



The Documentary Imaging Group

DIG.01





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Imag(in)ing Bigbury Camp

Mireille Fauchon
Leah Fusco
Gareth Proskourine-Barnett



Introduction

Archaeological storytelling has a long history from the works of Alan Sorrell to innovative uses of the past as a setting for video games like *Assassins Creed*. Artists such as the Documentary Imaging Group's work at Bigbury Hillfort capture the potential for exploring places with such a deep history where physical and documentary evidence for the site use and construction sit alongside myths and thoughts for the future.

Bringing different artists and mediums together into an exhibition allows the complexity of an unknown past to be presented and questioned by the viewer. Archaeologists and Historians have long grappled with how to present uncertainty in their visualisations, while artists are freed from these boundaries and have the ability to consider multiple interpretations of the past alongside each other.

Imag(in)ing Bigbury Camp offers creative responses to the tangible and intangible remains of a historic landscape that is also being actively managed with a view to integrating its deeper history with the conservation of the natural environment. Mireille Fauchon's popups seek to present the Roman past through the reuse of 20th century imagery, Leah Fusco's work considers the current integration of goats as a form of woodland management present a romantic view of the site as it stands today, while Gareth Proskourine-Barnett links new imaging techniques that look forward. Bringing these together highlight the changing landscape of the site and allow the viewer to think about shifting uses of the site over time, grapple with the evidence base and be enchanted by the elusive nature of past places.

Dr Catriona Cooper
Senior Lecturer in Digital Humanities
Canterbury Christ Church University





DIG

Documentary Imaging Group

Formed by longtime collaborators Mireille Fauchon, Leah Fusco, and Gareth Proskourine Barnett, DIG is a space to collectively and critically engage with visual methods of representation through practice-research.

1. The Meeting

2. Preparatory
Work

3. A Glossary

4. Work

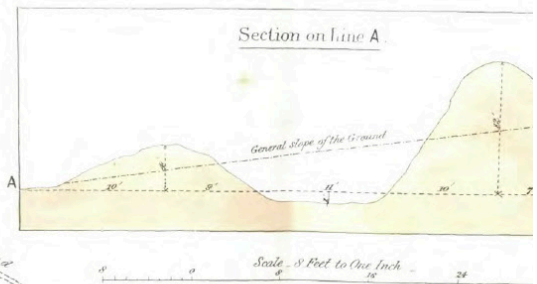


The Meeting





Ancient Entrenchment
in
HOWFIELD & BIGBURY WOODS.



Scale $\frac{1}{2500}$ or 25 344 Inches to a Mile.

J. B. Neill & Co. Ltd. 10, Golden Square





Bigbury camp- 20250313_123351- Meeting Recording

March 13, 2025, 12:33PM
34m 27s

This is a recording of a location visit to Bigbury Camp. The plan had originally been for Leah, Gareth and Mireille to be together and physically walk a section of the ancient pilgrim's route which passes the site. This would be Gareth's first visit. Mireille was ill, so couldn't be there in person, and Leah lives in the neighbouring village Chartham Hatch. Gareth had driven to Kent from South East London where he lives, and meets Leah on location. Mireille has not yet joined the TEAM meeting. Currently, she is trying to get online from her bedroom in South West London.

Leah Fusco started transcription

[Gareth and Leah are both on location at Bigbury Camp. Leah has her laptop and is hosting the TEAMS meeting. Gareth joins from his phone.]

Gareth Proskourine-Barnett 0:03

This is not a walk, anymore is it now?
It's more like writing, a conversation
between us on site.

Leah Fusco 0:15

Yeah.

GPB 0:16

I spoke to Mireille the other day about just that, spending time to observe the space and collect in writing our observations of being here. Whether that's the hum of the A2, the different noises and sounds that you can hear in the environment, like the wind.

LF 0:31

Yes, perfect.



GPB 0:37

Writing, reflecting, observations, recordings, that describe the encounter with the site. It could be an introductory piece of writing from the three of us. It doesn't need to be cohesive like singular text essay, and could be quite fragmentary,

LF 1:05

I completely agree, I know we've got this idea of chapters as STRATA, it might be really nice to intersperse it with different texts, historic accounts ... hello?

Mireille Fauchon 1:23

Can you hear me?

LF 1:23

It's bloody freezing here.

[The devices pick up the sound of fast moving wind]

GPB 1:24

Hello.

LF 1:28

Absolutely. Freezing. Gareth's over my shoulder, look.

[Gareth can be seen as a distant figure in the landscape behind Leah.]

MF 1:28

Oh, it's beautiful.

GPB 1:37

I'm at the other end of the site.

MF 1:40

All right, let's see what's going on.

GPB 1:42

I think Leah's up there? [He points behind him] I'm in the background of Leah's picture, the transcript will give our individual voices from across the site.

MF 1:43

Hi, right, got you.

LF 2:00

Are you just seeing sky Gareth?

[Gareth's camera looks directly upwards capturing the cloudy dark blue sky]

GPB 2:02

I've just put the phone down on the on





a piece of wood and I'm just rolling.

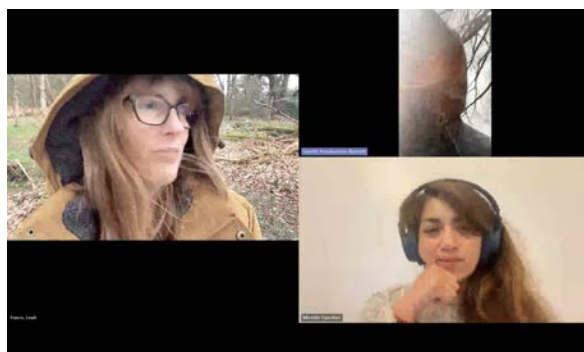
Fusco, Leah 2:06

Beautiful. Just stay there. I've just taken some screenshots so that we have it for documentary purposes. Is everyone OK with that?

GPB 2:13

Yeah.

[Mireille nods, unbeknownst to her companions, she has already taken a screenshot as a memento.]



LF 2:21

Excellent. This is the beginning of our publication. Gareth was just saying we should to talk through

our responses to the site. I'd love that. Gareth, this is the first time that you've come to this place. What do you think?

[Mireille has visited Bigbury with Leah before].

GPB 2:54

First time here.

LF 2:58

The goats! The goats chased us by the way!

GPB 3:03

They were very interested, weren't they? They were curious, which is nice.

MF 3:04

This is their place too.

GPB 3:11

Yes. I know you'd said that there is little visible to identify to the site as being of historical significance, and even knowing that, I'm still surprised by how little there is. I think I still expected there to be something more. It's interesting to have only seen the images of it, like in the journal article,





where you've got the lidar imagery.

It seemed like the light in the aerial shot, I've seen some close-up shots which look like trenches or like in the trees where it looked like some digging was taking place.

But then to be here and see the site in it's entirety is like quite a different thing, but I guess there's always a sense of that you know. The transition from the aerial perspective into the ground floor and sort of all of a sudden the space opens up around you, but here it really does open up around you.

Now I'm stood here, the reassuring thing is that the film and the kind of the images I've been making feel like they really make sense, which is interesting. The film was not made yet, it's made from fragments found in this earth, in this landscape. The kind of images that came out of that process now standing here, looking out across the horizon, and you've got these waves of purple from the... what did you say? Are these

what are the bushes here? Did you say, Leah, these are hazel?

LF 5:03

I think that it used to be sweet chestnut that they grew with coppicing, but that looks like silver birch to me because the trunks are tall and papery.

GPB 5:06

The chestnuts. Yeah. So you got that silver birch, but then you've got this, like, thinner one in front of it on the hill, which is almost silvery purple. You got the blue and the moodiness of the sky. And then these shards of light that come through and it really feels like the video, it really feels like those unwrapped Jpegs from the 3D scans.

I guess my first instinct is really more around the sort of the work that I'd made, seeing it now in response to the site, that's a very backwards way for me to make work.

I normally would go to the site, it's always like the first thing. So to do it this





other way round as well, yeah, maybe just felt slightly discombobulated, but being here now it kind of makes sense.

LF 6:12

Yeah, but Craig, [Craig Bowen is the Collections and Learning Manager at Canterbury Museums and Galleries, who provided access to iron fragments and archaeological materials found during various excavations at Bigbury Camp over the last 100 years]. **when we were scanning the metalworks, he was saying** when he was looking at the way the images were processing, he was really shocked by it. I think he thought it would be something very precise and trying to mimic the materiality of the physical object in front of him. And he was a bit sceptical about it. But I think when he saw the images, which were quite sort of experimental and abstract.

GPB 6:27

Mm hmm.

LF 6:39

He spoke about them as being

very landscape like and I think he was excited by how they had transformed the object into something completely...

GPB 6:43

Yeah.

LF 6:50

Different.

GPB 6:51

Yeah. Mireille, what did you think when you came?

MF 7:05

It's not boring. And I think actually maybe that's the point is that it's so un-boring given what you can't see. The history is such an epic drama. You know.

It's so huge that it's so difficult to comprehend and at the same time quite exciting to make the connections between the ancient world and Bigbury Camp.





It's so incredible, I was just thinking about, as you were talking.

LF 7:44
Yeah.

MF 7:48

About my own response, and I think for me it's there's almost a real sort of childlike wonder about it all, like squeezing your eyes together and trying to imagine what it would have been like, but at the same time, but also not in reality, but what it would have been like if it was a movie, because that's my frame of reference.

You know, there's something about the fantasy and the reality coming together and the real humility of the place. It doesn't show off this epic history where, you know, we're talking about potentially the first site of Roman occupation.

Is that right? I mean, it's really epic in terms of you know, Britain being

colonised, it's so huge and yet it's unassuming, it's so huge and yet it's unassuming.

That beauty, and I am from the city as well. So this also has something to play. In the way that I'm on this bit of land next to a road knowing that something absolutely happened here, but there's little visible evidence I love it. It's brilliant, and also that some people know and some people don't.

It's really my cup of tea.

GPB 9:46
Yeah.

MF 9:53

It could be missed because Gareth, like you said, there is so little to mark it out.

LF 10:01

We went down to look at the interpretation board, didn't we, Gareth?



MF 10:04

Oh, I love it.

GPB 10:09

Yeah, I guess that's the only thing, isn't it, that that's here really well, it seems to be.

LF 10:13

Yeah.

I think what you're both talking about is the presentation of it as a historic site and where it really starts to tap into those ideas and conflicts around heritage, how heritage should be kind of packaged, how it should be offered up to public audiences and it's so muddy, isn't it? Because on one hand, you know, we are really excited by this site, but then a lot of the things that draw us to it are precisely the things that keep it under the radar. The strangeness of it, the tension between its historical significance and its lack of public consciousness.

And one of the things that I love about it is that we were just walking around the site and bumped into Dario, my next door neighbour, Didn't we, Gareth?

GPB 11:14

Yeah.

LF 11:23

Dario is the son of Luca, who kind of kick started this whole thing about the goats being reincarnated legionaries. So it was really appropriate to bump into Dario. But I think this is the other thing, isn't it? It's a really significant site and I would say it's quite a romantic site because it has that element of speculation and it's inconclusive. And I think that is another thing to me that marks it out is it's not been proven that Caesar landed here or that Caesar camped here, but there's lots of evidence that points to it. I always think that that ambiguity increases the potential for these





conversations around what is heritage? Why is it important? Why does it need to be recognised in a kind of factual sense or proven? Is it more important that the site's significance exists in the hearsay or the fragments of knowledge?

But I also really like that around those conversations you've just got people from Chartham Hatch walking of their dogs around and just going for a morning walk, to this quite extraordinary place. And then you've also got people who are on pilgrimages. So, you've got all these different people coming to the site for wildly different reasons, like some are really practical and basic and everyday. And some are on that once in a lifetime journey maybe where they're travelling through the site. I find that's the fascinating thing, that this place is significant to different people in different ways.

Bloody come back.

MF 13:10

As you were talking, I was just thinking...

LF 13:23

I think my tits have gone blue with cold.

MF 13:27

...two things that were coming to mind as you were talking, one being that this idea of history belonging to the past, right, so this is where a thing may have happened, but things are happening there all the time.

We've put emphasis on this incredibly significant moment in history where things changed for Britain. You know, this is a thing, but also it's just something that happened there when things are happening there all the time. So there's a kind of ongoingness to it all, just being. Like you say it's an educated guess, but it's a guess, isn't it? It's not completely verified, but we do know it happened. It did definitely happen somewhere if not here.



And then something else which is a bit of a different point, but this thing of the reality of it, like, you talking about it being cold and what it must have actually been like back then, and what it is to have travelled all that way like these legionaries, to get there and the indigenous people that were here, and the horror of that and what it is to be invaded.

It's a reality that's still present. Of course. It's ongoing. But with this it's so far in the ancient past that you can almost, we can romanticise it because, you know it doesn't affect us in the same way. We don't have lived experience of it, we may have lived experience of similar things, similar events, but we can totally romanticise the Romans.

LF 15:27

This is a conversation I have with Jack [Jack Newman is a historian, and Leah's partner] all the time because I'm really interested to know in the study of history, when does that level of sensitivity drop?

Because the way war in the 20th century is taught, remembered and presented is completely different from even going back a few 100 years. When's that point of sensitivity lost and is it to do with lived experience? It must be, I guess, because we've still got people from that period who are alive.

MF 16:23

Leading on from what you're saying maybe is it representation that links to the living?

LF 16:39

Yeah.

MF 16:40

Or testimony maybe, like where is the testimony of those invasions? And of that lived experience, or the reportage. Going back to a certain point, but you've got to be literate, don't you? In order to leave that record, what is the validity like, what is the substance of the evidence of





experience? Because then it becomes interpretation, doesn't it? And what we interpret. What does Jack say to that?

LF 17:18

He says that that there is a real lack of empathy in the study of history. And one of the things he's interested in is working with digital methods, like using machine learning to transcribe medieval legal records to almost reenact events in court spaces, to bring empathy to the lived experiences of people in that time.

It's interesting, isn't it?

The of handling artefacts to me is like one of the closest ways you can almost get to that. I always find it so incredibly moving. When you see the things that have literally been made by the hands of those people to survive. That for me is one of the most immediate things. And also just being here.

Going back to what Gareth was saying about it being much emptier than he anticipated.

One of the things that really strikes me and always has done about this location is its height and the perspective that you have across the surrounding landscape. It does feel quite epic. I think when you're elevated there is real drama in the way that slope just cuts away.

And I think because I've walked up the hills quite a few times and I'm really unfit, I get the burn in my legs, it really kind of embodies the topography of the site, like it's, it's actually really hard work walking up the hill and having to talk to someone at the same time.

MF 18:55

Hmm. Yeah, yeah, definitely.

That is such a good point, because you would have driven me up.





LF 19:21

Yeah. Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MF 19:22

We would have driven up, which yes, is so different, and you're absolutely right, it is the view, it's spectacular. It really is.

LF 19:31

Yeah.

And you get a sense of why it would have been the perfect site in terms of being able to see all around you. And it's that idea of re-enacting the perspectives of the people who would have been here. We went to look at the wood piles and stuff. And, you know, the idea of them being like visual echoes of the campsite that they might have constructed.

And my God, it's hailing just being, like, pelted.

GPB 20:02

Yeah, that's definitely hale.

LF 20:09

Oh, my God, it's proper hail. Hang on, I'm going to find some shelter, but there's no leaves anywhere.

MF 20:15

So.

LF 20:18

Hang on.

Wow, they're really big. They're like bloody golf balls. Where are you, Gareth? Are you over there? Hang on.

MF 20:30

Oh wow, yeah.

LF 20:32

I'm gonna sit behind this tree. I think that's probably a bit better. Yeah. I've never done a sort of teams meeting like this before. It's good, isn't it?

MF 20:47

I know it's better than the usual ones.



GPB 20:49

Yeah.

[Gareth makes this way to rejoin Leah who is sheltering from the hail under a tree]

GPB 20:59

My fingers have gone numb.

The idea of this, there's something just picking up on what you guys are saying, that being in the space or handling those objects, there's a sense of reperformance.

Being that when you're in the site, when you're in the space. It's the possibility that that these histories might reperform themselves or that they might be reperforming themselves all around you and just can't see them.

Yeah, there's always that thing the Incas believed that past, present and future were not chronological. We weren't walking along the timeline with the past behind us in the future in front of us, but the past, present and future were stacked on top of one another and

you were just able to and you were able to access them.

MF 22:02

It's beautiful.

GPB 22:06

There's a particular phrase about walking into the future backwards and it's to do with this like this idea of how they saw time in a very different way.

I'm jumping around a little bit here, sorry, but the like on the car journey on the way in, they were talking about a storm on Jupiter that had been going for 300 years and we can't even imagine a storm that lasts that long because, our idea of a storm is that it might last, you know, last as long as this hailstorm that we're now in. It's dying off now. It was like 5 minutes, a couple of minutes, and then it passes by.

But a 300 year storm is something we can't comprehend



because we're humans and we of measure everything in this human scale. But then when you're in a landscape like this and you're all you're handling an artefact that's been dugout of the ground that's maybe like 2000 years old or what, or however old it might be.

There's almost this point where you can you can begin to imagine something outside of that human time. And that yes, for me, the really exciting thing is that moment of departure from this human centric kind of imagining of history and of the world, and into these landscapes where they then become active. They become tools for its usefulness as a site is in thinking about the sort of futures that you want to build. So, in the history of this site and thinking about orders and edges and you know Dover. That's an 8 hour walk that direction I imagine [he points]. That opens up the channel and then that goes to France, and then this route that would have gone all

the way to Rome, like the route that we were looking at the other day, Mireille, on there on the computer screen.

MF 24:16

Yeah, that's right.

GPB 24:18

I guess the for me, the interesting thing about Heritage, or history, or a site is that as its possibility for activating the futures that we might want to build. History's always done that right? It's always been used as a tool to activate a path for various political ends in various ways. I guess there's something in the more kind of creative or sort of speculative approaches to site and history that allow us to think the futures that we want to build.

LF 24:56

I think that's a brilliant way almost wrap up and think about Catriona Cooper's involvement in this (Dr. Catriona Cooper is a Senior Lecturer in Digital Humanities at Canterbury





Christ Church University), and why is there such an interest in creative artistic methods in accessing the distant past.

GPB 25:17

I think the description of the storm should be like the description of Leah hiding behind a tree and me standing in a field with my phone and talking to you Mireille, and this hailstorm coming down on us.

MF 25:45

We should, we should describe it. Even the journey up. You know, like what's on the radio in your car. You're sort of preparing, aren't you, for the experience and the experience of this is not isolated from you waking up and, like, sorting out Zach [Gareth's son] and walking the dog. It's the anticipation of the wholeness of the experience.

GPB 26:12

I'm really excited about what we can do in the future here. Not only a great start to working together as DIG, but also as a project that might take up a considerable

amount of time and maybe years, to keep coming back to and working with. I think there's so much here.

MF 26:53

Well, it's not going anywhere. I don't know how to, I'm trying to think of the words, you're sort of dealing with the bare bones of a landscape that is holding so much experience, but there's no threat, where is it going to go? It's ongoing.

GPB 27:33

The idea of a holding is quite nice as well, so you stand in this opened up space, but with the trees that are creeping over the top and wrapping around and there is that sense that you're holed up in the space. There's an embrace of the trees, of the woods, they kind of wrap around. I've left my coffee cup down there. I'll walk along and I'll jump over the hedge. I don't want to leave it. I don't want my first visit to the site involved me littering, leaving it for





the goats to get to get to.

MF 28:28

Do you know, that lovely reference you gave of like the Incas I think I've seen an image of that like in text either by Tim Ingold or Doreen Massey. This beautiful idea of different time frames that are coexisting. And the idea that the coffee cup also exists in the same universe as the Romans. You know it's not linear. It's the interruptions that bring everything together. You know the kind of flashing of different time frames.

GPB 29:27

I think there's something in how this is written that kind of matches the landscape. Oh, the fences are all quite high. It was a broken bit down here I think. I'm gonna try and find that broken bit so I can jump on over. There, I just got back to the car. Well I should have given Leah the keys.

But yeah, like we were saying those ways in which the landscape is measured and some of that

information intersecting with this transcript and other material in various ways.

Yeah, right. I'm gonna go 'cause people in cars are looking at me a bit strange as I'm walking down, they're like what, this guy doing? Why is he just walking down the road?

MF 32:06

'Cause. You're lost? Yeah, they'll be digging you up in 2000 years. Yeah, we think he was lost.

GPB 32:16

Yeah.

MF 32:18

He has an ancient vessel in his hand.

GPB 32:53

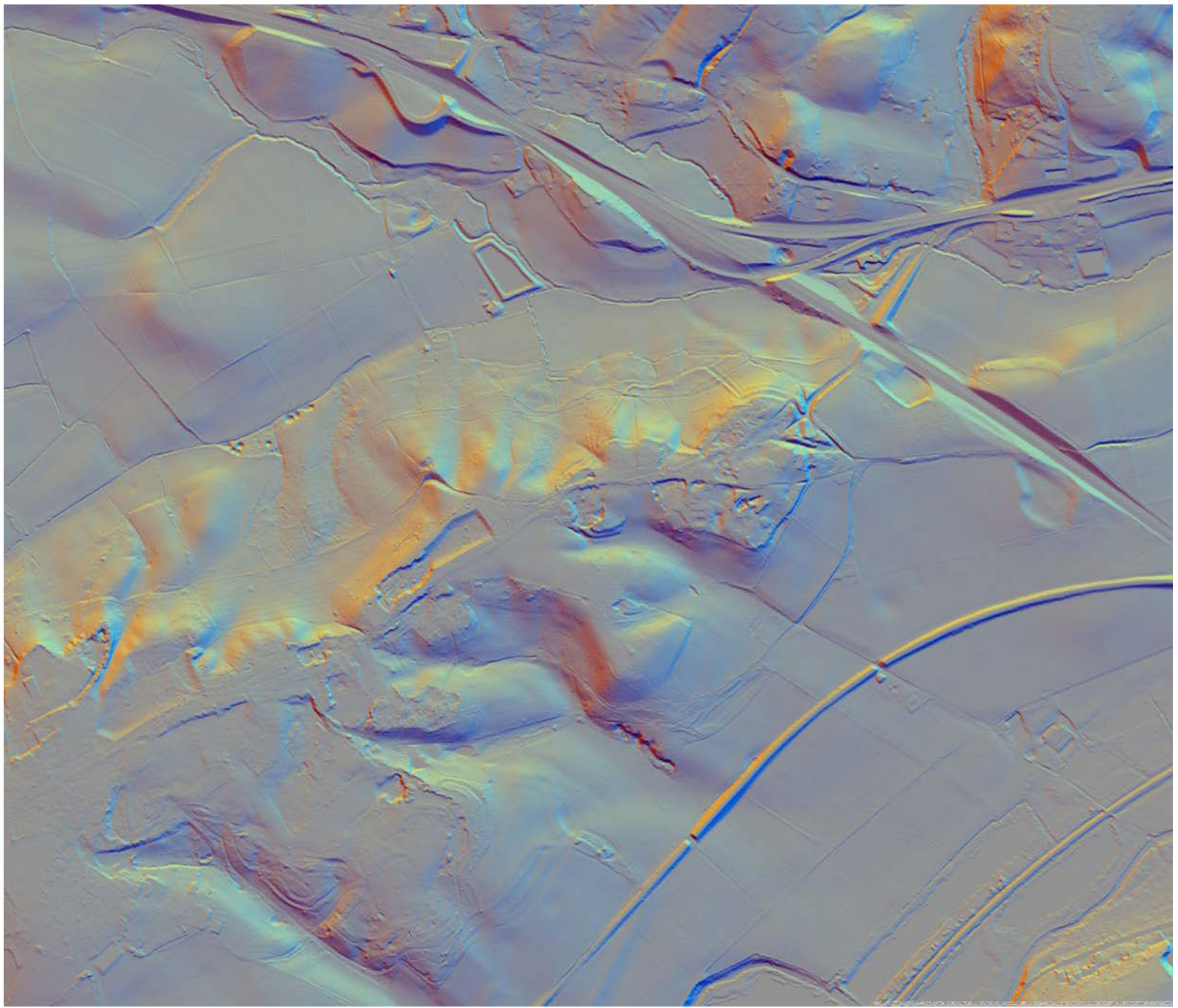
Leah, I should have given you the keys, shouldn't I?

Leah Fusco stopped transcription



Preparatory Work







In what ways can creative practice serve as a form of knowledge production that complements traditional archaeological research methodologies?



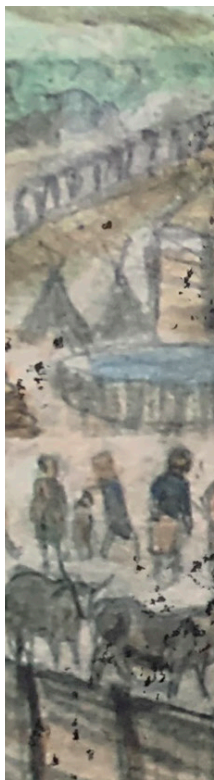






How might creative
reinterpretations of
archaeological sites
challenge (or support)
established historical
narratives?









What unique insights
can artistic practice offer
in understanding the
sensory and embodied
experiences of past
inhabitants at Bigbury
Camp?





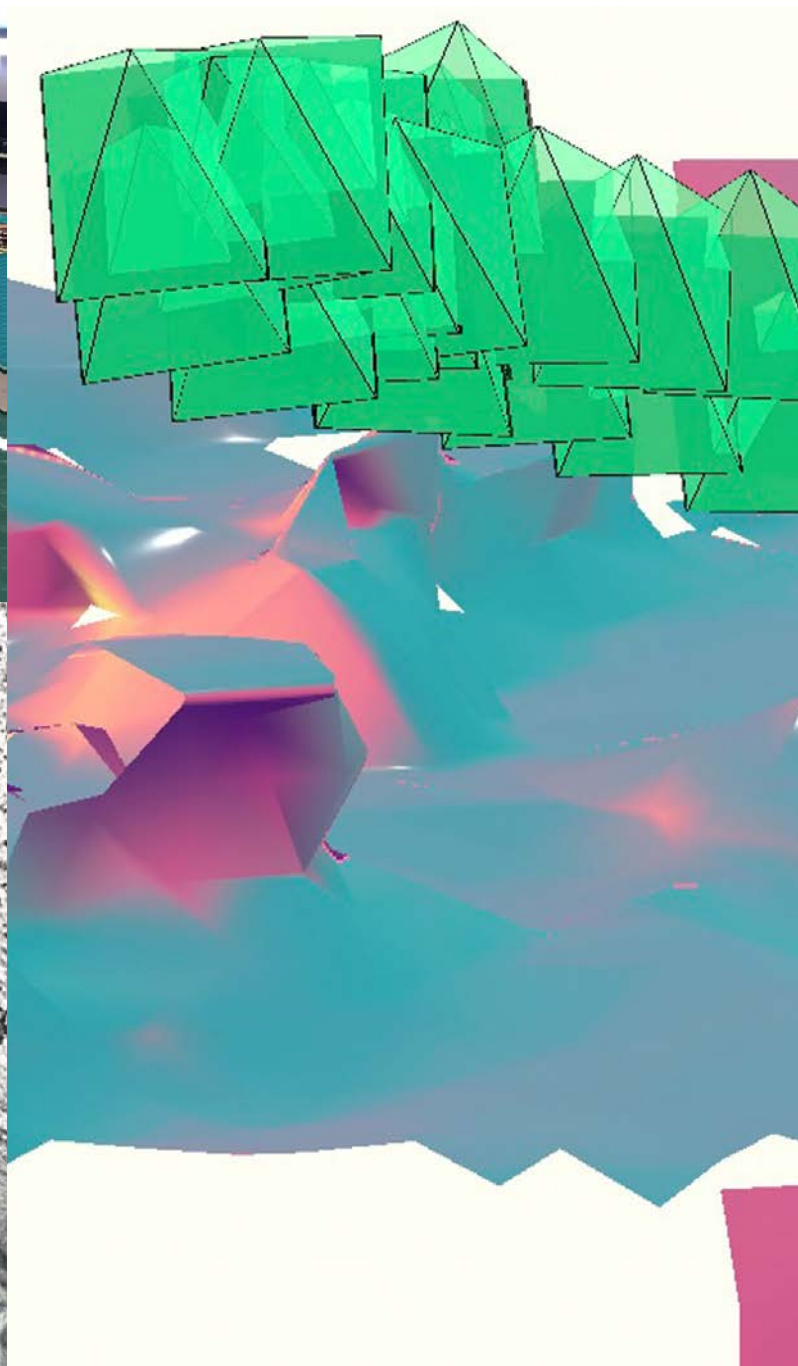




How do digital artistic interpretations of archaeological sites reveal our contemporary relationship with technology as both mediator and creator of cultural memory?









How does the exhibition's
artistic treatment
of Bigbury Camp
challenge conventional
distinctions between
“authentic” heritage
and contemporary
interpretation?









What ethical frameworks
should guide artists
when creating work that
interprets contested
or culturally sensitive
archaeological sites?

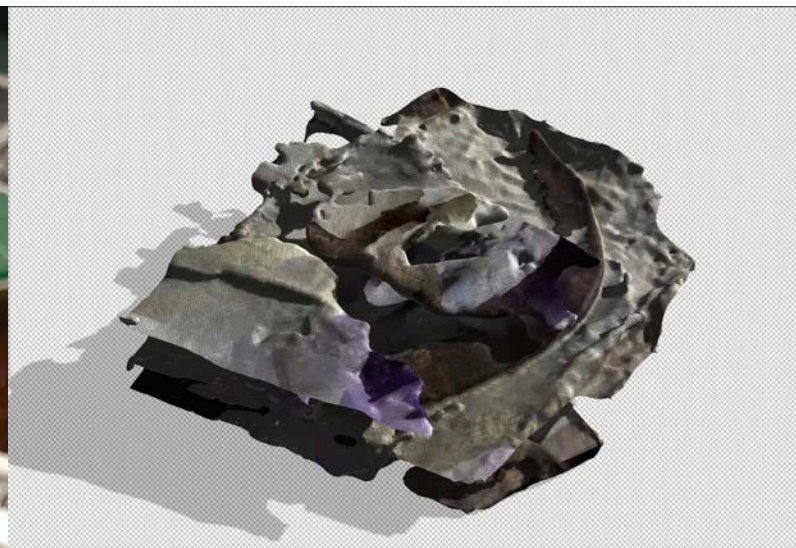
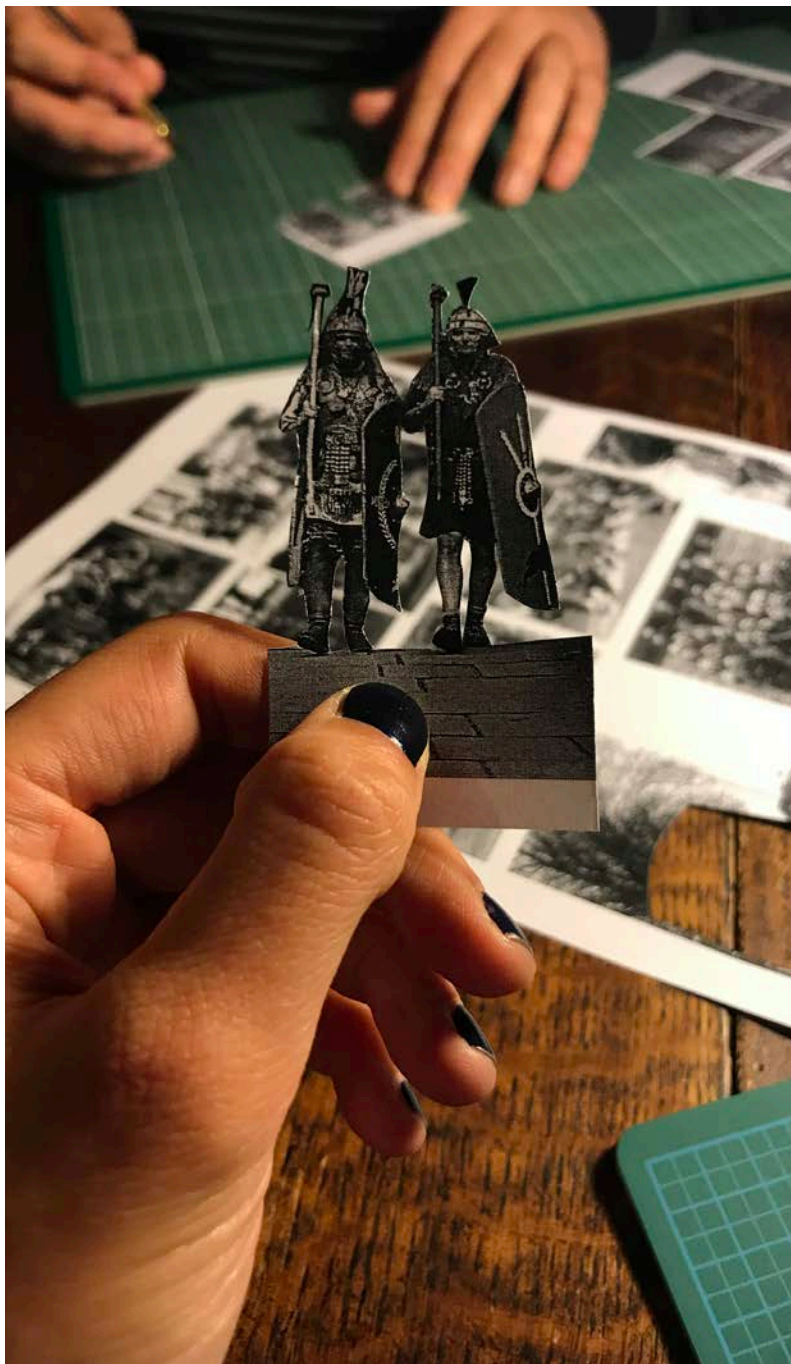






In what ways can creative responses to historic sites contribute to their ongoing cultural biographies?







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Size 3
ENGINEERING

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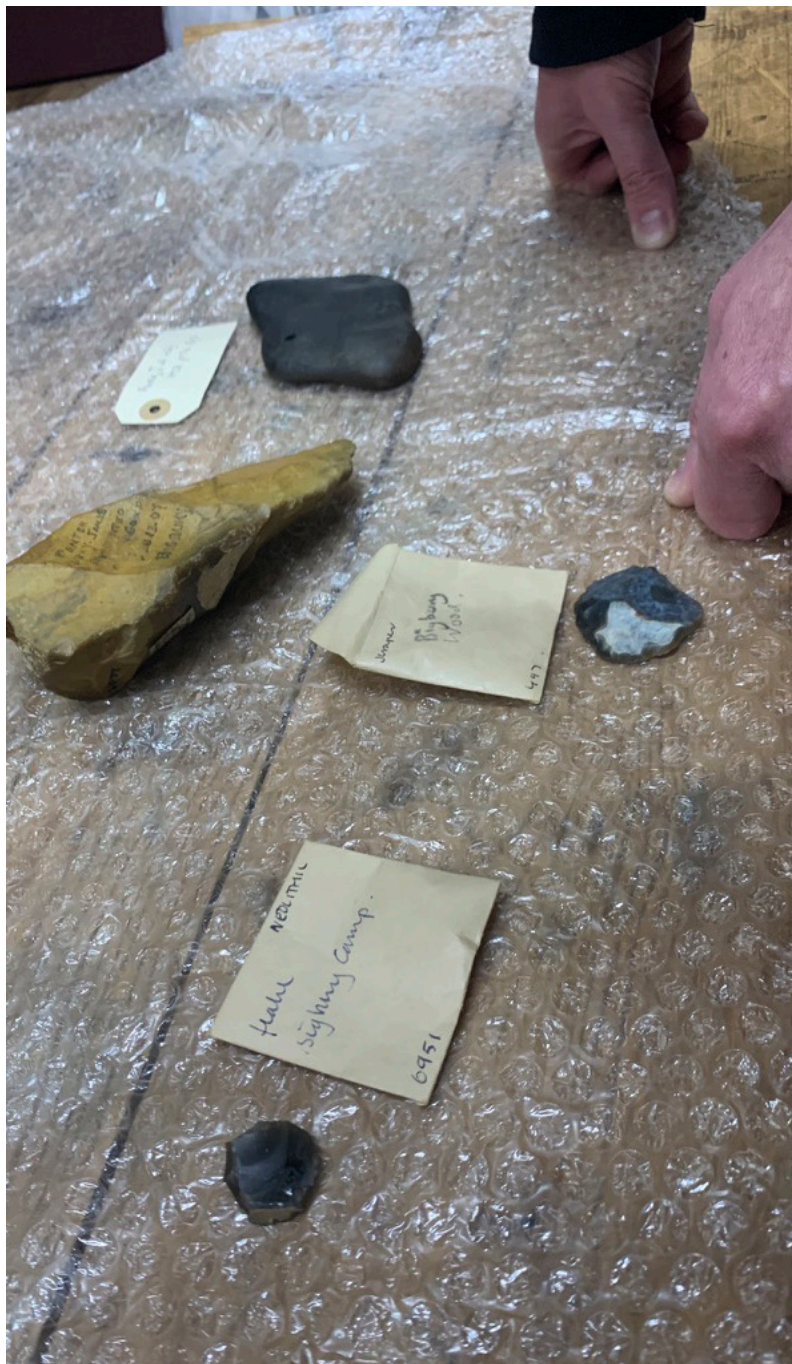




How might participatory
art practices involving
local communities create
new forms of heritage
engagement with sites
like Bigbury Camp?









A Glossary





Activate:

**Make something
happen**

Scale:

Size, climb, alter

Sequence:

Arrange accordingly

Narrate:

**A telling recounted with
feeling**

Cut:

**A violent and abrupt
end, or entry**

Paste:

Adhere to, or against

Illustrate:

Articulate with clarity

Engage:

Connect with others

Wonder:

**Consider possibilities,
be amazed**

Fold:

**Bring into, disguise
within, incorporate**





Associate:
**Companion,
camaraderie, in
alignment.**

Read:
Making sense

Observe:
Take a good look

Interpret:
**Understanding from
one's own perspective**

Revise:
Look again

Speculate:
A proposal

Imagine:
Think differently

Reimagine:
Think again

Respond:
React to

Order:
Bring into coherence

Dig:
Burrow down and deep





Transcribe:
Translate into another
form

Contain:
Be held within

Compile:
Bring together

Represent:
Show and exemplify

Embody:
To hold within oneself
and become

Dream:
Take leave of reality

Disseminate:
Put forth, make known

Bind:
A union not easily un-
done

Conceal:
Hide, withdraw, keep
withheld.

Document:
Witness and record





Rescale:
**Altered dimensions with
maintained integrity**

Reveal:
Make seen

Discard:
**Remove and throw
away**

Touch:
Make bodily contact

Feel:
**Be porous and
vulnerable**

Edit:
Altered from the source

Collect:
**Brought together in
commonality**

Assemble:
Place into configuration

Share:
Make mine yours

Collaborate:
**Working together as
equals**





Disrupt:
Challenge through
resistance

Critique:
Not taking what's given
for granted

Question:
Seek clarity

(self) Publish:
Make public, relinquish,
and let go.

Burn:
Extract, use, spend

Perform:
Made tangible through
doing and presenting

Enact:
Make real

Re-enact:
What was once real
relived

Project:
Throw forward

Demonstrate:
Show as example





Work









LF





LF











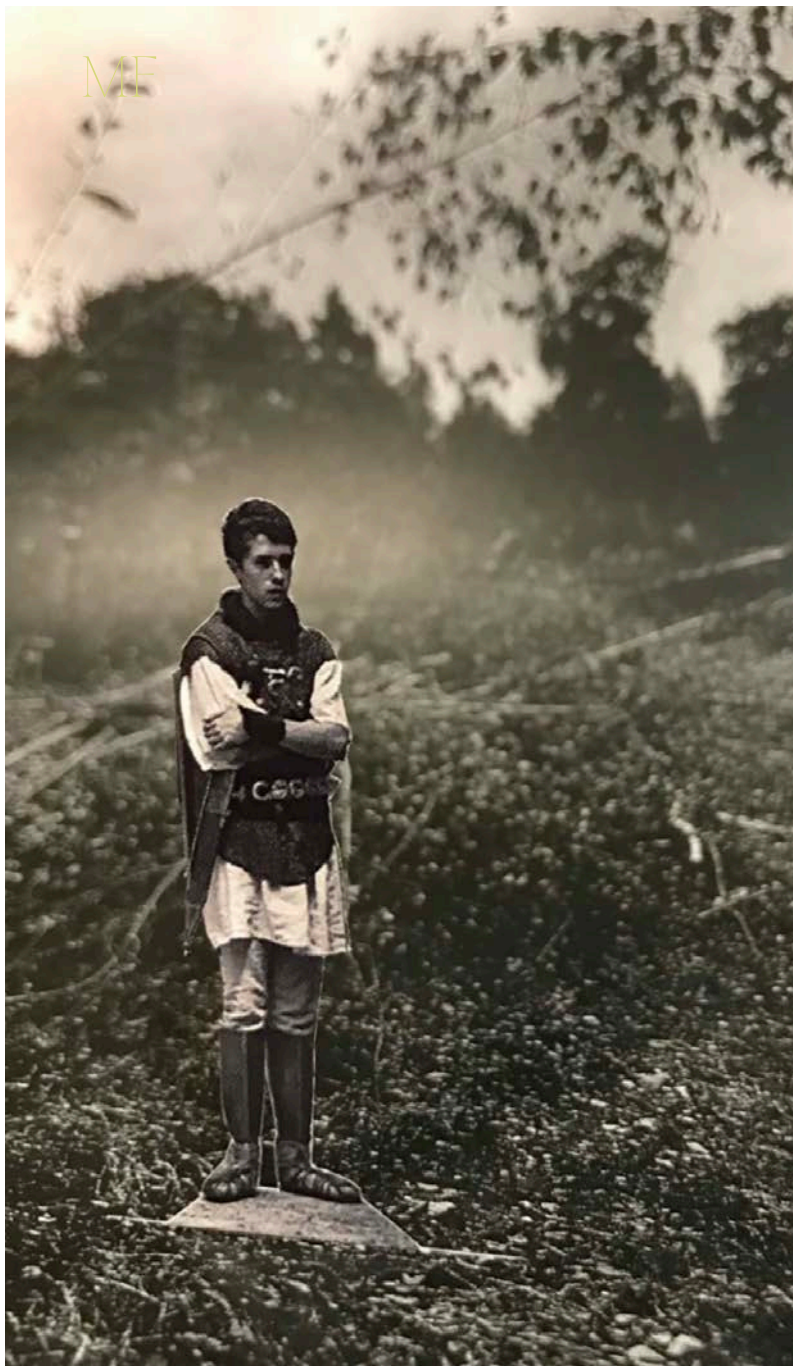
MF





MF







MF











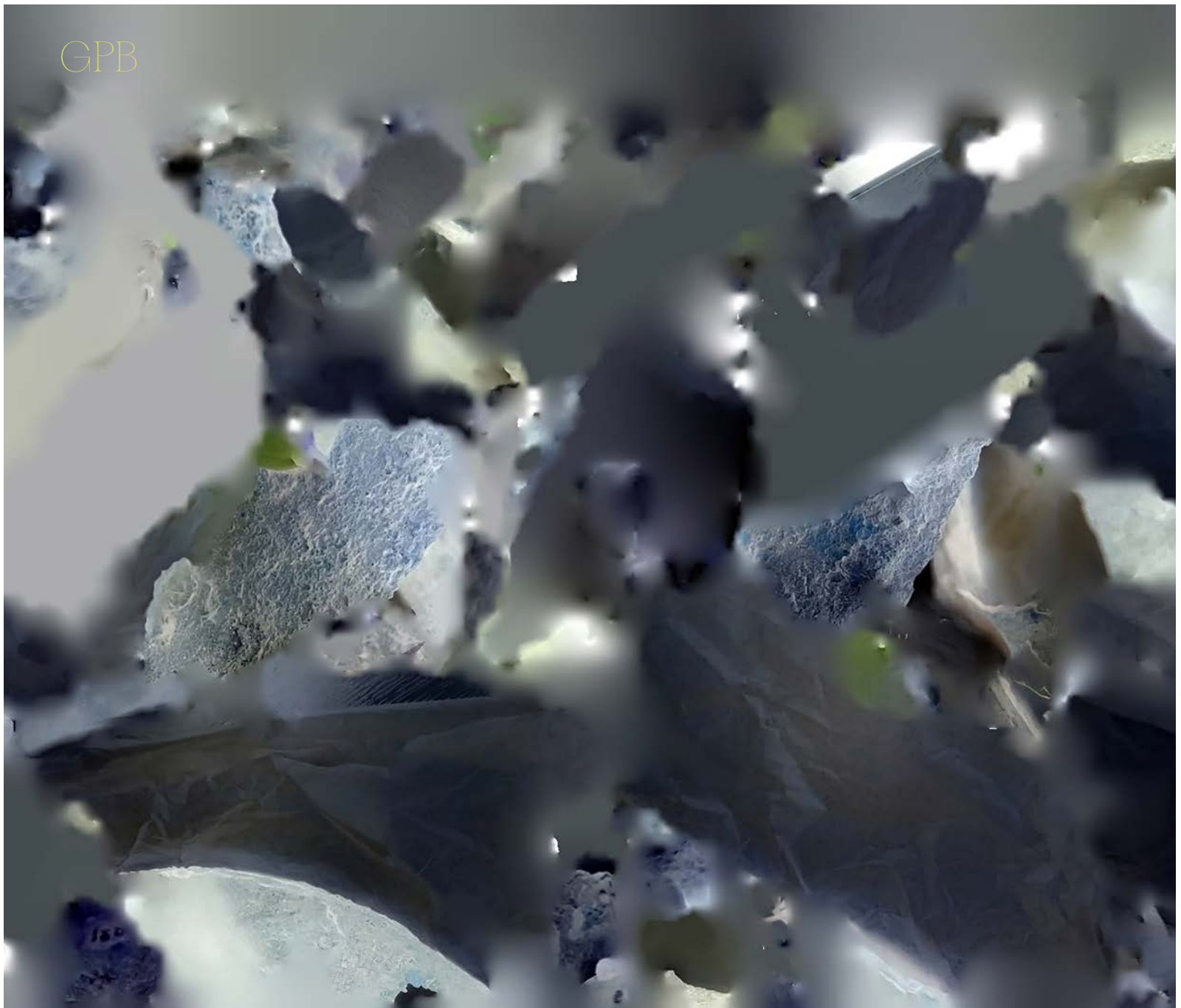


GPB





GPB



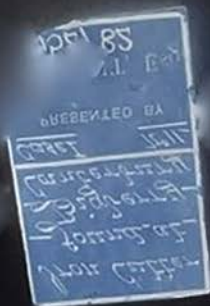


GPB





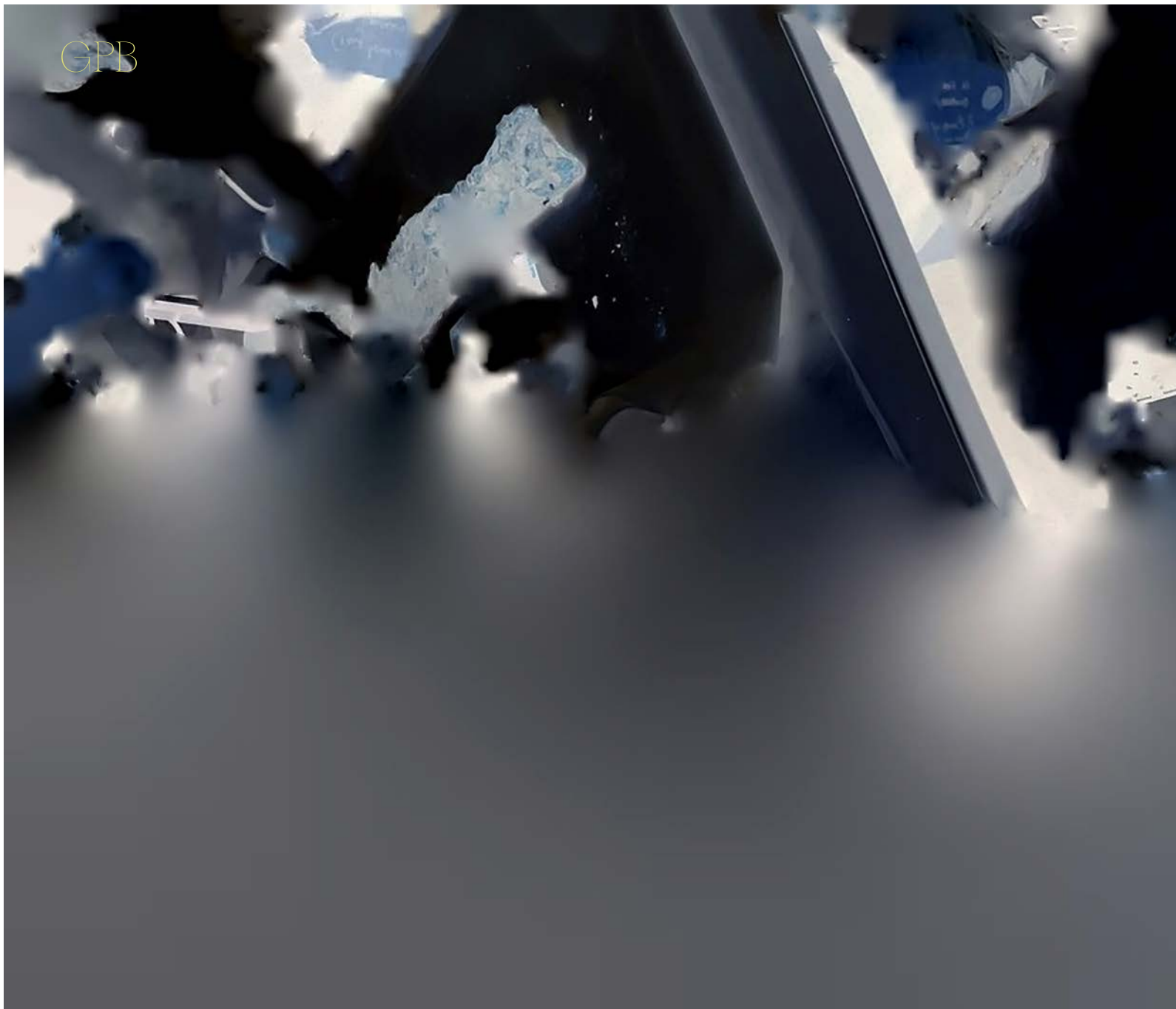
GPB





GPB



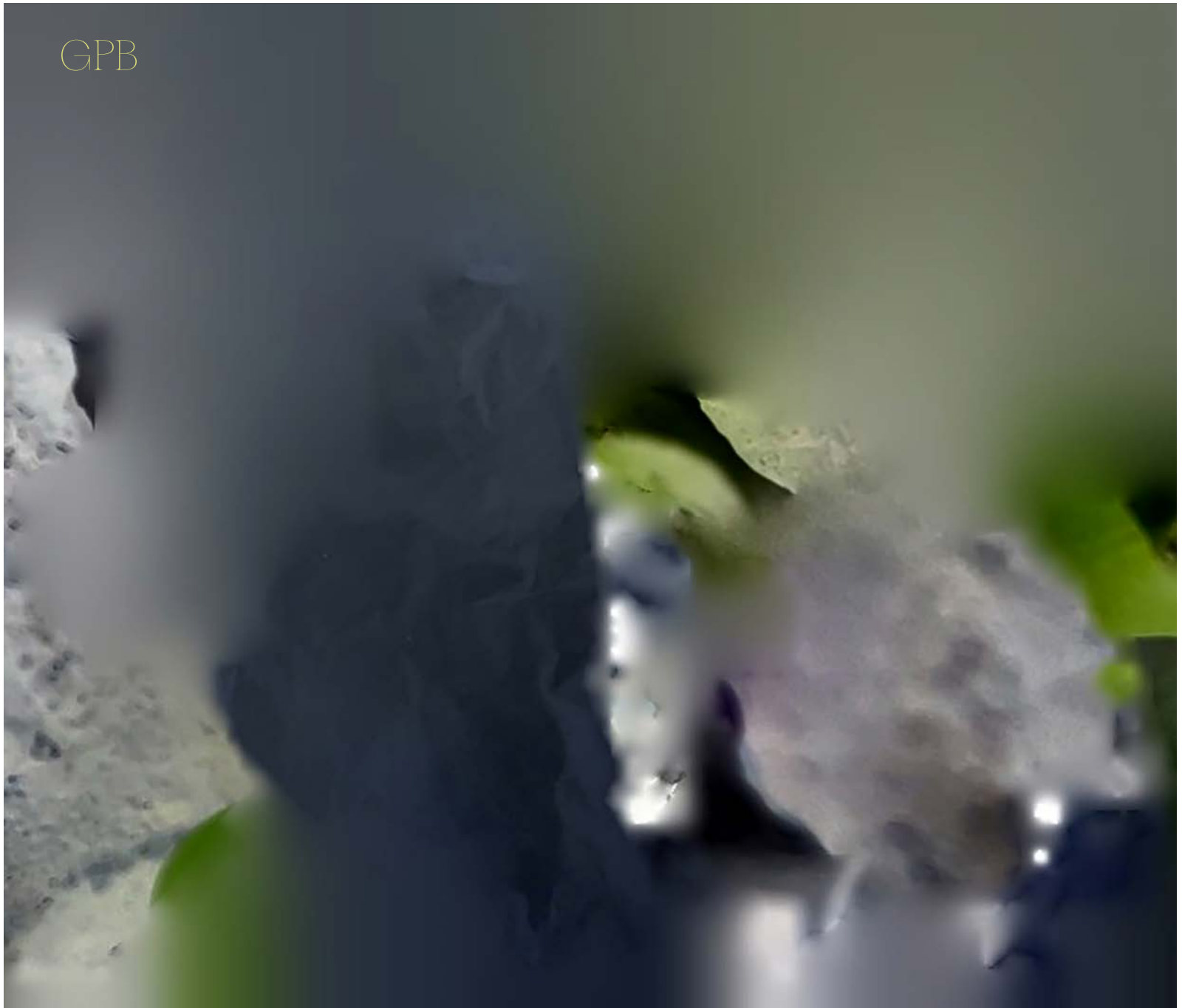


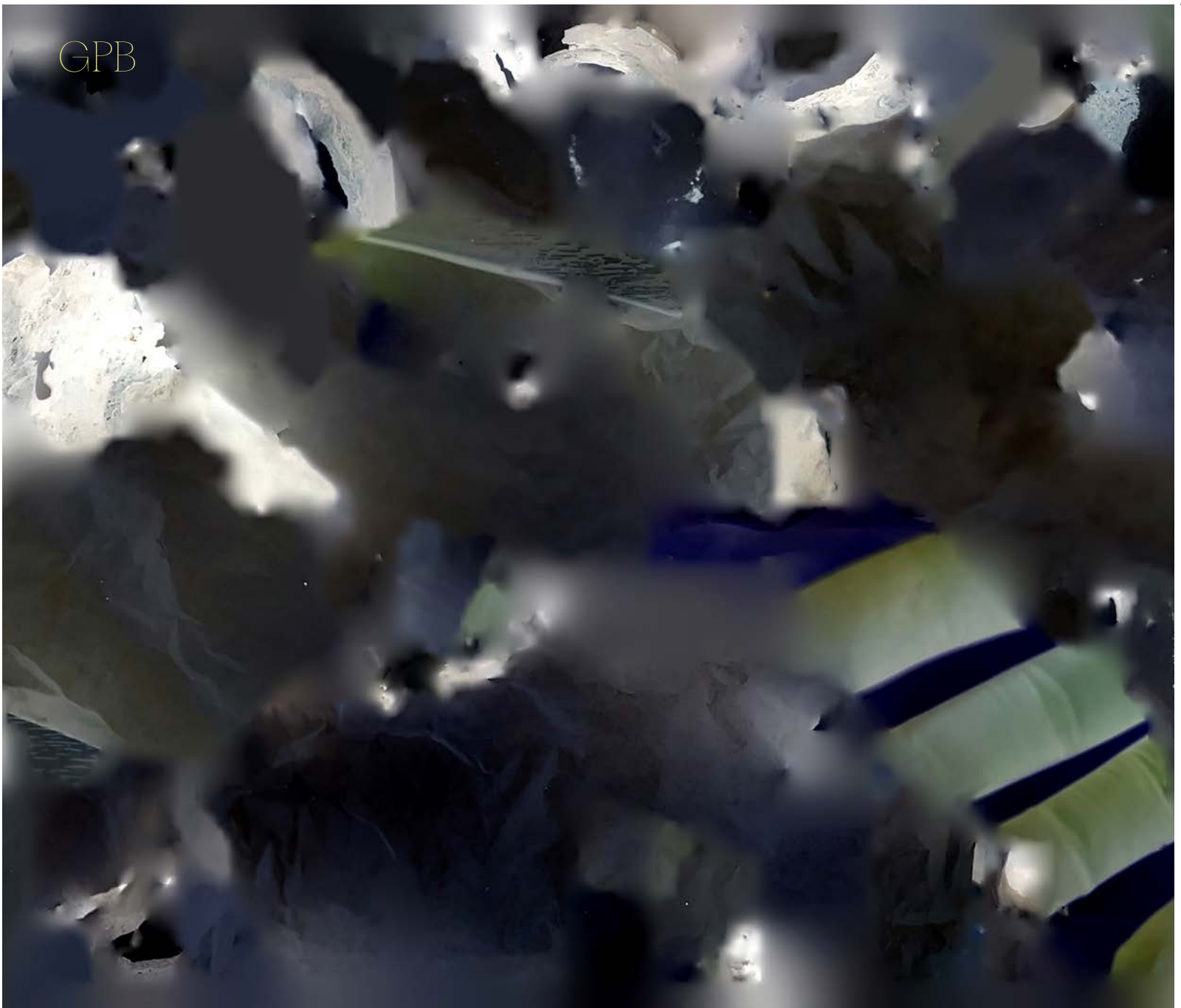
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