

Edith Walks

By Andrew Kötting

WITH A KIND OF PSYCHIC SATNAV GROUP ENERGY, THEY UNFOLD THE MAPPED AND IMAGINED EVENTS AND LOCATIONS, STIRRING FRESH POETRY ACROSS THE TIRED 1086 BATTLE NARRATIVE, ACTIVATING HALF FORMED AND UNDOUBTEDLY MISREPRESENTED EVENTS AND MEMORIES

—
SARAH LLOYD

AFTER CHILDBEARING, LITTLE CAN SHOCK ME WHEN IT COMES TO BLOOD AND LIQUIDS THAT SURGE LIKE OCEANS WITHIN ALL OF US. ORGANS TOO, LIKE FREAKISH SEA CREATURES SPLAYED ON THE SEA SHORE, ARE NOT DISTURBING AND I WILL BE THE FIRST TO GATHER THEM UP AND ROAST THEM WITH SAGE AND MARJORAM

—
**EDITH SWAN NECK

I IMPRINTED ON HIM, SHE THOUGHT, LIKE A DUCKLING, LIKE A BABY CHICK. SHE KNEW ABOUT IMPRINTING, ONCE, WHEN SHE WAS HARD UP FOR CASH, SHE'D DONE A PROFILE FOR 'OWL MAGAZINE' OF A MAN WHO BELIEVED GEESE SHOULD BE USED AS A SAFE AND LOYAL SUBSTITUTE FOR WATCHDOGS. IT WAS BEST TO BE THERE YOURSELF WHEN THE GOBLINGS CAME OUT OF THE EGGS, HE SAID -

—
MARGARET ATWOOD

NIGHT DESCENDS AND POWER IS RELINQUISHED BACK TO NATURAL FORCES. THE MERRY MEN ATE HEARTILY AND DRANK MEAD INEXPLICABLY FULL OF MIRTH. WE BEDDED DOWN IN BLACKHEATH, CLOSE TO WHERE I WAS RAISED. MY FIRST SCHOOL WAS ACROSS THAT BLACK HEATH. I HAVEN'T BEEN BACK SINCE I WAS SEVEN. EVEN AS A GIRL I KNEW IF I EVER DID RETURN, IT WOULD BE AS A QUEEN

—
**CLAUDIA BARTON

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

—
**KATHY ACKER

EDITH
(THE CHRONICLES)

ANDREW
KÖTTING

EDITH
(THE CHRONICLES)

ANDREW KÖTTING



Project Details

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

Project Details

Year and mode
of dissemination (cont.):

FEATURE FILM

EDITH WALKS (2017) SCREENINGS AND EVENTS:

June 2017

HOME Manchester – Andrew Kötting performance

ICA London – Andrew Kötting and Iain Sinclair readings

Tyneside Newcastle – Andrew Kötting Q&A

Curzon Bloomsbury

East End Film Festival – David Aylward, Claudia Barton, Jem
Finer, Andrew Kötting and Iain Sinclair film performance

July 2017

Curzon Aldgate London – Andrew Kötting and Claudia Barton
performance and Q&A

IFI Dublin

Barbican London

Showroom Sheffield – Andrew Kötting Q&A

Broadway Nottingham

Chapter Cardiff

Watershed Bristol

Queens Film Theatre Belfast

East Dulwich Picturehouse

Glasgow Film Theatre Glasgow – Andrew Kötting Q&A

Edinburgh Filmhouse – Andrew Kötting Q&A

INSTALLATION

November 2017 – January 2018, Towner Gallery Eastbourne

BOOK

Kötting, A. (2017). *Edith (the Chronicles)* London:

Badbloodandsibyl. ISBN: 0956873340

DVD & ONLINE PLATFORMS

Edith Walks (2017), DVD distributed by HOME Artist Film



*Statue of Edith the Fair,
St Leonards-on-Sea*



Synopsis

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

The research was initially commissioned by Root 1066 Festival as a one-off performance. Arts Council England funding enabled its further development. Kötting extended the walk-performance into a feature film that is a poetic, historical, metaphysical odyssey taking the audience from 1066 to the present day. The project adds to Kötting's corpus of journeyworks and his collaborations with the writer Iain Sinclair; *Swandown* (2012) and *By Our Selves* (2015). Kötting's research in *Edith Walks* develops psychogeography in its exploration, through film, of the fictive/factual intersection

of histories and their contemporary traces, in a process that embraces openness, contingency and serendipity. The methodology is made accessible through Kötting's unique film-making voice, promoting new understanding of the field.

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

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





Stills from Edith Walks



Still from Edith Walks

Context

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

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

The term hauntology was coined by Jacques Derrida in the 1990s, and, like psychogeography, it is concerned with the presence of the past in contemporary experience. Mark Fisher has suggested that 'what haunts the digital cul-de-sacs of the twenty-first century is not so much the past as all the lost

futures that the twentieth century taught us to anticipate' (Fisher, 2012:9). Fisher's writings are influential on Kötting's recent works, provoking him to reconsider and re-visit tropes explored in his earlier work with fresh intellectual depth, rigour and coherence.

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

REFERENCES

Fisher, M. (2012) 'What is Hauntology?'. *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 66, No. 1, pp. 16-24.

Fisher, M. (2014) *Ghosts of My Life: writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures* (Winchester & Washington: Zero)





Still from Edith Walks



Research Aims and Questions

Research aims:

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

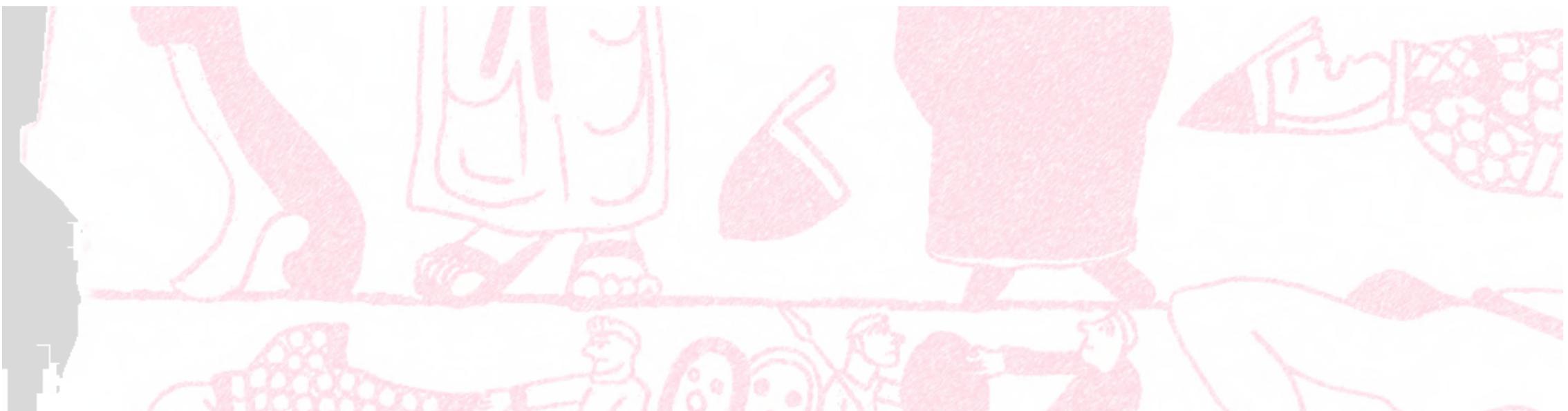
From this journey, to produce performance, film and diverse other outcomes through a process of collaboration with other researchers across multiple artistic forms.

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

Research questions:

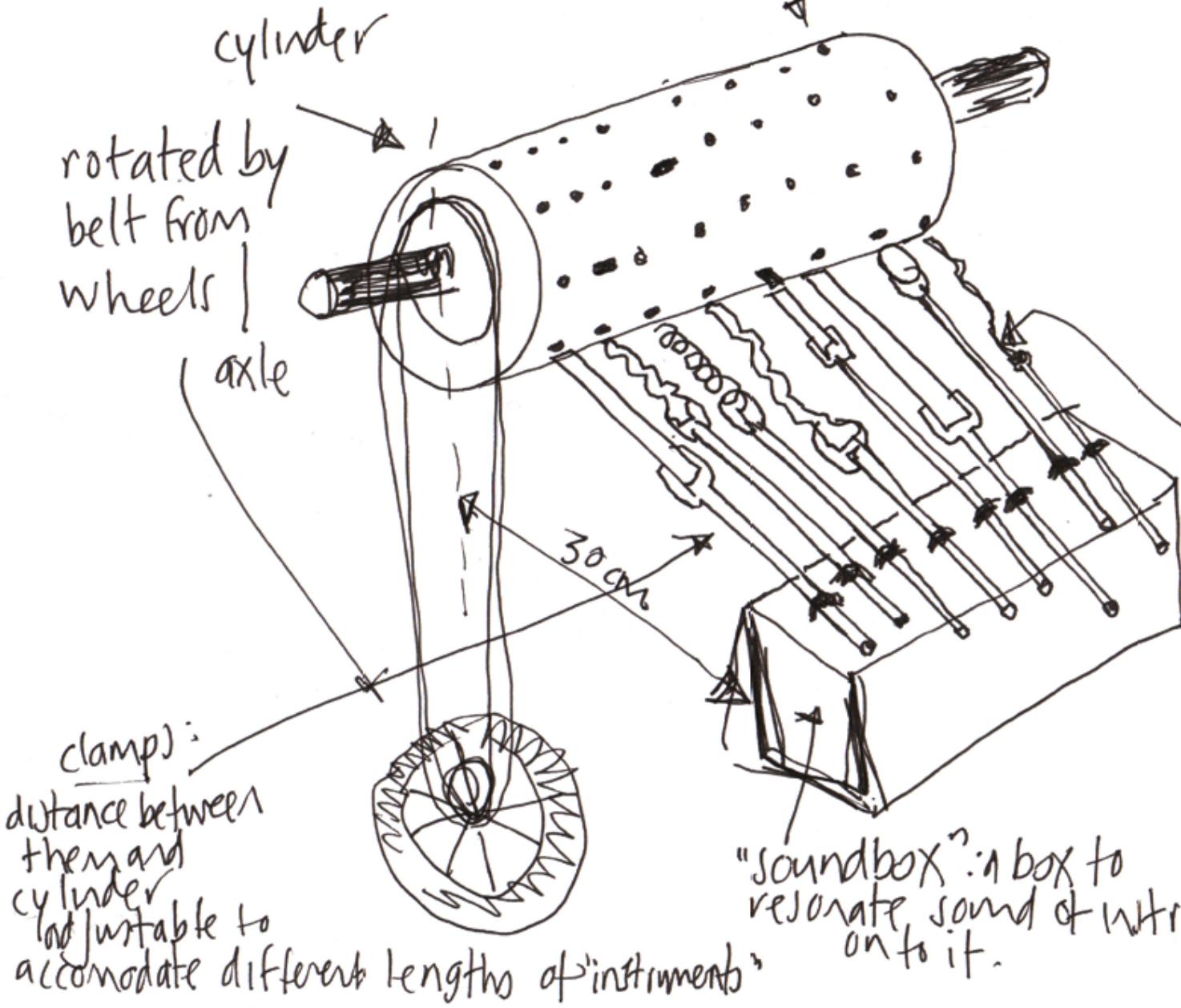
How can nostalgia be connected to hauntology, and used as a provocative catalyst in connecting the past with the present?

Can the negative associations of nostalgia and 'heritage' be challenged in using it as a creative tool to reconsider personal and wider histories?



TO BE BUILT INTO A TROLLEY
or clampable to ANY wheeled
vehicle

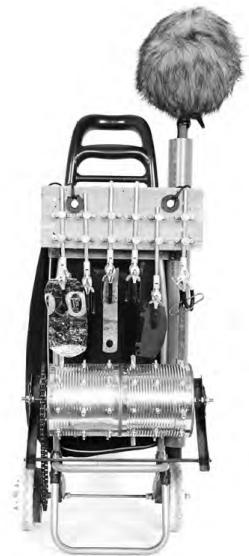
notes: 8 ~~across~~ across (depending on size)
- 12 across
8 around



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

instruments are
bits of rubbish
collected on a
journey; metal,
plastic, springs etc
etc

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



Designs for music box with boom microphone



Still from Edith Walks

*'Here he comes, the wayfarer,
walking on gilded blisters, dragging
his trolley behind him.'*

Research Methods and Process

JOURNEY

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

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

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

FILM AND SOUND

The film emerged from the journey. The ‘shoot’ relied heavily on serendipity and chance encounter. Kötting captured a mixture of planned and improvisational footage, including public and impromptu performances by the walkers. Footage was shot using digital super-8 iphones. Kötting ‘reverse-engineered’ the film in the edit suite, selecting from the ample materials captured during the walk, and drawing from various archives. Archival material—sound or image—has an important place in Kötting’s practice.

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

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

PERFORMANCES

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

Research Insights and Contribution

New insights:

Edith Walks furthers Kötting's contribution, through film and performance, to the fields of psychogeography and hauntology.

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

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

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

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

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



Still from Edith Walks

*'Taking his violin bow from a
hunter's tote bag - David asks
permission to play the spokes of
well travelled bicycle wheels to
sound the tension.'*



Still from Edith Walks

Research Dissemination and Recognition

Dissemination

Edith Walks has been widely disseminated and viewed, with approximate figures as follows

ONLINE

MUBI: 1,800

BFI Player: 800

Amazon Prime: 250

Just Watch: 200

YouTube trailer: 5,800

Mark Kermode Film Review: 5,000

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS: 800

UK CINEMAS: 1,800

BOOK AND CD SALES: 200

GALLERIES

Kötting's trilogy of *journeyworks*, including *Edith Walks*, were presented in an installation at the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne in 2017-18. Visitors: 6,000.

Follow-on-activities:

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

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

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

Research Dissemination and Recognition

Influence of research:

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

REVIEW LINKS

BFI / *Sight and Sound* review by Hannah McGill:

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/reviews-recommendations/edith-walks-andrew-kotting-makes-england-loopy-again>

The *Guardian* Review by Peter Bradshaw:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/jun/22/edith-walks-review-andrew-kotting>

Radio Times review by David Parison:

<https://www.radiotimes.com/film/fpcbbx/edith-walks/>

Kermode and Mayo's film review:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pQiadvZZN0>

BFI 50 films to watch list:

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/lists/mark-kermode-50-films-every-film-fan-should-watch>

Mark Kermode review, BFI Player:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5KDh7mgAr4>

MUBI review:

<https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/no-longer-need-she-look-close-up-on-andrew-kotting-s-edith-walks>



*Live performance (sold out) at
KINO TEATR St Leonards-on-Sea,
September 17, 2016*



*Live performance at St Johns
on Bethnal Green, East End
Film Festival*



University for the Creative Arts
Research Portfolios

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Studio Mothership

FRONT COVER IMAGE
Edith (the Chronicles) book cover

BACK COVER IMAGE
Still from Edith Walks

