding the world" (Pallasmaa, 2012:44).

Thick with atmosphere, the space was one of the earliest introductions to the phenomena. The problem, as Böhme has identified of atmosphere, is that "one does not know whether to attribute them to the objects or environments from which they emanate or to the subjects who experience them" (Böhme,

2017:14). How did the atmosphere manifest itself in the front bedroom of this 1940s house and how was it generated?

In this one room profound moments of “memory, imagination and dream” took place; the multi-sensory relationship to objects and to space, the realization of the body in the world, the introduction to a mediated landscape of photography and watercolour and as a cell that was a collision of time (present human time and a past, “petrified” time of the building) (Pallasmaa, 2012:56). It was moderated by the figure of my grandfather whose room provoked the “strange tissue of space and time” (Böhme, 2017:18).

This phrase from Walter Benjamin’s work on auras follows the gaze of the eye as it sees “a mountain range on the horizon or a branch that casts its shadow on the beholder” and Böhme understands this passage to be about the “phenomenon of remoteness that can also be sensed in things close by”. Observing the snowshoes, generated feelings of strangeness and dislocation that years later would be revived by the objects Louisa would gather on the peninsula for the archive. There is a disjuncture, a missing gap in the story to the close observation of an object and its mysterious history. A pair of pre-war snowshoes appear on a wooden shelf in England and a carefully shaped piece of wood painted with gloss tangerine paint, turns up on the shoreline at Grain.

When I came upon the Hoo Peninsula I returned to these sensations and perceptions that I had so strongly experienced as a child. In between I had moved away from the “indeterminate” mist of atmosphere towards the “structures and permanence” that press firmly onto the developing child, but in the early 1990s I was facing uncertainty and dislocation that re-routed me towards the peninsula. Dickens had understood the landscape perfectly as a place that generated dark things on the marsh; an underworld that was remote, complex and difficult to navigate (Dickens, 1868).

This recollection, I believe, is vital in recalling the identification and awareness of atmospheres in early childhood, but what it does not necessarily explain, however, is my specific interest in the Hoo Peninsula and its distinct atmosphere. In order to address this aspect of my enquiry, I will look in detail at how experiences of landscape in my formative years were triggers binding me to this estuarine place.

7.3 The Topographies of Watercolour and 35mm Slide Film

My childhood was spent in towns in the Surrey landscape, once a rural county but whose proximity to London has been under the increasing threat of a "creeping suburbanization" (Edward, 2009). The growth of its population, initiated by the railways in the 1840s through its commuter routes to the city and the popularity in car ownership, brought an increasing demand on development of its land (Cannon and Crowcroft, 2015). There is a continuing tension between conservation of ancient land and the pressure to build homes and infrastructure. Roads that cut through the countryside, including the M25 London Orbital, are notoriously congested and overstretched. This changing landscape is a model repeated around similar counties that abut cities, particularly those on the periphery of London such as Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire. As F.R. Banks in his foreword to *The Penguin Guides: Kent* in the early fifties notes of Kent, "almost any place may be reached in an hour or two from London by train and motorbus" (Banks, 1951:12).

This proximity of these home counties, including Surrey, would rapidly change their character in the twentieth century. As the *Recording Britain* project initiated by Sir Kenneth Clark in the 1940s displayed, the British landscape was changing dramatically and with rapidity in this period and on his initiative, artists were commissioned to document the changes. These artists included Barbara

Jones, John Piper and Kenneth Rowntree and they captured Britain's rural and urban environs through the medium of watercolour (V&A, 2012). Clark was keen to visually record the swift change brought about by war "progress and development", taking care to note the "places and buildings of characteristic national interest" alongside the overlooked and familiar scenes of Britain (Towner, 2016).

Fig. 53 *Underbank Farm, Woodlands, Ashdale, Derbyshire* (Kenneth Rowntree: 1940)

Through projects such as *Recording Britain*, watercolour was once again a popular medium and its revival continued in this inter and postwar period, demonstrated through the work of artists including Eric Ravilious, Edward Burra and John Piper. A professionally trained artist, my grandfather created his own watercolour studies of the Surrey landscape and had numerous books on influential artists such as Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland and John Nash.

His watercolour paintings alongside his extensive slide collection were influential images that engaged me in the subject of landscape.

Fig. 54 *Winter, Basingstoke Canal, Byfleet* (Denis R. Gray: 1947)

Both mediums, however, have been the subject of scrutiny and mistrust by the artworld; photography for a duality in being an “endless manipulative medium” and as a witness to scenes providing visual evidence (crime scenes, war photography) and watercolour for its enthusiastic adoption by the hobbyist and its emerging suitability in the 19th century as an appropriate medium for women (Lippard,1997: 20; Tate, 2011). The watercolours created by my grandfather were idealized, romantic images; the paintings depicting characterisations of a fading England such as barges pulled by horses and fields of haystacks with human figures excluded except where they reinforce the illusion of a gentler period in the countryside or where they are guides to the proportions of objects

(a human figure the standard by which the world is navigated) (Moszkowicz, 2015:85-99).

Something more disturbing began to appear in some of the transparencies; however, change was evidently happening and captured by the lens. Along with the pastoral, images also surfaced of the rapid expansion of the post war landscape with modern architecture in town centres and new road construction such as the M3 motorway through historical common land; documented by my grandfather. This subject matter was evidently unappealing as a theme for watercolour, a work of art that would furnish domestic walls in the newly expanding housing, acting as a window to the rural past that was rapidly being buried under the foundations of these houses. Transparencies on the other hand, were evidential, forensic materials, potent as they transformed from a jewel like image in the palm of the hand to a large luminous one in the slide projector, hovering momentarily on a white screen like a moth.

Inherently portable as media, watercolour and photography are critical technologies that have uniquely documented landscape and shaped cultural knowledge at periods of great change such as the tumultuous effects of industrialization in the 1830s (Bermingham, 1989:87-89). Before photography, watercolours were the convenient snapshots of their day, ideal for quick results in the field as reference material for larger paintings worked up in the studio. They released artists from the laborious and restrictive hierarchies of the traditional medium of oil painting and allowed for spontaneous and intuitive responses. One can think of any number of the watercolour sketches of Turner for example, made *en plein air*, that have an “energy” and delight in the “airy…and “fresh” expanses of scenery he observed” (Blayney Brown *et al.,* 2014:170, 202).

In the 1940s as the British landscape was again undergoing expansion and development, watercolour was an artistic medium that "could offer authentic descriptions of the everyday (or the exotic), working alongside the black and white photograph to evoke a heightened sense of geographic location and a 'spirit of place'" (Moszkowicz, 2015:85-99). The media of watercolour and photography emerged as interchangeable and this is evident in my grandfather's works. Observing finished watercolour paintings, as opposed to sketches, one can identify a formulaic, desensitized feeling in the work, suggesting the later images were informed by photographic references. This problematizes the experience and knowledge of the local landscape I was inheriting through the watercolour works; the landscapes were selective and idealized. Through their topographical realism and romantic vision, they lost the capacity to be authentic and to express feeling. The transparencies on the other hand, were less laboured and more plentiful in subject matter. Engaged as a tool for not only photographing landscape but also domestic and social events, the outcomes produced images that were often unpredictable with the capturing of time and light, allowing for happenstance to occur. In these photographs the anthropocenic surfaces as the presence of human influence appears to dominate them.

Two images from 1966 of my infant brother wearing a pink jumper in open countryside with his grandmother wearing a bright pink synthetic headscarf and sunglasses, brings into focus the ancient and the transient. As she leans in to see what he is observing at ground level, their figures dominate the image through their interaction and landscape slips away to become a backdrop to the scene. Rather than them being in the landscape, the landscape is in them.

I have established the groundwork for my relationship to the local landscapes of childhood and the way in which the mediums of watercolour and photography were evocative but unreliable means of information that

Figs. 55 & 56 *The author's grandmother and brother at Newlands Corner, Surrey* (Denis R. Gray: 1966)

developed fundamental ideas of the subject. How then, twenty years later as a young mother, did I connect to the Hoo Peninsula, a place of such radically different geography and histories?

As a child there was a momentary stability in my grandfather's room, where I experienced atmosphere through objects, images and time spent in the space. Landscape was a preoccupation of my grandfather and so it influenced my own cultural language that I enthusiastically studied. It was not, I argue, the subject of landscape that I responded to per se, but rather the "heightened experiences" of smell, sound, texture, colour that emanated from the relationship to landscape (Pallasmaa, 2012:56). Coming to the Hoo Peninsula to live on a Dutch barge in the 1990s was a period of disturbance, change, independence, and anxiety as a young mother. A feeling of reparation and mending began, a literal exploration that found its way into my contemporary textile practice and a subconscious need to self-repair. I was dislocated and in a situation that psychotherapist Luce Irigaray outlined as

“the place, the whole of the place where she (a woman) cannot appropriate herself as such. Experienced as all-powerful where ‘she’ is most radically powerless in her indifferentiation...dispersed into *x* places which do not gather together in anything which she can recognize” (Whitford, 1991:53).

In other words, not only was I physically dislocated from familiar places, but psychologically I was deeply detached, adrift and vulnerable in a place that was unfamiliar to me. In this status as “displaced” and “immobilised” I returned to the “spaces of my past moments of solitude” (Whitford, 1991:53; Bachelard, 1995:10). As Bachelard further elaborates on this point, “even when we no longer have a garret, when the attic room is lost and gone, there remains the fact that we once loved a garret, once lived in an attic” (Bachelard, 1995:10). Having misplaced that attic space, had I unearthed the feelings from so long ago, of the atmosphere in my grandfather’s room? In reflecting on this excavation of deeply embedded experience I argue that the immersion in the Hoo Peninsula provided a space of where the past and present converged during the first excursion that I took there on foot.

7.4 Sensing Atmosphere through Lenses

In this sheet so far, I have largely focused upon the embodied position in the landscape from a phenomenological position. This has identified early childhood situations that have been ruptured from their dormancy by the introduction to the Hoo Peninsula as a young woman.

In this next section, I will address the wider perspective of the atmosphere through a post-phenomenological stance, mediated via the camera lens and other technologies. With the addition of the camera lens, the map or binoculars, for example, the body is *prosthetic-ised* and these technologies modify the responses and understanding of the atmosphere.

In order to address this aspect of the research, I reference the work of Ihde who concludes that a phenomenological position is permanently altered through our knowledge and experience of technologies. Ihde asserts that we are now in a period of the "*embodied hermeneutic*" where a permanent alteration to the embodied position is unavoidable in a developed cultural context (Ihde, 2009:56). It is impossible to extract human experience from technology, which has become both inherent in our knowledge and often is a physical intercession between the body and perception.

If I trace my own examples of this technological progression I can pinpoint the childhood Kodak camera I used to take images of Bushy Park in Surrey, my grandfather's transparencies of landscape and the car windows of my mother's Mini that were all mediating my experience of the world. Similarly, the atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula is a multi-dimensional series of encounters that is received through not just the bodily perspective but by means of technologies either actively engaged, such as a sound recorder, or as reflexive forms of knowledge that are pre-ordained; tides, meteorology, cosmology (Ihde, 2009).

Before these phenomena were scrutinised and analysed, they were felt, and as Jacquetta Hawkes noted on the evolving life of the planet, the "dominant, significant process in those millions of years has been the heightening of consciousness" (Hawkes, 2012:27). Within this consciousness, has developed a curiosity to know, to unearth the mysteries of the planet, to see craters of the moon or to capture the "red end of the visible spectrum" as William Herschel achieved with infrared (Ihde, 2009:54). Inadvertently this has presented a dilemma of gaining knowledge while simultaneously losing ground on the embodied position.

In revealing the previously unseen or unknown, I argue that technologies have subdued the sensing body and in relation to the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula, my experience of the atmosphere from an embodied situation will be diminished in comparison to that of Charles Dickens over a century before (Tomlin, 2011:314). The permeability of the "*embodied hermeneutic*" would have seeped into Dickens' world but his immersion in the Hoo Peninsula on his noted walks from Higham into the marshes would have been more visceral and vivid to an embodied position. Simply, there were fewer technologies to interfere with the perceptive body and the peninsula was less populated, with little infrastructure and an emerging mechanical industry in its infancy (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:26).

The technological development of the lens subsequently produced new experiences of visualizing the world that not only revealed new phenomena previously unseen to the naked eye but also positioned a machine between the body and the object being observed. The lens then became an extension of the human eye creating both an intimacy with the scene being observed and a physical distance through the intervention of a machine.

I have lost count of the number of photographs I have taken of the Hoo Peninsula. Latterly, I have even imposed a restriction to either not take any more photographs or to limit the number. This rapidly becomes an obsolete gesture as I am absorbed by new phenomena that has recently appeared or, conversely, I revisit familiar sites anew and click the shutter. The resistance to further photography is twofold; managing the increasing volume of research materials and, more significantly, the transference from the embodied/phenomenological to a post-phenomenological position.

Fig. 57 *Archaeological Investigation at St Mary's Bay* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

What happens when I reach for my camera is an abrupt shift from being present and an interruption from the embodied to Ihde's mediated stance. The camera becomes what Henri Cartier-Bresson defines as "the extension of my eye" and it can be seen as both interrogating the atmosphere whilst also being unable to penetrate it as my eye can (Sontag, 1976:185). The surface of the eye is all powerful, both feeling the sensations on its surface (moisture, temperature etc.) whilst capturing the refracting light of images and transferring those to the brain, creating archival memories of the atmosphere.

The stills camera is a purely visual medium and so it is at a disadvantage as a tool for observing the atmosphere in the peninsula through the senses of sound, touch, smell and taste. It occludes those senses and they linger as potential sensations in the shadow of the images the camera

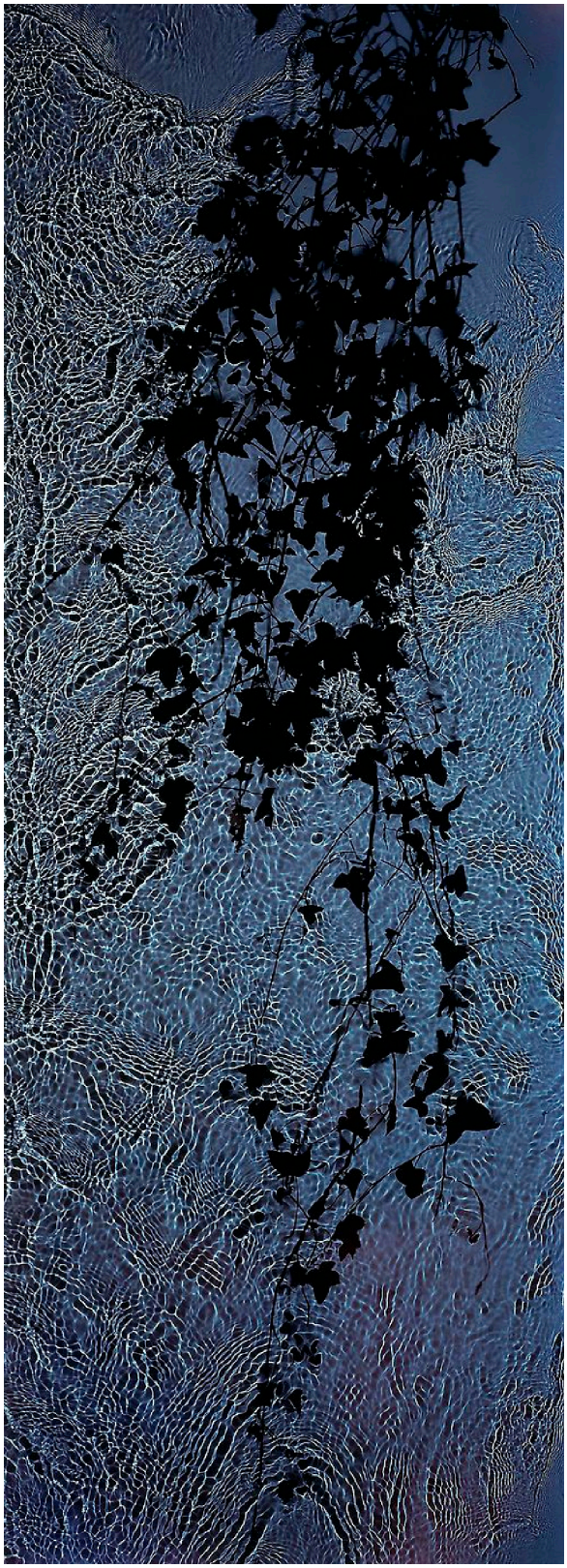


Fig.58 *Susan Derges River Taw* (Susan Derges: 1998-2019)

produces. One can imagine, for example, the feeling of the magical night skies of Susan Derges' camera-less works of the River Taw in Devon through the visual resonance of her images. They exist as imaginative possibilities based upon an individual's own depth of experience because the work excludes a stills camera.

Susan Sontag declares that photographs "thicken the environment" and she finds it to be "the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood" (Sontag, 1976:3-4). This is perhaps where the camera's role is most useful as an extension of one's consciousness, albeit a mechanical one directed by the body. As the eye is busy in the moment of live research, the camera stops the world for a second. At this point of capture is a momentary record of something in the Hoo Peninsula; it is not in itself

atmosphere but a witness to, a record of atmosphere.

The contemporary photographer Nadav Kander is an example of this interplay between the conscious body and the mechanical entity. As I open the catalogue to Kander's *Dark Line: The Thames Estuary* (2017), a line of text floats up like an escaping seed, planting itself into the subconscious:

"Travelling to the estuary in the dark, often alone, and returning home at nightfall has affected how I see this place – not as a geographical landscape, but as a mystical space, somehow otherworldly and full of intrigue" (Kander, 2017)

He notes how "I have not made this work anywhere else" meaning that he could not make this work anywhere else for the landscape is the "mystical space" of his observation and is experienced through his own sensing body, captured by the camera lens. The camera has documented the dead weight of blanket grey skies that skim either a boiling North Sea or, in complete contrast, a motionless body of water where the horizon, at times, disappears (Kander 2017).

Extraordinarily, Kander has presented the images in a portrait format and in unusually long slices of imagery so that the familiarity of the wide, squat angled vision of the landscape that is so familiar in the peninsula is immediately disrupted. He notes that this is a "mirror [of] bodily proportions" (2017). The format is not only bodily but a "law of stratification", where Kander becomes a "geologist [whose] instruments of consciousness…are engaged in reawakening the memory of the world" (Hawkes, 2012:19). In a number of images in the series the lens crops most references to land and instead is occupied by the watery mass of the estuary. It barely appears as a line of mud that buffers up against the water's edge. Jacquetta Hawkes in her seminal work of 1951 *A*

Land reminds us of how “solar radiation acting upon sea water first enabled matter to reproduce itself and life thus to begin. Now it seems like drying mud is a more likely cradle” (Hawkes, 2012:27).

Kander also reverses this proportion in works such as *Horizons I, (Coalhouse Fort towards St Mary Hoo)* (2015) where the blue-ish tones of marsh grass sweeps up towards a horizon and occupies most of the frame. Although water does not appear there is an undercurrent reproduced by the photographic treatment of the landscape, through a low exposure and dark colour. Whatever element has birthed life, the sea or mud, they are visceral components in sensing the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula and they are the result of the body and technology working in tandem.

Ihde attributes post-phenomenology and technoscience to “ancient knowledge” and “observable phenomena” and notes that “all science, or technoscience, is produced by humans and either directly or indirectly implies bodily action, perception, and praxis” (Ihde, 2009:46-50). The proposition Ihde suggests is that the embodied and technoscience are implicated in one another. They are bound by a fundamental enquiry which is satisfied through the physical sensing body and an expansive technological viewpoint. In combination, the embodied and the post-phenomenological are co-collaborators who work simultaneously to reveal an expanded knowledge.

Navigating the atmosphere specifically in this research project of the Hoo Peninsula, a number of technologies are called into action including maps, sound recorders, film cameras, pencil and paper etc. The one that is most consistent has been the stills camera; a tool documenting scenes of atmosphere. Unlike Kander, I have not used the camera for purely artistic

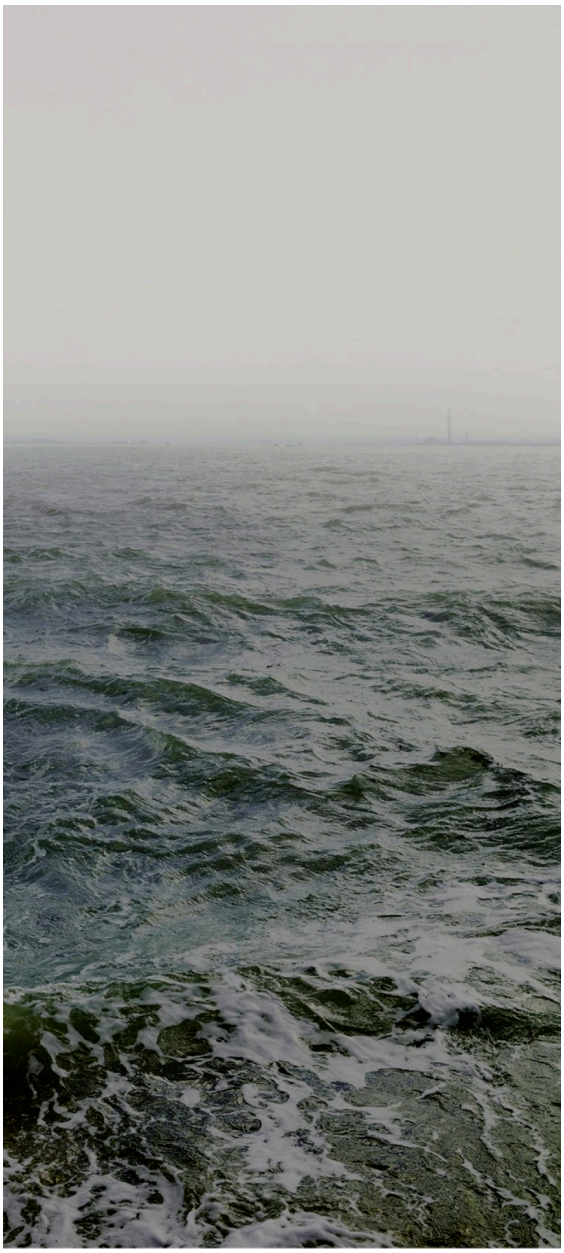


Fig. 59 *Water I part 3 (Shoeburyness towards The Isle of Grain) England* (Nadav Kander: 2015)
Fig. 60 *Time II, 'Watch Over Me', (Allhallows towards Canvey Island), England*, (Nadav Kander: 2015)

means but instead as a witness to scenes of atmosphere. The photographic camera as Sontag notes, is "an inherently equivocal connection between self and world" (Sontag, 1979:123). It has provided a reflective, latent medium to study the atmosphere from a physical distance, through visual analytics.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this sheet, I set out to understand my relationship to the Hoo Peninsula and how I have become increasingly drawn to exploring the atmosphere over a period of time. Historically, other notable figures had recorded its unique atmosphere and these documentations established an atmospheric presence. As we have seen, earlier periods in the peninsula's history have created an often-mythical status of a dark and strange place where inhospitable conditions of marshy land and a remote territory have influenced external impressions. These have lingered and remained tangible, underpinned by the peninsula's seemingly obscurantist position.

The "marshy topography" has continued to proffer perceptions of a remote and difficult terrain, resisting the economic growth that is subsuming neighbouring areas (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:61). In the post-industrial period its estuarine ecology has been problematic for the developers meeting the intense demands of housing and economic generation in the area (Bartonwillmore, 2018). In contrast to the expansion of areas that surround it, including the Thames Gateway and the Medway towns, the Hoo Peninsula has remained largely underdeveloped. As a result, it is a landscape in an indeterminate state, hovering between things (the rural, peri-urban, industry and a small populous) and this in itself generates a particular atmosphere.

This "estuarine situation" is a predominant feature of the landscape and one cannot escape its underlying presence and impact upon the peninsula's atmosphere. Not only has it shaped the land and its past, its liquid history has also directly attributed to my experience of this landscape, through a primary encounter at sea on a Dutch barge and secondly on land, at a viewpoint that revealed the visual geography of the Thames and Medway estuaries around The Isle of Grain (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:3). I argued that these two encounters

were instrumental in my perception of the Hoo Peninsula and its atmosphere, giving rise to a feeling of being “unheimlich” (Fisher, 2016:9).

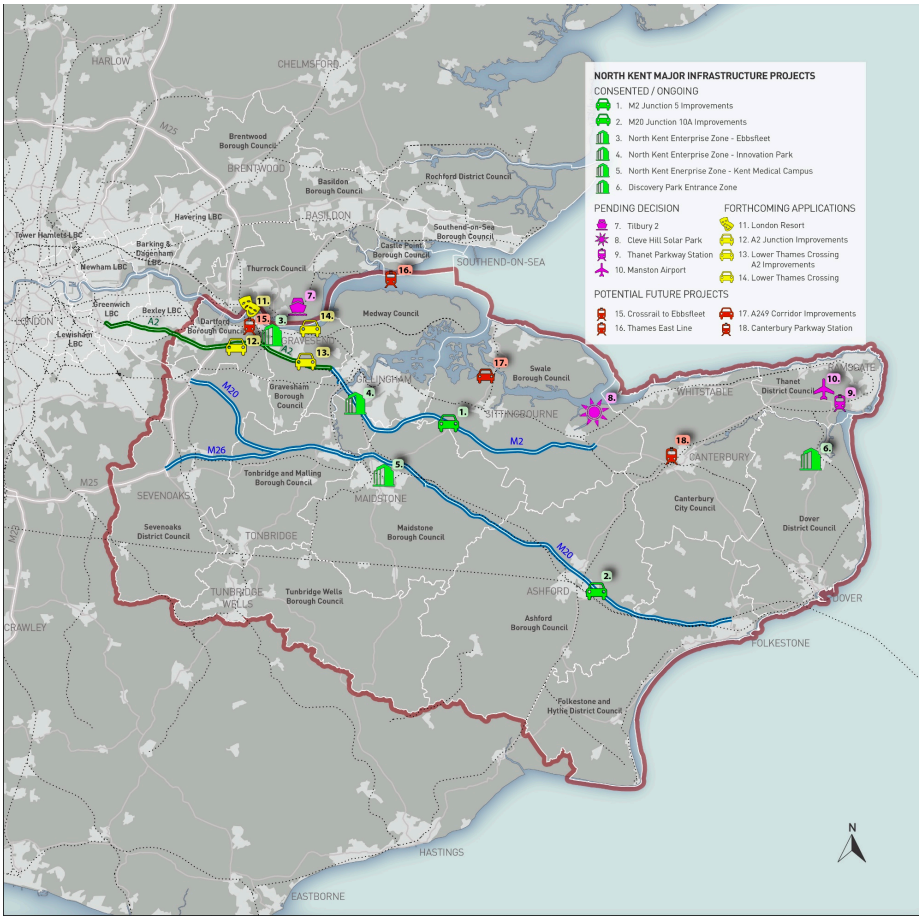


Fig. 61 *Thames Estuary 2050: A Strategic Plan for North Kent? North Kent Infrastructure Projects* (Barton Willmore: 2018)

To ascertain the particular attraction to the Hoo Peninsula, I regressed back to earlier childhood encounters of atmosphere through Gaston Bachelard’s memory of the house as a place to shelter daydreams (Bachelard, 1964:6). I noted that it was in my grandfather’s room that I became aware of my body in relation to the world, where a pivotal moment of internal and external worlds were experienced. This coincided with encounters of mediated examples of landscape through watercolour and slide photography that my grandfather had authored. I considered the impact of these early visual libraries of landscape

that led to a narrow cultural appreciation based mainly on the Surrey landscape of my childhood, but how it also led to a series of subtle engagements that triggered other senses of smell, sound and touch, for example. These qualities of experience were reignited through feelings of displacement and immobilisation when I first encountered the Hoo Peninsula as a young woman. I suggested how, in a period of instability, I sought out Bachelard's "attic space" that I had once inhabited. These instabilities and past histories found a symbiotic relationship to the Hoo Peninsula and connected me to the atmosphere. The conditions that had led to being on the periphery and often struggling at the margins of life now appeared to reverse and culminate in the perfect set of circumstances to experience the atmosphere.

In the final section of this sheet, I addressed the post-phenomenological position through the theories of Ihde, in particular the "embodied hermeneutic" where he argues that technology relocates the embodied position, altering human knowledge and perception of the world (Ihde, 2009:56). I reflected that whilst these technologies were highly significant in catching up with "phenomena [that] exceeded our bodily capacity to detect", there was also a certain amount of interference to the embodied position that disrupted the senses (Ihde, 2009:54). Whilst technology expanded research into atmosphere, recording audio for example that might otherwise be lost in the ether, it also had the capacity to de-sensitise the body.

The technology I consistently applied in this research has been the stills camera and I observed how it had been a diligent participant in noting moments of atmosphere. Where atmosphere is impossible to pin down or momentarily stop, the camera grasped the information and froze it in the shutter becoming a witness to a scene of atmosphere. It captures a snapshot of that scene that triggers my own memory of the lived atmosphere and whilst photographs such as Kander's do evoke atmospheric feelings for a viewer who

is unfamiliar with the site, it is not a bodily felt sensation but one that possibly evokes or triggers a more general ambience. Even though I am familiar with Kander's scenes in his images, they do not provoke atmosphere for me in the same way that my own photographs do because I have invested myself in the work I have made through the lens in a way that is removed from viewing Kander's work. A photograph can provoke or suggest the atmosphere but the authenticity must be consolidated by the bodily immersion in the landscape.

The camera is an appendage to the body and, as both Sontag and Ihde have argued, is the point of connection between the self and the world. The counter argument to this point is that it is also limited in what it records, unable, for example, to note how the landscape smells, the temperature, the effect of wind or rain on the body etc.

As Nadav Kander suggests in his work *Dark Line: The Thames Estuary*, the body of photographs made in 2017, he had to immerse himself into the landscape in order to develop such a profound collection of images. Occupying both an embodied position and a post-phenomenological one was decisive in the conclusion of this work.

The outcome is a series of works that return to the early perceptions of the landscape as dark and mysterious, exuding atmosphere in every image where he replays the unheimlich and ghostly phenomena that was formally noted in historical accounts. His compositions exclude human activity and they depict the peninsula in considerably grey and stormy weathers. Although the outcome reinforces those past fables, the images are so deeply ingrained in atmosphere that one suspects Kander was as gripped by the peninsula as much as Lambarde or even Dickens.

Fig. 62 *Looking towards Grain LNG Gas Terminal, The Isle of Grain* (Anna Falcini: 2016)

Sheet 8 TQ 7690 Grain Spit: Conclusion

This practice-based research has investigated the particular and unique atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula. To identify and understand the atmosphere, an interdisciplinary methodology foregrounding the visual was adopted that articulated the ephemeral qualities of atmosphere. A psycho-geographic approach, underpinned by established forms of research such as geography, archaeology, cartography and history, placed the post-phenomenological body at the core of understanding the experience of place. Cohesively, these disciplines have provided outcomes that enabled the enigmatic nature of atmosphere to be articulated in more tangible ways through the creation of the *Archive of Atmosphere* and other works of art made during this Ph.D.

The research was located in and around areas of the Thames estuary within the Hoo Peninsula. I identified particular sites where the atmosphere was more prevalent; Cliffe Marshes, Halstow Marshes, Allhallows and The Isle of Grain. Each of these had different geographical and historical characteristics and subsequently produced variable effects of atmosphere.

To navigate the existing cultural and historical perceptions, I adopted an embodied position, immersing myself in the landscape. I located the post-phenomenological body at the centre of my understanding of the place, to experience the atmosphere through the sensing body whilst being aware of the mediated perceptions of technology.

8.1 Reflections on the Research

Perceptions of the Hoo Peninsula as a strange, empty, melancholic and oppressive landscape had long been alluded to but had never been specifically identified as a phenomenon of atmosphere (Carpenter *et al*., 2013:14-15). The

elusive nature of the subject was problematic and could not be simply proven through hard evidence or empirical outcomes; it was pervasive, at times almost tangible and intense, yet it was also hard to characterise and pin down.

Otto's notion that atmospheres were mysterious and all-encompassing was affirming whilst Böhme's concept of atmospheres being indeterminate and "diffuse" whilst simultaneously having a character that is not indeterminate, reiterated what I experienced in the peninsula; the atmosphere appeared both as an all-enveloping phenomenon and as a more intimate series of phenomena that were localised (Böhme *et al*., 2014:91; Bohme, 2017:14). The Hoo Peninsula's atmosphere was uniquely characteristic and attributable to its location. I observed that I did not experience this feeling anywhere else, but how to evidence this through a research methodology was, at first, not clear. It became apparent that formal methods using tried and tested processes, although useful, had limitations. A short course in landscape archaeology with English Heritage in the early stages of the research, could not, for example, ascertain the sensory feelings of atmosphere.

The phenomenological position proved to be a more useful inroad into the spectral investigations of atmosphere. From a foundation of the phenomenological and the psycho-geographic, theory and practice worked in parallel. As I immersed my body into the landscape, the material and immaterial of the atmosphere began to reveal itself.

The methodology was adapted from the original principles of psycho-geography as defined by the *Internationale Situationniste* under the editorship of Guy Debord, through the "specific effects of the geographical Environment…on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Coverley, 2006:93). Dérives into the open marshland of the peninsula allowed for "transgressions" into "emotional zones", entering restricted

land or buildings that were out of bounds, including the welfare unit and Grain Fort. Encountering these spaces through the sensory mode of the body uncovered powerful atmospheres (Pallasmaa, 2012:14).

As a principle method of psycho-geography, walking in the peninsula was critical to the research and it generated encounters of atmosphere that might otherwise have been missed. It led to the identification of a zone of atmosphere that hung between the Hoo Peninsula and myself (p.116). I identified that experiencing the atmosphere on foot as a woman brought a number of issues to the fore; a vulnerability and consciousness of danger, a heightening of the senses and a feeling of being out of place. I walked with a number of individuals in the landscape; Carol Donaldson and Michael Dale, local inhabitants who knew the landscape intimately; and the writer Iain Sinclair and film director Clio Barnard, who were frequent visitors.

These walking excursions were an opportunity to explore how others perceived the peninsula and their experiences of its atmosphere. Whilst there were similar responses to it, individuals had their own unique experiences and perceptions. Dale's working life as a police officer was deeply ingrained in his feelings about The Isle of Grain, for example and his perception of the landscape was never specifically framed within atmospheric terms, yet much of what he expressed during our walks and conversations I identified as being attributable to the atmosphere.

In contrast, I also undertook a walk in Blakeney, a similar coastal area in North Norfolk with the artist Polly Binns. This proved to be a valuable exercise in contrasting Binns' equally enduring relationship with Blakeney and its ephemeral characteristics that have consistently drawn her back, to my own in the peninsula.

To partly counteract the issues wrought by gender when walking in the peninsula, I operated covertly as the Edwardian amateur archaeologist Louisa Cornford. I had established Cornford in 2002 in my first creative projects with the peninsula during my M.A.. Cornford had originally surveyed Cliffe Marshes but in this research the study expanded further into the peninsula.

Cornford's work culminated in an *Archive of Atmosphere* where objects, material and matter collected from the peninsula by her, were classified as artefacts and accessioned into the archive. To be valid for entry into the archive, artefacts either contained atmosphere in their material bodies, or they were discovered at sites that were atmospheric. Often, both of these criteria applied to the artefacts.

The archive developed into a performance piece, with selected artefacts being displayed and performed by Louisa, thus re-activating their potential atmospheres and the memory of collecting the objects. Unlike traditional archival objects whose decay is arrested by contemporary museum conditions, these artefacts were unstable and what DeSilvey notes as "mutable" and animated (DeSilvey, 2012). Identifying the unstable, precariousness and unpredictability of these objects and materials was critical in approaching the research. Atmosphere operated most effectively through these phenomena and therefore the methodology for researching it had to allow for these conditions to be understood and valued, rather than seen as problematic. Methods such as psycho-geography and the archive were important ways to unfold the subtleties of the atmosphere.

In this respect, the discovery that the Hoo Peninsula became a location for film, an ephemeral time-based medium that is mediated through light, fitted into the emerging methodology of unstable and enigmatic materials. Bruno's work in

Surfaces brought into focus the materiality and immateriality of film and how celluloid film physically "responds to atmospheric conditions" (Bruno, 2014:118). The concept was further developed through the example of *The Island* (Ingram and Pickering, 1952) a film shot on location in the peninsula which I argued had the potential to absorb the atmosphere as Greenaway suggested in his concept of light particles of celluloid film becoming "re-enlivened" through its projection (Bruno, 2014:55).

In order to understand how the atmosphere in this estuarine setting lured me so vividly I drew upon Merleau-Ponty's work on the *Relations of Soul and Body* analysing how my body became an intermediary in the Hoo Peninsula, and was inextricably entwined (Merleau-Ponty, 1965:190). The question was whether there was a neutrality between the atmosphere and my body or whether my own bodily experiences were re-ignited by the connection to the peninsula. Reflecting on the formative introductions to landscape through my grandfather's watercolours and 35mm slides revealed a cultural education that underpinned my later experiences of living in the Hoo Peninsula as a young mother.

How the atmosphere was altered by a post-phenomenological position, through what Ihde has described as the "embodied hermeneutic" came into view with the physical intermediary lens of the still's camera. On the one hand, the camera was capable of stopping time to record examples of atmosphere. On the other hand, it intervened between the perceptive body and the atmosphere, privileging the visual over the range of sensory receptors.

8.2 The Original Contribution to Knowledge

The most significant original contribution to knowledge that has emerged from this research is how the atmosphere was revealed through an interdisciplinary

practical methodology which would otherwise have not been apparent through a singular disciplinary approach. Where individual disciplines have uncovered in-depth knowledge that can contribute to reasons for an atmosphere; how geography, for example, can demonstrate the peninsula's geological deposits telling the story of the land formation; or how archaeology might form a picture of human activity, what they cannot individually do is articulate the phenomena of atmosphere that is present in the Hoo Peninsula. Applying an interdisciplinary method that studies not only geography, history, archaeology and cartography but which applies evidence from a psycho-geographic and phenomenological approach, has revealed the tangibility of the atmosphere. As I stated at the beginning of the thesis, atmospheres matter because they reveal the affective quality of a site and the body's response to it (Sheet 0:23).

Where the empirical evidence of the more traditional disciplines is undoubtedly essential as a foundation for this research, it is the psycho-geographic and phenomenological approach that are productive, active methods in locating the unstable and "mutable" materials of the research, leading to evidence of the atmosphere (DeSilvey, 2012). One of the key practical outcomes of this has been Louisa Cornford's *Archive of Atmosphere*, the conceptually devised work rooted in traditional museological practice, containing found objects that Louisa described as 'curiosities', defining their status as having little archaeological value. The significance of the 'curiosities' in this research surfaced through two aspects; atmosphere was present within the object (history and memory of its use); and through indefinite exposure to the environment of the peninsula, the objects had the capacity to become either contaminated by atmosphere or to contaminate the peninsula's atmosphere.

Performing the archive led to the atmosphere of the artefacts becoming re-activated through a series of gestural acts; the dropping of an iron bolt on the floor releasing particles; a crushing of cockleshells underfoot recalling the

coastal walk on Cockleshell Beach and the imbibing of dehydrated rosehip flesh to induce the taste and memory of the atmosphere.

Extending this interdisciplinary methodology, I was able to locate atmosphere within what I determined were existing archives in the peninsula; a sea container at Cliffe Pools; a concrete barn at Dalham Farm and a makeshift shed at Cliffe. Each archive contained multiple objects and materials that had resulted in atmospheric phenomena. What emerged from the study of these ready-made archives were the spectral nature of the remains that conjured up ghostly presences embedded in the latent human absences that had been collected (Edensor, 2005:329). The speculative nature of these objects, buildings and sites were tinged with the lingering shadows of human engagement. Long since gone to ruin, however, these structures and objects provoked strong feelings of atmosphere. Through the interdisciplinary methodology, this knowledge of human presence and absence of places and things, became evident and imperative to the research.

The ruins and abandoned buildings, abundant in the area of study, presented further opportunities to investigate atmosphere. Typically of military or industrial purpose, these were further examples of what Fisher notes as the spectral and ghostly where a temporal re-humanising of those spaces had often occurred through vandalism, with evidence of illicit nocturnal activities, that disturbed and heightened the original atmospheres (Fisher, 2016). An unnerving feeling was commonplace when walking around or inside these buildings, echoing the miasmic narrative of Dickens' *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1992).

The research identified how the Hoo Peninsula has a particular identity and sense of place that is distinctive and attributable to this landscape that contributes to its atmosphere. As I stated at the beginning of the conclusion, the Hoo Peninsula has been perceived to have certain

characteristics but it has not been specifically understood through the lens of atmosphere. Individually, there have been numerous examples in historical records and in contemporary works that identify the Hoo Peninsula as having certain characteristics, feelings or sensations but no research has explicitly stated or investigated these and attributed them to either the peninsula or an atmosphere. To get a grip on these perceptions I studied an eclectic body of materials including literature, film, ornithology and industry. Walking with Jonathan Mycock, an RSPB officer, for example, introduced specialist knowledge of bird activity unique to the peninsula's estuarine environment. How the varied dialogue of birds ranging from skylarks to curlews and gulls contributed to the sense of place in an aural capacity, could be understood in Böhme's ideas of a tincturing, "ecstasies of things" (Böhme,1993:122).

More widely, the study of atmosphere that is particular and unique to specific places is currently a fragmented and specialised area of research with few critical studies. The work of Böhme in this field is one of the key philosophers with practitioners in the field of architecture including Juhani Pallasmaa and Peter Zumthor curious about the "atmospheric characteristics of spaces, places and settings" (Pallasmaa, 2012:15). The peripatetic nature of research and interest in the subject was evident when I attended the *Atmospheres* conference at University of Manchester in 2015. The theme of atmosphere was expansive with interesting projects, yet few papers addressed the question of atmosphere in relation to a particular place. The conference programme even asked why social scientists didn't "engage with atmospheres more than they do" (Atmospheres, 2015:10)?

This study therefore, aims to address this gap in knowledge and to use the research methodology as a template that can be applied to other places, in

order to identify their atmospheres, particularly within landscapes like the Hoo Peninsula, that are varied, complex and not easily categorised by one single definition. As I suggested earlier (Sheet 0:36), the research may provide a methodology for organisations, academics, geographers and communities that can be applied to other kinds of landscapes to identify similarly unique atmospheres, enabling landscapes to be valued in a wider variety of ways bringing emotional and physical well-being into view.

Using the concept of the *Archive of Atmosphere* to identify the intangible qualities of sites including their atmospheres, through material outcomes, could equally be applied to other similar landscape studies. Potentially, a series of archives resulting from this methodology could be developed resulting in useful comparative subjects for studying atmosphere across locations. Outcomes could be collected in a digital database as a key source of information for atmospheres as well as physical displays of collections.

8.3 Dissemination of the Research

The research has generated a number of works that have been exhibited, including *Black Spots, Material Immaterial* at the Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury (2016); *Coming Out of That Past into Glistening Black, Metal Festival,* Isle of Grain; *Harbouring Memory (Blackened)*, *Somatic Shifts* at the Zandra Rhodes Gallery, UCA, Rochester (2017), *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere*, Brewery Tap Gallery, Folkestone (2019) and *Stalking the Atmosphere: Journeys into the Hoo Peninsula* Herbert Read Gallery 2020
.

The research has been disseminated through conferences, seminars and presentations including *Performing Places* conference, Chichester

University (2015), *Strata: Art/Science Collaborations in the Anthropocene* conference*,* Aberystwyth University (2016); *Immateriality: Possibilities and Experience* conference*,* UCA, Canterbury (2016); *Landscape Now* conference, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London (2017); *Temporal Connections* conference, UCA, Farnham (2018), *CREST Ph.D.* Research Event*,* London (2018); *Creative Image* conference, University of Manchester (2018); *Walking's New Movements* conference, University of Plymouth (2019).

I organised the specialist seminar *Wanderings in the Hoo Peninsula* (2016) in collaboration with the Thames Estuary Partnership and UCA, inviting guest speakers including Edward Carpenter, (Investigator, Aerial Investigation and Mapping), English Heritage, artists Michael Collins and Charlie Tweed who presented work, as well as presenting my own research.

I have undertaken a number of walks in the peninsula including with the writer Iain Sinclair, film makers Andrew Kötting and Rick Goldsmith in The Isle of Grain (2016); Carol Donaldson, a conservationist and writer in Tilbury (2017); Keith Gulvin, a local historian (2017) in Allhallows; Michael Dale, a retired police officer and local historian in The Isle of Grain (2016-18); Clio Barnard, film director and writer in Allhallows (2018). These walks have been documented and exist as film works, blog posts and within the research materials.

I contributed to a walk on The Isle of Grain with artist Mike Nelson, organised by the Whitstable Biennale and the University of Kent (2016) and was instrumental in shaping proposals for creative projects in the RSPB HLF funding application for *Who's Hoo,* an ambitious project to promote and preserve the Hoo Peninsula (2017-19).

The research has been disseminated through publications including an article in the journal *British Art Studies, Issue 10* (Falcini, 2018); a blog post on Guild HE Research (Falcini, 2019); *Walking's New Movements, specialist publication* (pending 2020). Throughout the research I have maintained the blog *Estuary Dialogues at* http://estuarydialogue.wordpress.com/; a website http://cargocollective.com/annafalcini; work on Axis https://www.axisweb.org/p/annafalcini/; and video work on Vimeo https://vimeo.com.

8.4 Further Research

I intend to develop and refine both the performance aspect and the visual presentation of the *Archive of Atmosphere.* Taking a lead from the work of visual artists and their works such as *OR* by Kathy Prendergast (2015); *Manora Field Notes* by Naiza Khan (2019); *Mobile Museums* by Dayanita Singh (2013); and the site specific, performative sound works of Janet Cardiff, I will further develop a system of museum display for the objects and produce further performance-based works. A catalogue of all the *curiosities* or objects that are in the collection is also to be formalised under the terms of *Cornford's Analytics*, creating an inventory of each item and its atmospheric properties.

Further work on evidence that emerged during the research but that had to be shelved will also be undertaken. Returning to some of the formal resources, such as the local Medway archive, to expand upon the aspects of black spots in the peninsula (records of waterborne diseases) will enable future investigations with the resulting outcomes of a body of cartographical works.

The visual research will also implement a further series of night walks, exploring the scope for further creative outputs. A series of guided night walks for groups in the peninsula is also an ambition of the research.

Contributions to the field of research around atmosphere, through writing and publications particularly focused upon the Hoo Peninsula, are key to the development of the study. As indicated, the research methodology is a template that I can apply to other landscapes of interest, to further the investigations into atmosphere and a sense of place.

Last Word

When I first stumbled upon it in the 1990s, the Hoo Peninsula was perceived in largely negative terms. Few people visited it, there were areas of fly tipping and a strip of land at Cliffe acted as a graveyard of rusty, burnt out cars. It was a neglected corner of Kent, overlooked as a place of any interest and regarded only by government and the local authority as ripe for commercial development. Despite this image, there had always been enthusiastic advocates of its value. Local inhabitants such as the late Gill Moore and Joan Darwell at Cliffe; Michael Dale and Veronica Cordier at The Isle of Grain; conservationists Carol Donaldson and Mark Loos; and external figures such as the writer Iain Sinclair, artists Frank Watson and Germander Speedwell.

The threat of it being developed into a “Thames Hub” that included an airport to replace Heathrow, proposed by the former London Mayor Boris Johnson in 2012, undoubtedly reversed its fortunes and shone a light on this previously dark spot. As the Guardian journalist Ian Jack wrote in defence of the peninsula under the cloud of development, “something important will go: wreckage, the traces of a previous era that have no official curator and are therefore delightful to find” (Jack, 2012).

The bid for an airport and infrastructure to support it was, in the end, unsuccessful and subsequent strategic reports of the area have left the Hoo

Peninsula as empty spaces on colourful graphic maps, bordered by re-generation projects creeping into the areas around it.

The tide is turning and the peninsula has become re-evaluated and recognised as a coastal landscape that is rich and complex, attracting many more visitors who come from surrounding areas to appreciate its strange beauty. Organisations such as RSPB, Historic England and local conservation and community groups have done much to transform its image and promote the characteristics of it.

My time in the peninsula has been a moment in comparison to its layers of history but within the period I have spent visiting and studying it, I have witnessed these changing perceptions and how physically these are altering the landscape. The rusty cars and the old shipping container have disappeared, replaced by a site-specific RSPB area at Cliffe Pools, for example. I am not averse to these improvements but I also hope it can hold onto some of its "wreckage" and "traces" of its chequered past. The things that have contributed to its uniqueness and, subsequently, its atmosphere are the very characteristics that can be swept away in the desire to cleanse the landscape of its dark histories and return it to nature.

When I first became hopelessly lost on that first excursion, I witnessed a landscape on the threshold of ruin and beauty. It was the first glimmer of a psycho-geographic adventure into a place of power stations, creeks and wide-open marshes. Over the years, I have come to know the landscape intimately and, despite moving to the borders of England and Wales twenty years ago, I have endured an endless longing for it. The difficulties of studying at distance have never dampened my fascination.

To stand at night on the shoreline of Cockleshell beach and hear the liquid history of the Thames estuary at your feet is to capture the essence of the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula.

Summary of Artworks

Overview

This is a summary of artworks completed during the research of the thesis. The artworks are of various media including drawings, photographs, film, audio, performance and a collection of found objects. Inevitably there were many possibilities and ideas that surfaced as the research developed, but a number of key works began to emerge that resonated with the ethos of the investigations into the atmosphere of the Hoo Peninsula. It is these that I have focused on in this summary. The resulting artworks developed alongside the written thesis, particularly *Sheet 3: Mapping as a Tool for Locating Atmosphere*, *Sheet 4: Psycho-geographic Wanderings in the Marsh* and *Sheet 5: Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere*.

The artworks have evolved over a period of time and there were opportunities to present these through a series of exhibitions. They were displayed in traditional gallery settings as well as in more site-specific locations. The following is a concise list of where the key works were exhibited and include both group and solo exhibitions of the works. The list includes the exhibition, the location, date, whether it was a group or solo show and the names of the works exhibited.

Following on from the list of exhibitions, I then summarise the key artworks with illustrations and brief descriptions. Further, detailed information on many of the works may be found in the main body of this thesis which I have referenced using the relevant Sheet and page numbers in brackets after each work of art.

Exhibitions of Artworks

Material Immaterial Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury 4-13 April 2016
Group Show

Works exhibited: *We Drill for Oil* and *We've Come Out of That Past That's Laid Beneath the Churchyard's Weathered Stone*

Coming Out of That Past into Glistening Black, St. James' Church, The Isle of

Grain, Kent 24 -26 September 2016, *Metal Festival*

Solo Show

Works exhibited: *Coming out of the Past into Glistening Black*, *Black Spots, We Drill for Oil, We've Come Out of That Past That's Laid Beneath the Churchyard's Weathered Stone*, *Coming out of the Past*

Harbouring Memory (Blackened) Zandra Rhodes Gallery, UCA, Rochester, 13 March – 05 April 2017, *Somatic Shifts* Group Show

Works Exhibited: Research in action from the study of a charred object recovered from Grain Tower.

Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere, Brewery Tap Gallery, Folkestone**,**

08-18 June 2019 Solo Show

Works exhibited: *The Archive of Atmosphere, Areas of Atmosphere*, *Encyclopaedias of Atmosphere*, *Performing the Archive*

Stalking the Atmosphere: Journeys into the Hoo Peninsula, Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury, 7 -25 September 2020
Solo Show

Works exhibited: *The Archive of Atmosphere, Areas of Atmosphere, Encyclopaedias of Atmosphere, Performing the Archive*, *Liquid Histories, We Drill for Oil, We've Come Out of That Past That's Laid Beneath the Churchyard's Weathered Stone, Black Spot, Measuring the Atmosphere, Night Drawings, Allhallows, Submersion, Maps without Beginnings or End, Maps to Find Atmosphere, Great Expectations, Studies of Charred Object from Grain Tower, Measuring Devices, Louisa Cornford's Desk, Spiritual Conversations*

Artworks

The Archive of Atmosphere (2016-Current)

Fig.63 *Objects from the Archive of Atmosphere (Clockwise from top: Iron Bolt, Fragment of clothing, Mullein, Dehydrated rosehips and Orange painted wood).* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Description

Collection of approximately fifty found objects from Cliffe Marshes, High Halstow and Halstow Marshes, Allhallows and The Isle of Grain. The objects have been collected by the fictitious amateur archaeologist Louisa Cornford and are noted for their potential containment of atmospheric properties. They are of various materials and construction, plant-based, natural and synthetic properties that are often abandoned, washed up in the estuary, botanical specimens, lost and forgotten objects.

Once collected the objects are catalogued, indexed and then stored in the archive until selected objects are displayed. There is currently no permanent museum display of the archive but objects are brought out on temporary loan for display. The objects are integrated into a number of performance works by Louisa Cornford where their atmosphere is tested through a series of actions.

Fig. 64 *Louisa Cornford performs the Archive of Atmosphere* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Archive of Atmosphere: Index (2020)
Wooden box with drawer, containing individual cards describing each object in the archive. (90L x 45w x 40h)

The Archive of Atmosphere has a catalogue and indexing system where each artefact is listed and then catalogued onto individual cards. The cards are housed in a bespoke wooden cabinet under the title *The Archive of*

Atmosphere and organised into four sections: 1. The Isle of Grain; 2. Allhallows; 3. High Halstow and Halstow Marshes and 4. Cliffe Marshes. The provenance of each object determines where the index cards are to be placed. For example, 'Nicky's Hard Hat', the red safety hat recovered from Cockleshell Beach on The Isle of Grain is located in '1. The Isle of Grain'. Each object is analysed using *The Cornford Analytics* method. (*Sheet 5,* pp.148-164).

Fig. 65 *Archive of Atmosphere: Index* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Spiritual Conversations (2018)
Digital Audio work (55 minutes)

In May 2018 I underwent a series of spiritual counselling sessions with Sharon Elliott, a Spiritual Counsellor based in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. In the sessions I explored my relationship to the Hoo Peninsula, my spiritual connections to it, gaining further insight into my psychological relationship and to atmospheres in general. In one session it came to light that I had a deep affinity to water and Sharon revealed that I was a water nymph. This audio recording is taken from that session (*Sheet 4*, p.115)[22]

Areas of Atmosphere (2018)
4 photographic prints (68L x 61 W cm) unframed.

[22] A recording of Spiritual Conversations is available with this thesis.

Four photographic prints depicting examples of atmosphere in the Hoo Peninsula from the four areas of study. In the images we see the exterior of the shed at Cooling Road, Cliffe (pp.182-90), the surface of a retrieved object from a concrete barn at Dalham Farm, High Halstow, the view at low tide of the estuary at Allhallows and the close up of post-industrial, concrete remains at The Isle of Grain.

Fig. 66 *Areas of Atmosphere: The Isle of Grain* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Encyclopaedias of Atmosphere (2018)
Four hand illustrated books with original photographic covers

Each encyclopaedia corresponds with the areas of study in the thesis; Cliffe Marshes, High Halstow and Halstow Marshes, Allhallows and The Isle of Grain. The covers are copies of the prints from *Areas of Atmosphere* and each cover contains letters from the word ‘atmosphere’. When displayed as a group they spell out the word in full, a visual reference to the research for atmosphere

covering the four geographical areas and how different characteristics and forms of atmosphere are found in these distinctly unique areas of the peninsula.

The encyclopaedias were devised for the exhibition *Louisa Cornford's Archive of Atmosphere* at the Brewery Tap, Folkestone in 2018. The books were displayed on a wooden shelf that had been salvaged from the shed at Cooling Road, Cliffe. During the exhibition Louisa's archive was on display and she could be found at a desk making studies of objects. Notes and drawings were entered into the encyclopaedias for the duration of the show. The books were also used during her live performances.

Fig. 67 *Encyclopaedias of Atmosphere* (2018) *at the Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Liquid Histories (2020)
Five antique glass bottles with liquid collected from the Hoo Peninsula with accompanying index cards

Water samples were collected from sites of atmosphere in the landscape: Allens Pond, Cliffe Marshes; Egypt Bay, Halstow Marshes; Decoy Fleet, Halstow Marshes; Yantlett Creek, Allhallows; the Cooling Channel, Grain Power Station, The Isle of Grain. They were contained in five antique glass bottles and placed upon individual cards with hand drawn maps, archival images and drawings associated with each site. (*Sheet 5*, p.180; *Sheet 7*, pp.226-7)

Fig. 68 *Liquid Histories* (Anna Falcini: 2020)

Maps without Beginnings or End, Maps to Find Atmosphere (2017-20)
Three Drawings, white ink on tracing paper

These drawings are taken from the impression of the surface from a fibre glass boat fragment found washed up on the shoreline at The Isle of Grain. The

surface had ruptured into a series of cracks and lines that underwent a series of processes to extract the marks onto paper. The final drawings are a meticulous re-rendering of the marks that transform into a type of map; one that appears obscure and unreliable as a pure navigational tool but that offers possibilities to track the atmosphere.

Originally one large drawing, the work was later separated into three sections, reflecting the Ordnance Survey map system of adjoining sheets that cover the UK. (*Sheet 3,* pp.84-87)

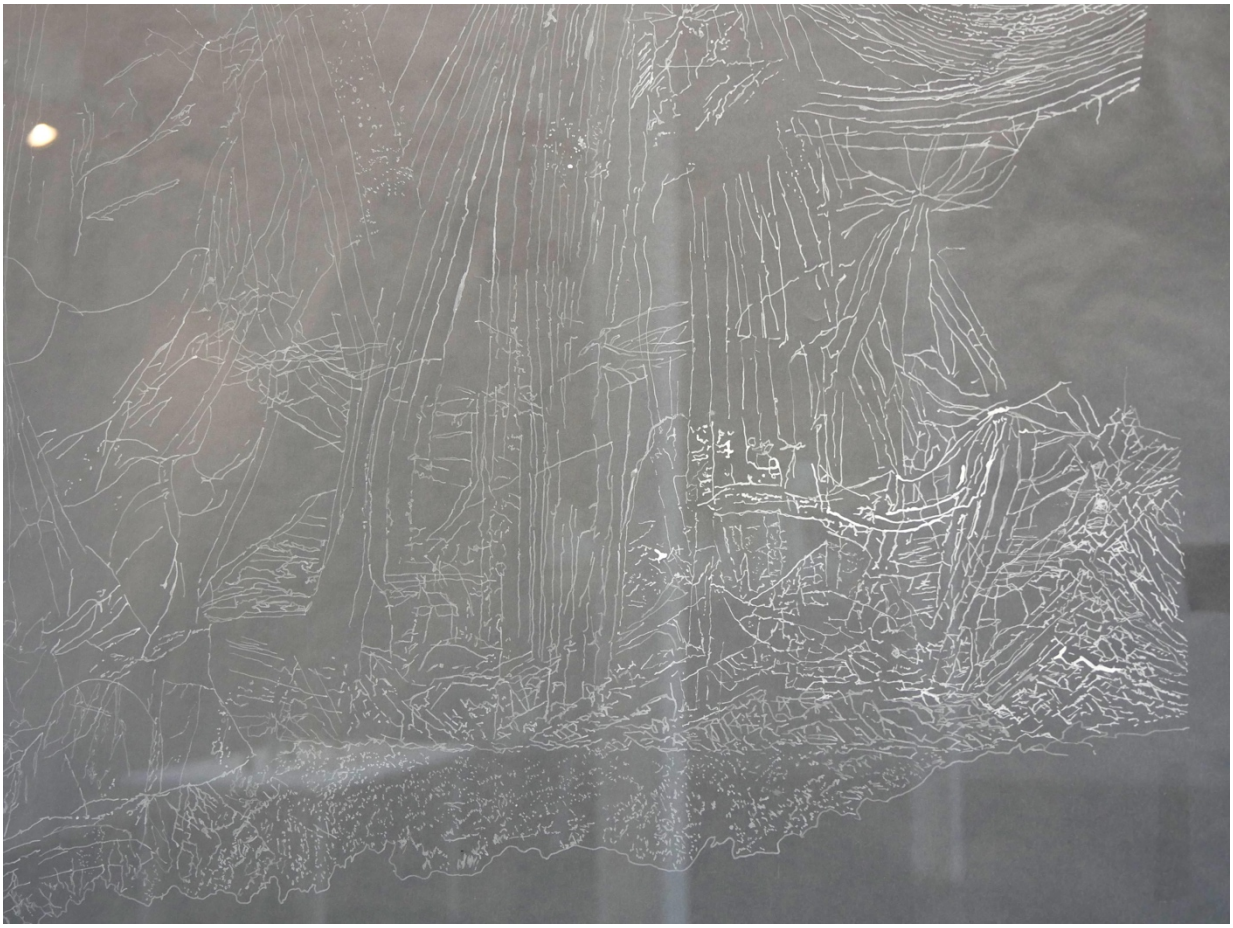


Fig. 69 *Detail of Maps without Beginnings or End, Maps to Find Atmosphere* (Anna Falcini: 2017-20)

Night Drawings, Allhallows (2019)
Series of 5 drypoint prints

Night Drawings were made on the shorelines of Allhallows and The Isle of Grain, as a method of investigating atmosphere from an alternative perspective. I took paper and simple drawing tools with me on night walks making instinctive drawings and, in the pitch black of night, developed works based upon emotional, phenomenological responses rather than observational work.

Across the estuary, illuminated on the distant shore of Southend were little pearls of light and I intuitively made drawings composed of sequentially arranged dots. They appeared to be reminiscent of routes and pathways on the maps that I had been studying, a different kind of cartography. With nothing else to see I focused on the forms and shapes of the lights, which, allowed me to become more attuned to the sounds and smells; the subtle particles of the atmosphere that were obscured in the daylight hours. (*Sheet 4*, pp.117-123)

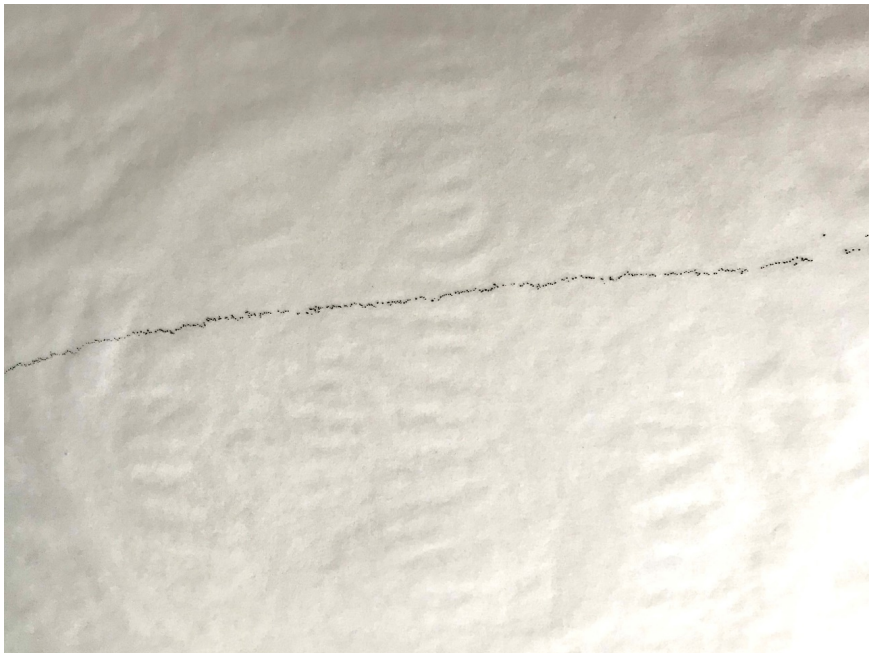


Fig. 70 *Night Drawing* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Measuring the Atmosphere (2018)
Film (5 mins)

This film explores the concept of how we might measure intangible phenomena such as atmosphere in the setting of a derelict agricultural building. Through the interior of this prefabricated, derelict concrete barn in High Halstow with views over the estuary, the film tracks the abandoned objects and debris of this eerie space. Alighting on a couple of antique cotton tape measures tied to the rafters, the camera observes as they sway from the iron girder of the roof space to and fro. The film's soundtrack is a compilation of verbal descriptions captured from social media of how to measure phenomena like tides, units of atmospheric pressure, the distance of planets, relative signal levels, gravity etc.; mysterious phenomena that is hard to capture (*Sheet 5*, pp.164-166).

Fig. 71 *Still image: Measuring the Atmosphere* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Great Expectations (2018)
Plastic white trim recovered from concrete barn at Dalham Farm, High Halstow and writing in blue felt pen.

To accompany the film *Measuring the Atmosphere* I collected a number of objects from Dalham Barn as alternative tools to measure the atmosphere. These became integrated into the film screening, installed alongside the film. One of those objects I collected from the barn was a remnant of white plastic trim used in home decorating. Using a phrase from Dickens' *Great Expectations* that referenced the estuary landscape in his fictional account, I applied it to the white strip in pen, creating a standard narrative by which to measure the atmosphere (Dickens, 1868).

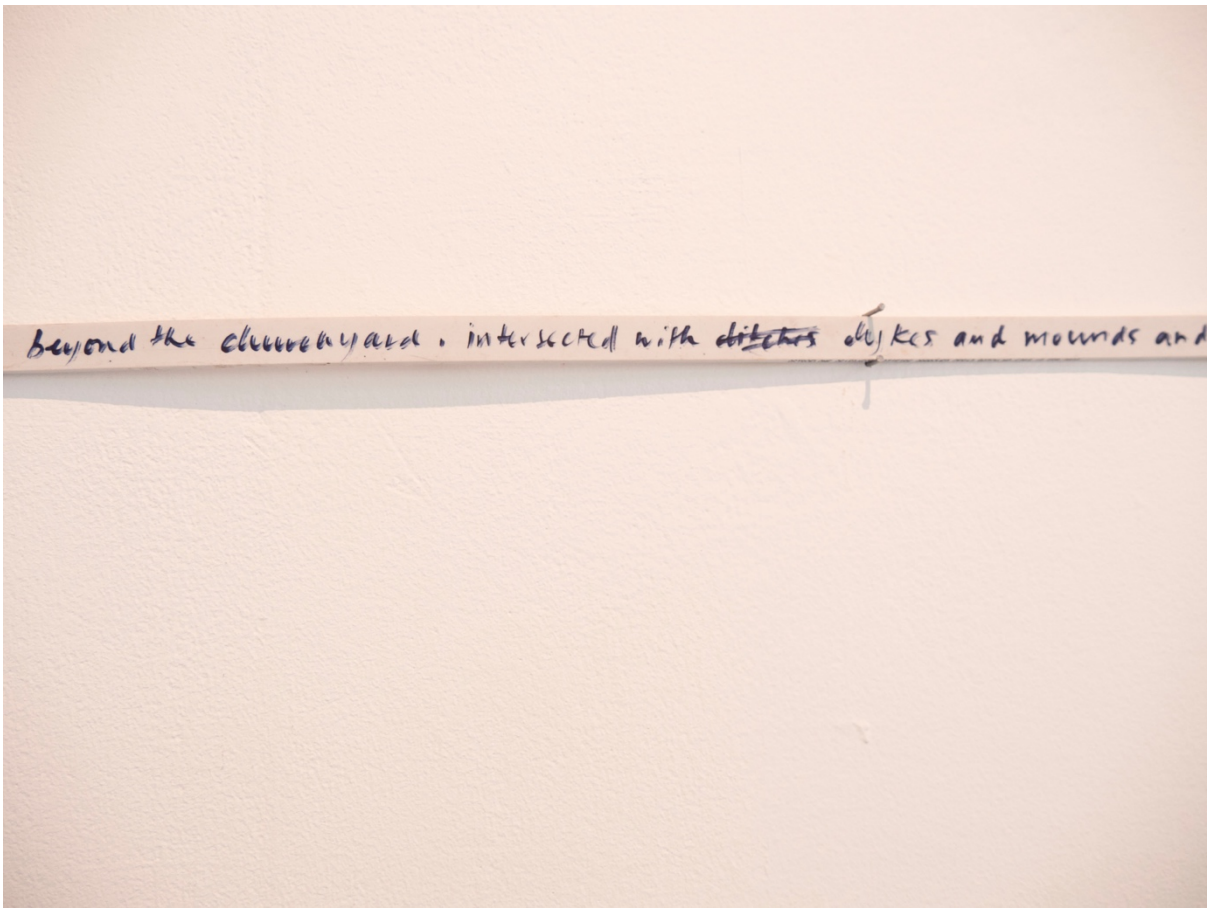


Fig. 72 *Great Expectations, Herbert Read Gallery, UCA, Canterbury* (Anna Falcini: 2018)

Studies of Charred Object from Grain Tower (2017)
8 drawings on layout paper

Figs. 73 & 74 *Studies of Charred Objects from Grain Tower* (Anna Falcini: 2017)

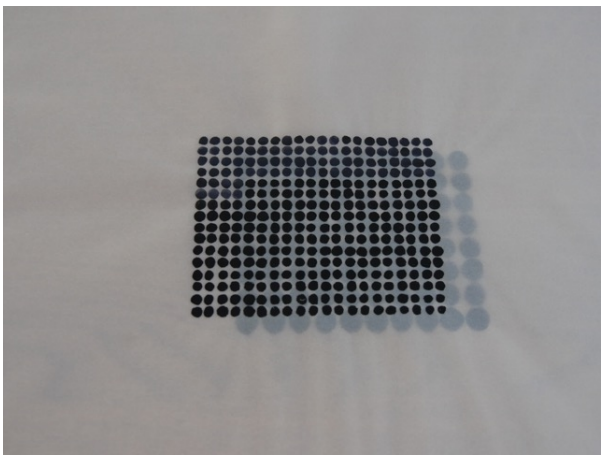
These drawings are made from studies of a charred object; a small rounded piece of wood that had been burnt and that had the remains of several screws embedded in it. The object was recovered from the interior of Grain Tower, an historic Napoleonic gun tower that was accessed by a causeway at low tide. Invited to exhibit at the group show *Somatic Shifts* in 2017, I decided to develop work in response to the object as a live, ongoing work for the duration of the exhibition. This series of drawings were made during that 'active research project' (*Sheet 5*, pp.167-169)

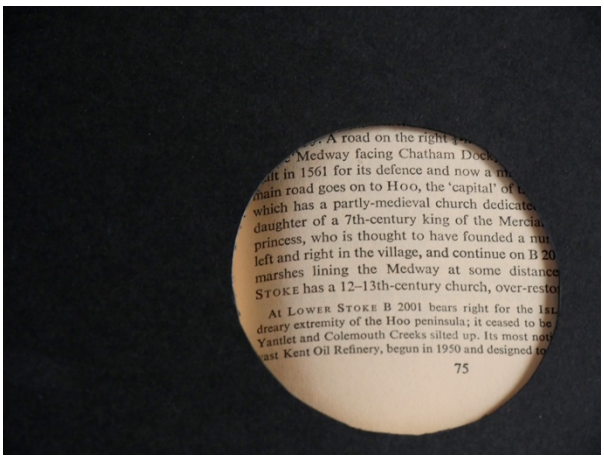
Coming out of the Past into Glistening Black (2016)
Mixed media work with cockleshells and marsh grass.

In 1952 the oil company British Petroleum (B.P.) built an oil refinery on the Isle of Grain that dramatically changed this easterly point of the peninsula. The oil company commissioned a film *The Island* as a promotional tool that documented the construction of the refinery and interwove fictional inhabitants

from The Isle of Grain such as the local vicar, housewives and a birdwatcher into the story of its construction.

Directed by John Ingram and Peter Pickering, it captured The Isle of Grain at a unique moment in its history. Coinciding with the discovery of this film, I came across the work of Mary Dobson who had identified how marsh parishes such as those of the Hoo Peninsula became “black spots” (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013:15-16). Drawing upon the idea of black spots, the work explored the





infiltration of oil and disease in the landscape and how it tinged the atmosphere.

Clockwise from top left image: Fig. 75 *Black Spot 1* (Anna Falcini: 2016); Fig. 76 *Black Spots* (Anna Falcini: 2015); Fig. 77 *A Guide to Kent* (Anna Falcini: 2016); Fig 78 *Detail from Black Spot 2* (Anna Falcini: 2016); Fig. 79 *Coming Out of That Past into Glistening Black* (Anna Falcini: 2016); Fig. 80 *Black Spot 2* (Anna Falcini: 2016); Fig. 81 *Detail from Black Spot 1* (Anna Falcini: 2016)

We Drill for Oil (2016)
Drawing. Pen and Gouache on Confectionary Paper.

We've Come Out of That Past That's Laid Beneath the Churchyard's Weathered Stone (2016)
Drawing. Pen, Pencil and Gouache on Confectionary Paper.

These two drawings are both derived from scenes in *The Island* (1952). The figure in *We Drill for Oil* is one of the construction workers who, in a dramatic scene in the film, is captured as he looks up in wonder as a large piece of the refinery is hoisted into place. The scene is accompanied by the intense musical score of Malcolm Arnold. In the drawing we see a handwritten list positioned beneath his upward looking face. The list is the complete set of buildings at the site and is a direct copy transposed from the BP Kent Refinery booklet. This booklet was created for visitors to the oil refinery and gave a detailed account of how the oil refinery operated and the products it made.

We've Come Out of That Past That's Laid Beneath the Churchyard's Weathered Stone features the hand of the vicar, a character from the film, collaged onto the paper with features drawn from the BP Kent Refinery booklet. The vicar was in fact played by the real-life vicar from St. James' Parish Church on The Isle of Grain but the narration in the film fictionalised his character. The scene that features his hand shows him pinning up parish notices to a board on the church but in the drawing this was replaced with a red painted line that is taken from the diagrams in the BP booklet. The hand implies the physical disruption of the landscape and the dramatic shift to the atmosphere this created.

(Left) Fig. 82 *We Drill for Oil* (Anna Falcini: 2016)

(Right) Fig 83 *We've Come Out of That Past That's Laid Beneath the Churchyard's Weathered Stone* (Anna Falcini: 2016)

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