
research +
enterprise

UCA
university for the creative arts

Research students exhibition catalogue 2011



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Introduction

The University for the Creative Arts has a mission to explore, advance and celebrate creativity across the breadth and depth of art, design, architecture and media, and nurture talent. Our research students form a vital part of UCA's research culture. Their inquisitiveness and imagination, which spurs on focused experimentation and observation, and directs critical inquiry and intense reflection, enriches the debate and creative potential of the institution. Moreover, their work introduces new creative and intellectual concerns, conceptual connections for UCA and contributes to the shaping of communities of practice in and beyond the academy.

The research degrees programme offers a period of sustained study and analysis, supported by dedicated supervision. It provides a framework in which the poesis of making can flourish and the confluence of sensing, thinking and creating, researching and doing is encouraged to aid the shaping of a holistic research proposition. The processual dialogue between practice and theory, intention and intuition that lies at the heart of the creative investigation, is stimulated by the open-ended exchange with artists and academics working in the field as well as by peer learning.

The catalogue demonstrates the scope and vibrancy of current inquiries and pays tribute to the creative capacity and investment of UCA research students. It brings together contributions from students who are at different stages in their research ad/venture. Their explorations are connected by the centrality of contemporary material practices as focal point for the reconsideration of societal values, cultural symbols and rituals and their meaning, and the trans/formation of individual, collective and national identities. The media and formats employed range from cloth, jewellery and ceramics to analogue film, the human voice and the representation of dress and fashion in virtual environments. Thematic interests span from explorations at the interface of art and medical science to an investigation of the role of art in contested spaces, or the role of metonymy in 'how the arts think'. And whilst the projects are motivated by personal curiosity and passion, their outcomes transcend the boundaries of individual practice and offer new insights, understanding and applications for the benefit of wider society.

Prof. Kerstin Mey
Director for Research and Enterprise

Beverly Ayling-Smith

Research Degree Student

1st Year Part time

Cloth, mourning and melancholia

Beverly's work examines the emotional states of melancholia and mourning. She questions whether in the space between these two emotions there is a grief that allows for a creative productivity which could not otherwise be achieved. Textile art has been described by Maharaj as the 'chameleon figure of the 'undecidable'', belonging to both genres of art and craft but not truly belonging to either. This, together with the intimate association cloth has with the body during life and after death, places textile art as a uniquely appropriate medium for the exploration of mourning/melancholia as both a pit of despair and portal to creativity.

The work Beverly shows here builds on work begun in her MA studies and uses a small child's dress to explore the notion of loss, both the loss of childhood and the loss of the inner child as one grows older. Even when the immediate feelings of grief and mourning are passed, we are changed forever, the emotions embedded in the fabric of our lives. The way the image of a child's dress can seep through the smoothed-over surface echoes the way in which feelings of loss can come to the surface at different moments in our lives.



*The Persistence
of Loss*
Linen, paper,
print and stitch
50 x 30 cm

Kim Bagley

Research Degree Student

1st Year Full time

Africa and the West: a contested conversation in ceramics

As a South African, Kim Bagley is concerned with representations of contemporary African identities through ceramic objects. Specifically her research is concerned with hybrid identities that are formed as a result of the complex, interrelated histories of Africa and the West - a legacy of colonialism and postcolonialism. She uses metaphor, material, process and form to provoke questions about shifting contemporary identities, referencing the history of making, collecting and displaying African ceramics in the West.

Cattle forms are a recurrent theme in her work, referring to Nguni cattle, an indigenous Southern African breed which has entered the popular consciousness of many South Africans in recent years. The breed is known for the varied patterns and colours of its hide. It was popularised mainly through the linguistic research of author, Marguerite Poland.



Object/ify
3D installation-type piece
Ceramic (unglazed stoneware
and earthenware),
found objects
Dimensions variable



Reading Shadows
(detail)
Textile, light
Size variable

Gail Baxter

Research Degree Student
2nd Year Part time

Connecting the lacunae: contemporary lace practice and the notion of 'absence' in museum archives

'How do the lacunae in archives challenge the conventional reading of museum text and therefore the meaning of objects?' Gail's Research Question is concerned with what the museum archive does not contain and how such gaps and absences affect the reading of museum objects.

For the purposes of this research an archive is defined as: any collection of material that has been withdrawn from its normal circulation and stored for potential future reference.

In the archival process it is rare for all of the available material to be retained, filtering takes place on many levels, and thus information gaps occur. By questioning the influence of such absences in museum archives Gail aims to encourage the development of critical questioning and stimulate debate on the interpretation of museum objects.

Whilst the content of an established archive may be static its interpretation will vary. Exhibition curators can offer a specific reading of an object through their chosen text and contextual positioning but this may be subject to reinterpretation based on the experiences, tacit knowledge and agenda of the audience.

Gail's practice is inextricably linked with absences - holes, gaps, voids, lacunae - it is the absences that give lace its distinctive identity. The lacemaker's skill lies in effectively drawing together, and interlinking, many individual threads to form a coherent whole around the absences that are the essence of the fabric. Gail is applying these skills to the archives of her Case Studies; identifying the absences, drawing together hints and clues and adding information from specialist sources to give form to the voids and facilitate new readings.

Reading Shadows invites the audience to consider how the visibility of voids and information in the work changes according to their physical position and how this subtly affects their reading of the object. Gail's work can be seen at: www.ghostreestudio.co.uk

Sarah Bowen

Research Degree Student
PhD Completion phase

Landscape as transitional space in film practice

Walking Albion is a stop-frame meditation on the changing landscape along the Michael/Mary ley-line that runs between Cornwall and Norfolk across the widest point of Britain. The film was shot on a seven-week walk that began with the Beltane sunrise in May and led up to sunrise on the summer solstice. With its themes of temporality and transition it presents the landscape as a fragmented and de-populated space that is observed at the same speed as the sun rose, along the Michael/Mary line, on the day the walk began.

Walking Albion
Format DVD, HD
Stop frame animation
37 min 40 sec



Richard Couzins

Research Degree Student

3rd Year Full time

Inside out: the under-theorised material and object voice

'precisely that which cannot be said' Mladen Dolar

The voice, like the realm of vision, is outside of language but intimately involved in communication. It physically gives birth to language as the interface between noise and meaning. My research sets out what can be learnt from the voice, of itself, as object and material between its linguistic and extra linguistic attributes.

The voice becomes different things to different discourses, a nexus whose reference can switch, breaking or moulding communication, where the listener infers meaning. As the voice is never singular in origin my research takes two approaches: how the meaning of voices in artists' works are inferred by audiences with contextual criteria using the linguistic and literary theories of Wilson and Sperber, and Mikhail Bakhtin; and how the voice can be heard as a form by applying formal approaches from visual art theory.

My method outlines the production, transmission and reception of recorded voice in art works. As presence and immanence the voice can be effaced by the nearly instantaneous speed of sound. As a bodily emanation it is a function of breath, which can stop being equated with self presence, or as a partial or transitory object that is partly out of the subject's control. My research provides theoretical explanation of the rich aesthetic and cultural connotations found in the quotidian voices inhabiting our experience, and prevalent in contemporary art practice.



Situated Utterance
Single screen video

Matthew Gulliford
Research Degree Student
PhD Completion phase

Transforming the self into a work of art: a critical consideration of Foucault's aesthetics of existence and popular self-help literature

Matthew's doctoral research is concerned with the production of the self and subjectivity. His work is particularly interested in the arts of the self or the techniques of aesthetic existence, which Michel Foucault conceptualised during his late genealogical studies on the subject in the 1980s. Following Foucault's analysis of Ancient Greco-Roman practices surrounding the *art of living and care of the self*, Matthew's performance based video works investigate the possibility of formulating and practicing new styles of aesthetic existence through the exercises found in contemporary self-help literature.



Exercise 1: Morning
Pages 1–12
Digital video
10 min

0910312130
Performance
on drum kit
with electric
harmonium and
metal detector
Image courtesy of
Donald Bousted



Phillip Henderson

Research Degree Student

3rd Year Full time

A critical analysis of the temporal aspects of musical improvisation, drone and indeterminacy arriving at a synthesis of contrasting temporalities in a new musical work

Phillip is an artist and researcher developing his practice of musical improvisation. The work has an original temporal form arising from the interaction between mechanical and performed means of sound production. His research highlights a timeframe of synthesis that he uses for his performances. The practice theory centres on three temporally divergent elements and their simultaneous occurrence within the work. The three elements are:

1. Improvisation played on drum kit.
2. Constant drone played on electric harmonium.
3. Indeterminate tones played by metal detector.

The elements have commonality in terms of their individual relation to particular temporal conditions. For example, the stasis of the drone may provoke sensations of timelessness. A drone highlights the absence of differentiation between past, present and future. In contrast, live improvisation, especially that which has come to be known as free or non-idiomatic improvisation in music, has a dependence on the moment within which it is performed and the moments in the past. As such it requires a performer to be actively conscious of the present as distinct from the past and the future. Similarly, generating indeterminate sound requires a system to be in place that enables change to occur according to a method with outcomes that cannot necessarily be entirely predictable.

Phillip has been invited to contribute to Late at Tate curated by Microtonal Projects in April 2011. He has recently performed his work at The Vortex Jazz club, London and Permanent Gallery, Brighton. He has delivered international conference papers on improvised music to Queens University, Belfast (2010), and on the music of Charlemagne Palestine to The University of Missouri, Kansas City, USA (2009). His article; *Identifying a timeframe for temporally self-contradictory music*, will be published by Intellect in the *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* during 2011/2012.

Michelle Jessop

Research Degree Student

3rd Year Full time

Jewellery and transience: recording and representing the tangible and intangible in contemporary jewellery practice

Using the perspective and methods of a contemporary jeweller, my work explores the design and application of a critical jewellery object within the gallery environment. My practice-based research is centred on an autonomous presentation of contemporary jewellery that is analytical in strategy, engaging with theoretical principles of display, representation and craft. The impetus for my work engages with display methodology, considering the role of digital technology as a communicative tool that addresses the relationship between conception and presentation of a jewellery object. When considering the dissemination of jewellery, representational methods such as photography, photographic manipulation and film are utilized to explore the traditional forms associated with jewellery. The approach is to offer an alternative role of analysis and interaction within jewellery display, addressing the relationship between the object and the viewer through creative practice.

In *Necklace* (2010) the role of representational images that present jewellery design to a wider audience are considered. Promotional images, advertisement and fashion photography contain striking visuals of highly finished designs produced to influence the needs and desires of the consumer. In the digital age, social perception of an image as a truthful representation of the jewellery product can be questioned, as doctored imagery allows the creation of illusion. A critical investigation into digital methodology involved the duplication of a single bead, transformed to formulate the illusion of wearable jewellery. The resulting images challenge the notion of craft and critically explore conventional notions of jewellery design. The wearable object presented does not exist, its wearability is established through the 'craft' of visual manipulation and technological imagery. The practical work produced was developed by considering display and representation, mediating an alternative approach to jewellery design that considers presentational methods during the conception of a critical jewellery object.



Necklace
Porcelain
42 x 59.4 cm

Maria Manuela Lopes

Research Degree Student

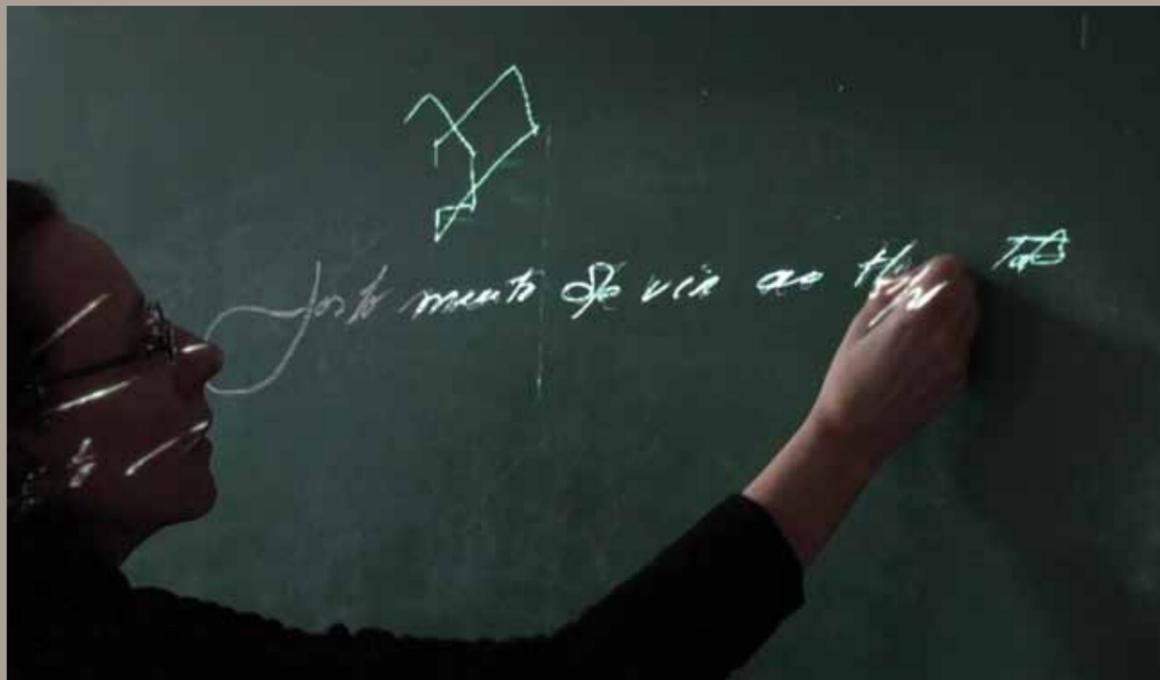
PhD Completion phase

Representational strategies on Alzheimer's studies: a practice-based art research in a neuroscience laboratory

Maria Manuela Lopes is a visual artist and researcher based in Portugal and the UK. Her transdisciplinary practice is based on issues of memory and self-identity as informed by the life sciences and medical research. Her practice based PhD research explores the complex assessment methods and representational strategies of Alzheimer's disease within the neuroscience laboratory context. Her work is a result of her situated research within the Hospital Santa Maria/Molecular Medicine Institute in Lisbon.

Her time-based, multi-media installations encompass photography, video and the use of scientific biological materials and imagery.

THE ARCHIVE 1, Lost Words, explores possible interpretation that objects acquire when they are subjected to artistic processes and re-experienced in a different context. In the neuroscience laboratory and Alzheimer's clinic a sentence, a diagram or an MRI is read against the assumptions of medical discourse. The installation uncovers some of the representational strategies produced in the laboratories searching for similarities between the visual technologies applied by this field of neuroscience and self reflection in the studio; examining that in both contexts, decisions regarding handling, archiving, framing and time happen in parallel. Although if in science the effort to enhance or scale 'inscriptions' (Latour, 1986) reflect the power to make believe in the invisible world of scientific research, Lopes proposes that in employing artistic methods such as re-tracing, wax casts and assemblages she is challenging the associations of scientific images to an invisible truth and exploring their potential power to deploy the discourse of autobiographical memory. By recording/re-editing both the studies of Alzheimer's disease and herself under similar neuropsychological examination she operates at a metaphoric level of endless revision of traces, comparing the never-ending chain of representations (scientific archive), to the psychological process that creates identity and integrates personality.



*THE ARCHIVE 1,
Lost Words: Re-tracings*
Video, wax casts,
A4 paper, glass,
Petri dish, drawing
and other laboratory
materials
Dimensions variable

Christina Lovey

Research Degree Student

2nd Year Full time

A pilgrimage into the liminal – an investigation into the psychological space of grief and its representation in film

Christina works primarily with moving image, and has been working on re-representing *The liminal experience*, in order to convey lived-experience: the experience of grief and loss. The process of making work is to begin with still images/views that are taken to document lived-experience, and to then work in an experiential way with a hand held video camera, using a simple aesthetic and low production values, to capture this experience. This allows for use of reflexivity and the 'embodied camera'. Current research involves finding new elements of filmic language. Working with the exilic optic and reflexivity, recent work is concerned with the psychological space of grief and its re-representation. By considering how to work with moving image in order to convey a specific experience, it has been necessary to inhabit spaces and places and to immerse the self in the experience of a place – it has also been important to find alternative approaches to filming. Using reflexivity and the embodied camera, as well as employing camera movement the work re-represents a journey that was undertaken literally as an act of mourning. The Pier at Southend is the longest pier in the world and was built to allow passengers to get on and off pleasure cruisers in Victorian times. The pier was used as it is a place that has been visited and inhabited temporarily by a huge number of visitors over the years, many of them embarking on another journey at the pier head. The pier represents the journey undertaken at the end of life and the pier head represents the place where souls leave the world. The journey allows for a letting go and a saying farewell, before returning to the shore, where life continues, uninterrupted.



*The liminal
experience.
Image no. 3
Digital camera*

Thomas Makryniotis
Research Degree Student
PhD Completion phase

ModeCode – identity through dress in virtual environments

Thomas Makryniotis is a digital designer who deals mainly with the representation of dress and fashion in virtual environments, particularly through interactive technologies. His main areas of expertise are 2D and 3D design and illustration for fashion with the aid of digital media, and fashion promotion through digital technologies and desktop publishing. His PhD research, entitled ModeCode, focuses on the use of fashion and dress within digital media, and has been presented at several conferences in the UK. In 2010, Thomas formed a new company called ModeCode, which takes on digital fashion projects such as the creation of virtual catwalks, interactive software for fashion promotion, 3D fashion illustration and web design.



The Fashion Game
Digital
1050 x 1680 px

Katherine Nolan

Research Degree Student

PhD Designate

Seducing the machine: narcissism and performance in contemporary feminist practice

Katherine Nolan is a video and performance artist, currently completing a practice-led PhD entitled *Seducing the Machine: Narcissism and Performance in Contemporary Feminist Practice*.

Her work is concerned with the erotic female body as spectacle, in particular provoking questions around narcissism and exhibitionism as contemporary concerns of spectatorship, that are seemingly incongruous with critical agency. The artist turns a 'trivial' and 'frivolous' fixation with her own image into a critical weapon, seeking to unravel narcissism and twist its clichéd terms.

Drawing on mainstream iconography of the erotic female body displayed in black stockings and lace lingerie and repositioning it in the art context, the work seeks to disrupt both voyeuristic viewing pleasures and the safety of a distanced critical gaze.

Her early performance work to the camera produced an *auto-erotic* in which her desire to be seen, projected onto the camera and further transposed onto the viewer, perverted the representational space with tropes of self-reflexivity. Moving into live, public spectacle, her staging of the erotic female body is employed to trouble propriety and convention in the social and public space of the art context, through the exhibitionist implications of the performance.

Her concerns are currently explicated through an over-invested relationship with the machines and spaces that produce and frame the body in performance. She tests herself as (art) object against the camera, screen, white gallery walls, re-used art space or even another authorial body. The physicality of the performances opens out questions of objectivity, laying emphasis on materiality and sensation, such that the flesh of the erotic object threatens to erupt from stylized pose into the raw and vulnerable.

<http://katherine-nolan.blogspot.com>

Silver Screen Shimmy
Digital video
projection
6 min 45 sec
(on a loop)



Judy Price

Research Degree Student

2nd Year Full time

White oil and the disappearance of the West Bank

Judy Price is a London-based artist who works with moving image, sound, photography and installation. In a practice that intertwines documentary, fiction and testimony, Price constructs narratives that draw on the multiple dynamics that comes into play within various social and political landscapes.

Price is concerned with how art can engage with and draw out the explicit and hidden dynamics in zones of conflict making visible the geopolitical forces that impact on specific geographical places. One such geographical location that has been a focus of Price's practice for many years is Israel and Palestine. In encountering these landscapes Price is interested in how art might be able to move thought forward and create new perceptions of the experiences of individuals and cultures and arts capacity to critique; in short its transformative potential.

White Oil and the disappearance of the West Bank, explores the quarries in the Occupied Palestine Territories as both a physical, metaphorical and subjective space focusing on a culture's edges, endings, displacements and disappearances.

Despite being one of the main industries of Palestine, the quarries are largely an underrepresented part of these struggles. There are over 300 quarries in the West Bank, some owned by Israelis, others owned by Palestinians, so strictly controlled by Israel to be unviable. Of the stone and sand excavated 75% is used in the construction industry in Israel and to build the illegal settlements in the West Bank.

The hues and colours of the landscape, sand and stone forge deep into the land as scars and fissures both trace and torment. Being so close to the city of Ramallah, from certain perspectives it appears as though the quarry to the west of Qalandia has been excavated in order to make space for the West Banks centre to collapse into.



The Keeper
Still from moving image

Carol Quarini

Research Degree Student

2nd Year Part time

The domestic veil: exploring the net curtain through the uncanny and the Gothic

Carol has been making and studying contemporary lace for many years and uses it as a medium for conceptual work. She is studying net curtains and how they can be used to re-read the relationship between the domestic, the Uncanny and the Gothic. In particular, she is interested in the Uncanny feeling described by Freud that occurs when the familiar becomes strange, the boundary between the homely and unhomely is blurred and when what has been repressed comes to light. This boundary, the liminal space between home and not-home, is represented by the net curtain. She is also interested in the duality of home as a sanctuary and prison and the dysfunctional families found in the haunted Gothic house.

Carol subverts the idea of the industrious, submissive female producing decorative coverings for the home by making curtains that appear conventional, but which contain an unhomely hidden meaning. *Marking time* conveys the position of a young woman trapped in the home and longing for escape but fearful of what may lie beyond, reflecting the duality of the home as sanctuary and prison. The net curtain pierced with pins and needles alludes to a prisoner marking time, but the misuse of feminine sewing equipment suggests a subversion of the domestic. The words of the accompanying cross stitch sampler reflect the conflicting thoughts of the trapped seamstress and they fade in and out to reflect aspects of her inner turmoil. The complete text suggests the fragility of her mental condition.

Carol's background as a biologist informs much of her practice. Her work has been displayed in many exhibitions in the UK and other European countries and is held in private collections. More information and images can be found on her website www.carolquarini.com.



Marking time
Textile, pins, needles
100 x 100 cm

Susan Ryland

Research Degree Student

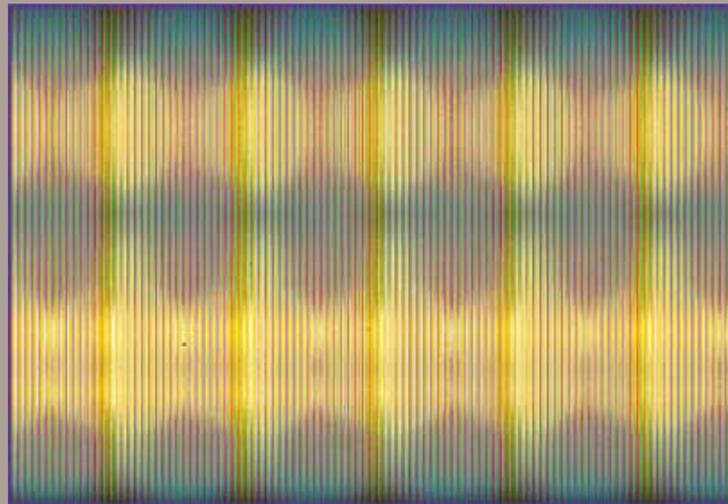
PhD Designate

Resisting metaphors: a metonymic approach to the study of creativity and cognition in art analysis and practice

Susan Ryland's art practice and research explores the relationships between metaphoric notions of sedimentation, accumulation, resonance, articulation and segmentation and the domain-internal metonymic meaning relations formed through physical, conceptual, and linguistic proximity.

These proximal relations generate meaning in distinct ways: physical proximity enables differences and similarities to be identified between elements in a group, whilst conceptual proximity uses a presence-absence dynamic of part-whole relations, in which one constituent draws meaning from its absent-but-known related parts. Linguistic proximity can be found in polysemy, where one word carries more than one related meaning which, under some circumstances, can be encouraged to shift between those meanings. The cognitive linguist Raymond Gibbs (1994:40) suggests that some ninety-eight of the one hundred most frequently used words in English are polysemous.

Light:Strip
(detail)
Digital print and
mixed media
36 x 476 cm



Vicky Smith

Research Degree Student

1st Year Part time

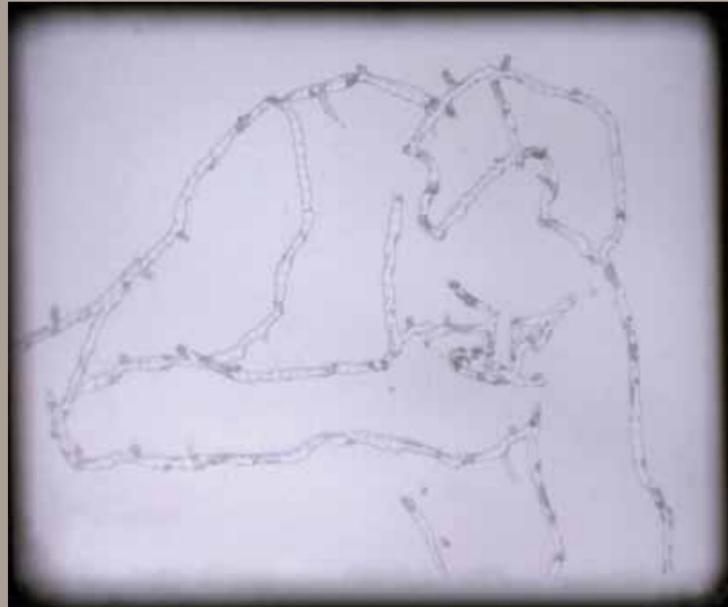
Touching negative: losing control and feeling camera-less film

After 15 years working with the moving image only to frustrate its direct gaze, I have abandoned the lens altogether.

Using the somatic veracity of the film strip as physical object, I can work over ambivalent aggressive/reparative emotions.

I am researching into how the substitution of the artist's body for the camera leads to new paradigms of automation.

My interest is framed by the concept of negative: how can camera-less film work in opposition to the dominant paradigm and can it be conceived as an ambivalent practice engaged with a 'temporal despair' (S. Brakhage: 2002) and as comment on our times.



Distressed Film
(still image)
16 mm

Imprint

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