

**Experiencing the Filmpoem.
A Practice-Based Approach to the Film-
Phenomenological Potential of the Production
and Exhibition of the Filmpoem.**

Susannah Ramsay

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Film Studies

The University of Stirling, Division of Communication, Media
and Culture

September 2019

Abstract

This thesis explores the production and exhibition of the film-poem using practice-based and film-phenomenological methodologies. The film-poem is a synthesised art form combining poetry and experimental cinematic techniques to create a non-narrative experience. This sub-genre of experimental cinema is a personal form of filmmaking that aims to evoke intimacy with the subject matter. The structure of the thesis is divided into two, to reflect the dual methods and to bring focus to the intersubjective nature of the project.

The first section analyses the production of the film-poem and makes use of Laura U. Marks' (2000) distinction of haptic visuality and Jennifer Barker's (2009) perspective concerning cinematic tactility. A case study approach examines key films from Leighton Peirce and Margaret Tait to understand how these film-phenomenological elements function within their work. Drawing from this analysis, my film practice attempts to transpose my (inter)subjective perspective, a position already inscribed in the real world, through film form, i.e., slow-motion, lens manipulation, editing, and camera movement, to evoke embodied, multi-sensorial experiences for the viewer. A critical reflection of my work considers these perspectives.

Building on the production elements of film-poetry, the exhibition of the film-poem is explored through an analysis of Chrissie Iles' (2000 and 2001) and Maeve Connolly's (2009) work concerning the incorporation of single and multi-channel moving image installations into art galleries and museum spaces. Included in this examination is an interpretation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1964) concept of the reflexive body, which forms the basis of my analysis regarding the attentive spectator, supported by Volker Pantenburg's (2012) and Giuliana Bruno's (2007) debates. Again, a robust critical reflection is incorporated, which, in turn, highlights the intersubjective relationship between myself, as a reflexive practitioner, the gallery-goer and my work in situ at RSPB Loch Lomond and An Lanntair Arts Centre.

To view my film-poems: www.susannahramsay.co.uk

Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Abstract..... | 2 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 5 |
| List of Illustrations..... | 7 |
| Chapter One: Introduction | 10 |
| Film-Phenomenology as a film-philosophy..... | 11 |
| The Film-poem: Definition and history..... | 13 |
| Notes on my film-poems | 16 |
| <i>West of Dalabrog</i> (2016, HD video, 3:52 mins)..... | 18 |
| <i>Dislocation</i> (2016, HD video, 3:35 mins)..... | 20 |
| <i>The Essence of Place</i> (2017, HD video, 4:40 mins)..... | 22 |
| <i>Imprint</i> (2018, Super 8mm film, 1:54 mins)..... | 24 |
| <i>always carry a camera</i> (2018, Super 8mm film, 1:09 mins)..... | 25 |
| A Practice-Based Approach to Filmmaking..... | 28 |
| Outline of Chapters..... | 33 |
| Chapter Two: Review of literature..... | 36 |
| The founding principles of film-poetry (c1909-1913)..... | 36 |
| Synthesis between cinema, poetry and filmmaker | 38 |
| Film-poetry as a movement | 42 |
| Film-phenomenology: concepts..... | 45 |
| Embodiment, the senses and intersubjectivity | 47 |
| Haptic visuality | 49 |
| Tactile visuality..... | 50 |
| From experimental cinema traditions to contemporary artists' moving image exhibition practices | 52 |
| Situating the film-poem within a contemporary artists' moving image exhibition context.. | 55 |
| Audio, artists' moving image and the exhibition of the film-poem | 58 |
| Conclusion | 60 |
| Chapter Three: An analysis of haptic and tactile concepts in Margaret Tait's and Leighton Peirce's work critically reflected upon through my own approach to the production of the film-poem..... | 61 |
| Exploring the concept of the haptic and tactile image | 62 |
| The significance of the close-up and the extreme close-up shot in the haptic and tactile image | 66 |
| Case study one: Leighton Peirce. The haptic parameters of <i>White Ash</i> and <i>50 Feet of String</i> | 68 |
| <i>White Ash</i> | 69 |
| <i>50 Feet of String</i> | 73 |
| Tactility..... | 77 |
| Tactile approaches to filmmaking..... | 79 |
| Case study two: Margaret Tait. An analysis of cinematic tactility in <i>Aerial</i> , <i>These Walls</i> and Tait's hand-painted film experimentations..... | 84 |
| Critical reflection: exploring my own approach to hapticity and tactileness through the production of my film-poetry..... | 93 |
| <i>Imprint</i> and <i>always carry a camera</i> | 97 |

Chapter Four: An analysis of artists’ moving image exhibition practices critically reflected through the exhibition of my own filmpoems..... 102

- Conceptual approaches to artists’ moving image exhibition practices: existential phenomenology, place, in-between spaces and the haptic path..... 102
- The Essence of Place* (2017). A critical reflection of my single screen site-specific installation..... 105
- The phenomenological significance of configuring an exhibition space..... 113
- The in-between space and the embodied spectator 116
- Critical reflection: *always carry a camera*. A phenomenological exploration of my multi-screen filmpoem installation..... 124

Conclusion 133

Bibliography 136

Filmography 144

Online resources..... 147

Appendix..... 149

Acknowledgements

As this project developed, I often used the well-known metaphor ‘climbing a mountain’ to describe the doctoral research process. As someone who climbs hills regularly, and understands the pain and enjoyment connected to the effort spent reaching the summit and negotiating the descent, this analogy is apt and has grounded me over the past four years. This doctoral process has two pinnacles – one, the submission of the thesis and the other, completing the viva voce.

What was startling about my journey was the amount of time spent at ‘base camp’, reiterating elements of the written component. Similarly, in terms of my practice, time was spent travelling to the Western Isles of Scotland, location shooting, testing camera and projection equipment, writing poetry, (re)editing the films, and organising exhibitions. While this project is all my own work, reaching the heady heights of submission has been achieved with the help of some incredibly kind and generous people.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Sarah Neely (University of Glasgow) and Dr Ross Birrell (Glasgow School of Art). Together their constructive comments and critical insights have guided me through some challenging times. I would also like to acknowledge Sarah’s generosity with her time and her unflinching confidence in me both academically and as a practitioner.

My gratitude goes to AHRC and SGSAH for providing the scholarship for this incredible opportunity. Furthermore, SGSAH’s fantastic support enabled the realisation of my exhibitions at RSPB Loch Lomond and An Lanntair Arts Centre.

Additionally, I would like to thank: the late Dr Katharina Lindner (University of Stirling), for her excellent critical appraisal of my work early on, Professor Karen Boyle (University of Strathclyde), Jen Hadfield, Dr Philippa Lovatt (University of St Andrews), Dr Jannat Salem (clinical psychologist), RSPB Loch Lomond, Andy Mackinnon at Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum & Arts Centre, Roddy Murray at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Macrobert Arts Centre, Dr Sarah Smith (Glasgow School of

Art), Dr Nadin Mai (independent scholar), Guy Sherwin, Hugh Watt and Jennifer R. Wicks. Throughout my PhD odyssey, my family have been a continual source of support. I am indebted to my mother, Ann, who sadly passed away in March 2019, my father, Denis, my sister, Kirsten, who is a continuous inspiration to me, and her husband, Euan Lowe. My research could not have progressed smoothly without the love from my dogs: Lily (again, who sadly passed away in 2017), Olive, Polly and Isla.

Finally, a massive thank you goes to my husband, Jeff Lloyd, who survives this process with me.

List of Illustrations

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1. A typical Avid editing suite..... | 17 |
| Figure 2. Avid Media Composer interface illustrating bins (top left), composer window (top right) and timeline (bottom) with audio track (grey) and Video track (brown) | 17 |
| Figure 3. Timeline (bottom) illustrating ten audio tracks..... | 24 |
| Figure 4. The Butt of Lewis. Photo taken in 2005..... | 26 |
| Figure 5. Top image refers to the first stanza of ‘Malaise’ | 27 |
| Figure 6. Last stanza reflected in the visuals..... | 28 |
| Figure 7. <i>Handphone Table</i> (Anderson, 1978) | 59 |
| Figure 8. Charging horses, <i>Murder Psalm</i> (Brakhage, 1980, 16mm, silent, colour) | 63 |
| Figure 9. Soldiers marching, <i>Murder Psalm</i> (Brakhage, 1980, 16mm, silent, colour) | 63 |
| Figure 10. Commercialism, <i>Murder Psalm</i> (Brakhage, 1980, 16mm, silent, colour) | 63 |
| Figure 11. <i>Sniff</i> (Ming-Yuen S Ma, 1996)..... | 64 |
| Figure 12. Optical image, <i>White Ash</i> (Peirce, 2015, HD digital video, colour)..... | 70 |
| Figure 13. Haptic image, <i>White Ash</i> (Peirce, 2015, HD digital video, colour)..... | 70 |
| Figure 14. Bodies and water splashes, <i>White Ash</i> (Pierce, 2015, HD digital video, colour) | 71 |
| Figure 15. Indistinguishable bodies, <i>White Ash</i> (Pierce, 2015, HD digital video, colour) | 72 |
| Figure 16. Bodies and water splashes, <i>White Ash</i> (Pierce, 2015, HD digital video, colour) | 72 |
| Figure 17. Start of pull focus, <i>50 Feet of String</i> (Pierce, 1995, 16mm, colour)..... | 74 |
| Figure 18. During pull focus, <i>50 Feet of String</i> (Pierce, 1995, 16mm, colour)..... | 75 |
| Figure 19. End pull focus revealing a garden rake, <i>50 Feet of String</i> (Pierce, 1995, 16mm, colour) | 75 |
| Figure 20. Start of pull focus, Pickup Truck, <i>50 Feet of String</i> (Pierce, 1995, 16mm, colour) | 76 |
| Figure 21. End of pull focus, Pickup Truck, <i>50 Feet of String</i> (Pierce, 1995, 16mm, colour)..... | 76 |
| Figure 22. Beginning of film with no visible corrosion, <i>Pryia</i> (Syed, 2011) | 81 |
| Figure 23. Several minutes into the film and signs of visible corrosion are evident, <i>Pryia</i> (Syed, 2011) | 82 |
| Figure 24. Towards the end of the film the image is visibly tactile due to corrosion, <i>Pryia</i> (Syed, 2011)..... | 82 |
| Figure 25. Pictures pasted on Tait’s walls, <i>These Walls</i> (Tait, 1974, 16mm, colour, silent)..... | 87 |
| Figure 26. Rapidly edited sequence, <i>These Walls</i> (Tait, 1974, 16mm, colour, silent) | 88 |
| Figure 27. Static shot of a window, <i>These Walls</i> (Tait, 1974, 16mm, colour, silent) | 89 |
| Figure 28. Painted animations, <i>Painted Eightsome</i> (Tait, 1970, 35mm, colour)..... | 90 |
| Figure 29. Painted animations, <i>Calypso</i> (1955, 35mm, colour)..... | 91 |
| Figure 30. Tactile images, <i>Garden Pieces</i> (Tait, 1998, 16mm, colour)..... | 92 |
| Figure 31. Tactile images, <i>Garden Pieces</i> (Tait, 1998, 16mm, colour)..... | 92 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Figure 32. Original image of my face and hands | 95 |
| Figure 33. Resized image of my face and hands..... | 96 |
| Figure 34. Filming the left-hand screen of <i>Imprint</i> (2018, Super 8mm, colour)..... | 99 |
| Figure 35. Edited images, <i>Imprint</i> (2018, Super 8mm, colour) | 99 |
| Figure 36. <i>always carry a camera</i> (2018, Super 8mm, colour), installed in the gallery space at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis | 101 |
| Figure 37. Building the frame and screen for <i>The Essence of Place</i> (2017, HD digital video, colour)..... | 106 |
| Figure 38. The giant screen (2.4 x 4m) hung from 2 x 4 metre high poles..... | 108 |
| Figure 39. As darkness fell, the film began to play | 109 |
| Figure 40. <i>A Wall is a Screen</i> @ The Glasgow Short Film Festival, 2017..... | 110 |
| Figure 41. <i>A Wall is a Screen</i> . Portable projection equipment | 110 |
| Figure 42. <i>A Wall is a Screen</i> . A mini-pilgrimage | 111 |
| Figure 43. <i>A Wall is a Screen</i> @ The Glasgow Short Film Festival, 2017..... | 111 |
| Figure 44. <i>Trap Door</i> (Roberts, 1997, four 16mm projections) | 115 |
| Figure 45. Maya's phrase: "Pebbles are round because the water makes them swell up", <i>Messages</i> (Sherwin, 1981-83, 16mm, silent, b&w) | 118 |
| Figure 46. Child's hand mimics the branches of a tree, <i>Messages</i> (Sherwin, 1981-83, 16mm, silent, b&w)..... | 118 |
| Figure 47. Visual articulation of Maya's question, <i>Messages</i> (Sherwin, 1981-83, Sherwin, 1981-83, 16mm, silent, b&w)..... | 119 |
| Figure 48. Guy Sherwin @ MacRobert Arts Centre film-poetry event, 2017 | 120 |
| Figure 49. <i>Messages</i> (Sherwin, 1981-83) illuminating the exhibition space | 120 |
| Figure 50. An Lanntair Arts Centre gallery space. Exhibition layout: single-channel installation (top left red line), three-channel installation (bottom right red lines) | 125 |
| Figure 51. Arrows illustrating the optimal pathway for the viewer..... | 126 |
| Figure 52. Visual representation of walking through the three-channel installation..... | 126 |
| Figure 53. Washed out image of Hushinish beach (bottom right), <i>always carry a camera</i> (2018, Super 8mm, colour)..... | 129 |
| Figure 54. Haptic image (bottom left), kicking up sand (bottom right), <i>always carry a camera</i> (2018, Super 8mm, colour) | 129 |
| Figure 55. Capturing things out of the corner of the eye, <i>always carry a camera</i> (2018, Super 8mm, colour) | 131 |

“In a sense the whole of philosophy, as Husserl says, consists in restoring a power to signify, a birth of meaning, or a wild meaning, an expression of experience by experience.”

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1968, p. 155).

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis explores three main questions using a practice-based approach: to what extent does film-phenomenology inform and impact the production and exhibition of the filmpoem, what are the different ways in which the filmpoem, as an art form, can engage in philosophical thinking and exploring different viewing conditions to understand how the filmpoem can be phenomenologically experienced.

The genesis of this practice-based PhD project began in 2014 towards the end of my MLitt Film Studies programme at the University of Stirling. The opportunity to engage with a creative project and dissertation¹ that combined film practice with the philosophical texts taught during the Masters' programme resulted in *Absent-Present* (2014),² my initial foray into the production of the filmpoem.

I was first introduced to the concept of the filmpoem by Dr Sarah Neely, my MLitt and subsequent PhD supervisor. In addition to film-philosophy and theory, we shared a mutual understanding of practice-based research projects and a keen interest in experimental cinema. After a successful outcome with my MLitt creative project, I was urged to resume my academic study via the practice-based PhD route. This approach has allowed me to explore the philosophical and formal structures of the filmpoem further—an approach that has re-defined my work from conventional filmmaking practice to experimental filmmaking.

My reasons for choosing the filmpoem for analysis are twofold. Academically, my decision is driven by a desire to revive the critical interest surrounding the production and exhibition of the filmpoem in relation to the history of experimental cinema and contemporary artists' moving image practices. It is noteworthy to add, that I will be using the term experimental film or cinema when discussing the production of the filmpoem, as this is the filmmaking tradition my practice resonates with the most. The term artists' moving image will be applied, mainly when exploring exhibition strategies throughout Chapter 4. In doing so, it is hoped that the two terms will remain distinct yet can be united through my film-phenomenological analysis.

¹ MLitt dissertation: *Articulating the Avant-Garde. Exploring the Reliability of Memory Through the Filmpoem Genre* (2014).

² *Absent-Present* (Ramsay, 2014) explores loss and the reliability of memory through abstract imagery, soundscapes and spoken word.

Very little has been written about the film-poem and can, therefore, bear further careful consideration. Additionally, the film-poem has escaped film-philosophical examination. I believe film-poems can engage in philosophising for approaching aspects of film-phenomenology and principles of experimental filmmaking. For example, a film-poem can engage in a deep-seated questioning of the self, viewed in relation to the phenomena of the real world, and express intersubjective and embodied sensations by combining a non-narrative approach with semi-abstract images, amateur film aesthetics and asynchronous sound in a specific way that everyday language sometimes cannot.

My own personal interest in film-poetry originates from my first experience of viewing *Aerial* (1974) by Margaret Tait. This experience has had a long-lasting effect on me and has influenced my approach regarding the relationship between film and philosophy. Since these first impressions, I have maintained that *Aerial* encourages philosophical thinking. Tait provides a non-narrative commentary on the cycle of life, seasonal changes, reflections on human nature and the natural elements: fire, water and air. Her philosophical and experimental approach foregrounds a discontinuity of temporality through the asynchronous shots, thereby disavowing a connection to a continuous narrative, as identified by Neely (2017a, p. 150). Therefore, to make sense of Tait's world, *Aerial* connotes meaning through direct emotional connections to the *experience* of watching the film-poem, providing an opportunity for film-phenomenological exploration. Additionally, the semi-abstract nature of the images simultaneously coupled with asynchronous sound evoked in me a visceral sensation, and I remember thinking, this is the style of filmmaking I would like to explore. Both *Aerial* and Tait's tactile approach to filmmaking is analysed further in Chapter 3.

Film-Phenomenology as a film-philosophy

This project maintains that the film-poem can typically embody film-philosophical thinking, a perspective not only intrinsic to the genre but also one that aims to expand the understanding and appreciation of this art form. As Smith and Wartenberg assert, the synthesis of film and philosophy 'attempts to think systematically about fundamental issues of human existence [...] [regarding] film as capable of embodying such acts of reflection' (2006, p. 2). This position opposes film theory, which employs paradigmatic structures to analyse social, cultural and political concerns in cinema

through textual analysis, for instance, Marxist, feminist or psychoanalytic theories. In this sense, *doing* film-philosophy allows for a fluid approach to thinking about ideas concerning cinematic aesthetics, a philosophical perspective that fervently relates the material nature of film with the human condition and the phenomenal world. Apropos, this approach enables me to develop original thinking around these themes in relation to the film-poem; ideas, which are expressed further through my methodologies: film-phenomenology, film form, in particular, editing, lens manipulation and camera movement, and artists' moving image exhibition practices. It is important to note that I will not include a traditional methodological chapter in this thesis. The analyses in Chapter 3 and 4 accounts for the chosen methodologies. Additionally, a review of the conceptual and creative decisions I employed when developing my methodological approaches is provided further on (pp. 28-33).

As a broad film-philosophical framework, based on the film theories of Jennifer Barker (2009), Laura U. Marks (2000, 2002) and Vivian Sobchack (1992, 2004), whose work is grounded in the philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, plus Maurice Merleau-Ponty more explicitly, film-phenomenology explores the intersubjective relationship between the audience and their experience of viewing a film. This project considers the film-phenomenological possibilities arising from audience experience as both a collective, shared experience in the context of an exhibition setting and as an individual affective state concerning responses to the content of the film-poems. In this sense, the potential manifestation of an embodied experience typically refers to a strong expression or tangible feeling sensed deep within the body. Focusing on the work of Marks, Barker and Sobchack, as opposed to the widely reworked early twentieth century phenomenological approaches, my approach maintains that their oeuvre illustrates a particular way of thinking about film. This contemporary perspective identifies that a multi-sensorial experience, prompted by visual hapticity and tactileness (blurred images and images that transmit a particular sensation) can embody the viewer through a filmic encounter. As Marks writes, '[haptic images] invite the viewer to respond to the image in an intimate, embodied way' (2000, p. 2). In this sense, I perceive film-phenomenology to be the most appropriate form of analysis to illustrate the personal and impressionistic qualities of the film-poem. An analysis of the haptic and tactile potential of the film-poem in relation to the viewer's potential response will be discussed in Chapter 3.

My film practice embodies my subjectivity, a position already inscribed intersubjectively in the real world, one, which underpins both my intellectual and conceptual intentions for this project. As the external world experiences my work, the notion of intersubjectivity becomes increasingly evident. Intersubjectivity, the intertwining relationship between the experience of the inner self in relation to the experience of others, originates from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh, and the chiasm, a perceptual *in-between-ness* that connects 'a reversibility of the seeing and the visible, [and] of the touching and the touched' (1968, p. 147). Understanding the production of my filmpoetry beyond merely expressing a subjective point-of-view, plus the intersubjective nature of exhibition means that my presence as a reflexive practitioner must coexist with the viewers' experience of my work. Jenny Chamarette's reference to *thinking with cinematic subjectivity* describes this method of film analysis as 'what emerges phenomenologically from the work as a moment of encounter with a viewing subject' (2012, p. 15). As a reflexive practitioner, therefore, I have placed myself at the centre of this project to think with and respond to in parallel with the material, temporal, spatial and conceptual nature of this audio-visual format. A position that allows me to transpose, through my methodological approaches, my internal sensibilities and external experiences of the real world unique to myself, such as artistic values and creative decisions, my physical relationship with the landscape and recording equipment, my memories, sensations, emotions and intentions.

The Filmpoem: Definition and history

As a synthesised art form, filmpoetry typically combines poetry and experimental film techniques to present an intimate experience with the subject matter. William C. Wees (1999), a notable writer on artists' moving image and the avant-garde, provides an interpretation of the filmpoem contrasting it with the poetry-film tradition (1999, pp. 1). Wees' distinction of the filmpoem adopts an impressionistic, non-narrative approach incorporating little or no spoken word and semi-abstract imagery, for example, *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Deren and Hammid, 1943) a black and white, silent³ filmpoem synonymous with the experimental American avant-garde film

³ A film score was added to *Meshes* in 1959 by Teiji Ito, Deren's third husband.

movement about which I will go into more detail later. In contrast, poetry-film incorporates on-screen text or spoken word on the soundtrack combined with illustrative imagery, for example, *Mile End Purgatorio* (Sherwin and Doyle, 1991). It is important to note that my approach follows the film-poem concept of including impressionistic, semi-abstract images, which present metaphorical connotations as opposed to the literal representations illustrated in poetry-film. However, my work highlights a fine line between these distinctions as the first three film-poems demonstrate through the incorporation of spoken word on the soundtrack. In these film-poems my written words are a reflection on what I feel at the time of filming, whereas in the latter two films the images and sound act as the emotional response.

The film-poem's existence has manifested itself through the early twentieth century avant-garde film and art movements, through the development of experimental cinema segueing into the contemporary context of artists' moving image. It is worth briefly mentioning critical moments in the history of the film-poem; however, an in-depth account of this subject is provided in the literature review.

The history of the film-poem began with the Futurists' art movement circa 1913. These first avant-gardists combined the traditions of sculpture, painting and poetry with film to develop the *cine-poem*, an explicit experimental style of filmmaking typically depicting scenes from cityscapes edited with inter-titles (Rees 1999, p. 34). Following the inter-war years, the 1940s American Avant-Garde film movement saw a significant shift in the development of the film-poem. Contributions from experimental filmmakers such as Jonas Mekas, Marie Menken and Maya Deren, amongst others defined this era of the film-poem. Crucially, Deren produced *Meshes of the Afternoon* with her husband at the time, cameraman Alexander Hammid. *Meshes...*, now considered a classic example of a film-poem according to William C. Wees' distinction, mentioned earlier, comprises rhythmically edited dreamlike montages based on an expression of the protagonist's (played by Deren) psychological state. The complexity of this film-poem resides in its experimental formal structure, juxtaposed with a myriad of socially driven questions concerning character identification, sexual desire and genre, for example, melodrama and film noir (Nichols 2001, pp. 14 and 19). A decade later, Deren's philosophical thoughts on poetic filmmaking were expressed during the 1953 Cinema 16 symposium in New York City, as explored in P. Adams Sitney's 'Film Culture Reader' (2000b, pp. 171-186). Here, Deren established her vertical/horizontal axis theory, which determines

how poetry and prose are realised through film form and practice. Deren's theory has become ingrained in many aspects of experimental film criticism and has influenced my research on the film-poem.

In Britain, from the early 1950s until her death in 1999, Margaret Tait, a self-proclaimed film-poet from Orkney, worked prolifically producing over 30 films in her lifetime. Tait typically shot on 16mm film and her work comprised experimental film-poems, film portraits and hand-painted animations. In contemporary artists' moving image criticism, her oeuvre is consistently referred to as being a significant contribution to the development of the film-poem genre (see in particular: Todd and Cook 2004; Neely 2012, 2017a). In 1999 film curator, programmer and filmmaker Peter Todd organised a touring film programme entitled *Film Poem, Poem Film* supported by the BFI and LUX. Todd subsequently curated a further three film-poem programmes, *Film Poems 2* (2000), *Garden Pieces* (2001) and *Film poem 4: Messages* (2003) thereby establishing the film-poem as a recognised genre in the twenty-first century. On April 6, 2019, Todd marked the 20th anniversary of the *Film Poem, Poem Film* touring programme at the Close-Up Film Centre, London. *Meshes of the Afternoon* and *Messages* (Guy Sherwin, 1981-83) framed the tone of the evening, which explored the relationship between poetry and film, and how a film can be a poem in itself.

As intimated, the film-poem, as a sub-genre of experimental cinema, is a personal and reflective form of filmmaking. For instance, experimental filmmakers, Peter Todd, Margaret Tait and Guy Sherwin utilise their inherent artistic drive to explore personal interests and desires. Todd, Tait and Sherwin adopt intimate formal techniques such as hand-held camerawork, a practice that connects the body's proximal space to close observations made through the camera lens. My film practice uses a hand-held approach to emphasise intentional connections to my memories and imagination, which are then visualised and intertwined with images of my immediate surroundings. For example, *Imprint*, which will be discussed in detail further on, presents a series of memories in the form of haptic archival images of myself projected onto a brick wall juxtaposed with hand-held camerawork emphasising a tangible sense of being in the landscape.

Notes on my filmpoems

This practice-based project comprises five short colour filmpoems:⁴ *West of Dalabrog* (2016, HD video, 3:52 mins), *Dislocation* (2016, HD video, 3:35 mins), *The Essence of Place* (2017, HD video, 4:40 mins), *Imprint* (2018, Super 8mm film, 1:54 mins) and *always carry a camera* (2018, Super 8mm film, 1:09 mins). Footage for the first three filmpoems was shot on a Canon 5D MKII and an SX60. Both cameras produce HD digital images; however, the Canon SX60, shoots at 60 frames per second and produces a smooth slow-motion effect on playback, crucial for observing the subtleties of the wildlife in *The Essence of Place*, for example. For the latter two filmpoems, I used Super 8mm film format. Initially, I was drawn to the immediacy of the HD digital format; however, as my style of filmmaking evolved with the written component of this project, and after discussing the properties of celluloid with Guy Sherwin at the filmpoetry event I organised in 2017,⁵ I recognised that my work demanded the tactile quality that the film medium can provide. That said, both mediums are vital to my artistic and film-phenomenological approach to film form, discussed throughout this thesis.

To edit the filmpoems, I used my MacBook Pro and Avid Media Composer (fig. 1), the broadcast industry standard, non-linear editing software.⁶ Since learning to edit with Avid in 1997, and throughout my professional editing career,⁷ I have used different versions of this software. It is a system I am thoroughly familiar with, more so than any other professional editing platforms, for instance, Adobe Premiere Pro, or Final Cut Pro. The fundamental purpose of the Avid software is to replicate the non-linearity of analogue film editing. For example, the system splits audio and video footage into two unique tracks, which can then be multiplied (depending on the requirement of the project). The footage is stored in bins, a virtual space similar to the actual material bins that editors used to hang analogue film in, and optical effects such

⁴ My website, www.susannahramsay.co.uk, hosts my filmpoems and supporting work, i.e., blog posts, which comprises written reflections on my poetry, filmmaking and exhibitions.

⁵ The filmpoetry event, at the Macrobert Arts Centre, University of Stirling, included contributions from, British artist and filmmaker Guy Sherwin, poet Jen Hadfield and Glasgow-based film artist, Jennifer R. Wicks.

⁶ <https://www.avid.com/about-avid>

⁷ Commercial television work included: Formula One and World Rally Car Championships, for BBC and ITV, plus various programmes for Channel 4 and 5.

as superimposition and transitions are easily applied without having to reprint the film stock (fig. 2).

The following sections include synopses of my filmpoems and examine the decisions I made during the pre-production and production stages of my project. This analysis complements the exploration in Chapter 1 (pp. 28-33), which accounts for the conceptual and creative decisions that contributed to the continued development of my film practice.



Figure 1. A typical Avid editing suite.

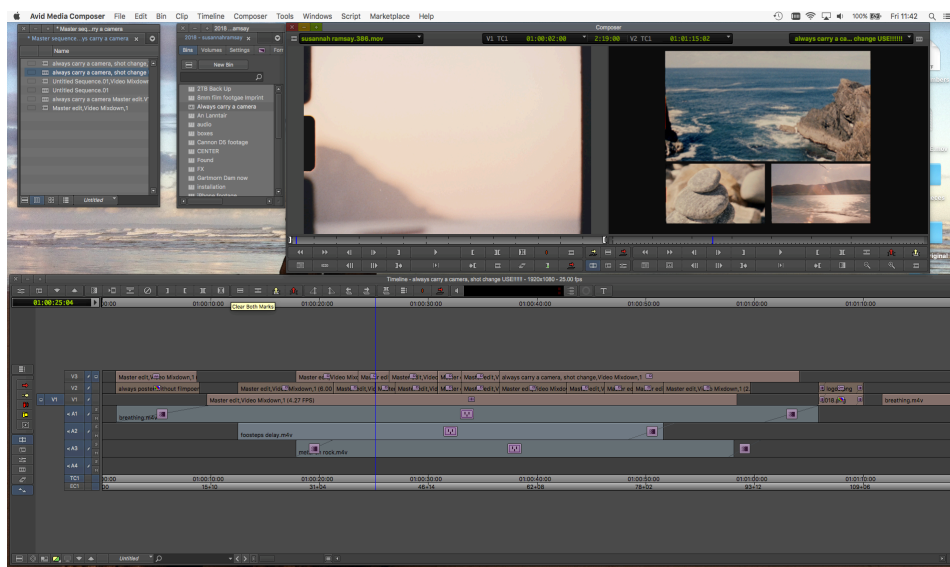


Figure 2. Avid Media Composer interface illustrating bins (top left), composer window (top right) and timeline (bottom) with audio track (grey) and video track (brown).

***West of Dalabrog* (2016, HD video, 3:52 mins)**

In *West of Dalabrog*, I explore my memories and emotional connection to the landscape of the Western Isles of Scotland. The film-poem focuses on the return to a beach west of a town called Dalabrog, South Uist, which I first visited in 2001. At that time, I was working as an editor in a busy post-production house in Soho, London; therefore, experiencing the tranquillity of South Uist felt liberating. The emotions I experienced during this first visit have, over the years, remained as strong memories.

As a place of personal importance, it was vital that this film-poem remained authentic to my emotional connection to the South Uist landscape; therefore, the majority of the footage was shot on the beach. Furthermore, to parallel my affinity with the immediate surroundings, I decided that the footage should be indicative of the short distance between the sea and the machair (a low-lying grassy area found on the coastlines of the Outer Hebrides). While filming between these two proximities, I began to reflect on my memories, and as I moved with my camera, I began to experience the landscape around me as embodied sensations, further supporting the authenticity of the concept. For instance, as I focused my camera on the rocks, I remembered the cold wind that blew in from the Atlantic Ocean the moment it chilled my face and hands. This memory sparked a rush of excitement in my stomach, which resulted in a shiver in my bones as I embraced thoughts of the forthcoming spring, a time of year that continually evokes heartening emotions for me. Becoming aware of my physical sense of self in relation to my immediate surroundings heralded a shift in my sensorial perception of actually being there, which interweaved with my understanding of my past emotions. To transpose my sense of embodiment, I used my camera creatively, for example, employing film form (camera movement, position, framing and angles) to express emotions, such as crouching down to pull focus to emphasise the half-light reflected on the waves, a process that is also enhanced by the poetic quality inherent in the landscape.

West of Dalabrog formally references my shift in my perception through the structure of the edit. The shift comprises two different shots of the same beach: one that begins the film and the other that ends it. The first shot, just under one minute in duration, is blurred and refers to a past time, and the last shot, in sharp focus, implies a sense of present time. The juxtaposition between the clarity of the present and the

unclear quality of the past is repeated throughout, paralleling the constant questioning regarding the reliability of my memory. For example, the piano music at the start is simultaneously played forward and backwards to suggest an intertwining sense of past and present, and the extreme close-up (ECU) shots of my eye visually signify this questioning, as if probing at the core of the self (myself) to understand my changing perceptions.

From the beginning, I had a strong sense of direction for this film-poem. The poem was written on location and reworked over several nights. The words attempt to invoke a sense of reenergising of the self, as it were, with the final two stanzas supporting these feelings of renewal:

*I saw my reflection crash into the contours of the rocks.
A little death in the half-light of the distance.*

*I watched as it pushed me out from the wilderness of my Mother's bones,
Out beyond the dunes and where the Lapwings' call,
Out to where I can begin again.*

Furthermore, the disembodied viewpoint, evident in the first lines of both stanzas enabled me to reflect upon myself, physically and mentally, as I cut myself loose from the inherited anxieties concerning my past life. In the film, this reflection takes place between the landscape of the beach and the sea, visually illustrated through the intentional embodied movements perceived by myself through the camera. For example, a sense of searching is presented through the montage (2:47) starting with a low angle pull focus of the grasses intercut with a pan down onto rocks revealing debris washed up from the Atlantic Ocean. Reflective moments are seen in the next shot as it cuts to a blurred image of my eye coming into focus and stopping on a freeze-frame. It then fades to another low angle pull focus of sand and shells. These images are embodied visual equivalents of the poetic words that continually shift focus between the emotions connected to a sense of temporality.

As standard, the soundtrack for *West of Dalabrog* is mixed in stereo; however, for a screening as part of UK/Danish artist Shona Illingworth's mixed media and film exhibition *Lesions in the Landscape*,⁸ at Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum & Arts Centre,

⁸ Shona Illingworth's three-channel moving image installation juxtaposed the cultural amnesia connected to the evacuation of the population of St Kilda in the 1930s with Claire, a woman who had suffered brain trauma and as a consequence can no longer remember her past or make new memories.

<https://www.taigh-chearsabhagh.org/events/shona-illingworth-lesions-landscape/>

Isle of Uist, 2016, it was mixed in 5.1 surround sound. 5.1 surround sound affects five speakers, as opposed to two (stereo left and right). This version of the film enabled my spoken words and sound effects to be spatialised, meaning that the audio set-up evoked a sense of three-dimensionality. For example, the sound of the crashing waves (2:31) was heard from directly behind the audiences' heads, and as this image defines the boundary between past and present emotions within the poem's progression, it was important to experiment with this style of audio for exhibition. Furthermore, my voice panned from left to right speakers, emphasising my changing perceptions, which, again, mirrored the interweaving emotions I felt on my return to the island. Subsequently, using 5.1 surround sound instead of stereo enhanced the emotional connotations and created a tactile viewing experience.

West of Dalabrog has also received nominations from various film festivals: best doctoral film nomination, AHRC Research in Film Awards 2016, official selections for the Festival silêncio, Lisbon, 2017, and the 6th International Video Poetry Festival, Athens, 2018.

***Dislocation* (2016, HD video, 3:35 mins)**

Shot on location on the Isle of Uist, Western Isles of Scotland in March 2016, *Dislocation* reflects on a period in my life when I experienced several amnesiac episodes. The title not only refers to my fragmented memory and changing sensorial perception as a result of the episodes but also mirrors the fragmented physical landscape of North and South Uist.

The film begins with an image of the barren landscape synonymous with the Isle of Uist. A grey cloudy sky fills two-thirds of the screen and the bottom third shows the typical terrain: heather and peat bogs. The image conjures a sense of bleakness and the title, placed in the top third of the screen, expands outwards evoking further dissociative connotations. The intention for this film-poem was to reframe my sense of mental dislocation through visual imagery that evokes perceptions of touch in an attempt to externalise emotions. During filming, I searched for visually tactile objects and textured views that would illustrate a sense of physical contact with the real world. For example, juxtaposing different surface textures with contrasting colours or manipulating the depth of field to produce varying physical relationships between the landscape and objects. These textures emerged from

documenting the abandoned and derelict houses, disused boats, decaying sheds and other objects discarded in the advent of mechanisation, evident across the Western Isles of Scotland. As a comment on these changes, and to set the tone of the film-poem, the start of the film combines the sound of wind with a lobster crate abandoned on a beach, a rusty corrugated iron door intercut with a close-up shot of a single feather amidst stones displaying similar rusty tones intercut with a pull focus of a rusty boat fallen into disuse.

The concept for the eerie soundscapes emerges from the on-screen textures, which are also a reflection of my emotional state. The high-pitched noises are reminiscent of the first sounds I heard as I recovered from an episode of amnesia. Every time this happened, I felt varying levels of anxiety rise within my body, referenced through the intermittent droning undertones of the soundscape. The sound of the wind, synonymous with the island, bookends the film-poem and is used as a device to concretise a real sense of time and place. The insistent sound of the clanging bell emphasises the desolation and heralds my search to understand the impact of losing time through amnesiac episodes. This sound also reflects memories I have of Hollywood's engagement with the South or Midwest of America, in particular, films that challenge the wilderness or reveal towns to be desolate or unwelcoming.

Several drafts of the poem were written on location and developed further during post-production. The sentiments of the words follow a trajectory of questioning; there are more questions than answers in this deep-seated philosophical search for my lost time. Temporal references are illustrated through the shots of water, for instance, the reversed image of ripples on the water (2:50) and the close-up of the backwash of the waves intercut with the haptic image of a broken statuette of Jesus (1:26-1:54). In the latter of these references, my spoken words *Ancient pigments fade with time, like the thinnest of rabbit bones*, support the notion of losing time. Metaphorically, the fading of ancient pigments refers to the fading of a presence, which is further mirrored by the waves' power to erase human and animal traces in the sand. Underscoring these unanswered moments is a sense of otherworldliness illustrated by religious iconography. However, as I do not follow any religion, a tension emerges between what the images typically represent and what I determine them to mean. These images throughout the film-poem are a comment on the sense of oppression I felt as I reflected on the amnesiac episodes. For instance, the statuette of a religious woman praying (3:16) gives a sense of being saved but juxtaposed with a

pull focus of a broken glass window attempts to illustrate a feeling of being severed from the real the world. These visuals are intended to provoke a sense of emotional unease for the viewer as opposed to a resolve.

***The Essence of Place* (2017, HD video, 4:40 mins)**

Completed as part of my artist residency⁹ with RSPB Scotland, Gartocharn,¹⁰ Loch Lomond, *The Essence of Place*, aimed to invite a new audience to the reserve and to engage with the broader concerns of nature conservation. As a single screen installation, *The Essence of Place* was exhibited outside at night in the landscape of the RSPB nature reserve on the 21st October 2017. The exhibition context for this film-poem will be discussed fully in Chapter 4 (pp. 105-113), while a review of the evening's event, written by Dr Nadin Mai, independent scholar and founder of 'The Art of Slow Cinema' journal can be accessed through her website.¹¹

In terms of contributing to the film-phenomenological aspect of the research topic, the intention for this film-poem was to explore how my film practice can embody the seasonal changes of the landscape to evoke memories and create a multi-sensorial viewing experience for the audience. The poem, written and recorded in situ at Loch Lomond, attempts to reflect this intention through exploring the intertwining relationship between human senses, grief and physical places. The words invoke self-reflection and refer to a sense of mindful awareness as a way of existing or being in the world. For instance, the anaphora, *Here, is where I am* at the beginning of the first stanza and repeated in the fourth and sixth stanzas, presents an insistent reaffirmation of existing in a place. This phrase functions in two distinct ways. Firstly, it is an attempt to mirror the concrete reality of my visits to the reserve, which lasted from January to August 2017, and secondly, it is a reference to (and a play on words) of Margaret Tait's film, *Where I am is Here* (1964).

⁹ The RSPB artists' residency was in collaboration with SGSAH, Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities, the governing body that funded the scholarship for my doctoral study.

¹⁰ Pronounced Garto-*h*arn.

¹¹ <https://theartsofslowcinema.com/2017/10/26/the-essence-of-place-susannah-ramsay-2017/>

Because each visit brought varying physical and mental demands, my sense of awareness, and of how my body responded to extremities prompted a series of tactile experiences. As I traversed the expansive area carrying camera kit the environmental conditions anchored my presence within the place. For example, I experienced hard frost, numb fingers, dark winter mornings, cold winter evenings, high winds, flooding (including wading through and getting stuck in the mud, while I held my camera aloft) and warm sunny days. Moreover, being mindful of the wildlife and developing a physical dexterity when filming became an embodied behaviour. For instance, moving slowly, climbing trees and fences, crouching down, balancing on objects, memorising the camera controls so I could operate them quickly and without looking, bending my knees when shooting to give a smooth *steadicam* effect on a static hold, and using my body as a stable apparatus to pivot for camera panning and tracking. This hand-held approach connecting my body with the camera's body is evident throughout the film-poem (and in my other films), for example, the images of the geese and swans in flight (0:41-0:55). Moreover, this shot parallels the first stanza of the poem, referring to my physical relationship with the landscape.

Many of the images comprising *The Essence of Place* seek to mirror these tactile moments I experienced at the reserve. The properties of tactile images, which will be discussed fully in Chapter 3 with specific reference to Margaret Tait's approach to filmmaking (pp. 84-93), are images that prompt a visceral reaction and a bodily sensation when viewed. Typically, tactile images are recognisable images that reflect a tangible feeling for the viewer. For instance, a visual trope, which I use consistently throughout my film practice, comprises capturing the sunlight through foliage (e.g., *The Essence of Place* 2:17 and 3:48) or directing the camera towards the sunlight then using a tracking shot to create lens flare with shifting kaleidoscopic shapes to emphasise the feeling of warmth reflected in and through the image, while simultaneously foregrounding the intentionality of the pro-filmic event (e.g., *Imprint* 1:17, *Dislocation* 2:45).

The ambient soundtrack consists of natural sounds recorded at the reserve and manipulated in post-production. My initial impressions of listening to the sounds of the reserve, when I first visited in December 2016, highlighted the quietness of the area. However, several trips later, I discovered this quietness was inconsistent. For example, the sound of geese is deafening in the early winter mornings and evenings, and depending on the time of year, in particular springtime, the sound levels of the

wildlife become increasingly noisy. Additionally, quite often, light aircraft could be heard flying overhead – referenced in the shot of the plane reflected in the water (3:00).

Developing the experimental aspect of the soundtrack, in an attempt to negate representational forms of audio, I decided to layer the field recordings on ten audio tracks in Avid Media Composer (fig. 3). Typically, for my work, four tracks would suffice, but I felt *The Essence of Place* demanded a more intricate yet subtle approach to audio experimentation. Editing ten audio tracks creates space for manipulation and increases a sense of haptic reverberation, for example, incorporating repetition to increase ambience, duplicating the clips¹² to make the sound louder, layering clips and staggering their start points to produce an echo effect, reversing and repeating the birdsong to emphasise the tactile sounds I experienced. These experimentations, bookended by the experimental tune I created with a kalimba discussed on p. 33, again emphasise an emotional, tactile response transposed through the images.

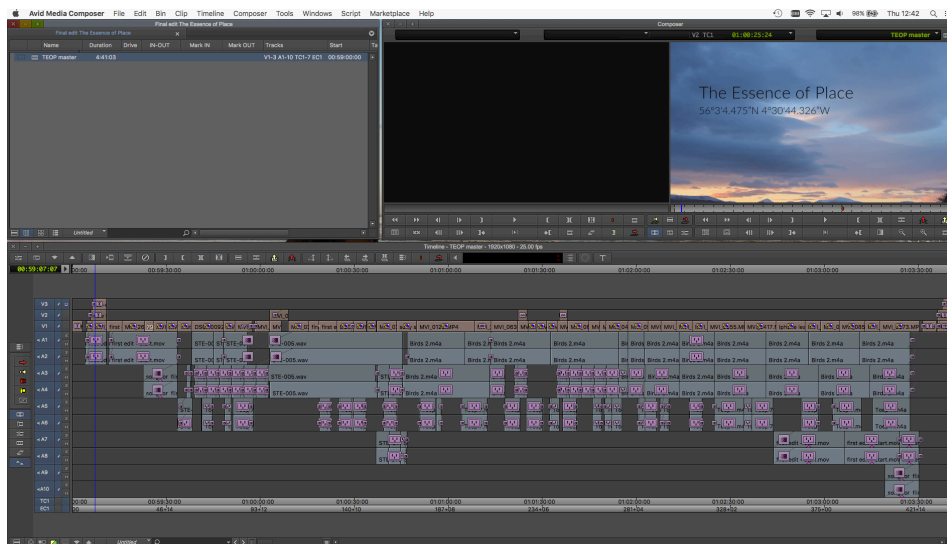


Figure 3. Avid timeline (bottom) illustrating ten audio tracks (grey).

Imprint (2018, Super 8mm film, 1:54 mins)

Devised as a single-channel installation, *Imprint*, is loosely based on the psychological term for perceptual learning, a concept, which suggests that our sensory perceptions change and adapt to environmental stimuli resulting from either

¹² An audio clip is a digital segment of audio footage (similar to a digital video clip), which is a reference to the analogue term audiotape.

experience or practice. I am extending this concept to include how our perception of a sense of self can change through re-experiencing memories. The theme of the original poem, 'Dead Girl',¹³ which I wrote many years ago, followed the departure from my childhood and into adulthood through a series of emotional incidents from which my sense of self evolved. The film version is a visual response to the poem and excludes spoken words, leaving the metaphorical connotations to resonate through the images and sounds alone. For example, the image of the old rope, a reference to an incident that may or may not have happened, juxtaposed with the haptic image of my four-year-old face (1:29) evokes a sense of ambiguity. These images are illustrations of the last two lines of the original poem: *She was me. I did not cry.*

Shot on Super 8mm, *Imprint*, was the first film where I had to consider how I used my shooting time. A Super 8mm cartridge comprises approximately three minutes of film and costs significantly more in price than recording onto an HD digital format; therefore, more time adjusting the lighting and planning the setting up of the shots was necessary. For the key sections of the film, I would rehearse the camera position and movements with an HD camera before engaging with my film camera. For instance, the images that comprise the left-hand screen were choreographed to be filmed within thirty seconds, and the first minute of the right-hand screen was shot back-to-back, in situ. The specifics of how I composed the shots for *Imprint* will be explored fully in Chapter 3 (pp. 97-100).

***always carry a camera* (2018, Super 8mm film, 1:09 mins)**

As a site-specific three-channel moving image installation, this project functions on two distinct levels. The first seeks to challenge the viewer's central and peripheral vision through the spatial configuration of the exhibition space, and the second attempts to engender an embodied experience for the viewer through film form. The title comes from a rather artful message on the side of a 1960s 35mm panchromatic photographic slide box, which persuades us to look more intently at our surroundings. Similar to *Imprint*, this version of *always carry a camera* incorporates no voice in an

¹³ For the original poem see the images: <https://www.susannahramsay.co.uk/single-post/2019/08/23/Notes-on-my-PhD-2016-2018>

attempt to challenge how metaphorical connotations can resonate through the semi-abstract images and soundscapes alone.

Initially, *always carry a camera*, as a poem, was titled ‘Malaise’,¹⁴ and was a response to a picture I took many years ago of the Butt of Lewis, situated at the top of the Isle of Lewis (fig. 4).



Figure 4. The Butt of Lewis, taken in 2005.

‘Malaise’ positions me standing alone on the precipice of the cliff, and explores the emotions I felt regarding how I could achieve contentment in my life. As mentioned earlier, this film-poem was conceived as a three-channel installation; however, the online version¹⁵ comprises one screen displaying a triptych of visuals. The first stanza of the poem establishes my position, which is referenced through the image at the top of the screen (fig. 5):

¹⁴ For the original poem see the images: <https://www.susannahramsay.co.uk/single-post/2019/08/23/Notes-on-my-PhD-2016-2018>

¹⁵ <http://www.susannahramsay.co.uk>

Malaise

*This place.
Private and secluded.
A space of my own,
a sensorial affair.
Peace to fix my weary heart;
And to fill my lungs with
raw Arctic air.*



Figure 5. Top image refers to the first stanza of 'Malaise'.

As I developed the film-poem, I wanted the images referenced in the bottom two visuals of the triptych to do multiple things. For instance, these images reflect snapshots of memories, they also illustrate experiences as I traversed the island, and they represent the fleeting glances of objects that caught my attention out of the corner of my eye as I filmed. The fixed point-of-view shot of me standing on a precipice at the Butt of Lewis is also a visual memory (referenced in the top visual of the triptych). The original version of this film-poem includes impressionistic soundscapes,¹⁶ which replaced the words from the original poem. For example, an audio reverberation replaces the words *sensorial affair* cited in the original written poem. For these sounds to be perceived as sensorial, particularly concerning the feeling of touch, and to connect with the original words, I incorporated simultaneous visuals of my hands. One hand is aloft attempting to capture the glimmering sunlight through my fingers, and the other is feeling the textures of lichen on a rock. As the film progresses, the horizon between the sea and sky come into frame in the top visual and simultaneously aligns with the tracking shot of a murky drive through the Isle of Harris, eventually reaching the standing stones at Callanish approximately thirty-five miles from the Butt of Lewis (fig. 6). This section of the film refers to the last stanza of the original poem, whereby my renewed and repositioned self is liberated from feelings of malaise:

¹⁶ For the exhibition at An Lanntair, I omitted the soundscapes due to issues of sound transference, discussed in Chapter 4 (p. 124).

*Glimpses of sun-sparks shimmer
like fragmented memories.
A decade of malaise
granulates into white scars.
Each new breath cleanses my flesh.*

*But, before I belong,
before I am required to feel,
I connect my feet to soil.*



Figure 6. Last stanza reflected in the visuals.

As a result of this filmpoem evolving the way it did, and together with how my film practice has subsequently developed, I recognise that omitting the spoken poetry from my films can sometimes produce a more poignant viewing experience that conveys a more profound sense of emotion. The exhibition of *always carry a camera*, at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway will be critically reflected upon in depth in Chapter 4. The following section introduces the approaches taken to realise this practice-based research project.

A Practice-Based Approach to Filmmaking

This section contributes to the development of the research topic through scrutinising what constitutes the *production* of the filmpoem, more broadly. In this sense, I am referring to a conceptual and creative approach to filmmaking that incorporates the use of my voice, poetry and soundscapes to provide an overarching perspective to ensure all aspects of my practice-as-research is accounted for. Consideration of my film practice in this way will establish a basis for further film-phenomenological analysis, which can be found in Chapter 3 and 4.

The decision to use my voice in my filmpoems has evolved through several creative iterations, from my initial foray into producing filmpoetry mentioned earlier, to my most recent project for this thesis, *always carry a camera* (2018). Initially, I hesitated to use the sound of my own voice in *Absent-Present* as the experience of writing such personal poetry heightened my sense of vulnerability. Then, the thought of speaking the words out aloud seemed horrendous, prompting a dual level of intimacy to avoid. However, on reflection, and with guidance from my supervisor, it was suggested that the personal nature of the filmpoem commands that additional

intimacy and authenticity. Referencing writer Italo Calvino, Adriana Cavarero suggests “‘voice could be the equivalent of the hidden and most genuine part of a person”, a sort of invisible, but immediately perceptible, nucleus of uniqueness’ (2012, p. 521). The uniqueness and authenticity of voice rely on a body, my body. Voice reverberates through flesh and bone to determine the tone and emotion of the poem, allowing the poet’s intention, vulnerability and humility to become inscribed in the shape of the words. To respond truthfully to Cavarero’s statement, I needed to re-address my approach to using my own voice.

While I understand the reasons why I did not want to engage with using my voice initially, and although it is still uncomfortable, I am now at the stage where I can think of the process as being contemplative. I become aware of how my body explicitly feels when the words are expressed. As a reflexive practitioner, I embrace reciprocity between author and reader, filmmaker and viewer, but I still find it incredibly exposing to lay bare my words, pregnant with emotion for others to respond to. However, Walter Ong expands on the idea that words are the basis for intersubjective exchange, ‘(A) word can live only while actually issuing from the interior, physical and psychic, of the living individual’ (1962, p. 50). Considering Ong’s statement, my approach to voice has evolved as an intersubjective exchange, communicating my sensorial experiences, and evoking embodied responses from the audience.

Preference over the use of my voice on the soundtrack and subsequent projection into the exhibition space underscores the decision to avoid using on-screen text, which I believe can sometimes interrupt the visual connotations and by extension distance the audience. Poetic voice or voices typically refer to the poet’s internal voice or the voices of characters created by the poet as a form of communication. However, an actual voice does not have to be present in a film-poem. Poetic meaning can emerge as a visual response to the written word, a technique I adopted in *always carry a camera* and *Imprint*,¹⁷ mentioned earlier (pp. 24-28). For example, the sequence of images on the right-hand screen of *Imprint* are visual manifestations of the original written words underscored by rhythmical soundscapes. My approach to a voiceless film-poem draws on impressionistic tropes such as juxtaposing asynchronous sounds with abstract images, evident within Margaret Tait’s film-poem *Aerial* (1974),

¹⁷ To reconsider *Imprint* and *always carry a camera* as moving images, I decided to extract the visual imagery from each of the original written poems.

mentioned earlier. Reflecting on these elements, I have discovered that engaging with my own voice in a film-poem, whether absent or present, connects to Cavarero's idea of uniqueness, and supports Ong's approach to an intersubjective exchange of experiences.

My approach to writing poetry¹⁸ evolves from the recording of memories and real experiences combined with imagination. For me, poetry follows the practice of freewriting, generating lists of words and phrases, and collecting meaningful images and artefacts that inspire me and by extension, inspires the project. How I write a poem invariably begins with a strong visual image, a phrase, noises, abstract thoughts or feelings. Following this, I conduct several free writes to extrapolate meaning and probe at the core of the image, sound or emotion. My poetry, on paper and in my film-poems, employs a first-person semi-confessional point-of-view to convey my key obsessions, for instance, psychologically driven concerns that push the boundaries of the innermost self, juxtaposed with a fondness for the natural world. I employ a certain amount of poetic persona to distance myself from raw emotions, to release my imagination and allow my writing to flow. Persona typically refers to an imagined character that shields the poet's true feelings from sometimes, explicit personal scrutiny (Ong 1962, p. 54). My poetry focuses on emotions and the self (myself) as a conduit for intersubjective expression. The themes, which I typically explore, are abstract forms of human emotion—fear, emptiness, love, loss, death and absence. Besides my preferences, inspiration comes from Sylvia Plath, Margaret Tait and Nan Shepherd. For me, their poetic writing is immediate and perceptive—acerbic, beautiful and playful, oozing with visual imagery. Their approach to exploring the relationship between emotions and the landscape (urban, rural, private/personal and public) engenders a duality between my sense of self and the film-phenomenological component of this research, invoking a sense of belonging, and a tangible connection in terms of how I exist in the world.

Diverse in many ways, the commonality between the three women's writing aligns with Cavarero's (2012) sense of vocal uniqueness and foregrounds the experiences of the self, set to a backdrop of embodied relationships with landscape, elemental forces and the contradictions of the psyche. In Jennifer Barker's (2009)

¹⁸ See: www.susannahramsay.co.uk for an insight into my approach to writing poetry.

film-phenomenological sense, discussed further on, the work of Plath et al. provokes bodily responses that engage with the tactileness of the viscera, skin and muscle. Their poetry can be sensuous, as in the case of Shepherd's longing to be *in the mountains* of the Cairngorms for example, 'Summit of Corrie Etchachan' (from *In the Cairngorms*, 2014), and Tait's embodied relationship between herself, her camera and the nuances of nature for instance, 'Now' (from *Origins and Elements*, 1959: in Neely 2012, pp. 43-45). While many of Plath's poems present sensuous undertones, her work was often violent and uncompromising, a reflection of her intense anguish and anxiety towards her sense of self and the world, for instance, 'Cut' and 'Daddy' (from *Ariel*, 1965, both written in 1962). Plath's words were deeply confessional, hidden amongst metaphor and poetic imagery, and it is this approach that guides my writing style.

The filmpoem's relationship with the word is unique in that it employs images, sound, film language and the viewer's imagination to respond to linguistic patterns, unlike the poem on the page. As discussed earlier (pp. 13-15), the synthesis between film and poetry engenders complex connotations (Wees 1999, pp. 1-2). By combining words and images, these connotations become significant in terms of exploring film form and practice. Maya Deren emphasises this struggle within poetic filmmaking, '[I]f they [words] were brought in on a different level, not issuing from the image, which should be complete in itself, but as another dimension relating to it, then it is the two things together that make the poem' (in Sitney, 2000b: Vogel 1963, p. 179). Deren's reference to asynchronous visuals aligns with my approach to film practice. For example, my film editing techniques have evolved to accommodate my poetic intention. I now work with the visuals first, as opposed to the soundtrack, to establish the pace, duration, and relationship between the images. Following this, I record, manipulate, and add the soundscapes to the edit. Finally, the poetry is edited into the sequence, quite often omitting words from the original version of the written poem. At this stage, my experience has highlighted that sometimes the images have more powerful connotations than my words (at the time of writing); therefore, editing redundant words is necessary. This process of using asynchronous visuals as opposed to illustrative images connected with the soundtrack delineates my approach to the filmpoem.

My application of sound is explained in terms of conceptual, practical and creative approaches and is explored throughout this section and in the literature review (pp.58-60). In terms of film-phenomenology, my filmpoems include audio layering as a form of hapticity to evoke emotions and enhance the visuals. While I acknowledge that sound can be both haptic and tactile, temporal and spatial, something, which I do address at times throughout this thesis, the parameters of this research focuses predominantly on the visual image as a method for film-phenomenological analysis. This decision is based on my intense drive to decipher the visual content that constitutes the filmpoem as an art form in relation to philosophy, the self and the surrounding world, mentioned earlier (pp. 10-13).

At the beginning of this project, my approach to recording and manipulating audio was pragmatic, highlighting the limited conceptual creativeness preferred in my previous broadcast television career. Four years on, and my conceptual approach to soundscapes has changed significantly, much like my shift in editing techniques, mentioned in the previous section. As I began to develop my approach to working with the principles of experimental filmmaking, my conceptual approach to sound evolved. For instance, using royalty-free music in *West of Dalabrog* and *Dislocation* was a product of my past practice; therefore, for *The Essence of Place*, *Imprint* and *always carry a camera*, I created original soundscapes to conceptualise how my memories might sound.

I perceive soundscapes not so much as an additional layer residing underneath the visuals, as per the Avid Media Composer editing software interface (fig. 2, p. 17) but more as an anchor for developing meaningful relationships between my memories and the visuals. At the forefront of this thought process is the question, what sounds resonate with which emotions and by extension with the viewer's responses? Over time, these emotional elements manifest themselves through the process of audio manipulation (distortions, temporal shifts, echoes and delays), which produce tangible sensations when outputted. This practice is also analogous to my approach to filming haptic images, discussed in depth in Chapter 3, which supports the reciprocity between the filmpoem, in situ, and the viewer's experience.

The tendency for my soundscapes is to function on three distinct levels. Firstly, they can be illustrative, replacing the words of the original poem to add ambience, tone or connotation, evident in *Imprint* and *always carry a camera*, as explored in Chapter 1 (pp. 24-28). Secondly, creating original soundscapes in

response to tactile imagery pushed the boundaries of my approach to experimentation, for example, the first thirty-six seconds of *The Essence of Place*. The untitled tune, created on a kalimba,¹⁹ and digitally reversed in Avid Media Composer, juxtaposes high-pitched harmonies with temporally adjusted images to underline the tactility associated with wintertime, to prompt a sensorial memory of cold air and frost felt against the naked skin.

Finally, my soundscapes can be used spatially to enhance the sensorial experience of viewing my filmpoems, particularly in an art gallery context. For instance, during my exhibition at An Lanntair Arts Centre, I used the audio echoes from my single-screen installation to create an ambient soundtrack for the multi-screen installation *always carry a camera*, which shared the same screening space.

Outline of Chapters

This project foregrounds my approach to the production and exhibition of the filmpoem to unravel how this sub-genre of experimental cinema can be reflected upon film-phenomenologically. The project is twofold. The written component critically analyses the filmpoem, as an art form, through twentieth-century experimental cinematic traditions and contemporary artists' moving image exhibition practices. Addressing the filmpoem from these perspectives contributes to the existing literature and forms the basis for further research. The practice-based element illustrates the significant advancements made in my film practice, which, in turn, drives the analysis and develops the critical reflections throughout Chapter 3 and 4.

Chapter 2 comprises the literature review, providing key texts concerning the historical trajectory of the filmpoem. I begin with accounts from the early twentieth-century avant-garde art and film movements (1909-1913), then the mid-twentieth century experimental cinematic movements, culminating with reviewing the filmpoem through a contemporary artists' moving image exhibition context. In terms of my philosophical approach, I will map out key terminologies regarding film-phenomenology, e.g., haptic visuality, cinematic tactility, intersubjectivity, and embodiment.

¹⁹ Typically a wooden sound box with metal keys, that when plucked create musical notes; however, the kalimba I used was an iPhone app.

Laura U. Marks' (2000) theory of haptic visuality suggests that 'vision itself can be tactile, as though one were touching a film with one's eyes', thus inviting the viewer to perceive images as textures through remembering, as opposed to visual recognition (2000, p. xi). Building on the work of Marks, I will make use of Jennifer Barker's (2009) notion of cinematic tactility. Barker's perspective is grounded in the reciprocal qualities between the filmic experience and the comportment of the viewer's physical body. Bridging these two concepts, Vivian Sobchack's (1992) phenomenological perspective regarding intersubjective filmic experience or the reciprocity between perception and expression, film and viewer, is outlined and consistently expressed throughout this thesis. Linking Barker's and Sobchack's notion of intersubjectivity, Jenny Chamarette's (2012) work concerning this theme is applied to enrich the understanding of my role as a reflexive practitioner and how this can impact the production and exhibition of my filmpoetry. The final section of the literature review accounts for artists' moving image exhibition practices. Here, I address the significance of gallery spaces and site-specific places in relation to moving image installations and the embodied experience of the viewer.

Chapter 3 focuses on an in-depth analysis of hapticity and tactileness evident in a selection of experimental films and relates the findings to the *production of the filmpoem*. A case study approach exploring the work of experimental filmmaker's Leighton Peirce²⁰ and Margaret Tait illustrates these concepts. Pierce's work, *White Ash* (2010) and *50 Feet of String* (1995), are discussed in terms of their haptic parameters, focusing on how his application of film form and media specificity can evoke a sensory experience for the viewer. Margaret Tait's hand-painted animations, *Calypso* (1955), *Painted Eightsome* (1970), *John Macfadyen* (1970), *Colour Poems* (1974) and *Garden Pieces* (1998), plus *Aerial* and *These Walls* (both 1974) are explored in relation to cinematic tactility. Providing key examples of tactility in Tait's filmmaking illustrates how the viewer's body can be phenomenologically implicated through these filmic encounters. Drawing on the case studies, *Imprint* and *always carry a camera* will be critically reflected upon. This section explores my film-phenomenological approach to the production of the filmpoem and will also illustrate my engagement with the material nature of the Super 8mm film format.

²⁰ Currently, Leighton Peirce is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Iowa and the Dean of the School of Film/Video at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts).

Chapter 4 provides an exploration of the *exhibition of the film-poem* through contemporary artists' moving image exhibition practices. Key texts from Maeve Connolly (2009) and Chrissie Iles (2000 and 2001) foreground the significance of site-specific moving image installation in public or private places and spaces, for example, art galleries and museums. Maeve Connolly (2009) argues that the sense of spatiotemporality within a moving image experience is created through the viewer's memory suggesting a 'complex interplay between the site and space of the auditorium' (2009, p. 18). Considering Connolly's statement, I will explore the exhibition context for *The Essence Of Place*. Analysing this work synthesises the phenomenological significance of the space and place of moving image installations in relation to site-specific mini-pilgrimages. Building on this, Giuliana Bruno's (2007) idea of the haptic path, Volker Pantenburg's (2012) notion of the embodied spectator and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1964) concept of the reflexive body are analysed to understand the audience's viewing experience of single and multi-screen installation works. Finally, a critical reflection of my film-poem exhibition at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Isle of Lewis, 2018 will illustrate my approach to designing the gallery space for a moving image installation. Drawing on Connolly's notion of the in-between spaces of multi-screen moving image installations, *always carry a camera* is explored to understand the phenomenological potential of the film-poem in an exhibition context.

In my conclusion, I summarise key points established throughout to understand how they have impacted the analysis of the film-poem. Consideration will also be given to explaining why my project provides a significant resource for future analyses of the film-poem as an art form. Furthermore, I will endeavour to state what I, as an experimental filmmaker and academic researcher, have learned from this doctoral process.

Chapter Two: Review of literature

William C. Wees (1999) argues that avant-garde cinema traditionally explored ‘the dynamic symbiosis of poetic language and moving images’, juxtaposing connotation and metaphor to create a personal non-narrative, multi-sensorial experience (1999, p. 1). Before I explore the film-phenomenological potential of filmpoem through contemporary artists’ moving image context, I will begin this literature review by analysing key texts relating to the early-twentieth-century avant-garde art and film movements. A historical analysis will help determine how early avant-gardists’ approaches to film practice and philosophy impacted the inception of the filmpoem. These debates will relate to key themes explored throughout this review concerning the interrelationship between the production of my filmpoems, human sensorium, landscape, and exhibition space.

The founding principles of filmpoetry (c1909-1913)

Modernist principles sought to undermine religious beliefs, cultural, social, political and economic norms of the late nineteenth century. During the early twentieth-century critics, artists and writers began to revolt against Romanticism, Realism and bourgeois principles. The impact of the First World War (1914-1918) eventually made casualties of these entrenched traditions, resulting in the art of new, built on difference and revitalised aesthetics and attitudes (Childs 2008, pp. 1-21). Avant-garde films emerged from the Modernist art movement; provoked new ways of thinking and subsequently created new developments in the cinematic medium. Phillip Drummond states that the aesthetic boundaries between modernism and cinema began to blur when the avant-gardists eschewed popular cinematic conventions, while at the same time were forced to depend upon the technologies built from industrial capitalism (1979, pp. 9 and 11). Ian Christie (1998, p. 450) supports this shift, highlighting the many Soviet filmmakers’ attitudes to film production. For instance, film director and screenwriter Leonid Trauberg implied that the Russians were inconsistent with their position. On the one hand, disregarding the avant-garde as being bourgeois, but on the other hand using formal experimentation to quash conservatism.

Modernism was pre-occupied with new subject matters and processes, for instance, melding technologies with philosophy and formal structures. Moreover, Modernist painters²¹ were fundamental in the development of the avant-garde film movement—abstract Cubist painter Fernand Léger eventually produced *Ballet Mécanique* (1924), and Norman McLaren’s painterly animations resembled modern aesthetics (Apollinaire, Eimert and Podoksik 2014, p. 29; Tyler 1960, p. 61). However, it was the artists of both the Italian and Russian Futurist movements (c1909-1913) that first synthesised poetry, painting, sculpture and photography with film (Rees 1999, pp. 33-34; Christie 1998, p. 449; O’ Pray 2003, pp. 8-9). The Futurists’ creative vision and enthusiasm fused art and science, metaphysics and movement. Their reimagining of realism created challenging, controversial and sometimes absurd aesthetic compositions of sculpture and photography.²² Italian poet, theorist and Fascist propagandist, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti documented the harsh ideology of the first wave of Futurism in ‘The Futurist Manifesto’ (1909). Marinetti set out eleven rules that a practitioner of Futurism should adhere to. For example, ‘(C)ourage, audacity, and revolt will be essential elements of our poetry’, and ‘(W)e will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice’ (1909, pp. 21-22).

In his introduction to ‘The Futurist Manifesto’, Umbro Apollonio (1973, pp. 7-16) contextualised Futurist writings as developmental documentation of contributions to twentieth-century art. Apollonio states that the Futurists discredited the pleasure of art; instead, they viewed it as an energy capable of permeating and even violating life, the environment and politics. Birgit Hein (1979, pp. 19-21) goes further in both a textual and contextual analysis of the historical lineage of Futurism. Taking information from the ‘Futurist Manifesto’, she begins to piece together the theories on the rare, if not obsolete films. Again, she echoes many other theorists

²¹ For instance, Post-Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne broke down the conventions of composition by analysing and manipulating shape in ‘The Bathers’ (c1894-1905); Fauvist, Henri Matisse introduced vivid, intense colours to express emotion in ‘The dessert: Harmony in Red’ (1908), and Pablo Picasso’s ‘Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J. R. M.)’ (1907), pushed the boundaries of form and shape beyond all previous comprehension of structure and meaning to establish Cubism.

²² For example, Anton Giulio Bragaglia’s photograph ‘Young Man Rocking’ (1911), or Umberto Boccioni’s bronze sculpture ‘Unique Forms of Continuity in Space’ (1913), Carlo Carrà’s ‘The Funeral of the Anarchist Galli’ (1911), or the ‘Cyclist’ (1913) by Natalia Goncharova, all portray the Futurist ideals of man as technology, power, violence and dynamism.

when she states that the Futurists saw the role of cinema to be an extension of painting, sculpture, or the *plastic arts*, (in Abel, 1988: Canudo 1911; Faure 1922). Murray Smith (1998, p. 399) distinguishes the plastic arts as *cinéma pur*, a modernist principle, which expresses the formal and abstract elements of the cinematic potential. Ian Christie (1979, pp. 38-39) states that the *cinéma pur* structure engages film form, for example, differing camera speeds and lens manipulation to produce poetic imagery. It is conceivable, therefore, to suggest that both the art forms and philosophy of the Futurists together with the film techniques of *cinéma pur* were fundamental in establishing the principles of film-poetry. My film-poems incorporate similar aesthetic principles to evoke poetic resonance, for instance, the application of extreme close-up (ECU) and blurred images to engage and disrupt the viewer's cognition and perception. Furthermore, the experience of viewing blurred images as textures create a sense of hapticity or haptic visuality. As a result, these indistinguishable visuals seek to invoke sensorial memories, a concept established by Laura U. Marks (2000), explored later on in this chapter (pp. 49-50).

The Futurists (c1913) were the first art movement to establish the *cine-poem*, an explicit experimental film, and it has been suggested that their film practice was closer to sculpture and painting than to the convention of theatrical arts (Rees 1999, pp. 33-34). The Futurists' principles of mixing aesthetics are reflected in the symbiotic nature of the film-poem, as emphasised by William C. Wees (1999, p. 1). As a by-product of Futurist art, barriers between high art and mass culture were displaced, thus aligning the avant-garde with modernity. As an explicit expression of modernity, the Futurists viewed cinema as a vehicle for metaphorical and symbolic detachment from past artistic movements. Their films, while still narratively conventional in many ways were technically advanced both in terms of film apparatus and cognition, emphasising a sense of early guerrilla filmmaking going 'further into abstraction' as Rees suggests (1999, p. 28).

Synthesis between cinema, poetry and filmmaker

The characteristics of both film and poetry have been a point of discussion for many critics (Shklovsky 1927; Jakobson 1987; Pasolini 1976, 1988), who have debated questions of legitimacy, specificity, interpretation, prose versus poetry and the aesthetics of cinema. Accounts from film-poets and theorists (Man Ray, Maya Deren,

Ken Kelman, William C. Wees and Herman Berlandt) detail that defining the film-poem can be a lengthy process with significant consideration given to its composite nature. For example, William C. Wees states that Berlandt ‘was the first to campaign actively on behalf of the poetry-film [Wees’ term] and to provide it with a working definition’ (1984, p. 107). Ken Kelman discusses the lyric poem [Kelman’s term] in terms of expression as ‘direct manifestations through words of feelings and thoughts’ (1963, p. 22), and Frederick Aicken (1952b, p. 206) maintains that the poetry *of* cinema emerges from an emotional interconnection between the artist and audience. The idea that cinema can make the ordinary seem interesting through the experiential qualities transferred by poetic virtue mirrors many experimental filmmakers’ search for on-screen truth and realism within their film practice and the filmic images. The points raised here resonate with my approach to written poetry and my film practice, in that, my sense of self and my (inter)subjective experience is revealed through visual metaphors with the anticipation of reciprocity between the audiences’ own lived experience.

Aicken emphasises that film as an art form, with its own set of characteristics, deserves closer attention; furthermore, he suggests that art cinema can create ‘poetry for the eye’ arguably mirroring the development of the film-poem (1952a, p. 129). Stan Brakhage’s visual experiments of film and poetry challenged the audience’s perceptions through emotional stimuli by screening blurred, abstract visuals (2001, pp. 174-175). In order to counteract this displacement, Brakhage screened the same film in focus resulting in members of the audience noticing the beauty of abstraction as the subject matter. This experience is analogous with Laura U. Marks’ (2000) theory of haptic visuality, discussed further on. In terms of audience experience, the visual impact of my film-poems is informed by Brakhage’s experimentation. However, instead of revealing the film in focus, post-viewing, much of my work concentrates on sustaining the hapticity to emphasise the evolving emotional connection between the seer and the seen, comparable with Hans Richter’s filmmaking sensibilities. Richter, as a film-poet of abstract film form, thought all experimental films should be called film poetry, as Jonas Mekas notes (1957, pp. 6-7). Although this idea carries a degree of interest, it remains a somewhat reductive notion, considering the diversity of experimental cinema. Crucially, however, Richter suggests that the qualities of film-poetry lay in a loosely sketched outline at the planning stage. This process produced an organic filmmaking experience that encouraged spontaneity, a concept

that resonates with my method of filmmaking, mainly when using Super 8mm film, mentioned earlier (p. 25). Likewise, C.I. Belz (1965) states that Man Ray's films, interpreted as personal pieces of visual poetry, incorporate the juxtaposition of abstract and recognisable images, analogous with haptic and tactile visuality. Furthermore, as Belz affirms, Man Ray also characterised his films as fragmented cine-poems using abstraction as punctuation, or temporal suspension emphasising the visual rhythm (1965, pp. 119-120).

On October 28th 1953, Cinema 16's film poetry symposium convened, organised by film critic and writer, Amos Vogel. The event was designed to bring together practitioners from the world of literature and film to discuss the growing concern of poetry's relationship with the aesthetics of film. The panel comprised Parker Tyler, Dylan Thomas, Arthur Miller, Willard Maas and Maya Deren. In terms of developing the status of the film-poem, it was Deren who enlightened everyone (although both Thomas and Miller dismissed her distinctions) with her seminal theory of the *vertical* and *horizontal* axis attack informed by literature and interpreted through cinema (in Sitney, 2000b: Vogel 1963, pp. 173-175). Deren's distinction between the poetic intervention based on an inquiry into emotions (vertical) and narrative progression (horizontal) allowed for a linguistic visualisation of both poetry and prose through the crystallisation of on-screen images. Aicken (1952b, p. 208) echoes Deren's theories by emphasising how film form, for instance, editing, can make manifest these poetic moments by crystalising snapshots of memories or dreams within sequences thus connecting with human emotions when viewing.

The idea of capturing memories through film form, in particular, editing, is robustly theorised through Gilles Deleuze's concept of the crystal image, which crucially for this research, primarily investigates the temporal constructs of an image in non-narrative cinema (2013b, pp. 82-86). Deleuze's definition, based on Henri Bergson's (1920 and 1991) theories of pure memory and pure recollection, suggests that the past time or virtual image is a pure recollection, or a memory of an object, while the present time is an actual image that has the feeling of being real. Both the virtual and actual image co-exist within the same temporal structure, '(E)very moment of our life presents the two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on the one side and recollection on the other' (Bergson 1920, p. 165; Deleuze 2013b, p. 82). In other words, the process of perceiving an object is two-fold and co-exists in abstraction and

discernibility. As Laura U. Marks (2000, p. 163) affirms, this abstraction or virtual (and vertical)²³ interruption is synonymous with experimental cinema as it prompts the viewer to question what they are beholding, forcing them to use their memory to decipher connotations within the image, or sequence. Therefore, in a film montage, the crystal image is typically presented through irrational edits, such as the snowflake scenes in Alain Resnais' *Love Unto Death* (1984). Deleuze states that the crystal image is a source of profound subjectivity (and intersubjectivity) through which the audience can experience an inhabitation of time in a non-chronological way (2013b, p. 84). The inclusion of irrational edits, or a sequence of semi-abstract images, evident in Margaret Tait's *Aerial* (1974), or my film *Imprint* (2018), for example, allows the viewer to see a past and present time within the duration of the film itself.

During the symposium, Deren alluded to audience expectation concerning her theories on poetic filmmaking. She recognised that a distinction between poetry and anything else is essential for the viewers' understanding of the film (in Sitney, 2000b: Vogel, 1963, p. 173). Hans Richter echoes Deren's concerns regarding audience expectation, again recognising that the filmmaker has to trust the audience to use their intuition to unravel the connotations within the poeticness they are beholding (Mekas 1957, pp. 6-7). Advancing this notion, and in terms of film-phenomenology, both Richter's and Deren's accounts of the film-poetry distinction not only relies on its fundamental constructs and that of the poet's experience but also the audience's *cognition* of the film through perception and expression, which will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Maya Deren continued with her 'risky' assessment of poetry by intimating that there are instances or isolated poetic moments within narrative films that display the vertical axis of exposition (in Sitney, 2000b: Vogel 1963, p. 173). Similarly, as Willard Maas, a film-poet himself, pointed out, and, in contrast to Miller, a film can engage in both the poetic and dramatic areas of literature, citing Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet* (1932) as a classic example (in Sitney 2000b: Vogel 1963, pp. 183-184). Ken Kelman (1963) determined a sense of poetry through the flashback a visual trope in *The Naked Night/Sawdust and Tinsel* (Bergman, 1953). Theorising the

²³ The concept of the crystal image is analogous with Maya Deren's concept of the vertical axis, an emotional, introspective and metaphorical investigation within narrative prose. This is in contrast to the horizontal axis, which follows the dramatic action within the narrative progression.

filmpoem, Kelman (1963, pp. 22-27) makes the distinction between device and effect within both narrative and experimental cinema. In other words, the vision and expression of the filmmaker are charged through the rhythm of the editing or the impact of the camera angles resulting in pure visual poetry. However, in terms of narrative cinema, poetic elements can be expressed as part of a film sequence but only in isolation from the narrative. Kelman notes that these moments lack pure expression and are found solely in films that are explicitly abstract or experimental. He considers the isolated moments to be clear representations of the shift from experimental cinema to art cinema synonymous with the 1960s onwards. It is conceivable to argue that Richter builds on Kelman's moments of pure expression by relating film to the subconscious, to make the 'invisible visible' (Mekas 1957, p. 6). Richter's films could be considered poetic because he explored mood rather than entertainment, similar to Maya Deren's philosophical concept, which suggests a clear continuation of the psychological ramifications of early twentieth-century society.

Filmpoetry as a movement

The previous sections have brought filmpoetry into focus within the context of the early-twentieth-century avant-garde film movement. This section investigates how the filmpoem has developed in terms of becoming an autonomous sub-genre within the context of experimental cinema. Scott MacDonald (2007) emphasises the presence of poetry in film, citing 1920s European and 1940s American avant-garde practices as important examples. MacDonald, like many other critics, insists that both movements originated from art, poetry and theatre, as mentioned earlier (Drummond 1979; Hein 1979; Christie 1998; Rees 1999; O' Pray 2003). Crucially, MacDonald (2007, p. 3) emphasises that on-screen text became a significant influence on filmmakers, citing *Manhatta* (Sheeler and Strand, 1921) as being the first film to include poetic text. In *Manhatta*, excerpts from Walt Whitman's poems were used to parallel the visuals; a concept reframed as poetry-film, mentioned earlier (pp. 13-14) by Wees (1984). Like Sheeler and Strand's film, both Duchamp's *Anemic Cinéma* (1926) and Man Ray's *L'étoile de mer* (1928) display the inclusion of visual text as imagery. Furthermore, as MacDonald suggests, the avant-garde film movement incorporated this device to inspire audiences who frequented the ciné-clubs (2007, p. 4). Avant-garde practitioners came to recognise the need for experimental films to reach the audience

in different ways, in particular through film clubs and magazines. Georges Dureau (*Ciné-Journal*), Riccotto Canudo (*Club des Amis du Septième Art*) and Louis Delluc (*Le Journal du Ciné-club*) were some of the first to introduce both approaches (Curtis 1971, p. 9; Abel 1988, pp. 5-8).

By the mid-to-late 1930s, the European avant-garde movement was in decline. The Second World War had prompted a shift in interest to American artists and filmmakers. Scott MacDonald (2007, pp. 5-7) discusses the American avant-garde of the 1940s onward as being retrospectively analytical regarding the influence of 1920s and 1930s poetry and poetic text in filmmaking. However, it was not until after World War Two that film clubs and societies in America began to theorise debates surrounding poetry within a cinematic context. Sitney (2000a p. xii) supports this approach by suggesting that the American avant-garde looked to European filmmaking traditions, especially when finances were tight. MacDonald (2007, p. 6) suggests that the term *poetic*, which American avant-garde filmmakers adopted, did not necessarily refer to written or spoken poetry but instead to the aesthetics of film. For example, when re-analysing *The Blood of a Poet* (Cocteau, 1932) the poetic qualities of the film emerged from the implicit sensibility connected to visual style and manipulation of form, observed by Willard Maas earlier (p. 41).

As a consequence, this sense of poetry was interpreted by audiences as phenomena, as “poetic” film experiences’, rather than an interpretation of a written verse or an explicit philosophically driven film synonymous with the work of Maya Deren (MacDonald 2007, p. 6). Parker Tyler’s (in Sitney, 2000b: Vogel 1963, pp. 171-174) critique of poetry’s relationship with avant-garde film led filmmakers to believe in the poetic film or the cine-poem, conceivably first acknowledged as the *film poem* (no hyphen or co-joining) (see also: Sitney 2000a, p. xii). From the mid-1950s onwards a select number of filmmakers such as John Broughton, Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas and Margaret Tait remained committed to the practice of using poetry as a significant factor within their work.

Margaret Tait was a film poet, whose work exemplified the symbiosis of film, philosophy and poetry. Tait’s film poems or ‘self-made films’ were critically acclaimed but widely disregarded, often being misconstrued as amateurish or naïve to those who failed to see the internal rhythm and intent of intimate composition (Curtis 1999, unpaginated; Wees 1998, p. 4; Todd and Cook 2004, p. 132). Tamara Krikorian

(2003, p. 103) suggests that Tait collected her footage over time and worked spontaneously. Her approach to filmmaking was remarkably similar to the ethos of the avant-garde: generally self-funded, non-conformist, uncompromising, non-commercial, and with distribution and exhibition being select. Moreover, Tait's work displayed her technical abilities and authenticity in revealing the importance of the everyday ordinary (Neely 2008, p. 220). Tait's work, in particular, her hand-painted films, which display a unique visual tactileness related to the early avant-garde films of Man Ray and Hans Richter, will be discussed in terms of film-phenomenological themes in Chapter 3.

As a filmmaker and poet, Margaret Tait made over 30 films in a career that spanned 46 years. She studied at the *Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia* in Rome before moving to Edinburgh in the early 1950s where she set up her own film company, *Ancona Films*. Using 16mm film stock Tait's camera, a lightweight wind-up Bolex, became a mode of seeing differently, more deeply. Referencing Scott MacDonald (2006) in terms of Tait's working methods, the technique of looking closely at the ordinary and functional things that we generally do not notice links to the avant-garde tradition 'of using cinema to *look* more carefully at the places that surround us' (2006, p. 265). The accessible medium-gauge format allowed Tait's poetic experimentations to flow with visible freedom, even playfulness. For example, *Splashing* (1966) is produced in a light-hearted manner to mirror the spirit of childhood. More broadly, the format affirmed the medium's appeal to artist filmmakers. The ease with which the 16mm film format could be used was 'conducive to poetic experimentation' as Sarah Neely, an expert on Tait, observes (2017a, p. 111). Crucially for Tait, film was an 'inherently poetic medium', and one that she believed could sustain poetic experimentations at length, although, for Tait, the lack of funding generally halted this process (Neely 2017a, p. 128). Tait did use the 35mm format for *Blue Black Permanent* (1992), her only feature film, and additionally *Calypso* (1955), *John Macfadyen* (1970) and *Painted Eightsome* (1970) were made from a surplus of 35mm film stock given to her during her time in Rome (Todd and Cook, p. 106).

Tait wrote, filmed and edited all of her film-poems and was particular about documenting every step of the filmmaking process (Neely 2012, p. 1). However, she made films for direct response rather than for documentation (Todd and Cook 2004, p. 92). Like Tait, I am keen on the immediacy of human reaction: to facilitate a

reciprocal relationship between film and viewer, and to determine what sounds or visuals can evoke embodied responses. My site-specific audiovisual outdoor installation, *The Essence of Place* provided an instant response from the viewers. Reflections from the audience, informally voiced after they had experienced the installation, seemed to resonate strongly with my original intent for the project, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

To summarise, film-poetry is a multifaceted genre built on the variants of key twentieth-century innovations, mentioned at the beginning of this literature review. The following section will build on my review thus far by establishing key film-phenomenological concepts, which, in turn, will inform my practice-based approach to artists' moving image production and exhibition practices, critically reflected upon in Chapter 3 and 4.

Film-phenomenology: concepts

Film-phenomenology as a film-philosophy has gained momentum in contemporary film studies over the past twenty-five years, in a counterattack against dominant film theories from the 1960s through to the 1980s (mainly Marxist ideology, structuralism and psychoanalysis) (Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich 2016, pp. 38-44; Sobchack 1992, pp. xvi-xvii). Recent contributions to understanding film in terms of emotions, sensations and perception, as opposed to conventional textual analyses, have continued to rise. In Ferencz-Flatz' and Hanich' article, 'What is Film Phenomenology?' (2016), the authors offer a broad and narrow definition of film-phenomenology. The broad definition refers to a 'phenomenological philosophy, which turns to film as an object of inquiry', and the narrow definition applies film-phenomenology as a methodology to describe the '*invariant structures* of the film viewer's *lived experience* when watching moving images in a cinema or elsewhere' (2016, pp. 13-14).

My film-phenomenological investigation of the production and exhibition of the film-poem draws from both definitions. However, it has been brought to my attention that the term *invariant structure*²⁴ implies a sense of unchanging perspectives

²⁴ I would like to thank Jenny Chamarette and Kate Ince for identifying the term *invariant structures* as being problematic in terms of producing a fluid film-phenomenological exploration. Source: Film-Philosophy Conference, Göthenburg, Sweden, 2018.

relating to consciousness, a perspective that fails to engage with the notion of intersubjectivity and embodiment, key concerns for this project. In opposition to Ferencz-Flatz' and Hanich's statement, my analysis of the film-poem maintains that a possible embodied film-phenomenological experience is mutable and intersubjective, a perspective that Jenny Chamarette's (2012) work on cinematic subjectivity supports:

Films are objects and moments of experience in addition to being objects of and for interpretation. Furthermore, film experience, and the encounter with filmic objects, shifts the opposition of thinking about a viewing subject, and a viewed object (2012, p. 3).

The overarching sense of Chamarette's work explores the 'everyday attitude' of the body during a filmic experience through concrete (material) and abstract (dematerial) thought, with the latter paralleling 'the relationship between phenomenology and film' (2012, p. 3). Chamarette's work points to an integrated approach that highlights the complexities of phenomenology, such as 'temporality, representation, presence and embodiment as a means of *thinking through* the particularities and specifics of cinematic subjectivity' (2012, p. 4). For example, congruent with my research, reconsidering subjectivity in terms of temporal and experiential structures uncovers an intriguing relationship between lived time and filmically presented time, or as Chamarette writes, 'time that is experienced subjectively and time as revealed by the material nature of film' (2012, p. 6). Furthermore, and analogous to Jennifer Barker's work, discussed in the following section, Chamarette draws from Merleau-Ponty's notion of the intertwining chiasm, expressed in 'The Visible and Invisible' (1968, pp. 130-155), posthumously published in 1968. Her distinction translates the well-established film-phenomenological approach as a reversibility between the human senses and that which is sensed cinematically, or 'the contact between viewer and viewed, seer and seen' (2012, p. 3). The 'chiasmic in-betweenness' of a cinematic encounter maintains that the film object is experienced both interrelationally (contextually and culturally) and intersubjectively (2012, p. 3). This phenomenological perspective means that a discussion delineating the possibilities of cinematic subjectivity is fluid and need not follow the separate elements that define a filmic event. In other words, all aspects of the filmmaking process, including those who facilitate the process, can be viewed as intertwining entities.

Drawing from Chamarette's intersectional approach, my work focuses on the sense of *in-between-ness*, emphasised throughout her work, as a method for thinking film-philosophically about how the film-poem can be tangibly experienced as an art form. By doing so, her research invites me 'to think about subjects and their intersubjective relations to objects, the variable and permeable positioning of the subject behind the camera, on the screen or [and] in front of it' as she suggests in relation to further complexities that arise from the melding of philosophy and film analysis (2012, p. 5). Considering this, I maintain that the intersection between my (inter)subjective position and the intersubjective embodiment of the viewer is not only significant in terms of my film practice and exhibition context but is also reflected in the combining of film and poetry, and experimental film techniques and artists' moving image practices.

Embodiment, the senses and intersubjectivity

As I have alluded to, the overarching philosophical perspective of this thesis includes two key phenomenological concepts from Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1968). Firstly, the notion of the flesh, and the chiasm, established earlier (p. 13), which underpins Jennifer Barker's research on cinematic tactility, explored in detail in the following section. This concept evokes a sense of tangible reversibility between the film and the audience, which, in turn, is reflected in both the production and exhibition of my film-poems. Further on, I will be making use of Merleau-Ponty's idea of the reflexive body established in his essay 'Eye and Mind' (1964), which will be analysed in relation to artists' moving image exhibition strategies in Chapter 4 (pp. 113-116).

Jennifer Barker (2009) privileges Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1968) notion of binary sensations in determining the relationship between the viewer and the filmic experience. Barker suggests that Merleau-Ponty's example of one hand touching the other, with both hands playing a dual role—touching and being touched—provokes a pulsating exchange between the hands (Merleau-Ponty 1968, pp. 147-148; 2012, p. 94). Barker describes this reversibility as 'tactile structures', a mutuality of the inhabitation and enactment of embodiment, analogous with our physical body and that of the film's body (2009, p. 19). Barker refers to the film's body as a conceptual presence within the filmic experience. For instance, in terms of the visual style

present in many experimental films, the relationship between the unidentifiable visual hapticity and our search to understand what we are beholding begins to question our position within the filmic experience, leading to the perceptual reversibility between viewer and film (2009, pp. 6-7). Vivian Sobchack (1992) suggests that reciprocity and embodiment, relating to existential phenomenology, underpins the structure of a cinematic experience. Again, referencing Merleau-Ponty (1968), Sobchack maintains that cinema incorporates the body and senses to embody language and movement. Our physical, auditory and visual expressions combined with understanding become a phenomenological experience, an 'expression of experience by experience' (Merleau-Ponty 1968, p. 155; Sobchack 1992, p. 3). She continues, suggesting that film has the ability to possess both sense and sense-making qualities signifying to the viewer through more than just the evident materialistic structures (e.g., film stock or camera equipment) that cinema's mode of communication is embodied and intersubjective. Therefore, intersubjectivity or the intellectual relationship between viewer, film and filmmaker is instructed by an assumed sensibility to present a filmic experience through 'embodied vision', meaning that cinema can provide both a sense of perceptual universality or communal experience and a unique sensorial encounter for the viewer (1992, p. 6).

Similarly, Barker's research combines the intersubjectivity between viewer and film and the *tactility* of the lived body during the cinematic experience, signified as a shared experience. Barker (2009, p. 2) suggests that the tactility of cinema is implicit in language and explicit in terms of proximity, meaning that although we view a film from an *objective* distance, we can still say that a film, in a sense, felt intimate and touched us. For Barker (2009, p. 3) the tactileness of cinema is threefold and reflects the human body. *Haptically*, touching the surface of the skin; *kinesthetically*, associated with muscle and bone, and *viscerally*, which relates to the internal rhythm and structures of the body. Furthermore, she suggests that tactility is displayed in the material complexities of film such as the projection screen (haptic), the movement in and around the cinematic space (kinesthetic), and viscerally or what she describes as the 'film's rush through a projector's gate', which is unfortunately non-existent in digital format (2009, p. 3). However, it is conceivable to think that the *immediacy* applicable to digital film perhaps replaces the kinesthetic quality Barker discusses. In terms of my practice and the filmpoem, engaging further with Barker's

anthropomorphic position will allow me to explore how my (inter)subjective lived experience can be embodied to create an intersubjective experience.

Haptic visuality

In 'The Skin of the Film' (2000), Laura U. Marks' approach encompasses a thorough discussion of intercultural cinema and diaspora, cultural memory and embodiment. Much of her research is based on Henri Bergson's (1920 and 1991) philosophical scholarship on pure memory and pure recollection, and Gilles Deleuze's theory of 'The Crystal Image' (2013b, pp. 82-86), mentioned earlier (pp. 40-41). More specifically, her research explores themes of haptic visuality; a sensory experience invoked when viewing films, an act that triggers multi-sensorial memories. Marks parallels haptic visuality with the sense of touch, suggesting this form of looking is 'as though one were touching a film with one's eyes' (2000, p. xi). In cinematic terms, haptic visuality, or haptical looking is, therefore, a method for gaining new knowledge and evoking memories through visual stimuli. My film practice engages with haptic visuality as a concept to illustrate how my inner world and emotions can be visualised abstractly and metaphorically, to be understood externally by the audience in an exhibition context.

Marks' research on haptic visuality is informed by Aloïs Riegl's (1985 and 1995) research on haptics, in which he explored the relationship between physiology, vision and the sense of space in the compositions of European art. Riegl's notion of haptic images was explicitly interpreted through sharp focus, images that are clearly visible (1995, pp. 10-12). In contrast, Marks' theory connects hapticity with out-of-focus images, which results in the viewer barely recognising what they perceive (2000, pp. 162-164). Additionally, a haptic image could include the layering of multiple images through superimposition, or the inclusion of an extreme close-up resulting in the viewer sensing a mix of different textures on the surface of the image. Haptic images have a physical presence in cinema, evoking the viewer's sensibility, imagination and memory to connote meaning (2000, p. 163). Optical images, in contrast, are underpinned by tactile memory, an on-screen realism, or representation of a recognisable image, a reversal of Riegl's theory. Optical images can also have a profound effect/affect within a montage. They are often used to distinguish clarity before the haptic image; however, they do not necessarily need to be immediately

recognisable, considerations, which are analogous with experimental cinema and film-poetry. For example, the blurred image of two people seen behind textured glass in Man Ray's *L'étoile de mer* (1928) becomes a mediator of truth and provokes the viewer's imagination to decipher what (if anything) is being hidden from them.

In terms of my film practice, discussed in depth in Chapter 3, *West of Dalabrog* juxtaposes tactile and haptic visuality, for example, the first two shots infer a disorientated physical presence through haptic visuality. The following four shots orientate the viewer with recognisable images—blue sky, waves, a rainbow and a seagull. In the next shot, the visual rhythm reverts back to hapticity. Not only does this shot re-establish an unhinged sense of perception, but it also attempts to evoke sensory memories of smell and taste through an ECU of my nose and mouth. The significance of incorporating haptic and tactile images in experimental cinema will be the focus of analysis in Chapter 3 through a case study approach exploring Leighton Peirce's and Margaret Tait's filmmaking practices. Developing these concepts further, a critical analysis reflecting on my own approach to applying haptic and tactile images will conclude the chapter.

Tactile visuality

The textural qualities of haptic images are characterised by film form, for example, slow-motion, camera movement, panning and zooming, optical/digital superimposition and scratching on celluloid. Various formats such as videotape, Super 8mm, 16mm film and HD digital allow for different textures, for instance, graininess and depth of colour. These examples are characteristic of a tactile nature also, but they differ slightly to the function of haptic images, some of which are highlighted by Marks (2000, pp. 173-176). In Chapter 3, I will discuss how the textural qualities of film form, as described by Marks, have developed within my film practice.

In contrast to haptic visuality, tactile visuality and tactile memory in cinema refer to the cognition of recognisable images that evoke sensations, or as Marks writes tactile visuality is 'thinking with your skin' (2000 p. 190). For example, a multi-sensorial experience could be prompted by images of a hot, arid countryside contrasted with the refreshing coolness of water on the skin, and juxtaposed with the sound of water. However, as Marks maintains, the images still do not touch us,

instead, tactile visibility arises from the *thought* of that contact: what the heat feels like on the skin or the spray of cool water splashing on the feet.

Acknowledging Merleau-Ponty's (1968) notion of the flesh and the chiasm, Jennifer Barker's approach to tactility in cinematic images specifies bodily compartment and sensations. Barker's notion of film's body suggests that film must have a *skin*, not in the sense of a physical biological organ, but as a *way* or *form* of being in the world (2009, pp. 26-34). For Barker, skin becomes a conceptual focal point or a membrane where perception and expression can be exchanged between self and other. The film's skin is a composite feature drawing from cinematic technology, mechanics, style and themes to provide a 'tactile mode of being in the world' (2009, p. 29). This tactile boundary allows for human contact and access into the film by virtue of textured surfaces within the on and off-screen space. For example, the metaphorical landscape of a film's narrative serves as sensations of touch translated through the on-screen visual textures, which can provoke the mind and body of the audience into different sensorial states of being. As an act of reciprocity, Barker (2009, p. 40) gives the example of viewing the children playing in the water and taking great pleasure in roaming within the *tactileness* of their character's surroundings, and pro-filmic landscape in *Pather Panchali* (Ray, 1955). Tactile visibility, therefore, connects visual experiences to the spectator's body, provoking a sense of intimacy and affect through observation and response. As an outdoor installation, *The Essence of Place* (2017) achieved degrees of tactility by interweaving the audiences' senses evoked through viewing the film in the actual landscape juxtaposed with the optical and haptical images of the recorded landscape presented on-screen. The potential for an embodied experience, driven by the sensorial oscillation between the screen, space, the image and the viewer is a notion that underpins Barker's theory on cinematic tactility. In sensing ourselves in and through the film, through the reversibility between us and the film, perception and expression, we become the 'cinesthetic subjects' of a truly embodied filmic experience (Sobchack 2004, p. 84).

As intimated in earlier sections of the literature review, many principles of the film-poem are underpinned by the filmmaker's expression, theoretical and empirical knowledge. Attention to the human condition (e.g., emotions and sensory perceptions), are made manifest through the intimate relationship between the source material, environment, film form and filmmaker. My own experience of filming in

harsh landscapes affirms the congruity between apparatus, body and mind. Considering the film-poem as a unique film experience, whether projected in a site-specific context or conventionally screened, the poetic and film-phenomenological themes discussed thus far are reflected perhaps more significantly in this genre than in any other, as Ken Kelman (1963) has highlighted (pp. 41-42).

From experimental cinema traditions to contemporary artists' moving image exhibition practices

The exhibition context for experimental films, including the film-poem, has shifted from film clubs, small venues and festivals to museums, art galleries and the Internet. Similarly, the shift in terminology from experimental cinematic traditions to artists' moving image practices helps to establish a contemporary context for the exhibition of the film-poem. Sarah Neely (2017b, pp. 134-135) and Erika Balsom (2017, pp. 81-82) argue that the definition artists' moving image has subsumed the term experimental cinema in an attempt to bring forward a more inclusive context for this wide-ranging genre. Inclusive in terms of the variety of moving image artwork available and in opposition to the ridged filmic structure attributed to experimental cinema and avant-garde traditions. Considering the film-poem as a contemporary art form, the next section explores the different contexts for artists' moving image exhibition practices.

It is widely accepted that artists' cinema and artists' moving image, both video-based and analogue film, are firmly established within a contemporary art gallery context, and recent years have seen a marked rise in its predominance (Balsom 2013, p. 63; Bruno 2007, pp. 3-17). For example, contemporary work such as Doug Aitken's immersive moving image installation, *Electric Earth* (2017) at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art), Los Angeles and Tacita Dean's *Antigone* (2018), at The Royal Academy of Arts, London, emphasise how the art world is currently investing in large-scale multichannel work. As Maeve Connolly's (2009) research on the place of artists' moving image asserts, this 'enhanced visibility of artists' cinema' occurred primarily because of the digital revolution opening up once closed spaces, particularly in a UK context (2009, p. 10). It is important to note that the overarching sense of my research follows Connolly's

perspective highlighting the shift from a psychoanalytical reading of artists' moving image and spectatorship to a more shared, social and ultimately phenomenological response. The introduction of the moving image into museums and galleries in the mid-to-late 1990s arose from the accessibility of possessing video recording and post-production equipment for personal use that was once unobtainable. Furthermore, Connolly argues more broadly, that over the past ten years the over-commercialisation of film and television production has perhaps forced certain artists towards the gallery space and that 'cultural policy, curatorial discourse, urban redevelopment and art practice...[has]...structured the relationship between art, cinema and place' (2009, p. 10). In this context, Connolly implies that site-specificity and place has become the locus for understanding artists' moving image more deeply, in age when experimental work such as the filmpoem is increasingly marginalised within mainstream film contexts. Both Connolly's ideas and the filmpoem as a site-specific art installation develop as the topic of discussion in Chapter 4.

Historically, the filmpoem was projected on 16mm analogue film format, and screened in small venues, at film festivals, or via touring cinema programmes. For instance, Margaret Tait organised many of her own film-screening events, such as the Rose Street Film Festival, held in her Edinburgh studio, established in 1954 (Neely 2017a, p. 11). Recent contexts for the exhibition of the filmpoem have developed with the introduction of digital technologies and the dominance of the Internet. Currently, access to filmpoetry is mainly web-based, while filming practices typically engage HD digital video via HD technology and the latest versions of smartphones.

In 2017, Peter Todd and experimental filmmaker Ute Aurand curated an experimental film programme²⁵ (including their own work and filmpoems from Tait), for an event at *Spektrum*, Berlin. Similarly, British artist Zata Banks, who established poetryfilm.org in 2002, curates and delivers lectures at many international filmpoetry screenings. While festivals such as the German-based biannual Zebra Filmpoetry Festival, the Weimar Poetry Film festival, the Festival Silêncio in Portugal and the Athens International Video Poetry Festival, have become consistent platforms, providing a space for conventional screenings of filmpoetry. Furthermore, the contemporary manifestation of the filmpoem prevails through an increased focus on the digital, and online consumption of such work. For instance, websites such as

²⁵ Light Movement 23: Open Doors. Sunday 23rd July 2017, 8pm. Spektrum, Berlin.

filmpoem.com, established in 2010 by artist and photographer Alastair Cook, movingpoems.com, curated by Dave Bonata, and more recently poetryfilmlive.com, established by film poets' Helen Dewbery and Chaucer Cameron provide an immediate distribution network and point of access for both the viewer and artist.

Furthermore, websites such as lightcone.org, circuit.org.nz, LUX.org.uk and LUXScotland.org.uk are crucial for promoting the work of moving image artists through distribution and sales. For relatively modest fees and prices, historic experimental films and contemporary artists' moving image works can be rented for exhibition or research purposes or purchased on DVD. However, as Erika Balsom (2017, p. 81) identifies, some moral debates surrounding the legitimacy of artist-led initiatives and web-sharing platforms are foregrounded in terms of supporting the artist. In recent years, the marginalisation of experimental cinema, mentioned earlier (p. 52), has seen a rise in bootleg versions of key films. Balsom's analysis supports the idea that the current place for the consumption of avant-garde cinema, regardless of quality, is the Internet (2017, p. 82). The significance of this can be seen in web-sharing platforms such as UbuWeb.com, in particular. As Balsom states, 'UbuWeb started in 1996 as a site focusing on experimental poetry, with video added in 2002' for streaming purposes (2017, p. 86). However, Balsom takes issue with UbuWeb's access policies, and archiving and preservation practices to explore what is at stake for the artist and their work. As Balsom writes, '[the website] prides itself on posting files without first seeking permission of the author', which raises significant moral dilemmas regarding copyright and circulation (2017, pp. 86-87). UbuWeb streams primarily low-resolution videos, meaning that the uploaded artists are continually denied the opportunity to screen their work in the correct manner in which it was intended. Additionally, the right to engage with professionals who preserve, protect and archive the work is also eliminated. Notwithstanding this brutal perspective, UbuWeb's Film & Video section does state that on viewing these films in this manner it is 'no way comparable to the experience of seeing these gems as they were intended' (<http://www.ubu.com/film/>). Furthermore, they realise that many of the experimental films are generally difficult to access, which, I, again, suspect is a consequence of experimental cinema being marginalised from cinema theatres.

In terms of my work, the significance of these differing contexts is equally important. For instance, An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway, the Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling and Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, North Uist, have

all allowed me to either organise an event or screen my films with them. Also, artists' residencies are crucial in giving the artist space to develop their practice, such as the one I undertook with RSPB Loch Lomond. The Internet is the usual route I use to disseminate my work, whether it is through my own website, or other web-sharing platforms, such as vimeo.com. Finally, online peer-reviewed sites such as screenworks.org.uk are hugely crucial to my development as an early career academic researcher.

Following these assertions, the next section introduces literature concerning the historical shift in artistic practices, the significance of which can be identified through recent manifestations of artists' moving image exhibition practices. This exploration will establish my phenomenological analysis concerning the art gallery as a context for exhibiting film-poetry.

Situating the film-poem within a contemporary artists' moving image exhibition context

Chrissie Iles (2001, p. 33) and Tanya Leighton (2008) assert that throughout the 1960s and 1970s the development in artistic practices shifted the parameters of exhibition spaces from traditional to contemporary aesthetics, 'exchanging the white cube of the exhibition space for the black box of image projection' (Leighton 2008, p. 7). The hybridisation of art practices and mediums meant that the boundaries between cinema, television and traditional art gallery aesthetics began to blur. Erika Balsom (2013, pp. 33-34 and 40) echoes this shift in perspective by suggesting that the introduction of a constructed box for image projection into the traditional white cube exhibition space raises questions of composition. For Balsom, the gallery space both preserves cinema and asserts 'high cultural' value to the medium (2013, p. 40).

Crucially, Claire Bishop (2005, p. 10) states that the introduction of installation art in the 1960s sought to challenge the spatiotemporality of traditional gallery spaces. Bishop's work explores the intertwining of existential phenomenology with the Minimalist art movement, which, in turn, informed the art criticism of the era. Installation artists often presented their work in various unorthodox locations and invited the gallery-goers (or participants) to interact with the artwork. Once the exhibition had finished, the site would be physically demolished, leaving the audience with a unique experience. This experience was distinct from a white cube gallery visit

in which the gallery-goer could return time and again. Leighton (2008, p. 10) therefore raises the question, how are artists' moving image practices better understood today? A question that this research broadly addresses throughout.

Chrissie Iles (2001, p. 33) determines that during the decades of radical change artists began introducing objects, such as film projection into gallery spaces, thereby distancing the moving image from the conventional static arts (i.e., paintings and sculptures). How these objects were incorporated within the traditional spaces challenged audience perception and created sensorial experiences, a clear indication of the shift towards phenomenology in art criticism. I think what Iles is suggesting here is that the combination of the properties of the film medium projected within the site-specific nature of the gallery space comprise several modalities, whereas the traditional static arts are typically determined through a singular form. Analogue (and digital) moving images, therefore, have the ability to create deep sensorial encounters and meaning through film form, audio, haptic and tactile images, content and kinesthetic movement. Furthermore, Iles suggests that the shift between the darkened cinematic theatre and the typically brightly lit, spatially bare gallery space has deconstructed the traditional one-directional viewing position between screen and audience (2001, pp. 33-34). In other words, both the gallery space and the inclusion of a multi-screen installation, in-situ, for example, demands the participation of the viewer's body and consciousness to produce an existential phenomenological response. The phenomenological potential of single and multi-screen configurations in relation to the film-poem will be explored further in Chapter 4.

Maeve Connolly (2009) establishes the concept of a third way of viewing artists' moving image through an exploration of the *place* and *space* of exhibition sites. Informed by theories concerning contemporary art practices, architecture, themes of spatiotemporality and socio-political concerns, her work explores the spectator's social and cultural memory of civic institutions and amenities (2009, p. 63). Connolly's debates are underscored by Haidee Wasson's (2005) research relating to the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) Film Library, New York, which delineates the concept of the *publicness of place* in relation site-specific artworks and film history, and Giuliana Bruno's ideas concerning the reciprocal relationship between architecture, public viewing and the exhibition of moving image within the museum (2007, pp. 3-41). The next section establishes key aspects of Bruno's work; however,

her concepts will be discussed in full in relation to my own approach to the exhibition of the film-poem in Chapter 4.

As Connolly notes, the key element within Bruno's work is the suggestion that artists use the idea of cinema as a form of historic space, a mnemonic history linked to memory, technology and architectural space (2009, p. 65). Bruno articulates this interfacing between cinema and the museum in terms of architecture, memory, imagination and the ambulatory action of spectators moving through space. She traces the genealogies of museum walks, the establishment of public viewing and film exhibition concurrent with the imaginary journey one takes when viewing contemporary visual arts, in particular, gallery-based moving images (2007, p. 17). The spectator, placed within the context of the contemporary art gallery, is seen to traverse single and multi-screen installation spaces experiencing motion and emotion while being reminded of the cinematic and museographic genealogy. Bruno's work incorporates the haptic path, a concept that illustrates the significance of how the spectator physically and mentally traverses the exhibition space to view the artwork. The haptic path is a mode of mobilisation for the gallery-goer, which takes her/him on an architectural and emotional journey through a museum or gallery evoking and embodying personal experiences and memory (2007, pp. 27-28). In terms of my approach to the exhibition of my film-poetry at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway, I employed the haptic path as a method for phenomenological analysis, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

In addition to Bruno's concept, I made use of Maeve Connolly's assertion concerning the *in-between space* of an artists' moving image multi-screen installation. As an exhibition strategy, Connolly maintains that the in-between space or the third way of viewing artists' moving image works produces a profound experience for the gallery-goer (2009, p. 18). In other words, space becomes the place where the physical presence of the viewer is foregrounded, and meaning arises vis-à-vis experiential cognition, prompting the physical reciprocity between film and viewer, echoing Vivian Sobchack's perspective concerning perception and expression (1992, pp. 8-14). In terms of the exhibition of my film-poetry, it is this third way of conceptualising the artwork to create an embodied dialogue between the film and the audience that I take inspiration from, which will be explored further in Chapter 4.

Audio, artists' moving image and the exhibition of the film-poem

The haptic and tactile visualisation of the film-poem has been explored through understanding the combination of artists' moving image practices, film-phenomenology, space and place and site-specificity, but how does the sonorousness of the film-poem translate into a gallery context? As discussed earlier, elements of my research have determined how sound design can create meaning beyond visualisation within my film-poetry (pp. 19-20, 23-24, 32-33, 59-60 and 86). This section explores key existing literature relating to audio and experimental cinema and uses specific examples of the unconventional methods relating to sound (re)production within artists' moving image exhibition practices in an attempt to uncover how the film-poem's soundtrack can produce meaning and evoke embodied responses from the viewer.

It is evident that avant-garde filmmaking, experimental cinema and artists' moving image illustrates unconventionality; therefore, it seems logical that the inclusion of audio will naturally follow in opposition to commercial filmmaking. Catherine Elwes (2015, p. 207) states that this is the case, citing Bruce Nauman's film *Lip Synch* (1969) as a case in point. In this example, the non-synchronised sound pushes the parameters of experimentation to produce further connotations. Another example, *Handphone Table* (1978), conceived by audiovisual artist Laurie Anderson, relates to how the sonic reaches of artists' moving image, in-situ, can create an embodied synesthetic subject (Elwes 2015, p. 208). Audio reverberation is physically felt as the body part (the elbows) makes contact with the table (fig. 7). The body, therefore, acts as a conduit for sensations. Film artist Bill Viola, suggests that the physical sensations felt through sonic embodiment engenders an urgency to produce films using sound waves as opposed to images, as Chris Drake notes (2000, p.187). In discussing *The Space Between the Teeth* (Viola, 1976), Viola illustrates that the visualisation of the film was a result of the interpretation of sound (Drake 2000, p. 187).



Figure 7. *Handphone Table* (Anderson, 1978).

Catherine Elwes prompts a second inquiry into the acoustic perceptual field to which the body is contiguous—the absent presence of sound. The absence of sound allows for significant reflectivity within space and place, bringing images and environment into focus. Michel Chion considers silence to be *void of silence*, suggesting that ‘silence is never a neutral emptiness’ (1994, p. 57); hence the technical terms *atmos track* and *ambient sound*—recorded pieces of audio used to fill gaps in-between action in narrative films. However, in artists’ moving image, silences, which follow louder or softer soundscapes suggest that acoustic ellipses have a potentially significant impact on both the image and sensorial body, an extreme example could be the freeze-frame and musical cessation of John Cage’s film *4’33’’* (1952). Don Ihde (2007, pp. 49-50) suggests that we can visually recognise silence in static objects, which only become audible when in motion. Ihde’s notion of the invisible sound is based on that which we are unable to see, but can only hear (2007, pp. 50-51). In terms of contemporary site-specific exhibition space, the invisible sound could be comparable to elements of sound design (Elwes 2015, p. 219). These sonically designed spaces comprise soundscapes, manipulated voices, sound effects, rhythmic drones, crackles and white noise. For example, *Black Rain* (Semiconductor, 2009) displays sonographic sound processing (interpreting sound into images, in this instance from NASA satellite pictures) to depict the muted world of deep space.

Bringing sound design into an exhibition context for the film-poem would potentially provide a coherence and cohesion between the space and the artwork. The layering of clean audio with manipulated field recordings sonically dispersed through speakers strategically placed around the gallery space has the potential to reflect the symbiotic nature of the film-poem. Conversely, a film-poem could be screened in a traditional cinematic setting with 5.1 surround sound to heighten the sensorial

experience, explored earlier (pp. 19-20). After the exhibition at Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, North Uist in 2016, the informal responses from members of the audience intimated that they could not only sense the emotion in the poetry through my voice shifting from left to right speakers, but there were suggestions that the visuals could be felt, spatially, as the sound effects swirled over their heads.

Conclusion

Visual and aural perception can almost seem ambivalent at times within the landscape of site-specific exhibition spaces. Perceptions simultaneously tease and soothe our sensory processors and reverberate through our physical being, stimulating a deeper connection with the environment. Claire Bishop (2005) suggests that ‘installation art presupposes an *embodied* viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision’ (2005, p. 6). As our phenomenological body moves through the gallery space, we respond to soundscapes devoid of images, images mute of sound, multi-screen projections and visuals projected on objects. Our senses become poised to touch and remember things through the tactility of the visuals and the surrounding physical space. Considering these observations, the film-poem’s scope to be experienced beyond the audiovisual reaches of the one-directional screen seems vast.

Chapter Three: An analysis of haptic and tactile concepts in Margaret Tait's and Leighton Peirce's work critically reflected upon through my own approach to the production of the film-poem

The previous chapter defined the film-poem through a contextual and historical analysis of avant-garde film and experimental cinema traditions; established the conceptual framework for this research by drawing from literature concerning film-phenomenological concepts and determined artists' moving image exhibition practices. This chapter will expand on two key elements of film-phenomenology through a focused analysis of Jennifer Barker's (2009) and Laura U. Marks' (2000) assertions concerning cinematic hapticity and tactility. In terms of artists' moving image, and cinema more broadly, the properties of the haptic and tactile image are intertwined; therefore, it will be necessary to disentangle the two in order to understand their unique principles fully. Setting them apart allows the analysis to determine the significance of both in terms of their potential impact in the production of the film-poem.

To explore the key elements of film-phenomenology further, I will examine the filmmaking practices of Margaret Tait, whose work was established earlier, and American experimental filmmaker, Leighton Peirce. This case study approach aims to reveal how their working styles contrast and resonate with my own practice. The analysis will specifically illustrate Tait's and Peirce's use of film form, including hand-held and slow-motion camera movement, plus editing and lens manipulation: the close-up (CU) and extreme close-up (ECU) shot. I have chosen to explore these particular technical approaches, as they have the potential to engender cinematic embodiment for the viewer, a notion that has been acknowledged by Barker and Marks in relation to a range of moving image work but perhaps less acknowledged in terms of the film-poem.

Similar to Tait's and Peirce's approach to film form, my own approach employs hand-held camera movement, lens manipulation, the use of the CU and ECU shot, and rhythmic editing. Examining film form informed through film-phenomenological concepts, for me, is the most exciting way to develop and transpose my own philosophical ideas, as mentioned on pages 10-13. Finally, through critical reflection, I will explore how the key elements of film-phenomenology

evident in both Tait's and Peirce's practice, resonates with my own approach to the production of film-poetry. In doing so, my film practice seeks to provide new insight regarding how the film-poem can be researched in terms of film-philosophy.

Exploring the concept of the haptic and tactile image

Expanding on Marks' assertions, established in the literature review (pp. 49-50), the haptic image refers to the sensuous and physical presence of the image within the on-screen space. Furthermore, the haptic image seeks to create a sense of embodiment for the viewer. According to Marks, the haptic image is typically an obscured image, identifiable only as colours, or monochromatic textural shapes as opposed to recognisable objects. Moreover, because the viewer is forced to search the image to extract meaning, for Marks, this act can trigger multi-sensorial experiences and memories (2000, pp. 162-164).

Murder Psalm (Brakhage, 1980), for example, uses 16mm found footage to depict the complexities of the duplicitous crimes imposed by humanity. Images of soldiers marching, horses charging and exploding bombs are seen as vague shapes and textures emphasised by the over-saturation of the film colour space (fig's. 8 and 9). These haptic images, presented through a sense of bas-relief, are produced from the technique of superimposing and separating the synchronisation of positive and negative film stock. The technique of de-synchronisation creates a space in-between the frames, an abstraction that creates the impression of intermittent motion across the surface of the screen (Gidal 1989, p. 124). Aligning with Marks' sensory perspective, when I watch this film, many of my senses are stimulated. For example, as my eyes trace the outlines of the morphing shapes, I begin to decipher their familiar forms. I sense my body feeling and moving with the textures of the on-screen images. As I realise what these textures represent, a physical reaction deep within my body makes me recoil. Understanding the juxtaposition between the recognisable images of capitalism, such as the commercialisation of desirable everyday consumables and the indistinguishable images of destruction makes for a visceral and uncomfortable sensory experience (fig. 10).



Figure 8. Charging horses, *Murder Psalm* (Brakhage, 1980).



Figure 9. Soldiers marching, *Murder Psalm* (Brakhage, 1980).



Figure 10. Commercialism, *Murder Psalm* (Brakhage, 1980).

As explored earlier (pp. 51-52), the phenomenological mode of perception and expression evokes an intersubjective relationship or reciprocity between the viewer's

senses and the film, engendered through perceiving the haptic image. Throughout this chapter, I will explore how similar cinematic experiences can evoke embodied relationships between the film, screen, the senses and emotions. These experiences have the potential to surrender the audience to the image, an action I am keen to explore in terms of my approach to the production of the film-poem.

In film-phenomenological terms, the optical image is structured and recognisable in form. Perceiving an optical image typically demands an element of distance between the object on the screen and the viewer. However, the optical image can also present a tactileness if a sense of hapticity is simultaneously present. The image then adopts a unique interrelationship between deep multi-sensorial experiences and viscerally tactile responses (Marks 2000, pp. 162-163). For example, parts of the human form can be presented in often-explicit ways, although not necessarily identifiable in their full form. For instance, in the fantastical, quasi-orgy scenes in Stephen Dwoskin's *Central Bazaar* (1976) images of naked, writhing limbs and distorted facial expressions are presented through CU and ECU shots. As the camera moves, it caresses the intimate body parts in a similar manner to that of haptic looking, yet distinct human forms are perceivable. This application of film form evokes a multi-sensorial experience and the possibility of a tactile reaction for the audience. Likewise, Laura U. Marks (2000, p. 172) in her analysis of *Sniff* (Ming Yuen S Ma, 1996), a film depicting the dissipating memory of smell from a man's many one-night stands, also explores the means by which optical imagery can be employed in artists' moving image, in this case, to enable a visual embodiment of the human sensorium that evokes the fragility of memory (fig. 11).



Figure 11. *Sniff* (Ming-Yuen S Ma, 1996).

In *Sniff*, the protagonist tries and ultimately fails to re-claim the scent of his lost lovers by licking and sniffing the bed sheets, a symbolic act visually mirrored through the deterioration of the original VHS source recording as a result of repeating analogue copying. The dialectical narrative between the act of the man searching for traces of smell and the act of the generated visual deterioration triggers an evocation of memories, which, in turn, seeks to embody the viewer. As Marks states, both film and video sustain a material decay over their lifetime, producing and re-producing hapticity (2000, p. 172). This decomposition extends into the territory of the expansion and the constant redefining of film space analogous to materialist film traditions, explored further on (Gidal 1989, p. 45).

In the film-phenomenological sense, a tactile response from an optical image is evoked through the *thought* of a memory, much like the reaction provoked from *Sniff*. Tactile images are prompted by tactile visibility, or ‘thinking with your skin’ (Marks 2000, p. 190). Focusing on the tactile properties of an optical image in relation to the film-poem introduces a visual mode that challenges the viewer’s perception and expression. In Peter Todd’s *Three Films From the Room* (2009), for example, memories and emotions connected to the familiarity of everyday objects placed in rooms where a daily routine occurs are emphasised through tactile visibility. Similar to the sense of embodiment felt within aspects of Dwoskin’s *Central Bazaar* the thought of how these objects – a table, or a cup, for example, can prompt a sensuous feeling or memory is heightened through Todd’s approach to camera movement.

In *Three Films...*, Todd’s camera, positioned statically, lingers to observe the immediate space, inviting the viewer to focus in on the significance of the recognisable objects. In this instance, potential meanings are engendered through experiencing the film in terms of understanding the relationship between the viewer’s perception and the film style. Similarly, Margaret Tait’s intimate, tactile approach to painting on celluloid produces a sense of optical imagery such as the dancing figures in her trilogy of hand-painted films. For example, in *Painted Eightsome* (1970) and *John MacFadyen* (1970), the animated movements within these images connects directly to the lively soundtrack of Scottish reels, to which it becomes almost impossible not to engage one’s body in the rhythm of the musical pieces and the colourful jiggling forms. Aspects of Margaret Tait’s filmmaking will be explored in detail later.

The significance of the close-up and the extreme close-up shot in the haptic and tactile image

As mentioned earlier, understanding how hapticity and tactility can influence my own film practice will focus mainly on camera movement and lens manipulation. Engaging with these formal aspects should allow for further exploration of the intimate characteristics of the film-poem. My choice to focus on these techniques is informed by the debates surrounding the coalescence of philosophical ideas and medium specificity, specifically during the early twentieth-century avant-garde film movement. For instance, Jean Epstein wrote fervently about the philosophical reaches of the practical application of camera movement and the expressive precepts of the close-up shot within narrative cinema, as detailed here in his own words:

The close-up is an intensifying agent because of its size alone. [...] [It] modifies the drama by the impact of proximity. Pain is within reach. If I stretch out my arm I touch you, and that is intimacy. I can count the eyelashes of this suffering. I would be able to taste the tears. Never before has a face turned to mine in that way. Ever closer it presses against me, and I follow it face to face. It's not even true that there is air between us; I consume it. It is in me like a sacrament. Maximum visual acuity' (Epstein and Liebman 1977, p. 13).

For Epstein, using the medium in this way brings attention to the minutia of human expression through an immediate temporal illusion. The enhanced optical image becomes disembodied from the narrative, never static, always moving (1977, p. 9). Epstein distinguished the CU as the *photogénie*. As a philosophical concept, the *photogénie* expressed ideas surrounding the principles of the cinematic image. As a visual metaphor, Epstein used the concept to communicate the intricacies of the human lived experience seen through the characters in his films. For example, in *A Faithful Heart* (1923), the ECU of the textured creases of the protagonist's knuckles during the fight sequence is used to heighten the drama and imply a sense of suspense, fear and anger connected to the character's state of mind. Following these assertions, the *photogénie*, therefore, could be argued to be the nexus of film-phenomenological cinematic exploration. Following these assertions, the *photogénie*, therefore, could be argued to be the nexus of film-phenomenological cinematic exploration. Expanding Epstein's attention to the human form, my practice employs

the notion of the *photogénie* to focus on the sensual qualities of non-human forms. Because I have an inherent desire to use my camera to explore, in detail, the nuances of the natural world, I decided to use CUs and ECUs to invite the viewer into my private world, to share how I perceive nature and the landscape. Furthermore, my use of haptic and tactile image making teases out the essence of these non-human forms, an approach that intertwines the *photogénie* with film-phenomenology.

Comparable to other theorists (Benjamin [1936], Eisenstein [1949], Balázs [1952] and Deleuze [2013a]), Mary Anne Doane suggests that '(T)he close-up is an object of vision, not touch, but nevertheless provokes a sense of the tangible, the intimate' (2003, p. 109). Doane suggests that the illusions of image size, and by extension, the fundamentals of the *photogénie* are variants of signification, cinematic specificity and inscribed perception based upon projected realism (2003, pp. 90-91). In other words, the intimate magnification of the close-up, whether it is a haptic or optical image, and the proximal range in which it is viewed gives meaning to the audience through embodied responses, echoing my film-phenomenological approach to the production of the film-poem.

I maintain that the CU haptic images in my work function as embodied visual equivalents to the textural quality of skin—a tactile membrane between the image, screen and viewer, a concept explored in detail by Jennifer Barker (2009), analysed later. My approach, informed by Doane's theory, suggests that the CU shot is 'associated with the screen as surface', a haptic encounter between the viewer, the film and projected image (2003, p. 91). These haptic images remain expressive, yet become devoid of perspectival depth the moment they are projected onto the screen, analogous to the unique nature of the skin. Through the audience's perception of the space and interaction with the film and the screen, the CU and the ECU shots reveal themselves in a renewed way to evoke a sensory experience. However, if CU and ECU images were comprised of a series of superimpositions, the haptic dimension would perhaps evoke different sensations for the audience. For instance, as Marks's analysis maintains, the audience's eyes typically skim the surface of a haptic image, whereas when scanning a superimposed image, a sense of depth is presented. This act, in effect, could connect the filmic layering to a layering of different emotions and tactile sensations evoked within the viewer's body. To explore the principles of the haptic image further, the next section will provide a focused analysis illustrating two of Leighton Peirce's most notable films.

Case study one: Leighton Peirce. The haptic parameters of *White Ash* and *50 Feet of String*.

To explore the parameters of hapticity within Leighton Peirce's work, I have chosen to discuss examples from *50 Feet of String* (1995) and *White Ash* (2015). Both films display contrasting filmic styles and demonstrate how the application of particular types of film form and media specificity can invoke visual hapticity. In turn, this can inform the degrees with which the viewer's reciprocal perception is experienced and expressed.

Shot on 16mm film, *50 Feet of String* illustrates an exemplary use of the CU and ECU shot to produce both haptic and optical images. Furthermore, 16mm film tends to produce a greater haptic dimension through the presence of on-screen textures created by film grain, chemical residue and magnified specks of dirt and fibres. For instance, in the *Lawn Care 2* montage (*50 Feet of String*) the presence of a hair in the gate at the top of the frame intertwined with film grain enhances a visual sense of hapticity. In contrast, *White Ash*, constructed from a series of still images shot in HD digital format, typically produces a clean, sharp image. However, the mechanical procedure of using stills photography, which I will explore in the next section, creates a distinct hapticity within this film and illustrates the extreme lengths Peirce will go to, to challenge the spatiotemporality of his practice.

Leighton Peirce's films foreground the processes involved in the practice of analogue and digital filmmaking. Similar to filmmakers such as Margaret Tait, Joanna Margaret Paul, Bea Haut and Peter Todd, Peirce's films comprise scenes of domestic, everyday objects and immediate surroundings that when perceived by the viewer reveals the layering of metaphorical connotations (MacDonald 2006, pp. 255-256; Williams 1997, p. 15). However, congruent with the case study approach evident in this chapter, Peirce's style of filmmaking differs considerably from Tait's. Many of Peirce's experimentations tend to follow structuralist traditions, characterised by the 'application of system [...and] the act and event of filming itself' (Gidal 1989, p. 9). For example, *Retrograde Premonition* (2010), created using the same method as *White Ash* becomes a record of a filmmaking style captured through stills photography and systematically blended to produce patterns of inexorable movement. Tait's films are generally still and contemplative with palpable anticipation, which is expressed through a static, or lingering hand-held camerawork, for example, *A*

Portrait of Ga (1952). In terms of specificity, Tait predominantly worked in 16mm film (although her hand-painted films, which will be discussed in depth later, and her only feature film were made using the 35mm film format). Pierce's choice of apparatus involved a variety of formats for a variety of reasons. For example, VHS video was readily accessible meaning that Peirce could shoot lots of footage using this format relatively inexpensively, and film stock, processing and printing for *50 Feet of String* was made available to Peirce through university grants (MacDonald 2006, pp. 260 and 262).

White Ash

White Ash's (2015) visual style comprises an indeterminate number of still images superimposed repeatedly and edited together to create a visually haptic event. The persistent flow of unrecognisable objects merges with the optical sharpness of recognisable images to produce momentary visualisations potentially analogous to memories (fig's. 12 and 13). Peirce created this highly stylised form of haptic imagery by physically twisting and turning both his and the camera's body in unison to produce a blurred motion effect.²⁶ The bright streaks of colours, evident in the film, are produced through long exposure using a slow shutter speed and hand-held camera movements.²⁷ The combination of these physical and formal processes relates to Jennifer Barker's (2009) anthropomorphically charged notion of the film's body, whereby the viewer's physical and visceral reactions mimic that of the camera movements, discussed later on in this chapter.

²⁶ Pierce in conversation at the *Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival*, 15th April 2016.

²⁷ D.N. Rodowick, scholar, experimental filmmaker and personal friend of Peirce employed a similar technique, learned from Peirce, in his philosophically charged film *Plato's Phaedrus* (c2016). (Personal communication between Rodowick and myself. Film-Philosophy Conference 2017, Lancaster University).



Figure 12. Optical image, *White Ash* (Peirce, 2015).

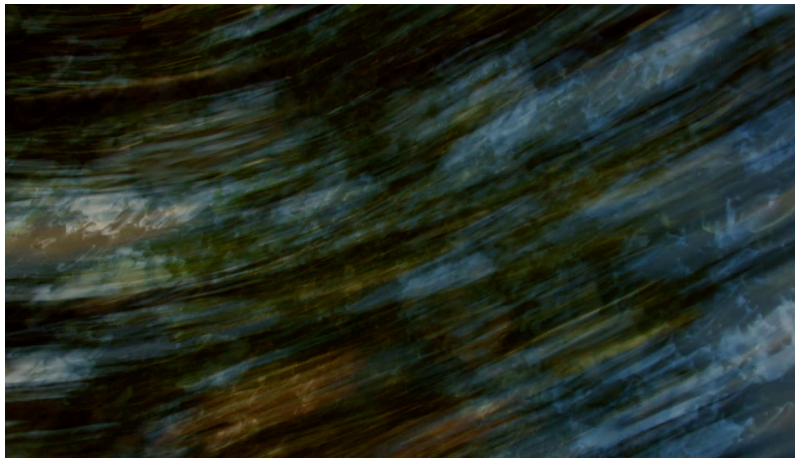


Figure 13. Haptic image, *White Ash* (Peirce, 2015).

As a result of Peirce's technique,²⁸ the visuals in *White Ash* blend fluidly, similar to the dreamlike images synonymous with Impressionist paintings of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century. These images reoccur as visual motifs and provide a sense of insistent perceptual spatiotemporal readjustment, challenging the imagination continuously as the viewer's eyes are forced to refocus on the morphing images. Throughout the film, distinguishable images, such as telephone wires, a bicycle, trees and clouds pulsate and intermingle with the haptic images. These optical images provide an ellipsis, a momentary breath to reflect on the visceral experience of watching *White Ash*, perhaps even prompting the viewer to question

²⁸ It is worth noting that many of Peirce's other films feature this film technique including: *The Back Steps* (2001), *Water Seeking its Level* (2002), *37th & Lex* (2002) and *Retrograde Premonition* (2010). Peirce's work also includes exhibiting multi-channel installations in art galleries, for instance, *Warm Occlusion* (2006) and *Threshold of Affinity* (2016).

their own position within the film experience. This process is both cognitive and corporeal, and leads to the perceptual reversibility between the film and viewer, as Barker suggests (2009, pp. 6-7).

The haptic images in *White Ash* create a physical presence that emerges from the surface of the screen. This sense of presence is enhanced by Peirce's movements in and around his immediate surroundings inviting the viewer to experience what he is experiencing. Resonating with Marks' (2000) phenomenological perspective, this style of filmmaking produces a sense of haptic looking, which determines the potential to evoke embodied multi-sensorial memories for the viewer. To explore this notion further, I am focusing on a sensuous sequence towards the beginning of the film, which shows naked torso(s) writhing in a bathtub. The movement of the human form(s) evokes a sense of intimacy and hapticity, generated through Peirce's filming technique just discussed, and the sensuousness is emphasised further by the echoing noises of water bubbling on the soundtrack.

The sequence begins with an image resembling a shard of light emitting from a crack. Connotations of being invited into Pierce's intimate world seem to fit with this image. The final shot of the sequence mirrors the first shot and focuses on a single bright light signalling the way out of his world. Consistent with hapticity, the images of the body(ies) in the bathtub are almost indistinguishable, forcing the viewers' eyes to search the parameters of the frame to understand what they are beholding by engaging the imagination (fig's. 14-16).



Figure 14. Bodies and water splashes, *White Ash* (Pierce, 2015).



Figure 15. Indistinguishable bodies, *White Ash* (Pierce, 2015).



Figure 16. Bodies and water splashes, *White Ash* (Pierce, 2015).

The intentionality of the medium close-up (MCU) and CU shots suggest that Peirce's camera is hand-held and held at arm's length. Additionally, ECU shots have been superimposed in post-production to increase the sense of hapticity. These changing perspectives give the viewer enough distance to question the morphing shapes, differentiating the images from their own position in the filmic event. Making sense of the shapes perceived in *White Ash* is determined through the viewer connecting their body with the rhythm and movement of the on-screen body(ies). An embodied experience for the viewer is further enhanced as the deep blacks and muted hues of flesh tones intertwine to produce contrasting on-screen textures. Water splashes in the shape of small, brightly lit squiggles, produced from the long exposure, mimic the motion of the human body(ies) and give a sense of coming alive on the surface of the screen (fig's. 14 and 16, pp. 71-72). In the film-phenomenological sense, as the viewer's eyes make contact with the screen - the surface of the film's skin itself - a

sense of understanding potentially engenders degrees of sensuousness, foregrounding the intersubjectiveness between viewing subject and subject viewed. As Marks asserts, ‘haptic images are erotic in that they construct an intersubjective relationship between beholder and image’, and because Peirce’s images are permeated with eroticism, they elicit a multi-sensorial film experience (2000, p. 183). Furthermore, an embodied sense of desire for the image to reveal *more* is produced for the viewer.

50 Feet of String

In *50 Feet of String* (1995), as Scott MacDonald notes, Peirce sought to find the beauty in the vernacular (2006, p. 265). The film demonstrates what I am referring to as a contemplative formal film structure. The structure comprises recorded moments of Peirce’s everyday life seen through a reflective and meditative, metaphorical lens. It is a structure, which informs the viewer of how Peirce embodies his film practice through the context of the everyday, ordinary. Furthermore, Peirce’s use of camera techniques is similar to the contemplative filming styles of Peter Todd and Margaret Tait, introduced earlier. For instance, it is widely accepted that camera positioning can determine what type of observation is being translated. Point-of-view angles relate to the internal thoughts of a character; low angles can suggest a sense of anticipation, or intent through mimicking the act of concealing oneself, while a hand-held camera gently moving at eye-level calls to mind quiet observation, or study—similarly, the attributes connected to the manipulation of depth of field mirror a contemplative mode of looking. For example, the shifting spatial perspective from a CU to an extreme long shot (ELS) perhaps suggests a moment of prolonged thought.

Structurally, *50 Feet of String* is divided into sequences introduced by inter-titles, for example, *Lawn Care*, *Corner of the Eye* and *Pickup Truck*. These montages are thematically and metaphorically connected through the film’s recurring images of a piece of string presented at oblique angles within the on-screen space juxtaposed with everyday objects that Peirce has carefully concealed from us, some of which are sometimes visually indecipherable at first glance. On closer inspection, the objects eventually become recognisable, shifting the viewer’s perspective and understanding. Therefore, a general sense of unawareness has to be overcome by the viewer as they perhaps revel in the act of noticing the minutia of things in existence, or as Cam

Williams writes: ‘The beauty of these things is lost on most of us. After watching the film, one experiences a desire to go out and perceive the world’ (1997, p. 16). Crucially, the desire to discover things anew can become an embodied form of looking for the viewer. For example, *Lawn Care 2* begins with a long shot of a car in the distance, driving on a wet surface. The beam from the car headlights ricochets off the road illuminating the surface. Peirce then performs a pull focus (aperture manipulation), shifting the image from a deep to a shallow depth of field. The light beam from the car becomes foregrounded within the on-screen space and begins to merge with the object closest to his camera. As the object closest to us (and to Peirce) comes into sharp focus, we simultaneously realise what it is—an ECU of a garden rake (fig’s. 17-19). There follows a pan from left to right of the rake, repeated three times—subtly edited so that the difference between the shots is barely recognisable. Deciphering these blurred shapes passing through the shot forces our eyes to continually (re)adjust focus. A sense of feeling our way around the frame by tracing the outline of the object in question is emphasised. Therefore, in terms of hapticity, this sequence seeks to expand the film’s spatiotemporality through Peirce’s contemplative and intentional approach to lens manipulation.



Figure 17. Start of pull focus, *50 Feet of String* (Pierce, 1995).



Figure 18. During pull focus, *50 Feet of String* (Pierce, 1995).



Figure 19. End pull focus revealing a garden rake, *50 Feet of String* (Pierce, 1995).

Additionally, the transformation of dimensional space throughout *50 Feet of String*, continually forces the viewer to look more closely. As Scott MacDonald suggests, Peirce's distinctive use of contemplative formal techniques, established at the beginning of this section, lends itself to the reconceptualisation of the peculiarities of domestic space (2006, pp. 256-7). Therefore, as MacDonald concludes, in the *Pickup Truck* sequence, for example, the continuous pull focus that abstracts form from the original haptic image to eventually reveal a sharp, optical image of the wild grasses closest to us, 'can be our discovery of what has been in front of us all along' (2006, p. 258) (fig's. 20-21).



Figure 20. Start of pull focus, *50 Feet of String* (Pierce, 1995).



Figure 21. End of pull focus revealing what is there all along, *50 Feet of String* (Pierce, 1995).

Hapticity in *50 Feet of String* is determined through the textural attributes of lens manipulation, specifically depth-of-field, and the material presence of 16mm film stock, suffusing the screen's surface. Laura Coombs (2006), reflects on Peirce's choice of camera technique: '[...] most of the film is not so much a window into the domestic, but a *canvas* made from observing and documenting domestic space [...] (2006, p. 63, [my emphasis]). This canvas, as Coombs points out, correlates to the film's screen as a metaphorical and philosophical place where a phenomenological understanding of the film can appeal to the viewer through the act of perception and expression. Peirce's contemplative filming style allows the images to develop on the surface of the screen or canvas, which, in turn, allows the viewer to feel and cognise what they are seeing. Peirce, in his own words, reflects on the perception and emotions within *50 Feet of String*: 'I DO want [the audience] to experience

themselves somehow while watching and listening' (Coombs 2006, p. 68). Therefore, a general sense of tactility (inscribed in hapticity) concerning how we physically and viscerally react to Peirce's internal and external worlds is teased out throughout the film experience.

Tactility

Based on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological notion of the flesh, and the chiasm established in the previous chapter (pp. 47-48 and 51), tactility engenders an interrelationship between the self and the other through the perception of something and the expression that follows. Jennifer Barker's (2009) work draws on this Pontian perspective to develop the concept of cinematic tactility, generally distinguished as reversibility and reciprocity between the film's body and the viewer's body (2009, pp. 19-20). It is an anthropomorphic attitude whereby Barker connects the idea of human skin, muscle and visceral comportment to aspects of the filmmaking process, including stylisation, film form and apparatus. Barker's assertions in 'The Tactile Eye' (2009) will be appropriate for this section of analysis as she brings together a range of film scholarship that discusses the complexities of contemporary film-phenomenology.

Following key principles informed by Barker's and Marks' perspectives, this section of the analysis, which includes a study of my own filmmaking, focuses specifically on how film form possesses a mimetic²⁹ tendency to evoke a tactile response from the audience (Benjamin 1979, pp. 160-163; Marks 2000, pp. 138-145). I am also extending tactility to include how the audience can sense and make sense of the textural qualities of a filmic image together with the nuanced methods and approaches to filmmaking that film artists adopt. A focused analysis exploring the tactility of experimental filmmaking will inform a case study approach of Margaret Tait's work.

To understand the film-phenomenological underpinnings of tactility and the embodied film experience, a brief expansion on the principles of the film's body is

²⁹ Walter Benjamin's work on the mimetic faculty broadly relates to how viewer's musculature (how our bodies experience the world) empathise with the filmic event. Laura U. Marks discusses Benjamin's assertions in terms of mimesis being a tactile epistemology.

necessary. For Barker, the film's body is an all-encompassing cinematic lived-body that perceives, expresses and engages both the viewer and the filmmaker's body through conceptual and mechanical means (2009, p. 10). Crucially, Barker's distinction connects film form to human comportment: 'The camera perceives and expresses through dolly tracks, tripod, wide-angle lens, and so forth; viewers do so by means of posture, muscle tension, visual concentration, facial expressions, and human gestures' (2009, p. 10). In the film-phenomenological sense, therefore, cinematic tactility is a mode of perception and expression that forces our internal and external body to physically respond when we experience a sense of heightened emotion during a film screening, as alluded to in the literature review (pp. 50-52). When watching an action/adventure film, for example, we express the perception of a sensorial situation through our muscles tensing up and our breathing becoming shallow, or even arresting during a *thrilling* scene depicting a dangerous or covert operation. Our bodily movements empathise with the movements in the filmic event, our embodied gestures interweave with the film's world and our emotions become palpable. Cinematic tactility refers to how 'the human body enacts in particular ways' within the spatiotemporality of the film experience, as Barker suggests (2009, p. 3). The complex notion concerning this embodied cinematic experience occurs on the surface of our skin, within the movement and comportment of our muscles, and within the depths of the internal rhythms of our body, or what Barker describes as skin, musculature and viscera (2009, p. 3). Equally, however, film sequences that allow for reflection and reflexivity, that give the viewer space to catch their breath, to stop, and to remember how the warmth of the sun on their skin feels, for example, is significant in terms of the reflective nature of the film-poem, which will be discussed later.

The film's body shows itself through perception, which, in turn, allows the audience to express their reactions in a unique way. In this context, the mechanics of the film's body comprising the concept, camera movement, editing techniques and the material characteristics of film, can become evident through intentional movements intertwining with our experience of the surrounding world. In terms of artists' moving image production practices, the viewer's attention can be explicitly forced towards the mechanical(ity) of the film's materiality highlighting celluloid as a bodily dimension, for example, showing the sprocket holes of the filmstrip in the frame (Barker 2009, p. 10). For instance, George Landow/Owen Land's *Film in Which there Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles, Etc.* (1965) is consonant with the viewer's

attention being re-directed to invoke apperception, an awareness of one's own body and thought processes during a film experience. Landow/Land's film comprises Kodak colour test footage and consists of a static image of a woman, left of centre, with the edge letterings moving through the projector gate to the right of the filmstrip. In terms of the non-conformist film practices synonymous with materialist/structural film concepts developed in Britain during the 1970s, this film explicitly shows the film's materiality as content, to elicit a sensory response from the viewer.

However, aspects of the film's body can also be implicit when viewing a film, although this is predominantly evident in commercial cinema. For instance, the mere suggestion of showing the material constructs of film, when the cinematic illusion is crucial, can show moments of reflexivity for the audience. As Barker suggests, aspects of the film's body elude our 'direct gaze', yet, at the same time, can present and foreshadow the embodied themes and tactility of and within the narrative (2009, p. 11). In this instance, Barker is referring to the seemingly non-relevant narrative moments within dominant cinema as being indicators of thematic agencies for affect. Echoing both Ken Kelman's (1963) reference to non-narrative moments in narrative cinema, and Maya Deren's notion of the vertical investigation of poetry and prose (Vogel 1963), established in the literature review (pp. 40-42), these indicators could be termed as visually poetic expressions. Counter to commercial cinema, poetic moments in artists' moving image works are paradigmatic; therefore, can justify an explicit commitment to tactility, accordant with human physical expressions. In the film-phenomenological sense, therefore, identifying the underlying structure of what we are beholding allows the film, whether it is artists' moving image or narrative cinema, to resonate with the way the audience acts when perceiving, listening, and feeling the work in question. In other words, tactility becomes a meeting place for the interweaving of the filmmaker, viewer and film experience.

Tactile approaches to filmmaking

The tangible presence of tactility that Jennifer Barker (2009, p. 27) discusses connects to experimenting with the materiality of film stock, as introduced in the previous section. Before I reflect upon my own filmmaking practices, the following sections will explore the notion of tactility using specific examples of experimental films and

artists' moving image work to examine the process of engaging film as a tactile medium during production.

In terms of tactile approaches to filmmaking in contemporary artists' moving image practices, innovations stem from early twentieth-century artists, amateur filmmakers and film enthusiasts who employed *do-it-yourself* techniques to produce predominantly low budget films. For example, Man Ray developed the *rayograph*, a camera-less technique that creates monochromatic patterns on film stock evident in *Le Retour à la Raison* (1923). In terms of medium specificity, and before the advent of video in the late twentieth-century, film artists typically used small and medium-gauge film stock: 8mm, Super 8mm and 16mm format. For instance, Stan Brakhage, and later Derek Jarman became most enthusiastic about the accessibility of 8mm film (Curtis 2007, p. 5; Balsom 2017, p. 58). The prevalence of small-gauge film stock grew out of a necessity to counteract the rising prices of industry standard film stock, camera equipment and projectors, laboratory and distribution costs. This shift was crucial for experimental filmmakers, as working with a smaller-gauge film format meant reduced costs, which meant they were able to produce and reproduce, exhibit and distribute films relatively inexpensively thereby reaching a wider audience. By 1965, Kodak Eastman had introduced the Super 8mm film format, intended for the home movie market and film enthusiasts (Balsom 2017, pp. 56-58; Kattelle 1986, p. 50; Wasson 2005, p. 46).

As alluded to earlier (p. 79), in the UK during the 1970s, a heightened sense of tactility became increasingly evident through materialist film concepts, established and heavily theorised by experimental filmmaker Peter Gidal. Consistent with Gidal's approach and Barker's considerations on viscera, films such as *Dog Man Star* (Brakhage, 1961-64) illustrates a tactile approach to filmmaking. Brakhage's seventy-five minute, silent film, shot on 16mm, comprised a series of shorter experimental films exploring themes of sexuality, consciousness, and the cyclical nature of the seasons. In the final section of the film, Brakhage intertwines an image of a pulsating human venous system with the tactile approach of physically scratching on the surface of the celluloid. Similarly, Storm de Hirsh's *Peyote Queen* (1965) incorporates this scratching method, and Guy Sherwin's series of *Optical Sound Films* (1971-2007) includes holes punched in the celluloid to create visual sounds. These methods all paved the way for artists such as Alia Syed to produce *Pryia* (2011). Syed's experimental film depicts the image of a dancer gracefully twirling on

the spot, the camera held consistently in an overhead position. Following materialist practices, Syed explored how best to degrade the film image, so she buried the film stock to encourage celluloid deterioration, and resurrected it after six months. As a result, the image of the colourfully dressed dancer became subsumed by the manifestation of a chemical reaction on the surface of the celluloid, producing visually corroded tactile images³⁰ (fig's. 22-24).



Figure 22. Beginning of film with no visible corrosion, *Pryia* (Syed, 2011).

³⁰ Syed in conversation at Goldsmiths University, 2nd February 2018.



Figure 23. Several minutes into the film and signs of visible corrosion are evident, *Pryia* (Syed, 2011).



Figure 24. Towards the end of the film the image is visibly tactile due to corrosion, *Pryia* (Syed, 2011).

In terms of this research project, my preference for recording medium has seen a distinct shift in my approach to tactility. The decision to switch to Super 8mm film stock heralded my departure from using the HD digital format and came after reconsidering the significance of materialist concepts. However, it is worth stressing that I have not disowned the HD format, but just distanced myself from it temporarily. Through using Super 8mm film format (a Chinon 612XL Macro) to produce film-poetry, I have gained a more profound sense of understanding concerning the significance of employing tactile approaches. Both *Imprint* (2018) and *always carry a camera* (2018) were shot on Super 8mm film and will be critically reflected upon later on in this chapter. I was inspired to explore the analogue medium again,³¹ following a discussion with Guy Sherwin at a film-poetry event I organised in 2017, mentioned earlier (p. 16). This approach has enabled me to imbricate aspects of materialist film theories directly into my practice. By including dirt and scratches, sprocket holes and the discolourations on the filmstrip as intentional content, a sense of tactility that resonates with the concept and subject matter of *Imprint* is provided. For example, the passage of time is visualised through superimposing flashes of colour on the filmstrip at the end of the film cartridge onto the images in the left-hand screen, which depict a sense of past-ness. Furthermore, by duplicating and superimposing these colour fields, visual depth and the sense of shifting temporality is maintained.

Using Super 8mm film has also allowed me to reconnect with the tactile relationship that can develop between the physical body and the analogue film format. For instance, the way I hold and move with my Super 8mm film camera differs slightly from how I held my HD digital camera, as I discuss further on (p. 97). Now, when I film, the camera feels like an extension of my body with the viewfinder very much up close to my eye, which often produces embodied movements as I respond to what I am beholding. Additionally, knowing how the nature of celluloid works allows me to compose an image manually using natural light and filters to tailor the exposure for experimental purposes.

Currently, among others (for example, Jaap Pieters and Luther Price) Berlin-based filmmaker Helga Fanderl consistently produces work using the Super 8mm format (although many of her films are projected and exhibited on 16mm and HD

³¹ I first used a 16mm hand-cranked Bolex camera and edited the output on a Steenbeck flatbed in 1996.

format to preserve the material quality of the original film). The Super 8mm format allows Fanderl to ‘shoot in a way that is both physical and intimate, as in traditional drawing or painting’ (Michaud 2013, p. 239). In the film-phenomenological sense, Fanderl’s tactile approach to filmmaking provides a mechanism for instantaneous perception and expression, connecting film form to bodily comportment, as Fanderl states in her own words:

[With the Super 8mm] camera in my hand – perceiving and recording simultaneously – I concentrate and create films in correspondence with the subject matter, in one gesture [...]. To make films means to shape time and to evoke the temporal dimension of the images. By editing in the camera I visualize inherent and felt rhythms (Fanderl 2010, p. 18).

What Fanderl feels when observing the subject matter becomes inscribed in what she is experiencing through her Super 8mm camera, perhaps more so than with a heavier 16mm camera that requires more attention to light and exposure in that moment of instantaneous creative action. Nonetheless, the resulting images from different formats have the potential to invoke an intersubjective relationship between filmmaker and audience.

To summarise, both narrative and experimental films display degrees of tactility, some of which have been discussed. As a reflective filmmaking practice, the film-poem demonstrates a subtler use of tactility, illustrating images with a unique quality that engenders reflexivity. The potential significance of the subtle tactile image aligns with the internal and external rhythm of the viewer’s body, connecting them through the *thought* of touching the image (or the thought of the image *touching* them), which, in turn, can evoke tactile memories concerning the subject matter. In the film-phenomenological sense, therefore, the subtle act of ‘thinking with your skin’, developed by Marks (2000, p. 190), is what interests me in relation to Margaret Tait’s filmmaking, explored in the following section.

Case study two: Margaret Tait. An analysis of cinematic tactility in *Aerial*, *These Walls* and Tait’s hand-painted film experimentations.

This section foregrounds the film-phenomenological presence of cinematic tactility within a selection of films by Margaret Tait. It also serves as a context in which to

situate my own reflective criticism. The examination will determine how Tait's tactile use of camera movement and editing engenders a kinesthetic empathy between the viewer's internal rhythm and external comportment, as established earlier in the chapter (pp. 77-79). *Aerial* (1974) and *These Walls* (1974), the focus of analysis for this case study, illustrate Tait's poetic form of experimentation and an acute sense of observation. Similar in their observational tone, the two films differ in terms of audio. *Aerial* presents a cacophony of sounds, while the version of *These Walls*, used for this research, is silent, a departure from its original conception³². In the phenomenological sense, her empathic connection to the camera and subject matter invokes reciprocity between film and viewer, which, in turn, can trigger multisensory memories. Through recollection, these moments are often connected to sensorial modalities and are made manifest through memories of a specific time or time of year, through remembering a feeling, or an object, a person, a place, or an event. For me, a reciprocal exchange can be engendered through understanding that experiences from the past are invoked through an awareness of, and connection with the here-and-now. The second stage of the analysis explores Tait's tactile approach to filmmaking, specifically the intricate act of painting and scratching on film evident in *Calypso* (1955), *Painted Eightsome* (1970), *John Macfadyen* (1970), *Colour Poems* (1974) and *Garden Pieces* (1998). Tait's animations align with the pioneering spirit of the early twentieth-century avant-garde film movement and materialist film concepts, foregrounded in many experimental films, discussed earlier. Connecting with Jennifer Barker's perspective (2009), Tait's trilogy of hand-painted films will also be discussed in terms of the manifestations of the composite parts of the film's body, established earlier (pp. 77-79).

Regarding Tait's films, discussed in the following section, there seems a notable sense of tactility that emanates from the images, which, in turn, can potentially provoke a succession of subtle compulsions within the viewer's bodies. Drawing on Barker's (2009) study of the film's body, the sense of tactility potentially felt when watching her films is an attitude relating to the comportment of the viewer's skin, musculature and viscera, established earlier (pp. 48 and 77-79). Consistent with tactile

³² At the time of submitting my thesis, a soundtrack for *These Walls* has been identified and synched by the Moving Image Archive in Glasgow but is not yet publicly available.

visuality, the viewer's external and internal corporeal reactions evolve with the formal structures, such as editing and camera movement to produce perceptual sensations, as Tait entices us into her world of 'stalking the image' (Neely 2017a, p. 61). *Stalking the image* was introduced by Federico Garcia Lorca's explorations concerning the methods by which sixteenth-century Spanish poet Gongora viewed objects within his surroundings. For Gongora, all things were equal and deserved the same attention (Neely 2017a, pp. 151-152). This sense of balance can be seen in the intentional movements of Tait's hand-held camera as it lingers on the sky at the beginning of *Aerial*, for example. This act of close observation resonates with Lorca's sense of *stalking the image* and is reflected throughout Tait's work.

Aerial, as a filmic experience, engages the viewer on a phenomenological level by triggering a tactile reversibility between the viewer's perception and expression. The film-poem invites the viewer's eyes to feel the surface textures of the natural world—the sun breaking through the clouds, rain and fire, the grass entwined with clover, leaves on the trees blowing in the wind and children playing in a *Lowry-esque* snowy landscape. The experimental soundtrack is repetitive, consisting of an eclectic array of chiming noises, whistling, droning, piano keys, field recordings of birdsong and dogs barking. The cacophonous noises juxtapose with the naturalistic images, forcing the viewer's ears to attend to this secondary mode of reflectivity, which, again resonates with Lorca's intense mode of looking. In terms of film-phenomenology, sound is both temporal and spatial, as Don Ihde asserts (2007, pp. 57-61). Listening to sound on a temporal level is to experience it through movement, or flux—'sound "exists" for a moment and "passes away"' (Ihde 2007, p. 57). In terms of spatial expansion, the sound component has to be removed from the object. For example, the whistling and chiming sounds at the beginning of *Aerial* are devoid of an actual object; however, the sounds still resonate with the audience through Tait's camera movement as she films the sky and grass. In those moments of perceiving detailed audiovisual textures, *Aerial* forces the viewer to express both the need to look intensely at the subject matter and to understand the nature of responding to the film.

These Walls is a vignette documenting Tait's presence in the world on what seems like her final days in her Rose Street studio in Edinburgh (Neely 2017a, p. 253). As the lingering hand-held shots skim over the pictures pasted on the walls (fig. 25), an emotional exchange between the camera, filmmaker and subject matter, the

surface of the images, the screen, and the viewer is evoked. These visual textures become a meeting place, or a ‘tactile embrace’, allowing the viewer to become present in the filmic experience, as Barker notes (2009, p. 29). Emphasised by Tait’s subtle camera movements, physical reciprocity mimics how the viewer’s muscles and viscera would perhaps react in the spatiotemporality of her world. As her camera leads us around the room, a muscular empathy allows us to ‘straddle that threshold between “here and there”, body and image’, to be at once *here* in our own skin and *there*, in Tait’s room. The membrane of the film’s skin or the viewer’s perception and expression of what they are experiencing is made manifest through the act of gazing (Barker 2009, p. 72). Throughout the film, as Tait feels the nooks and crannies of the room with her camera, she invites the viewer to follow, while a rapidly edited sequence (fig. 26) resonates with the muscular action of eyes blinking, again, weaving the viewer into the boundaries of the tactile embrace. Through the intentionality of editing (the start of the pan up to the inkpot on the desk seems unnaturally long) and visible presence of the splicing tape throughout, the film’s surface textures and material presence become evident, thereby breaking our perception of time and space within the film experience. Through Tait’s tactile, visual style, memories of how we attach ourselves to a place have the potential to invoke differing responses to the film.



Figure 25. Pictures pasted on Tait’s walls, *These Walls* (Tait, 1974).



Figure 26. Rapidly edited sequence, *These Walls* (Tait, 1974).

In the film-phenomenological sense, human viscera mimics internal human rhythms. *These Walls* uses formal structures such as decentering the frame, panning, editing and zooming to mimic the viewer's visual actions and tactile bodily behaviours. Noticing how Tait's camera moves gently over the walls, a motion that reflects each breath she takes, seems to invite emotional reciprocity from the audience; a reflexive invitation that prompts an oscillation between motion and stillness analogous to the physical act of breathing, as Barker discusses (2009, pp. 128-129). For instance, as her hand-held camera lingers on the abstract painting (2:04) feelings of intimacy are evoked, and as minute unintentional movements occur, the viewer gets the sense of how close the camera's body is to her body. Similarly, the rapid camera movement and editing during the tobogganing scene in *Aerial* (1:16) seek to quicken our anticipatory breath, while the image of the window frame in *These Walls* is held static, long enough for the viewer to stop and experience what Tait is experiencing at that moment of filming (fig. 27).



Figure 27. Static shot of a window, *These Walls* (Tait, 1974).

Phenomenologically, Tait's trilogy of hand-painted films, completed over several years, function as a place for corporeal reversibility. The audience's sense of muscular empathy responds to the flickering brushstrokes and vigorously moving abstract blobs and dancing figures (fig's. 28 and 29). Emphasising this intersubjective interaction, the materiality of analogue film, which includes dirt, scratches and chemical residue, provides an emotional reciprocity, as Kayla Parker maintains (2014, p. 7). Jennifer Barker (2009) describes this empathetic occurrence as the ecstatic body, based on Drew Leder's (1990) medical interpretations of the physiology of our bodily comportment (2009, pp. 76-78; 1990, pp. 11-35). Barker suggests that the ecstatic body enables our musculature to react to what we are experiencing in that moment (2009, p. 77). In the phenomenological sense, this ecstatic quality provides a direct relationship between perception and expression that can prompt a viscerally tactile response. Therefore, through Tait's tactile approach to experimenting with colourful paints, oils and dyes delineated onto 35mm positive film stock the viewer's experience of the film has the potential to mirror the vibrancy and energy of her intimacy with the artistic process (Parker 2014, pp. 1-3; Neely 2017a, pp. 205-6). Comparable with the camera movements in *These Walls*, our ecstatic body reacts to

Tait's lively mark making produced from this camera-less filmmaking process, as Parker notes regarding *Painted Eightsome*:

I feel her connectivity with the 'living world' she experienced and I am touched by its vibrant energies. I am, in effect, feeling 'affect', a collective term that embraces both feelings and emotions [...] I am 'brought back' to my body (2014, p. 5).

The feeling of a return to form that Parker discusses links to the conceptual meeting place or tactile embrace provided by Barker's notion of the film's skin mentioned earlier (pp. 86-88). In this moment of awareness, and, if the viewer connects with the anthropomorphic attitude of the film's body, discussed throughout this chapter, embodied meaning can be produced.



Figure 28. Painted animations, *Painted Eightsome* (Tait, 1970).



Figure 29. Painted animations, *Calypso* (1955).

Tait's trilogy of animated films is a gestural way of filmmaking comprising painting, etching and drawing onto film. Historically, this approach was synonymous with many experimental filmmakers, such as artist and filmmaker Len Lye, who became known for the technique of scratching and drawing images directly onto the filmstrip. For example, *A Colour Box* (1935) commissioned for the GPO, features painting on film, and *Free Radicals* (1958) was produced by scratching patterns directly onto black filmstrip. As Barker suggests, 'film expresses itself to the world through its muscular gestures [...]. The film's gestures are a means of communication, the "words" and "phrases" of its body language' (2009, p. 78). Like Lye's tactile approach, it is conceivable that Tait's work communicates a corporeal language based on the abstract images she etches onto film. For example, the scratches evident in *Colour Poems* (1974) and *Garden Pieces* (1998) produce an expressionistic rhythmic pattern juxtaposed with live-action footage. In *Garden Pieces*, an animated montage entitled *Garden Fliers* is formed of rough line drawings that move to modernist piano music. Crude formations of a bee, a butterfly, a feather floating through the frame, and swirling abstract scribbles of birds, flowers, grasses and trees emphasise the cyclical temporality of nature (fig's. 30-31) (Neely 2017a, pp. 198-199). Tait's animated pencil sketches, crafted similarly to that of Lye's and Norman McLaren's, move effortlessly around the frame, demonstrating a more

profound and intimate connection between the materials and artist (Neely 2017a, p. 30).



Figure 30. Tactile images, *Garden Pieces* (Tait, 1998).



Figure 31. Tactile images, *Garden Pieces* (Tait, 1998).

Similarly, the start of *Colour Poems* consists of monochromatic abstract expressionist pencil drawings of a human form writhing, sailboats and trees, before cutting to the sombre live-action footage of a Remembrance Day parade. The film is viscerally charged, referencing images reflecting the aftermath of war, environmental issues and topical themes. The asynchronous animated images play over ‘Numen of the Boughs’, a poem written and read by Tait, reflecting upon the Spanish Civil War (Neely 2017a, p. 159). The abrupt edit, at the beginning (1:44), juxtaposes Tait’s external and internal worlds as her perception and expression particular to the membrane of the film’s body, is laid bare for reciprocation. The audience perceives Tait’s sense of emotion through her poetry, expressed through the rhythms she creates in her tactile approach to animation, which, in turn, has the potential to invoke an internal visceral reaction within the viewer’s body.

Through this analysis of Tait’s style of filmmaking, it should be apparent that her approaches to the film medium are illustrative of a sense of tactility connected to experimental film techniques and analogous to Barker’s film-phenomenological perspective. As Sarah Neely points out (2017a, p. 254), Margaret Tait possessed a

‘preoccupation with really looking and searching with the camera’, which highlights her unique sense of being in the world, a central theme of phenomenology as a philosophy, more broadly.

Critical reflection: exploring my own approach to hapticity and tactileness through the production of my filmpoetry.

Drawing on the analyses of Leighton Peirce’s and Margaret Tait’s work, this section foregrounds my own approach to hapticity and tactileness through critically reflecting upon specific examples of my work. Hapticity will be discussed in terms of film form, camera movement, slow-motion, abrupt edits, lens manipulation and visual effects, while the tactile characteristics intrinsic to the analogue film format, determined through an exploration into my embodied relationship with the film camera, will advance the analysis.

With reference to the film-phenomenological concepts discussed, *Dislocation*, *West of Dalabrog* and *The Essence of Place*, the topic of critical reflection in the following section, seek to heighten the human senses to evoke embodied memories and responses. While *Imprint* and *always carry a camera* follow these concepts as well, these films seek to produce a more tactile relationship between myself as a filmmaker, the viewer and film experience, as suggested earlier (pp. 77-79). In terms of the film-phenomenological potential of exhibiting filmpoetry, *always carry a camera* was conceived as multi-channel output. In this sense, I am referring to it as a film installation to be viewed in a gallery context by an itinerant audience. Films viewed this way can prompt a more profound understanding of the artwork, an approach that echoes Maeve Connolly’s and Chrissie Iles’ research concerning the significance of the space and place in which contemporary moving image works are exhibited, established in the literature review (pp. 56-57). Regarding artists’ moving image exhibition practices, *always carry a camera* will be discussed in terms of the phenomenological significance of positioning a multi-screen installation in Chapter 4.

As referred to in Chapter 1 (pp. 18-22), when making *West of Dalabrog* and *Dislocation*, my aim was to emphasise how landscape, particularly seascapes, can become mediators for the recollection of sensorial memories. Similar to Leighton Peirce’s contemplative approach to filmmaking, the opening shot of *West of Dalabrog*

foregrounds hapticity through a metaphorical reflective lens. My intention for this shot was to prompt the audience to embody what it feels like to remember a place, perhaps long forgotten. To transpose my perception of the beach, I employed a hand-held camera position that subtly moved and caressed the landscape, mirroring what I was simultaneously seeing and recalling at that moment. Particular attention was given to emphasise the physical presence of the sea and coastline, which, for many people, can elicit moments of self-reflection. The haptic dimension, arising from the slow-motion and blurred image that blends the hues of the blue sea and sky with the muted tones of the coastline, is emphasised further by the melancholic piano music to produce a tactile embrace. Jennifer Barker suggests that film form, including the use of slow-motion, creates reciprocity and a unique sense of touch for the viewer:

The viewer caresses by moving the eyes along an image softly and fondly, without a particular destination, but the film might perform the same caressing touch through a smoothly tracking camera movement, slow-motion, soft-focus cinematography, or an editing style dominated by lap dissolves [...]. The film and viewer each respond in their own uniquely embodied ways to one another's style of touch. (2009, p. 32).

Slow-motion, as a formal device, is, therefore, used to emphasise the viewer's sensing and seeing, which, in turn, engenders intersubjectivity. Slow-motion, in terms of *West of Dalabrog*, invokes an intersubjective relationship between the viewer and filmic experience to convey a sense of what it would feel like to be present in that landscape. At the end of the opening shot, when the music comes to an abrupt halt, the viewer is invited to become aware of their own haptic perception through expressing and reflecting on what they have experienced. The abrupt halt attempts to provoke the viewer's sensorial memories of how the coastline smells and how it feels and tastes. The smell of the salty air mixed with the seaweed and the tactile quality of the Hebridean sand intertwined with the noise of the waves are potentially recalled. Embodied meaning, therefore, arises through haptic looking and seeks to make the intangible tangible and the inexpressible expressible (Marks 2000, p. 129). Indeed, as Marks reminds us, 'cinema can appeal to senses that it cannot technically represent: the senses of touch, smell, and taste' (2000, p. 129).

Similarly, the visual effect emphasising the ECU shots of my face, evident in my three HD digital films,³³ prompts haptic visuality and seeks to evoke a sense of embodied reaction for the viewer. Critically reflecting on the footage enabled me to determine what the images required in terms of transposing my (inter)subjectivity through the screen. The original image of my face was framed as a static medium close-up with the tripod positioned approximately two metres in front of me. *I* then moved around the camera lens; positioning my face closer to the camera when I knew I wanted to emphasise the sensuous qualities of the eyes, mouth and nose (fig. 32). In post-production, the image was resized to fill the frame (fig. 33) purposely to enhance the hapticity and tactility through pixelation. As the camera skims the blurred surface of my face, the audience is forced to decipher what they are experiencing. In this moment, the human sensory organs are brought to attention, potentially evoking memories of taste and smell. This action is a direct manifestation of the theoretical equivalent of Mary Anne Doane's (2003) notion of the close-up image, mentioned earlier (p. 67). It also echoes Epstein's photogénie, Peirce's approach to lens manipulation and explicitly links to Marks' notion of the haptic image evoking multi-sensorial memories.

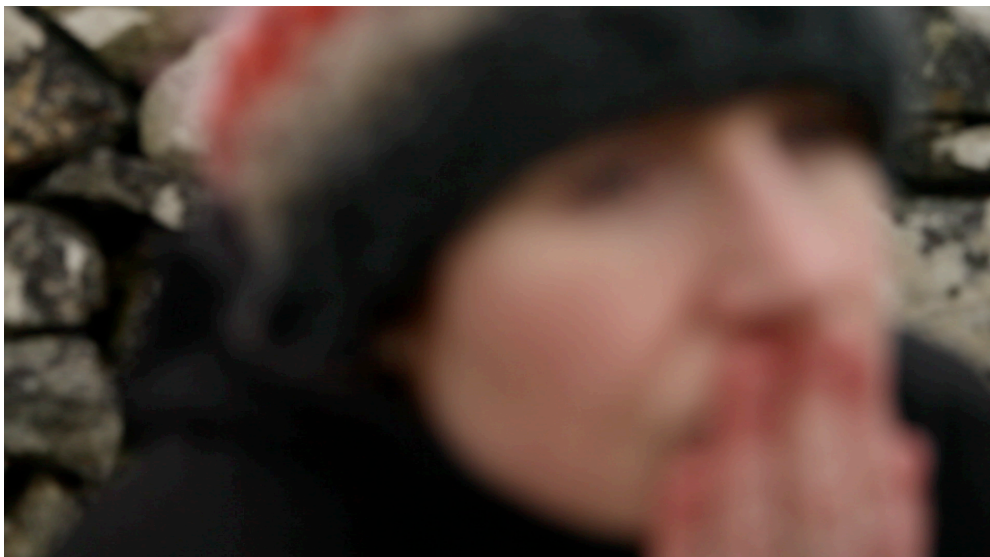


Figure 32. Original image of my face and hands.

³³ The repetition of these shots not only consistently emphasises the transposition of my (inter)subjective position but also is economical in terms of shooting time and quantity of footage used.



Figure 33. Resized image of my face and hands.

Haptic images in *The Essence of Place* seek to function as reflective moments to connect the viewer intersubjectively with the film and more profoundly to their own memories. For instance, the camera's caress over the blurred image of branches dissolving into frosty winter sunlight (1:28) is my emotional response to a memory of a death. The reflectiveness evident in this shot, emphasised by hapticity (created the similar way as the ECU shots of my face, mentioned previously), lens flare and the cool muted tones, aims to invite the viewer to follow the metaphorical *neural pathways* of the branches by using the searching motion of their eyes while engaging with their imagination. The spoken words resonate with this desire to find a space to reflect on grief: *In rare moments of silence, I trace memories that flit in-between the thin fingers of sunlight*. Also, as with the nature of grief, feelings and memories can come unexpectedly, metaphorically illustrated as the moments of flitting sunlight. Although the meaning of this shot is not explicit, it is hoped that through understanding the reflective subject matter of the film-poem, the viewer's own memories of this abstract theme could be potentially evoked. As a memory or a recollection, this haptic shot is juxtaposed by two optical images, echoing Deren's vertical axis and Deleuze's (2013b) notion of the crystal image, explored in the literature review (pp. 40-41). As Laura U. Marks maintains, the un-recordability of the senses, such as touch, taste and smell become 'repositories of private memory' within the on-screen images (2000, p. 130). Furthermore, the essential nature of the haptic image is encoded in the audiovisual format, suggesting that sensorial memories can be invoked by images and sound (2000, p. 131). An examination of *The Essence*

of Place, as a site-specific moving image installation, will draw on this sense of intersubjectivity in terms of discussing the tactile relationship between the audience and exhibition context in Chapter 4.

Imprint and always carry a camera

Building on the discussion regarding Super 8mm film format, and my shift from HD digital to analogue film, this section discusses tactility and my tactile approaches to experimental filmmaking.

Imprint and *always carry a camera* were produced in direct response to the immediacy connected to using the HD digital format. Critically reflecting on this digital work gave me insight into how I could develop my practice further by incorporating the analogue film format, established earlier. As suggested, my approach to working with Super 8mm film became an embodied experience, analogous to the film practices of Fendrel, Tait and Peirce. For instance, in digital filmmaking, the captured image is generally distanced from the filmmaker by a small LCD³⁴ screen attached to the camera. Therefore, the viewfinder typically becomes redundant. Engaging with my Super 8mm camera invited me to use the viewfinder, which, in turn, connected me directly to the apparatus. Filming in this manner attuned my eye, hand and body to what I was filming and how I was moving. For example, in *Imprint*, the viewfinder is held firmly against my eye (0:19) as my body crouches down and my left-hand touches the water. As my right-hand grips the camera, I then use my body weight as a static tripod to pan up with the camera. To determine how significant this embodied gesture was, I shot the scene again with the Canon SX60 HD camera.³⁵ Critically reflecting on this reconstruction, the HD version lacked the intentionality that occurred when my body was in synchronisation with analogue filmmaking. This detached way of capturing images, I maintain, was because I was holding the camera at arms-length, and not, as I have suggested in my analysis of Margaret Tait's relationship with her Bolex camera (pp. 86-88), close to my body.

³⁴ LCD is an acronym for liquid-crystal display. Although the position of the LCD screens can be manipulated and brought closer to the body, the distance still significantly increases the sense of disembodiment from the apparatus.

³⁵ When I started to shoot with film, I felt the need to produce an HD version as a back up, just in case the film footage was unusable. I no longer use this approach; whatever is developed can be adapted for output.

As a single-channel installation, *Imprint* suggests a past and present position referenced through moving images on the right-hand screen and a projected still image³⁶ of me as a small child, which I then filmed, on the left-hand screen (fig. 34, p. 99). In post-production, the images for the left-hand screen were blown-up to fill the on-screen space to emphasise the tactileness of the film grain and to visually distort the original clarity, again, similar to the techniques used in resizing the image of my face, mentioned in the previous section. Aligning with Marks' sense of haptic visuality, the process of altering the original image to emphasise the surface textures allowed for the output to have a more direct connection with the viewer's imagination and evocation of multi-sensorial memories. Both past and present, external and internal thoughts and emotions are interconnected conceptually through the mirroring of sprocket holes positioned in the centre of the screen.³⁷ The Kodachrome images move in super slow-motion in a jagged fashion to mirror the tactileness of the augmented image. Again, in post-production, images of light refractions were superimposed onto the projected 35mm slides. The result produced a haptic array of colours, textures and shapes, which, combined with the materiality of the film, for example, scratches and film grain became inscribed as the visual content of the film (fig. 35, p. 99). Furthermore, applying a superimposition created the sense of moving layers, perceived as a membrane of textures, which echoes Leighton Pierce's approach to visual effects. Realising my own expressionistic approach to (inter)subjectivity through the film medium attempts to exchange meanings with the audience in the hope that they will look beyond the membrane to gain an embodied response.

³⁶ The still images are 35mm positive Kodachrome slides from a personal archive of family photographs (c1960s-1980s). I projected them on a vintage Aldis projector and then filmed the projected images with my Super 8mm camera. The process of altering the original image allowed the output to have greater visual hapticity and tactileness.

³⁷ I gratefully acknowledge visual artist Jennifer R. Wicks for scanning a critical and aesthetic eye over *Imprint*, and for her instructive comments.



Figure 34. Filming the left-hand screen of *Imprint* (2018). Filming it first with an HD camera to rehearse the camera movement for recording with Super 8mm film.

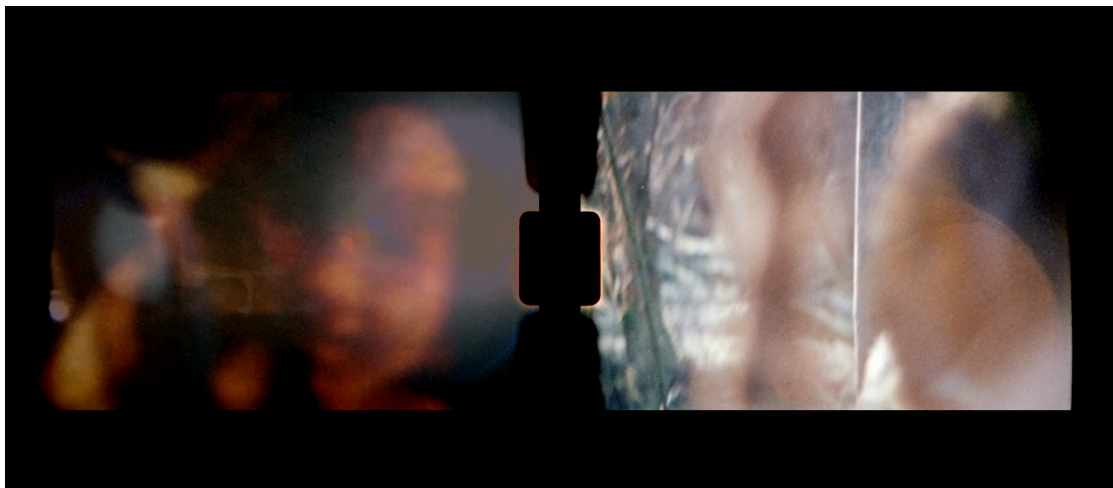


Figure 35. Edited images, *Imprint* (2018).

Imprint allows the viewer time to breathe and to contemplate what they are sensing and seeing, which is a direct reference to Margaret Tait's subtle camerawork discussed earlier. The aim of my camera lens lingering on the images of trees, water and sun motes, was to engender a reflexive response from the viewer. This response not only seeks to mimic how the viewer's body might feel in the natural environment perceived on-screen but also could potentially distinguish past from a present

perspective of the self. The clarity of the right-hand images, juxtaposed with the obscured left-hand visuals attempts to engender a tactile embrace between the subject matter, the film and viewer. Ultimately, the visual dialogue between the two screens seek to affect a sense of embodiment by simultaneously transposing my physical experience and perception of the pro-filmic event and interchanging it with the viewer's perception and expression of their filmic experience.

always carry a camera is a three-channel moving image installation that aims to challenge the peripheral and central vision in order to evoke a phenomenological experience. The multi-channel film, looped and silent,³⁸ was installed at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, and will be the focus of my critical reflection in Chapter 4 (fig. 36, p. 101). The overarching concept of this film endeavours to create a perceptual space, or middle ground in-between the audience and installation to evoke an embodied intersubjective response from the viewer. This approach aligns with Maeve Connolly's (2009) theory concerning the in-between spaces of a moving image exhibition, established in the literature review and explored further in Chapter 4. In the poetic sense, *always carry a camera* is a reflection of my tactile relationship with the Hebridean landscape. Again, key to the research topic, it is hoped that an intersubjective connection will be foregrounded through the juxtaposition of the three screens, to intertwine my sensory relationship with the memories and experiences of the gallery-goers.

³⁸ The three-screen version of this film, accessible through my website, <http://www.susannahramsay.co.uk>, incorporates an abstract soundscape.



Figure 36. *always carry a camera* (2018), installed in the gallery space at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

As I have stressed throughout this chapter, the film-phenomenological potential of the production of the filmpoem, located predominantly in hapticity and a tactile approach to filmmaking, emphasises the intersubjective relationship between the viewer and the perceived filmic image. The filmpoem, as a tactile form of filmmaking, can be recorded in various formats; however, as this practice-based project maintains, the profound expansion of understanding gained when analogue film stock is used can create a sensuousness that the physical body can respond to simultaneously as the images are projected. These assertions preempt how the application of artists' moving image exhibition practices can further enhance the phenomenological potential of the filmpoem, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: An analysis of artists' moving image exhibition practices critically reflected through the exhibition of my own filmpoems

Building on the analysis of the production of the filmpoem presented throughout the previous chapter, this chapter pushes forward the phenomenological exploration concerning my approach to the exhibition of the filmpoem. Examining various historical and contemporary single and multi-screen installations, together with recent literature regarding site-specific artists' moving image work, will illustrate how artists' moving image exhibition practices can be used as a methodology to inform my own creative practice.

The analysis will follow two main approaches to tease out key concepts concerning artists' moving image exhibition practices. Informed by Maeve Connolly's work (2009), I will explore how site-specific audiovisual installations can create a meaningful existence within public and private places. In addition, an examination concerning the significance of the *in-between spaces* of a moving image exhibition will illustrate how the filmpoem, screened in an exhibition context, can continue to evoke embodied experiences for the spectators. Secondly, an exploration of the spectator's relationship with multi-screen installations will be examined using Giuliana Bruno's concept of the haptic path. Both perspectives comprise phenomenological elements, which, in turn, inform how I approach the exhibition of my filmpoetry. Consideration of these points will inform my critical reflection of my single and multi-screen site-specific installations: *The Essence of Place* (2017) and *always carry a camera* (2018). Furthermore, this chapter seeks to distance the filmpoem away from the current mode of viewing, i.e., via the Internet towards a gallery context to create a more diverse critical framework to draw analysis.

Conceptual approaches to artists' moving image exhibition practices: existential phenomenology, place, in-between spaces and the haptic path

Chrissie Iles' (2001) seminal work established a criticism surrounding the inclusion of moving images within traditional static art galleries and museums. Advancing Iles' studies, Erika Balsom (2013, pp. 27-70) galvanised this research by exploring the significance of exhibiting artists' cinema within a contemporary art gallery context.

This widely acknowledged criticism derives in part from the development of the site-specific Minimalist art installation movement during the 1960s and 1970s, mentioned in the literature review (pp. 55-56). Crucially, for my research, Claire Bishop's (2005) work, again, established within the literature review, determines how Maurice Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology became a significant mode of criticism regarding the reception of Minimalist art installations during this period. This philosophical position typically underscores the importance of the gallery-goer's heightened sense of perception and awareness of space in relation to themselves and the artwork (including film installations), in situ. Further on (pp. 113-116), I will apply Merleau-Ponty's (1964) notion of the reflexive body's response to viewing modern art to understand this relationship in terms of the exhibition of the film-poem.

Drawing from Iles' and Bishop's work, the first approach will foreground Maeve Connolly's (2009) concept regarding the *place* and the *in-between spaces* of artists' moving image work as a site for a phenomenological investigation. Connolly's broad exploration examines the significance of understanding the place of artists' cinema in relation to cultural, economic, social and political contexts. Place refers to site-specific spaces, such as publicly funded or private art galleries and museums. More specifically, her study engages with the notion of what it means for *place* to be *public*. Following a focused analysis concerning the *publicness* of moving image installations, I will critically reflect upon the significance of place in terms of *The Essence of Place*, my single-screen site-specific outdoor installation (pp. 105-113).

Connolly suggests that moving image installations situated in specific places such as civic buildings, parks, streets or publicly funded museums engender a notion of 'publicness', which, in turn, has institutional and political implications (2009, p. 63). The overarching significance of *publicness* connects to 'public memory, the formation of public space and the social body' (2009, p. 63). For instance, Connolly highlights Jane and Louise Wilson's multi-screen installation *Stasi City* (1997) as an example of how the *memory* of a public space can connect with the audience's awareness and society, more broadly. Positioned within the former Stasi Headquarters in Berlin, *Stasi City* evokes embodied reflections concerning institutional and architectural themes. The Wilsons' work juxtaposes the politically significant place with the immersive qualities of multi-screen installations. The installation offers the viewer an enveloping experience, yet all four screens cannot be viewed

simultaneously. As the spectators move around to view the screens, they obstruct the views of others, who, in turn, obstruct their view at times. This sense of heightened awareness aligns with the phenomenological concerns of the Minimalist art installation movement, mentioned earlier. Additionally, resonating with Connolly's perspective concerning memory and place, Claire Bishop suggests that as the spectators negotiate the artwork, they become implicated in the work and by extension the broader cultural and social concerns of the installation (2005, p. 137 n. 62).

The profoundly political and social connotations seen within the moving image work that Connolly discusses are in sharp contrast to my work. However, much of what she does uncover, nevertheless, resonates with my work on a phenomenological level. Consequently, it is this relationship between place as a context for meaning; the audience's embodied responses and the spatiality of multi-screen projections that is particularly significant to my phenomenological inquiry, which will be examined later on. Albeit not conventionally socio-political, my approach to my practice is a mode of therapeutic expression, a tool for personal psychological reparation. Similarly, engaging with an ethical position, I strive to ensure care towards, and responsibility for my audiences and visitors, demonstrating a broader notion of therapeutic understanding.

Interweaved with place, the trajectory of Connolly's considerations reveal how the intervening or in-between spaces of site-specific artwork can engender a perceptual *in-between-ness*; a space mediated by the viewer, between the screen and the artwork itself (2009, p. 18). Inscribed within the concept of the in-between spaces, my second approach, therefore, examines the phenomenological significance of the spectator's ability to experience and understand the artwork more profoundly when viewing a single or multi-screen projection. Applying Giuliana Bruno's (2007, pp. 27-28) notion of the haptic path will assist in illustrating this relationship more clearly.

The haptic path, established earlier in the literature review (pp. 56-57) is underscored by three sources based on the spatial configuration of general viewing: Robert Fludd's *Memory Theatre*,³⁹ Eisenstein's essay 'Montage and Architecture'

³⁹ Robert Fludd's *Memory Theatre* is a mnemonic system that involves choosing images to signify what one wants to remember, then superimposing the images onto architectural features. Fludd's illustration involves the architecture of the theatre, an early example of describing a public theatre.

(1938/1989), in which the Soviet director draws parallels between the architectural nature of creating a montage and how a film can literally and metaphorically take the viewer on an imaginary pathway guided by the eye (1989, p. 116), and eighteenth-century garden design, which seeks to evoke emotions and produce trains of thought for the spectator as they move through the geography of a space. As Bruno states, '(T)his philosophy of space embodied a form of fluid, emotive geography. Sensuously associative in connecting the local and topographic to the personal, it enhanced the passionate voyage of the imagination' (2007, p. 24). This statement not only seems to agree with how I produce my film-poems, explicitly resonating with the emotional journey emphasised through the architectonics of editing my film-poems, analogous to aspects of Eisenstein's perspective, but also with how I continue to transpose this pro-filmic experience through the perceptual pathways of the gallery space to engender an intersubjective response, which will be discussed further on in this chapter (pp. 130-132). Before exploring my multi-screen work, the next section critically reflects upon my phenomenological perspective concerning the significance of place as a concept to understand the exhibition context for my single-channel site-specific installation, *The Essence of Place*. As a reference point, it is worth remembering that a conceptual analysis and synopsis of the film is incorporated at the beginning of the thesis (pp. 22-24).

***The Essence of Place* (2017). A critical reflection of my single screen site-specific installation**

Regarding site-specific installations, Maeve Connolly's notion of *place* as a *context* for meaning draws on Haidee Wasson's (2005) historical analysis charting how museums created a public place for artists' moving image works, mentioned earlier in the literature review (p. 56). For Connolly, *place* or location, is an interchangeable concept combining 'social geography and art practice' to engender different contexts and meanings (2009, p. 11). Furthermore, it is a concept that is informed by Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar's publication, 'Place' (2005) regarding the significance of place within contemporary art practice.

Both Dean and Millar discuss place, or site (its contemporary term, as in site-specific) as being in flux, continually changing and with no fixed position. It is sensed, rather than understood (2005, pp. 14-15). In recent years, site-specificity, as a

broad term, has been replaced, namely with *participatory* art practices; the assumption being, that the creative practitioner is *for hire*, nomadic and continually responding to different environments and that the audience is seen as being ‘central to the artwork’ (Moran, no date, p. 7; Meyer 2000, pp. 32-34; Kwon 1997, p. 100). The significance of producing artwork in this context aligns with the criticism concerning existential phenomenology’s connection to the art gallery space, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In terms of my research, when choosing the space and constructing the frame to screen my work at RSBP Loch Lomond⁴⁰ (fig. 37), and designing the exhibition at An Lanntair, discussed throughout the following sections, these considerations were vital.



Figure 37. Building the frame and screen for *The Essence of Place* (2017).

Regarding Dean, Millar and Connolly’s perspectives, the decision to exhibit *The Essence of Place* outdoors, illustrated a phenomenological manifestation of the sense of publicness Connolly attributes to place. In this sense, I am referring to the public location as a conduit for evoking an intimate, multi-sensorial experience for the itinerant audience.

⁴⁰ I would like to thank Glasgow-based artist Hugh Watt for his help, and guidance in helping me to realise *The Essence of Place* as an installation.

As a relatively new site for wildlife conservation, RSPB Loch Lomond nature reserve currently engages with numerous social activities to highlight the charitable organisation's mission statement,⁴¹ more broadly. Demographically, visitors to the site generally include ornithological enthusiasts, people local to the immediate area and regular visitors invested in the work of the RSPB, educational organisations and environmentalists. On the night of the exhibition, a similar demographic was in attendance. However, when talking to the visitors after they had experienced the film-poem, it became apparent to me that many of them regularly attended art galleries also, and had knowledge of moving image installations. Therefore, with reference to Connolly's sense of place prompting public memory, it is interesting to note that memories connected to the art gallery experience and the social awareness/impact of nature conservation were perhaps invoked for some visitors as they experienced *The Essence of Place*.

Through the melding of different contexts, this installation aimed to prompt the spectator's multi-sensorial memories of both the site and of how moving images can be experienced, in particular raising the question concerning how film-poems are generally viewed, alluded to throughout this thesis. Reconstructing the outdoor wilderness to incorporate an exhibition format typically experienced in a gallery context underscores the potential tactile and visceral response to this place. In turn, this could be seen to introduce a sense of disengagement from the experience of watching a film-poem through a web-based platform, emphasised earlier (p. 102).

As Giuliana Bruno suggests, '(P)laces live in memory and revive in the moving image' (2007, p. 21). Here, Bruno is referring to the connection between an understanding of the history of moving image, experience, memory, and how spectators encounter the spatial configuration of a museum or art gallery floor plan. It is conceivable to imagine that *The Essence of Place* provided an ambulatory experience analogous to the museum walks and architectural journeys linked to public exhibition highlighted by Bruno (2007, p. 28). For example, the pathway to *The Essence of Place* assumed another form of spatial configuration as the darkness engulfed the visitors during the short walk to reach the screen. For people familiar to the woodland area, the once easily negotiated pathway during the daylight hours had

⁴¹ The RSPB's mission statement includes: creating homes for nature, species recovery, protecting birds internationally, collaborating with commercial partnerships and outreach activities.

become a sensorial minefield. For new visitors, the nocturnal sensorial experience could provide a potential affective tension, should they return to the site in the daytime.

As the spectators drew closer to the installation, the sensorial ambulatory experience incorporated brief glimpses of the screen seen through the leafless trees. The wind carried the acoustics of the film continually oscillating them up into the night sky, and the sound of the diesel generator in the distance beyond, provided a sense of becoming, of presence, and of the landscape coming alive at night. As the giant hand-built screen, which hung on ropes tied to a wooden structure (fig's. 38-39) came into view, the filmpoem presented images of the nature reserve's daylight landscape. These images served to provide a contrasting perspective reflecting the nighttime scenario, for instance, the rain, and partially illuminated woodland area. This mini-pilgrimage sought to challenge the audience's sense of perception in the hope that the darkness would quieten their minds and open their sensory receptors, ready to engage with the audiovisual expression of my embodied experiences. Furthermore, in the film-phenomenological sense, established in Chapter 3, the manifestation of how the audience perceived the film relied on the reciprocity between their external perceptions and the exhibition conditions of the film installation.



Figure 38. The giant screen (2.4 x 4m) hung from 2 x 4 metre high poles.



Figure 39. As darkness fell, the film began to play.

The Essence of Place, as an outdoor exhibition, was inspired mainly by the notion of engaging in a mini-pilgrimage to view moving image works. A similar activity can be experienced at the Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival, where they have a tradition of organising *film walks*. For instance, this year, 2019, the mini-pilgrimage celebrated the centenary of Margaret Tait.⁴² The walk began near Wilton, Hawick and concluded in Wilton Dean Village Hall with a screening of *Orquil Burn* (Tait, 1955). Additionally, Gerda Stevenson, who played Greta in *Blue Black Permanent* (Tait, 1992), read a poem specially commissioned by Alchemy. On a similar note, the Hamburg artist's group *A Wall is a Screen* organise *film nights* comprising a pop-up installation projecting artists' moving image works screened in various disappearing urban spaces (fig's. 40-43). The purpose of the artists' group is to utilise inner-city areas and to weave the nighttime environment into the filmic experience. The spectators typically gather in a designated meeting place where the first film is introduced and screened. Once the film has finished, the artists' group moves on to the next location with the spectators following. Movement, en mass is made straightforward due to the portability of the projector, laptop and suitcase generator. This mode of pilgrimage has the potential to invoke notions connected to psychogeography as the spectators engage with the film and urban landscape on an

⁴² <https://www.margarettait100.com>

emotional and experiential level as Giuliana Bruno's *Atlas of Emotion* (2002) alludes to.



Figure 40. *A Wall is a Screen* @ The Glasgow Short Film Festival, 2017.



Figure 41. *A Wall is a Screen*. Portable projection equipment.



Figure 42. *A Wall is a Screen*. A mini-pilgrimage.



Figure 43. *A Wall is a Screen* @ The Glasgow Short Film Festival, 2017.

However, it was Gregory Markopoulos' site-specific 16mm film installation *Eniaios* (c.1947-91) that critically informed the mini-pilgrimage of *The Essence of Place*. Markopoulos' epic eighty-hour reworking of his entire oeuvre, scheduled to be screened every four years, in a site he called the Temenos, Greece embodies this notion of pilgrimage. The public expectations associated with this installation context extend beyond the film screening itself. Erika Balsom (2017, p. 208) notes that Markopoulos' screenings assume a 'therapeutic dimension', meaning that the surrounding area of the Temenos became a place for conversation and communal

living. In terms of *The Essence of Place*, it is conceivable to imagine that a sense of therapeuticness mediates with the Scottish landscape in an attempt to recontextualise how the film-poem can be received. For instance, in a separate area to the installation at the RSPB site, a tent with refreshments was constructed so that the visitors could spend time reflecting on their experiences of the film-poem. Several of the visitors participated in an informal post-screening discussion. Issues surrounding the ephemeral nature of this type of art practice were articulated, as were debates concerning environmental issues, film history and poetry. As I engaged in dialogue with the visitors, the conversations felt almost therapeutic as they explained their expectations and emotions regarding what they had just experienced.

For Markopoulos, the Temenos epitomised the ideal site and conditions for film exhibition, with the remoteness of the location being critical. Moreover, by reconceptualising the viewing nature of his films, he was able to retain absolute control over his work, as the New York experimental cinema scene became increasingly commercialised during the 1960s (Balsom 2017, p. 194). True to Markopoulos' rupture with this scene, the pilgrimage to Temenos assumed a sense of 'ritual cleansing' to rid the pilgrims/visitors of the poison produced by their urban environment, and yet the staging of the actual exhibition of the films recreated the exhibition formats of most galleries, albeit in an unusual location (Balsom 2017, p. 208). In this sense, *The Essence of Place* develops Markopoulos' idea of ritualistic cleansing and remoteness. For instance, to emphasise a sense of remoteness, the journey to the exhibition began at a specific location a few miles from the nature reserve. The *pilgrims* were met by a 'Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority' ranger, who then drove them by minibus through a network of narrow country roads destined for the RSPB nature reserve. Emphasised by the dark, late-October climatic conditions—a cold wind mixed with drizzle, combined with the anticipation of traversing the landscape to see the exhibition, the walk to the film screening functioned as a cleansing ritual by attuning the senses and re-orientating the body and mind to the Scottish environment.

The decision where to place my film installations is typically inspired by the reciprocity between the cultural context connected to location of filming, the landscape and myself. For example, it was crucial that *The Essence of Place* embodied both the location of the screening and the Scottish landscape, depicted in the film. Similarly, to convey layers of profound connotations for the viewers, it was

vital that *always carry a camera* be exhibited as a site-specific film installation at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway. Because this film-poem was filmed on the Isles of Lewis and Harris, I wanted to evoke a public memory that connected the emotional and physical experiences of being in the Hebridean landscape through sound and image with the architecture of the gallery space and the cultural heritage of the arts centre, more broadly. For instance, by including iconic landmarks synonymous with both islands, such as the standing stones at Callanish, west of Stornoway and a view of Scarp from Hushinish beach, on the west coast of Harris, for many visitors an immediate and tangible connection would have occurred. Furthermore, the characteristics of these images display varying degrees of hapticity and tactileness, which, as discussed throughout Chapter 3, seeks to prompt multi-sensorial memories for the spectators. In the film-phenomenological sense, therefore, the site-specificity of this film-poem installation seeks to embody the spectator through triggering their memories and prompting them to rediscover their own connections with the landscape.

In summary, the reciprocal action between place and the artwork is crucial to the exhibition of my film-poetry. However, it is also the relationship between the *in-between spaces* of the artwork that informs elements of my work too, a concept crucial to Connolly's work on artists' moving image site-specificity, which critically underscores the following section.

The phenomenological significance of configuring an exhibition space

As mentioned earlier (p. 35), Maeve Connolly's statement suggests that 'the complex interplay between the site and space of the auditorium', or the *in-between spaces* of an installation has become the intersection where profound meaning arises concerning artists' moving image (2009, p. 18). To explore the phenomenological significance of this statement, a focused analysis concerning the *spatial* properties of gallery-based installations will be informed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1964) notion of the reflexive body in relation to viewing modern art and Chrissie Iles' (2000) idea of transformational space in which an intersubjective gallery-goer comes into existence. In addition, Giuliana Bruno's (2007) concept concerning the haptic path, mentioned earlier, is applied to examine the spectators' interrelationship with the artwork,

developed through the configuration of the exhibition space. The analyses will inform the critical reflection of my multi-screen installation *always carry a camera*.

In the phenomenological sense, the configuration of an *exhibition space* can determine how the spectator's attention, perception and experience is brought into existence and embodied. The significance of this intertwining sensibility, foregrounded in the literature connected to both Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophical writings and the Minimalist art movement, places the embodied spectator at the centre of the artwork, mentioned earlier (pp. 102-103).

In Merleau-Ponty's essay, *Eye and Mind* the French phenomenologist's analysis of painting underpins a sense of reflexivity between the spectator, artist and the painting. This widely considered idea constitutes the Pontian perspective 'that perception is not simply a question of vision, but involves the whole body', as Claire Bishop notes (2005, p. 50). With the heightened self-awareness attributed to encountering Minimalist art forms, Merleau-Ponty's analysis considers the movement of the body in relation to how vision operates when we experience a painting.

Merleau-Ponty supposed that '(T)he enigma derives from the fact that my body simultaneously sees and is seen'. [...] 'It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself' (1964, p. 124). This *enigma*, as he suggests, is a self-propelled perceptual and psychological occurrence, happening inside and outside of the body, slicing through past, present and future spatiotemporalities. This embodied response conceivably resonates with the experience of viewing a multi-screen moving image installation organised within a specific space.

The understanding of the artwork, therefore, evolves through a manifestation of space in which an awareness of the self and body, together with the action of seeing is pronounced. For example, Liisa Roberts' multi-screen projection *Trap Door* (1997) positions the viewer phenomenologically using four 16mm film projections (fig. 44, p. 115). Three freestanding screens, placed in a triangular composition are back-projected. A fourth screen, detached from the main configuration, is front-projected and faces one of the other screens. The content depicts monochromatic images of female hands responding to one another in a visual dialogue.



Figure 44. *Trap Door* (Roberts, 1997).

As Chrissie Iles notes regarding the sculptural quality of this installation, ‘Roberts reveals the viewing of the film to be a self-conscious act’ (2000, p. 261). In other words, the position of the multiple screens, juxtaposed with the intentionality of the slow-moving images displaces a continual narrative while consistently denying the spectators the satisfaction of viewing the screens from a single vantage point. This incoherence illustrates the self-consciousness and self-reflexive nature of Roberts’ work, emphasising a sense of apperception for the spectator. The significance of this work, in terms of my film-poem installations at An Lanntair, illustrates how a multi-screen configuration, whether wholly or partially visible, can establish multiple viewpoints and have the potential to invoke a series of interpretations sensed by the embodied spectator, which will be explored in the critical reflection further on.

The interpretation of perceptual space, in terms of embodiment and the heightened sense of self-awareness, is hugely significant for Merleau-Ponty, as he, himself writes:

Space is in itself; rather, it is the in-itself par excellence. Its definition is *to be* in itself. Every point of space is, and is thought as being, right where it is—one here, another there; space is the self-evidence of the “where.” Orientation, polarity, envelopment are, in space, derived phenomena linked to my presence. *Space* remains absolutely in itself, everywhere equal to itself, homogeneous; its dimensions, for example, are by definition interchangeable (1964, p. 134).

Merleau-Ponty's statement clearly defines space as a universal entity that the body can inhabit regardless of other things surrounding it. Furthermore, his analysis of what constitutes space (i.e., 'space is the self-evidence of the "where"') is particularly relevant, as it could feasibly be interconnected to place and the site-specific nature of moving image installations prompting a sense of geographical and corporeal orientation, explored in the previous section.

The in-between space and the embodied spectator

As Chrissie Iles (2000, p. 252) indicates, space, in the context of a moving image installation, always becomes transformational. Moreover, Iles insists that this transformational space can be explored in terms of three phases: phenomenological, sculptural and cinematic. Critical to this research, Iles ascribes the emergence of video art installation during the 1970s to the phenomenological phase (2000, p. 252). This shift in exhibition practice seeks to direct the spectator's attention towards the surrounding space, as opposed to fixing their vision on a single projected image, which, in turn, prompts a sense of embodied perception and self-awareness, as suggested by Iles earlier (pp. 55-57) (2001, p. 33).

Regarding video art and concerning the tension between public and private space, Bruce Nauman's video installation *Live/Taped Video Corridor* (1970) remodelled the public space of a corridor into an intimate and phenomenologically charged space. The intention behind Nauman's installation was to create a psychological sense of unease for the viewer as they were instructed to move through the constricted corridor. Obscured closed-circuit cameras followed their every move and were time-delayed so the participants could watch themselves traverse the installation (Iles 2000, p. 255). The performative nature of Nauman's work encouraged the spectator's attention to turn in on themselves, simultaneously deconstructing privacy and emphasising the phenomenological experience. Regarding this era in which the phenomenological interpretation of installation work crossed the boundaries between public and private space, Iles writes, '[the] artist, artwork, and viewer were all called into question. Space became the primary site for this inquiry, and, as such, the viewer's relationship with space became introspective', much like Liisa Roberts' articulations of space (2000, p. 254).

In terms of the exhibition of the film-poem, it is conceivable to relate Guy Sherwin's screening of *Messages* (1981-1983) at the film-poem event I organised at the Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling, 2017, mentioned earlier, to Iles' notion of the phenomenological phase. Sherwin, a British artist and experimental filmmaker, synonymous with the London Filmmaker's Co-operative during the mid-1970s produces a wide range of short films. His work includes expanded cinematic performance, films that follow the structural/materialist tradition, and the lyrical film—the latter approach being comparable with the intimate and reflective nature of the film-poem.

Messages, a silent, thirty-five-minute poetic film charts how Sherwin's daughter, Maya, between the ages of two and four, discovers language and meaning. Like a film-poem, the content of *Messages* is personal as Sherwin uses Maya's curious statements and questions to create scenes pregnant with metaphor and connotations. For example, he films in close-up, one of her phrases written on a pebble, held gently in, presumably Sherwin's hand: "Pebbles are round because the water makes them swell up" (fig. 45). Additionally, throughout the film, he juxtaposes images of human physical features with images of nature: a child's hand mirrors branches of a tree (fig. 46), for example. These personal moments create a tactile embrace and seek to evoke emotions and memories for the spectators.

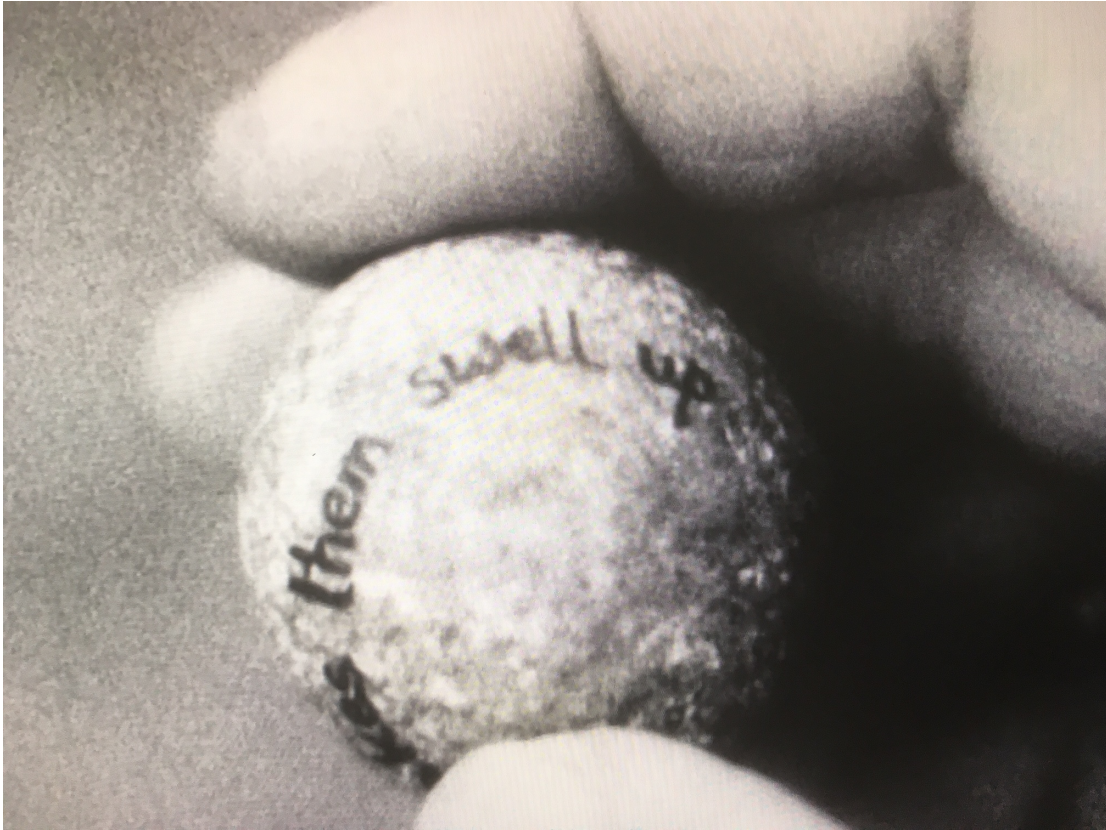


Figure 45. Maya's phrase: "Pebbles are round because the water makes them swell up", *Messages* (Sherwin, 1981-83).



Figure 46. Child's hand mimics the branches of a tree, *Messages* (Sherwin, 1981-83).

Furthermore, Sherwin's formal approach, which includes both haptic and tactile imagery, emphasised by the contrast of the black and white film grain, provide a sense of tangible perception, further enhanced through his observational camera movement, which is often intentional and hand-held. He also uses optical printing to layer many of the images to foreground the complexities of language, and long pull focuses emphasising the profound connotations arising from Maya's questions. For instance, in the section where he films himself holding a piece of glass with the words "why don't our looks mix, when they meet" (fig. 47), Sherwin's formal interpretation, viewed as a pull focus mixing the foreground with the background, is a direct visual articulation of Maya's question.



Figure 47. Visual articulation of Maya's question, *Messages* (Sherwin, 1981-83).

The screening of *Messages* at the Macrobert Arts Centre transforms the exhibition space the moment Sherwin, himself, begins projecting his own 16mm print of the film. In doing so, the experience of watching *Messages* has the potential to engender a sensorial relationship between the spectator's internal emotions and external physical body. For example, the light that emanates from the lens of the 16mm film projector is dispersed throughout the room as the beam illuminates the

small pop-up screen. The viewers' audible presence together with the mechanical noise of the film rushing through the projector's gate becomes the soundtrack to the silent film. These tactile elements combined with the inclusion of the projector placed in amongst the audience, as opposed to being hidden out of sight as with the digital projector, also used at this event, sought to evoke a visceral response from the audience. At this moment, it is possible to imagine that the emotional exchange between the film and the viewer became embodied as their attention to the in-between spaces of the exhibition space began to reveal a multitude of connotations (fig's. 48-49).



Figure 48. Guy Sherwin @ Macrobert Arts Centre filmpoetry event, 2017.

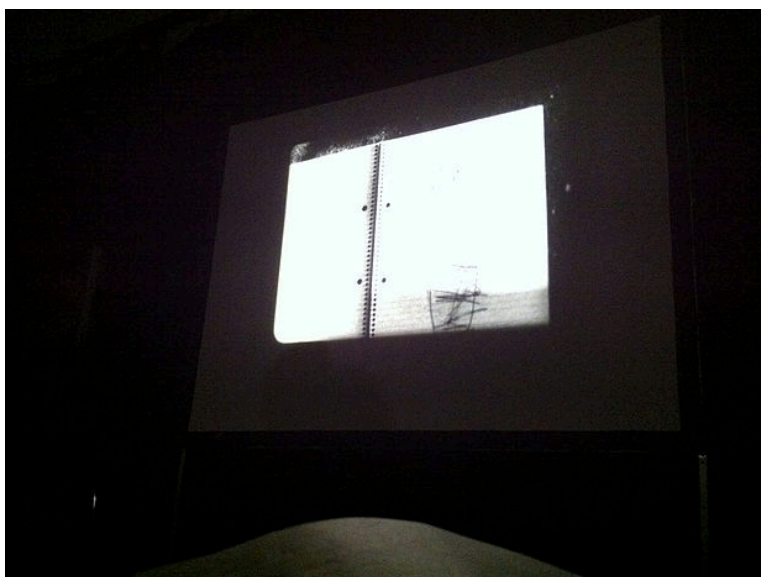


Figure 49. *Messages* (Sherwin, 1981-83) illuminating the exhibition space.

These examples support the assumption that the spectator dwells within the in-between spaces that Connolly's work refers to, mentioned at the beginning of this section. The configuration of the screen(s), including apparatuses such as the projector, provide a choice of viewing positions for the viewer, engendering various profound interpretations of the artwork. This opportunity simultaneously allows the spectator to become aware of a responsive body that relates to the artwork and an imagination that can decipher contextual and conceptual components further. This relationship is comparable with the Pontian perspective of the reflexive body becoming an embodied entity within a space, a critical factor for this section of the analysis. Furthermore, in terms of film-phenomenology, the act of deciphering and understanding meaning derived from philosophically imbued images also aligns with one of the key purposes of the haptic image within experimental cinema, mentioned in Chapter 3.

Reflecting on the previous section, it should be understood that the gallery-goer has become embodied. In other words, the active and passive, mobile and immobile spectator debates linked to the entrenched values of Marxist and psychoanalytic film theories of the 1980s have been phenomenologically reconsidered, as Laura U. Marks suggests (2012, p. 20). Marks amusingly argues that these film theorists assumed that the spectator (art gallery and film-theatre) were either active or passive viewers, idiots waiting to be reminded that they exist in society 'by tripping over a bench [in a black box gallery context] in the dark' (2012, p. 20). Referring to the spatiotemporality of a single-channel installation context, Marks' quirky rebuttal immediately re-positions the spectator phenomenologically as an *embodied* viewer. An embodied viewer in the sense that 'the body, memory, and perception are already social [...] [and] immersed in a rich social engagement', a viewer that was able to negotiate the gallery space as a sensorial exercise without having to be reminded of their ideological place in society, as Marks notes (2012, p. 20).

Regarding a multi-screen *white cube/black box* configuration, it is imaginable, therefore, that a carefully considered space within a gallery context could guide the embodied spectator. As Maeve Connolly's work details, multi-screen installations are

generally thought to prompt immersive⁴³ experiences for gallery-goers through employing various material structures and practices to create this encounter (2009, p. 64). For example, screens could be positioned in a traditional frontal mode of viewing, or oppositional, or indeed they could follow the architecture of the museum or gallery space itself. The relevance of configuring the exhibition space not only relates to the evocation of public memory exposed through a site-specific exhibition context, discussed earlier in relation to Jane and Louise Wilson's installation work, but also supports the notion that the spectator is (inter)subjective, and already inscribed in the real world, much like myself as a reflexive practitioner, and, therefore, is potentially liberated from psychoanalytical film theorisation. Consequentially, the embodied gallery-goer becomes the locus for a deep-seated understanding of the artwork, thus supporting the analysis throughout the previous section. To develop my research concerning artists' moving image spectatorship, this section concludes by making use of Volker Pantenburg's (2012) acknowledgement of the *attentive* spectator, which can be analysed phenomenologically.

The attentive spectator is a gallery-goer faced with a succession of choices connected to what excites them and what piques their attention during an exhibition visit (2012, pp. 84-85). Pantenburg bases this interpretation on Jonathan Crary's (1999) and Peter Osborne's (2004) dialectal analysis of distraction and attention. Pantenburg, without doubt, recognises that the shift from the mobile spectator towards the attentive spectator is crucial in how contemporary moving image installation is experienced and criticised (2012, pp. 84-85). For Pantenburg, attention becomes a critical framework for exploring the affective exchange that encourages the viewing habits of the gallery-goer:

The term "attention" can, I would argue, become a key concept for the analysis of the cinema/museum constellation, because it is positioned at the threshold between two economic fields: the economics of attention and the "real" economics of money, real estate and financial resources' (2012, p. 85).

⁴³ Irrespective of screen size, it is important to point out that an immersive experience can also be engendered through engaging with the content of the film-poem; the haptic and tactile images, the spoken word and the soundscapes, as suggested throughout Chapter 3. This suggestion aligns with the immersiveness felt when reading a poem on the page or listening to piece of music, for example.

It seems that in this statement, Pantenburg is insisting that cinema and art as differing forms with differing agendas be allowed an opportunity to coexist accordingly in the same context through the body and attention/distraction of the gallery-goer. Having configured my own exhibition space at An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway, the notion of the attentive spectator becomes critical in my decision-making, which will be discussed in the reflective criticism (pp. 124-132).

To summarise, the gallery space is predominantly the place where the multi-screen configuration shifts the spectator's attention away from the traditional notion of single screen viewing, as Chrissie Iles asserts (2001, p. 33). Furthermore, Iles suggests that the spectator's fractured vision of both the surrounding space and filmic space, 'mimicks the inherent mobility of the camera itself' and allows the viewer 'to visually retrace the steps of the artist as the images were originally recorded' (2001, p. 33). The idea that the in-between spaces of a moving image installation can invoke the artist's presence while prompting an affective exchange for the gallery-goer connects to Giuliana Bruno's notion of the haptic path, mentioned earlier. Crucially, this idea resonates with my own phenomenological approach to the processes involved in producing and exhibiting the film-poem. My approach directs the transposition of my own haptic path, as it were, i.e., my (inter)subjective perspective actualised through film form, realised through exhibition strategies and received intersubjectively by the audience. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier (pp. 104-105), the association between my own approach to editing, which drives the emotional flow of my film-poetry, in turn, emphasises Bruno's distinction of the imaginary pathway and connects to the configuration of the haptic path potentially experienced by the gallery-goer. This parallel association issues from my editing strategy, which seeks to break the sequentiality of conventional montage (shot/reverse/shot), juxtaposed with the actual projection of my films, in situ. For example, in *Dislocation*, my filmic experimentations utilise rhythmic pace to evoke visual sensations; for instance, the slow, intentional cuts emphasise the subdued, emotional state evident throughout. The edits parallel the slow-motion of the visuals; moreover, when exhibited in chronological sequence, *Dislocation* provides a pause or a sense of breath for the viewer after the more optimistic *West of Dalabrog*.

Considering these points, Bruno's account of the haptic path creating an intersubjective environment will be discussed in the following section in terms of the spatial staging of my multi-screen installation.

Critical reflection: *always carry a camera*. A phenomenological exploration of my multi-screen filmpoem installation

Throughout this chapter, my analysis has endeavoured to push forward existing artists' moving image exhibition practices in an attempt to reposition the filmpoem within a contemporary gallery context. Accordingly, the overarching rationale of this section seeks to critically reflect on the originality of my phenomenological approach to exhibiting the filmpoem. Drawing from the analysis set out in the previous chapter, my critical reflection follows a two-pronged approach. Firstly, I will illustrate the significance of Giuliana Bruno's notion of the haptic path when configuring the gallery space for *always carry a camera*. The second approach, underpinned by Merleau-Ponty's (1964) idea of the reflexive body and Pantenburg's (2012) concept of the embodied viewer, places the attentive spectator at the centre of the exhibition to illustrate how a phenomenological experience can occur when viewing my multi-screen installation. The following section begins with an explanation comprising the entire configuration of the gallery space at An Lanntait Arts Centre.

My single-channel films, *West of Dalabrog*, *Dislocation*, *The Essence of Place* and *Imprint* were exhibited together on the same screen, and like the floor plan shows (fig. 50, p. 125) both installations shared the gallery space of the Arts Centre. Because of this, sound transference from the installations was going to be an issue; therefore, I decided early on to produce the multi-channel installation as a silent filmpoem. In turn, this allowed me to utilise the audio echoes from the single-screen installation to create an ambient soundtrack for *always carry a camera*. The single-channel films were screened in chronological order of production and looped, and the surrounding space was utilised minimally allowing the viewers to move around with ease or to sit and view the films from the space towards the back of the gallery. The projected image for the single-channel installation was significantly larger than for the three-channel installation. The screen size meant that the exhibition of these filmpoems simultaneously provided the intimacy of a traditional cinematic screening while juxtaposing the self-consciousness of a gallery context, foregrounded in Chrissie Iles' work. Accommodating the other section of the gallery space, *always carry a camera*, as a three-channel site-specific moving image installation references the landscape of the Isles of Lewis and Harris in an attempt to connect with the viewer's cultural and

sensorial memories. The following section will concentrate on the configuration of this three-channel installation.

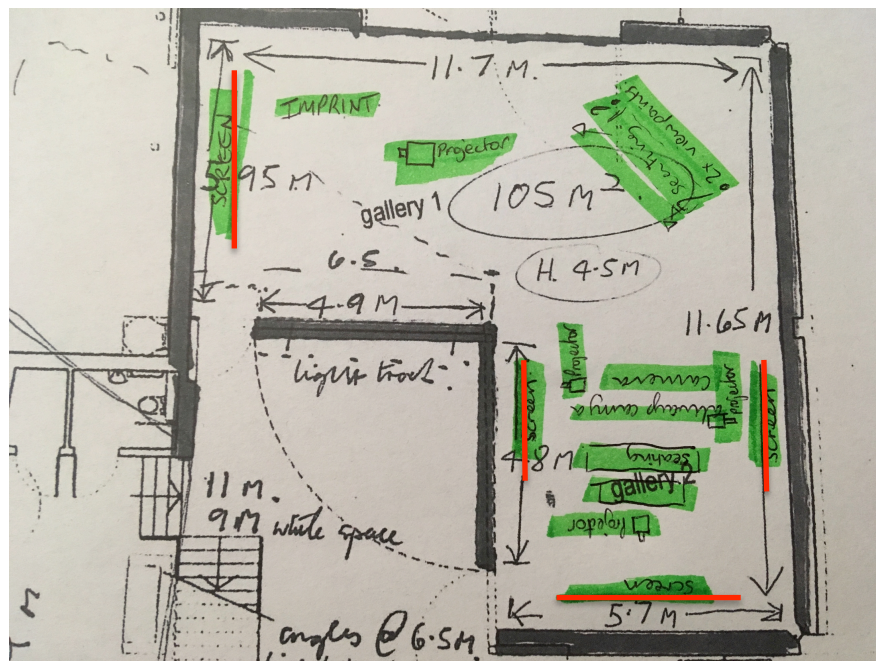


Figure 50. An Lanntair Arts Centre gallery space. Exhibition layout: single-channel installation (top left red line), three-channel installation (bottom right red lines).

The purpose of *always carry a camera* aims to challenge the central and peripheral vision in order to evoke a possible phenomenological experience for the spectator. The spatial configuration of the gallery space heightens the possibility of this experiential occurrence by guiding the viewer on a perceptual pathway through the space towards the seating arrangement. It should be noted that it is not compulsory for the spectators to be seated. The seats are there to incorporate inclusivity. Therefore, the understanding of the installation ultimately does not rely on the seated position, but it does add to the full experience.

On entering the gallery space, the spectator should notice two projected images opposite each other on the gallery walls, and another projected image to the far right, in their peripheral vision. Initially, the position of the viewer should face forward into the gallery space and the third image should be behind them. As they move further into the gallery, it is hoped that the viewers will become aware of themselves becoming aware of the projectors and perhaps becoming more involved with the content of the moving images. The viewer's awareness of the central screen should also become more apparent, which, in turn, should physically force their body to turn around to face it. When the spectator reaches the optimum viewing position,

the perpendicular screens serve as the peripheral vision, and the third projected image serves as the central vision (fig's. 51 and 52). However, this viewpoint continually denies the viewer the satisfaction of watching all three screens together as their vision and physical position are constantly challenged, thereby highlighting the significance of the in-between spaces as an exhibition strategy for interpretation.

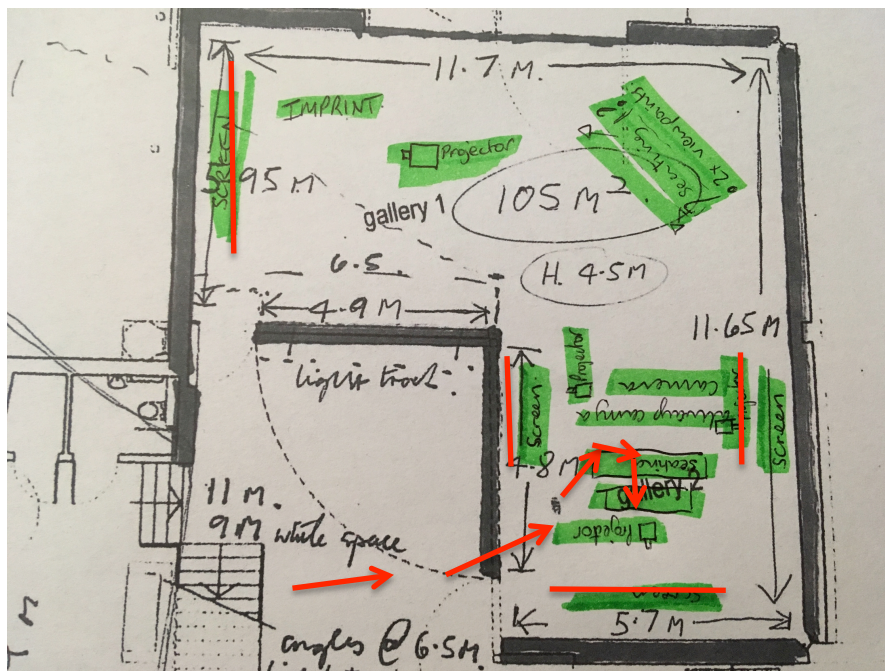


Figure 51. Arrows illustrating the optimal pathway for the viewer.

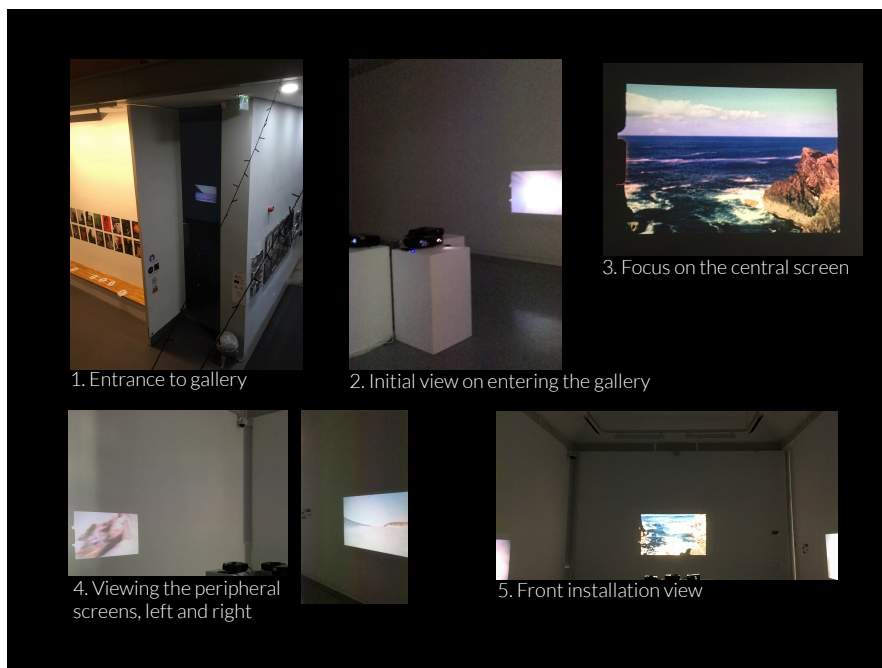


Figure 52. Visual representation of walking through the three-channel installation.

Once the viewer faces the central screen, it should become apparent that the two screens in their peripheral vision start to become a distraction or the focus of their attention. The relationship between the viewer's attention and their understanding of the artwork is emphasised further by the extremely slow-moving image on the central screen juxtaposed with the faster moving more visually intriguing montages on the oppositional walls. As Maeve Connolly suggests, the tendency for multi-screens is to draw the spectator's attention away from the single screen towards the in-between spaces of the installation to engender a more profound experience. Therefore, in this scenario, attention is drawn initially to the central screen but ultimately directs the viewer's perception towards the outer-edges, and hopefully towards a more profound interpretation. Of course, there are many different ways the gallery-goer could experience and understand this installation, as Merleau-Ponty's statement alludes to (p. 114). Furthermore, the exhibition space could become transformational in different ways, for example, if the projectors were ceiling mounted or if I had exhibited my filmpoems as an expanded cinema experience using performance interweaved with Super 8mm film projectors to enhance connotations. To consider the staging of *always carry a camera* further, I will reflect on how I approached my installations using the haptic path.

As mentioned previously, for the film spectator or gallery-goer the notion of the haptic path is perceptual. It parallels the act of walking through a museum or art gallery looking at static works of art with the imaginary journey taken when viewing moving images. Bruno's (2007, p. 24) work relates concepts surrounding eighteenth-century garden design with associations connected to the sensory emotions a person embodies when engaging with a filmic montage. She suggests that as '(A) memory theater of sensual pleasures, the garden was an exterior that put the spectator in touch with inner space' meaning that moving through the architectural space of a garden (or a film, or an art gallery) becomes a personal experience (2007, p. 25). For me, the personal act that Bruno highlights conceivably mirrors the intimacy engendered from producing filmpoetry, which, in turn, is reflected in my approach to exhibition practices.

In the film-phenomenological sense, this kinesthetic journey or haptic path, comprising of editing style, images, imagination and memory, interweaves the spectator's internal and external physical boundaries to potentially evoke tactile and visceral responses in relation to the exhibition space and artwork. For instance, as

illustrated earlier, *always carry a camera* provides a kinesthetic journey for the gallery-goer the moment they connect with the physical layout of the screens. The physical act of negotiating the external components of this installation, such as the semi-darkened space, the projectors placed on plinths, the three strategically positioned screens and the seated area, seek to engage with the gallery-goer's sense of orientation and imagination. Concomitantly with this physical action, it is hoped that the optical imagery will evoke internal emotions and prompt both tactile memories and a multi-sensory experience.

As Bruno (2007, p. 25) suggests, if the haptic path connects the internal and external sensory emotions to space and the feeling of pleasure, then it is conceivable in the film-phenomenological sense, that the imagination, emotion and physicality of the gallery-goer can intersubjectively embody my audiovisual contemplations. For instance, as well as memories, the images on the opposite screens attempt to connect my peripheral vision with the viewer's peripheral vision, mentioned earlier (p. 27). At the time of making *always carry a camera*, I became aware of my peripheral vision by employing the technique of filming with both eyes open. As I reflected on what I had filmed, I remembered the objects I had perceived in my peripheral vision as I was filming, i.e., the dead puffin and the tracking shot of the passing landscape; therefore, to recreate these experiences and to mirror them on-screen, I retraced my steps to film these objects and views. Similarly, I used this technique to recreate memories of the Hebridean landscape further emphasised by the tactility of Super 8mm film. For instance, (on the right-hand screen) I applied a washed out effect onto the original image of the pan left of Hushinish beach (0:23) (fig's. 53-54) intercut with me kicking sand to reflect a sense of nostalgia, perhaps even highlighting the unreliability of my memories of prior visits to the place. Furthermore, to present this experimental montage as a memory and to combine it with a sense of tangible emotion, in the edit, I juxtaposed the right-hand screen with the haptic image on the left-hand screen to emphasise the temporality connected to recollection.



Figure 53. Washed out image of Hushinish beach (bottom right), *always carry a camera* (2018).



Figure 54. Haptic image (bottom left), kicking up sand (bottom right), *always carry a camera* (2018).

Placing the film-poem in a multi-screen exhibition context certainly distances it from the current viewing format, i.e., via the Internet, as suggested earlier. Moreover, as my critical reflection thus far has emphasised, it is apparent that this recontextualisation inspires greater degrees of critical investigations with regards to artists' moving image exhibition practices. Additionally, by placing the haptic path as a central exhibition strategy, my (inter)subjective perspective, transposed through film form has the potential to encourage a visceral, embodied response from the gallery-goer.

Reflecting further on my phenomenological approach to the exhibition of the film-poem, the configuration of my installations at An Lanntair will be discussed in terms of how the attentive spectator engages and interprets this experience.

I have already suggested a typical route through the installation space for *always carry a camera*; however, this does not mean that every spectator will comply accordingly. As both my installations attempt to create multiple viewpoints and interpretations for the spectator, considering this further could potentially create a more in-depth understanding concerning the exhibition of my film-poems. In other words, acknowledging the significance of the in-between spaces of a moving image installation allows the spectator an opportunity to absorb sensorial audiovisual experiences as an intersubjective viewing subject, and means that the exhibition can provide a further reflexive dimension.

The idea of the *reflexive body*, elicited through the content of the work embodied within the exhibition space aligns with Merleau-Ponty's work, mentioned earlier. The configuration of *always carry a camera* enhances the notion of the reflexive body by connecting the attentive spectator with the images and the surrounding space in an embodied reciprocal embrace. For example, the two peripheral screens provide two viewpoints, arranged so that the images can just be seen out the corner of the spectator's eye as they focus on the central screen. The purpose of viewing the images in this way engenders a reflexive attitude that connects the visual attentiveness of the spectator with the feeling of catching something at the last moment. Images, such as the shadow of my hand caressing the lichen covered rock, and the kaleidoscopic lens flares attempt to highlight the sense of experiencing fleeting glances (fig. 55).



Figure 55. Capturing things out of the corner of the eye, *always carry a camera* (2018).

The intentional configuration of *always carry a camera*, therefore, seeks to engage with the potential self-reflexivity of the spectator's response. Moreover, if the spectator continues to watch the looped film, it is hoped that they will become aware of the purpose of the screens functioning as the peripheral vision, which, as I have suggested earlier (pp. 125-129) could in effect lead to them intersubjectively embodying my visual experiences. As mentioned previously, if the spectator wishes to view the screens individually, then, they have to move their bodies to achieve this; however, as an interesting consequence, if the spectators choose to watch one screen at a time, this could fracture the intended phenomenological experience but simultaneously produce a different experiential response. Perhaps a response that is underscored by incoherence, much like the sculptural quality of Liisa Robert's installation, discussed earlier (pp. 114-116).

As Chrissie Iles' (2000, p. 254) work has suggested, once the spectator engages with the installation space and screen configurations, their awareness and sense of self and body are engendered. Moreover, the awareness of space allows the spectator to become conscious of the relationship between themselves and the other gallery-goers, similar to the Minimalist art movement. This particular interpretation of

exhibition space, therefore, becomes both an internal and external investigation for the embodied attentive spectator. In other words, the private world connected to self-awareness seeks to understand emotions concerned with the external sense of self. In the film-phenomenological sense, the haptic and tactile elements emphasised by the formal structures, such as editing, camera movement, lens manipulation and superimposition, discussed throughout Chapter 3, further enhance this embodied relationship.

Considering these points, the juxtaposition of the external public world with my inner intentions manifested on-screen can potentially prompt an embodied sense of traversing boundaries as the spectator interprets the exhibition. The multi-screen set-up can potentially embody the spectator's sense of collapsing between different worlds. For example, the configuration of *always carry a camera* could be viewed as a set of interlinked screens, at which point the interpretation of the film-poem arises from the screens relying on each other for poetic coherence. Through the images and soundscapes melding with the spectator's interpretation of my (inter)subjective world, an affective exchange is prompted. In turn, the awareness of the gallery-goers' own bodies interweaves with the physical, virtual and temporal worlds of the exhibition space. As a moving image exhibition experience, *always carry a camera* signals a process that emphasises an intersubjective relationship between the itinerant, attentive spectator and how they critically reflect on both the knowledge of the moving image context and gallery context to create new meanings. Moreover, as discussed throughout, the engagement of the viewer is continually in-flux and continuously interchanging through the contexts of the exhibition strategies, as Connolly has also suggested (2009, p. 24).

In summary, engaging with artists' moving image exhibition strategies to exhibit the film-poem has provided a rich analysis for this practice-based project, not least in recognising the significance of including film form, such as camera movement and editing into the gallery-goer's perception and sensorial experience. The final section of this thesis will conclude my exploration regarding the film-phenomenological potential of the production and exhibition of the film-poem.

Conclusion

The dual approach taken to explore the significance of a film-phenomenological analysis of the film-poem was both philosophical and practice-based, as explained at the beginning of this thesis (pp. 10-11 and 28-33). The overarching aim of the written component was to provide a philosophical interpretation of the film-poem through a critical analysis of experimental film and contemporary artists' moving image production and exhibition practices, a study, absent before embarking on this project. My analysis began, firstly through establishing the film-poem as a source for philosophising. Questioning the self, in relation to the phenomenal world through filmmaking practices and projection, was a distinction that pushed my research to engage with an interpretation beyond commonplace language. Secondly, my research foregrounded key film-phenomenological concepts, e.g., the haptic and tactile image, embodiment, intersubjectivity, and perception and expression, with relation to the film-poem as an art form, examined throughout Chapter 3 and 4.

In my haptic and tactile exploration of the filmic image, addressed in Chapter 3, I highlighted Laura U. Marks' and Jennifer Barker's film-phenomenological perspectives. This exploration sought to understand the filmmaking practices of Leighton Peirce and Margaret Tait, in relation to the film-poem. Exemplary in the case study of the haptic image was Peirce's unique approach to creating visual sensations on screen. As I revealed, Peirce's use of camera movement and exposure in *White Ash* (2010) created a sense of eroticism within the haptic image. Through analysing a key scene from the film, I revealed how haptic visuality, the physical and sensuous act of perceiving blurred images, can potentially evoke a desire in the viewer to see more. My analysis of Peirce's work continued with an exploration highlighting the significance of using film form to emphasise the haptic image. In his 16mm film, *50 feet of String* (1995), Peirce used lens manipulation to provide a mutable form of haptic visuality for the viewer through the act of pulling focus. Examples from this film illustrated how Peirce articulated an ephemeral sense of hapticity through the process of shifting between a shallow and a deep depth of field. In *Lawn Care 2*, for instance, I explored how the blurred image moved within the parameters of the same shot. As the background image merged with the foreground, the hapticity was forced to redefine itself through micro-moments of transformation.

In the second case study, I analysed Margaret Tait's observational approach to filmmaking through a film-phenomenological lens. This section of the thesis clearly connected her artistic style with Barker's perspective concerning cinematic tactility or the interrelationality of how the human body responds when viewing a film. What is evident throughout my analysis of *These Walls* (Tait, 1974), is how cinematic tactility, as a concept, can be developed to explore the subtlety of Tait's filmmaking, as opposed to the more animated examples of narrative film illustrated throughout Barker's research. Noticing how Tait moves with her camera, and how these smaller movements are accentuated through the image, parallels with the personal and unique nature of the film-poem, more broadly.

To conclude Chapter 3, the critical reflection regarding my own film-phenomenological approach to the production of the film-poem drew from aspects of the case studies. Considering both Peirce's and Tait's approach to capturing an image whilst making my films meant that I was mindful of how I shot haptic and tactile images. For instance, deciding when to use a CU or an ECU shot, or searching for objects that have textured surfaces, as I have mentioned in Chapter 1 (pp. 20-22). Furthermore, drawing from both their approaches to movement, I made the transition from filming using a tripod to using the hand-held technique, which significantly enhanced the haptic and tactile elements of my images. In summary, it is hoped that the outcome of the analysis in Chapter 3 has validated my initial aims and intentions for the project, and can contribute positively to future explorations concerning the film-phenomenological potential of the production of the film-poem.

As a reflexive practitioner, again, viewed through a film-phenomenological lens, the practice-based component of this project endeavoured to transpose my (inter)subjective position through the principles of experimental filmmaking, as I explained in Chapter 1 (pp. 10-11 and 13). However, what became evident, as my film practice evolved, was a more profound understanding regarding the interrelationship between myself, my work, and how my work is received, an association, which is always a two-way process, as Chamarette's (2012) work maintains. Subsequently, the possibility of inviting an audience to respond intersubjectively to my work underpinned Chapter 4 of this thesis. To support this intersubjective perspective, and to emphasise the interrelationality between the production elements of the film-poem, discussed in Chapter 3, and how my work could

be received, the inclusion of artists' moving exhibition strategies, a primary goal from the outset of this project, was appropriate.

Amongst others, theories from Chrissie Iles and Maeve Connolly, plus Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of the reflexive body were a driving force in achieving this goal. Again, a critical reflection exploring my work as film installations within an exhibition context sought to understand the film-poem genre from a different perspective. In turn, this practice-as-research project has heralded a shift in viewing contexts for the film-poem, discussed throughout Chapter 4. The in-depth analysis exploring my site-specific film installations at RSPB Loch Lomond and An Lanntair Arts Centre articulates this shift, clearly illustrating that the exhibition of the film-poem, a genre synonymous with traditional film screenings, can significantly impact the contemporary art gallery or exhibition space. It is, therefore, my belief that this thesis has provided a starting point to encourage a more diverse critical framework for the film-poem to be analysed.

One final reflection on the film-poem leads me to suggest that the crucial element maintained throughout this thesis lies with the integrity of this unique art form. Derived from the artist or filmmaker's personal thoughts and emotions, combined often with a *do it yourself* approach to filmmaking, I believe that my work explored throughout this project and the film-poem, more broadly, will continue to provide a source of film-philosophical thought. I also maintain that this style of filmmaking can, and will evolve to permeate across a multi-disciplinary landscape in the future.

Bibliography

Abel, R. (1988) *French Film Theory and Criticism. A History/Anthology, 1907-1929, Volume I*. New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press.

Aicken, F. (1952a) 'Some Misconceptions of the Film Medium', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 4 (2), May, doi:10.2307/3204304, pp. 129-133.

Aicken, F. (1952b) 'Film as Poetry', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 4 (3), Oct, doi:10.2307/3203745, pp. 206-210.

Apollinaire, G, Eimert, D and Podoksik, A. (2014) *Cubism*. New York: Parkstone International. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central (Date Accessed: 16 September 2016).

Apollonio, U. (1973) *Futurist Manifestos*. Translated from Italian by R. Brain and others. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.

Balázs, B. (1952) *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*. Translated by E. Bone, Media History Digital Library. Available at: [www.archive.org/stream/theoryofthefilm000665mbp - page/n55/mode/2up](http://www.archive.org/stream/theoryofthefilm000665mbp/page/n55/mode/2up) (Date Accessed: 4 August 2016), pp. 52-59.

Balsom, E. (2013) *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Balsom, E. (2017) *After Uniqueness. A History of Film and Video Art in Circulation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Barker, J.M. (2009) *The Tactile Eye. Touch and the Cinematic Experience*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Belz, C.I. (1965) The Film Poetry of Man Ray. *Criticism: a Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 7 (2), pp. 117-130.

Benjamin, W. (1936) 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. In: Braudy, L and Cohen, M, (eds.), *Film Theory & Criticism* 7th edn. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 665-685.

Benjamin, W. (1979) *One Way Street and Other Writings. Chapter II, On the Mimetic Faculty*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter. NLB, pp. 160-163.

Bergson, H. (1920) *Mind – Energy. Lectures and Essays*. Translated by H. Wildon Carr. Westport, Connecticut/London: Greenwood Press.

Bergson, H. (1991) *Matter and Memory*. Translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. New York: Zone Books.

- Bishop, C. (2005) *Installation Art. A Critical History*. London: Tate Publishing.
- Brakhage, S. (2001) 'Film and Poetry'. In: *Selected Writings on Filmmaking by Stan Brakhage. Selections from Brakhage Scrapbook, Poetry and Film*. New York: McPherson and Company, Documentext, pp. 174-191.
- Bruno, G. (2002) *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*. New York: Verso.
- Bruno, G. (2007) *Public Intimacy. Architecture and the Visual Arts*. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: The MIT Press.
- Canudo, R. (1911) 'The Birth of the Sixth Art'. In: R. Abel, (ed.), *French Film Theory and Criticism, A History/Anthology, 1907-1929, Volume 1, 1988*. New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, pp. 58-66.
- Cavarero, A. (2012) 'Multiple Voices'. In: J. Sterne, (ed.), *The Sound Studies Reader*. Routledge: Oxon and New York, pp. 520-532.
- Chamarette, J. (2012) *Phenomenology and the Future of Film. Rethinking Subjectivity beyond French Cinema*. Palgrave Macmillan: UK and New York.
- Childs, P. (2008) *Modernism*. 2nd edn. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780203933787> (Downloaded: 6 June 2016).
- Chion, M. (1994) *Audio-Vision Sound on Screen*. Translated by Claudia Gorbman, (ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Christie, I. (1979) 'French Avant-Garde Film in the Twenties: From "Specificity to Surrealism"', in Phillip Drummond, Deke Dusingberre, and A. L. Rees, (eds.), *Film as Film - Formal experiment in film 1910-1975: Hayward Gallery South Bank, London SE1, 3 May-17 June 1979*. Arts Council of Great Britain, pp. 37-45
- Christie, I. (1998) 'The Avant-Gardes and European Cinema before 1930'. In: John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 449-454.
- Connolly, M. (2009) *The Place of Artists' Cinema. Space Site and Screen*. Intellect Books: Bristol, UK/Chicago, USA.
- Coombs, L. (2006) 'Fifty Feet of String: Interview with Leighton Pierce', *Millennium Film Journal*, (45/46), Fall, pp. 63-73.
- Crary, J. (1999) *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Curtis, D. (1971) *Experimental Cinema. A Fifty Year Evolution*. London: Studio Vista Ltd.

- Curtis, D. (1999) 'Britain's Oldest Experimentalist...Margaret Tait', *Vertigo Magazine*, 1 (9), Summer.
Available from: www.closeupfilmcentre.com/vertigo_magazine/volume-1-issue-9-summer-1999/britain-s-oldest-experimentalist-margaret-tait/ (Date Accessed: 19 July 2016).
- Curtis, D. (2007) *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain*. London: BFI Publishing.
- Dean, T and Millar, J. (2005) *Art Works. Place*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Deleuze, G. (2013a) 'Chapter 6. The Affection-Image. Face and Close-up'. In: *Cinema I. The Movement-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 97-113.
- Deleuze, G. (2013b) 'Chapter 4: The Crystals of Time', in *Cinema II. The Time-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 71-101.
- Doane, M.A. (2003) 'The Close-up: Scale and Detail in the Cinema', *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 14 (3), pp. 89-111.
- Drake, C. (2000) 'Chapter 3. Cinema Exploded: Film, Video and the Gallery'. In: *Light Readings. Film Criticism and Screen Arts*. London: Wallflower Press, pp. 159-166.
- Drummond, P. (1979) 'Notions of the Avant-Garde Cinema'. In: Phillip Drummond, Deke Dusinberre, and A. L. Rees, (eds.), *Film as Film - Formal Experiment in Film 1910-1975: Hayward Gallery South Bank, London SE1, 3 May-17 June 1979*. Arts Council of Great Britain, pp. 9-16.
- Eisenstein, S. (1938/1989) 'Montage and Architecture'. In: *Assemblage* (10), Dec, pp. 110-131.
- Eisenstein, S. (1949) *Film Form. Essays in Film Theory*. Translated by Jay Leyda (ed.), New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Inc.
- Epstein, J and Liebman, S. (1977) 'Magnification and other Writings'. Translated by Stuart Liebman. *October* (3), Spring, doi:10.2307/778434, pp. 9-25.
- Elwes, C. (2015) *Installation and the Moving Image*. London & New York: Wallflower Press.
- Fanderl, H. (2010) 'Film Live', *Sequence*, Issue 1. Available at: <http://helgafanderl.com/text/> (Date Accessed 7th March 2018).
- Faure, E. (1922) 'The Art of Cineplastics'. In: R. Abel (ed.), *French Film Theory and Criticism. Volume 1, 1907-1929*. (1988) edn. New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, pp. 258-268.

Ferencz-Flatz, C and Hanich, J. (2016) ‘Editor’s Introduction: What is Film Phenomenology?’ In: *Studia Phaenomenologica XVI*, pp. 11-61. Accessible at: <http://cliostirling.azurewebsites.net/GetUpload/Borrowing/61081> (Date Accessed 16 July 2017).

Gidal, P. (1989) *Materialist Film*. London and New York: Routledge.

Hein, B. (1979) ‘The Futurist Film’. In: Phillip Drummond, Deke Dusinberre, and A. L. Rees, (eds.), *Film as Film - Formal experiment in film 1910-1975: Hayward Gallery South Bank, London SE1, 3 May-17 June 1979*. Arts Council of Great Britain, pp. 19-21.

Ihde, D. (2007) *Listening and Voice*. 2nd edn. New York: State University New York Press.

Iles, C. (2000) ‘Video and Film Space’. In: E. Suderburg (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention. Situating Installation Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 252-262.

Iles, C. (2001) ‘Between the Still and Moving Image’. In: Chrissie Iles, (ed.), *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977*. New York: Whitney Museum, pp. 33-70.

Jakobson, R. (1987) ‘Chapter 8. Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances’, ‘Part V. The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles’. In: R. Jakobson *Language in Literature*. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, (eds.), Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 95-114.

Kattelle, A.D. (1986) ‘The Evolution of Amateur Motion Picture Equipment 1895-1965’, in *Journal of Film and Video Home Movies and Amateur Filmmaking*, (38) 3/4, Summer-Fall, University of Illinois Press. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20687736> (Date accessed: 6 March 2018), pp. 47-57.

Kelman, K. (1963) ‘Film as Poetry’, *Film Culture*, (29), pp. 22-27. Available at: http://www.ubu.com/papers/kelman_ken-film_poetry.html (Date Accessed: 20 May 2016).

Krikorian, T. (2003) ‘‘On the Mountain’ and ‘Land Makar’: Landscape and Townscape in Margaret Tait’s Work’. In: Danino, N and Mazère, M, (eds.), *The Undercut Reader. Critical Writings on Artists’ Film and Video*. Great Britain: Wallflower Press, pp. 103-105.

Kwon, M. (1997) ‘One Place After Another. Notes on Site Specificity’, *October* (80), Spring. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/778809> (Date Accessed 24th July 2018), pp. 85-110.

Leighton, T. (2008) ‘Introduction’. In: Tanya Leighton, (ed.), *Art and the Moving Image. A Critical Reader*. London: Tate Publishing, pp. 7-13.

- Leder, D. (1990) *The Absent Body*. University of Chicago Press.
- MacDonald, S. (2006) 'J. Leighton Pierce'. In: *A Critical Cinema 5, Volume No. 5: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (1). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 255-280.
- MacDonald, S. (2007) 'Poetry and the Avant-Garde Film: Three Recent Contributions'. In: *Poetics Today*, 28 (1), doi: 10.1215/03335372-2006-014 (Downloaded: 23 June 2016), pp. 2-15.
- Marinetti, F.T. (1909) 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism 1909'. In: U. Apollonio (ed.), *Futurist Manifestos*. 1973 edn. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.
- Marks, L. U. (2000) *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Marks, L.U. (2012) 'Immersed in the Single Channel: Experimental Media from Theater to Gallery'. In: *Millennium Film Journal*, (55), Spring, (Downloaded: 9 November 2017), pp. 14-23.
- Mekas, J. (1957) 'Hans Richter on the Nature of Film Poetry', *Film Culture*, 3 (1), (Downloaded: 16 March 2016), pp. 5-8.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964) 'Part II. Philosophy of Art. Chapter 5. 'Eye and Mind''. In: *The Primacy of Perception. And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*, J. M. Edie (ed.). Northwestern University Press, pp. 121-149.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968) *The Visible and Invisible. Followed by Working Notes*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. C. Lefort (ed.), Evanston: Northwest University Press, pp. 130-155.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012) *The Phenomenology of Perception*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, J. (2000) 'The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity. In: E. Suderburg (ed.), *Space, Site, Intervention. Situating Installation Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 23-27.
- Michaud, A-P. (2013) 'Helga Fanderl Films and Screens'. In: *Katalog, Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen*. Accessible at: <http://helgafanderl.com/text/> (Date Accessed 7th March 2018).
- Moran, L., No Date. 'What is Installation Art?' Available at: <https://imma.ie/what-is-art/series-1-1970-now/installation-art/> (Accessed: 3 September 2018).
- Neely, S. (2008) 'Stalking the Image: Margaret Tait and intimate filmmaking practices', *Screen*, 49 (2) Summer. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjn029> (Date Accessed: 3 March 2016), pp. 216-221.

- Neely, S. (2012) *Margaret Tait: Poems, Stories and Writings*. Manchester: Fyfield Books, Carcanet Press Ltd.
- Neely, S. (2017a) *Between Categories. The Films of Margaret Tait: Portraits, poetry, Sound and Place*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers.
- Neely, S. (2017b) 'Discoveries in a Biscuit Tin: The role of archives and collections in the history of artists' moving image in Scotland'. In: *Moving Image Review and Art Journal*, 6 (1&2) Intellect Journals, pp. 133-146.
- Nichols, B. (2001) 'Introduction'. In: B. Nichols (ed.), *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, pp. 3-20.
- O' Pray, M. (2003) *Avant-garde Film. Forms, Themes and Passions*. London and New York: Wallflower Press.
- Ong, W. (1962) *The Barbarian Within: and other Fugitive Essays and Studies*, Chapter Four 'Voice as a Summons for Belief. Literature, Faith, and the Divided Self'. Macmillan, pp. 49-48.
- Osborne, P. (2004). 'Distracted Reception: Time, Art and Technology'. In Jessica Morgan and Gregor Miur (eds.) *Time Zones*. London: Tate Publishing, pp. 66-75.
- Parker, K. (2014) 'Blobs in Tartan Colours: Margaret Tait's Painted Eightsome'. In: *Frames Cinema Journal*. Available at: <http://framescinemajournal.com/article/blobs-in-tartan-colours-margaret-taits-painted-eightsome/> (Date Accessed 13 March 2018).
- Pasolini, P.P. (1976) 'The Cinema of Poetry'. In: B. Nichols (ed.), *Movies and Methods. Vol 1*. University of California, pp. 542-558.
- Pasolini, P.P. (1988) *Heretical Empiricism*. Translated by Ben Lawton and Louise K. Barnett. L. K. Barnett (ed.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Pantenburg, V. (2012). '1970 and Beyond. Experimental Cinema and Installation Art'. In: Gertrud Koch, Volker Pantenburg and Simon Rothöhler (eds.), *Screen Dynamics. Mapping the Borders of Cinema*. Austria: Austrian Film Museum, pp. 78-92.
- Plath, S. (1965) *Ariel*. Faber and Faber: London.
- Ramsay, S. (2014) *Articulating the Avant-Garde. Exploring the Reliability of Memory through the Filmpoem Genre*. MLitt dissertation, University of Stirling. Unpublished.
- Rees, A. L. (1999) *A History of Experimental Film and Video. From the Canonical Avant-Garde to Contemporary British Practice*. London: BFI Publishing.
- Riegl, A and Binstock, B. (1995) 'Excerpts from "The Dutch Group Portrait"'. In: *October* (74) Autumn. doi:10.2307/778818 (Date Accessed: 8 March 2016), pp. 3-35.

Riegl, A. (1985) 'IV The Art Industry'. In: *Late Roman Art Industry*. Translated from the original Viennese edition with foreword and annotations by Rolf Winkes. Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, pp. 147-168.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (2018). Available at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/our-mission/> (Accessed: 2 September 2018).

Shepherd, N. (2014). *In the Cairngorms*. Galileo Publishers: Cambridge, pp. 18-21.

Shklovsky, V. (1927) 'Poetry and Prose in the Cinema'. In: Richard Taylor and Ian Christie, (eds.), *The Film Factory. Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896-1939*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp.176-178. Original source: *Poetika kino* (Moscow, 1927), pp. 139-42.

Sitney, P.A. (2000a) *Visionary Film. The American Avant-Garde 1943-2000*. 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sitney, P.A. (2000b) (ed.) *Film Culture Reader*. First Cooper Square Press: New York.

Smith, M. (1998) 'Modernism and the Avant-Gardes'. In: John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 395-412.

Smith, M and Wartenberg, T.E. (2006) 'Introduction'. In: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 64 (1), Special Issue: Thinking through Cinema: Film as Philosophy. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3700487>, (Downloaded: 16 May 2019), pp. 1-9.

Sobchack, V. (1992) *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Sobchack, V. (2004) 'What My Fingers Knew. The Cinesthetic Subject, or Vision in the Flesh'. In: *Carnal Thoughts. Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 53-84.

Tait, M, (1959). 'Now'. In: S. Neely, (ed.), *Margaret Tait. Poems, Stories and Writings*. Fyfield Books, Carcanet Press Ltd: Manchester, pp. 43-45.

Todd, P and Cook, B. (2004) (eds.) *Subjects and Sequences: a Margaret Tait Reader*. London: Lux.

Todd, P. (2000) *Film Poems 2 – programme notes*. Arts Council of England. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/231404217/Film-Poems-2-Programme-Notes-2000> (Downloaded: 20 September 2018).

Todd, P. (2001) *Garden Pieces – programme notes*. Arts Council of England. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/95537059/Garden-Pieces-2001-Programme-Notes> (Downloaded: 20 September 2018).

- Todd, P. (2003) *Film poem 4: Messages – programme notes*. Arts Council of England. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/17740843/Film-Poems-4-Programme-Notes-2003> (Downloaded: 20 September 2018).
- Tyler, P. (1960) 'A Preface to the Problems of the Experimental Film'. In: *The Three Faces of the Film. The Art. The Dream. The Cult*. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, pp. 56-63.
- Vogel, A. (1963) 'Poetry and Film: A Symposium'. In: P.A. Sitney (ed.), *The Film Culture Reader*. New York: Cooper Square Press, pp. 171-186.
- Wasson, H. (2005) *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Wees, W.C. (1984) 'Words and Images in the Poetry-Film'. In: W.C. Wees and M. Dorland (eds.), *Words and Moving Images. Essays on Verbal and Visual Expression in Film and Television*. Québec: Médiatexte Publications Inc, pp. 107-113.
- Wees, W.C. (1999) 'Poetry-Films and Film Poems'. In: Peter Todd (ed.), *Film Poems – Programme Notes*. Arts Council of England, pp. 1-2.
- Williams, C. (1997) '50 Feet of String', *Afterimage*, 25 (3), November-December, (Downloaded: 5 February 2018), pp. 15-16.

Filmography

Electric Earth (Doug Aitken, 2017, multi-screen HD digital video installation, colour).

Handphone Table (Laurie Anderson, 1978) [exhibit].

The Naked Night/Sawdust and Tinsel (Ingmar Bergman, 1953, 35mm, b&w).

Dog Star Man (Stan Brakhage, 1961-1964, 16mm, silent, colour).

Murder Psalm (Stan Brakhage, 1980, 16mm, silent, colour).

4'33" (John Cage, 1952, musical composition and performance)

The Blood of a Poet (Jean Cocteau, 1932, 35mm, b&w).

Antigone (Tacita Dean, 2018, two-channel 35mm anamorphic film, colour).

Meshes of the Afternoon (Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, 1943, 16mm, silent and sound, b&w).

Anemic Cinéma (Marcel Duchamp, 1926, 35mm, silent, b&w).

Central Baazar (Stephen Dwoskin, 1976, 16mm, colour).

The Faithful Heart (Jean Epstein, 1923, 35mm silent, b&w).

Peyote Queen (Storm de Hirsch, 1965, 16mm, colour).

Film in Which there Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles, Etc. (Owen Land/George Landow, 1965-66, 16mm, silent, colour).

Ballet Mécanique (Fernand Léger, 1924, 35mm, silent, b&w).

A Colour Box (Len Lye, 1935, 35mm, colour).

Free Radicals (Len Lye, 1958, 16mm, b&w).

Le Retour à la Raison (Man Ray, 1923, 35mm, Rayograph, b&w).

L'étoile de mer (Man Ray, 1928, 35mm, silent, b&w).

Eniaios (Gregory Markopoulos, c1947-1991, 16mm, colour).

Sniff (Ming-Yuen S Ma, 1996, NTSC video, colour and b&w).

Lip Synch (Bruce Nauman, 1969, video, b&w).

Live/Taped Video Corridor (Bruce Nauman, 1970, video camera, video recording and playback).

50 Feet of String (Leighton Pierce, 1995, 16mm, colour).

The Back Steps (Leighton Pierce, 2001, HD digital video, colour).

Water Seeking its Level (Leighton Pierce, 2002, HD digital video, colour).

37th & Lex (Leighton Pierce, 2002, HD digital video, colour).

Warm Occlusion (Leighton Peirce, 2006, 13-channel video installation, colour).

Retrograde Premonition (Leighton Pierce, 2010, HD digital video, colour).

White Ash (Leighton Pierce, 2015, HD digital video, colour).

Threshold of Affinity (Leighton Peirce, 2016, 14-channel video installation, colour).

Pather Panchali (Satyajit Ray, 1955, 35mm, b&w).

Absent-Present (Susannah Ramsay, 2014, HD digital video, colour).

Dislocation (Susannah Ramsay, 2016, HD digital video, colour).

West of Dalabrog (Susannah Ramsay, 2016, HD digital video, colour).

The Essence of Place (Susannah Ramsay, 2017, HD digital video, colour).

Imprint (Susannah Ramsay, 2018, Super 8mm, colour).

always carry a camera (Susannah Ramsay, 2018, Super 8mm, colour).

Love Unto Death (Alain Resnais, 1984, 35mm, colour).

Trap Door (Liisa Roberts, 1997, four 16mm projections, b&w).

Plato's Phaedrus (D. N. Rodowick, c2016, HD digital video).

Black Rain (Semiconductor, 2009, visual data).

Manhatta (Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand, 1921, 35mm, silent, b&w).

Optical Sound Films (Guy Sherwin, 1971-2007, 16mm, b&w).

Messages (Guy Sherwin, 1981-1983, 16mm, silent, b&w).

Mile End Purgatorio (Guy Sherwin and Martin Doyle, 1991, 16mm, colour).

Pryia (Alia Syed, 2011, 16mm, colour).

Portrait of Ga (Margaret Tait, 1952, 16mm, colour).

Calypso (Margaret Tait, 1955, 35mm, colour).

Orquill Burn (Margaret Tait, 1955, 16mm, colour).

Where I am is Here (Margaret Tait, 1964, 16mm, b&w).

Splashing (Margaret Tait, 1966, 16mm, b&w).

John Macfadyen (Margaret Tait, 1970, 35mm, colour).

Painted Eightsome (Margaret Tait, 1970, 35mm, colour).

Colour Poems (Margaret Tait, 1974, 16mm, colour and b&w).

Aerial (Margaret Tait, 1974, 16mm, colour).

These Walls (Margaret Tait, 1974, 16mm, silent, colour).

Blue Black Permanent (Margaret Tait, 1992, 35mm, colour).

Garden Pieces (Margaret Tait, 1998, 16mm, colour).

Three Films From the Room (Peter Todd, 2009, 16mm, silent, colour).

The Space Between the Teeth (Bill Viola, 1976, video, colour).

Stasi City (Jane and Louise Wilson, 1997, four-channel video projection).

Online resources

https://www.awallisascreen.com/index.php?id=awiashome&no_cache=1&L=1

<https://www.avid.com/about-avid>

<https://www.circuit.org.nz>

<http://filmpoem.com>

<http://helgafanderl.com>

<https://lightcone.org/en>

<https://lux.org.uk>

<https://luxscotland.org.uk>

<https://www.margarettait100.com>

<http://movingpoems.com>

<http://poetryfilmlive.com>

<http://screenworks.org.uk>

<https://www.susannahramsay.co.uk>

<https://www.taigh-chearsabhagh.org/events/shona-illingworth-lesions-landscape/>

<https://theartsofslowcinema.com/2017/10/26/the-essence-of-place-susannah-ramsay-2017/>

<http://www.ubu.com/film/>

<https://vimeo.com/watch>

Leighton Peirce films:

White Ash: <https://vimeo.com/61583349>

50 Feet of String (first half): <https://vimeo.com/13254162>

50 Feet of String (second half): <https://vimeo.com/13257188>

Warm Occlusion: <https://vimeo.com/8650204>

Threshold of Affinity: <https://vimeo.com/192677088>

Margaret Tait films:

Aerial: <https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/3699>

Calypso: <https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/6226>

Colour Poems: <https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/3697>

Garden Pieces: <https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/6214>

John MacFadyen: <https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/4445>

Painted Eightsome: <https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/4444>

These Walls: <https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/6234>

Appendix

West of Dalabrog

On the day I returned they were burning the heather.
Silhouettes of ancient rituals lit-up the skyline
and bitter winds carried the earthy smell of smoke.

I could taste the salty breath of sea,
the rhythm of the waves forcing my body forward.
That sense of happiness still remained.

I am older.

The beach, as it was is invisible to me now.
A ghostly coastline where no boats survive,
childish play all but gone.

I saw my reflection crash into the contours of the rocks.
A little death in the half-light of the distance.

I watched as it pushed me out from the wilderness of my Mother's bones,
Out beyond the dunes and where the Lapwings' call,
Out to where I can begin again.

Dislocation

What took me to this wilderness?
I had little or no control.
Do my eyes flicker, or are they closed
Or is my breath wasteful and slow?

My body has borne the fiercest storms
with scars carved by the stones.
Ancient pigments fade with time,
like the thinnest of rabbit bones.

Don't let me go alone.

Where is this wind-beaten wilderness,
with no presence, shadows, or stars?
I've fallen into nothingness. I hardly know myself.
Does my voice echo mouth and sound?

Am I emotionless?

The burden of abeyance wanes
Through my heart, lungs and tongue.
This wilderness - my dark amnesia,
A place, I never need return.

The Essence of Place

Here, is where I am.
My body is inscribed in the contours of this landscape,
My bones connect with muscle that moves beneath my skin that breathes.

January repairs my spirit.
In rare moments of silence, I trace memories
That flit in-between thin fingers of sunlight—
Contemplation - nature's secret language.

I remember those needful words that sorrow brought,
And left with it long spells of nothing.
I walked past your footprints again today—
I still didn't here your voice.

Here, is where I am.
Consoled by the beautiful wonder of nature.
The hills and woods, this river and sky reappear to me anew.
Hidden places we used to unpick time—together breaking the membrane
Of our cosmic whole.

The paths we walked together, and the seeds we planted
Are now in bloom.
Yet nothing keeps its shape.

Here, is where I am.
The simple act of breathing anchors me.
I remembered when we watched the elegant birds
Riding high on elastic gravity, above the yawning landscape.
Your presence now dwells as a ghost inside my bones.

Passing through this place, it seems like we were together
Before the world was made.
This is our place, we are this landscape—
And you have been loved.

Dead Girl (Imprint)

Dead girl dangling.
Her embroidered dress ripped—threads unpicked.
Nylon socks hang like angels in descent—
not protecting, or watching—their eyes scratched by hawthorns.
Persian red polish trickling off her scuffed shoes;
buckles bent.
Auburn dye seeping from her matted hair—scarring like freckles.
She was me.
I did not cry.

Malaise (always carry a camera)

This place.
Private and secluded.
A space of my own.
A sensorial affair.
Peace to fix my weary heart;
to fill my lungs with
raw Arctic air.

Silent breaths of breaking waves
whir about my neck and face.
Seabirds fly on elastic gravity,
their arabesque wings of snow
glide like a glissando;
swooping to the beat of the
Atlantic ebb and flow.

Wind kisses the salt
that whips onto my lips
taking the breath from my mouth.
I linger in descent.
Under the marbled water,
viridian sea grasses slice my thoughts.
Foam forms ephemeral acid blisters;
biting, snapping at the rocks.

Glimpses of sun-sparks shimmer
like fragmented memories.
A decade of malaise
granulates into white scars.
Each new breath cleanses my flesh.

But, before I belong,
before I am required to feel,
I connect my feet to soil.