THRESHOLD CARTOGRAPHIES: THE POETICS OF CONTESTED SPACE

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ABSTRACT

This PhD is a multidisciplinary mapping of the United Kingdom's deindustrialised zones, an investigation into the collective social formations that have become absent as a result of radical reordering of urban space in the post-industrial era. Here I examine areas of the UK that have undergone extensive change since the exodus of manufacturing industries in the 1970s and 80s. By investigating the social and ideological formations that have not been fully erased I develop a better understanding of how the absent collective subject is exerting an influence on the present.

This practice-based research renegotiates and expands the terms hauntology and psychogeography by deploying a methodology of collective critical walking. A multidisciplinary art practice explores how an intersubjective approach to walking provides important material for a better understanding of the affective or psychic infrastructure of the city. I am calling this dual approach Sociogeography and Radical Spectrality.

Sociogeography is walking as critical practice and methodology, a break from the Situationist practice of psychogeography and a repositioning of the dérive in a neoliberal context, Radical Spectrality is a new coinage which expands on Derrida's philosophical concept of hauntology and Mark Fisher's subsequent reworking of the term by developing a methodology for working with ghosts.

This practice based research will develop the concept of the dérive by encompassing the work of Giorgio Agamben on spectrality, Walter Benjamin's porosity in cities and revolutionary time, Karen Barad's writing on quantum time and haunting, Jane Bennet's political ecology of things, Franco Bifo Beradi's work on precarity, Guy Debord and psychogeography, Mark Fisher's reworking of hauntology, Black Audio Film Collective's affective proximity, Frederic Jameson's work on cognitive mapping and utopia, Henri Lefebvre's right to the city and residues, Moten and Harney's hapticality and the undercommons, Gilbert Simondon's magical universe and privileged places, Gilles Deleuze's Radioactive Fossil and Virginia Woolf's multi subjective approach to the city.

I am making a key contribution to the field by introducing two new concepts, Sociogeography and Radical Spectrality. By making exhibitions, publications and audio works I enact the significant turn from the individual to the collective by transforming the atomised encounter with the spectral collective subject into a multi-disciplinary, collaborative and public facing series of works I create porous exhibition sites where the production of new sonic and textual terrain moves between city and gallery space.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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LIST OF ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL

In this practice section of my PhD I am presenting four zines, three audio works and eight fictional works. In addition to this I am presenting supporting documentation from three exhibitions in London, Glasgow and Leeds.

ZINES/PUBLICATIONS

Four zines as follows:

1 *Savage Messiah: Alpha/Isis/Eden* 2017

2 *Ordnance Arms* Baltic 2019

3 *Feed the Fires Tend the Stock* Leeds 2019

4 *Savage Messiah: Open Your Palm, Feel the Dust settling there* 2018

AUDIO WORKS

Three audio works as follows:

1 *ALPHA/ISIS/EDEN,* SHOWROOM, LONDON 2017

This 50-minute track was made for the Isis/Alpha/Eden exhibition at the Showroom, London. The work sonic textures were combined with recordings of my voice allowing fictional narratives to unfold across the work. I worked with producer Jack Latham (aka Jam City), this working relationship was underscored by a series of dérives in London and Los Angeles.

2 *RADIANT FUTURES,* CCA GLASGOW 2017

Radiant Futures was made for the exhibition The Sky is Falling in Glasgow. It can be considered a sequel to Alpha/Isis/Eden. It was made in February 2017 and produced with Jack Latham. The work

was formed from dérives in Glasgow conducted in February 2017, a compilation of found tracks and a scripted text.

3 *OPEN YOUR PALM FEEL THE DUST SETTLING THERE* SOMERSET HOUSE STUDIOS, LONDON 2018

Open Your Palm, Feel the Dust Settling There, was a three part audio work commissioned by Somerset House Studios in 2018. The work inhabits the psychic and emotional contours of the Ladbroke Grove/North Kensington areas of West London. The work was made from field recordings, spoken text and fragments of found music.

FICTIONAL TEXTS

The eight fictional texts I am submitting are

1 The Rotherhithe Caryatids (2016)

2 Drift Report from Downtown LA (2017)

3 Millennium Point to Saltley Gate 2016-1972 (2016)

plus five excerpts from a 50,000 word fiction project *Charms Over Ashes* (2018-to the present):

4 Ordnance Arms, **5** Colin, **6** Tonia, **7** Blackwall to Barking Reach, and **8** Ilford: An End and a Beginning, which form a polyphonic, intersubjective work running parallel to the thesis.

The Rotherhithe Caryatids was commissioned by Jaspar Joseph-Lester for the Walking Cities journal, and appears as Ch. 17 in *Walking Cities: London*

Drift Report from Downtown LA appeared in the Journal of Writing in Creative Practice in 2017.

Millennium Point to Saltley Gate 2016-1972 came from a series of research walks in Birmingham in 2016.

The Ordnance Arms chapter from *Charms Over Ashes* appeared in a publication for the Baltic Digital Citizen Exhibition in 2019, and *Ilford: An End and a Beginning* will be published in London Open City 2020 edited by Owen Hatherley.

EXHIBITIONS

Three exhibitions and accompanying images.

1 *FEED THE FIRES, TEND THE STOCK* CONVENTION HOUSE, LEEDS 2019

Feed the Fires Tend the Stock was a multidisciplinary project involving publications, billboards, flyposting, text collaborative audio work and wall text. The artist, educator and curator Marion Harrison invited a group of artists to inhabit the project space and I made work in tandem with a sound artist Alex de Little who had made recordings of the building and surrounding area. The exhibition site became porous as sounds bled through rooms and windows opened on to flyposted walls. Images below:

1 Installation view: mixed media photocopied fly posters, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels.

2 Installation view: mixed media photocopied fly posters, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels.

3 Installation view mixed media photocopied fly posters, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels.

4 Installation detail: marker pen on window and photocopied poster visible on external wall.

5 Installation detail: marker pen on window and photocopied poster visible on external wall

6 Billboard situated on A64(M) slip road, Burmantofts, Leeds.

7 Billboard situated on A64(M) slip road, Burmantofts, Leeds.

8 Billboard situated on A64(M) slip road, Burmantofts, Leeds.

9 Publication *Feed the Fires, Tend the Stock* 2019

2 *ALPHA/ISIS/EDEN* SHOWROOM, LONDON 2017

In 2017 I was commissioned by the Showroom in London to respond to the Church Street area of West London. The nucleus of the resulting exhibition was a 4000-word text which became an installation and audio work. This text was generated by a series of sociogeographic dérives through Paddington and Edgware Road. The armature of the work was my own relationship with the area, my involvement in countercultural scenes and my employment as a community outreach worker for Westminster Council.

The installation was formed of plywood walls pasted with A0 photocopies, sitex panels and pink and amber lighting gels. Four Genelec speakers and a sub bass speaker broadcast an audio work in the gallery. Flyposters were collaged outside the gallery space and a new zine was published.

1 Installation view: mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen

2 Installation view: mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, sitex, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels, Genelec speakers

3 Installation detail: mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, sitex, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels, Genelec speakers

4 Installation detail: detail mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, sitex, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels, Genelec speakers

5 Installation detail: detail mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, sitex, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels, Genelec speakers

6 Installation detail: detail mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, sitex, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels, Genelec speakers

7 Exterior wall with flyposters

8 Zine published for exhibition

3 *THE SKY IS FALLING*, CCA GLASGOW 2017

The Sky is Falling was a group exhibition with Black Audio Film Collective, Clara Ianni, Dora Mejía And Carol Rhodes concerned with visual imaginaries, utopias and urban planning. I made a new audio work and installation, Radiant Futures which, following on from the Showroom project used plywood billboards, lighting gels and photocopied fly posters. The work interrogated the themes of social housing and regeneration. It was a meditation on displacement and loss but also an active working relationship with the ghosts of Glasgow's radical social formations.

1 Installation view: mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, sitex, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels, Genelec speakers

2 Installation view: photocopied flyposters, plywood, marker pen.

3 Installation detail: photocopied flyposters, plywood, marker pen.

4 Installation detail: photocopied flyposters, marker pen, acrylic, ballpoint pen.

5 Installation detail: mixed media photocopied fly posters, plywood, sitex, acrylic, marker pen, ballpoint pen, lighting gels, Genelec speakers

6 Installation detail: photocopied flyposters, marker pen, acrylic, ballpoint pen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

It would be best, perhaps, to think of an alternate world – better to say the alternate world, our alternate world – as one contiguous with ours but without any connections or access to it. Then, from time to time, like a diseased eyeball in which disturbing flashes of light are perceived or like those baroque sunbursts in which rays from another world suddenly break into this one, we are reminded that Utopia exists and that other systems, other spaces, are still possible.

– Fredric Jameson, Valences *of the Dialectic*

As flowers turn towards the sun by dint of a secret heliotropism the past strives to turn toward that sun which is rising in the sky of history. A historical materialist must be aware of this most inconspicuous of all transformations.

– Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*

The past has to be continually re-narrated, and the political point of reactionary narratives is to suppress the potentials which still await, ready to be re-awakened, in older moments…so to recall these multiple forms of collectivity is less an act of remembering than of unforgetting, a counter exorcism of the spectre of a world which could be free.'

– Mark Fisher, *Acid Communism*

When we walk in Britain's deindustrialised zones today we might be forgiven for thinking them hopeless and forlorn places. When Margaret Thatcher became prime minister in 1979 the Conservative government embarked on a radical restructuring of the economy and launched a raft of neoliberal policies – privatisation, deregulation, globalisation, free trade, austerity and reductions in government spending.

The move to a free market economy in 1979 completely transformed British society. The closure of manufacturing industries spatially reconfigured cities, overturned communal relations and intensified social atomisation. Four decades of neoliberalism has undermined and enervated the collective subject and eroded public space. Shipyards, collieries, steel works, coking plants, car plants and print works have been laid to waste or buried under Amazon fulfillments centres and out of town retail parks.

The premise of this PhD thesis however, refutes this total sense of futility, it documents and incubates the prefigurations of new radical social formations, pockets of resistance and flashpoints of contestation in deindustrialised zones. It is a search for visions of a different world embedded in the conditions and contradictions of the present, the spectre of communism evoked by Marx.

In the five-year span of this research I have walked, with others, in search of flashes of light, rays from other social systems, and found them in the most maligned and overlooked places. Communities caught in a web of inadequate benefits, poor housing and precarious work are sites of contradiction which harbour the conditions for radical social change. My practice does not seek to ameliorate the social realities in deindustrialised zones but harnesses the negative ambience arising from them, the vengeful spirit haunting regenerated and forsaken sites. This thesis maps disjuncture, antagonism and the unassimilable to join an oppositional current which wants to supersede the forces of finance capital. For Frederic Jameson alternative political systems are 'achingly proximate', they lie dormant like seeds waiting for the first heat of spring to signal their sudden unfolding. The practice-based research focuses on places where these signals might be found, the remaindered zones where glimpses of other worlds can be seen.

This work sets up a relationship with pit villages in South Yorkshire, textile towns in the North of England, shipyards in Glasgow, coking plants in Birmingham, and the Docklands and Lea Valley areas of East London. Some of these areas have been severely impacted by economic disinvestment and environmental damage, others have been structurally reorganised in urban regeneration masterplans, but despite a neoliberal drive to extinguish collectivity this thesis will show that multiple forms of socio-political activity

persist, that there are still points where the reinhabitation of dormant social and ideological currents is possible.

New forms of architecture – many of them provisional, sometimes involving the repurposing of older structures – have emerged during the economic changes of the past few decades. There have also been changes in the distributive networks of drugs, both prescription and illegal, which have created new and largely undocumented forms of urban, phenomenological experience. This PhD pays attention to these changes, draws them into a practice which generates new fictions, new social imaginaries.

A heightened attunement to the city's affective temperature is at the core of this research, and the psychogeographic methodology of the dérive is central to my approach. For Guy Debord, the dérive [literally: 'drifting'] is 'a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances' (Debord, 1958, p.52). which will permit the study of 'fissures in the urban network, the role of microclimates, of distinct neighborhoods with no relation to administrative boundaries, and above all of the dominating action of centers of attraction (Debord, 1958, p.62). By deploying the dérive as a research strategy I set out to gauge the city's collective mood, to respond to those signals, those flashes of light breaking in from another world.

I tap into a current running through Spinoza, Deleuze, Delanda and Massumi, and use the term affect to describe a set of potentials immanent in the terrain. These potentials are intensities of prepersonal relations (fields of forces, wills to power), continually being re-made, that spill over their actuality. What concerns me here is how textures of heightened collective moments have the capacity to make something actual in the present, how they operate as agents in the virtual. This thesis will show how the dérive cultivates a receptivity to these points of intensity in the terrain, how it allows us to identify and change the ensemble of urban, social relations by walking together, by occupying the city, by breaching its borders.

The dérive also allows for a discursive approach which deals directly with the relational dimension of aesthetic experience. I have a dialogical relationship to the city where conversations arising from walks

become a critical element in the production of new work. By opening ourselves up to new narratives, to other's memories, places become intersubjective.

The first part of this thesis deals with what I'm calling Radical Spectrality. Radical Spectrality is the transformation of material from dérives into new work. It is a methodology for working *with* ghosts, a channelling of spectral forces through the multiple valences of an art practice. Radical Spectrality takes the whispers, rumbles and quakes of heightened collective experience as its materials. By sculpting the micro-narratives abounding in the city's liminal zones the echoes of a radically different system can be imbricated in new work. My practice is concerned with art's capacity to occupy a non-linear temporality, to create temporal heterotopias which do away with categories of past/present/future. By layering, collaging, cutting and sampling, new worlds and new subjectivities are constructed from the textures of the city as we presently find it. I am interested in the interstices, what happens in the breaks, the threshold moments. My practice listens to the city's micro-tones, blue notes and barely perceptible shifts in order to access the textures of collective experience.

Radical Spectrality departs from Derrida's philosophical concept of hauntology and takes up cultural theorist Mark Fisher's subsequent reworking of the term by switching direction from a poststructural linguistic project to an aesthetic and political one. Radical Spectrality is a process of calling into being through art making. The experience of haunting is channelled into an art practice as a political act, not of remembrance but revivification.

Making art that engages directly with spectral forces sets up a multivalent conversation between the degraded contemporary moment and the absent collective subject. By opening up a speculative-fictive space the ghosts of previous inhabitants are invoked and new collective formations ushered in. Radical Spectrality disrupts and unsettles the contemporary moment by rejecting what Mark Fisher calls the 'mandatory individualism' of neoliberalism, this rejection extends to a collaborative/collective mode of production which includes zines, flyposting, audio works and listening events. Here, material gathered on dérives is transformed into porous exhibition sites where new narratives oscillate between city and gallery

space, a process of conjuring the absent collective subject in the virtual. By examining exhibition making as a radical mode of production I show how the findings from dérives can be redirected through a multidisciplinary, collaborative and public facing art project.

Radical Spectrality undermines the totalising ambitions of finance capital by resurrecting stories occluded in contemporary urban developments. Fragments of narratives recovered on dérives are transformed into fictional works which are circulated between the gallery and the city outside. A selection of these fictional works are presented in the practice component of this PhD thesis.

When the Situationists were wandering through Paris the post war consensus was still effective in most of Western Europe. Neoliberalism fundamentally abandoned the terms of the post war consensus along with public optimism for the future. Franco 'Bifo' Berardi describes the subsequent loss of a 'progressive modernity,'

> These expectations were shaped in the conceptual frameworks of an ever-progressing development. My generation grew up at the peak of this mythological temporalization, and it is very difficult, maybe impossible, to get rid of it, and look at reality without this kind of temporal lens (Berardi, 2011, pp.18-19).

Mark Fisher's re-working of hauntology is an attempt to resurrect the virtual futures, the set of utopian possibilities promised in the post war era. For him these visions of collectivity, of social solidarity, have not been fully erased, residues and traces still unsettle the present.

In *Ghosts of My Life* he writes

> Haunting, then, can be construed as a failed mourning. It is about refusing to give up the ghost or […] the refusal of the ghost to give up on us. The spectre will not allow us to settle into/for the mediocre satisfactions one can glean in a world governed by capitalist realism (Fisher, 2014, p.38).

Haunting is deployed in my work as a method for identifying moments when futures previously imagined can be rekindled. By making works which engender new forms of political agency I invoke the collective cultural formations neoliberalism seeks to exorcise. This thesis will examine how I have enacted this in public walks, listening events, and exhibitions,

This is not an anthropological approach, the work is not auto-ethnographic, but fragments of inter-subjective experience are introduced to provide a schema for fictional texts and audio work. In 'One Way Street' Walter Benjamin writes 'Autobiography has to do with time, with sequence and what makes up the continuous flow of life', something he rejects in favour of a broken, explosive kind of temporality, 'a space of moments and discontinuities' (Benjamin, 1928, p.612). It is these moments and discontinuities that concern us here, memories called up by a particular place are jolted by new encounters, new experiences in the terrain. As personal memories and scraps of experience break free of private rumination they succumb to the material textures of the city, fragments are eroded and reconstituted by other subjectivities. It is this transformative experience of walking that is channelled into new audio work and fiction.

The second part of the thesis explores what I am calling Sociogeography, a concept which departs from the critical practice and methodology of psychogeography and moves towards a deeper understanding of the affective dynamics of the collective. Sociogeography then, is a mapping of the city's collective social formations, actual and virtual, which distinguishes it from Social Geography.

Psychogeography, as it emerged from a French *avant garde* milieu of radical artists and cultural theorists in the 1950s, was a nebulous term, a cross hatching of letters, manifestos and pamphlets. This milieu had its roots in Paris Saint-Germain and crystallised into a grouping known first as Lettrism then the Situationist International. Psychogeography was described by Guy Debord as 'the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals' (Debord, 1956, p.23).

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Since the new millennium the term psychogeography has become synonymous with a 1990s literary turn exemplified by works such as Peter Ackroyd's *London: The Biography* (2000) Iain Sinclair's *London Orbital* (2002), and Will Self's 'Psychogeography' column in The Independent. The popularity of these mainstream works I argue, has obscured other radical and collective trajectories branching from the Situationist project. An exhaustive account of this literary genre is not the ambition of this PhD, instead I will explain how the methodology at work here differs from a single subjective approach to the city in the novel form.

Of importance here is the time bomb embedded in 1950s Situationist texts. We might think of psychogeography as a scorched patch of ground, the fire has been extinguished but embers persist, they continue to glow elsewhere; it is this elsewhere that concerns us here, not raking through the ashes, circling the same exhausted location.

Psychogeography, I will argue, becomes more relevant to the current phase of capitalism when it draws on manifold atomised voices. Sociogeography is not a total break from psychogeography but a reseeding of ideas in new ground. If deterritorialisation for Deleuze and Guattari is a line of flight, the movement by which one leaves a territory, then sociogeography might be thought of a walking practice that constitutes and extends the territory of psychogeography itself by making its tactics and strategies more relevant to the current phase of capitalism.

The term sociogeography emerged from conversations around my zine *Savage Messiah* (2005-2010) with cultural theorist Mark Fisher and philosopher Nina Power. The zine's photocopied, cut and paste narratives formed a multi-subjective mapping of a rapidly gentrifying London. In 2011 the collected zine was published by Verso and described by Mark Fisher as 'a gigantic, unfinished collage, which like the city-is constantly reconfiguring itself. Macro- and micro-narratives proliferate tuberously' (Fisher, introduction to Ford, 2019). So, while the dérive remained central to the project it was clearly not operating as a tool for an individualised form of urban exploration. In this way then, the prefix socio- 'social, of society' and, from

Latin *socius* 'companion, ally, associate, fellow, sharer,' seemed a better descriptor for the methodology at work.

This thesis will explore the uses of sociogeography by reporting on dérives from multiple cities. The sociogeographic dérive not only charts affective currents but offers tools for superseding the totalising tendencies of finance-capital by incubating new forms of physical and psychic occupation. These reports will explore the continued relevance of the dérive as a political strategy.

The second part of the PhD then is subdivided into dérives, each walk is composed of moments of insight. Following on from the work of Louis Aragon, Patrick Keiller and Victor Burgin I will include photographs from dérives in this thesis, not to illustrate the text but to foreground the processes at work in this practice-based research. My photographs are not reference material, but catalysts for new writing. I will also include collages and cut up material made in response to dérives. The point here is not to provoke a discussion on the concept of the photo essay or the collage but to integrate elements of a walking-research method.

For the purposes of this work I have focused primarily on the UK because I live and work in London. However, during this research period I have walked extensively in cities across the world. Residencies in Japan, China, Sweden and the United States have informed my practice as well as research trips to Germany, Spain, Greece and the Netherlands.

In the course of these dérives there are also encounters with protest movements, artworks and activist networks. I discuss examples of artworks which might be described as sociogeographic: Andrea Arnold, Black Audio Film Collective, J.G. Ballard, Pierre Bonnard, William Burroughs, William Blake, Janet Cardiff, Samuel Delany, Detroit Techno, Freee Collective, Nan Goldin, Virginia Woolf and Stanley Kubrick. In doing this I am making the distinction between psychogeography in its current literary incarnation and its more radical instantiation, I didn't invent sociogeography as a method but have found a new framework for naming it.

PART 1: RADICAL SPECTRALITY

RADICAL SPECTRALITY AS ART PRACTICE

Figure 1 - Alpha/Isis/Eden. installation view, Showroom, London 2017

Between the no longer and the not yet, we can provisionally distinguish two directions in hauntology. The first refers to that which is (in actuality is) no longer, but which remains effective as a virtuality (the traumatic 'compulsion to repeat', a fatal pattern). The second sense of hauntology refers to that which (in actuality) has not yet happened, but which is already effective in the virtual (an attractor, an anticipation shaping current behaviour). The 'spectre of communism' that Marx and Engels had warned of in the first lines of the Communist Manifesto was just this kind of ghost: a virtuality.

<div align="right">– Mark Fisher, <i>Ghosts of My Life</i></div>

Radical Spectrality arises from a particular conception of hauntology, a version filtered through the UK in the first decade of the millennium coalescing around the writing of Mark Fisher. Fisher's move from Derrida's metaphysical concept of hauntology to an aesthetic and political project allows for a reinvigorated use of the term hauntology. The objective here is not to write an exhaustive literature review of hauntology but to show how I build on this concept of haunting by working with spatially ingrained temporalities already exerting an influence in the virtual. My work engages directly with spectral forces in the city and sets up a dialogical relationship between the atomised experience of the neoliberal present and the absent collective subject. I use various modes of production to create speculative-fictive spaces where the ghosts of this absent collective subject, past and future, can be contacted.

Radical Spectrality is one half of a dual methodology, a process of gathering material from sociogeographic dérives in order to make new artwork. Radical Spectrality begins at the point of withdrawal from the street to the studio, it is the aftermath of the walk, a complex practice of sifting, cutting and reassembling. In this part of the PhD I will describe how the different elements of this practice work with spectral forces in order to occupy a non-linear temporality, to create other spaces for experimentation and the cultivation of new forms of organisation. By discussing the manifold valences of my art practice, I will show how new worlds and new subjectivities are constructed from the textures of the city in its present, degraded form.

Radical Spectrality pays attention to moments which undermine the city's dominant narratives. The past four decades have been underscored by a neoliberal drive towards self-interest, competition and entrepreneurialism, something Mark Fisher describes in *Capitalist Realism* as 'mandatory individualism'. My practice is a process of summoning absent social formations by listening to the collective fictions and dreamings that form neoliberalism's obverse side, the stories that persist despite systematic efforts to erase them. This refusal to forget extends to a collaborative/collective mode of production which includes zines, flyposting, audio works and listening events.

In the five-year span of this PhD I have constructed porous and unstable exhibition sites where the ghosts of absent social formations move between city and gallery space. I will examine exhibition making as a

radical mode of production by considering the different strands operating in my art practice, these strands refuse easy compartmentalisation and I will show that it is the overlaps, crossings and moments of interference where ghosts become most resonant.

Radical Spectrality becomes a counterforce to the totalising ambitions of finance capital by foregrounding residual traces, by restoring narratives erased in urban regeneration schemes and bringing them back into collective spaces. The city's recuperated countercultural and radical oppositional narratives are rekindled as a threatening channel which becomes an incubator of new work, a teeming flux of potentials. When occluded narratives appear as scrawls on the surface of billboard installations, or scripted texts in audio works or zines passed from hand to hand in the street they form splinters in the dominant regeneration narratives of linear temporal unfolding, progress and permanence.

Radical Spectrality is a process of listening to the whispers, rumbles and quakes of heightened collective experience.

THE PALIMPSEST

Figure 2 - LGF, 8,000,000 kami. installation view, CCA, Kitakyushu, 2017

I describe my approach to exhibition making as palimpsestic. Sediments of phenomenological experience are ingrained in the material, textual and sonic consistency of work. A palimpsest is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'a manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed, effacing earlier writing – something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form.' And in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, the geographer Donald Meinig writes that a terrain is 'at once a panorama, a composition, a palimpsest, a microcosm; [...] in every prospect there can be more and more that meets the eye' (Meinig, 1979, p.6).

The city then, can be described as a palimpsest, a complex, infinite montage where centuries of human experience are imprinted, where text is written and overwritten and previous inscriptions are available in the present. In the city traces of past activity form sediments, textures of heightened moments persist as

indelible marks, and despite efforts to naturalise the dominant order through the processes of recuperation and repression they are never fully erased.

Radical Spectrality enters into this process of erasure and re-inscription in order to trigger new and unexpected readings. When an art practice deals with the city's psychic sedimentations and stratifications it becomes a mapping of an urban unconscious. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* Freud compares the unconscious to a city where 'nothing that has come into existence has passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside later ones' (Freud, 1930, p.11). For Freud previous traces persist as a palimpsest, always open to the possibility of recovery.

Recovery is a critical element in my practice, the work sets up the conditions for an unearthing of repressed oppositional narratives by walking with others in deindustrialised zones, in this way it might be called a palimpsestic mode of investigation. The second part of this thesis offers detailed accounts of these walking investigations.

The palimpsest begins as a textual mode, the Ancient Greeks devised a method of writing on wax tablets which could be smoothed and re-inscribed. Other examples are parchment or vellum pages which could be repeatedly marked, washed and reused. As new documents were superimposed, faintly discernible inscriptions were left behind, making these surfaces repositories of ghostly traces. This *scriptio inferior* or under writing behaves as a metaphor in my work for the repressed immaterial traces embedded in the city.

Multispectral light (ultraviolet, infrared and x-ray) allows inscriptions which would ordinarily remain invisible in ancient manuscripts to come to light. In Freud's 1925 essay 'The Mystic Writing Pad' he describes an earlier device made of wax and celluloid which behaved in a similar way. This tablet allowed repeated reinscription, unlike ordinary notepaper it allowed repeated use through an ongoing process of writing and erasure. These inscriptions however, were not entirely effaced: 'The permanent trace of what was written is retained upon the wax slab itself and is legible in suitable lights' (Freud, 1925, p.230). We might think of the Mystic Writing Pad as a palimpsest, for Freud, it served as a model for the psyche, with its enduring marks it was a metaphor for sediments of permanently etched memory. Although the writing

pad was incapable of retrieval it bore the traces of buried and occluded layers, and at certain moments unexpected, forgotten elements become fleetingly visible. We might link this to Freud's idea of the Uncanny where what 'ought to have remained hidden and secret, and yet comes to light.' In *The Uncanny*, Freud describes getting lost in the city, repeatedly going round and round:

> After having wandered about for a while without being directed, I suddenly found myself back in the same street. I hurried away once more, but only to arrive yet a third time by devious paths in the same place. Now, however, a feeling overcame me which I can only describe as uncanny (Freud, 1919, p.237).

It is here we can make the connection with the Palimpsest; the retracing of steps is like the reinscription on the tablet, walking in the city brings flashes of familiarity, glimpses of prior textual traces. Previous inscriptions are intrusions, unexpected elements that beckon from the past. For Nicholas Royle, the Uncanny is 'indissociably bound up with a sense of repetition or 'coming back' – the return of the repressed, the constant or eternal recurrence of the same thing, a compulsion to repeat' (Royle, p.2). This is the eternal return, the past unfolding into the future.

For Michel de Certeau the city is interwoven with memories, and like the tablet with layers of inscriptions it harbours a multiplicity of textual layers. For the individual in the street these infinite texts cannot be grasped in their entirety, instead the city is read as 'fragmentary and inward turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state' (Certeau, 1984, p.108). In his essay *Walking in the City*, he writes 'within the grid pattern of functionalist planners, obstacles sprang up, 'resistances' from a stubborn past'(Ibid., p.133). The resistances he refers to are analogous to the *scriptio inferior*, the underwriting discernible in the palimpsest. When previous times are seen unmediated by the dominant narrative they can strike us as uncanny or weird, visitations from another, barely recognisable era. Certeau goes on to write 'the technicians were supposed to make a tabula rasa of the opacities that disrupted the plans for a city of glass. The remnants had to be eliminated in order to be replaced' (Ibid.).

Paris in the 19th century was subjected to the brutal urban planning of Baron Hausman which caused cataclysmic damage and according to Certeau 'destroyed even more than war had.' Hausmann's mission

was to replace the city's labyrinthine convolutions with the cold rationality of the grid; a network of ordered boulevards which would allow troops to crush dissent while opening up the most impenetrable corners. A colonial logic was at work in this cleansing and ordering of the 19th century city, and yet, Certeau goes on to explain, 'some old buildings survived, even if they were caught in its nets...defaced houses, closed-down factories, the debris of shipwrecked histories still today raise up the ruins of an unknown, strange city' (Certeau, 1998, p.133). These are the threshold zones, the relics of another time. Later on I will discuss the Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle, a stranded relic of a different political climate, and the Saltley Coking depot in Birmingham with its resonances of militancy in a conservative landscape of privately owned housing, such places, for Certeau 'burst forth within the homogeneous city like slips of the tongue from an unknown, perhaps unconscious, language... these islets create exotic effects within' (Ibid.).

These slips of the tongue are like the quivers, whispers and rumbles of an un-dead language. Speech and writing are interchangeable metaphors in the re-encounter with the city's buried sediments. The unexpected reinhabitation of the past is like seeing previously invisible inscriptions through multi-spectral light.

Writing on billboards in marker pen allows text to operate in a poly temporal register, instead of articulating a linear narrative, moving from left to right across a page it pivots on a chronotopic axis; translucent layers of white acrylic temporarily occlude text, allowing fluctuating moments of obfuscation and legibility, veiling and revelation. Swarms of oncoming sentences are the persistent voices of the displaced which trouble the neoliberal narrative of development and regeneration. Incipient stories, those washed out of the official narrative, rise to the surface, tapping into the city's unconscious commentary. These textual interventions do not seek to represent the marginalia written outside the main body of the text, they become it.

The intention in my practice is always to cause an interruption in the erasure and heritage project, the selective memory of regeneration schemes. Text is redacted and re-written, images are cut up and rearranged, images of luxury developments are reduced to monochrome photocopies and collaged on plywood boards. The degradation of these glossy computer-generated renderings into cheap low resolution xerox prints brings them into a samizdat tradition of zines and flyposting. The transformation of pristine interiors into torn and ink blotched fly posters is subversive, it disrupts the serene and celestial qualities of

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the sparkling white, sun flooded room and brings it back to the dirt, to Bataille's big toe, to the contamination, hybridity, eroticism and filth of the street.

The voices and stories percolating through this work emanate from sites pathologised and made redundant in the neoliberal city. Walking is a form of textual excavation, an encounter with seams of memory. What happens when these seams interpenetrate? When the memories that construct our subjectivity break into each other? In archaeology a palimpsest is a 'superposition of successive activities, the material traces of which are partially destroyed or reworked because of the process of superposition' (Bailey, p.203). When text is redacted, obscured and written over, it becomes mutable and shifting, with previous inscriptions still visible. This approach is as a form of psychic ventriloquy – as the hand skims across the image new voices are heard.

Memories are not atoms, micro-narratives coalesce in the city, stories weave and intersect. The methods at work in my palimpsestic art practice restore visibility to these micro-narratives that would otherwise be erased in marketing and 'place making' strategies.

In *Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* Andreas Huyssen writes that the palimpsest can be 'used to discuss configurations of urban spaces and their unfolding in time'. For him 'literary techniques of reading historically, intertextually, constructively, and deconstructively at the same time can be woven into our understanding of urban spaces as lived spaces that shape collective imaginaries' (Huyssen, p.7). Building installations which adopt these literary techniques allows me to scrutinise the affective textures of architecture. Intertextuality becomes a process of psycho-archaeological trawling. MDF boards become listening chambers where the city's repressed displaced voices can be heard. This method of exhibition making allows for a re-collectivisation of memories.

In *Eros and Civilisation* Herbert Marcuse writes 'The psychoanalytic liberation of memory explodes the rationality of the repressed individual. Regression assumes a progressive function. The rediscovered past yields critical standards which are tabooed in the present' (Marcuse, p.19). Palimpsestic art making also operates in this regressive/progressive axis. If finance capital is the dominant force in the neoliberal city, perhaps it is our unformed thoughts, half-remembered dreams and repressed memories hold the keys to an emancipatory future. By going back we can make jumps into the future, rediscover the values, ideas and

social formations of the past in order to construct new cities. In 1845 Thomas de Quincey uses the term palimpsest to describe how a 'succession' of memories 'seemed to bury all that went before. And yet in reality not one has been extinguished.' For him it is a vehicle for resurrection, for waking something which seems to be dead: 'all the impressions made on it are 'not dead but sleeping'' (De Quincey, pp.113-4). The palimpsest then, is not fixed, it is open to reinscription, to moments of revelation. The task of Radical Spectrality is to behave as an acerbic agent, to corrode an urban masterplan's patina and reveal the accumulated surfaces beneath.

We might think of previous traces as grains of sand in an oyster shell with new iridescent layers coalescing around them.

Figure 3 - Untitled. mixed media collage, 2017

In the 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire', Walter Benjamin meditates on the figure of the ragpicker, 'a man whose job it is to gather the day's refuse in the capital. Everything that the big city has thrown away, everything it has lost, everything it has scorned, everything it has crushed underfoot he catalogues and collects' (Benjamin, 1938, p.48). Benjamin's ragpicker is a scavenger who sifts through remaindered histories to reconfigure fragments and unearth new and unexpected 'dialectical images'. Radical Spectrality mirrors this process by sifting through material gathered on dérives for valuable insights. New work is made by combing whatsapp groups, listening to rumours, documenting hours between shifts and noticing the overlooked aspects of the city. Following Hito Steyerl's concept of the 'poor image' (Steyerl, 2009). I am calling these fragments 'poor narratives'. For Steyerl the poor image is

'a rip; an AVI or a JPEG, a *lumpenproletariat* in the class society of appearances…an illicit fifth-generation bastard of an original image.' We might think then, of the prevailing neoliberal discourse and its exposure to gossip, rumours, memes and loitering workplace chat. As stories circulate the authenticity of the 'original story' is questioned, its value downgraded. Like the poor image, 'whose genealogy is dubious' and 'often defies patrimony, national culture, or indeed copyright,' the poor narratives of rumour and pub gossip is also ambiguous, unreliable and mutable. The poor image Steyerl goes on to write is 'the debris of audiovisual production, the trash that washes up on the digital economies' shores.' Such debris is precisely the material Benjamin regarded as precious, and it is the fragments of this debris, the remainders of poor narratives that are spliced together in my practice to form new fictions. Steyerl concludes the essay by writing 'The poor image is about defiance and appropriation just as it is about conformism and exploitation.' It is this defiance and appropriation that makes the poor image a powerful counter-force to the pristine and glossy images of the neoliberal city; when I copy, re-distribute and recontextualise promotional material I am seeking to undermine a fictitious version of the city imagined by property developers. Fragments of poor images and poor narratives are brought together and reformulated in new artworks. The erratic circulation and jumpy temporalities of poor narratives are a riposte to the linear historical timelines narratives surrounding urban regeneration schemes. When poor narratives are spliced with images of luxury flats their oppositional power can be corralled into new blocs of defiance.

For Benjamin 'Ragpicker and poet: both are concerned with refuse' (Benjamin, 1938, p.48). Radical Spectrality is a process of making art from half remembered episodes, stories recounted by walking, anecdotes filtering into the collective memory. These fragments become *Denkbilds* ('thought-images') where mundane objects of the everyday – phone recordings, scrawls, and snapchats- are imbued with transformative powers, opening the possibility for philosophical inquiry. Radical Spectrality then is a gathering of shards and fragments to make work which is jagged, criss-crossed with fractures. It is a conflation of memories and half remembered episodes, stories recounted in the city, anecdotes filtering into the collective memory. It returns to sites of militancy and collective joy in order to collectively *re-member;*

by piecing together fragments of atomised collective experience, new fictions can be circulated, new narratives produced.

In Andrea Arnold's Red Road (2006) the intermediary figure of the ragpicker is made manifest in the character of Jackie Morrison, a security guard interpreting multiple fragmented images. Sitting before banks of grainy CCTV screens in a dim cabin she occupies a threshold site between actual and virtual. Here she gleans fragments of the city – sex in a car park, a man reading notices in a shop window, a fox running across a desolate stretch of wasteground – which combine to form a crepuscular, minor key mapping of East Glasgow. These fragments are a persistent, vexing presence, the *scriptio inferior* of the ancient manuscript which are perceived collectively to form an alternative text, another way of reading the city.

Figure 4 - Andrea Arnold, Red Road. film still 2006

> But the truth of that experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place. The truth of that limited daily experience of London lies, rather, in India or Jamaica or Hong Kong; it is bound up with the whole colonial system of the British Empire that determines the very quality of the individual's subjective life. Yet those structural coordinates are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience and are often not even conceptualizable for most people (Jameson, 1988, p.346).

When Frederic Jameson says that the phenomenological experience of the individual subject with one fixed view no longer corresponds with place, that the 'truth' of daily experience lies in India, Jamaica and Hong Kong he is making the claim that our lived experience is spectral, that our structural coordinates are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience. A shadow world lies beyond our grasp, he argues, a web of occluded narratives that constitute Victorian global power. We might think here about how economic power transforms media, education and culture (what Marx called the 'superstructure', Gramsci 'hegemony' or Burroughs 'consensus reality') so that general assent is achieved. From the nationalistic fervour surrounding the Brexit debate to the marketing suites and brochures of property developers, attempts are made to obfuscate class commonalities. For Jameson the spectre is capitalism itself, a ubiquitous force impossible to delineate or map because it is nebulous, sprawling, illogical.

The forces of reaction strive for an eternal city, a city of tradition and permanence but for Doreen Massey the city is 'unamenable to a single totalising project' because it is an 'open ended interweaving of a multiplicity of trajectories' (Massey, 2005, p.100). This 'unamenability' undermines the foundations of grand projects just as cryptolects, cant and slang erode the structures of standard English. The overarching system of the British Empire that Jameson evokes has collapsed, but London is not a relic, the ghosts resound as the city teems; the city is not cool like marble, but overheated, febrile, perpetually on the brink of tumult. The ghosts are active, waiting for hosts.

If, as Jameson writes, we inhabit a 'world of individual desires thoroughly colonised by advertising and consumerism' (Jameson, 2013, p.28). then perhaps our voices emanate from an occupying force, a badly stitched composite of advertising campaigns, tabloid headlines, and televised platitudes. Where does agency lie in this process, are we mere vessels or can we re-ventriloquise? Radical Spectrality sets up a methodology for consciously changing/displacing those voices, choosing to be haunted by another force. By listening to the city's shadow broadcasts, its minor literature and viral slang we garner another, collective voice, one which resonates with emancipatory power.

In his essay, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of Living with Spectres' Agamben writes

> A spectre always carries with it a date wherever it goes; it is, in other words, an intimately historical entity. This is why old cities are the quintessential place of signatures, which the flaneur in turn reads, somewhat absentmindedly, in the course of his drifting and strolling down the streets (Agamben, 2010, pp.37-42).

Neoliberalism creates atomised subjects, vessels straining with semiotic junk. As neoliberalism founders we find ourselves at a critical juncture. When terrain is contested the spectral signatures and inscriptions of the city must be re-read, its signs deciphered and re-inscribed collectively, restored to legibility so that occluded counter-histories can re-materialise in the form of societies we want. This is not an exercise in nostalgia or retreat into a supine longing for the past, but a return to pivotal moments in order to plot other trajectories, other possible outcomes. Benjamin uses the term *Jeztzeit* in the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' to describe time at a standstill, 'a messianic zero-hour [*Stillstellung*] of events, or put differently, a revolutionary chance in the struggle for the suppressed past-' (Benjamin, 1940, p.263). We might think of a feverish occupation, a hot summer of riots, a record that raised our expectations, to return to those incendiary moments is to reconnect with a time when we were first awakened to new possibilities. Sometimes the reconnection feels spectral – hearing a song from a car window, finding a fragment of old graffiti, the faded remnants of a fly poster – but sometimes the buried current is live, the vivification of the Peasants Revolt at an Anti-Capitalist protest for example, or the vestiges of workplace militancy in a

Birmingham industrial estate. In these moments the ghost becomes a poltergeist, throwing objects around, disturbing the physical order. It is no longer an afterglow but a conjuring of time in the present. This thesis insists that stories emanating from these moments are insinuated into the social and material fabric of the terrain, that they are carried by a dispersed collective subject leaving atomised elements open to recovery, to processes of reordering and reassembling. Radical Spectrality is a name for these processes which are not an attempt to restore an 'original' form but should be thought of as cut ups brimming with new potentials. Making art that engages directly with these spectral forces forges live links between degraded contemporary moment and the absent collective subject.

For Agamben the city's inscriptions are not fixed or cemented, they are mutable, always on the brink of retrieval if only we have the necessary attunement to the city. He compares the experience of walking around Venice to studying Latin, 'trying to pronounce every word... in a dead language.' While Latin is not widely spoken it is insinuated into our lexicon, it persists in our speech, just as oppositional currents move slyly through the streets. 'The truth is that a dead language, just like Venice, is a spectral language that we cannot speak but still quivers and hums and whispers in its own special way, so we can eventually come to understand and decipher it' (Agamben, 2010, pp.37-42).

We must make space then, psychically de-clutter so the phantoms we want can be heard. When we drift in the city we must tune into the city's auditory currents, its rumblings and whispers. We must watch for its *scriptio inferior*, visualise that which is presently unseen. There are no dead languages, 'obsolete' words crop up in new contexts and forgotten phrases are shards piercing another time.

Figure 5 - Alpha/Isis/Eden. billboard collage, Showroom, London 2017

The use of cut-up in my practice is a powerful tool for challenging hegemonic or consensual reality. The cut up is violence meted on a realist space, it breaks up the present to show other realities. Sometimes we encounter the city like a cut up where new meanings are manufactured between points of signification. William Burroughs wrote 'Cut the word lines and you will hear their voices' (Burroughs, p.347). In the act of cutting spectral content is revealed, voices previously unheard are made audible. For him 'Cut-ups often come through as code messages with special meaning'.

Guy Debord and Asger Jorn's collaborative cut ups reassembled fragments of conventional maps as artistic experiments, The Psychogeographic Guide to Paris (1957) and The Naked City (1957) foregrounded the city's affective currents by linking geographically discrete zones. Debord's use of the term 'renovated cartography' in the context of an avant-garde art project was a challenge to the totalising and reductive

traditions of mapping. Conceptions of knowledge, representation and power were scrambled by making a popular map (Plan de Paris) useless as a tool for navigation. The cut up map offered a spatially ambiguous reading of the city, in which unexpected routes could emerge.
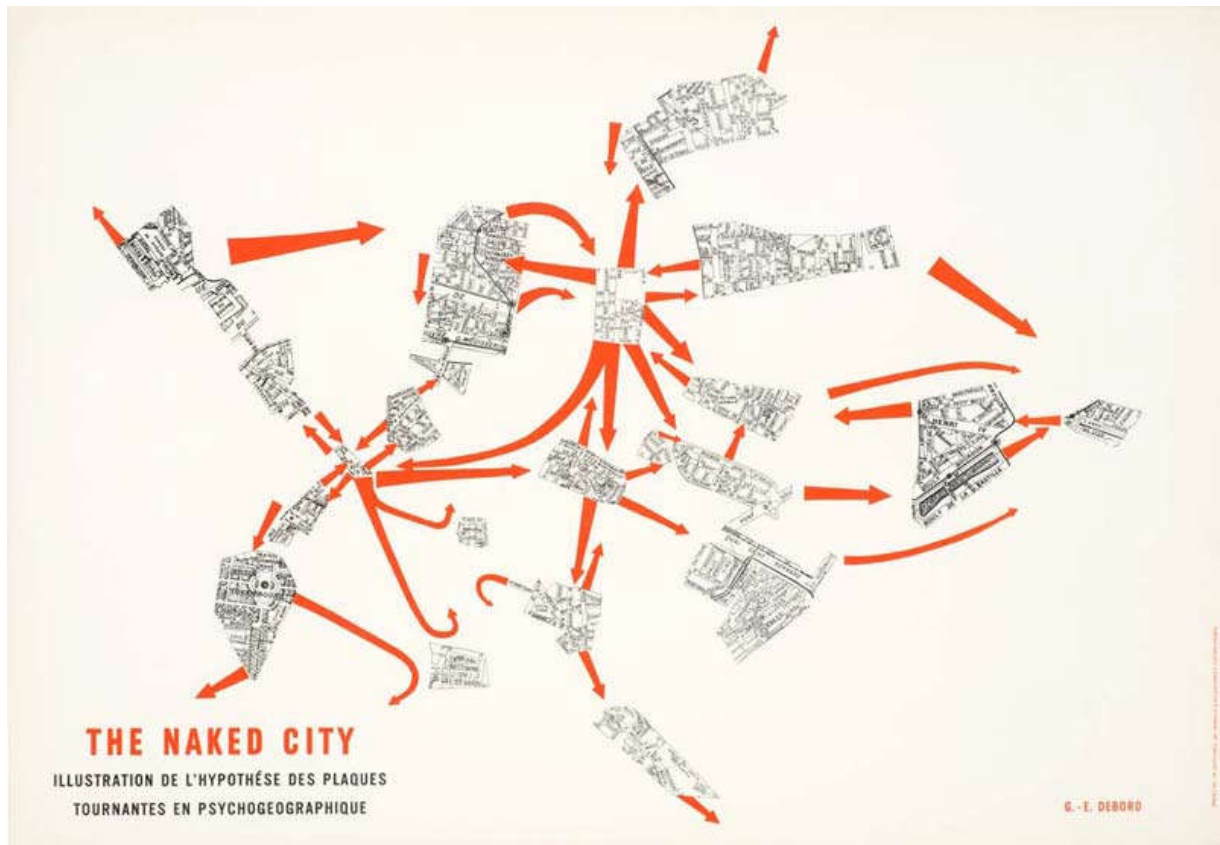
Figure 6 - Guy Debord, The Naked City, 1957 FRAC, France

In the 1955 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,' Debord wrote 'the production of psychogeographical maps may help to clarify certain movements of a sort that…are wholly insubordinate to the usual directives' (Debord, 1956). The purpose of Debord's cut up maps was not to generate new topographical knowledge but to gauge how the city *felt* at a particular moment, they were not an indexical sense of location but an emotional mapping of the city. Of interest to Debord was 'The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres'.

My use of cut up in zines and fly posters allows images to behave like a Burroughs journal or junglist breakbeat where unexpected shifts in direction forge new connections. In *Theory of the Derive* (1958), Debord notes that the dérive can take us 'beyond the discovery of unities of ambience' towards a perception of their 'principal axes of passage, their exits and their defenses.' The cut up is a method for opening new, unexpected escape routes from capitalism.

The Situationists used the phrase *Plaques Tournants* to articulate the magnetic pull of particular locations. In *The Situationist City,* Simon Sadler describes them as 'stations of the drift, junctions in the psychogeographic flow of Paris. A plaque tournant can be the centre of something; it can be a railway turntable; or it can be a centre of exchange' (Sadler, p.98). The Naked City Map is an explosion of these psychogeographic pivot points, each shard is a desirable *unité* of ambience piercing the blank space of gentrified or rationally planned urban space. So when Burroughs writes 'Cut the word lines and you will hear their voices' I recognise the cut up as a method of invocation.

Making a zine is like casting out a message in a bottle, it adds another layer to the city's collective dreamings, its imaginative spaces. It is a trigger or catalyst, it outlines a set of potentials and makes them tangible in the world, available to processes of bricolage or re-contextualisation. This is a process of willing something into being by claiming that another reality is already here. When photocopied images of demolished brutalist sites are fly posted in regenerated urban zones they operate like relay systems, signal repeaters, messages from the other side.

By adding new layers, new fictions to the terrain we can elicit new gatherings, new social formations. By flyposting inside and outside the gallery space I seek to draw out latent allies.
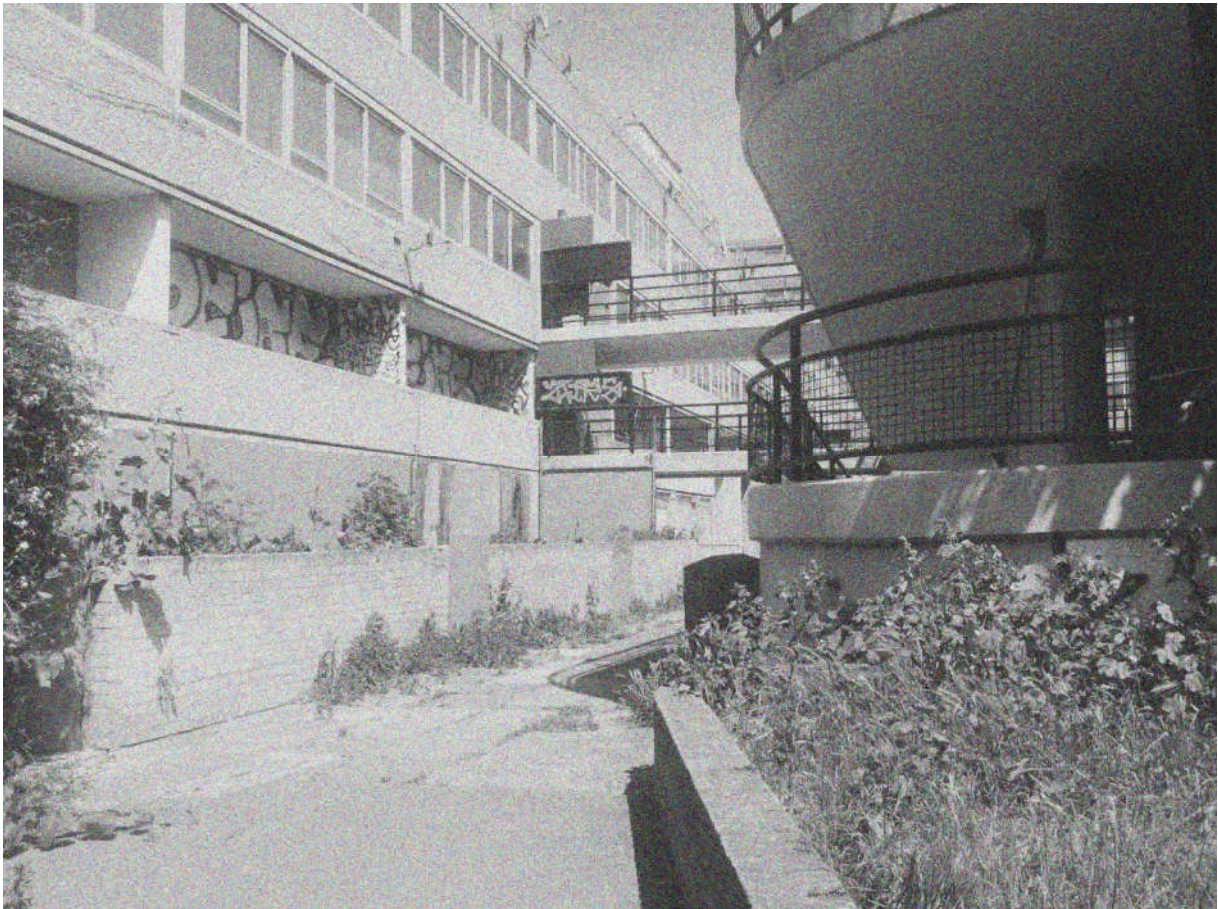
Figure 7 - Aylesbury Estate. photograph 2016

When we think of Walter Benjamin's objects and traces of the past that 'modern society threatens to destroy' we might think of the relics of the commons, the social housing estates and experiments in Brutalist architecture left stranded by deregulated capital. These are material shards of a repressed ideological current which open up new modes of retrieval. In *Cinema 2* Gilles Deleuze describes situations where 'the past surfaces in the shape of personalities which are independent, alienated, off-balance, in some sense embryonic, strangely active fossils, radioactive, inexplicable in the present where they surface, and all the more harmful and autonomous. Not recollections but hallucinations' (Deleuze, 1989, p.118).

These radioactive fossils could be thought of as terrestrial glitches that neoliberalism has trouble incorporating, or the ruins of brutalist architecture in a seemingly conquered neoliberal landscape.

The Heygate estate, built in 1972-4 in Elephant and Castle in South London could be described as a radioactive fossil, a terrestrial glitch. When modernist zones are revealed to us now, in the midst of rampant development they appear as apparitions, uncanny visitations. Poised between abandonment and speculation they are the spectral sectors of the city where demolished flats became reliquaries, places where repressed memories of the city are made fleetingly visible.

Left by Southwark Council as a ruined shell from 2004-2014, the Heygate elicited new relationships with the terrain. When buildings fall into ruin they become vessels echoing with resonances of other times, Neoliberal values are denaturalised, the prevailing order no longer totalises but shows itself up as porous, surfaces are receptive to new kinds of inscription. In the estate's decade of abandonment exuberant flora broke through garden walls and balcony railings, and empty rooms reverberated with the ghosts of past occupants. The urgencies of the present were temporarily allayed.

In *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*, Graham Gilloch outlines three of Benjamin's key approaches – Archaeological, Memorial and Dialectical. The Archaeological is 'concerned with the salvation and preservation of the objects and traces of the past that modern society threatens to destroy', the Memorial is a call to 'the Critical Theorist to oppose the modern propensity for amnesia, to remember those whose struggles and sufferings in the past would otherwise be forgotten' and the Dialectical, 'is the momentary mutual recognition and illumination of past and present' (Gilloch, p.13).

During the 1980s and 90s, vast estates were deliberately run down in a Thatcherite drive to malign the commons. Groves of council blocks like the North Peckham and Stamford Hill were squatted and became militant sites where architectural détournement was deployed as a tactic. In 2016 the tactic of occupying estates was remembered, reactivated. A Saturday afternoon housing demonstration splintered, piercing the side streets of Southwark, breaking open the Sitex walls and barriers of the Heygate Estate. In the moment

of occupation, steel-encased flats were reactivated, reinhabited. Vast estates like Ferrier, Trowbridge, Aylesbury and Heygate rose in the embers of post-war consensus. These abandoned sites had become dialectical images; landings and stairwells were the crystallised fragments of another time.

Temporalities were vexed as interior walls were exposed, as stalactites of torn wallpaper were seen from overgrown courtyards. The estate was reinhabited by the avenging spirits of radical political movements. These cracks and fissures correspond with the break-beat, the radical shift in direction, the quantum movement. Something halts unexpectedly, eliciting a multiplicity of lines. Something is out of place, a row of houses with a sudden gap, a truncated motorway bridge, a forest of sycamore in the heart of an abandoned housing estate.

In *Metaphilosophy*, Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre argues that global capitalism has remainders, or unassimilable elements that trouble it, Lefebvre considers the ephemeral social worlds and emancipatory possibilities arising in these excluded and remaindered elements, for him, the leaks and ill-fitting joints in a totalising system are sites of revolutionary potential Lefebvre approaches these residues as irreducible fragments that can be recovered and reassembled as an emancipatory force. For him 'Gathering the residues is a revolutionary thought, an action-thought' (Lefebvre, 2016, p.301).

We might think here about the remaindered zones in the city, its geographical edges and socio-economic margins. Throughout *Metaphilosophy* Lefebvre develops the a 'method of residues' which involves 'showing the precious essence in them, combining them, organizing their rebellions and totalizing these.' We might also think of those expelled by capitalist expansion, the unredeemed and unwanted who neoliberalism cannot assimilate. These unassimilated elements form atomised pockets of resistance to dominant neoliberal urban discourse, for Lefebvre, 'each residue is an irreducible to be grasped.'

He goes on to write 'Poiesis, today and now, starts from the residual. Its first act is to gather together the residues deposited by the systems that stubbornly persist without managing to constitute themselves as totalities, to 'globalize' themselves.' Lefevbre's precious persistent elements are not elsewhere, they do not

occupy an unrealisable utopia, 'The residues in question are there, hic et nunc' (Lefebvre, 2016, p.300-01). Following on from this Andy Merrifield writes 'The residues are the disenfranchised constituency haunting the global *banlieue*… a shadow citizenry, the remainders and irreducibles who live on the periphery, who feel the periphery inside them, who identify with the periphery' (Merrifield, p.30).

There is a residual stubbornness, a seam of refusal that vexes the neoliberal project. This 'shadow citizenry' is an aggravating presence, a source of anxiety for those seeking to optimise the conditions for capital accumulation. For property developers it is this shadow citizenry, the larval subjects who must be erased from visualisations of the city.

In *Difference and Repetition* Delueze writes 'Even the philosopher is a larval subject of his own system' (Deleuze, 2004, p.119). The larval subject is in a process of developing or becoming, it doesn't have a determinant position, its future form is unclear. We can extend this metaphor to the terrain, to sites stranded between abandonment and speculation. By sensitising ourselves to micro-climates and shifts in intensity in the terrain we might visualise what is to come. This visualisation (manifesting as audio work, fiction, film or performance) adds a hyperstitional layer, it becomes an act of summoning. By making something virtual in the terrain, we allow the possibility of its actualisation.

In 2015 a walk from Rotherhithe to Elephant and Castle led to the unexpected reappearance of two caryatids from a demolished housing estate. I discovered the statues in Southwark Park in South East London. I remembered them from the Heygate Estate's sunken garden on Deacon Way and their presence in the park was uncanny and disorientating.

I was stunned by their anachronistic strangeness, their presence was a hinge in a spooling backwards/forwards motion of time. They had emerged bearing wreaths of laurel and oak at Rotherhithe Town Hall in 1897 flanking the entrance with mournful ceremony. In 1974 they were moved to the Elephant and Castle where the first plattenbau blocks were forming in the rubble of slum clearances and bomb damage. The statues, in their solemnity, took possession of a hidden garden, a crypt like zone of roses, maples and walnut trees.

Figure 8- Rotherhithe Caryatids, Southwark Park. photograph 2016

This is Walter Benjamin's conception of the dialectical image, a flash of recognition and the simultaneous grasping of past, present and future. The Heygate and Aylesbury estates have now gone but with disappearance comes haunting. During their existence as purgatorial sites they offered a chance to seize multiple temporalities, the caryatids are crystallised emblems of this chance. In them, past and future are conjoined, not in reconciliation but in the edges of a time out of joint, stranded momentarily in the 'wrong time.'

TRANSMISSIONS FROM A DISCARDED FUTURE: PSYCHIC OCCUPATION,
HAPTICALITY AND STRUCTURES OF FEELING

Figure 9 - Ballymore Promotional film, London City Island 2016, screengrab from youtube 0.37

In 2020 images of luxury lifestyles have become so ubiquitous we barely notice them, champagne swilling bankers looming over scenes of abject poverty are part of the urban fabric, they have been internalised in the city's dream grammar, eerie and unsettling, they conjure a version of the future.

London is possessed by CGI renderings of private developments. A promotional film for Ballymore's *City Island* development lulls viewers into a set of dissociative tropes; the affect is intensely oneiric, Canning Town (an economically deprived area of East London) becomes an opiate induced dream; buildings assemble and disassemble, the viewer is borne high above buildings then coaxed through walls by an anodyne and mesmerising soundtrack. The experience is unexpectedly psychedelic.

These cinematic interventions make a claim on the city's psychic space, defining the terms of a new social imaginary. In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* David Harvey writes 'Neoliberalism has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us

interpret, live in, and understand the world' (Harvey, 2007, p.3). We can liken this to a mass hallucination, a fug of unreality that permeates our everyday life. If we think of 'common sense' in the way Gramsci defines it as something constitutive of our subjectivity but also perceived as an external reality then Harvey's 'pervasive effects' can be thought of as a form of psychic occupation.

Radical Spectrality détourns these manifestations of psychic occupation by redirecting them into art works. When CGI images and films are recontextualised their hexing power is détourned. The libidinal currents pulsing through images of luxury interiors are brought into the service of a radically different project.

In 2016 I saw City Island rising from the damp fug of Bow Creek. The physical presence of the newly constructed enclave contrasted sharply with the narcotic glow of the film. The 'island' (actually a kink in the polluted River Lea) was a slump of mud flats and construction lanes. It was unreachable, a guarded citadel in a twisting substrate of motorways and contaminated tributaries.

I traced paths through eel grass and reeds, I remembered a party in a derelict yard near Canary Wharf. It had been transformative, reordering an 'Enterprise zone' in London and suffusing it with euphoric collective joy. The promotional film with its psychedelic tropes had unlocked a buried current, corralled the trance state of an illegal gathering in 1993, with its deployment of spectrality it had unwittingly reactivated a revolutionary current.

Sometimes art corrals these revolutionary currents. it reactivates lost futures. When we re-encounter ways of living and negotiating the city which now seem lost the affect is both uncanny and empowering. The artwork is both melancholy reminder and bold suggestion of how things might be again. In Nan Goldin's *Ballad of Sexual Dependency* 700 intimate biographical fragments are projected in New York's Museum of Modern Art against an eclectic soundtrack. The work feels compartmentalized at first, each click of the projector draws us into one intense moment then another; each photograph is a glowing distillation of an era – an exuberant first kiss, the desolate remnants of a morning after, the party in an abandoned warehouse. The cumulative effect is a labyrinth of life-spaces, access to another's diary, a dérive through the highs and

lows of precarious lives. As viewers, we begin to piece them into a narrative, and in doing so we become inhabitants.

I first encountered the installation in the 1990s, a soundtrack swelled with fervour, melancholy and desire. The assembling of these 700 images crystallised a scrambled unfocused experience of the city, what Walter Benjamin called *erlebnis* into a legacy, a document of wisdom left for other generations to take up, something Benjamin termed *erfahrung*. Perhaps it is only now, when spaces for artistic experimentation and intense living have been subsumed into marketing strategies that we recognise the importance of this work. When we see ways of negotiating the city that are now denied to us, we recognise Goldin's work as a time bomb.

The Ballad of Sexual Dependency has also been shown as a framed photographic series in a conventional gallery setting but separated from its multidisciplinary environment the work's potency is weakened. The fleeting and intangible nature of the projected images articulate the ephemeral and precarious relationships and spaces the work depicts, and the soundtrack forges an emotional realm, transporting the listener to the span of those years 1979-2004. Could it be then that Goldin becomes an intermediary figure in the way Benjamin regarded Baudelaire, whose work has the capacity to transform the scattered, unfocused fragments of our experience into something lucid, something retrievable to another generation?

Samuel Delany's Times Square Red Times Square Blue (1999) is an erotic sociogeographic mapping of New York's rapidly disappearing peep shows, street hustlers and movie theaters. In the late 1990s I worked in a studio between Port Authority and 42nd street where anti-gentrification protests sporadically erupted. A significant flashpoint was the opening of a Disney Store in Times Square, I remember being penned into a sidewalk by irascible NYPD, I remember scuffles, arrests and the sense that Hell's Kitchen had a forceful skein of narratives pulsing beneath it.

Samuel Delany's Times Square Red voices some of these narratives, makes them audible in the present. His New York is on the cusp of assimilation into the neoliberal city and his movement through interior

spaces draws us into a shadow world of X-rated cinemas, hook ups and covert encounters. He is an intermediary between chthonic and terrestrial worlds. Delany's dérives are a search for precious material, experiences emanating from a place being eclipsed by a generic retail/entertainment complex.

In a redeveloped and sanitised 42nd street, Times Square Red amplifies voices who would otherwise be lost, in this way it becomes an act of haunting. The work is not nostalgic, it doesn't feel like documentary or archive material but a set of signals for a people-yet-to-come, an attractor in the terrain. Its potency is not fully grasped until years after it is written. In the two essays which constitute Times Square Red Delany makes the case that 42nd street was once a site where boundaries of race and class dissolved, and in doing so sets out possibilities for a reordering, a reimagining of how the city might look in the future.

Delany makes the distinction between 'networking' and 'contact' and his negotiation of the city is best thought of as a modality of feeling, a gauging of psychic textures through an 'interclass contact' which he calls 'the lymphatic system of a democratic metropolis' (Delany, p.198). Fred Moten and Stefano Harney use the term hapticality to describe the affective textures that can be accessed through others. He describes 'modernity's insurgent feel, its inherited caress, its skin talk, tongue touch, breath speech, hand laugh. ...the feel that no individual can stand, and no state abide.'

> This is the feel we might call hapticality. Hapticality, the touch of the undercommons, the interiority of sentiment, the feel that what is to come is here. Hapticality, the capacity to feel though others, for others to feel through you, for you to feel them feeling you, this feel of the shipped is not regulated, at least not successfully, by a state, a religion, a people, an empire, a piece of land, a totem (Moten & Harney, 2013, p.98).

For Moten and Harney this collective feeling comes from the hold, the resounding chamber of horror and contagion in the slave ships of the middle passage, hapticality here is a potent force arising from call and response communication and subversive currents rippling across the Atlantic.

Radical Spectrality makes use of the term hapticality as an incubator of counter-strategies. Hapticality might be applied to the way we feel cities, through and with others, others who may or may not exist in the present.

Feeling becomes collective knowledge, a tacit, covert network. It exists despite the imposition of a neoliberal individualism, and it contains 'what is to come', its emancipatory potential is already crackling, its pre-figurations are already here.

These are Jameson's 'alternate world', the 'flashes of light' that appear when we least expect them. If the 'other systems, other spaces' he refers to are always near then perhaps this haptic sense is how we collectively feel the rays of these 'baroque sunbursts' breaking into this world.

Marxist theorist Raymond Williams believed that no hegemony ('common sense' or prevailing attitude or values at a particular moment) can be all encompassing. For him, ways of thinking are always in flux and new formations of thought are always emerging. He describes this idea as structures of feeling in *The Long Revolution* (1961) where a 'particular sense of life...a structure of feeling: the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity' (Williams, 1961, p.64).

Structures of feeling refers to cultural formations attempting to break through. In *Marxism and Literature*, he divides culture into three main categories: dominant, residual and emergent. Writing on the residual he argues 'in a particular phase of a dominant culture there is a reaching back to meanings and values which were created in the past, and which still have significance because they represent areas of experience, aspiration and achievement which the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses, or even- cannot recognize' (Williams, 1977, p.124).

We might say that the social formations capitalist realism seeks to block are residual, by reactivating these we can construct an alternative cartography that erodes the processes of cultural exorcism used to suppress them. These residues might be thought of as hauntings, unsettling agents that persist in the present.

Williams goes on to write 'at certain points the dominant culture cannot allow too much residual experience and practice outside itself, at least without risk.' In order to deal with this threat, it operates a 'selective tradition' which must neutralise residual elements by incorporating them in a process of 'reinterpretation, dilution, projection and exclusion' (Williams, 1977, p.124). Here we might remember the placemaking

strategies at work in Battersea or the overarching narrative imposed on the complex ecologies of the Lea Valley.

The idea of the emergent is also important, Williams writes 'in the structure of any actual society, and especially in its class structure, there is always a social basis for elements of the cultural process that are alternative or oppositional to the dominant elements' (Williams, 1977). These elements might be thought of as the pre-echoes, emboldening moments offering glimpses of new emancipatory formations. For Williams these oppositional elements are already here, as nascent configurations in the terrain.

SPECTRALITY AND SPATIAL PROTEST

At any point collectivity can be rediscovered, reinvented. The 'spectre of a world that can be free' has always to be stifled. The sheer extent and intensity of the machinery that was necessary to shut down rave is a testament to this.

– Mark Fisher, Baroque Sunbursts, 2016

In 1994 the Criminal Justice Act was implemented to crush the UK's second major experiment with psychedelia. Section 5 Public Order: Collective Trespass or Nuisance on Land included clauses that specifically targeted rave culture. Amid new powers to curb collective trespass and nuisance on land were coded methods for extinguishing raves, squats and convoys. The drafting of the legislation was intended to criminalise protest as it erupted in new cultural forms. In Sections 63–67 any gathering of more than 20 people could be forcibly disassembled if it included '63(1)(b) "music" sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.'

Free Party or rave culture had reactivated derelict warehouses and factories. The temporary occupation of space had forged a spatial reordering, a re-imagining of the terrain. Post-legislation rave culture converged with political activism and new forms of spatial protest began to emerge.

The Major government (1990-1997) oversaw an intensification in road building, the privatisation of British Rail (1994-1997) and a shift to an exurban model of urban planning.

In the 1990s protest groups in the UK contributed to a new reading of the city *and* a collective re-habitation of it. Situationist text permeated the discourse around new political movements whose demands radically détourned urban centres. Reclaim The Streets (RTS), a direct action collective, engineered 'street parties' that turned traffic choked city centres into Rabelaisian 'Carnivals' with sound systems and mobile sculptures. The Situationist slogan 'under the paving stones the beach' with its stunning image of radical transformation was fleetingly enacted. The spatial aspect of these protests exploded the traditional linear A-B march of the traditional British Left. Tactics included burrowing, climbing, barricading and road blocking. Protests weren't an appeal for public space but a seizing of it.

These temporary autonomous zones were a collective reconnection with spectral circuits, a reactivation of a subterranean English counter-history. At the J18 Carnival Against Capitalism (June 18th, 1999) the Peasants Revolt was revivified when eruptions of violence flared across sites of the 1381 uprisings. J18 Carnival coincided with the G8 summit in Köln and marked an intensification of activism against the environmental and human cost of economic free trade. This was not a reactionary game which would reenact events as a sanitized masquerade, but a coming together to summon a particular spectral formation in order to radically change the future. A 32-page leaflet Squaring up to the Square Mile was also distributed which mapped the institutions, banks and corporate headquarters in the City detailing their connections to Arms manufacturing, environmental degradation and global inequality.

Also in June 1999, Iain Sinclair presented a project called Rodinsky's Room with Rachel Lichtenstein. In 'Ghostly Footsteps: Voices, Memories and Walks in the City', geographer David Pinder tells us that Sinclair was 'working with the directions indicated by Rodinsky as well as attending to coincidences and the contours of the terrain, Sinclair found the patterns turning into narratives, and each of the paths becoming like chapters in an unfinished and unwritten autobiography.' Recordings of these coincidences and contours uncovered on these walks were then presented as to the public in 'June 1999 on monitors at selected

locations in Whitechapel, from the basement of a bookshop to a hotel bedroom. They thus returned shadows of Rodinsky's steps to the area in which he had lived, allowing the spatial stories to connect with those of other people passing through streets now' (Pinder, 2001). The moment of geographical and temporal overlap in the summer of 1999 seems significant, psychogeography's literary turn and its move into the mainstream around the time of the millennium, I argue, coincides with the retreat of such protest movements as Reclaim The Streets.

RTS flyers would alert protestors to an area's radical history in moments of contemporary contestation, at a Brixton party in 1998 for example, where traffic was halted and the high street transformed into a free party, photocopied leaflets were circulated highlighting historical flashpoints – unemployment protests in Elephant and Castle, Anti-Fascist barricades in Bermondsey, Jack Cade Risings at Borough, Enclosures riots in Honor Oak, and the Peasants Revolt at Blackheath. The years 1885, 1937, 1450, 1897, 1381 evoked a scrambled non-linear time where new flashpoints could erupt. The seeding of previous manifestations was a form of conjuration, past events were summoned as virtual attractors in the terrain.
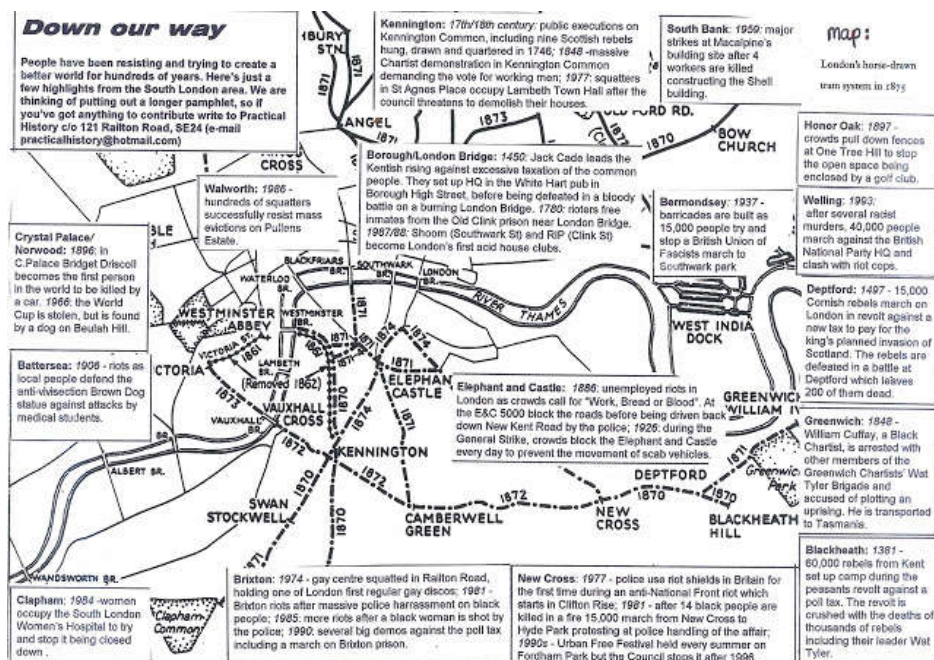
Figure 10 - RTS flyer, Brixton Street Party, 1998

THE SPECTRAL DÉRIVE: AUDIO AS TEMPORAL-SPATIAL PRACTICE.

A heightened attunement to the city through walking allows us to listen into conversations, hear the micro-timbres of ephemeral and eclipsed stories. Through a process of walking and recording Radical Spectrality searches for atomised fragments of heightened collective experience as its materials. By bringing these fragments back together in audio works the collective subject can be imbricated in new work.

Radical Spectrality identifies moments when futures previously imagined can be rekindled. The development of fictional texts into audio works further explores the city as porous, spatiotemporal terrain. The tracks I produce are not ambient soundscapes or field recordings but affective structures which allow the re-inhabitation of the city's intensities.

Recordings from dérives are combed for moments which will resurrect the affective tonalities of the city at a particular moment. For example, a song spilling from a balcony door, the murmurings of workers on a cigarette break, the call and response from cell windows might be collaged to create sonic textures, meandering audio dérives which rekindle the intensities of the walk. Sound deployed in this way evades the traps of representation, the work is not an indexical image of the city at a particular moment but an attempt to amplify and reinhabit the radical potential in the city's virtual worlds, fictions, dreamings and percepts, and by installing these tracks in an exhibition space I create opportunities for collectively re-hearing these radical potentials.

These sonic dérives are overlaid with a scripted element. The voice operates as a receptor or medium for the city's unfolding narratives, and the script is part internal monologue, part stream of consciousness, part audio hallucination. In this way it operates at the edge of subjectivity, in the porous, liminal reaches of dreaming and fiction, and opens itself up to intersubjectivity.

Withdrawal in the studio allows for a process of retro-fictionalising. Spending time with material gathered on dérives is a process of hearing new connections and new narratives. Fleeting conversations and

previously unnoticed whispers come to the fore. Tannoys, sirens and announcements realign, shine with new significance. These narratives are in dialogue with lost futures, they are never far from incendiary and euphoric collective traces. This process reverberates with the absent collective subject. In *Ghosts of My Life* Mark Fisher writes of a 'broken-time proper to hauntology...in which the traces of lost futures unpredictably bubble up to unsettle the pastiche-time of postmodernity' (Fisher, 2013, p.6). My approach deals with this 'broken-time' by cultivating an attunement to the fractured temporalities of urban development. When the social and physical fabric of a place is upturned traces of lost futures become tangible again. Like the palimpsest shreds of wallpaper on the exposed wall of a half-demolished house pockets of other temporalities are open to reinhabitation.

I incorporate music to harness affective currents, to bring in the psychic tectonics of the city. I record music from car windows, pubs and shopping malls. Tracks are selected for their emotional qualities, their capacity to operate as affective vectors. In this way the work has something in common with mixtapes, each record opens up a new temporal and affective field which I want to share, hand over, re-contextualise. This method is not nostalgic, it doesn't seek a sentimental idealised version of the past but unresolved grievances. Sometimes a particular track will elicit a Proustian return to an overlooked pocket of time, and like the wallpaper on the derelict house, the unexpected re-engagement triggers a new set of speculative fictions, flashbacks and forks in time. This mixtape approach is like a Burroughs cut up, it breaks into the past to release the future.

Technical effects such as reverberation and echo are used to open new spaces, where different realities can be experienced simultaneously. Pauline Oliveros describes a Quantum Listening which allows access 'to more than one reality simultaneously'. For Oliveros the field of sound can be felt as a potential force: 'Quantum Listening creates and changes what is perceived. All sounds are included in the field. This creates potential, cultivates surprises, opens the imagination and approaches and even plunges over the edges of perception into the mystery of the universe predicted by Quantum Field Theory' (Oliveros, 2010, p.87). We might think of these auras or force fields as the intensities experienced on a dérive, the encounters and

percepts which spark new speculative fiction. Similarly, Karen Barad speaks of a ghostly sense of dis/continuity where 'There is no overarching sense of temporality, of continuity in place. Each scene diffracts various temporalities' Here we have the evocation of the city's sedimentations, its accretions of time which defy Newtonian measurement. Barad goes on to write 'Scenes never rest, but are reconfigured within, dispersed across, and threaded through one another' (Barad, p.240). What Oliveros and Barad evoke here is the broken-time of hauntology, those unresolved temporalities which refuse to settle.

By conflating temporalities and transcending the physicality of space my audio works seek contact with these auras and forces, they attempt to harness the unseen presence evoked by Pauline Oliveros and the baroque sunbursts which remind Frederic Jameson 'that Utopia exists and that other systems, other spaces, are still possible' (Jameson, 2009, p.612).

In exhibitions I place heavy bass speakers concealed behind plywood walls. Earthquake rumbles move beneath the floor and shudder up through the body. This is the remembered experience of the rave, searching for the carnivalesque Reclaim the Streets party by feeling it in the ground, the anticipation before an ecstatic collective encounter. This use of the bass speaker is an attempt to re-embody the feeling of something achingly proximate, something felt but not yet realised.

The Missing Voice (Case Study B) (1999) by Janet Cardiff is a 50 minute audio response to the Whitechapel area of East London. Cardiff is a stranger to the city but also a guide. As listeners follow her steps from the Whitechapel Gallery to Liverpool Street station they are invited to access her subjective relationship with the terrain. Her cursory imperatives 'Wait here' 'Turn to the right' 'Look both ways' are interspersed with meditations, exchanges with a counterpart on another continent. 'Have you ever had the urge to disappear, to escape from your own life, just for a while. I remember the first time I said it, we were driving to the mountains, sometimes I just want to disappear I said, he freaked out, after that I only said it to myself.'

Cardiff's London then is not a clearly demarcated geographical location, she pulls in references to works of cinema and literature, a man on the other side of the globe and childhood memories of Canada, these are

her psychic landmarks and the sounds of London recede behind them, became ambient textures. Shop signs, street names and newspaper headlines give the listener some sense of an indexical location, but particular situations will spark new fictions in the terrain; in 'Gunthorpe street' she says 'a man just went into the side door of the pub' this observation leads to a story which begins with 'I sometimes follow men home from the tube station at night'. Or 'She walks up Brick Lane, she wears a dark coat and beige scarf, she looks in the windows as she passes the stores, she knows that his office is close by'. These film noirish asides open fictive ellipses in the terrain.

Such moments create fictive spaces, other temporalities, chronotopes in the audio work. For Mikhael Bakhtin the chronotope (literally, 'time space') is 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.' The term is useful for understanding Cardiff's approach to audio where the walk elicits a sequence of potentialities in the form of undeveloped stories. In the Missing Voice she allows us to hear the kernels of new fiction, the sparks of them in the street. Bakhtin goes on to write that 'space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history' (Bakhtin, p.84).

When Cardiff says 'I'm behind someone else now, a new companion' she exposes the method at work, the reliance on strangers as instigators, sparks of new streams of consciousness, new fictive speculations. These other people however, are never directly engaged with, instead she is an observer her personal space is carefully guarded. In this way, we might argue that her approach bears similarities to psychogeography in its literary form which was beginning to reach its apotheosis at this time. The observations of the individual as explorer guiding a naive audience around the East End of London has resonances in the work of Iain Sinclair and W.G. Sebald.

Temporalities in The Missing Voice are also marked by audio montage, listeners are directed by the audio signposts of an air raid siren and a musical theatre song. The audio work was released at the Whitechapel Gallery the day before the aforementioned massive protest in the City of London. Had gallery visitors

attempted to follow her route that day they would have found themselves in the midst of pitched battles with police.

The socio-economic dynamics of race and class are occluded from Cardiff's audio walk, schisms are not brought forward. The area's Jewish Radical tradition is missing from her perception of the area, and the Bengali presence is registered as music, a curry house, a fleeting overheard conversation. Gender however, is marked by anxiety, uneasiness, 'the London experience enhanced the paranoia that I think is quite common to a lot of people, especially women, as they adjust to a strange city.' (The Missing Voice (Case Study B))

It is illuminating to listen to Cardiff's The Missing Voice alongside Black Audio Film Collective's Twilight City because the work was made a decade before. Twilight City, directed by Reece Auguste and scripted by Edward George and John Akomfrah, was made a decade before, in 1989 when London was on the cusp of financial deregulation, privatisation and radical urban transformation. Twilight City shares the melancholy register of Cardiff's Missing Voice but moves beyond a subjective engagement with the city to take on the impact of economic restructuring on the physical and psychic textures of the city; the impact of the London Docklands Development Corporation on the East End of London is a strong current running through the work.

Twilight City takes the mode of epistolary address, the central character Olivia Levelle is writing a letter to her mother, Eugenia. Eugenia wants to return to London after leaving for Dominica a decade before, Olivia tries to discourage this, 'London has changed' she says, 'it is falling apart'. The post-war consensus active in England is being dismantled, she doesn't think Eugenia will adjust. 'The London you left behind is disappearing perhaps forever, and I don't know if you'll want to return to the new one.'

The Twilight City of the title is a crepuscular London of rough sleepers, new construction and destroyed council blocks. Olivia returns to the housing estate on the Isle of Dogs where she grew up, it is being demolished as part of the Docklands Development programme. There she finds words she wrote on her old

bedroom wall exposed in the glare of a demolition site. '*Love Me and Don't Forget Me 1979.* I left those words on an east end estate and they are now fading in the city that left you tired and exhausted, the old securities are fading.' The unexpected encounter with this handwritten text is a moment of precision, a finely honed point of recognition, allowing the viewer to zoom in and out of the macro- and micro-narratives of the Twilight City. This is a psychedelic sensitivity to the city.

The graffiti operates as a dialectical image, a collision between two points in time which releases the image of what has been lost. In his essay 'Twilight City: Outline for an Archaeopsychic Geography of New London', Kodwo Eshun writes 'Canary Wharf with its corporate towers was experienced by many as a shock…that threatened historical memory and breached psychic defences. If childhood is inscribed into place, then the destruction of locality, no matter how immiserated, not only endangered memories but could trigger a pervasive homelessness.'

Figure 11 - Black Audio Film Collective, Twilight City. film still 23.27m

The reconnection with words inscribed a decade before is not an experience of nostalgia for Olivia but a stark confrontation with her own vulnerability and the physical textures of a programme of social dismantling. The auditory textures of our memories are incubated by the spaces we grow up in, when these spaces lie in ruins, and memories are separated from their source they move to a space of hallucination and dreaming, a point at the edge of subjectivity. Perhaps, like the obsessive dreams of a childhood home, the hauntings of another social reality can destabilise the present. Trevor Mathison's synthesizer soundtrack creates a sense of sonic eeriness, the pulse of a nebulous non-human presence, textures which may echo the pervasive, predatory tendencies of global capital but also those other spaces outside. So, the discovery of graffiti written in 1979 is a return to a pivotal moment, the year Margaret Thatcher was elected and the

beginning of a disastrous course for the UK. As we experience the debris piling up in the aftermath of this moment we are offered a chance to go back and re-inscribe, to add to the text and rewrite new futures.

Like Cardiff's Missing Voice the narrator is never seen, Olivia is a spectral presence. Other voices are allowed to permeate the work, Paul Gilroy, Gail Lewis, George Shire, Homi Bhaba, Rosina Visram, Femi Otitioju, Savriti Hensman and David Yallop are interviewed by Olivia about the 'new creation of wealth' which opens up space in the film for descriptions of multiple experiences of London, of negotiating a diaspora city, the heart of a spectral empire. They are not observed like the characters in Cardiff's missing voice but absorbed into the work, in this way the film is dialogic and intersubjective.

RADICAL SPECTRALITY AS FICTIONING

Radical Spectrality is an attunement to the residues of heightened collective experience which persist in the city and a method for producing new fictions in response to the terrain. It is a set of tools for communing with ghosts, for re-coding and reinscribing the city, for gauging its complex temporalities.

By creating fictions that amplify the city's unconscious commentary, by foregrounding occluded narratives we loosen the grip of financial capital on the city. By scrambling temporalities and engaging with a poetry of dates we disrupt what Walter Benjamin calls heterogeneous empty time.

In *Austerlitz*, W.G. Sebald maps a psychogeographic drift through London. The narrator articulates an attunement to the psychic contours of the city by foregrounding the complex temporalities of Liverpool Street station

> I kept almost obsessively trying to imagine – through the ever-changing maze of walls –
> the location in that huge space of the rooms where the asylum inmates were confined, and
> I often wondered whether the pain and suffering accumulated on this site over the centuries
> had ever really ebbed away (Sebald, 2001, p.138).

For Sebald, encounters with the temporal accretions of place happen in a depopulated city. The spectral signatures inscribed on walls are dioramas he projects, a composite of images drawn from a personal reservoir, a collection of scholarly gleanings. 'Pain and suffering' are not ascribed to any particular person but abstracted, so that the architecture itself is possessed of agency. This has echoes of Peter Ackroyd's *genius loci*, an assertion that the built environment has the power to shape and influence history. In *London: The Biography* Ackroyd calls it 'that territorial imperative, or *genius loci*, which keeps inhabitants and activities in the same small area' (Ackroyd, 2001, p.132). In the London of Ackroyd and Sebald, it is the stones of the city that shape and influence its inhabitants.

Radical Spectrality subverts this assertion by claiming that agency resides in the city's shifting populations, that it's us who influence and mark the city, who leave signs and inscriptions, channel and develop idiolects, produce the micro-musics and pharmacological climates which create these vexed temporalities and exert an influence on the city's inhabitants. These signs and inscriptions are spectral but not supernatural. The city then is in a perpetual state of flux, it contains interconnected zones of intensity which are forged in the common.

The plasticity of fiction, its capacity to be continually re-made, is a useful metaphor for the city. By returning to pre-existing material, fiction allows repressed formations to erupt in other times, fiction is a responsive resource.

Simon O'Sullivan and David Burrows have developed the idea of 'fictioning' which works through 'a disabling of conscious intention, so as to channel other forces and entities—to open the possibility of inhabiting other fictions, of shuttling between different ways of being in the world' (O'Sullivan and Burrows, 2019, p.71). In my practice, imaginary worlds are generated from a reservoir of images, a spatial memory produced by walking. The making of fictional worlds allows not just glimpses of new social imaginaries but the production of them.

I approach writing as a textual dérive, there is no linear narrative, no resolution or conclusion, instead I follow oneiric and fugitive threads that lead to a collapsing of temporalities, a compression of space. The

realist space of the novel is rejected in favour of an unstable, unresolved and ineffable realm. From this unstable terrain new systems, new forms of ordering begin to emerge. These fictions are less about an indexical sense of location than a gauging of the social field, a sensitivity to structures of feeling.

Writing generated by drifting is both method and practice, a means of critically reflecting on space and an attempt to evoke the psychic tectonics of place. By creating new layers and fictions, new sonic textures the work exerts a pull, becomes part of the psychic infrastructure of the city. When we revisit abandoned factories, tracks and overgrown towpaths we might we reactivate repressed currents, reconnect with the galvanising energies of long forgotten experiences, Places are intertextual, inscribed with multiple meanings, even the most developed and glossed over neoliberal spaces harbour passwords to the city's psychic vaults.

I approach writing as a form of psychic ventriloquy. To know a place is to walk through its walls and beneath its streets. In the city we brush the skin of memories and desires, the tremors and fault lines of other biographies, other pasts. The city is porous, it allows for the inhabitation of multiple lifeworlds, multiple subjectivities.

Shifts in spatial and temporal zones allow new modalities to emerge in the writing, they permit an interweaving of voices. Writing becomes *solvent*, it dissolves geographical distances and boundaries. In this way it is possible to establish a series of contacts with hidden narratives, a process which articulates the relational dimension of aesthetic experience.

In *Street Haunting* Virginia Woolf writes

> As we step out of the house on a fine evening between four and six, we shed the self our
> friends know us by and become part of that vast republican army of anonymous trampers,
> whose society is so agreeable after the solitude of one's own room (Woolf, 1930, p.2).

In the shuttered rooms of a private home her eyes fix on familiar objects, trinkets and ornaments which give rise to weary anecdotes. The domestic sphere for Woolf is a drum resonating with the broadcasts of old

things, things that fix and cement a biographical I. The house is cluttered with 'objects which perpetually express the oddity of our own temperaments and enforce the memories of our own experience'.

It is not until she crosses the threshold that we fully grasp their restrictive influence. Objects are suffused with anecdotes, and images are fixed like glazes. Each ornament, garment and household thing has its place in a reticulation of biographical markers, memories become frozen images like outdated data caches.

The escape is exuberant, as Woolf shuts the door and escapes this universe of objects, psychic space is liberated, she becomes a vessel, an all-encompassing eye.

> The shell-like covering which our souls have excreted to house themselves...is broken, and there is left of all these wrinkles and roughnesses a central oyster of perceptiveness, an enormous eye.

This enormous eye is the multi-subjective self, the radial, all-encompassing point of view. Movement in and out of psychic life worlds dispenses with an idea of essentializing identity, the self is present, not as a monolithic, insoluble I, but a vessel channelling stray signals, a composite of voices.

Dérives are escape routes from the neoliberal pressure to be 'ourselves', to be entrepreneurial, self-promoting individuals. In the encounter with other life-worlds we can evade our own reflection, inhabit other minds. This is a radical move, to see through another's eyes is to break the binds of individualism.

Woolf describes 'moments of being' which are not only writing on the page but those that make infinite connections in the world; in these moments the self is not static, there is perpetual movement through multiple temporalities. This bears a resemblance to Deleuzian worlding – a rippling out of subjectivity which creates an aesthetics of desire. 'I am hardly aware of myself,' she writes, 'but only of the sensation, i am only the container of the feeling of ecstasy, of the feeling of rapture' (Woolf, 2002, p.67).

Figure 12 - Downtown LA. photograph 2016

This rippling out of subjectivity can be experienced as the movement through multiple spaces, as temporalities fold so does the terrain. In 2015 I walked from LA's Union Station to Downtown's Broadway district and encountered ghostly iterations of East London twenty years before. Amidst the ruins of deregulated capital I encountered the affective textures of the past. Layers of memory were reactivated and the sense of location became faulty and unstable. LA didn't remind me of London, it *became* it, in those few hours I returned to a city that had disappeared two decades before.

I mapped a covert maze of paths around Skid Row, Grand Central Market and the abandoned cinemas of Broadway. These buildings echoed the art deco warehouses and factories in London's East End. Temporal and geographical distance was condensed by the impact of deregulated capital, Downtown LA on the brink of radical spatial reordering as the East End had been in the early 1990s, it was on the threshold between abandonment and speculation. The point where the terrain becomes porous enough to step from Downtown LA into Whitechapel is the encounter with the Techno sound system in a derelict warehouse. At this juncture there is ambiguity, it is not clear which city the reader is being asked to occupy.

A fictional narrative began to manifest as an internal monologue. A meeting with someone I knew before became a thread linking the two cities. These spatial condensations in the city make transversal cuts through time. Following on from Walter Benjamin we might say that the conflation of these two places conjures another space, a dialectical image of the city. Historical materialism is the conflation of present experience with images from the past; walking through these ruins elicited an involuntary move towards a materialist historiography, a sense of shock as constellations of past images became reachable, inhabitable in the present (Ford, 2017b).

Figure 13 - Canning Town to Barking. collage 2016

An important thread running through my work is the production of fictional narratives through found objects. To drift in the city is to encounter random arrangements of discarded objects and sometimes, in the mush of affective response, the outline of a story emerges.

In Commercial Road an abandoned Punjabi restaurant is newly pasted with fly posters, objects are strewn outside my building, a broken fridge, Billy bookshelves, an abandoned washing machine. Graffiti leaches across the walls, fluorescent spray paint, outlines drawn in the early hours.

In *Vibrant Matter* Jane Bennet begins with a discussion on 'strangely vital things'. For her nonhuman forces are actively involved in events, they shape and influence political agency. She calls this 'thing power,'

(Bennet, p.4) and draws it into a current running through Spinoza's *conatus* and Thoreau's concept of the Wild. This sense of a vital materialism is introduced through an array of random objects – plastic glove, bottle top, oak pollen, stick – that she encounters on a pavement and describes as 'existents in excess of their association with human meanings, habits or projects' (Ibid.).

Perhaps the unexpected, unsolicited narratives that arise through contact with objects shouldn't be discounted. Neoliberalism deploys storytelling to shore up a particular set of histories, to gloss over the brutal underpinnings of capitalism. Sociogeography re-routes storytelling as a method for creating ruptures, a way of breaking open new possibilities in the terrain and exposing the truth of lived daily experience.

For Marx commodities are imbued with 'metaphysical subtleties' which make them fetishistic. In *Capital* he writes 'we must take flight into the misty realm of religion. There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race' (Marx, p.165).

In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida writes 'The phantasmagoria, like capital, would begin with exchange-value and the commodity form. It is only then that the ghost 'comes on stage.' Before this, according to Marx, it was not there' (Derrida, 1994, p.159).

If the commodity is a mundane object brought to life in a glowing sphere of fictions how is it read when it is cast aside? What happens to this ghost when the object is discarded? Has it departed or does it persist in a distorted, subversive form? Radical Spectrality is a process of feeling discarded objects in order to read the spectral communications it emits, no matter how weakened or degraded. In doing this we might rekindle and re-route their spectral qualities.

My work harnesses fictions elicited by the discarded object and interrogates new forms of political agency embedded in them. The role of fiction in this methodology might be explained by thinking about the neuropsychological patterns in Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). If I have OCD I might avoid holding a cup someone has discarded, I might visualise a micro-film of bacteria, cutaneous grease,

contagion waiting to be transmitted. But if this 'pathology' was re-routed, instead of perceiving the discarded object as malign, I might recognise its capacity to draw me into someone else's affective field. This affective field, this proximity to another, is the spark for speculative writing. The subsequent text unfolds like a bipolar manic phase, the discarded cup is picked up, the door marked no entry is opened, and strangers become intimate companions.

In 2018 I wrote a story generated by a tray of discarded objects in McDonald's, Canning Town. I lifted wrappings and cardboard cartons until they bound me in their psychic space. I breathed residues of MDMA and alcohol and allowed them to change the chemical composition of my brain. Colin was an imaginary character who appeared like a hallucination, the objects themselves were the catalyst but the channelling of his voice was made possible by my intense involvement in the city, my dialogical knowledge of London. In *Together*, Richard Sennett describes a 'dialogical domain, a world of talk that makes an open social space, where discussion can take an unforeseen direction.' This domain is the incubator of my characters, they are summoned from a vast reservoir of dialogic conversations, which for Sennett are those which 'prosper through empathy, the sentiment of curiosity about who other people are in themselves' (Sennett, p.15). But the discarded object plays a role in this process, as trigger, as catalyst. Colin's voice emerged as an uninterrupted flow from the tray which became a 5000 word text about the black economies of City Airport and residual memories of the Blitz.

When stories arise from these objects, through abjection and disgust I arrive at a place of insight, of clairvoyance. When I overcome the fear of touch, I succumb to the world, take my place in the flow and tumult of it. This is a haptic knowledge of the city. a radical shift in subject position, a move from psycho- to sociogeography.

The zone between London and Essex is marked by decommissioned power stations, wind turbines and salvage yards. Landfill sites, recycling centres and incinerators pull in tides of unwanted consumer goods.

The shoreline of the Thames at Barking is a threshold site, time behaves differently there. Without shops and advertising hoardings it exists on the blind side of semio-capital. The iTime of communicative capital has no purchase where phone signal is intermittent. The tidal river influences it, clock time gives way to moon phases.

A wasteful, splurging metropolis like London supports a thriving counter-economy of scavenging, recycling and repurposing. In 2018 I walked to an abandoned power station with friends I had lived with twenty years before who were now scavenging in the margins of finance capital, hiding in the black spots that neoliberalism had failed to assimilate.

Unwanted commodities exerted a powerful influence in the terrain, a low buzzing became audible as if the electrical goods were in communion. We followed tracks through redundant electrical appliances. Fridges were arranged like citadels; the abandoned objects had an unsettling presence. This walk became the catalyst for a 5000 word text *Ordnance Arms*.

In *The Weird and the Eerie*, Mark Fisher writes 'Confronted with Easter Island or Stonehenge, it is hard not to speculate what the relics of our culture will look like when the semiotic systems in which they are embedded have fallen away' (Fisher, 2016b, p.63). For Fisher, the discovery of a symbolic order unreadable in the present forces us to ask 'What kinds of being created these structures? How were they similar to us, and how were they different?' In these groves of abandoned kitchen appliances I gained a flash of a different kind of human, future beings for whom the relics of consumer-capitalism are utterly baffling and unreadable. We can speculate on how these redundant electrical goods might one day be received, as xenolithic objects compacted beneath layers of sedimentation.

Figure 14 - Anton Furst. drawing on photograph for Stanley Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket 1987

In Stanley Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket (1987), a derelict area of East London is radically re-imagined as Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. The production designer, Anton Furst created the film's visual texture, its affective architecture. Influenced by Breughel, Samuel Palmer and Gustav Doré, he tapped into an oneiric reservoir of images.

The estuarial bleakness of Beckton, East London, makes an unlikely place for the reconstruction of Vietnam. In 2019, the site of the gas works is an expanse of ring roads and contaminated ground. The 1990s retail park has been eclipsed by two vast shopping malls. However, the memory of Anton Furst's vision for the gas works brings another set of possibilites into view; the fires, the palm trees, and Vietnamese signs return to unsettle the exurban terrain.

Anton Furst said his tools were a 6b pencil and a putty rubber, a method which allows a process of altering and modifying, shifting and re-ordering. The plasticity of this kind of image making, prefigures ways of negotiating the city.

This re-imagining of place opens other routes, if we can believe a grey stretch of the Thames is Vietnam then there are no limits to how we might re-inhabit it, perhaps the potential for a radically emancipatory future is also harboured there.

In the 1970s and 80s I saw shells of industry reconfigured by counter-cultural scenes, post-punk bands in working-men's clubs, anarchist social centers in derelict factories, raves in the imprint of marshalling yards. These scenes subverted the traditional relationship with industrial sites, places were re-imagined, viewed in unexpected ways.

It is worth returning briefly here to the concept of fictioning. In 'Art Practice as Fictioning' Simon O' Sullivan writes

> the production of a 'new' landscape, a new platform for dreaming – is another definition of fictioning. Fictioning inserts itself into the real in this sense – into the world as-it-is, but, in so doing, it necessarily changes our reality (O'Sullivan, 2015).

In my practice, new terrains open by returning to pre-existing material, this material is not an archive but a responsive resource, it exists as a terrain to mould and shape, to carve new paths. The making of fictional worlds allows the production of new social worlds.

PART 2 SOCIOGEOGRAPHY

Figure 15 - Barking Road. digital photograph 2018

Sociogeography does not make a total break with Guy Debord's concept of psychogeography but reimagines the idea in a new set of socio-political conditions. In a series of documented dérives I will show how psychogeography becomes more relevant to the current phase of capitalism when it draws on multiple atomised voices. By walking in degraded neoliberal terrain I show how the tactics and strategies first developed by the Situationists are made relevant to the contemporary moment.

In *Ghosts of My Life* Mark Fisher describes a neoliberal process of 'psychic privatisation' where 'space outside started to be abandoned, pathologised and enclosed' (Fisher, 2016, p.45). Sociogeographic dérives

gravitate towards this 'space outside', they are a search for kernels of revolutionary potential in maligned urban terrain.

Sociogeography maps encounters with older forms of social solidarity in the degraded commons, it recognises potential in overlooked terrain, the Wetherspoons pub, the Travelodge, the boarded-up shopping precinct.

Sociogeographic dérives are a method for overcoming the totalising bind of finance-capital by engineering new forms of physical and psychic occupation. Walking through sites of former militancy and collective intensity like Saltley Gate Coking depot in Birmingham, Wapping Print works, the pit villages of South Yorkshire and the vast housing estates of Peckham and Elephant and Castle is not an experience of left-melancholia but a strengthening of currents that vex the neoliberal project. In the enervated husks of coking plants, collieries and print works incendiary textures persist, erupting in the present as after-shocks, as reverberations. We might think of the outbreaks of effigy burning and carnivalesque joy in the pit villages of South Yorkshire as Margaret Thatcher's death was announced in 2014. Two decades after Orgreave the spectre of militancy reappeared as a poltergeist, an agent in the present, creating new ruptures, new time marks to catalyse around.

What follows in this second part of the thesis are reports from multiple cities which show my methodology at work. These reports will explore the continued relevance of the dérive as a political strategy. By drifting in de-socialised spaces, I will show that group consciousness waits in the virtual future and that other possibilities are tantalisingly near. This thesis posits the idea that the most bland and unexpected exurban expanses have the potential to be radically reimagined.
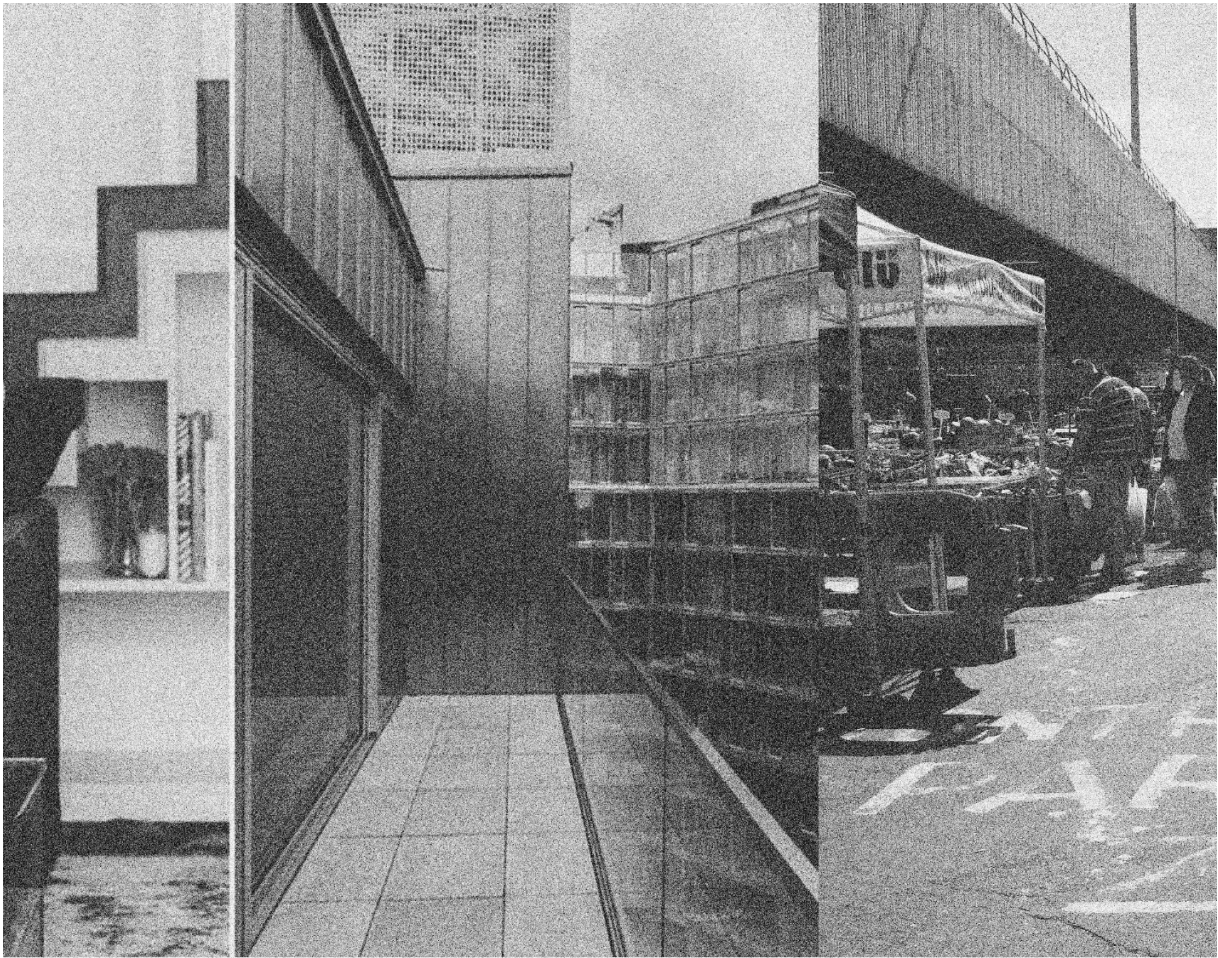
Figure 16 - Nine Elms Battersea Power station. digital photograph 2016

For Guy Debord, the dérive was the preliminary stage in the making of psychogeographic surveys which would chart the city's unités of ambience. In the Theory of the Dérive he writes

> One of the basic situationist practices is the dérive [literally: "drifting"], a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. Dérives involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll (Debord, 1958, p.62).

In this five year research period psychogeographic surveys have increasingly been deployed in the marketing strategies of private developments. In London, the derelict Battersea power station is being

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redeveloped by a UK/Malaysian consortia (S P Setia Berhad, Sime Darby, Employees Provident Fund) amid claims that 'A key part of the Development Project's overall regeneration strategy is utilising history to recentre the building within the community. Placemaking has been a core driver for crucial decisions throughout the project' (Calvium website).

In 2015 I walked with a friend, Duncan Jeffs, who was living on the Patmore Estate in Battersea. The estate consisted of 28 LCC blocks built in the 1950s interconnected with passages and courtyards. He told me about 'placemaking', teams of people coming with clipboards to ask for memories and experiences. Contemporary placemaking, I am arguing, is the deployment of psychogeography in a degraded, weakened form to increase financial land values. The strategy calls upon urban theorists Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte to borrow critical and moral authority and preempt accusations of architectural homogeneity. The term, which stems from Jacobs' and Whyte's call for a human centered approach to urban planning has been adopted to create an impression of social inclusion.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs likens the city to

> an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole. The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any one place is always replete with new improvisations (Jacobs, pp.50-54).

This version of the city, with its individuals, its distinctive parts and orderly whole is a pre-echo of the neoliberal regeneration plan, this 'good city', whose new improvisations never upset or disrupt the 'orderly whole', is the ideal template. We might ask then, what is the 'bad city', Jacobs answers this by extending the same metaphor, it is 'a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en masse.' Thus Jacobs' moral assertions are useful for private developers because they dispel accusations of bland homogeneity; developers do not want their projects to be labelled non-places or what Marc Augé calls 'a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity' (Augé, p.77).

The rejection of Jacobs' 'bad city' distances new developments from the municipal urban experiments of the post-war era with their collectivised spaces and architectural uniformity. The intricacy and improvisational quality of Jacob's sidewalk never descends into the labyrinth, nor does the orderly whole look like a modernist housing project, instead it has the quaint and jumbled feel of a village with watching eyes everywhere.

The promotional halo surrounding new urban developments emphasises the 'uniqueness' of their location. In *Ghosts of the City*, Michel de Certeau writes 'Political power has known for a long time how to produce narratives for its own use. Urban planners themselves have tried to produce them artificially in new housing projects.' For Certeau it is clear that developers exploit the human desire to narrativise place in order to profit from bland and homogeneous places. 'Without them,' he continues 'these brand-new neighborhoods remain deserted. Through stories about places, they become inhabitable. Living is narrativizing.'

The narratives abounding in the city become valuable resources for developers, they are gathered, edited and presented to the public in palatable and sanitised forms, they insinuate themselves into the urban fabric via hoardings, leaflets and promotional websites. The developers of Battersea Power Station describe their method as

> a pertinent piece of thinking about the place experience. None are written in stone, but collectively they capture the specific character and mood of what is intended – often the kinds of things you can't easily show on a set of architectural drawings. It's fundamental to get these intangible aspects right if Battersea Power Station is to become one of the world's great places (The Placebook, 2014, p.45).

The narrative surrounding the power station becomes a sanitised chronological line featuring market gardens, Huguenot silk mills, Sunday Fairs, the construction of Chelsea suspension bridge, Charles Darwin's visits to a local pub and the architectural designs of Giles Gilbert Scott. The power station, according to the developers, closed in 1983 because of 'increasing concerns with pollution, urban air quality and public health' which 'saw the government switch towards cleaner fuel supplies.' This occlusion of

economic restructuring and class dynamics is necessary to the project, the new power station must be seen to rise from benevolent ashes, its avenging ghosts must be silenced. Its re-emergence in this derelict deindustrialised zone is proclaimed as a miraculous renaissance 'The iconic Grade II* listed building and surrounding area is being *brought back to life* as one of the most exciting and innovative mixed-use neighbourhoods in the world' (italics mine) (https://batterseapowerstation.co.uk/).

The developers then, make the claim that the area is currently dead and propose to resurrect it by calling on a selective set of ghosts, by foregrounding a particular set of narratives in order to sculpt ambience and redefine 'place'. This is the recuperated dérive, affective textures of experience are corralled into the masterplan. Clearly though, the area is not dead, it teems with live currents and proliferating fictions. By examining whose experiences are excluded from the masterplan, the ideological drive behind it becomes starkly visible.

My friend told me about caravans, cars and trucks parking on his estate in the week, mobile dormitories for the men working on the construction of the new developments. The estate spanned the boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth, and the men sleeping in their vehicles had found refuge in an island of ambiguous jurisdiction. On the threshold they were transient, non-aligned and mostly left alone. We might think here of Deleuze's 'any spaces whatever', those he describes as 'deserted but inhabited, disused warehouses, waste ground, cities in the course of demolition or reconstruction.' For him these places were sites of becoming, places which were incubating a new kind of human. 'In these any-spaces whatever, a new race of characters was stirring, kind of mutant: They saw rather than acted, they were seers' (Deleuze, 1989, p. xi).

My friend said in their block there is black mould on the ceilings and silverfish in the walls. The Patmore Estate was built in the aftermath of the second world war, its red-brick blocks are marooned between the railway lines, the market, the power station and the river. Sometimes, he says, it's like living on an island.

The vast halls and yards of New Covent Garden market lie opposite. Its western edge is demarcated by a high brick wall running the length of Thessaly Road, every few meters palettes are leant against it by scavengers to assist access to skips overflowing with surplus produce. We walked beneath the hoardings at the perimeter of the development, its hectoring manifesto felt narco-fuelled and ebullient – 'Battersea Power Station must come across as both massive icon and intimate place. At one moment monumental and awe-inspiring, at another browsable and fine grain.' We kept seeing this reference to 'fine grain' and recognised it as an attempt to deflect the public gaze from global capitalism's totalizing predations.

There were security cabins and buddleia breaking through plywood boards. We turned down a dusty construction lane where a row of 1980s maisonettes lay stranded. He told me he'd been here the week before when squatters were flyposting images of fossils and crystals. I described this as the cultivation of a negative ambience, a disconnect with the platitudinous throb of the hoardings. On a plywood wall we found traces of the photocopied posters.

The squats were quiet, they had a view right across the development. Security guards watched from perspex cabins. Behind the houses were banks of elderflower and a destroyed Camelot sign. He wanted to show me a new development called 'Riverlight' and we walked through desolate lawns and woodchip borders where Public Art was sponsored by St James, Futurecity and Berkely homes. The adoption of high culture by developers is a totemic statement, it signals to the bourgeoisie that the area is safe to occupy, art becomes a marker of colonial occupation. Embedded in the luxury flats was a temporary project space called Studio RCA, we stopped to read a text in the window:

> Dr Paul Thompson, Rector of the Royal College of Art said: This partnership helps cement
> our place in the Wandsworth creative firmament – one can almost draw a straight line from
> RCA Battersea through the Pump House Gallery to Riverlight.

The evocation of an invisible line connecting significant sites might have been written by Iain Sinclair or Peter Ackroyd demonstrating the ease with which psychogeography's literary manifestation can be

assimilated. Such a statement is a clear example of the psychic engineering and myth making surrounding the developments at Nine Elms and the way art is implicated in this process.

We walked towards Vauxhall. The sterility of the new developments was beginning to weaken, the landscaped verges and commissioned artworks were losing ground in a new zone of intensity, a new atmosphere. Here we could feel the pull of the labyrinth, the disorder and unravelling of the Sunday market.

The temperature dropped as we entered a subway with orange lights and the sound of trains above. A narrow path opened between a high breezeblock wall and a wire fence. We were in a crowd, moving the wrong way through a crush of bodies and boxes and blue carrier bags. It was like Brick Lane in the early 1990s, carnivalesque and licentious.

A yard with brick arches rippled in the heat. Kwaito and Baille Funk CDs were pushed into our hands, persuasive monologues intensified by the rhythms blasting from speaker cabs. As we walked voices became subsumed in the music, no longer words but beats.

In the cool blue shadows of an indoor warehouse, partition walls were built from bric-a-brac. Vans were parked at angles and doors were flung open spilling boxes onto the concrete floor. With its ad hoc architectures the market was porous, inside and outside were re-coded. In 1925 Walter Benjamin described Naples as 'porous' because its architecture refused obedient notions of fixity or designated function, private and public could no longer be considered binary opposites, as domestic interiors escaped into the street and activity outside was drawn within.

> As porous as the stone is the architecture. Building and architecture interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades and stairways. In everything they preserve the scope to become new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided (Benjamin and Lacis, 1925, p.165-6).

For Benjamin these disobedient architectures elicited feelings of exuberance, in the spinning of 'new, unforeseen constellations' he saw a metaphor for an entire social reordering. For Jane Jacobs however 'there

must be a clear demarcation between what is public space and what is private space. Public and private spaces cannot ooze into each other as they do typically in suburban settings. or in projects' (Jacobs, p.35). In the Riverlight development acres of private apartments manifested feelings of coldness, anxiety, and the sense that nothing exciting or spontaneous could ever be allowed to happen; the market, on the other hand, was intense, haptic, we experienced it in the body, a collision of micro-musics, minor texts, minor sounds. Experienced together these forces exerted a power, a threat to the sanitised stability of the new developments.

The Sunday Market temporarily occupies its host. Stalls sprawl outside the modernist vaults and cantilevered corridors of the market hall. It defies any attempt to pin it down, it is experienced as a heterotopia, a space philosopher Michel Foucault describes as somehow 'other', which is 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault, 1984, p.6). Contrarily, the Battersea Power Station and Riverlight developments strive for notions of legacy, rootedness and fixedness. As they spatially reconfigure the terrain they psychically remodel it, propagating new myths in their quest for eternity. Their association with high culture is a way of separating themselves from the unbounded and unassimilated outside, the threatening world of the Sunday market.

We left the market through a service tunnel and crossed a derelict park with nettles and rusting climbing frames. Two Italian squatters were testing a door of a boarded-up house. My friend vaguely knew them and asked for a light. They told us they had to move from their last place because it was commandeered by a Property Guardian company called Grandploy. I had seen their logo around, a menacing portcullis on ex-public buildings like the Patmore Children's Community Centre.

We passed a pub which opened all hours and carried a reputation for total sensory derangement. I thought how late licenses always coalesce around London markets, a nocturnal ecology that subversive currents have always occupied.

Figure 17 - Aylesbury Estate, Elephant and Castle. digital photograph 2015

The Mall is rectilinear and molten, a conduit between Trafalgar Square and Buckingham palace. Here London falls prey to the architectural control inflicted on Paris in the 19th century when Baron Hausmann swept the labyrinthine medieval city into a grid system.

We might think of The Rue du Marché aux Fleurs on the Île de la Cité, before Hausmann; it had narrow cobbled streets, porous buildings, staircases and open windows. It was a disorientating place, a site of unravelling, cross contamination and hybridity. Hausmann's radical cleansing project transformed it into what is now the Place Louis-Lépine, an exposed square and prefecture of the police.

The Mall is accessed through Admiralty Arch, to walk alone here elicits feelings of helplessness, monuments seem permanent and immovable, they manipulate time, locate themselves in the eternal. I think about times when I've been here in a collective, when such monuments have become mutable, open to reassignment and interpretation.

In 'Formulary for a New Urbanism' Ivan Chtcheglov's reimagination of the city conflates elements from Dada and Surrealism with Baudelaire's conceptualisation of the *flaneur*. For Chtcheglov, ghosts are obstacles to the materialisation of the radically new city, victors that persist as a spectral force in statues, boulevards and monuments. 'You can't take three steps without encountering ghosts bearing all the prestige of their legends. We move within a closed landscape whose landmarks constantly draw us toward the past.' This motioning towards the past is reversed when he evokes 'the magical locales of fairy tales and surrealist writings: castles, endless walls, little forgotten bars, mammoth caverns, casino mirrors,' here he spatialises an alternative social imaginary, a prefiguration that already exists in the fabric of the city. And it is precisely here that the other ghosts, the spectres of repressed historical currents might be found. The city already harbours another, radically different city within its walls.

Sometimes the reconnection with the absent collective subject is spectral – a song from a car window, a fragment of old graffiti, the faded remnants of a fly poster – but sometimes it is live, emerging sporadically as trespass, illegal occupation, public disorder and criminal damage. In these moments ghosts became poltergeists, throwing objects around, disturbing the physical terrain, no longer an afterglow but a conjuring of time in the present.

I walked past the ICA which was hosting an exhibition called Detroit: Techno City. The image of Detroit jarred with the architecture around me, Carlton House Terrace, Buckingham Palace and Duke of York steps. I wanted to discover if a sonics manufactured in the de-industrialised zone of Detroit could retain its potency in such a controlled site, a spatial nexus of dominant order.

I stepped into a brightly lit gallery, one of the smallest spaces there, where monochrome paste-ups were neatly interspersed with record sleeves. Trinitron monitors were spaced evenly on white plinths. The Techno soundtrack drew me into its affective field. Cybertron, Inner City, Underground Resistance. The music transported me to a network of clubs and parties in de-industrialised zones where collective memories formed in derelict buildings. I remembered the textures of a scorched ceiling rose, window panes scored with glyphs, the overgrown walkways of a modernist housing estate.

Techno emanates from a dystopian realm, an ex-motor city. A monochrome vista of downtown Detroit opened on a far wall. Grand Hall, Best Sports Bar, East Grand River, names conjuring an American city in ruins – a city ossified but porous. For Techno producers the apocalypse had already happened, Techno articulated an experience of living amongst the ruins, it took fight above buildings blackened by the fires of the 1967 riots, hovered over the aftermath of the 1973 recession, looked down from a position of almost supernatural clarity on the core of a city hollowing in the grip of Reaganomic policies. I thought of the vast ruined sites across the river, Elephant and Castle less than two miles away.

The gallery walls were punctuated by a singular pedagogic voice, the tone was sensible, playing down race and class, imposing order. We were presented with a narrative which was easy to follow – distanced, dispassionate, impartial. A composite of fluorescent posters depicted lost scenes – recording studios, mix-tapes, radio stations. But moments of potential were still present in the soundtrack.

Techno doesn't lay crude territorial claim to Detroit, instead it glides through walls, speeds across freeways, becomes a nomadic spectral presence. Techno as an immersive, auditory hallucination is an escape, not into blissful ignorance but as a strategy of resistance to a ravaged environment and an impoverished everyday life. In the charcoal shells and derelict factories it escapes ordinary space and time.

Detroit Techno was now frozen in the heart of a sealed and socially cleansed central London but the potential in the speakers contacted the city's liminal sites. As the Techno geist circuits through the UK

underground club and free party scenes it is heard in the sites of transience and becoming – Elephant and Castle, Edmonton, Croydon, Barking, Tottenham.

The speakers in the exhibition were set at polite volume. Record sleeves were pressed behind clip frames, little museum pieces neatly hemmed in and archived. My engagement with these records came from the proliferation of scenes that radiated from Techno when it landed in Europe, or more specifically, in the North of England. This landing, this explosive moment of emergence resonated across a region that bore an uncanny resemblance to Detroit. I heard Underground Resistance *Revolution for Change* for the first time in a former pit village in South Yorkshire in 1992, the track was blasting from a sound system outside a housing estate. I remember looking out across derelict marshalling yards and the abandoned Cortonwood colliery.

I left the air conditioning and white walls of the ICA and re-entered the heat glare of the Mall. St James's park was crowded with memorials, an impervious arrangement of monarchs and colonial explorers. The Techno soundtrack I carried with me was a backdrop to visions of their toppling.

I walked through Strutton Ground, a pocket of an older, working class city; it was becoming gentrified but there were still vestiges of another London. I worked around there 15 years ago, in a Salvation Army hostel on Westminster Bridge road. I ran art classes for homeless people, sometimes there would be fifty or sixty men crushed into that church hall. I remember their drawings, some of them still haunt me, images of London which ranged from the cartoonish to cosmic, to labelled mythologies and mental maps. It was my first job as an outreach worker for Westminster Council, it was a way in, a class no one else wanted.

I cut through the estates at Page Street, a mossy path under cherry branches, flowering jasmine, a kettle whistling through an open window. These were the unofficial routes through the city, the writing in the margins of the official text, moments of epiphany unsung and undocumented.

Then Millbank and the Thames. On the opposite side MI5, the ziggurats of St George's Wharf and luxury towers spanning from Vauxhall, this was London in the grip of finance capital and the logic of surveillance.

Behind these developments the city began to unravel, the monuments, memorials, boulevards and fortresses that shore up the dominant order began to lose their influence, I was moving beyond range.

I crossed Vauxhall Bridge and walked through the estates of Oval, Kennington and Elephant and Castle. I thought an illegal party in 2010 in the sunken garden in the abandoned Heygate Estate, Techno sound systems had occupied the Plattenbau blocks and metallic beats ricocheted between them. This time I was going to see a friend in neighbouring East Street, she wanted to show me the new Elephant Park development and 'boxpark' emerging on the Walworth Road. We scanned the hoardings depicting an Elephant and Castle we didn't recognise – a cleansed zone, an affluent white population. I wondered about the caryatids that had stood in the sunken garden, the techno sound systems that came after. We looked through the perimeter fence at the new development, the 30 storey towers with their diverse brickwork and asymmetrical balconies. Sounds ricocheted across the rubble heaps, metallic beats emerging from the construction site. I wondered where the 3000 tenants evicted from the site had gone and remembered the paths out of London, the enclaves forming in Kent and Croydon.

Techno is an echo from a future moment, it appears like a hallucination before it exists in the physical realm. Techno summons futures by reassembling fragments of the past. With its re-routing of spatial narratives it is a tool for communing with ghosts, an echo from a future moment.
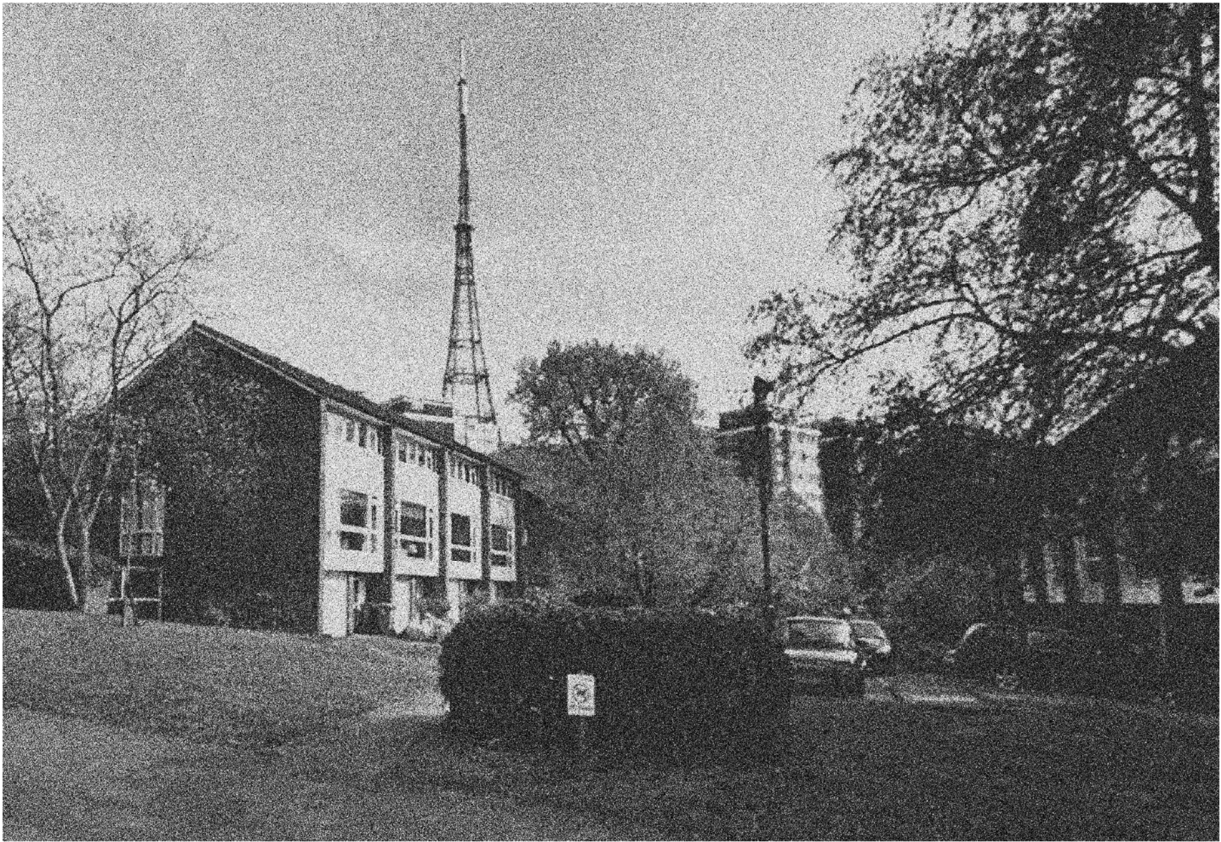
Figure 18 - Crystal Palace. digital photograph 2018

In the 'Essence of Technicity' French philosopher Gilbert Simondon describes places where technical modes and natural powers converge to create new reticulations of space, 'The magical universe is structured according to the most primitive and meaningful of organizations: that of the reticulation of the world into privileged places and privileged moments.'

These singular sites are often naturally occurring topographic features which dominate the surrounding terrain 'as a highland governs and dominates a lowland; the elevated peak is the lord of the mountain'. Such a privileged place has the power to 'drain from within itself all the force and efficacy of the domain it delimits; it summarizes and contains the force of a compact mass of reality, it summarizes and governs it.' Despite their ascendent status, these sites are not fully activated until they are drawn into a schema, an

organisation of significant points which make a *temenos*. Simondon's essence of technicity is a system of aesthetic thought, anything at any time can emerge as an exceptional point in the terrain. What interested Simondon was the capacity of aesthetic thought to cultivate structures of reality.

> The magical world is thus made of a network of places and of things that have a power and that are bound to other things and other places that also have a power. This path, this enclosure, this τέμενος [temenos] contains all the force of the land, the key-point of the reality and the spontaneity of things, as well as their availability (Simondon, 1958, p.180).

The figures in this schema are 'Key points', aesthetic and technical objects such as masts, monuments and bridges. In 2019 I approached Crystal Palace transmission mast in South London as a key point. The point of intersection between the aesthetic object and the highest hill creates an assemblage, a convergence where two elements amplify each other's power. Simondon believed the power of the aesthetic object does not lie in imitation, but is activated when it attaches itself to significant, singular places, when the aesthetic object appears here it becomes a conductor, drawing currents of power up from the ground.

If, for Simondon 'The magical universe is made of a network of access points to each domain of reality: thresholds, summits, limits, and crossing points, attached to one another through their singularity and their exceptional character' (Simondon, 1958, p.180). we might argue that Crystal Palace is activated by other techno-aesthetic objects such as the water tower at Shooters Hill and the observatory in Greenwich Park. Their position in exceptional topographical sites forms a visible network or web. These are landmarks, tools of navigation, which we perceive as a schema.

These modern examples of techno-aesthetic objects follow a pattern, the water tower at Shooters Hill is on the site of six bronze age barrows and the Greenwich observatory stands near to the site of a Romano-Celtic temple. As landmarks they form a *temenos*, or sacred precinct, an enclosed system of significant sites. We might think of the transmission mast, water tower and observatory as transductions between modern technology and non-modern cosmologies.

For Simondon this is a process of symbiotic exchange: 'To climb a slope in order to go toward the summit, is to make one's way toward the privileged place that commands the entire mountain chain, not in order to dominate or possess it, but in order to exchange a relationship of friendship with it' (Simondon, 2017).

Simondon's privileged places then are not like Akroyd's *genius loci*, they are made significant by an interaction between human technicity and place; we are not passively moulded by the terrain, nor is the land blank and malleable, rather we find points of connection between singular topographical sites and new technologies.

Figure 19 - Scarborough Morrisons. digital photograph 2019

> In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there.

> – Guy Debord, Theory of the Dérive 1958, p.62)

The Situationist dérive not only posed a challenge to reductive forms of topographical mapping but the regimented clock time of capital. The transposition of Debord's theory into the contemporary neoliberal city starkly illuminates our restricted access to time. The Situationist dérive demanded a sensitivity to the city's affective current by suspending work and leisure activities, the drift was the cultivation of a dilated

temporality, it could last 'a few hours' or 'several days without interruption' or 'pursued without notable interruption for around two months' (Debord, 1956b).

The opportunity to go on long meandering dérives is thwarted by the digital micro-commands of an 'always on' managerial culture, something Jodi Dean calls communicative capitalism. In *After the Future*, Franco Bifo Berardi writes 'After scarcifying the land (enclosures) capitalism has scarcified time itself, forcing people who don't have property other than their own life and body, to lend their lifetime to capital' (Berardi, 2011, p.112). The crushing of trade unions, outsourcing and competition in public services has resulted in precarious working conditions. Time required for drifting has been enclosed, Post-Fordist forms of labour – affective, creative and immaterial, encroach on our time as we are pressured into perpetual online connectivity, jacked into swarms of algorithms and data that monitor our productivity.

These are not new observations, the question of how the precariat can create new social systems is what concerns us here. If, as Franco Bifo Berardi says, the future can no longer be grasped because we've experienced its 'slow cancellation' then how can we imagine a world post-capitalism? Sociogeography seizes upon Debord's 'fortuitously brief moments' in lieu of 'dérives pursued without notable interruption for around two months.' The sociogeographic dérive might involve the disabling of a tracking device in order to loiter at a service station or deliberately getting lost in the shelves of the Amazon Fulfillment Centre.

The concept of time outside work has radically altered its meaning in the post-Fordist era. 'Free' time has metamorphosed a marketised idea of leisure, a negative concept defined by work. As Franco Bifo Berardi writes 'Your time can be called for on the phone and for one day, one week, two hours' The temporal ellipses and glimmers of revolutionary desire watched for by the Situationists are threatened by work which 'becomes de-territorialised and just as fractal and recombinant as financial capital' (Berardi, 2012).

Unoccupied, delirial and drifting time finds its corollary in remaindered space, just as the threshold zones of the city are subsumed into the rubric of regeneration, these moments of surplus are corralled into the

communicative time of late capitalism. For Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, 'communication is the form of capitalist production in which capital has succeeded in submitting society entirely and globally to its regime, suppressing all alternative paths' (Negri and Hardt, 2000 p.347).

To call up the spectre of the collective subject is to question what we are in the absence of it. Economic restructuring in the neoliberal era has seen rapid deterritorialization of communities. For Paolo Virno, the position in the multitude without the collective subject is a daunting one, it is one of dependency, exposure to a set of unpredictable hierarchies.

> The general intellect or public intellect, if it does not become a republic, a public sphere, a political community drastically increases forms of submission. A public sphere translates into an unchecked proliferation of hierarchies as groundless as they are thriving (Virno, 2004, p.41).

A sense of isolation and vulnerability is pervasive. Think of the experience of walking through space designed for cars. To walk through an exurban retail development is to expose one's isolation to those who mask theirs behind a steel shell. The experience allows for a renewed sense of clarity, vulnerability is a direct encounter with the absence of collectivity. In the warmth of the car with music evoking trace-memories of collective joy and fast food franchises offering a fix of comfort and familiarity, one is momentarily distracted from the insecurity of one's job, the fragility of life's foundations.

Virno goes on to write

> If the substantial communities once hid or muffled our relationship with the world, then our dissolution now clarifies this relationship for us: the loss of one's job, or the change which alters the features of the functions of labour, or the loneliness of metropolitan life- all these aspects of our relationship with the world assume many of the traits which formerly belonged to the kind of terror one feels outside the walls of the community (Virno, 2004, p.33).

On a warm April morning in Scarborough, North Yorkshire I edged around car showrooms, a drive-thru McDonald's and a council refuse tip to reach Morrisons car park. The superstore was built in the late 1990s in the imprint of an abattoir and lime quarry. It is in close proximity to the site of one of the town's main employers: Plaxton coach factory, now a row of retail barns. I was watched from passing cars, scrutinised. To walk in such terrain is to be an outsider, deviant, a threat to the prevailing order.

In the car park the dynamic changed, it was Good Friday and there was a sense of frazzled urgency, trolleys smashing together at angles. The music blasting across the store was synthetic US pop, my adrenaline and cortisol levels shot up, the lyrics looped round, implanting themselves, and so I grabbed things, not in the trance-like state the music was designed to induce, but in the rush to get out.

I turned right out of the store and followed a mossy footpath past the cafe. The path took me out of the car park to an escarpment of scots pine. The sky was blue and cherry trees were frothing with blossom, there was a fragrance of black forest gateau, of chlorophyll, of freshly turned earth.

At this point I was alone on an upward slope between the railway and a bank of silver birches. Two figures were scrambling down a motorway bridge with a Bassline track blasting from a rucksack. Someone in a Travis Perkins uniform was walking towards me, I was aware of blackbirds and sparrows in the hollows of a hawthorn hedge, the smell of weed suddenly. The woman asked me the time saying her phone was out of battery.

We stopped as the men came scrambling through the blackthorn with hammers, red eyes and ghost dub dropping through a crackling boom box. They'd come from a stranded patch of ground, a disused quarry, accessible only by clambering up a concrete motorway bridge. I recognised an expression on her face, a split second yearning for a relinquished life, the intoxicating lemon scent, the white blossom, the temporary encampment were escape routes from the vexed time of the retail park.

In the *Critique of Everyday Life* (1947) Henri Lefebvre rails against a quotidian existence synonymous with banality and boredom and focuses on everyday revelatory moments that might bring experiences of vision

and clarity. In the *La Somme et le Reste* he describes moments as 'modalities of presence' a 'plurality of relatively privileged moments...not situated outside of everydayness, but articulated along with it' (Lefebvre, 1959, p.236).

For Lefebvre these are moments we must keep hold of. We might liken them to Joyce's epiphany, or the revelatory paintings of Bonnard, these flashes of insight and emotional awareness from the template of an enriched, fulfilled life (l'homme totale). Lefebvre's moments are sensations like love and collective joy, they exist beyond the regimented time of capitalism and can be reinhabited. Lefebvre's moments then are a theory, method and practice for emancipation.

Figure 20 - Stratford. digital collage photograph 2019

The historical movement which changes the producers into wage-workers, appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these new freedmen became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.

– Karl Marx, Capital Volume 1, The Secret of Primitive Accumulation

Stratford in East London is dominated by the gargantuan Westfield shopping mall which, like a privileged place in Simondon's magical universe, has 'drained from within itself all the force and efficacy of the domain it delimits;' (Simondon, 1958, p.178).

I climbed sweeping steps, crossed a railway bridge and entered the mall. There were no shopping bags, no haul to justify the excursion, and I felt suspicion, pity even, as I walked alone through the central atria. As I followed the mall's psychic contours I encountered barriers which disrupted the image of relaxation and enjoyment the Westfield Corporation seeks to project. The idling, drifting time of the dérive revealed plain clothes security guards, service tunnels and subterranean holding cells.

As public space is enclosed, the dérive regains potency by becoming sociogeographic, by collectively interrupting and rerouting channels of commerce and consumption. An example of this is the way Black Friday (a US imported retail phenomenon) was rerouted through the Ferguson protests of 2014. On November 28th the scenes of cynically manipulated frenzy in the malls and retail parks became grooves protestors were able to inhabit, in Missouri three shopping malls were shut down and in London a Westfield shopping mall saw hundreds join a 'die in'. Neoliberalism undermines the public sphere but there are still temporal and topographical glitches that retain currents of political agency.

The mall veered off course, the channels of leisure and consumption were rerouted as the affective currents of pop music became the textures of radically different emotional terrain. The space of the mall re-contextualised the action, the symbolic placing of 'dead' bodies in the heart of a space marketed as exciting, future-oriented and youthful was an act of détournement as it became a vast mocking mortuary, the glossy hoardings, over-familiar platitudes and window displays now appeared cold hearted, cruel and uncaring. The swift appearance of security guards and police created a rupture in the space of the mall, something which had remained hidden was now in full view, the mask had slipped.

The sociogeographic dérive is walking as a political strategy in order to summon flash points of militancy not to archive, compartmentalise and make safe but to will them into the present, to re-route the future.

Sociogeographic dérives in privately managed city centres challenge contemporary enclosures by pushing against their limits; in the antagonistic encounter with private security firms the right to the city is called into question. The sociogeographic dérive is a direct encounter with gates and fences, but sociogeographers are also intermediaries, liminal figures who move between worlds – the cleaners, security guards and couriers, identities are not fixed but interchangeable.

Clintons cards. I moved among spot-lit rows of clichés. There were candles in geometric jars, muted pastel colours, at the edge of my vision a security guard circling.

In the central atria the fashions were all wrong, heavy woolen coats in berry and ochre and bottle green. Outside the city was simmering in unexpected heat. In the moment of exception possibilities began to proliferate, the shopping mall could be reimagined as a social centre, or an endless rave, or rooms for homeless people.

The music reverberating in the plazas and 'streets' of this retail behemoth seemed unguarded, unwittingly forging the 'wrong' psychic textures. Instead of encouraging frenzied buying the songs had a subdued, downcast effect. *Another Day in Paradise* by Genesis was circuiting around Costa, then something by Coldplay, a track I couldn't name fading somewhere near the Apple Store. I watched escalators transporting shoppers between floors.

Swarovski crystals. Necklaces in the window, gold chains glinting in the spotlights. Motifs jumped out, teddies and broken hearts. There were silver chokers loaded with miniature stones, *Wedding Collection* in pink script. I felt them tightening, the rings pressed into velvet trays, the white gold bracelets. Then escalators, floating up to the first floor.

Glowing orange booths and poker cash games, factory smell of new carpets and tendrils of cigarette smoke creeping in through a fire exit. There were benches, fibreglass seats like pebbles, organic forms curving like melted plastic. I looked across the Lea Valley for the traces and outlines of another time. The area was under occupation, I thought about police crawling through estates in Hackney Wick and Maryland,

roadblocks and security cabins, cameras in roof voids and microphones nested in satellite dishes. For a second, in the solar heat I saw them, the parties we had there, the bonfires and rigs in the old tanning factories.

The Lea Valley was once Lammas Lands where medieval parishioners had the right to gather wood, forage and graze cattle, a self organised form of sustenance which allowed a degree of autonomy. In 1970 the entire area was designated Metropolitan Open Land. In 2005, the London Development Agency (LDA) seized 102 hectares of the Lea Valley in East London for the construction of the Olympic park. Urban theorist Stephen Graham describes a New Military Urbanism where facial recognition technologies, tracking algorithms and scanning zones contribute to an invisible skein of barriers which insinuate themselves 'into the quotidian spaces and circulations of everyday life.' Such surveillance techniques add up to what he describes as 'long-standing military dreams of high-tech omniscience and rationality into the governance of urban civil society,' which intensity 'the deepening crossover between urbanism and militarism' (Graham, pp. xi-xii).

Before the LDA's enclosure, alternative and experimental systems had flourished in the Lea Valley. With its industrial ruins, overgrown riverbanks, pylons and concrete pill boxes it was reminiscent of Tarkovsky's zone. In the film *Stalker,* meditations on a restricted, ruined 'zone' open an alternative temporality, an oneiric sense of time which echoes the experience of drifting in an abandoned expanse of East London in the1980s and '90s. Following the Olympic bid in 2005 blue fences enclosed the zone transforming it into what Michel Foucault calls a 'carceral archipelago'.

This radical appropriation of land carries resonances of the Enclosures Acts (1604 and 1914) when 6.8 million acres were wrested from the commons. Enclosures was an end to communal control of the means of subsistence, and as Feudal authority began to dissolve agricultural workers were forced off their land to become beggars, vagabonds and paupers. In the *Invention of Capitalism* Michael Perelman writes 'the brutal process of separating people from their means of providing for themselves, known as primitive accumulation, caused enormous hardships for the common people. This same primitive accumulation

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provided a basis for capitalist development' (Perelman, 2000, p.14) and in *The Making of the English Working Class* E.P. Thompson describes a process where 'in village after village common rights were lost. Enclosure was a plain enough case of class robbery' (Thompson, 1964, p.198).

In the Lea Valley communally organised subsistence had survived in multiple, overlapping ecologies. Black economies thrived in the form of scrap yards, underground clubs and car boot sales. Foraging and scavenging were fundamental to a shadow market, an alternative way of life which refused the discipline of wage labour. The arrival of speculative investors in 2005 forced a profound spatial, social and economic reorganisation. The LDA attempted to crush unassimilable elements by replacing black economies with public-private partnerships, industrial ruins with bland corporate landscapes and communally organised subsistence with a mantra of personal individual achievement. Synchronous to this enclosure of land was its psychic entrapment in a profusion of corporate narratives which coalesced in a singular, totalising vision for the newly rebranded Queen Elizabeth Park.

Neoliberalism has drastically reconfigured what constitutes public space in UK cities. Business Improvement Districts (BIDS), Special Economic Zones, gated communities and compulsory purchase orders have privatised urban commons and presented obstacles to the 'rapid passage through varied ambiances' and 'playful-constructive behavior' of the derive.

I wanted to leave Westfield with its cloying atria, its cooped molten air. The city was sizzling in the high twenties. Stratford was bleached, sculpted from chalk, the new towers blinding.

Stratford is a significant transport interchange. Deep in the crush I followed invisible lines, a zig zag march through Baptists and Jehovahs, end times crackling in megaphones. Circles were forming, young men from prayers in white salwar. Opposite was the 1960s shopping arcade, still holding vestiges of the era, amethyst tiles and modernist mosaics creeping up stairwells. The indoor market was concealed behind swing doors, a souk or a bazaar with polystyrene ceiling tiles and mint green walls.

The corridors were cloaked in iridescent fabric and fluorescent light. The scents of amber and sandalwood drifted from kiosks. I passed Colombian cafes, African hairdressers and shops selling tarot cards.

The Broadway was the eclipsed commercial centre, the former privileged place made obsolete by Westfield. Both these retail zones maintained their position s by locating themselves at significant crossing and turning places.

If we return to Simondon's privileged places we might think of another schema, the *temenos* of the neoliberal city. Neoliberalism hijacks access points and re-routes them into capital as luxury housing developments and shopping malls. These 'mixed use' sites become the new key points, pivotal sites in the terrain.

The neoliberal city is an enclosed precinct with its own pivotal points, its own poles of attraction. The fight to control the narrative of the city is waged through its architecture, its occupation of 'thresholds, summits, limits, and crossing points' with luxury developments and retail zones. Rivers, city centres, transport exchanges are key points in the neoliberal *temenos*. There is a shadow schema operating beneath this, the sub-*temenos* of eclipsed key points, in Stratford the relegated 1960s shopping centre and nearby Carpenters Road estate could be considered eclipsed sites.

There were new construction sites, the skeletons of new towers silhouetted on the skyline. I saw men filing out in knots, emerging through glossy hoardings with concrete dust in their hair. They were building New Garden Quarter where apartments start at £732,500.

Figure 21 - Dining Room in the Country, 1913 by Pierre Bonnard.

In February 2019 I was summoned for jury service at Blackfriars Crown Court. Halfway through the proceedings we were dismissed early and I went to Tate Britain to see an exhibition of paintings by Pierre Bonnard. The contrast between the claustrophobic chambers and scuffed palette of the court with the opalescent fields of colour in these paintings created a jolt, a shift in consciousness.

In the courtroom a prosecution barrister demanded to know what reason the defendant could have for driving idly around London, for stopping randomly, drifting aimlessly, smoking weed in the car. How was it possible that he could lose track of time? The answer lay in Bonnard's paintings, to a sense of dilated time, to pulsing efflorescences of colour. The paintings blasted conservative notions of an ordered temporality, they spoke of something transformative, a glimpse of another world. Despite the domesticity

of the scenes, windows and doors were flung open to allow the possibility of escape. The paintings are liminal, inside and outside are inverted, they inhabit a state of transience and becoming.

I watched the proceedings in court. The defendant was trapped behind glass, I listened to descriptions of the car, the Audi with tinted windows, the fug of smoke. I sensed the warping and melting and thought of the paintings again, the hallucinogenic rippling, the shores of heat and saw with a new sense of clarity, how the court with its tawdry austerity, its tape holding it together, was steeped in calcified ritual, arcane ridges spanning centuries. Bonnard's paintings, with their psychoactive colour, their tilting interior spaces, were imbued with the textures of the heightened moment, in them we see the crystallised moment of epiphany, a revelatory moment where everything seems to gel and coalesce.

Bonnard's paintings, with their neon violets, their vistas of tangerine speak of radical transformative experiences of the everyday. The artist becomes a transmitter, colours rush like signals; there's a feeling of sensory derangement. The paintings operate on the threshold between immanence and transcendence, the divine manifested in the material world, the embodiment of a secular radiance. When Bonnard goes out walking he is seeking moments of grace, moments of epiphany. These paintings posit the idea that the presence of the divine can be detected in mundane situations, that revelatory moments can be encountered in the most humdrum places.
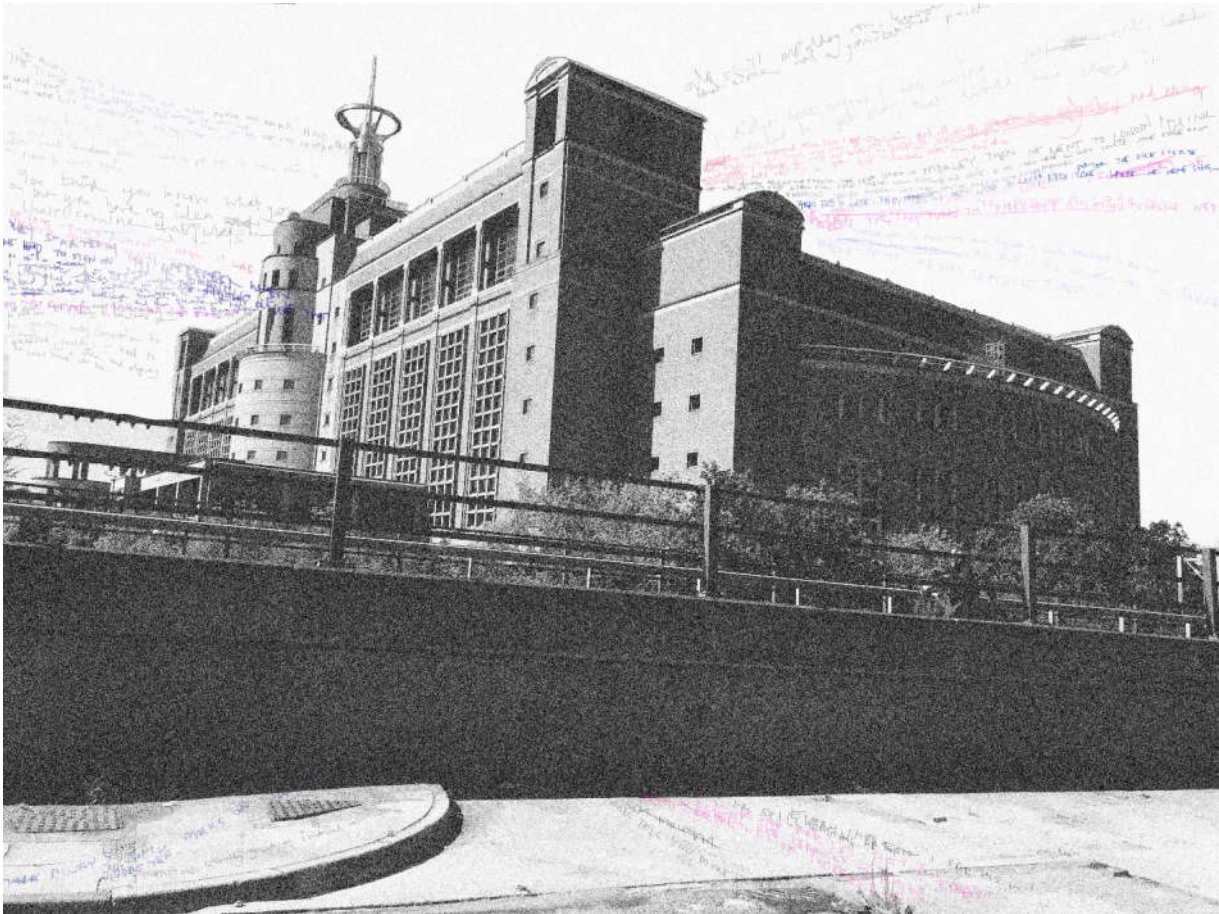
Figure 22- Leeds. collage 2019

In Leeds, the city's medieval boundary can be traced by walking the edges of the Business Improvement District or BID , defined in the Local Government Act 2003 'as a flexible funding mechanism to improve and manage a clearly defined commercial area'.

> There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a Business Improvement District. The only requirement is that it should be something that is in addition to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures (Guidance, Business Improvement Districts https://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts).

The demarcation of an 'improved' zone spatialises a city's inequalities, the preserved and sanitised centre conjures the spectre of a malign outside. In the medieval city, plague pits, polluting industries and leper colonies were placed beyond the walls creating a sacrificed outside. This outside haunted the imagination of the intramural city. In *Madness and Civilisation* Michel Foucault writes

> In the margins of the community, at the gates of cities, there stretched wastelands which sickness had ceased to haunt but had left sterile and long uninhabitable. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, they would wait, soliciting with strange incantations a new incarnation of disease, another grimace of terror, renewed rites of purification and exclusion (Foucault, 2006, p.1).

These fears of an undifferentiated, dangerous outside persist, tropes of cleanliness and safely haunt the objectives of the contemporary Business Improvement District.

> The aim of LeedsBID is to transform Leeds city centre, through investment and innovative projects, to make Leeds a cleaner, safer, and more welcoming city. The street teams are out daily – cleaning, greeting people, helping with directions, ensuring people have a safe night out, and liaising with other local organisations including West Yorkshire Police' ('What is Leeds BID?').

In March 2018, I walked around the perimeter of the Leeds BID with students from Leeds Beckett University. In a group of ten we followed the edges of the map's designated zone. This perimeter is not a hard border like the bars and walls of the medieval city but a system of motorways and ring roads. The collective dérive was a method for recording the psychic textures at the edge of the zone, by forging an attunement to its affective grain we might read the occluded narratives coalescing in the margins.

Leeds was contested territory. Within the BID zone the ghosts of the city's industrial past (textiles, chemicals, leather and pottery) had been corralled into the heritage, tourism and retail sector. On edge of the zone however the economic and social impact of deindustrialisation haunted the agendas of political groups, UK Uncut, DPAC (Disabled People Against Cuts) People's Assembly Leeds and Class War, whose

demands were immediately visible in fly posters and stickers. The presence of these groups proved that the city had not been fully assimilated into the logic of late capitalism. Graffiti is a reflection of a febrile socio-political ecology. The BID is the boundary line between redeemed and unredeemed zones.

In the margins of the Leeds BID other nonaligned voices and oppositional currents were detectible, a shadow discourse emerged in an array of registers – obscene, aggressive, territorial. CGI images of new retail quarters were disrupted by frenzied spray painting and new meanings arose in defaced images. A thriving black economy was made visible as stickers offering 'opportunities to work from home' scattered across advertisements for unlicensed clubs. The structural integrity of architecture was compromised by caravans, tarpaulins, and illegal extensions. The city's official narratives then, were eroded by an unconscious commentary.

Graffiti is a social barometer, outside the BID zone it is treated as an anti-social blight, inside it mutates into 'street art' and is commissioned by the BID itself. Inside the zone there was stylistic coherence, a proliferation of vacuous street art. On the BID website graffiti is welcomed in the form of innocuous 'planned street art'. This process of recuperation is an attempt to occlude, neutralize and re-route the city's unconscious commentary.

> The A City Less Grey initiative, launched by Leeds BID, has been behind a lot of the 'planned' street art in Leeds. It brought human vibrancy. Leeds is at the forefront of exciting street art developments nationally (Street Art in Leeds website).

Walking together allows the sharing of tacit knowledge, covert strategies and new ways of negotiating the city. Subsequent collaborative work in a shared studio involved sifting through material, reassembling it in zines and bringing atomised experiences and micro-narratives into a public project. Walking through the BID zone was a reminder that even the micro narratives and fictions embedded in our cities are susceptible to recuperation. In the centre of Leeds, an art festival, 'Found Fiction' (2019) proposes to 'make everything art' by adding 'micro-stories' to buildings.

micro-stories themed by location. were installed inside the premises of participating businesses – primarily on windows, so they could be read by people outside or, alternatively, on huge billboards, foam boards or postcards inside (It's Proper Art blog).

As we saw in Nine Elms, the placing of insipid texts by corporate placemakers is an attempt to dispel accusations of bland homogeneity and restore a sense of place specificity and ownership. The centre of Leeds is being subjected to a sustained process of psychic cleansing.

The 'micro-fictions' appearing in these zones are the enervated husks of repressed micro narratives. They are bleached, disinfected, made safe. At Beckett the poltergeists of radical conceptual art writing continue to exert an influence in the work of Simon Morris whose cut up publications bear the traces of a rich Leeds tradition. In the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Leeds had a thriving culture of flyposting and zine making, activities that orbited around political actions, raves and club nights. These photocopied communiques were the counter-narratives of the city, windows opening onto a subterranean world of basement parties, band practices and marginal subcultural groups. In Leeds 6, the focus of this activity, a communally organised system of subsistence operated in the form of squatting, food co-ops and alternative music scenes.

Sociogeography as a practice brings fragments together to resurrect a different Leeds, a city that existed before the universalising ambitions of the neoliberal BID. It amplifies the city's unconscious commentary, communicates directly from temporalities coalescing beyond the grasp of finance-capital. On the periphery of the BID zone we see the micro-fictions weaving unbounded, the ones that never passed the BID's seal of approval, the itinerant code of the city's shadow citizenry.
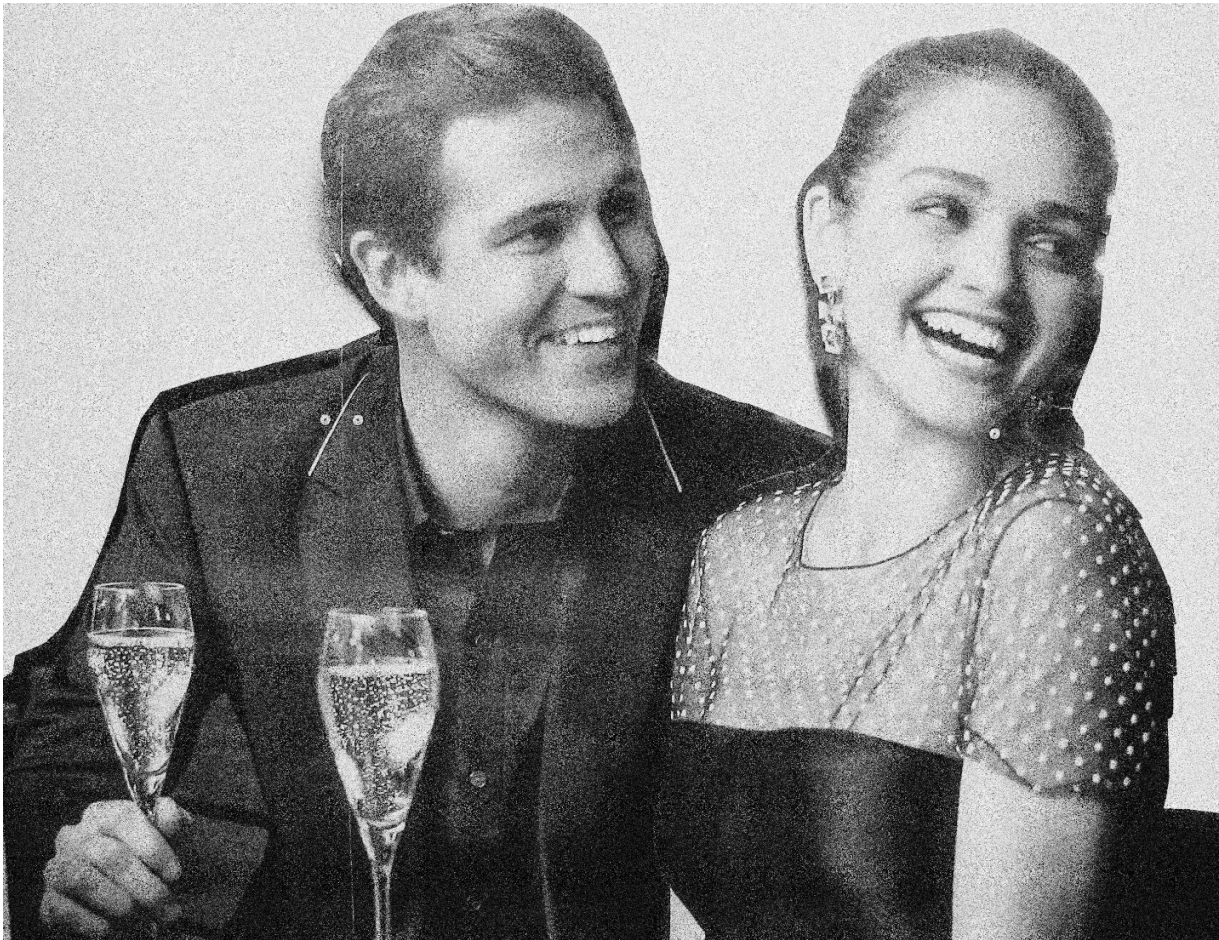
Figure 23 - Collage 2017

From 2003 to 2012 I was employed by Westminster Council as a community outreach worker in homeless hostels and day centres. The area was interwoven with stories and experiences. My job allowed me free movement through a maze of interior spaces: the Hallfield Estate in Paddington, the sheltered housing schemes in Adpar street, the maisonettes in Lisson Green. Access to multiple life-spaces granted me an intimate knowledge of the area, a multi-generational, multi-subjective range of insights.

In 2016 I returned to the area to conduct research for an exhibition *Alpha/Isis/Eden* at the Showroom gallery in Westminster's Church Street ward. Church Street was a pocket of working-class London about to be subsumed into a regeneration scheme called The Futures Plan. In 2016 this was in its implementation phase

and involved 'decanting' council tenants, demolishing social housing blocks and forcing a radical architectural reconfiguration not seen since the Blitz of 1940/1941.

CGI images for the Berkeley Homes West End Gate development were casting a luminous glare over the patchwork remnants of working-class communities. The spectre, West End Gate, was the new *genius loci*.

I adopted this biographical set of loci as a shadowscape, an underlying structure in the new work. The exhibition would be a mapping from below, an expression of a larval subjectivity. I walked in residual and liminal zones, places pushed to the edges of the new developments.

The proximity of West End Gate to the city's retail and financial centres was a key aspect of its marketing strategy; Marble Arch, Paddington Basin and Mayfair were foregrounded on hoardings and promotional brochures. These dérives were an attempt to illuminate an obverse constellation, the condemned housing estates, disused subways and DSS hostels shimmering darkly under the masterplan.

I made a note of stickers and flyposters and moved through temporary religious sites, encampments, subways, pubs and Middle Eastern cafes. I revisited a network of places around the market – Chicken Cottage, Clay Grill, Lord High Admiral.

As I retraced old paths I searched for missing friends and new allies, I wanted to get under the skin of the masterplan, feel the forces exerting an influence in the present. I relied on informal networks of friends, allies, ex colleagues and students to accompany me on walks. Some of them were working illegally in kitchens of shawarma cafes and awaiting legal documents. I met political activists from Damascus Aleppo and London resisting Home Office raids in 2016.

If the CGI images on the billboards were visualisations of future inhabitants, I wanted to track down the ghosts of those 'decanted' to towns and cities far beyond the pull of London.

The margins it seemed had folded back in, the liminal was here in zone 1. I made note of names taken from social housing blocks earmarked for demolition. Alpha. Isis. Eden. The names loomed like talismans, they

were a source of power, a portal to a reservoir of knowledge. I wanted to preserve them, not to stultify or make safe, but to harness their power as a form of counter-hegemony, a mode of resistance to the rebranding and erasure at work in the masterplan.

Eden House evokes the unexpected encounter with the enchanted garden, a quantum move to another dimension. In the ghost story by HG Wells, 'The Door in the Wall' (1911), a boy discovers a magical garden in an ordinary London street never to find it again. The subsequent conflict between the garden's allure and the pull of the worldly and mundane casts a melancholy pall over him.

In this piece I also introduce Blake's idea of the energy field, portal or star gate, this is a device I have been using to describe the melting of boundaries springing of being jolted into another reality, another social field. William Blake identified a portal connecting a churchyard in Marylebone with Primrose Hill.

An important part of my research was the movement through abandoned flats classed as 'voids' by Westminster Council. As a squatter I had illegally occupied such voids, now I was granted access within the rubric of a gallery education programme. This sense of complicity in a regeneration process which uses art as cultural capital is a current which moves through my work as a vexing agent, a line of contestation. If regeneration masterplanners recuperate art to make an area more palatable to a bourgeois constituency then the work itself must summon an ambience which is hostile to it, it must insinuate itself into the socio-political fabric of a place.

Paddington Green Police station is used for the custody and interrogation of terror suspects. It is a central locus, a distillation of grievances. Before the development of West End Gate it towered over the surrounding streets as a privileged place.

The crossroads is a site of rupture, it instigates a splintering of ideologies. In 2010 I was swept into a demonstration there, a collision between Britain First and Al Muhajiroun. I remember the backdrop of the flyover, the sublime camber arching over the febrile, squabbling mass. A strident Anjem Choudury was at the centre, mobbed by acolytes in black salwar kameez.

The move from marginal online culture to highly spatialised urban formations was critical to groups like Britain First and Al Muhajiroun who operated at the edge of the political spectrum. Paddington Green was chosen because it was already a flashpoint of contestation, terror suspects were held there and the groups were able to harness the hostility and dissent that coalesced around that.

Such flashpoints of contestation expose the flawed idea that neoliberalism is the 'natural order'. Such ideological positions cannot be naturalised into the prevailing system, the exponents of these positions cannot constitute neoliberal subjects. And so they operate as a mechanism, opening up spaces for discourse. As Mark Fisher says in the introduction to *Capitalist Realism* 'emancipatory politics must always destroy the appearance of a 'natural order', must reveal what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be a mere contingency, just as it must make what was previously deemed to be impossible seem attainable' (Fisher, 2010, p.17).

OPEN YOUR PALM FEEL THE DUST SETTLING THERE

Figure 24 - Westway. photograph 2018

Following on from the Alpha/Isis/Eden project I began working on a three part audio work *Open Your Palm Feel the Dust Settling There;* the work focused on North Kensington where Grenfell Tower emerged as another dominant force. The demand to occlude or eradicate brutalist structures has been a character of urban regeneration schemes, the drive to clad tower blocks is an ideological one. The fire at Grenfell Tower was catastrophic because cheap, flammable cladding was used to hide its concrete structure.

The Grenfell fire was a cataclysmic failure of neoliberalism. Critical voices were excluded from a public narrative shaped by Kensington Council, the Conservative Government and a reactionary UK press. I wanted to map the repercussions and tremors radiating from this moment; most audible in the nomadic and transient zones, Wormwood Scrubs, Hammersmith Hospital, the spaces beneath the Westway.

In 2005, I had mapped the area in my zine *Savage Messiah.* Drifts through living rooms, abandoned buildings, and back rooms of pubs had allowed stories to proliferate from a network of hidden interiors.

> A dinted portakabin houses a pirate radio station, nocturnal Grime scene. A tantalising link with Grenfell tower, pink lights glowing in windows. 106.9, Laylow FM (Savage Messiah, 2005).

The Grenfell fire had forced a radical recalibration of space, a new imprint, a new psychic wound. The work emerging from this part of west London would be a retracing of steps, a map of warnings left unheeded.

I wanted to summon flash points of militancy not to archive, compartmentalise and make safe but to avenge, to incite class consciousness and collective action. The affective textures of mourning would be channelled into political currents, I wanted to make audio work which could be collectively heard at deep listening events in spaces which would cultivate consciousness raising.

The overturning of socio-political conditions is always there as a possibility. Something out of the ordinary can happen, a radical subversion that occurs unexpectedly, a moment of rupture when rules are suspended and familiar terrain is experienced in a radically different way. There is something messianic in this idea that we might step into a new reality without warning, that something unforeseen could happen at any time. In 'Marx's Purloined Letter' Frederic Jameson says

> As for the content of the redemptive idea itself, another peculiar feature of it must be foregrounded, namely it does not deploy a linear idea of the future: nothing predictable, nothing to be read in the signs of the times (Jameson, 2009, p.62).

In moments of crisis familiar places are made strange, allowing us to 'see' for the first time. In those suspended times, what Benjamin, and later Agamben call 'states of exception' where commerce is halted and the patterns of everyday life are put on hold we are able to 'see' the social and physical fabric of the city, we gain insight into other forms of spatial organisation. Sometimes, in these moments, atomisation is disrupted, those held in isolation are brought into the collective.
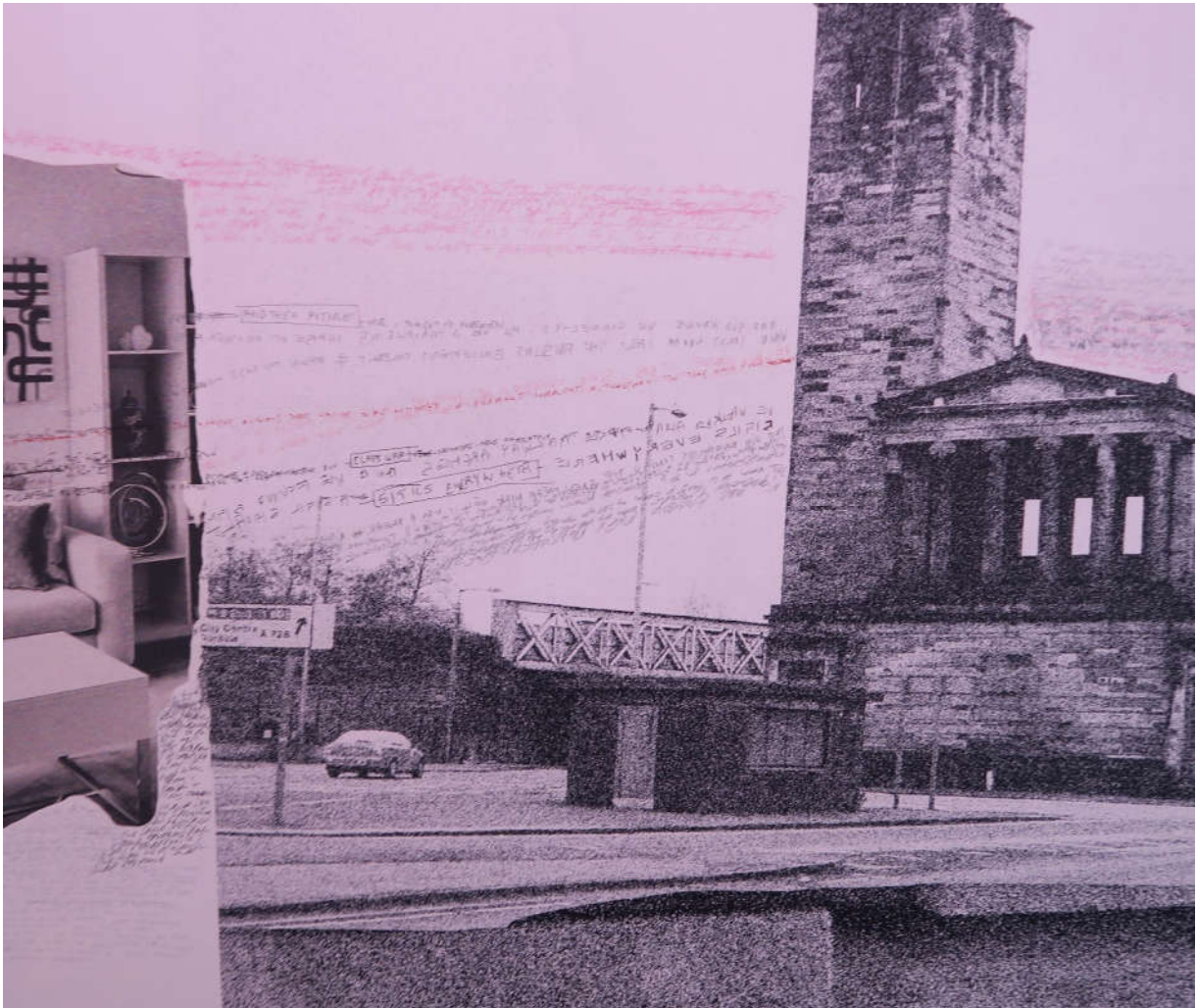
Figure 25 - Glasgow, The Sky is Falling. installation view 2017

In 2017 a drift in Glasgow began at the site of the demolished Hutchesontown C, a brutalist block in the Gorbals by the architect Basil Spence. As a subject for artists Brutalist architecture is often treated in a dispassionate, objective way; we might think of the photographs of Andreas Gursky or Rut Bleet Luxembourg where modernist housing estates loom silently, micro-fictions lost in sweeping panoramas. My approach, by contrast, is discursive and intersubjective where the encounter with modernist architecture becomes a series of contacts with multiple hidden narratives.

Hutchesontown C has a spectral, oneiric quality. My relationship with Glasgow goes back to the early 90s. I'd known it then through its bifurcating counter-cultural and political movements. I was always struck by its intensely European character, its red glowing sandstone and warren of bars and clubs. Most powerfully I remember a network of sound systems, brutalist office buildings turned into clubs, a city tilting and warping with intoxication. I remember the tower blocks of Red Road, Hutchesontown and Site Hill but these memories are at the edge of my subjectivity, they are dream-like and unstable.

Walking around the regenerated Gorbals elicited fictions from the site of demolished tower blocks. Interiors of flats became affective vessels, capsules of emotional intensity.

The drift through spectral architectural space became the mining of someone else's biography, each room was the unpeeling of another layer. I drew on a composite of mental images, images gleaned from walks across the city with Francis McKee and Ainslie Roddick from CCA and Malcolm Dickson from socialist project space Photoworks. Conversations arising on walks coalesced around the arcane and esoteric, architecture and social history, activism and labour struggles. I spliced fragments of these conversations with personal memories of the city, and emerging fictions were underscored by layers of experiences and encounters.

We meandered through flats, pubs, markets and churches. A personalised meditation on these interior spaces became an unspooling fictional narrative, I channelled the voice of someone who had run away to Glasgow to be with someone who had grown up in the flats. This fictional story ebbed into a broader conversation around brutalist architecture and the socio-economic forces that buffet it. Neoliberal disinvestment in social housing resulted in the rapid decline of estates from the late 70s onwards, council blocks were abandoned to physical decrepitude and myriad social problems. Hutchesontown C became a significant site, a privileged place in the mapping of this work.

The geographical parameters of the story shift to the new town of Cumbernauld. Urban regeneration in the Gorbals has seen many residents 'decanted' to Cumbernauld. The migration from the Gorbals to Cumbernauld has a pre-existing template in the post-war slum clearances.

I explored the experience of pressure, isolation and fugitivity in Glasgow, where drinking and over the counter opiates elicited fleeting memories of collective joy. At the centre of the story is a non-linear jump, the folding of geographical and temporal distance, something African-American poet Will Alexander describes as quantum time 'sending signals into mystery, and having them return to me with oneiric wings and spirals, so much so, that I forget my prosaic locale with its stultifying anchors' (Alexander, 2011, p.83).

This sense of quantum time, this epiphany is experienced after a drink in a Wetherspoons pub in Cumbernauld. White wine, prescription opioids and the hierophant quality of a Deal or No Deal fruit machine evoke memories of a party in Glasgow two decades before. Here brutalist architecture becomes porous enough to accept the psychoactive imprint, it becomes a site of psychic-archeology. The daydream is crepuscular, half remembered, faulty, but within it is the forecast, the dream of an alternative future.

This moment of epiphany is articulated by the Techno soundtrack, the 'skein of mesmerising sounds' that dissolves boundaries and erodes individual autonomy. In the subsequent audio work this moment becomes a crescendo, a point of heightened intensity.

Figure 26 - Birmingham. photograph 2016

Birmingham is a porous city where meshes of CGI futures hover over a degraded deindustrialised terrain. As a regeneration masterplan coalesces around a speculative infrastructure project (HS2) the derelict Curzon street railway station becomes the focus of a vast restructuring plan. Wrapped in a skein of marketing strategies the station's Doric Arch becomes an attractor, a virtual force, as new tech hubs and cultural zones emerge around it.

Digbeth, a deindustrialised area of red brick workshops and factories, has been rebranded 'Birmingham's Creative Quarter' ('Digbeth', visitbirmingham.com).

I set out walking with the intention of burrowing under the circulating narratives of entrepreneurialism, creativity and regeneration. I wanted to read the city's unofficial texts, uncover the inscriptions of protestors, itinerants and scavengers, and collectively transmute stories emanating from the proscribed reaches of the political spectrum.

To walk in de-industrialised zones is to forge temporary alliances and new constituencies. In the transitional zones we can imagine radically new worlds. In its threshold state Digbeth offers the possibility for inhabiting new fictional worlds; situated between railway lines, canals and the motorway ring road system it was an island ripe for the kind of Crusoean re-imagination that characterises the novels of J.G. Ballard.

> Sometimes he wondered what zone of transit he himself was entering, sure that his own withdrawal was symptomatic not of a dormant schizophrenia, but of a careful preparation for a radically new environment, with its own internal landscape and logic, where old categories of thought would merely be an encumbrance' (Ballard, 1962, p.14).

Ballard's sci-fi novels, particularly his earlier works, *The Crystal World*, *The Drowned World* and *The Ultimate City*, urge readers to closely observe the terrain, to recognise it as a powerful incubator of collective narratives, something theorist David Cunningham has called 'a generator and manifestation of unconscious collective drives, indicative of debts to the 'modern mythology' of surrealism and to its Lautréamont-like conjunction of scientific and poetic imagery' (Cunningham, 2009, p.66).

East of Birmingham's retail zone is a redevelopment site where stranded street names and fragments of architectural ruins wait to be decoded. Skins of previous decades are temporarily visible and the past opens for reinhabitation. A stranded brutalist stairwell and the imprint of a demolished pub are shards of the past piercing the present, unexpected obstacles disrupting the totalising imaginary of the masterplan. The concrete motorway system that once encircled the centre has been erased in the new city imaginary, but material traces persist, it is graspable in the present. We might think of official pedestrian networks as habits we have accepted, grooves deepened through quotidian routines and lowered expectations. These shards expose a plasticity in the terrain by forging new lines from designated routes, the unexpected encounter

with the repressed past is a deviation from the major path, it conjures images of a radically different city. This is the revelatory moment, the epiphany which elicits an unfolding of neural pathways, an infinite set of new directions.

The name Saltley on a road sign was a startling reconnection. The Battle of Saltley Gate was imprinted on the UK's collective psyche in 1972, the mass picketing of the coking depot and neighbouring Nechelles gas works was the culmination of the first general strike by coal miners since 1926, a moment of collective militancy with deep political ramifications.

I call this event a 'privileged time', suggesting its capacity to exert a powerful influence. If we think again of Simondon's privileged place as one with 'power, one that drains from within itself all the force and efficacy of the domain it delimits'; what I'm calling privileged times are intense collective moments capable of forming peaks in the social terrain, moments that possess power to alter the fabric of the urban landscape from their position in the virtual.

I walked around the ruins of the depot with an old friend in the city, she became an intermediary, bringing new connections and alliances. The Battle of Saltley Gate was an intensely transformative moment, a radical reordering of urban space and an effective hijacking of energy infrastructure as thousands formed to blockade the gas works. The victory, known as the miners' Agincourt, formed a collective shift in consciousness.

The site of the gas works gates is now a millennial housing estate. At the end of a cul-de-sac we unexpectedly encountered a public sculpture in the form of a fossil, and I wondered if this was a covert signifier, a coded connection to fossil fuels. It seemed more likely that it was a benign nod to the safer elements of Birmingham's history, the cases of fossils in its museums. This enclave of sandy brick houses was in close proximity to a Trussell Food Bank and alms ministered by St Matthews church. Despite the attempts to bury the area's radical industrial history beneath a conservative architectural vernacular of

pitched roofs and mock tudor panels the economic impact of deindustrialisation on the resident population is evident.

Attempts are made on anniversaries to keep the Battle of Saltley Gate alive in the public consciousness as Arthur Scargill comes to speak, and those who remember the strike gather with union banners. But where is the class anger now?

I lived in Birmingham in the early 1990s at a point it was undergoing another radical restructuring. The name Heartlands was imposed on a militant industrial area as a rebranding exercise, just as the Port of London was subsumed into the Docklands 'Enterprise Zone' in the 1980s, acres of Birmingham's de-industrialised sites including Saltley were corralled into the Special Economic Zone of Heartlands with its attendant powers of compulsory purchase.

We searched for affective grains and textures, for spectral currents emanating from the site of the mass picket. I wanted to know how this seismic event from 1972 was exerting an influence in the present. The battle had been a victory, perhaps it was woven into the area's micro-fictions, maybe it persisted as a collective sense of identity? Or had subsequent decades of neoliberalism, distorted and deformed this sense of identity, turned it into something bitter and malign.

In the shells and imprints of factories and car plants there is no longer a fixed community but an unsettled, shifting landscape. As we walked together we gathered more stories as strangers struck up conversations with us. By drifting together we entered a process of psycho-archaeological trawling.

By walking together we were creating mobile, communal space, drifting in privatised land. Walking together unlocks memories, becomes an experience of *memoire retrouvé*. The voicing of these memories becomes a political conversation, it adds more knowledge and emboldens. A hauntological staining of place became a physical occupation of space as we rekindle political agency through collective walking and trespassing.

We went to yards and lanes that didn't exist on the map, that were not accessible to google street view. In the pubs and industrial estates we encountered a seam of resistance, a sense of refusal to conform to neoliberal expectations. I recognised it in the re-routing of pharmaceuticals, the disabling of SatNav monitoring devices, the blacking out of registration plates. It was present in the defiance of the smoking ban, the black market economy, the contempt for the regenerated city centre. The men around here (in the weekday afternoons it was always men) looked at the city through a dark psychedelic lens, a combination of alcohol, beta blockers, cocaine and skunk. There was no respect for the prevailing social conditions.

WALKING AS COLLECTIVE CRITICAL PRACTICE OR SOCIOGEOGRAPHY AS ANTAGONISTIC, DISRUPTIVE FORCE.

Figure 27 - Leeds. photograph 2015

The dérive then, is a key strategy in my practice, that allows me to identify and change the ensemble of urban, social relations by walking together, by occupying the city, by breaching its borders. If Sociogeography is a collective critical walking practice then it might be useful to think briefly about its relationship to participatory art practices and gallery education programmes designed to fulfill what Clare Bishop calls a 'political logic in which audience figures and marketing statistics became essential to securing public funding' (Bishop, p.13).

In her overview of participatory art *Artificial Hells* Claire Bishop questions its oppositional quality and effectiveness as political artwork by refuting the claim that audience participation automatically forges new emancipatory social relations. Drawing attention to the parallels between participatory arts and the cultural agenda of the neoliberal New Labour government (1997-2010) she writes

> the question it asked on entering office in 1997 was: what can the arts do for society? The answers included increasing employability, minimising crime, fostering aspiration – anything but artistic experimentation and research as values in and of themselves (Bishop, p.13).

Sociogeography differs from relational and participatory walking practices in that it does not seek audience participation and social cohesion, it forges a collective dynamic through antagonism. By plotting lines of contestation it reveals breaks and divisions, in these ruptures spaces unassimilable to neoliberalism open.

The participatory art practices of gallery education programmes are problematic because they evoke an idea of inclusion when, at a systemic level, there is deep inequality. John Beck and Matthew Cornford's work on the replacement of art schools by what they call 'culture sheds', exposes the insidious way art has been re-routed through the rubric of regeneration. By mapping defunct Foundation colleges onto sites of 'landmark' cultural centres they make visible the shift in relationship from artist as producer to passive consumer.

A raft of millennial public galleries (opened between 1997-2011) were placed in economically deprived areas such as Walsall, Middlesborough, Margate and West Bromwich and tasked with 'engaging' the communities they landed in. New Labour's desired outcome for these galleries was that they would provide a catalyst for urban renewal. In 'The Art Schools and the Culture Shed' Matthew Cornford writes

> [art school] wasn't a place to go and consume culture, it's where I could meet some people and make something. That's very different from going to Margate to look at 'the great works of the great artists of our time' (Cornford and Beck, 2014, p.38).

'Community' and 'participatory' arts events are not the same as access to art education, the rise of these galleries coincided with the introduction of tuition fees in higher education which created a significant barrier to working class constituencies.

Claire Bishop considers the New Labour obsession with social exclusion, participatory art for her is 'Less about repairing the social bond than a mission to enable all members of society to be self-administering, fully functioning consumers who do not rely on the welfare state and who can cope with a deregulated, privatised word…'

The evocation of 'community' in Participatory Art projects is particularly troubling, we might think of Marcus Coates, *Journey to The Lower World,* 2004 with Liverpool Housing Action Trust. In this work a selected audience from a 'community' on a condemned estate in Shiel Park, Liverpool are left bewildered when he 'performs a traditional Siberian Yakut ritual' and preaches a message of community cohesion. This garbled and pretentious message can only be translated as a middle class view from above. The real antagonisms arising in the room are quickly closed down as the message he delivers (via a sparrowhawk's wing) is that 'we must stick together'.

In a discussion on Bishop's critique on relational and critical art practice, Dave Beech writes distinction between art's convivial Recovering Radicalism

> Whereas Bourriaud's writing emphasises and favours art that lays out forms of immanent togetherness, Bishop's writing emphasises and favours art that reveals real antagonisms within its social and cultural exchanges. Bishop's critique of Bourriaud has opened up questions of the political substance of relational art by asking for an antagonistic (ie political) rather than convivial (ie ethical) account of art's social relations (Beech, 2009).

This distinction between antagonism and conviviality is important, it asks whose cohesive space, whose set of values? An art practice which seeks to disrupt the flows of capitalism should create its own antagonisms. The art collective Freee deploy a tactic called 'expanded publishing,' where slogans are put in public spaces – billboards, clothes, market stalls – to evoke community through antagonism. Their work might be

described as social cut up, an attempt to call up the absent collective political by liberating the imagination in a collision of ideas and opinions. By intervening in the public sphere they re-route the channels of advertising and disrupt the image the neoliberal city seeks to project.

Figure 28 - Freee Collective, Exploited of the World Unite. billboard 2008

My walks invoke a different kind of public, a mobile public, something discussed by Nina Power in her essay 'The Only Good Public is a Moving Public'. Here she makes the distinction between the silent but outraged community invoked by a judge after the 2011 UK 'riots' and the moving 'bad' public of protest movements.

> But the other public, the mobile, punished public creates something else: an art that is public, perhaps, or a collective blurring of the boundary between the public and art itself. Against the legal artist-subject we can oppose the illegal artist-collective, the not-whole whose mobility cracks open the real illusion of the "good public" which exists nowhere and to which no one belongs, yet whose spectre hovers over every arrest, trial and prison in the land (Power, p.11).

Artists projects which engage this 'bad public', which moves beyond gallery education programmes and workshops into trespass, occupation and protest elicits are unlikely to be funded, publicly or otherwise. The 'Community' of gallery education programmes is not supposed to look like this.

This sense of a temporary collective moving through the terrain is reminiscent of the Kinder Scout protests of 1932 and the convoy/ New Age Traveller culture of the 1980s and 1990s. The mass trespass in Derbyshire was instigated by the young communist league in Manchester who demanded the right to ramble around the sublime yet geographically proximate peak district. Every Sunday thousands of industrial workers escaped on the train to the Derbyshire Dales only to find written notices and warnings from the Duke of Devonshire, sick of being driven off by violent game keepers (on behalf of ruling class landowners) the young communist league recognised the right to ramble was a class issue. They claimed it by moving together, by asserting their right to the land. The Kinder Scout Trespass involved 400 workers approaching from three directions, after a series of violent scuffles, they ran through prohibited land singing. It was a mobile public, a 'bad public' who won the national parks and public rights of way recognised today.

INTOXICATION/DERANGEMENT

Drugs permit a radically altered reading of the city, an experience of estrangement in familiar ground. They create psychoactive topologies where unexpected socio-spatial forms emerge. The city's pharmacological terrain is an incubator of visionary experiences. For Baudelaire, the quotidian moment is loaded with possibility, the city 'is rich in poetic and marvelous subjects. We are enveloped in an atmosphere of the marvelous;' (Baudelaire, p.119).

In Thomas De Quincey's Confessions of an Opium Eater London becomes a psycho-topological site, a labyrinth constructed from the tilting architectures of his opium-fuelled wanderings. In this psychedelic passage the streets of Fitzrovia are transformed into a tumultuous sea.

> now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to appear; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces upturned to the heavens—faces imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries: my agitation was infinite; my mind tossed and surged with the ocean (De Quincey, p.58).

How does this opium vision of a liquid city help us? In its unbound state, architectures slide into an aqueous realm, in the process of melting, the city releases generations frozen inside it. Who are these wrathful and imploring faces seen by De Quincey? Perhaps we might read them as the avenging spirit of the city, the voices erased and occluded by the logics of capitalism. When the rigidity and permanence of dominant order is shown up as an illusion other voices come to the fore, other histories are made visible.

For Walter Benjamin, intoxication allows new insights into the city, for him the city is a textual site and writing a metaphor for its unravelling. 'The certainty of unrolling an artfully wound skein – isn't that the joy of all productivity, at least in prose. And under the influence of hashish, we are enraptured prose-beings raised to the highest power' (Benjamin, 2006, p.58).

Benjamin's preoccupation with narcotics went beyond the symbolist scrambling of the senses and moved towards a reordering of reason. Benjamin took drugs to gain a radically new perspective on the quotidian, the occupation of multiple temporalities and spaces brought him moments of 'profane illumination.'

In his essay 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire' Walter Benjamin considers the role of the flaneur through two interconnected ideas, *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. *Erlebnis* is what he calls the overwhelming barrage of sensory information in the modern city, a fragmented, passive experience; *Erfahrung* is its corollary, the lucid, cumulative experience of the city communicable as wisdom, as accretions of experience retrievable in another time (Benjamin, 1939).

The notion of *Erfahrung* might be understood as an ordered system of guiding principles, not the regimented order of the grid, but the capacity to access a lucidity of thought, to make something tangible and coherent from an ineffable and inchoate terrain. We might think of the systems in the work of William Blake which emerged from a sensory immersion in the city but are retrievable to us in the form of drawings and poems, these systems are radically in opposition to the regimentation he saw being imposed by industrialists in the early 19th century.

The dialectical relationship between these ideas was of interest to Benjamin, he saw Baudelaire as an intermediary figure whose poetry could transform *erlebnis* into *erfahrung*. Radical Spectrality is a process of transforming the scattered, unfocused fragments of our experience into something lucid and retrievable. It combs decades of psychic pollution in search of clarity and collectivity. By altering our perception of the city and making it strange we might see it again as if for the first time, the vapours of intoxication might coalesce into a visionary sense.

Writing on William Blake, Iain Sinclair argues that London in the early 19th century was an inebriated labyrinth where fumes of intoxication could subsume you in a 'fug of otherness' or it was an experience that could be channelled into a clarity of vision. Blake's choice was 'either to go into this fug or to cultivate that visionary sense' (Sinclair, 2012, p.4).

This need to refine the experience of intoxication into a sense of lucidity seems urgent in 2020 when the UK ripples beneath a veil of weed smoke, alcohol and SSRI's. With a workforce of 73,000 the pharmaceuticals industry is one of the UK's biggest employers (ABPI website). In 2019 Public Health England conducted a survey which revealed that '11.5 million adults in England (26% of the adult population) received, and had dispensed, one or more prescriptions for antidepressants, opioid pain medicines, gabapentinoids benzodiazepines, or z-drugs' in the previous two years' (HM Govt Prescribed Medicines Review Summary 2019).

And, according to a report by UK analytics database company Exasol in 2017 of the 64 million prescriptions for antidepressants in 2016 (up from 7 million in 1991) most were dispensed in the deindustrialised zones of the North and East of England, areas abandoned by the economic restructuring of neoliberalism.

> There is a large regional variation across the country with a clear link to deprivation in the North and East of England. The highest prescribing district in the country is Blackpool, the only district in England where more than two prescriptions per person per year were given out by GPs (Exasol website 2017).

In a report 'Local Health Inequalities in an Age of Austerity' (2016) Clare Bambra notes that 'antidepressant prescription rates have risen since 2007, with the highest increases in the North: by 2012, antidepressant prescription rates were highest in Blackpool (331 per 1,000).'

Dérives in deindustrialised zones then, are an interrogation into the UK's pharmacological terrain. The deleterious impact of poverty on health is obvious, the high streets of former industrial towns look like the aftermath of a terrible war. In my practice I avoid glossing over these realities but the dérive follows the city's flows of intoxication, the textures of the heightened moment. Pharmaceuticals are re-routed into new narratives. The texture of the heightened moment is psycho-spatial, when prescription drugs and illegal drugs cut into each other they produce new textures of experience. We might think about beehive geometry; when wild bees occupy a potential hive workers begin making cells which join irregularly in the middle, these cells deviate from the standard hexagon into pentagons and heptagons. The point where drugs

intersect create new, irregular urban phenomena, and like the unexpected polygons in the wild beehive, they are absorbed into the wider structure yet remain distinct.

Self medication is pervasive. Cities are hallucinating. Energy drinks are mixed with spirits in Travelodge dormitories, weed and SSRI's combine in fugitive, unsurveilled moments. Dissociatives, Cannabinoids, Psychoactives and Stimulants elicit webs of narratives, new modes of thought. Perhaps it is at these points of intersection, these irregular cells, that new planes of insight might be reached. It is from these textures that new work, where new modes and systems emerge.

A study published by Kings College in 2016, 'Effect of high-potency cannabis on corpus callosum microstructure' showed that high potency cannabis causes damage to the corpus callosum, the threshold between the brain's left and right hemispheres. Smoking high levels of THC in strains like skunk changes neurological microstructures which inhibit the flow of information between the two sides. The report concludes 'Frequent use of high-potency cannabis is associated with disturbed callosal microstructural organization in individuals with and without psychosis.' We might think of this as a schizoid relationship with the world, a dual receptivity. The left hemisphere is traditionally thought of as the ordered rational side while the right is associated with intuition and creativity (Rigucci et al).

We might think of these two sides as *erfahrung* and *erlebnis*. Perhaps the neurological model works as a metaphor for a dialectical process of transforming unformed, chaotic and emergent channels of experience into something lucid and retrievable. The damaged corpus callosum is the porous threshold, the gateway between.

Figure 29 - William Blake, colour etching "London" Plate 38 from Songs of Experience 1794

So how might we harness the psychoactive topologies unfolding in the contemporary city? Perhaps it might be useful to consider William Blake's psychedelic visions of London. Sociogeography, is a term I've introduced to describe a multi-subjective approach to the city, walking as the cultivation of a visionary sensibility, but I didn't invent the method.

My own deployment of the dérive is a move towards mapping the social, the residual emotions of the collective. The idea of mapping a city's psychic infrastructure, (which is what I am arguing Blake was doing) moves beyond the observations of the individual towards a collective reading of the terrain. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney talk about 'hapticality', the feelings you can tune into through others. Cedric

Robinson said that the dispossessed created 'solvent-objects' that could erode attempts to fix the city in a colonial bind (Moten and Harney, 2013, pp.105-107; Robinson, 2016, p.5).

Blake's work is generated by walking in London, walks that channel the affective currents in the city. His work can be called sociogeographic because it draws on the experience of the social. His work isn't made in isolation, it doesn't come from a position of solipsistic withdrawal, it comes directly from working and living in London, and long drifts out through the city.

In the poem 'London', he's among people, he's close enough to read their faces, to see, what he describes as 'Marks of weakness, marks of woe' this isn't a faceless multitude, an anonymous crowd. What he notices, what he feels, is individual suffering folded and multiplied.

This is a deeply divided city, a city riven with injustice, Blake hears the 'cry of every Man,' and the 'Infants cry of fear,' and these cries reverberate, they are all around him, he doesn't seek to insulate himself or block them out, instead he interprets them, channels them, positions them within the wider context of colonization and exploitation.

When Blake says 'In every voice: in every ban/ The mind-forg'd manacles I hear' we might think about the UK in the contemporary moment, payday lenders, zero hours contracts, inadequate housing. We might think of the pressures we experience at work, repeatedly being told that as individuals we determine our fate, if we're poor it's our own fault for not constructing a better narrative; this idea of what Mark Fisher calls magical voluntarism lies at the heart of contemporary neoliberalism, it's there in CBT, in managerial diktats, in back to work schemes and TV game shows. It's almost as if Blake foresees this contemporary form of psychic binding.

In an original sketch of the poem 'London', EP Thompson finds that Blake uses the term 'German forged links' before changing it to 'Mind Forg'd manacles', and I think that's because, instead of being historically specific in talking about the monarchy of his time, the House of Hanover, Blake is writing for the future, a

people yet to come, and so he is able to speak directly to the current political situation (Thomson, 2008, p.183).

The first time I went to see the 2019 exhibition of Blake's work at Tate Britain I walked from St James's Park. There was an intensification of building work around the tube station, concrete spines, prefabricated rooms, armatures, fences. The city was under incredible pressure here, it was being branded *Buckingham Green, a new quarter for London.*

This area houses Royal palaces, parks, embassies and government buildings, but between these are pockets of working class markets and council estates.

And I thought about Blake's *London* again, his use of the term 'chartered streets' where he is talking about the domination of chartered companies in the late 18th century, the parceling up and privatisation of the city. In Blake's London the river also was being chartered by the East India Company. This must have horrified Blake who revered the river as a site of spiritual significance, who always lived and worked within a mile or two of it, it is unimaginable to think that he would have been able to dissociate this chartering of the river by the East India Company and their overseas colonies.

Blake was also living in the time of Enclosures, which intensified between 1760 and 1820, roughly Blake's lifetime. When he talks about chartered streets he is positioning London within the same context of enclosures and colonisation, he is witnessing the same process. The desire pulsing through Blake's work and the milieu and traditions it emerged from, is to unbind, loosen and open up private resources and return them to the commons. This is what I think is meant by Jerusalem.

Urban master plans are the single vision renderings Blake despised, they reduce the city to measurements, to net worth, to securities and investments.

Blake recognised London as a site of visionary experience, in his walks through the city he traversed its psychic terrain. It's obvious that neoliberalism has learned how to hijack these psychic channels. The luxury

developments rising in serried formations across the city cast a psychic net over our vision of London, these CGI images of the future are a form of psychic and libidinal engineering, late capitalist sorcery.

Blake shows ways to re-route this by deploying a kind of counter sorcery, his visions of London are a way of reconnecting with an ancient, sacred English history that opposes the 18th century rationalism of his time, which to him is sterile, calculated, deathly. This counter sorcery is a way of reconnecting with another lineage, another English current, which emanates from Albion, and runs through the true levellers, Winstanley's Diggers, and the dissenting sects that Blake was born into, that speak of the commons, an England which manifests as a shared experience of joy and abundance, a glimpse of something yet to be realised, something virtual, a post capitalist England.

When Blake says

> The Fields from Islington to Marybone,
>
> To Primrose Hill and Saint John's Wood,
>
> Were builded over with pillars of gold;
>
> And there Jerusalem's pillars stood.
>
> (Blake, 'Jerusalem')

the earthly and divine appear simultaneously. So if in 2019, it's not just the streets, but the psychic terrain we're fighting on, and Blake understood both, he lived in a city of the seen and the unseen.

The London he inhabited was socially divided and politically febrile, it was a city of mobs, of destitution, and eruptions of violence. Blake was swept up in riots, he saw the Albion Flour Mills burn, he wore the red cap of the Jacobins, but he also saw angels in London, it was where he communed with ghosts.

As I continued my journey to Tate Britain I crossed Victoria Street. This is when I started seeing police closing roads, Parliament square beyond, fluorescent lines jamming the exits. There was a week of protests

by Extinction Rebellion, and Blake echoed through it. Blake's visionary consciousness, his heightened sensitivity was deployed in the war against injustice, the violation of the earth through exploitation and greed.

The protestors are catching up with him now, gradually shedding vestiges of liberalism as their exposure to the repressive apparatus of the state increases, Blake's call to overcome the walls and fences, the chartered streets, is being adopted by greater numbers now, if we want to avert climate catastrophe it's the only real demand.

Blake was vehemently against the enlightenment concept of the individual, the stable unitary subject. He rejected the idea that humans are autonomous and bound individuals who exist above nature, this was not how he saw the world, instead he saw forces, energy flows, light, he saw immanence and connectedness.

Blake upsets the neoliberal privileging of the sovereign individual by repeatedly calling upon the collective to free ourselves. The self in Blake's work is present not as a monolithic, insoluble I, but a vessel channelling signals. The work speaks to what Deleuze and Guattari called a people-yet-to-come, it is a contribution to and enunciation of the collective, so in our counter-national anthem, he says *We* can build Jerusalem, not I, and in this way, alongside multiple others, he seems profoundly of our time.

The Extinction Rebellion protests carry traces of the London I came in the early 90s, threads unspooling from Reclaim the Streets Actions against environmental degradation, Spiral Tribe parties under the strobe of Canary Wharf, and also convoy culture, the protests and festivals at Stonehenge.

I connected with these countercultural scenes and protest movements, that's how I mapped London. The free party scene opened up radically different perceptions of the city, temporary occupations forged a reconfiguration of architecture, a new way of negotiating the terrain. And I recognise the same forces in Blake, he haunts these movements, these visions of a decolonised city without gated communities and private property and locked down riverside developments.

The capacity to radically reimagine the city is necessary and urgent. Blake resonates most intensely in the sites of radical occupation and efflorescences of collective joy, the force his work is felt in experiences of psychedelic intensity. We can think again about rave and protest culture, how the experience of participating tapped into that same counter-history, that same subterranean current.

This resonates with Mark Fisher's essay *Baroque Sunbursts* which talks about rave culture within the context of the compulsory individualism of neoliberalism, and the crushing of collectivity:

> Rave's ecstatic festivals revived the use of time and land which the bourgeoisie had forbidden and sought to bury. Yet, for all that it recalled those older festive rhythms, rave was evidently not some archaic revival. It was a spectre of post-capitalism more than of pre-capitalism (Fisher, 2016).

Tapping into historical currents is not some form of reenactment or exercise in nostalgia, but a sense of melting linear time, moving into the expanse of what Blake recognised as eternity.

Fisher goes on to say

> the 'energy flash' of rave, now seems like a memory bleeding through from a mind that is not ours. In fact, the memories come from ourselves as we once were: a group consciousness that waits in the virtual future not only in the actual past' (Fisher, 2016, p.45).

In the poem 'Jerusalem', Blake talks about seeing a new kingdom manifest in London, he names particular places, Marylebone, Primrose Hill, St Johns Wood, and this privileging of certain points is a deployment of the counter-sorcery I mentioned before.

If we think about contemporary London, how areas are re-branded, how places are 're-made' under the rubric of urban regeneration then perhaps we need to re-examine how Blake understood place. It is important to remember Blake's years as a boy, making engravings in Westminster Abbey, where he absorbs the aura of the sacred. It is here that he developed a deep understanding of Gothic art and a sense of a

mystical geography. Peter Ackroyd vividly evokes the intensity of this experience for Blake. 'Images of arches and ogres and canopies reappear through his subsequent art, springing directly from his time among the ancient monuments of the church' (Ackroyd, 1999, p.45).

This sense of Blake mining a reservoir of images becomes an act of channelling, by drawing, by observing intensely he is able to summon them later, recontexutalise them, this might be thought of a kind of proto-sampling, a cross fertilisation and hybridity at work in his oeuvre.

And the idea of immanence is embedded in the architecture as Ackroyd elucidates

> His art and poetry are filled with the images of steep steps and ancient doorways, of cloisters and arches and crypts that suggest dissolution and decay but which are also often seen as harbingers of a spiritual world still lying upon the surface of the earth (Ackroyd, 1999, p.45).

The way time behaves in Westminster Abbey is again, to do with the sacred, and Blake maps the city by working with this kind of time. His work pans slowly across vistas, opening lines of sight, and the visions become cosmic. But London persists, we are brought back with names, with architectural details. This mystical-spatial approach allows contours and edges to emerge, delineations of the imaginary spaces, other worlds we might begin to realise.

To stand in a churchyard in Marylebone and emerge in Primrose Hill is a quantum move distinct from travelling time, it is a break.

Blake's idea of the energy field, portal or star gate is a device I use in my own work, which as I mentioned in my report from Edgeware Road and Paddington, describes the melting of geographical and temporal boundaries and the proximity of other social fields, other worlds. In a sense it operates like Benjamin's dialectical image, a moment where past and future can be grasped simultaneously.

Blake's works are psycho-topographies and fugitive temporalities, they feel contemporary, we can think about current discussions around entanglement, and quantum mechanics Blake's work allows us to occupy multiple zones simultaneously.

The currents Blake tuned into are live, he shows us glimpses of a higher level of consciousness, and tactics we might need to call forth an absent collective subject and occupy those alternative worlds achingly proximate to ours.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this PhD was to refute a sense of despair and hopelessness surrounding the UK's deindustrialised zones by contacting an absent collective subject. I adopted walking as a research method, invited others to join collaborative and collective walks and formed new milieus, new publics. In doing this walking was transformed into political agency. These actions created joyful collective moments which sought to undo neoliberal damage by incorporating consciousness raising, haunting, antagonism and protest in its ecstatic mode. Such actions jolt us, give us cause to re-appraise the possibilities for a radically different way of life. To experience freedom and liberation, no matter how temporarily, is to have one's expectations raised. By walking with others in degraded deindustrialised zones I have recovered the indelible marks of alternative socio-political systems and encountered/engineered situations where emancipatory moments haunt as poltergeists disrupting the social order.

I returned to moments Walter Benjamin said were 'blasted free from the ceaseless flow of time' such as the Battle of Saltley Gate 1972, the '84/'85 Miners strike, the 2011 UK riots, 1990s protest/free party scenes and the 'hot' summer of 1981 in order to plot other trajectories, other possible outcomes. In a series of exploratory dérives over a period of five years (2015-2020) I identified something historical still lingering, still fizzing in the present. The dérive became a research strategy to gauge the city's collective mood, walks

became an archaeological sifting through the psychic sediments of the city, a process of unlocking collective memory and gathering new material for audio work and exhibitions. Subsequent shows drew audiences from different regions, class and ethnic backgrounds, academic and artistic disciplines and political positions.

My practice disrupted and unsettled dominant contemporary values by rejecting what Mark Fisher calls the 'mandatory individualism' of neoliberalism. Sonic and textual fictions were assembled to call up absent social formations; a refusal to forget which extended to a collaborative/collective mode of production which includes zines, flyposting, audio works and listening events. In this way I sent out messages which would behave as attractors or poles for potential allies to coalesce around.

The work's relationship to the street was an intervention in the city's psychic infrastructure, a re-routing of narratives emanating from urban masterplans. Here the vexing agents eroding the edges were folded back into the centre. Outside the Showroom Gallery in London for example I flyposted fictional texts and drawings, distributed a zine and made an audio track available in public listening events and digital media platforms. In this way the work sampled itself, became a self referencing system which linked to the city's dreamings. By making work which sent out messages into the city I pulled in residual and emergent traces of countercultural, radical and oppositional currents. The placing of work in the street also allowed me to reach others who would join a moving public, a peripatetic form of occupation through walking.

Material found on dérives was transformed into porous exhibition sites where minor narratives oscillated between city and gallery space, a process which was successful in conjuring new social formations in the virtual. The urban terrain is indelibly marked by moments of socio-political intensity – uprisings, protests, strikes, conflicts– as well biographical features and fault lines. In Leeds, Birmingham, London and Glasgow I reinscribed spaces with the city's occluded narratives, a process which not only dreamed of radical alternative scenes but conjured them in the present. By opening fictive spaces to imagine protest movements, communes and counter cultural efflorescence I spoke directly to a people-yet-to-come, the

work was an invitation, the initiation of a polyphonic conversation. Narratives oscillating between the street and gallery space set up a dialogical relationship with the city.

By deploying walking and art making as a method for incubating and facilitating collective actions this PhD has shown that prefigurations of new radical social formations, pockets of resistance and flashpoints of contestation persist in deindustrialised zones. Across the UK they glimmered on the edge of the political spectrum, by organising public walks in sites of collective militancy such as Saltley in Birmingham, contested regenerated zones in Leeds and redundant power stations in Barking the city's marginalised and repressed narratives were revealed through processes of intense aural and visual attunement.

By reclaiming walking as a critical tool in the neoliberal context and transforming atomised experiences into new collective sonic and textual terrain I have made a body of work which reaches for the altered states needed to imagine spaces beyond the reach of finance-capital. This PhD then has been an argument for a utopian imagination in the city. It hasn't been a rejection of Debord's project but a contemporary reworking of it: it has absorbed its visionary, radical elements and re-positioned them in the degraded edge of neoliberalism.

By cultivating a visionary sense through walking we can conflate temporalities, make quantum moves and reconnect with emancipatory currents. Haunting has been channelled into an art practice as a political act, not of remembrance but revivification. My practice engaged directly with spectral forces to forge oscillating links between the degraded contemporary moment and the absent collective subject.

Large scale installations allowed for an experiential and phenomenological engagement with the work. Installations formed of MDF boards, 'sitex' (galvanised steel) panels and lighting gels became the site of listening events and talks. By opening up speculative-fictive spaces ghosts of previous inhabitants have been invoked and new collective formations ushered in. These new collective formations were a 'bad public', a moving public, one that veered away from the criteria of gallery education programmes into trespass, occupation and protest.

The moving public that coalesced around my practice sometimes consisted of students, or people who had been active on social media but were atomised in the city, who were in precarious work or unemployed. It also included 'professionals': academics, medical doctors, architects, historians and geographers who regarded my approach as useful for their own areas of research. My walks, exhibitions and listening events formed plural spaces, opportunities for gathering which engendered new forms of political agency; in this way I invoked the collective cultural formations neoliberalism seeks to exorcise.

The intensification of atomisation in deindustrialised zones means the research is a process of piecing together fragments of narratives, something I have learned to do by engaging in conversation, developing a dialogical relationship with the city. Psychogeography, I have argued, becomes more relevant to the current phase of capitalism when it draws on manifold atomised voices. In Leeds I worked with students and collectively mapped the perimeter of the city's Business Improvement District. This walk was followed by a collective zine making workshop. In Birmingham collective walks to the site of the Saltley coking depot converged with forces I had aligned with in previous exploratory dérives, the pubs that harboured a dark strain of psychedelia, the vehicles with disabled sat navs, older forms of collective subsistence. In Barking and Ilford I re-encountered a peripatetic activist network near Barking power station. These walks intensified a dialogical relationship with the city which has been honed into an effective research method. By opening ourselves up to new narratives, to other's memories, places become intersubjective. The practice element of this PhD demonstrates the development of a complex intersubjective body of work which has been generated by these walks.

Glimpses of emancipatory futures might be seen in re-configured architectures, in re-routed technologies and radically reimagined urban zones. When something is deemed defective, obsolete and broken we are closer to unlocking its potential, its entelechy.

In the abandoned shopping precinct we might confront forgotten promises. In Stratford I walked from the new Westfield to the eclipsed 1960s precinct, an experience which allowed me to see the abandonment of a modernist future, it allowed me to re-imagine the defunct arcade and imagine what its new purpose might

be. The defective machine brings new ways of hearing, the record player reimagined as an instrument brings what Kodwo Eshun calls new 'sonic fictions'. This relationship with redundant objects as vessels brimming with potential calls to mind Benjamin's dialectical image, the forward backwards motioning of time.

This thesis mapped degraded social formations so that they could be re-imagined, reconfigured, and rekindled. It searched for *enteleke* in discarded objects and absent collective formations. So the Ikea riot taking place on the site of a rave twenty years before is the degraded manifestation of an incendiary collective current. In my practice I identified moments of collective possession, when the ghost of the absent collective subject becomes embodied, re-incarnated as a vengeful poltergeist. While a neoliberal mode of capitalism undermines the public sphere there are still temporal and topographical glitches that retain currents of political agency. I am challenging the idea that a relationship with the matrix of consumerism, precarity and digital technologies inhibits the potential for the emergence of emancipatory social movements. I walked with others through enclosed shopping malls, business improvement districts, new luxury housing developments, places that prohibited loitering, photography and drinking, in order to set up antagonisms, to reject the assigned role of passive neoliberal consumer.

We might think of scenes of (manipulated) disorder at Ikea or retail parks on Black Friday, these are grooves open to new forms of inhabitation; the gap between this licentious and carnivalesque form of consumption and its full-scale reordering are narrow. The de-naturalisation of neoliberalism is taking place in the contemporary moment in multiple forms, not all apparently progressive or emancipatory, and these might be considered the vengeful spirit of the lost collect subject, its return in a degraded form. A residual seam of resistance, obstinacy and refusal persists in the UK and I have paid attention to moments when technologies are subverted and redirected. In 2011 BBM (blackberry encrypted messaging service) played a role in the social unrest of August 2011, in 2018 drones were used to menace passenger planes at Gatwick airport. I have incorporated these moments in zine and audio cut ups to posits the idea that these moments carry seeds of revolutionary potential.

Sometimes we encounter places that are haunted by pre- and post-capitalism. Places sinking under bindweed and buddleia harbour the germs of co-operative self-sufficiency. Spaces open up for scavenging, drifting, merrymaking and the construction of temporary architectures. These sites elicit a different relationship with time where neoliberal concepts of leisure and consumption are eroded by vestigial glimpses of collective joy. These threshold zones hold images of what Mark Fisher calls Acid Communism, a world without drudgery and pointless toil.

If the corporate-speak of the finance-capital matrix becomes the official text of the city then perhaps it is our unformed thoughts, half-remembered dreams and repressed memories hold the keys to an emancipatory future. Perhaps it is the fictions that emerge from these, the stories that arise from the encounter with abandoned objects, neglected and abandoned architecture that might provide us with the images needed to realise an alternative future.

The possibility for an upsetting of prevailing socio-political conditions or a re-routing of habitual paths is always there. Something out of the ordinary can happen, a break, a moment of rupture when rules are suspended and familiar terrain is experienced in a radically different way. There is something messianic in this idea that we might step into a new reality without warning, that something unforeseen can happen at any time. In his essay 'Marx's Purloined Letter' Frederic Jameson says

> As for the content of the redemptive idea itself, another peculiar feature of it must be foregrounded, namely it does not deploy a linear idea of the future: nothing predictable, nothing to be read in the signs of the times, in the first few swallows and shoots, the freshening of the air (Jameson 2007, p.62).

To use a psycho-topological metaphor, perhaps we can say that it is the alleys, lanes, tracks and overgrown towpaths that harbour the whispered secrets we need to unlock the psychic vaults of the city. By harnessing an oneiric-delerial temporality I have accessed an oppositional undercurrent that lies temporarily dormant before re-emerging in another guise. From experiments in psychedelia and Afrofuturism, to punk and post-

punk, Dub and Techno sound systems to the bifurcating genres emanating from club music it is always there, a persistent strain operating under the skin of official culture.

My practice has willed into being a collective subject that walks through sediments of consumer-capitalist detritus, that opens new pathways by reassembling spectral fragments. I have distorted and time stretched the hectoring commands of late capitalism in the belief that cities still hold a radical collective consciousness. Memory is not a sanitised image, but a texture in the moment, an altered state of consciousness, a new relationship with time, showers of light when we least expect them.

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