

# **FILM OUTSIDE CINEMA**

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## ABSTRACT

Cinema and film are terms that have been inextricably linked since the Lumière brothers showed their first motion picture *Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory in Lyon* in 1895. It is difficult to conceive of one without the other. According to film theorist Jonathan Walley, the vanguards of 'paracinema' (such as Anthony McCall and Tony Conrad) have tried to release cinema from the medium specificity of film with works that prioritise time and light, arguing for a cinema without film. The question this project proposes is: can film exist outside cinema?

This MPhil by project is led by a direct approach to creating the film image using experimental filmmaking techniques. A series of experiments will look at subject (time, motion, representational imagery) and context (location, site of the pro-filmic). The studio outcomes will lead to a critical and philosophical inquiry into theories of time, duration and movement through Henri Bergson and Mary-Ann Doane, assessing how this relates to the notion of what cinema is via André Bazin. A series of installations will demonstrate the tension between the visible and invisible by capturing motion using lensless apparatuses, against a desire to see simultaneous moments of time all at once with a material that divides and segments time. Using expanded cinema strategies, these works will be presented to see how and to what effect film, when presented as projection, object, and as a component of sculptural installation, communicates ideas of movement, space and time.

The thesis analyses Jonathan Walley's three pivotal essays on paracinema comparing the concept and practice to expanded cinema. The filmstrip will be explored through simultaneous exposure, site-specificity of the pro-filmic and installation, printing, projection and hand processing. This will form the basis of a critical analysis of how the lensless apparatus presents the nature of the film image, movement and duration, against forms of paracinema.

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### DVD of Practical Work

*Hosepipe Film*  
*All Around You I and II*  
*Rosemary, Again and Again*  
*All of This is Here*

### Online Links

Personal website

[www.cargocollective.com/cathyrogers](http://www.cargocollective.com/cathyrogers)

### Exhibitions and Events

*Nightworks*, Testbed1, Battersea, April 2013

<http://night-works.tumblr.com/>

*Here and Now*, The Horse Hospital, Holborn, February 2013

<http://collective-iz.tumblr.com/nowandhere>

*Disruption*, RCA Research Biennale, RCA, South Kensington, January 2013

<http://disruption.rca.ac.uk/#events>

*Fieldworks II*, Paper Tiger, South Kensington, June 2012

<http://fieldworkrca.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/nightworks/>

### Conference Presentations

*Alongside and Beyond: Why Paracinema?* Presented on the panel Limits of Film at

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<http://bts.re/bts-2012-panel-4>

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification.

The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRODUCTION

In the late 1960s experimental filmmaker Ken Jacobs developed the term paracinema to mean “an equivalent cinema” (Jacobs, 2005 cited in Walley, 2011, p.38). The term was used to describe his live *Nervous Magic Lantern* performances in which no discernable filmstrip was used. These works did not prioritise the filmstrip in the production of cinema. Instead Jacobs used colour slides, modified projectors and lenses to create images made in the moment of projection. This other or 'equivalent' cinema provides the basis for a concept of cinema that exists independently from the materiality of film and its material processes.

Within the last ten years experimental cinema historian and theorist Jonathan Walley has revised the term paracinema through a critical examination of a number of works by three experimental filmmakers of the 1960s and 1970s. In a series of essays published between 2003 and 2011 he claims that specific works by Anthony McCall, Tony Conrad and Paul Sharits “...have largely been ignored” in historiographic accounts of avant-garde film (Walley, 2003, p.17). This he maintains is due to their critique of the film material and as such are not easily categorised within the medium-specific tradition that was dominant at the time. He argues that these important 'films', so called even though they did not use the film material, form the basis for a theory that “locates cinema's essence elsewhere” (Walley, 2003, p.18) creating a particular mode of practice within experimental film which operates beyond its medium-specific history.

If cinema exists beyond the physical film material, as suggested by the theory of paracinema, then where do the materials of cinema reside? In what context and under which set of conditions does it operate? Paracinema theory suggests a return to a pre-cinema as a form of release from historic notions of medium-specificity, moving beyond perceived material constraints. However, this approach ignores the potential possibilities for these supposed material limitations to be re-configured into new temporal forms that extend medium-specific boundaries without rejecting the specific nature of their materiality. Through practice and theory I explore how apparent material constraints within a specific medium can be used to extend its possibilities and contexts rather than reduce them, ultimately asking how a practice that specifically utilises the photochemical filmstrip can be seen to operate beyond the technical and institutional context of cinema.

As a practitioner solely using the photographic filmstrip to examine time and space, I seek to expose the tension between how we perceive the projection of successive still images, which we understand as cinema and which constitutes illusionary movement, against the creation and presentation of these images via non lens-based systems. My own concerns are to explore the necessary conditions under which the inadequacy of cinema and the lens based film image can be exposed. This position demands a critical examination of the processes and procedures involved in creating a film image, questioning what it is, and the context in which it is received. Therefore counter to paracinema theory I make a claim for the relevance of the specific qualities of the photochemical filmstrip, its indexical nature and its relationship to the pro-filmic moment. Rather than suggesting that the materiality of film limited experimental filmmakers in their quest for making new forms of cinema as Jonathan Walleys' paracinema theory asserts, I propose that *through* the materiality of film a critical examination of cinema can be sought.

I have chosen to focus considerably on Jonathan Walley's first three essays on paracinema as he is the only contemporary film historian who has written substantially on the topic. There are very few critical frameworks in this area on which to base my research. My contribution is to give his essays a degree of attention, through practice and writing, which he hasn't received elsewhere, and offer an alternative response to paracinema.

I am aware that my own practice could be seen to share the same sensibilities as those of paracinema, a practice where site and location of the pro-filmic and modes of presentation outside conventional filmmaking apparatus (the projector, camera, lens and screen) are integral to the encounter with and understanding of the work. However, the theory of paracinema is concerned with where cinema exists without the materiality of film. In my practice the filmstrip is fundamental in establishing a visual, spatial and temporal relationship with the world in the most direct manner possible. Its specific photochemical qualities and tangible form allow for the exploration of the relationship between material, the pro-filmic and object in ways that are not available in any other temporal medium. Using alternative lensless methods I create images on photochemical film in order to make a contact print of the world, translating ideas about time and space that extend film beyond the context of the purely cinematic. Outside of a mechanical lens various forms of presentation including projection of these photo films are shown as durational installations in non-traditional cinema spaces.

## Background to My Practice

Whilst working on a site-specific project in a disused bus factory in 2009 I made a work titled *14:11 (Train Film)*. This consisted of a simultaneous exposure, on short 2ft lengths of super 8 film housed in a hand made pinhole cameras, of a train passing a bank of windows. The desire was to capture simultaneous moments of time and movement. The metrical relationship between the subject and the film material became important to me and in order to develop this further I moved to making pinhole films in a 50ft garden hose, which provided a direct relationship between a 50ft roll of super 8 and the hose pipe. Questions arose around the nature of the representational image made in frameless, lensless apparatus. Where is the image and how is it made? What if there was no recognizable correlation between the image on the film and the object? How can this frameless image on a strip of film be presented to communicate movement and reference the pro-filmic (time of exposure)? What does it mean if its not presented through a projector but displayed as a strip of film, the grammar of which is time, movement and the cinematic?

Whilst reflecting on these pinhole images I came across the term paracinema through the writing of Jonathan Walley who claimed that cinema exists beyond its historic medium-specific heritage and that it could no longer be reduced to physical materiality. This provided me with a fulcrum in which to research both the historic and contemporary context for my practice. By contextualizing the practice against paracinema the aim is to find new ways in which to move the practice forward whilst at the same time using these new practical developments to critically reflect on the theory and support an argument for the importance of the materiality of film and its indexical properties.

In an early essay Jonathan Walley argues through Sergei Eisenstein and André Bazin, that cinema existed long before the invention of the film material. He proposes that our desire to see or put together a meaning through images placed side by side is inherent in our nature of how we perceive the world, which existed centuries ago in Japanese pictographic writing before the invention of film. Bazin's theory that the ontology of cinema not only resides in the qualities of the film material but is also related to "conceptual phenomena – a dream a fantasy – as it is a tangible medium" is used to further support Walley's argument that cinema can exist beyond purely physical means. (Walley, 2003, p.23) However, what is clear through the writing of several leading film theorists is that our notion of cinema is built on more

than the binary opposition of a material and dematerialised proposition. For D N Rodowick, cinema is “the projection of a photographically recorded filmstrip in a theatrical setting.” (Niessen, 2011, p.309) The surrealists declared it a “psychic delirium triggered by the cinematographic apparatus – its imaginary, oneiric, and hallucinatory effect.” (Levi, 2010, p.3) For Niels Niessen, the ontology of cinema is multifarious and does not just reside in the film material and its indexical relationship to the pro-filmic but also in the relationship between “viewer and image.” (2011, p.307). It is clear that cinema is neither purely conceptual nor technical but a coalescence of both. To suggest that the historiography of cinema can be reviewed to displace a fundamental component of its manifestation, as Jonathan Walley’s paracinema theory does, denies the unique place that photographic indexicality holds in providing at the moment of capture an unarguable direct relationship with the world.

Accompanying this thesis are four experimental works using the filmstrip and other components of the cinematic apparatus, such as the projector and light, alternative presentation configurations and spaces. These experiments look at how the filmstrip can be used outside of the traditional technological and institutional spaces of cinema using alternative photographic methods of production and differing presentation modes.

## **Structure**

The first chapter will look at the ontology of cinema, defined within the context of experimental film and historic and contemporary materialist theories of dematerialised film, asking if a claim for a dematerialised notion of cinema can exist without the historiography of medium-specificity and how one supports the other. This leads to an examination of three essays on paracinema as re-introduced by Jonathan Walley, exploring how it differs from expanded cinema, a form of experimental film that makes no distinctions between material and dematerialised forms of experimental cinema.

Chapter two will compare the ontology of the photographic image, indexicality, and the relevance of medium-specificity to the ontology of cinema, looking at limits, resistances and inherent inadequacies. I will compare two contemporary works and

their direct image making processes, exploring the relationship between medium-specificity and hybridity.

Chapter three will document my practice with the filmstrip, and the situations and processes by which the film image is made and finally presented. My work is compared with another contemporary filmmaker, Jennifer Nightingale, who makes pinhole films, and explores alternative forms of image making on film and how re-siting movement and privileging the materiality of the film image suggests a place for film outside cinema.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **HISTORY AND THEORY: ONTOLOGY OF CINEMA AND EXPERIMENTAL FILM PRACTICES**

Reviewing historic and contemporary theories of the ontology of cinema with a particular focus on experimental film helps to define where paracinema sits within experimental film practice, and how it is defined against expanded cinema and its claim of difference. The chapter will include a short survey of the major theories, which will be refined down to an argument for both non-material and material based practices to show that medium-specific practices (e.g. structural and structural materialist film) support the non-material aspects or dematerialisation. However, dematerialisation cannot exist alone. This argument will take a closer look at the theory of paracinema through three essays written by Jonathan Walley between 2003 and 2011.

#### **The Ontology of Cinema**

Cinema is a Greek word that means “movie.” The illusion of movement is certainly an accustomed adjunct of the film image, but that illusion rests upon the assumption that the rate of change between successive frames may vary only within rather narrow limits. There is nothing in the structural logic of the filmstrip that can justify such an assumption. Therefore we reject it. From now on we will call our art simply: film. (Frampton, 1971 cited in Jenkins, 2009, p.137)

For Bazin, the ontology of photography is a direct representation of reality made possible through the indexical nature of the filmstrip. The registration of light on photochemical material produces images that have a causal link with the objects in front of the camera or device that houses the filmstrip. This, along with filmmaking strategies such as the long take, deep focus and the priority and “respect” (Rosen, 2001, p.4) given to the pro-filmic, for Bazin, provides the key to the ontology of cinema.

Of course cinema is more than this. Cinema is technology, economics, structures and institutions, a system of signs and codes (Heath, 1980, pp.2-3). Christian Metz echoes this with an idea of cinema being multi-coded and operating on levels apart from the indexical sign. (Heath, 1980, pp.3-4) It is metaphysical, operates on a sub-conscious level, a desire to see the real, a desire to return to a primary state tapping into our 'psychical desire' (Baudry, 1975 cited in Rosen, 1986, pp.300-307). For Mary Ann-Doane, like Bazin, the ontology of cinema is linked to the indexical nature of the film material (2007, p.129), but for Peter Wollen it is not only in the material base and photochemical characteristic of the filmstrip but also in its language or "text." (Wollen, 1972, p.20)

Stephen Heath discusses Christian Metz's psychoanalytic view of cinema as 'the imaginary signifier' and suggests the need for a return to pre-cinema before codes and signs, before film and the camera (the apparatus), to find "the psycho-analytic evidence of the apparatus' – mental machinery." (Heath, 1980, p.4)

Even though for Bazin "The impression of reality would seem to be the key" (Baudry, 1986, p.307), and central to his ontology of cinema, Jean-Louis Baudry adds Bazin's acknowledgement that "Any account of cinema that was drawn merely from technical inventions that made it possible would be a poor one indeed." (Bazin, 1967, p.18)

In *Moving Away from the Index*, Tom Gunning makes a convincing argument that cinematic movement be considered an equal component of cinema's ontology alongside realist aesthetics of photographic indexicality. For Gunning this provides a way to include the long-shunned practice of animation into film theory discussion, which has mostly been ignored due to its disconnection from realist imagery or 'realist aesthetics'. This has recently been distanced further by digital media's (CGI) constructed imagery.

Gunning uses Metz to argue that cinematic motion is constructed at the time of projection and in the psychological and cognitive effect that is perceived by the viewer. He believes that Metz offers a radical way to rethink cinema's ontology beyond aesthetic realism held within the image:

Great confusion (which I feel Deleuze increases rather than dispels) comes if we do not realize that the analytical aspect of the cinematograph that Bergson took as his model for this tendency to conceive of motion in terms of static

instants derives from the film strip in which motion is analysed into a succession of frames, not the projected image on the screen in which synthetic motion is recreated. (Gunning, 2008, p.42)

A closer reading of Henri Bergson will reveal, however, that although the filmstrip and projector form part of the problem of the cinematograph and supports our knowledge of how we perceive duration, (the fragmented filmstrip containing separate successive still images and the projector for animating these images), the real issue is that in projection we perceive this succession of images as false mobility or movement. In life, duration is an aggregation of events and life stages, not a replacement of one stage for another, as succession suggests in the cinematograph projecting a kind of superimposition;

It behaves in much the same way as the movement, always the same, of the cinematographical film, a movement hidden in the apparatus and whose function it is to superpose the successive pictures on one another in order to imitate the movement of the real object. (Bergson, 1909, p.330)

In my own practice the desire to capture simultaneous moments of time and space on the filmstrip at the centre of a moving world (as in my *Hosepipe* film), directly engages with the concerns that Bergson has for the problems associated with the way that the cinematograph supports the “mechanism of our ordinary knowledge... [as being]... of a cinematographical kind.” (Bergson, 1909, pp.323) What is clear is that both Gunning and Bergson suggest that cinema’s ontology is through movement. For Bergson this is problematic, for Gunning it is not. As *Hosepipe* is a record of time past, unframed, and is not a projected film, it operates outside of cinema. Gunning believes that synthetic motion is where we consciously experience the ‘flow’ of time that Bergson suggests the cinematograph falsifies.

A notion of the existence of a ‘cinema elsewhere’, although supported by the cinematic apparatus, explicitly referencing a dematerialised state for cinema, is a preoccupation for contemporary theorists Jonathan Walley and Akira Mizuta Lippit. This points towards the search for an understanding of cinema that doesn’t operate purely in the physical technical world but for Lippit in the conceptual space between distinctions and medium-specifics as “a set of manifestations and praxes.” (2012, p.6) For Walley, it is in the practices, institutions and discourses of avant-garde cinema but outside of the “raw physical material of film.” (2007, p.365)

Jonathan Walley develops the term 'paracinema' from the original introduced by Ken Jacobs in the late 1960s (2003, p.17), who was thinking about a way to describe a practice that invoked cinematic qualities but which used materials other than the ones traditionally defined; to locating forms of experimental cinema which challenged medium specificity and the dominance of a filmic aesthetic, elsewhere. This means defining a notion of cinema which is not determined by the specifics of its medium. Pavel Levi's essay and later book of the same title, *Cinema by Other Means*, similar though this term might appear to be to a notion of 'elsewhere' and 'dematerialised', in fact refers to the opposite;

...the practice of positing cinema as a system of relations directly inspired by the workings of the film apparatus, but evoked through the material and technological properties of the originally non-filmic media. (Levi, 2010, p.53)

Levi questions the problem seen with material limits and medium specificity, in terms specific to cinema, and is his criticism of Walley's version of Paracinema. Whilst acknowledging Walley's depth and breadth of theoretical insight, Levi points back to the historical avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s, in particular citing Moholy Nagy's *Painting, Photography, Film (1925-1927)*, summarising that although "various endeavours to differentiate the concept of cinema from the actual cinematographic apparatus" (2010, p.54) were made during this time, Moholy Nagy did not see matching technological material advancements and conceptual ideas as opposing preoccupations:

For Moholy-Nagy, consideration of a medium's potential for "dematerialisation", on the one hand, and the practical concern with improving the state of its existing technological apparatus, on the other, are complementary rather than mutually-exclusive endeavours. (Levi, 2010, p.56)

It is easy to see a logical progression from Moholy-Nagy's photograms through to the development of the *Light Space Modulators* or *Light Display Machines* (1922 – 1930) and the turn in attention to light, motion and the machines themselves. These light machines seem to marry the material and non-material through shadow, light and kinetic device much in the same way that the photographic film and paper registered the shadows of the objects placed on or near it in his photograms. However, Moholy-Nagy believed that for advancement "to forge a totality" of one medium over another

“...would underrate the possibilities of future synthesis...” (1927, p.35), expressing that in 1927 the future possibilities of photography were too many to speculate but that the fixing of the “most delicate effects of light-value” was already a given.

In the introduction I asked if cinema existed elsewhere, where does the physical reside? From the camera obscura to Moholy's *Light Display Machines* the answer could be in the physical structure, which funnels and directs the light. However it is the fixing of these light effects on a surface, photosensitive film or paper, which I carry through in my argument. Even the most dematerialised form of cinema, light and time, colour produced through light, needs a physical surface on which to capture it; dust particles, smoke, screen, wall, a physical substance has to stop light from dispersing.

## **HISTORIES**

### **Experimental Film**

In America and Northern Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, experimental film practices existed alongside conventional forms of cinema in parallel configurations as projection activities, events and installations in non-gallery spaces and outside of traditional cinema auditoriums. In America, the makers of 'Structural film', a term coined by P. Adams Sitney, and their British counterparts the Structural-Materialists, were concerned with revealing the illusions of cinema: their pursuit was to unveil the process by which films were made, bringing the audiences into the space of projection and performance to reveal the process of production. In William Raban's *2'45"* (1973) the film is made and remade with each viewing in the space of the auditorium, in front of the audience. The film material became the content, and experimentation with hand processing, reprinting and projection were strategies used to highlight the process by which films were made against the illusionism of mainstream narrative cinema. As Peter Gidal states in *Structural Film Anthology*:

The structuring aspects and the attempt to decipher the structure and anticipate/ re-correct it, to clarify and analyse the production-process of the specific image at any specific moment, are the root concern of Structural/Materialist film. (1976, p.1)

Toward the end of the 1960s and by the early 1970s, filmmakers on both sides of the Atlantic were testing the material limits of the filmstrip in order to operate beyond the confines of commercial production, pushing the limits of the physical film material (the photochemical strip) to find new ways in which to deconstruct cinema and the materials that supported it. Those Structural filmmakers who worked in a conceptual way in pursuit of a dematerialisation of art, Tony Conrad and Anthony McCall, saw the film material as the focus of a dominant aesthetic and at the centre of medium-specificity theory that was upheld in avant-garde film practice and the theoretical discourse until the 1970s. A shift occurred in both film theory and practice around this time and was felt in experimental film too. This shift occurred in the aftermath of Minimalism, the bridge between Modernism's rhetoric of formal boundaries of both culture and materialism, and Conceptual art, with the subsequent dematerialisation of the art object, a direct reaction against the modernist art of the preceding three decades. Theories of medium-specificity gave way to a concern with gender difference, psychoanalysis, feminism and post structuralism, placing the objectivity of the spectator or subject as the primary focus. A switch occurred, from an objective to a subjective response to both mainstream and alternative/art house cinema and also experimental film. The impact of this was felt in the experimental film of the American avant-garde, with the focus from structural explorations of the materiality of film moving to more subjective political or psychoanalytical content such as Yvonne Rainer's *Journey to Berlin* (1971) and Steve Dwoskin's *Times For* (1971). Some filmmakers occupied both territories (Michael Snow and Paul Sharits). Through the act of projection, film was already dematerialised.

## **Paracinema**

According to film theorist Jonathan Walley, the vanguard artists of 'paracinema', such as Anthony McCall and Tony Conrad, have tried to release cinema from the medium specificity of film with works that prioritize time and light, arguing for a cinema without film. For Walley, the work of Anthony McCall and Tony Conrad typifies paracinema. Walley's definition takes the meaning of the prefix 'para', "alongside of, by, past, beyond" (2007, p.355), and develops it to encompass a transgression of limits enforced by medium specificity theory. He suggests a use in the "colloquial sense suggesting a challenge to a dominant aesthetic" (Walley, 2007, p.356). The film material was the focus of this dominant aesthetic and of a theory of medium-specificity that was upheld in an avant-garde film practice and theoretical discourse

through the 1960s and 1970s. In opposition, works of a paracinematic nature challenged this dominant aesthetic and were defined as having “An array of phenomena that are considered “cinematic” but that are not embodied in the materials of film as traditionally defined” (Walley, 2003, p.18). Essentially, they are works defined as films but without using the filmstrip.

As already stated, this is not the first time that the term paracinema has been used. Both Ken Jacobs and Hollis Frampton have written about or defined paracinema. For Ken Jacobs in the late 1960s it was a way to frame shadow play (2008) and for Frampton “To my mind any phenomenon is paracinematic if it shares one element with cinema, e.g. modularity with respect to space and time.” (Frampton from Zorns Lemma notes, not dated, cited in Jenkins, 2009, p.199)

What follows is a close examination of three essays written by Jonathan Walley between 2003 and 2011 and the evolution and nuancing of his theory of paracinema and the practices that support it.

In the first essay, *The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-garde Film* (2003), Walley states that paracinema is “...based on a different version of essentialism...” (2003, p.18) from the modernist version where an artwork is defined and advanced by foregrounding its material properties. (2003, p.15) Instead of promoting the idea that cinema resides in the traditional film materials of projector, camera, filmstrip and screen, he declares that paracinema “... locates cinema’s essence elsewhere” (2003, p.18) finding it in the “light and time” (2003, p.20) explored through Anthony McCall and Tony Conrad’s work. This allies it with Sheldon Renan’s pioneering definition of expanded cinema.<sup>1</sup>

To show how medium-specificity in experimental film was challenged, examples of work in this first essay include *Long Film for Ambient Light* 1975 by Anthony McCall, Tony Conrad’s *Pickled Films* 1974 and Paul Sharits’ site-specific or locational work of the 1970s. He makes particular reference to the re- showing of Sharits’ earlier flicker films with modifications being made to the projector, namely by removing the shutter

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<sup>1</sup> Renan’s ‘explanation’ of expanded cinema is cited by Walley as works that are cinematic not by their use of the traditional film medium but by the qualities of cinema, namely light and time. “Thus, any art work that traded in these elements – light and time – could be considered “cinema,” even if it was not film.” (Walley: 2003 p16). Sheldon Renan’s explanation of expanded cinema is, “It is cinema expanded to the point at which the effect of film may be produced without the use of film at all” (Renan, 1969, p.227). For a full account see chapter 6 of *An Introduction to the American Underground Film*, 1969.

blade and registration pin. This is read by Walley as an approach in which he "...began by committing a kind of violence against the film projector..." (2003, p.19) Theoretically, these works are seen as a way to locate the cinematic outside of film by altering the normal mode of projecting the filmstrip by reconfiguration of the projector. This could actually be discussed in another way. Paul Sharits' locational film works were about expanding out of the dark theatre spaces and single screen viewing conditions. By moving into gallery spaces with multiple projectors, projecting film horizontally instead of vertically, Sharits was continuing his exploration of working and showing film as film. Yann Beauvais quotes Sharits talking about the approach of his locational works;

I have found this form of filmmaking and display, using 'more than one projector,' more and more meaningful (and imperative if I wish to truly actualize my intent of developing a clear ontological analysis of film's many mechanisms and dualisms). (Sharits, 1976, cited in Beauvais, 2008, pp.23-24) quoted from "statement regarding multiple screen/sound 'Location' Film Environments-Installations" 1976.

In fact, Paul Sharits never made any film works where the medium of film, the filmstrip, wasn't a key component. He was a painter before he started working with film and used drawing as a way to score his films. Working on graph paper, each square was equated to a film frame in order to compose his work. I see Sharits' *Frozen Film Frames* (1975) as the antithesis to paracinema and would use it to illustrate how film can be seen beyond the context of cinema (as defined in the introduction). *Frozen Film Frames* are a series of works where filmstrips are sandwiched between plexiglass and displayed as objects, thus halting the temporal flow of projection in favour of a reordering of temporal space but one that is not directed by film-time. These objects also act as static visual alternatives to the 'films' themselves.

The *Frozen Film Frames* allow us to distinguish the structuring and dividing up of the elements at work that the experience of duration while watching the projected film masks because of the fusion of these same elements in an audio-visual flow. (Beauvais, 2008, p.9)

The titling of this work, *Frozen Film Frames*, also points to the fact that these strips aren't moving; they are not 'films' in the sense of being cinematic, but operate on

another semiotic level outside of illusionary movement, but at the same time communicating an idea of motion and time.

Jonathan Walley sees the locational works of Sharits as a step towards an “elementary primary cinema” (2003, p.20) as echoed by Sharits’ essay *Words per Page*, stating that such an elementary cinema might involve using very little of the medium of film (projector, screen, filmstrip) and that it is not limited to the film frame. Even if one sees this as a pursuit for cinema outside of film (dissolving the film frame through frameless projection or by using more than one projector), there is no denying that the constant intense interrogation of the frame and its perceptual possibilities in projection is also a critique of the technicalities of cinema.

A later essay, *The Paracinema of Anthony McCall and Tony Conrad* (2007) uses McCall and Conrad’s works to expand the theory that paracinema “...explores cinematic ontology...” (2007, p.365). Critically, this is a different stance from the one declared in *The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film* that replaced one set of materials for another. Walley admits that the reduction of cinema to qualities of ‘light and time’, swapping one set of materials for another in order to define an art form, conforms to modernist principles which he is rallying against. However, encompassing another set of conceptual concerns such as calling a film a film when there is no film medium used calls into question what a film is, hinting at the technical mechanisms and material production involved in a traditional film; this is the question raised by Anthony McCall’s *Long Film for Ambient Light*, for example. No film medium, projector or screen is used. The cinematic aspects of this work belong to light and duration, which were a key preoccupation of McCall’s at this time. The only reference given to the fact that this work is a film is in its title, without which there is no other discernable clue that indeed this is what it is. However, in each of Tony Conrad’s film-works *Pickled Movie* and *Unprojectable*, the filmstrip no longer functions as a projectable film and any kind of recognisable film image is destroyed. In the case of *Pickled Movie* the film was pickled and bottled in vinegar and now exists as an object. As Conrad explains;

... if you take a roll of film and instead of making pictures on it, you process it by pickling it in vinegar and putting it in a jar and presenting it for people to look at that way, projected through the lens of the fluid around it, this is so

distorted and such a monstrous disfigurement of the normal way in which you are 'supposed to use' film. (Sanders, 2005)

For Conrad, the message was one of defiance at being dictated to by a dominant film culture and its standardised industrial technologies. He resisted being told how to make 'moving image' works and with what film stock, apparatus and production procedures. He cooked, hammered and destroyed film, thus rendering its viewing impossible.

In the same essay there is a further attempt to disassociate paracinema from medium-specific essentialist theory. Walley situates it in the institutions, activities and conditions supporting an experimental cinema practice:

Paracinema does not simply replace one set of raw materials – film, camera, projector, screen with another – light and time, nor does it leave the concept of cinematic essentialism behind altogether...Rather, it identifies cinema not with the raw physical material of film, but the cluster of activities, institutions, and discourses that define avant-garde cinema as an artistic tradition. (2007, p.365)

By broadening the necessary conditions for an experimental film practice to operate and develop within a 'cluster of activities, institutions and discourses' is neither restrictive in its scope about what it could be nor is it about swapping one set of materials, conceptual or physical, for another. This positional shift (described above by Walley) moves the idea of material from an artistic medium rooted in a physical malleable form to a conceptual set of conditions in which to produce and disseminate artistic production.<sup>2</sup> (Walley, 2007: p.366) This foregrounds the activities that surround the films and performances themselves, like Conrad's *Yellow Movies* or *Bowed Film*, where the emphasis is on the audience's position in relation to the work and their reception of it. (Walley, 2007: p.366) But is this paracinema in its own right, or expanded cinema by another name, adopting a similar set of concerns?

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<sup>2</sup> This resonates with George Dickie's "three senses for works of art" which move toward a definition of art. He shows how Scafani suggests a non-artifact (in his example a piece of driftwood) could be called art if it shares a resemblance or several similar properties to "some paradigm work of art", which in this case is Brancusi's 'Bird in Space'. The summary is that, as long as an artifact is part of a context in 'the art world', a recognised institution, then it can be called art. George Dickie *What is Art? An Institutional Analysis in Art and Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1974 p.19-52.

In order to see where a film practice outside of cinema may sit, it seems appropriate to look at how paracinema is defined against expanded cinema practices of the 1970s. Expanded works were characterised by filmmakers who were expanding out of the traditional single screen projection mode and experimenting with multiple projectors, integrating performance, using different configurations and questioning what constituted the screen. In some cases, artist filmmakers were replacing one or more elements of what was traditionally defined as the film medium (projector, camera, screen and film material or celluloid) with other components.

## **Expanded Cinema**

In 1967 Sheldon Renan announced a new phenomenon in avant-garde film, the fourth avant-garde (1967, p103). At the time of writing this new phenomenon had yet to appear, but he described it in advance:

Expanded cinema is sometimes also deflated cinema, cinema from which everything but the bare essentials has been removed. Such is the case with the new stroboscopic style films that have no images, but only light and dark frames alternating in various patterns. (1967, pp.104)

For Renan, light and time takes the place of the film material, particularly in the ways that artist filmmakers were beginning to use it to create shadow play (Ken Jacobs), evoking pre-cinematic forms, creating images by controlling light with shapes, and intervening with bodily performances, multiple beams of light and three dimensional objects within the dark viewing space.

As already discussed, paracinematic works do not just take one set of materials and replace them with another, film material for light and time. More importantly for Walley, within expanded cinema historiography the boundaries were too broad, leading to a loss of experimental film's autonomy at a time when it was new and finding its own ground. There is a problem for Walley in Renan's definition of expanded cinema, which is that Renan does not state *how* one could distinguish a sculpture or a performance from expanded cinema practices. In the final essay discussed in this thesis, *Identity Crisis: Experimental Film and Artistic Expansion* (2011), Walley seeks assurances of how medium specificity can be maintained even when it's used in multi media (multiple art forms, not forms of digital media)

situations. I find this a contradiction in an argument for a transgressive art form like paracinema that rejects an idea of medium specificity, even if that rejection is in relation to the historic concept of medium-specificity.

To examine the problematic of paracinema's claim of difference from expanded cinema it will be useful to look at two examples of expanded cinema by filmmakers who were part of the London Film Makers' Co-op. The expanded cinema of European filmmakers in the early 1960s and 1970s reveals a close connection to paracinema. What follows is a brief examination of *Castle 1* (1969) by Malcolm Le Grice, and *Reel Time* (1973) by Annabel Nicolson, as examples of works that challenged the same institutional conditions of cinema without disregarding the medium specificity of the film material (the filmstrip either as a strip or projected as a single image). Le Grice was actively opposed to narrative forms of cinema and used the medium of film to "search for new and alternative forms of temporal structure" (Le Grice, 2011, p.160), thereby offering differing modes of reception for the audience. *Castle 1* is comprised of a film projection of found news footage and a filmed light bulb. In front of the screen a bare light bulb is suspended. The sound from the film and the on/off flashing of the light bulb bring into sharp contrast the act of the film projection and the experience of the act of watching the film in its present moment. This constitutes what William Raban notes as a "live event" (Raban, 2011, cited in Rees, White, Ball and Curtis, 2011, p.101). As Le Grice says "when I made *Castle 1* 1966 – the lightbulb film – I was consciously attacking the predominant mode of narrative cinema." (Le Grice, 2011, cited in Rees, White, Ball and Curtis, 2011, p.160). Nicolson's *Reel Time* (1973) also employed the same liveness of the production and presentation of a film event

...in which the artist sat at a sewing machine and stitched directly into a filmstrip containing her image sewing, which passed in a loop to the projector, then back into the sewing machine, circulating between them until it fell to bits. (Curtis, 2007, p.231)

Nicolson's *Reel Time* also appears as a hand written film loop on a white filmstrip for an exhibition in Colchester in 1994 and as a two page document at the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna in 2004, the latter acting as a concrete written description of an event that happened some thirty years earlier and potentially could be called a film.

Without investigating the essential qualities of the film material, would such works as Annabel Nicolson's *Reel Time* (1973), William Raban's *2'44"* (1972) and more recently *4'22"* (2008) have been made? The argument for medium specificity is succinctly put in Nicky Hamlyn's essay *Medium Practices*, which argues for the determining necessity of the medium in such diverse works as Simon Payne's *New Ratio*, Callum Cooper's *Victoria, George and Thatcher*, Neil Henderson's *Candle*, Chris Kennedy's *Tape Film* and my own *14:11:Train Film*. Hamlyn's argument is based on a reaction to the rise of post-medium theories that suggest that medium specificity is a form of reductive formalism. His view is that a medium like film or painting is far more complex due to its aggregate form and expanded contexts. In the case of experimental film and video these contexts are time, space and viewer orientation. All of these works critically examine a component of the medium in which they are made, i.e. analogue film, both 16mm and 8mm, and digital video. They are about specific traits such as movement, grain, time, the act of projection and the way the medium records reality and the relationship to other aspects of the medium; not reflexively celebrating but critically analysing it. This suggests that the medium translates a meaning that is specific to the complexity of its qualities that no other medium can adequately portray. (Hamlyn, 2011, pp.21-37)

In a recent series of interviews with filmmakers from the 1970s, researcher Duncan White asked the question, *What is Expanded Cinema?* Some claimed that it took place where the performance and the production are the same thing, presented live to the audience in order to break down any product of illusion (Guy Sherwin, 2009). For David Dye, a trained sculptor, it was about "space perception", developing his interest in working with space and time with the emphasis being on "Real time, real space" of the "viewing situation." (David Dye, 2009) William Raban explains that it is about revealing, not concealing, the means of production, and bringing the audience with him in the process of the making of the image. Making and viewing of the work become an active not passive process (2009). Birgit Hein replied:

What I found most interesting about expanded cinema, is that expanded cinema really makes a connection between film and art. It goes into the space. It's an event. But this is a general statement, in that expanded cinema extends film into the art scene. But then there are so many different forms of expanded cinema. I would say, from my point of view, expanded cinema is very much reflecting about cinema. (2009)

Expanded cinema crossed boundaries of film, installation, performance and sculpture without reducing an event to a singular set of materials. For Walley however, any correlation between paracinema and expanded cinema is rejected, since expanded cinema is too all encompassing.

At the time when expanded cinema was emerging (in the later 1960s), Walley argues that experimental film's identity was in a fragile state, and could easily be absorbed into other more autonomous established art forms, such as sculpture and performance, which had defined institutional and economic structures. With expanded cinema, experimental film was in danger of losing its identity and becoming meaningless (2011, p.25-27).

The increasingly unwieldy mass of forms and materials placed under the head of expanded cinema has rendered the term, capitalised or not, bloated to the point of near meaninglessness. (Walley, 2011, p.27)

Distinctive practices had been subsumed under the umbrella term of Expanded Cinema (capitalisation suggests the historical sense of the term), so that a 'taxonomy' of expanded cinema is necessary to recognise the specific practices held within its definition, acknowledging specifics and flexible overlapping boundaries. To do this Walley argues for a split in the terms between cinema and film. In *Identity Crisis: Experimental Film and Artistic Expansion* (2011), the inference is that Expanded Cinema opposed medium specificity theory – opening up the definition of cinema to include all manner of inter-media practices, including TV, shadow play, performance etc. However, Walley believed that experimental film practices had been challenging the relationship between the ontology of cinema and “the nature of film”, but within the concept of Expanded Cinema this was not recognised:

For example, the critic Deke Dusinberre suggested in 1975 that the materialist emphasis of European experimental cinema was leading in an unexpected direction: some filmmakers, scrutinizing film's materials in their investigations of cinema's fundamental principles, had produced work that abandoned the medium of celluloid entirely. (Walley, 2011, p.29)

Referring to *Long Film for Ambient Light*, Dusinberre comments on how material film practices and immateriality actually seemed connected and not opposed at all.

The reasoning behind this is to prise apart the classical notion of the ontology of cinema from medium specific film practices. To theoretically do this would open up a discussion for those experimental practices which moved away from being rooted in celluloid or the filmstrip to what could be considered works of a paracinematic nature, the priority on materiality being displaced by virtue of the dematerialised nature of the “activities, institutions and discourses” (Walley, 2005, p. 365) in which experimental film practices were situated. This further defines these specific dematerialised practices within the overall definition of Expanded Cinema. Using Hollis Frampton’s term “film machine” (Frampton, 1971, in Jenkins (ed.), 2009 cited in Walley, 2011, p.33) of which the filmstrip is just one part, the process of dismantling cinema’s ontology is begun.

However, the British Expanded Cinema scene shared more in common with paracinema, in creating the situations and contexts where the act of viewing and spectatorship was prioritised. They also shared a major concern in controlling the methods of their own production and dissemination, but they didn’t reject the filmstrip in its entirety.

UK Expanded Cinema was led by filmmakers predominantly interested in production and distribution/screenings of their work. The printing and processing lab at the LFMC led to an investigation of film through its materiality. Even though theoretically paracinema suggests a rejection of medium-specific practices, particularly through the use of the film material (celluloid) and subsequent film image, their practical manifestations remain remarkably similar. European experimental filmmakers were concerned with critiquing the powerful institutionalisations and structures of cinema, wanting to control the means of production and ultimately reveal the illusions of the cinematic image. However, in order to do this they did not need to reject the materiality of film. For them it was critical to push its limitations and exploit the gap between reality and the illusions of cinema. Paracinematic works do not neatly fall into either material or dematerialized forms either, and some even straddle this divide. Tony Conrad’s *Pickled Movie* and *Unprojectable* series critically foreground the film material, but each of these works utilises the film material in order to convey their ideas about the relationship between the film medium, such as the celluloid filmstrip and cinematic phenomena. So works that could be defined as paracinematic do not always jettison the filmstrip in its entirety, on the contrary, in Conrad’s case the *Pickled Movie* series offer a direct comment on the dominant means of industrial production. These works are critiquing their place within the

language of cinema. By destroying the film material, rendering it unusable within the industrial machine that it is part of, it questions cinema's ontology.

Inherent within both expanded cinema and paracinema is resistance to mainstream cinema's economic and distribution structures. By producing and disseminating their own work, filmmakers were able to control how, when and where their work was received, the situations and spaces in which the work was shown and the conditions under which the audience encountered the work. Like Malcolm Le Grice's *Horror Film I* (1971), in *Bowed Film* (1974) Tony Conrad intervened between projector and screen, physically manipulating the film's performance. Although some performances were repeatable, most of these works further resist any form of commodification as seen in other art forms, as they could not be sold as editions or packaged and shown without the filmmaker being present. This could be one defining factor that Walley seeks for film works that mark both expanded and paracinematic works as autonomous from other art forms.

In fact, paracinema and expanded cinema take the same set of concerns, using light and multiple projectors or no projectors, but utilizing other light sources to invoke 'qualities of cinema', expanding the notion of what cinema can be by performing in alternative spaces to the cinema auditorium. Dematerialised versus materialised, a metaphysical understanding of the ontology of cinema versus technical advancements. It seems that one cannot exist without the other and to deny the place of either in ontological questions would be to tell only half the story.

As a counterpoint to paracinema with my own film practice currently rooted in the exploration of the filmstrip, my project moves beyond the modernist medium-specific argument that relates the film material to the ontology of cinema in order to develop how and in what form the filmstrip can be seen beyond this context. The pursuit of the 'space' that the form of the filmstrip can occupy situates it somewhere between site-specific installation, expanded cinema, sculpture and photographic object. My project asks a different set of questions to those being presented by the challenges put forward by the works of a paracinematic nature. What is the film image, when made using direct photographic techniques, with no lenses or traditional cameras, onto a continuous strip of film? Where is the movement? It is not in the object of the filmstrip, as it is static. Outside of the projector, with no propulsion, the question is reflected back onto the pro-filmic and the reality out 'there'. Ultimately, the assertion identifies the inadequacy of the apparatus of 'cinema' to convey what Bazin calls a

“complete and total representation of reality”. (Bazin: 1967, p.20) I am questioning the very idea of cinema and how it constructs our perception of space, time and movement; ultimately as Bergson suggests, “...the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind.” (1909, pp.322-323)

My practice could be seen as sharing the same sensibilities as those of paracinema, a practice where site and location of the pro-filmic and modes of presenting outside the conventional filmmaking apparatus - the projector, camera and screen - are integral to the encounter and understanding of the work. Just as Walley is looking for cinema outside of the film medium, my own practice is concerned with finding an autonomous position for film somewhere that highlights the slippage between the two.

In this chapter I have questioned, through Bazin, the claim that paracinema releases cinema from film in its renunciation of the prevailing medium specificity theory of the 1960s. If we understand the ontology of cinema to be connected to indexicality, a special property of the film material, then it's impossible to conceive of cinema ever realising our dream of reality without it. However, cinema is more than this. To continue the argument for film outside cinema it is necessary to understand how the photographic filmstrip's inherent limitations, and cinema's inadequacy to represent the physical world, is exploited through an emphasis and focus on how the image is made and the contexts in which it is received. The next chapter looks at how indexicality is at once a true representation of the physical world but inherently flawed, which is in itself essential for its reinvention. The exploration continues into what form and context the filmstrip can be seen outside of cinema. To make a distinction or define a boundary for a canon of works called paracinema in order to show how they differ from expanded forms of cinema is an elusive quest. Swapping one set of materials for another in order to define an art form as paracinema tries to do, still depends on an adherence to the same modernist principles. In the desire to move away from this Walley broadens the terms encompassing conceptual elements, such as the institutional framework, situations/spaces and traditions that surround an avant-garde practice. This moves the discussion towards broader territory, that of installation, site-specific filmmaker and artist-led activities that could also be described as expanded cinema. The materials and situations they both operate in slip and slide, there is fluidity between mediums, overlaps in concepts and modes and ideologies of production. It is this conclusion that should be borne in mind when thinking about the concept of film outside cinema.

## CHAPTER 2

### MEDIUM SPECIFICITY: INDEXICALITY, LIMITS AND RE-INVENTION

In the previous chapter I discussed the concept of paracinema and some examples proposed by Jonathan Walley which he suggests, historically were marginalised from the avant-garde film canon of the 1960s and 1970s. The point is made that present day film scholars will need to come to terms with the fact that “some of the most interesting and perhaps most important works in the tradition of avant-garde film were not made in the film medium.” (2007, p.355) Practices that subscribe to, or theoretically reflect, medium specific theories of cinema within their work are rejected, to foreground a number of ‘films’ that either jettison the medium entirely, or “...reconfigure the filmic apparatus so substantially as to bear little resemblance to film as we have known it for over a hundred years.” (Walley, 2007 p.355)

The works described as paracinematic, *Long Film for Ambient Light*, 1975, *Long Film for Four Projectors*, 1974 (Anthony McCall), *Pickled Movies*, 1973 – 1975 and *Yellow Movie*, 1973 (Tony Conrad) and Paul Sharits’ locational films such as *Synchronousoundtracks*, 1973-1974 all share similar conceptual and technical concerns to mine. These are a critical examination of the ontology of cinema, its perceptual and material limitations or possibilities, and the physical boundaries relating to the viewing experience. There is one difference, since I consistently use the filmstrip as the central material in my critical ontological investigations of cinema, to the extent of finding alternative contexts and situations for film works to be received. Questions are asked, about the film image, how it is made and how it can represent time and space outside what is traditionally defined as cinema (such as the apparatus, projector as propulsion machine and light emitting device, lenses, camera and the spatial configurations of these elements in institutional spaces such as auditoriums and other dark seated rooms such as galleries). How does this change our interaction with it and knowledge of how space, time and the filmic image are made and portrayed?

So where does a practice that foregrounds the specifics of a medium fit in a cinema without film? What is the relevance of medium-specificity and why is it so central in a

contemporary practice? If cinema exists elsewhere, outside of the medium, where is it?

What follows is a description of two contemporary works, one that uses only the photochemical filmstrip time and natural elements as its specific materials and the other that uses no other traditionally defined cinematic materials as we know them, apart from a screen, light source and chemical reaction which shares the qualities and processes inherent within the photochemical filmstrip in its creation of an image. My argument here is for the relevance of the specifics of certain temporal mediums in creating direct filmic images (no lenses) that highlight the hybridity between cinematic and non-cinematic contexts and cannot easily be classified as cinema or performance art.

### **Process, Performance and Image Making**

Amy Dickson has recently made two performative works utilising the heat sensitive qualities of thermochromic paint on a fabric screen. *Light Trace* (2012) is a performance in which Dickson stands behind a thermochromic fabric screen, which when exposed to the heat of light leaves a trace of its image on the screen. Once the thermochromic fabric is no longer in the heat giving light, the image fades. Dickson positions her body between the light and the screen (the light source is approximately 3 meters behind the screen) and the area of the screen that is exposed to the light traces the outline of her body. The area of the screen blocked by her body remains dark. As Dickson moves her body to cover the area of the screen that was exposed to light, this trace image fades and a new image is traced on the area of the screen now exposed until she moves her body again. The slowness with which Dickson rearranges herself enacts a shifting image simulating movement, and the exposure time on the unblocked areas of canvas through her stillness give the work its temporality.

Although the thermochromic fabric is not an acetate or polyester filmstrip, the material surface registers an image using the same necessary ingredients as those used on the filmstrip, a chemical sensitive to light and a substrate to carry the image. In Dickson's work the relationship between the duration of the act of 'projection' and the temporality of the image (it only exists until it's blocked from the light) is foregrounded. The registration of light on a surface to create an image and the fragile

and temporal nature of it, shares a relationship to the way that the filmstrip registers an image. This is certainly a paracinematic work under the description put forward by Walley, but it's concerned with the representation of movement through a photochemical material base; as Dickson says, '*the idea is to try to capture movement that's not visible with a still photograph or even moving image.*' This work doesn't use the conventional apparatus of cinema, projector, film medium or camera, but its purpose is to break down what constitutes movement and the trace image and illuminate the gap between the two.

*Light Time* (2013), a performance of approximately fifteen minutes, is a development of the earlier work described above. Using the same thermochromic screen, approximately thirty small birthday candles are fixed to slim wooden battens about 2 cm behind the surface of the fabric. Dickson states;

This piece explores the idea of light as the material substance of 'film': light's movement, flickering and informing time. Melting time flickers out leaving trace-line marks - a temporal document to the action. (Programme Notes for *Nightworks*, 2013)

The performance starts when the candles are lit one by one in a slow methodical process, then allowed to burn, and extinguished at a time determined by her. The audience stand in a darkened room watching the image of the candle light form on the surface of the fabric, glow and then disappear. Heat, light, reactive chemical surface and time are the essential components of this work: without any one of them, this work would not come into being. What interests me here is not the analogous relationship to the materiality of the filmstrip but the way it's foregrounded through the use of filmstrip-like material qualities.

Deconstructing the specifics of a medium will yield a number of component parts or elements. Each of these elements will have their own qualities, which may not be unique to them; but when these singular elements are either reconfigured or interrogated, ontologies are questioned and new ways of understanding are presented.

Placing unspooled reels of unexposed film underwater in lobster pots is the process involved in David Gatten's series of films, *What the Water Said*. The resulting filmstrips are sometimes shown as film and sometimes presented as filmstrip objects.

*What the Water Said No's 1-3* (1997-1998) are strips of 16mm colour and black and white film that were submerged in the Atlantic ocean off a South Carolina beach in crab pots for three days between January 1997 and August 1998. Gatten describes these films as;

...inscriptions written directly into the emulsion of the film as it was buffeted by the salt water, sand and rocks; as it was chewed and eaten by the crabs, fish and underwater creatures. (Gatten, 2007)

Gatten calls his films 'cinema' and understands them in this context. But this series of works has been shown as filmstrips, and also projected. Gatten uses the process of registering an image on celluloid to communicate the passing of time, and its direct relationship to the filmstrip to reveal this normally invisible connection between duration, nature and the process of making, resulting in representation through abstract imagery. It is not just time and nature that is inscribed onto the film surface but the process of making the image is inherent in it too.

This direct registration of nature and natural processes onto the filmstrip through the process of the water touching the photochemical material is made possible due to the specific indexical nature of the filmstrip. For this work to come into being both material and immaterial conditions must be present together. There's a certain amount of risk taking and chance involved in making a work of this nature, completely outside of the normal production modes of filmmaking but still considered by its maker as cinematic. The resulting filmstrips that are recovered after being submerged have been nibbled by crabs and other underwater sea life and bashed and battered by the waves. Sprocket holes are torn which makes projecting problematic, creating a friction between what this material is traditionally used for and what it has become. Pushing the limits of a specific material component of the medium of 'film' has produced a film object and cinematic event (when projected), creating a tension between its status as an object but foregrounding the process of making which in turn comments on the ontology of the film image and its place within cinema. However, what is left in no doubt at all is that it exists because of the properties of film material not in spite of them.

## Reconfiguring The Medium: Productive Limits and Gaps

In *The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity*, Mary Ann Doane suggests that traditionally we think of medium “as a material or a technical means of aesthetic expression” (2007, p.130) which contains both potentiality and constraints or ‘resistances’ and that the idea that both are inherent within the medium is an important characteristic of it, stressing the importance of;

The juxtaposition of negativity and productivity...[As an example she uses painting]... the visibility, colour, texture of paint for instance...[that are a medium’s potential against its limitations of]...the flatness of the canvas, the finite enclosure insured by the frame. (Doane, 2007, p.130)

Doane insists that both these frictions must be present for a medium to be self supporting; for its possibilities come from its constraints. Citing Gombrich’s *Conditions of Illusion*, Doane uses his notion of ‘gaps’ ‘empty or ill-defined areas’ and ‘screens’ and the role of psychological ‘projection’ to reinforce her argument of the necessity of limits and possibilities within a medium. Gombrich suggests that the image must contain a ‘gap’ and be convincing enough to build an expectation within the viewers to ‘project’ a vision based on their own experience and complete the image. In order for this ‘projection’ to happen two conditions must be met;

One is that the beholder must be left in no doubt about the way to close the gap; secondly, that he must be given a “screen”, an empty or ill-defined area onto which he can project the expected image. (Gombrich, 1960, p.208)

Doane uses Gombrich’s *Conditions of Illusion* to substantiate her claim that limitations and possibilities exist within a medium and the necessity for the dualism of materiality and immateriality to exist as an argument for illusionary space. The immateriality being referred to is the gap or blank spaces within the work. Gombrich’s examples of limitations within a medium refer to painting and sculpture having “...to be satisfied with working its wonders within its own medium and within its own isolated world.” (Gombrich, 1960 p.207) This implies that due to the medium’s limitations, invention and new possibilities occurred. Gombrich suggests that in order for the medium to work in new ways, artists understood how to create illusionary gaps for our “imitative faculty” to be activated (Gombrich, 1960 p.208). For film, these gaps could be between the projected image and the physical form of the

filmstrip together with the process by which the film image is made and its subsequent form of representation. These gaps could be seen as the limits of the film material which have been filled by finding new ways of working with them as seen in the work of David Gatten and Amy Dickson.

The medium's limitations are fundamental for its re-invention and this theory would suggest that an exhaustion of its materiality is not possible due to this duality of limits and possibilities inherent within it. If a material is becoming limited then expanding the contexts in which it exists is a way to change or expand the limits of its meaning.

Duality and expanding a medium is expressed in Ji-hoon Kim's reading of Rosalind Krauss's concept of the "expanded field" (Kim, 2011, p.12) which covers a range of art practices that, rather than focus on a specific medium as a process for making, is more concerned with specific situations and contexts to which it responds. These responses take different forms depending on their medium. Krauss uses sculpture of the 1970s, coupled with the land art movement, which saw sculptural forms move from the gallery to the public realm, bridging the boundaries between architecture and landscape. The example of two seemingly opposing disciplines highlights how one medium, sculpture, re-invented itself by changing situational contexts and stepping outside of its institutional boundary to create something new. However, as Kim suggests (through Krauss) this is in opposition to the modernist practice of sculpture that is "...grounded in two kinds of oppositions, one opposition to architecture and one to landscape." (2011 p.12) The duality referred to here is the opposing contexts of architecture and landscape, but rather than being oppositional the new work (sculpture in the landscape) actually extends the modernist practice beyond its 'own isolated world' as indicated above by Gombrich, into new ways in which to work with the medium and extend its meaning. Extension beyond its medium, in this case cinema, is what I'm suggesting for the filmstrip.

For Doane, the dualities of material and immaterial support film's ontology. Krauss's concept of the '*expanded field*' is similar to 'expanded cinema' or 'intermedia', terms already discussed, a dissolving of boundaries between specific mediums and the spaces they occupied. As already discussed in Chapter one, Jonathan Walley's criticism of the historic Expanded Cinema movement was that it was too all-encompassing, and specific fledgling mediums were in danger of losing their identity, (particularly experimental film), suggesting that hybridity could lead to meaninglessness. However, what Kim suggests is that hybridity actually extends the

modernist project, by changing the physical context in which work is shown; discourses merge, institutional boundaries converge, simultaneously moving specific material practices to new ground.

In certain practices, hybridisation of seemingly oppositional mediums can illuminate and strengthen their specificity, reasserting their specific qualities rather than trying to suggest an either/or approach. Ji-hoon Kim sees the work of Jim Campbell's *Home Movies 300-1* (2006), and *Library* (2004) (a mix of an analogue photographic process, a photogravure and LED light sources depicting movement of people through the static photograph, one placed over the other) as a work which;

...exemplifies the ways in which contemporary media art pieces cross various platforms or genres, ranging from avant-garde cinema to video installation, provide a fresh look at the photographic inscription of reality ... This new breed of practices fosters hybrid visual forms that make porous the boundaries between the live action and the animated images. (Kim, 2011, p.2)

In Campbell's work, the ontology of the image (one digital, one photochemical) is tensioned by the dialectic between moving and still. The analogue process of the photograph is amplified by the presence of the animated pulsing LED's. Not in spite of but because of its indexical nature, film is re-invigorated in this work where mediums co-exist.

Physical and institutional limitations within the medium and its materiality are essential for its re-invention, and Doane's theory would suggest, like those of Krauss and Kim, that it is because of their limits that new possibilities exist too. Rather than seeing limits as limiting, when a work directly confronts these so called limits inherent within it, qualities of the medium are seen in new ways. When materials are used in a way beyond their normal processes or context, new possibilities occur. By amplifying or foregrounding certain limits of a medium, and shifting the context of process and institutional boundaries, material constraints are overcome and re-worked, as with Dickson and Gatten's work.

One of the fundamental components of the film medium is the analogue filmstrip, whose indexicality is considered by Mary Ann Doane as the "...primary indicator of cinematic specificity..." so that theories around medium specificity have become

central once again (2007, p.129). When the filmstrip is used in extreme processes such as in David Gatten's work, the nature of the representational imagery is dramatically changed. The relationship between the abstract image and the object in the real world or nature (taken to mean everything outside of the mechanics of photography) asks far many more questions about photography's ontology than just about presenting a representation, through the technical apparatus of the camera and projector, of what we know already exists. This in itself presents a duality between representation and abstraction. The inadequacy of photography to represent reality on the one hand and its mimetic ability to represent reality on the other, is essential to its self-supporting status and autonomy and represents the gaps discussed earlier suggested by Gombrich.

### **The Inadequacy of Photography**

James Elkins suggests that photography represents the world inadequately and that academic criticism has not yet dealt with this idea.

The same theorists who say photography's realism is really a matter of what people want it to represent, still reserve the index as photography's physical link to the world.... and it is hard to disagree that photographs are formed by a physical and mechanical interaction with the world (as a debased version of Peirce has it). (Elkins, 2011, p.169)

The desire to represent the world the way we see or want to see it through the camera, and the fact that the apparatus performs this mimetic function by the nature of its physical link to the real world, seems to Elkins to be a convenient coincidence. Elkins is not interested in looking at photographs that connect point by point with their counterpart in reality, the photographs that do are not concerned with capturing the world in a realist sense, they are actually seen to be anti realist. Elkins' book is a response to Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, and the photographs he chooses in response are of a selenite window, black ice and rock salt which act as metaphors for the nature of photography itself:

They make me visually desperate: staring at them, I am compelled to think about how little they resemble things I recognize as part of any possible experience. It is as if I am seeing the world through the selenite window, and

it will not come together in my mind or in the image. Something about these photographs resists being seen: they repel my eye, my vision trickles off them like water running down a windowpane. (2011, p.176)

For Elkins, the analogies drawn between the photographic images that he has selected (the selenite window, hazily obliterating a complete view of the outside world; the cracked ice revealing a black and murky distant background presenting two surfaces) and the idea of what photography is, has parallels with the resistance inherent in the photographic process to capturing images on film outside of the traditional lens system and the ontology of cinema. If cinema is realism what happens when we can't recognize the image?

Abstraction from the representational visual field was explored in the early 1900s by European artists who started to work with the new medium of film (namely Oskar Fischinger, Walter Ruttmann, Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling). Basic formal principles of line, tone, shape and (eventually) colour were used to explore movement and rhythm within the cinematic image.

Malcolm Le Grice nuances the general meaning of the term 'abstract' as being "concerned with the non-representational" and makes a distinction between concrete and abstract films in the work of the early avant-garde of the 1920s. Those works that were not concerned with representation in favour of 'non-referential elements' he calls concrete and those that adhered to the more general meaning of abstract "...the separation of qualities, aspects or generalization from particular instances" (Le Grice, 1977, p.32) were affiliated to the painterly works of Cézanne and the Cubists. He makes this distinction to mark the difference between the concrete works of Ruttmann, Fischinger, Eggeling and Richter from the those film works that were considered 'abstract' but not "non-representational in the photographic sense." (1977, p.32)

Le Grice believes that Man Ray's *Le Retour à la Raison* (1923) is the first work that moves one step further in separating elements of objects from their referential backgrounds, fragmenting parts of objects so their form and association is ambiguous. *Le Retour à la Raison*, Le Grice argues, is radical in that it is the first experimental film to draw attention to the process by which it is made. The film is in black and white, some parts negative some not, with sections made completely in the darkroom where lengths of film were covered in pins, salt and pepper and exposed

with a light source outside of the camera (making a 'rayogram'). This is interspersed with shots of a fairground and his muse Kiki of Montparnasse, made with a movie camera. Through the process of making a rayogram or photogram, all frame lines are eradicated and in projection this produces a flow of shapes and forms albeit fragmented from the way it was made by the imposition of frames in projection. The key for Le Grice however, is that it draws attention to the materiality of film and its ontology:

As an extension of this area of awareness, it becomes impossible to separate the material aspects of the image from the photochemical process and the procedural aspects of constructing work. (1977, p.35)

Pavel Levi agrees, but uses the film to describe how the limits of indexicality are pushed further; because the objects that form the rayogram part of the film are physically touching the material, no light can come between the object (salt, pins, etc) and the photochemical material. This is in direct contrast to the way an image is normally made on a photochemical or digital medium, whereby light bounces off the object and forms an image of itself on the photo medium. In other words, there is a distance between the object and the recording device. This may be the one area of indexicality where the photochemical medium champions the claim on indexicality over the digital.

Levi notes that the rayograms' structural abstract qualities are made via process or are "productive" rather than a "reproduction". This distinction is made because the abstract image doesn't directly relate visually to what we see in reality:

...it is representationally reductive - yet for that very reason - powerfully explicative of the design patterns and the relational properties commonly concealed by the "natural", external appearance of objects, their textures and density. (2012, p.6)

The indexical nature of the photochemical filmstrip when used in this 'direct' manner outside of the traditional apparatus i.e. the camera, in being "representationally reductive" produces an image of reality that we do not immediately identify with, it reveals other properties of form and surface qualities that we wouldn't normally see. In my film *Rosemary Again and Again* (2013) the representation of the rosemary bush is abstracted from its normal representational form as in some places the film

material is directly touching the plant and in others not. What is recorded is a 1:1 scale replica of fragments of the herb, tips of leaves, shadows of stems, a matrix of criss-crossing fragments of the whole. This way of presenting something that we know in an unrecognizable form leads to new knowledge and understanding about the relationship between real objects and their visual representational forms and highlights the special properties of the recording medium. This points to the limits and possibilities that Doane suggests must exist within a medium in order for it to be self-supporting.

Doane's re-imagining of medium is not the same as the essentialist theory championed by Clement Greenberg, where self-referentiality eventually cancels out what is extraneous to the medium, leaving only the bare specific qualities; for example, in the case of painting, flatness and the rectangular frame of the canvas. Instead she positively champions the limitations inherent which are the necessary conditions for reinvention:

Proper to the aesthetic then, would be a continual reinvention of the medium through a resistance to resistance, a transgression of what are given as material limitations nevertheless requires those material constraints as its field of operations. (2007, p.131)

Tom Gunning has eloquently disputed the argument that the digital medium is not indexical in his essay *What's the Point of an Index? Or Faking Photographs?* in which he shows that digital and analogue photography share indexical claims in that both operate as icons (the secondary sign operating within the photograph). As Gunning states:

An index need not (and frequently does not) resemble the thing it represents. The indexicality of a traditional photograph adheres in the effect of light on chemicals, not in the picture it produces. The rows of numerical data produced by a digital camera and the image of traditional chemical photography are both indexically determined by objects outside the camera. (2008, p.25)

Doane's second argument against digital indexicality is based on believability or truth; how do we know what we are looking at refers to the pro-filmic? Laura Mulvey suggests however that "the index is a registration of a moment of time" (seminar

paper, RCA, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012), once again shifting the argument away from the issue of medium-specificity. If we move away from the idea of the index being linked to a specific medium then it becomes possible to start to think about film outside of cinema.

The relationship to the pro-filmic seems to be key for Doane. Throughout her text on the index, materiality and medium she claims that a certain level of believability is needed, i.e. we believe that the digital can be untrue because we know it can be altered, whereas chemical photography asserts a certain truth, a “corroboration of an existence.” (2007, p.109) The indexical sign ensures a point to point connection to a real object, a trace. Like Gunning, Doane points out that

Unlike icons, indices have no resemblance to their objects, which nevertheless, directly cause them. This is due to the fact that the index is also evacuated of content; it is a hollowed-out sign. It (for instance, a pointing finger) designates something without describing it... (2007, p.133)

The index is also connected to touch or contact, and in fact Doane reiterates through Peirce that it shouldn't resemble the object but that its contact is reassurance of its “physical link” and its resistance to iconicity. (2007, p.135) Philip Rosen distinguishes between indexicality and the indexical trace. The trace represents a time that has passed, whereas Peirce's examples of indexical signs, the weather vane and the sundial, require “the action of a referent occurring at the moment one apprehends the sign” (Rosen, 2001, p.20), indicating a presentness. This would point to the fact that a temporal quality exists, as Laura Mulvey suggests. Bazin's comparison of cinema to the death mask, the Turin shroud and the fingerprint is an indexical trace; it indicates that the referent was there in the past but what is left behind on the surface it touches is not an iconic representation of it.

In Peter Wollen's 1976 essay *Ontology and Materialism in Film*, Bazin's ontology of photography, and therefore by default cinema's ontology, is “a natural process of registration, a process which excluded man”, (Bazin cited in Wollen: 1976, p.7) and his absence in photography leads us to enjoy photography without him, which: “acts upon us as a “natural“ phenomenon, like a flower or a snowflake whose beauty cannot be divorced from its vegetable or telluric origins.” (Wollen, 1976, p.7)

This is also a temporal relationship, a past time both in the way we encounter the photograph as an object and the way in which the index operates as trace. However, Wollen calls for an ontology of film being not only in its material base and photochemical characteristics but also in its language or 'text', and the idea revealed within the space created between the limits of the material investigation and the hidden signifier which is completed by "the thinker, seer, imaginer." (1976, p.20) What he is referring to here is what Peirce would have called the referent, the interpretation completed in this triadic structure by the viewer. This reverberates with Gombrich's theory of the 'gap' being an essential component of the work and relates back to Doane's argument that the medium's "enabling impediment" is its potential. (Doane, 2007, p.130)

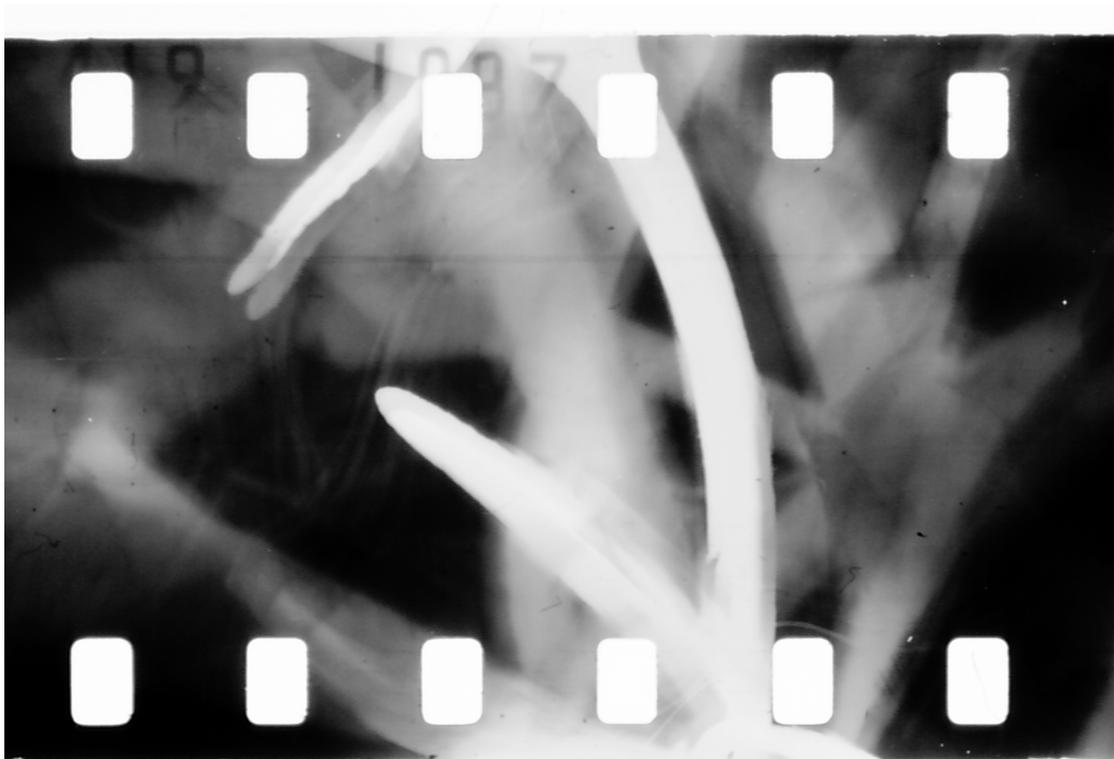


Fig. 1: Cathy Rogers, 2013, Section from Photogram *Rosemary, Again and Again*, Unsplit Standard 8 Black And White Film, 10ft loop

## Medium-Specificity and Dismantling the Film Machine<sup>3</sup>

Paracinema transgresses traditional formal limits of cinema and boundaries of the film medium by resisting a reductive medium specific definition, but claiming autonomy and distinction by retaining a connection to the cinematic and 'film specificity'. Contrary to equivocations of art works existing between artistic forms, Walley believes that paracinematic works explore cinematic ontology "even though they reject or radically reconfigure filmic materials." (2007, p.365) Anthony McCall's solid light films and Conrad's *Pickled Movie* series and *Bowed Film* explicitly address the nature of the engagement with the audience, and this shapes the work, but it is not reduced to Renan's light and time of expanded cinema. According to Walley, they are still material practices, "in the sense that they constitute the concrete practices and spaces in which that thing we call avant-garde cinema is situated." (2007, p.365) They are just different sets of materials from those traditionally defined, but still essentially cinematic.

Walley suggests, that when cinema expanded from its specific material practices and occupied other cultural institutions such as the gallery and museum, there were consequences for its autonomy:

If cinema could be made from so many other materials, what made the resulting forms distinct from those of the other arts? As it entered the gallery and museum, what if anything secured its status as "cinematic" as opposed to sculptural, painterly, or something in the grey zones inbetween...The question was no longer "what is cinema?" But "what isn't cinema?" (2011, p.26)

The argument for distinct works out of the canon of expanded cinema (namely McCall's and Conrad's) to be defined specifically as paracinematic contains its own paradox, a call for a selection of works that reject medium specificity to be defined as distinct due to the fact that ones that "once flowed into expanded cinema and have since flowed out in a new direction" (Walley, 2011, p.28) weren't acknowledged.

In order to find a way out of this expansion of cinema that ultimately would see it go to a point where it would dissolve, and keep the medium specificity of cinema, Walley

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<sup>3</sup> The "film machine" is a term coined by Hollis Frampton and referenced in Jonathan Walley's *Identity Crisis: Experimental Film and Artistic Expansion*, 2011, p.33

uses Hollis Frampton's concept of the "film machine" (2011, p.32) – all parts, camera, film, projector, lens, screen, make the up the sum of the whole, and if one part is replaced or substituted then it's still considered film. Theoretically this allows experimental film to remain specific within the heterogeneous forms of expanded cinema if a relationship to the film machine is maintained. For example, if the filmstrip is replaced by a human body interacting between the projector beam and the screen to create an image, this is distinct from theatre and on a level with performance art because the projector is part of the work. (Walley, 2011 p.34)

This way of preserving an identity for experimental filmmaking practices within the wide gamut of expanded cinema keeps a connection to filmmaking processes and methods of production even if it is reconfigured beyond all recognition.

As soon as an expanded work under Walley's revised definition reaches the outer limits of a film practice and is in danger of being dissolved into other art forms or seen as 'sculptural' or 'a painting', for example in Tony Conrad's *Pickled Movie* series (1973 – 1975), it could come dangerously close to being sculptural; it is saved from this by virtue of the fact that it contains part of the film machine and thereby keeps its autonomy. This way work that has replaced or substituted any part of the film machine remains associated with the cinematic. So for Walley the boundaries must remain clearly delimited but with room to play.

Through a presentation of my practical work and a comparison with filmmaker Jennifer Nightingale, this chapter summaries the practical aims of my project, which is to extract one element of the 'film machine', the filmstrip, exploring ideas of re-invention, alternative image making practices, to start to think about film outside of cinema. In order to do this it is imperative that it deliberately sits uncomfortably between the gaps in art forms.

## CHAPTER 3

### TRACE, TOUCH, CAMERALESS AND PINHOLE FILM

The trace made by light on sensitive material is an image. A camera may have been involved, or it may not. The light may or may not have been focused by a lens. The image may very well not look at all like a cow, or like Simonetta Vespucci; but because it is a photographic image, it is subject to the same procedures. Most important: it is accessible to our sensibilities on precisely the same basis. (Frampton, 1965, cited in Jenkins (ed.) 2009, p.7)

#### Introduction

This statement by Hollis Frampton encouraged me to proceed with an experiment in how to capture the motion of a speeding train, on a strip of film. Whilst working on a site-specific installation in an old bus factory that was positioned parallel to a mainline railway track, I observed how the train moved through the large windowpanes on one side of the building. Watching this movement through the window frames I wanted to capture it all at once, as it happened, onto a continuous strip of film. In order to do this a number of long pinhole cameras were built to take segments of a filmstrip. The results were various but the blurred motion of the train was barely visible. However, recording this continuous movement on separate strips of film broke the continuity of the image. In order to mirror the continuity of movement in the pro-filmic with the material film strip, I moved on to threading whole rolls of super 8 film into a garden hosepipe which, punctured with holes, functioned as a pinhole camera. This time the results were even more abstracted, which led to the question, what is this, do I need to be able to recognise this image on the filmstrip in order for it to be a true representation of what is out there?

These first pinhole experiments were driven by the pursuit to find ways in which to represent time and movement all at once – captured on the analogue filmstrip and explore ways in which the image is made outside of traditional lens-based cameras. The desire was to capture this in the most direct way possible, as an imprint of reality. In projection, only fleeting, broken segments are partially visible, and this highlighted the inadequacy of projecting film or showing the filmstrip through a projector, especially one that had been created outside of a device which imposed

framed images. This only highlighted the disparity between representing the physical world in such a way that the link to the means of production remained intact. Using a process that involved entire lengths of super 8 film in a non traditional camera, without a lens to focus the light, produced flares of colour, pin pricks of light and suggestions of outlines of recognisable objects like street lamps. Questions arose, such as where is the image that I'm expecting to see, and is it a replica of the object in reality? Is this trace of light bouncing off the object the real image of this thing? I realised that these light flares, suggesting forms and swathes of colour, are not available to our eyes without the technology, as the lens in the eye acts as a focusing device. Making the pinhole films on the smallest film gauge, 8mm, and using the minimum photographic equipment (lensless pinhole cameras), produced continuous images, unlike the realist aesthetic associated with classical film theory's essence of cinema.

My project asks a different set of questions to those being presented by the challenges put forward by the works of a paracinematic nature. What is the film image when made using direct photographic techniques, with no lenses or traditional cameras, onto a continuous strip of film? Where is the movement? It is not in the object of the filmstrip as a static sculptural installation, since the images on it are fixed, they do not move. Outside of the projector, with no propulsion, the question is reflected back onto the pro-filmic and the reality out there. Ultimately the enquiry is based on revealing the inadequacy and limitations of the apparatus of "cinema" to convey as Bazin says a "complete and total representation of reality." (1967, p.20)

### **Similarities and Differences with Paracinema**

The idea of using film in a non-traditional way outside of the traditional apparatus is supported by Walley's claim for a cinema without film. Film can be seen to operate in many other contexts other than the traditional cinematic form and taking Jonathan Walley's claim as a point of resistance, I started to think of making work that existed as film (as we know it, in its visible material form) but made and presented outside the apparatus and familiar languages of cinema. With no projector, there is no enforced mechanical movement, since the movement in my experiments has already happened in the pro-filmic event. The more I moved away from the traditional materials of cinema, the more I realised that without one 'essential' component, light, the film image wouldn't exist at all, in any form.

As a counterpoint to paracinema, my own film practice is rooted in the exploration of the photographic properties of the filmstrip to find ways in which to represent space and movement, as directly as possible. The work is not concerned with recreating a multitude of cinematic qualities but with creating an image of the real world in a way that is as direct as possible but not necessarily recognizable to us. If cinema is the manifestation, a representation of the real world brought about by an indexical link with the physical world, propelled into a simulation of reality through illusionary movement of the cinematic apparatus, then how is my work different?

## **Method**

My practical research has taken the form of a number of experiments with making 'films' that either don't move or where the image is abstracted through the use of direct photographic techniques. Each time, the material is tested to the limits of its use and each time new forms and questions are raised. Every work starts with a perceptual enquiry, and every stage in the development of the work presents some form of technical problem, the resolution of which leads to a new form. Very rarely do I remake work, instead taking forward issues and resistances in order to inform the next. These problems are investigated by experimenting with the filmstrip and looking at the process by which the image is made, the trace that light leaves on a photochemical surface and subsequently how this image object (the filmstrip) is presented and within which context. This I believe is the start to thinking about how film can be seen outside the context of cinema.

The focus of the practical element of the project is on the interplay between the representation of the real and its quite obvious illusionary outcome in the form of movement through the projector. This resistance between reality and illusion is made more difficult to read in the way the films are presented: normally small, durational works shown in the place they are made. How my work bridges this gap, between having cinematic qualities (use of analogue film in a projector) and still photographic installations, provides some points of consideration. The way the image is made is constantly being questioned in order to suggest or show how inadequate cinema is – but this enquiry cannot take this position without being based in the materiality of film – the filmstrip. You could say it is paracinematic but not in Walley's terms. My work resolutely requires the film medium in order to show its failings. It's important to encounter the work, as much as possible, in the place of the pro-filmic in order for the viewer to map both film time, the space to which it refers,

and the real time and space of the encounter with the work, thereby understanding the disparity between the representations of the two.

In pursuit of an autonomous space for the filmstrip as object and as a surface for creating images, experiments have situated it somewhere between sculptural installation and expanded cinema.

Practically, the work communicates a deliberate rupture between the fixed and moving (filmstrip as object and then filmstrip as moving object), and the spatial representation of the places where it is made and its representation on film, shown in the time of spectatorship against the past time of the process of making. Within these relationships between still and moving, past and present, context and object an incongruity is presented, a stasis<sup>4</sup>, which I believe situates these film works outside of cinema, which is a simulation of continuously flowing reality.

## **Practical Work**

Presented alongside this thesis are a series of four practical works; *Hosepipe Film*, *All Around You I and II*, *Rosemary Again and Again* and *All of This is Here*. Each play with the relationship between image - object, movement - duration and projection – illumination, and form the practical basis for the study into an idea for the use of film outside of cinema.

What follows is a critical review of each work, the processes involved and how they are positioned within the context of contemporary filmmakers working with alternative photographic processes, the pinhole and photogram.

## **Trace and Touch: Pinhole and Cameraless Films**

This study started with pinhole filmmaking as a way to make a type of contact print of the external world. Whereas pinhole images are made in lensless cameras without mechanical shutters, pure cameraless films are made outside of any type of lightproof container. The similarities between the two forms of alternative image making are that they are both concerned with handmade aesthetics and the intention

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<sup>4</sup> The definition of stasis in this context is the idea of something that is normally flowing but which is held motionless.

or acknowledgment of unexpected results. However, the varying techniques applied make the outcomes fundamentally different in their use of the film material. Pinhole photography is widely used but pinhole film less so. Pinhole films are made in substitute camera forms that can take many different shapes and sizes. The more primitive hand made versions include making the aperture from a small hole made by a needle in a dark container, as in the pinhole films of Jennifer Nightingale and my own, without a traditional shutter. Making any kind of pinhole or cameraless film image involves an element of chance and a risk of unexpected results.

Cameraless films encompass a range of techniques and processes. Some start from found footage, strips of film that already have imagery inscribed on them working over the top with drawing, painting, scratching and cutting, while others use a 'direct' approach choosing to work with paint, scratching, gouging, bleaching, drawing or collage techniques on clear or exposed film surfaces. By contrast, placing objects directly onto unexposed film stock or photographic paper in the dark, which is then exposed to light, makes a photogram. In the photogram the objects touching the photographic surface either block the light completely, leaving their shape unexposed on the film or paper, or - depending on the opacity - light passes through the object registering its shape and patterning on the photographic surface. Multiple objects can be placed on the photosensitive surface creating a shadow of the ones that aren't touching it directly. This description shows that there is very little difference between a contact print and photogram, apart from the fact that the contact print is part of the lexicon of lens based photography and typically uses film negatives or positives to make a copy onto another surface. Essentially they share the same physical process.

At a Symposium in 2006 held at the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, the relationship between the photogram, photography and scientific applications such as the x-ray were discussed with a view to deciding whether or not the photogram was an autonomous art form in it's own right:

...the photogram's technique presents a radical break with prior methods for producing vision and image. By comprising various imprint techniques and shadows, the aim is to show that the photogram, as a tracing media, has little in common with lens-based photography. (The Photogram, Light, Trace Shadow, 2006)

In the introductory statement for the symposium, the central question seemed to be the implication for the photogram being sidelined from mainstream photography or art discourse. Here, what is overlooked is the significance of "...the semiotic question of the relationship of image, body/object and traced outlines..." (2006)

The summary aims of the symposium have similar claims to my own for a film outside cinema in its call for recognition of the photogram outside traditional lens based photography.

### **The Distance Between Touch and Trace**

The distance between touch and trace in the photogram/contact print process and pinhole image not only exists practically (object/surface placement) but also theoretically, in thinking about the result of the representational image. Practically, both pinhole and photogram methods fall under the category of cameraless filmmaking, but diverge again, separated by a phenomenological question about how we perceptually experience them.

In making the distinction between touch and trace, both practically and theoretically, the question of the distance between object and sign and the hand of the maker and image are diametrically opposed. In traditional lens based photography there is a physical distance between the object and camera containing the film. The lens bridges this distance. In cameraless film or photogram films this distance is closed and an intervention is made to bring the photographic material into direct contact with the object. In order to create trace images there is a gap between surface and object for the light to travel. This gap is not only physically pro-filmic but widens in the subsequent projection event, positioning the viewer/subject between beam and screen. Therefore there is a correlation between the physical and theoretical notions of distance/trace and touch/contact.

The trace of light on a photo or non-photochemical surface exists whether a camera is involved or not, be it a traditional photograph, pinhole or photogram. The difference between them is whether a lens is involved, and further still the distance between the object and the photochemical surface as in the contact or photogram. This points to a distinction between 'touch' of the object and 'trace' of light. Trace exists whatever the process, but touch is a specific act that changes the nature of the representation of the image and the encounter with the film or photograph.

Susanne Ramsenthaler believes that “photographs and photograms exist in different perceptual spaces”. The photogram is a very direct reference to the object and offers a view not always easily deciphered, whereas the photograph depicts objects. For this reason she suggests that the photogram is “cognitively distant”, which suggests we perceive these images differently. (2009, p.228)

## **Pinhole and The Trace Image**

Jennifer Nightingale has made a series of pinhole films using the 8mm cartridge and 16mm magazine as a substitute for a traditional camera, without a lens, shutter or any form of automatic winding-on device. Piercing the black cartridge housing with a small hole, she winds it with her fingers to act as a shutter. She has refined her shooting strategy into ‘trace moments’ and ‘intermittent exposure’. When the aperture is open and the light hits the film plane this is in ‘trace mode’, and when her hand covers the pinhole this is called ‘intermittent exposure’. She advances the film, approximately a frame at a time, by hand cranking the reel (via a dial on the outside), which sits inside the black cartridge spool. In *West Window/East Window* and *Rectangle Window/Arch Window*, the subject is the interior scene of a window. Based on the hand cranking and the approximation of what constitutes a frame, the projected images are stretched into flickering formations of what we recognise as window frames but are represented through the projector’s imposed frame delimitations. These films are implicitly bound to the medium in other ways than their indexical relationship. The process by which they are made belongs only to the configuration of the film cartridge and the intervention of the filmmaker’s body as a makeshift shutter. The cinematic apparatus, in this case the projector and film cartridge, are essential components in bringing this film into being. Nightingale talks about her films as “moments, pulsing, formal units of gestures.” (Nightingale, 2013, Interview on 16<sup>th</sup> May at the Royal College of Art) The formal unit of the frame is substituted for the informal notion of a gesture, a movement, an expression of an idea. The fluttering hand operating as the shutter, light leaking through her fingers, is what gives the work its chance, rhythm, form and colour. Nightingale says that the film “has to push and pull in some way otherwise it’s not active”, which relates to a resolvedness within the image. (Nightingale, 2013, interview on 16<sup>th</sup> May at the Royal College of Art)

In contrast, the pinhole work I’ve made operates differently. The idea of units and frames is disposed of in favour of continuous moments of time registered on a

frameless filmstrip. The linearity of what is before the camera is matched metrically with the configuration of the film plane. For *Hosepipe* and *All Around You I and II*, whole reels of Super 8 film (50ft) are fed into a hand made pinhole camera. The cameras for both works have taken different forms. As the name suggests, *Hosepipe* was a garden hose of 50ft in length, punctured with holes in which the film was threaded, and for *All Around You* a whole roll of film was stuffed inside a plastic globe that was painted black with four holes drilled into it. The significant difference between these pinhole films and Nightingale's is that the aim was to capture simultaneous moments of time at once along the entire length of film with as little intervention from the filmmaker as possible. The flexible nature of the hosepipe camera meant that its spatial configuration matched that of the object that was being filmed. In the case of *All Around You*, that object was empty space in the room around which the sphere hung.

Nightingale's work is completely embodied by the filmmaker who decides, with her fingers acting as the shutter, when to block the light and when to let it through. Although her hand is not directly readable on the filmstrip as in touching, it's inherent in the process by which it is made and the trace of light that she decides forms an indexical link to the final image. These films are shown as durational projections and this method of presentation completes the film, so that the viewer becomes active in registering the time image made through projection. In this sense, the work is completely cinematic.

Both our practices share the manufacture and use of the hand made camera. However there are some fundamental differences in intention, technique and configuration of the camera that point to the position they then occupy in their final presentation in terms of cinema, installation and photography. Most of the works I make are ephemeral, not easily repeatable or reproducible, and if they are reproduced are different each time as they are normally site-related. They include an element of chance and offer fleeting moments of another view of space and time. Most are made on Super 8 positive film stock; no inter-negative is made and therefore no duplicate print exists. They are immediate in the sense that they are made at the point of exposure. If they are projected they are presented as durational looped performances or static installations. They are not cinema in the sense of a replaying of a recording of a past time, but unravel in the time of spectatorship and at that point operate in the moment. The issue of medium is not important but at the same time it is completely central to this way of working: the message is not the

material element, but the questioning of how we see and understand the space around us and in this sense the medium is secondary to the message. However, without the film material and the way it's physically organised, the integral visual language and its construction is completely central to making a work of this nature. The nature of the relationship to the context in which these works are shown means that each time they are shown their connection to the space is different and offers a different interpretation. The relationship exists between work, context (site) and subject, unlike cinematic films where the relationship is the same wherever it is shown, as is the triadic structure between screen, projector and subject.

## **Practical Experiments**

### ***Hosepipe Film***

The first experiment with how to present time and movement with the filmstrip, outside the traditional projection apparatus, came in presenting the pinhole filmstrip as an object. A 50ft strip of Super 8 film which was exposed in a hosepipe punctured with holes, representing the scene of a river bank on which it was exposed, was displayed in a vitrine. Presented as an object to be looked upon, the installation worked as an aesthetic representation of light on photographic material, although raising questions of function and meaning within its somewhat out of context location. There were no visual references to its connection with the object that it represented or to the place where it was exposed, although there was a short explanatory statement alongside the display, which led the spectator to an aspect of its construction. Although this is an interesting element of the experiment, and clearly highlights film's original primary function to aesthetically represent reality and perceived motion, when one of those of primary functions is negated (recognisable representation imagery) what is left is an aesthetic response. Taka Imura's *One Second Loop (=Infinity)* 2007, a loop of 24 frames presented in a clear Perspex box, clearly communicates the relationship between the material matter of film time (the frame and filmstrip) and the loop which completes the concept of one second of time. With *Hosepipe Film* I was starting from a length of film, which although visually identifiable, in its presented format is related more to an aesthetic and metrical value than a temporal one. This is what I intended, as it suggests another way in which to use film outside of cinematic language, accentuating this cross over into spatial correlations.

Fig. 2: Taka Imura, 2007, *One Second Loop (=Infinity) A White Line in Black*

To explore the spatial representation of a 'film' and its reading of such, *Hosepipe* was published in printed form; in its entirety it was scanned to fit at a scale of 1:1 on a A4 double page spread in *Sequence 2*, a journal of experimental film and video. It has never been shown as a projected film.

### ***All Around You I and II***

Super 8 film, glass sphere, projector, 2012 and 2013

As a continuation of experimenting with ways of capturing movement and time as a simultaneous action, *All Around You* is about capturing time and space in a non-linear configuration to correspond to the idea of non-linear space. What happens if we could present this somehow with film? What would it look like and how could it be done? Instead of a linear pinhole camera, a spherical one was made and a whole roll of Super 8 film was stuffed inside until it filled the void within the sphere. An exposure was made in the small gallery where the work was to be seen. The exposure time was calculated, the film was developed and presented within a glass sphere of approximately the same dimensions as the pinhole camera. The beam of a Super 8 projector lit the sphere, illuminating the contents of the filmstrip inside the ball, while simultaneously a single image was projected on the wall behind the

suspended sphere. This work tests how the linear filmstrip can be used to represent the space and time outside of the traditional camera and projector apparatus.<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 3: Cathy Rogers, 2013, *All Around You II*, Installation View from *Disruption*, RCA Research Biennial

## The Photogram and Touch

The photogram is a technical process for making images on film where objects are placed directly or indirectly onto the photosensitive material, outside of a camera. When objects are placed directly on a filmstrip in the darkroom, continuous frameless images are produced, as in Man Ray's *Le Retour à la Raison* (1923). Stefan Themerson invented a *trick table* (1928) for photographing objects that were placed on a sheet of glass, between which lay some translucent paper, a light shone down on the object and then from underneath he photographed the objects frame by frame with a camera. What seems to be the unifying characteristic between the indirect and direct method of making photograms is that the object being captured is still. The frame by frame technique used by the Themersons and other pioneer filmmakers from the 1920s is more akin to animation, as are Bärbel Neubauer's cameraless films, which are photograms made in the darkroom. Heide Häusler

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<sup>5</sup> In trying to get away from using the projector, alternative light sources were tested, but the beam of light focused by the lens was the most successful in terms of lighting the ball without the image being diffused. The projector in this installation also became part of the representation of the idea and provided the visual and conceptual code to complete the work. Version II of this work was also exhibited at *Disruption*, Royal College of Art, in the 2013 Research Biennale, and *Fieldwork II* in South Kensington.

comments on how the photogram film “unlike the photogram that preceded it – has seldom been employed in the history of the cameraless film.” Hausler suggests that the exposure time is inscribed in the image and can be read on the developed filmstrip. When projected, the film;

...takes the characteristic antitheses of these two media – a fixed time, on the one hand, and a continuum of movement on the other hand – and produces a synthesis. (2010, p.109).

Fig. 4: Bärbel Neubauer, 1998, Still from *Feuerhaus*, 35mm colour film, sound, 5:20

### ***Rosemary, Again and Again***

B&W Unsplit Standard 8mm film, 10ft loop, 2013

As a continuation of my pinhole studies, a length of standard 8mm film was draped in and around a rosemary bush, so that some of the film touched the leaves and stalks while other parts didn't, something like a contact print, but not entirely: some of the leaves of the plant came into direct contact with the film surface producing a clear shape of the leaf. In other parts where the plant isn't touching the film plane, the light creates a shadow image, which creates a sense of depth. The shape of the subject is represented on the film in a more or less 1:1 scale. When projected the subject is broken down into sequential frames presenting a durational representation of the volume of the rosemary bush.

Frustrations with not being able to see representational imagery on the pinhole film and the delays in the process led me to trying more direct methods, this time doing away with the camera completely. Holding on to the idea of making contact prints of objects in their natural state with as little interference as possible led me to exposing the film directly in situ on the object at night with the light from a torch. The process is somewhere between making a photogram and a contact print, either one or the other.

The impetus for *Rosemary, Again and Again* was to translate a three-dimensional object and represent it in a linear way, as if you could unravel and unwind an object, peel it and stretch it out through space and time. Bärbel Neubauer's cameraless films are more a meditation on pattern and image making, through animation. They are visual and aural (mostly accompanied by a composed musical track) experiences of rhythm, form and colour, creating abstract films which relate to the natural world (she uses plants in some of her films for example *Feuerhaus*, 1998), but with a different aesthetic to mine. Neubauer celebrates the natural forms of plant life and narrativizes them through colour and sound, transforming the real into something otherworldly. *Rosemary, Again and Again* is completely the opposite. Its direct one to one relationship to the object and its form is not separated from reality, it maintains and shows this via the method by which it is made as explained above. There are no embellishments or transformative processes, apart from turning it from a static form into a moving entity.

In the context of cinema however, image making is only half the story, the other lies in cinema's ontology being inextricably bound to perceived motion.

## **Movement and Projection**

As outlined in chapter one, Henri Bergson's concerns for the cinematograph are that it falsifies the way we experience time in reality, due to the mechanics of the cinematic apparatus. Tom Gunning argues that this is related to the way the filmstrip registers reality in segmented 'instants' and this is where the falsity lies. Gunning argues that the ontology of cinema also lies in projection and not just the indexical nature of the filmstrip.

For Christian Metz, the past represented in a photographic image is forgotten in favour of our absorption in the present act of viewing;

Metz's cinematic impression of reality depends on "forgetting" (that is, on distracting the viewer's attention away from – not literally repressing the knowledge of) the technical process of filming in favour of an experience of the fictional world as present. As he claims, 'the movie spectator is absorbed, not by a 'has been there' but by a sense of 'here it is.' (Gunning, 2008, p.47)

This position by Gunning through Metz acknowledges that cinema is movement as perceived by the spectator, and a separation is required between knowledge of how the image and movement are produced, and a focus on the 'fiction' happening in the present through the act of viewing. Rather than forgetting this connection, my work aims to highlight the discrepancies between the hidden nature of movement, made possible by the filmstrip but seen as continuous in the projector, by taking the photographic process of the strip outside the apparatus of cinema, highlighting the representational qualities of the non-fictional world in a manner not normally seen.

Cinematic motion as discussed by Gunning can be broken down again, as that offered by camera movement (which he references in his essay and its stylistic uses) and the basic operation provided by the projector, so a pre and post-production activity.

Rather than replicating the conditions and qualities of cinema by creating representational images and simulating movement through projection, my project takes these conditions as a set of problems and areas of resistance. I'm constantly trying to find a way to present the tension that exists between what Bergson calls the 'snapshot and the aggregation.'

Succession thus understood, therefore, adds nothing: on the contrary, it takes something away; it marks a deficit; it reveals a weakness in our perception, which is forced by this weakness to divide up the film image by image instead of grasping it in the aggregate. (Douglass, 1999, p213)

Paul Douglass summarises that Bergson's critique of cinema is "...its indivisibility of motion. For cinema as for physics, motion cannot be projected unless there is real movement somewhere." (1999, p.212) For Bergson the cinematographic apparatus leads us to think in a way that for him is faulty and takes us away from thinking about how we are in the world.

## **Capturing Film Time**

To explore other ways to present film as a conceptual phenomenon outside the apparatus of the projector, tests strips of film from an earlier single frame film of Martello towers (Napoleonic fortresses that line the South Coast) were projected to see how much could be captured in a single photographic image on silver gelatin photographic paper, before the paper was over-exposed. Carrying out the process felt as if time was being moulded, but a lingering question remained; what's the difference between this and long exposure, or the sequential presentation of Paul Sharits' *Frozen Film Frames Series* (1971-1976) or Peter Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer* (1960)?

My conclusion is that this is film-time captured, the act of projection encapsulated and re-represented, but not in the same way that Hiroshi Sugimoto's *Cinema Theatres* are. Sugimoto's images of Los Angeles' traditional cinemas are long exposures of entire films. Sugimoto sat in the audience with the camera shutter open for the entire length of the screening. The resultant images are of a screen of pure white light where the compounding projection beam over-exposes the screen section of the still image.



Fig. 5: Cathy Rogers, 2012, a negative black and white photograph of 7 seconds of film time from a colour reversal Super 8 film of a Martello Tower

Fig. 6: Hiroshi Sugimoto, 1978, *U.A. Playhouse*

The difference between my film time images and long exposure lies in a tension between temporalities. The film time captures of my work acknowledge the past time of recorded space and somehow reassert that, in its visibility of the film as a new image, a new recording. Whereas projection is just an act, an illusion of time, it's a playing device replaying this other past time. Sugimoto's *Cinema Theatres* are resolutely about a time passed, that has been experienced; and what is left is the residue of nothingness, just light. My photographs of film time aim to capture and make visible that which is normally invisible, through the projection of successive frames of static images: a representation of time materialised rather than the dematerialisation of projection. In Sugimoto's images, the passage of film time is represented as imageless; the image is obliterated by the over exposure of the projector beam burning away the image on the film plane. Alternatively, it can be said that the individual frames self-obliterate in their cumulative force.

Fig. 7: Jim Campbell, 2000, *Illuminated Average #1: Hitchcock's Psycho*

In Jim Campbell's *Illuminated Averaged #1*, (2000), film frames from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* are scanned and digitally 'averaged' into a single aggregated image. An algorithmic scanning process looks for areas of brightness and contrast in the image, and adjusts or smoothes out these areas according to a baseline optimum brightness/contrast setting. Some information from the original film is lost, overwritten or obliterated; just as the projector beam in Sugimoto's still photographs obliterates the film image. In his essay *The Index and the Algorithm*, Braxton Soderman suggests that Campbell's final static photograph, installed as a lightbox, is collapsed into one frame, a superimposition of an assembled image. Although technically it does not represent the original, albeit digitised film, it is an aggregated image based on certain information contained within the film, which the algorithm had kept or wiped out. A scorched patch near the centre of the image depicts where the computer programme has averaged the frames according to brightness. This for Soderman suggests a reference to its own making, and is the point of Soderman's argument that the digital algorithm is indexically linked to this "cloudy apparition" (2008, p.154) and the photograph it has created. The computer's averaging algorithm changes the information already recorded; the computer averages are based on the digital information present and it smoothes out the image according to its internal logic. The reduction or addition to the image presents a new one, not the original indexical photographic one.

The difference between the film time I'm attempting to capture and both Sugimoto and Campbell's work is that they obliterate certain information contained within the original film image so that the temporal connection to film time is lost. With the film time captures into photographic image, the aim is to preserve the integrity of film time by capturing the film image in motion. In order to highlight the inconsistency between the projected image, the temporal and spatial discontinuities it produces within a live site-specific environment, a new work was made for a one night film and video performance event at Testbed1, a disused dairy in Battersea.

### **The Subject: Pro-filmic Event and Spatial Reconfigurations**

In order to highlight the disparity between representations on film, the process by which they are made, and consequently the fragility of vision, I developed the film-time captures further into a durational installation. This last piece of work is the accumulation of the site responsive process of working in a particular location and showing film in another form which relates back to the context in which it was made, the work itself and the audience encounter, tackling some of the difficulties of projecting film in an installation event context and using those limitations to further the work.

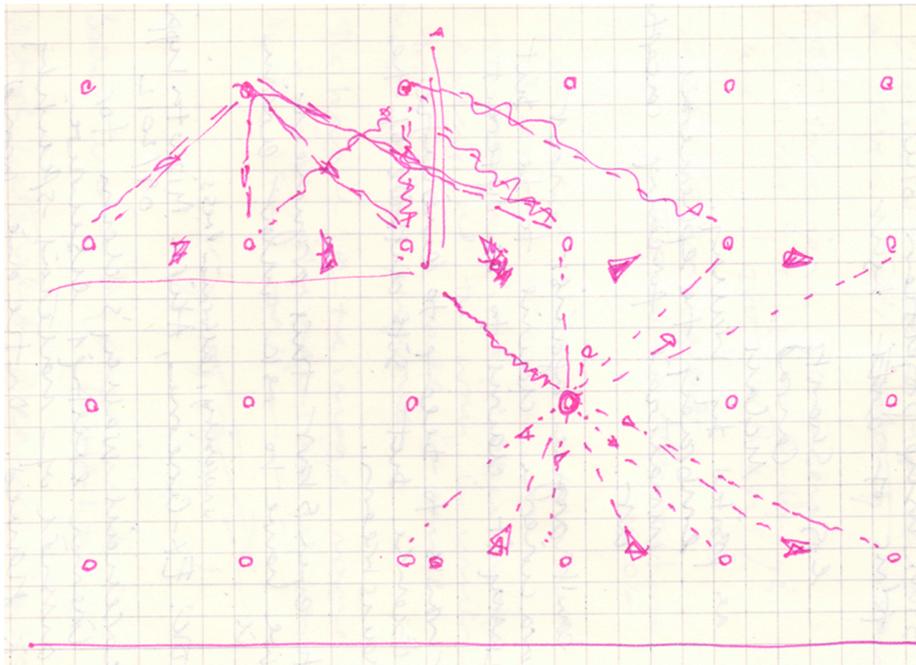


Fig. 8: Cathy Rogers, 2013, Shooting Strategy for *All of This is Here*

***All of This is Here (2013)***

Super 8 Projector, super 8 black and white reversal film, clear leader, looped, silver gelatin photographic print, 10 x 8".

In conceiving the work, I looked at sculptor Richard Wilson and the way in which he appropriates space and cuts or rearranges it. I wanted to adopt a similar strategy but using a temporal photographic medium in a kind of optical reconfiguration.

Adopting a single frame shooting strategy, the space was photographed, in a super 8 camera, between its columns, using the focal lengths marked on the camera lens and a set aperture keeping a shallow depth of field. Rather than create an optical pulsing or push-pulling of the space (a strategy I'd adopted in my earlier Super 8 work), the aim was to pull the space between the columns of Testbed1 towards a central point. The exposed film was then projected onto a piece of photographic paper and developed producing a single negative image of film-time. For the installation the film was presented as a loop projected onto the photograph, creating a dual trace, the momentary one of projection against the lingering one of the photographic inscription. The loop was finished with clear leader that revealed the photograph of the film for a short time before looping again. A dual temporal action happened through this work, a projection of the film in the present time, onto a past re-projection of the entire film, now static, preserved. Multiple temporalities operate in this work, which has a temporal and spatial relationship to the space and itself, reflecting on the process and site where it was made. *All of This is Here* explores the re-representation of a 3 dimensional space via the fragmented representation of space and time of the filmstrip to a single printed film time image.



Fig. 9: Cathy Rogers, 2013 *All of This is Here*, 10 x 8 Black and White Negative Silver Gelatin Print of the film *All of This is Here*, 0:45

In an article written for *Art and Artists* in 1972, Annabel Nicolson describes the expanded cinema landscape, and succinctly categorises the current forms and processes of the day.

On projection strategies and site she says;

Since every projection is inevitably influenced by the immediate context and is essentially the moment when film exists as a fact in time, it is surprising how few artists respond to this basic premise of film. Occupying space in time, literally, as in the case of Tony Hill's films, is a very sculptural response to the situation. There seems to be a paradox, however, in using information on pre-constructed realities as the content of the film in such specifically immediate projection contexts. (Nicolson, 1972)

There are always resistances to certain modes of working, but why should there always be a resolution? Maybe the paradox is the work and this is something I strive for in my installations. However, although there are aspects to my work that are self-referential, attention is directed to the image that aligns it more with a photographic practice and in direct opposition to paracinema.

These experiments have provided me with a body of work that starts to address the question of whether film can exist outside cinema. The space this work occupies sits between single screen projection, expanded cinema events, photographic installation and sculptural photographic object. It's neither one nor all but attempts to disrupt and confuse any relationships that start to emerge.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **RESISTANCES AND INCONSISTENCIES**

From the beginning of this project, which for me started in 2009 with pinhole filmmaking, the theory of paracinema gave me a base in which to question and challenge the assertions it made and reflect on the work I was making. This in turn informed the practice, which sent me back to find new philosophical and theoretical frameworks (Henri Bergson and André Bazin) with which to support the practice. Analysing the theory of paracinema, comparing the key works with expanded cinema and experimental film has provided me with a cornerstone in which to ascertain where a practice, which centralizes the use of the analogue filmstrip, sits. This zigzagging between reading, writing and making throughout the last two years has been essential to making the work that accompanies and informs this thesis.

When conceiving new practical work the enquiry develops from perceptual phenomena and my instinct is to separate, order, classify and confirm. When translating my conceptions of time and space through making with tangible materials, this desire to make sense and order when manifested through the relationship with material process, produce both evidence of a structural enquiry and a cross fertilization with other art forms and contexts. It is this hybridity of concept, material form and context that I seek but have found a resistance to in the theory of paracinema. Expanded cinema practices both historic and contemporary blur medium-specific boundaries. The idea that one set of materials should replace another (light, performance, time, for projector and photochemical image) negates any future development or re-invention for the medium of experimental film and its histories. The artistic practices and contemporary theories discussed in this thesis give me the knowledge to locate a material practice such as my own in the dematerialised discourse of contemporary artists' film and video. There is an opportunity to acknowledge material constraints but look at how limits can be turned into possibilities and boundaries into potential new avenues of knowledge. Suggesting new uses outside defined contexts.

The outcomes of this research have resulted in sharing my project at four symposiums, two exhibitions and three public one-night events. These presentations

include film that operates outside the projector as static object (inspired by Henri Bergson's critique of cinematic movement and how it influences the way we think about duration and being); film as object; creation of the film image using the photogram technique and optically reconfiguring architectural space. Presentation spaces included single screen projection in dark rooms, performances in non-traditional gallery spaces and film object installations in light gallery spaces. Throughout I have sought to find a way to discuss and communicate ideas of movement, what constitutes the film image, the impact of context (the space where the work is encountered) and its representation of physical space whilst retaining a direct connection between making and the final outcome.

What started out as an outright opposition to paracinema theory and an anti cinema stance, has developed into a conclusion that counter to the dualism of immaterial - material, conceptual - tangible, the technological and the handmade, one cannot exist without the other. Whilst trying to find ways in which to present the filmstrip outside of the projector, which is seen as the giver of life from still beginnings to illuminated seemingly moving images, it became apparent that without light, the image is neither made nor seen. This led to the writings of Ji-hoon Kim who advocates a theory of hybridity, suggesting that mediums can co-exist and still maintain their autonomy.

The body of work that accompanies this thesis would not have been made without the complementary relationship between theory and making. The theory informs the practice and the practice informs the reading and writing. The theory and the practice bounce off each other and without this reaction these works would not have been made.

For me limits are not limiting but essential in reinventing ways to use film to the edge of its perception and discourses. At the same time, through writing and showing the work, it is clear that the specific qualities of the material are fundamental in developing these new concepts and practical forms. One of the most exciting discoveries for my practice and future research is the realisation that it is at the moment of capture after the intent has been defined, the film has been set up, that this is the point where any connection to forms of cinema dissolves and the work moves onto new territory and forms. It is this moment of the pro-filmic that I will continue to research and develop within my work.

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