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Paul, L (2015) Dirty Bottom. [Video]

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Dirty Bottom (2015 – 2019)



Paul, Lewis (2015) *Dirty Bottom*.

[Output Type: Q Digital or Visual media]

Research Cluster: Image

[Film/Show/Exhibition]

Output Cluster

RE// Bermondsey Artists' Group Exhibition,

London, 2019. Exhibited Film Work : *Dirty Bottom* (2015)

25, London Gallery West, London. 12 October – 31 October 2015. Exhibited Film Work : *Dirty Bottom* (2015)

'Embodied Methodologies' 2016: The fourth annual Practice-based Research Conference, hosted by Royal Holloway, University of London. 4th to 5th December 2016.

Exhibited Film Work : *Dirty Bottom* (2015) & Paper ***Embodied space, A very Queer boy: Adoption and Gay identity as politicised motivators in the role of the grown-up artist.***

**RE//
Bermondsey Artists' Group
Exhibition, London 2019
Film Work : *Dirty Bottom* (2015)**

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PRIVACY POLICY



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

ART



RE // Bermondsey Artists' Group 10 Oct 2019 - 3 Nov 2019

ART

Re marks the 35th anniversary of the Bermondsey Artists' Group. It celebrates the diversity and progression of practices by the membership and charts creative approaches and evolving processes within this diverse group.

About

The exhibition brings together work by over 50 local artists. Some of the works go back to the early years of the group's existence; some are from the artists' current practice. Each of the works has been selected by the artist to reflect upon their membership of the BAG and how their practice has developed during that period; *reconsidering*, *reconstructing* and *reinventing*.

ART

This large-scale group show weaves together multiple voices and histories by artists who live in close proximity to the gallery. This is London at its best; bringing together stories, visions and interpretations of the world around us.

Some artists have chosen to revisit early works, some of which have not survived or have deteriorated, some have been entirely revisited and re-energised, these artists are engaging in dialogue with their former selves and a former Bermondsey.

Many of the artists exhibit pieces from their on-going current practice. For them, *Re* has offered an opportunity to consider where they are now as contemporary visual artists in an ever-changing London art community. Many of them recognise that even though their work has changed over the years, they are still working around similar themes, thoughts and concerns.

ART

In *Re*, we experience multiple voices and lifelong fascinations by artists of all disciplines and at all stages of their careers, all presented together, equally. In essence, this bi-annual show illustrates the rich artistic community of the Bermondsey Artists' Group which continues to thrive 35 years on.

Re offers an opportunity for us all to understand our present by taking the time to stop and look back. It brings together new and old members of the group that has been instrumental in making Southwark the culturally rich borough it is today.

Re is generously supported by [Arts Council England](#) and [Southwark Council](#).



Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* : Installation view



Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* : Installation view



Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* : Film still



Lewis Paul | *RE// Dirty Bottom* : Exhibition installation view



Lewis Paul

Lewis Paul is an artist that works with film, and objects. His work is engaged with masculine identity, queer cultures, and concepts of family. Lewis is interested in the ways we gather, reflect, develop and tell stories, create narrative intersections and illusions and treasure material objects as contributors to social and subjective memory.

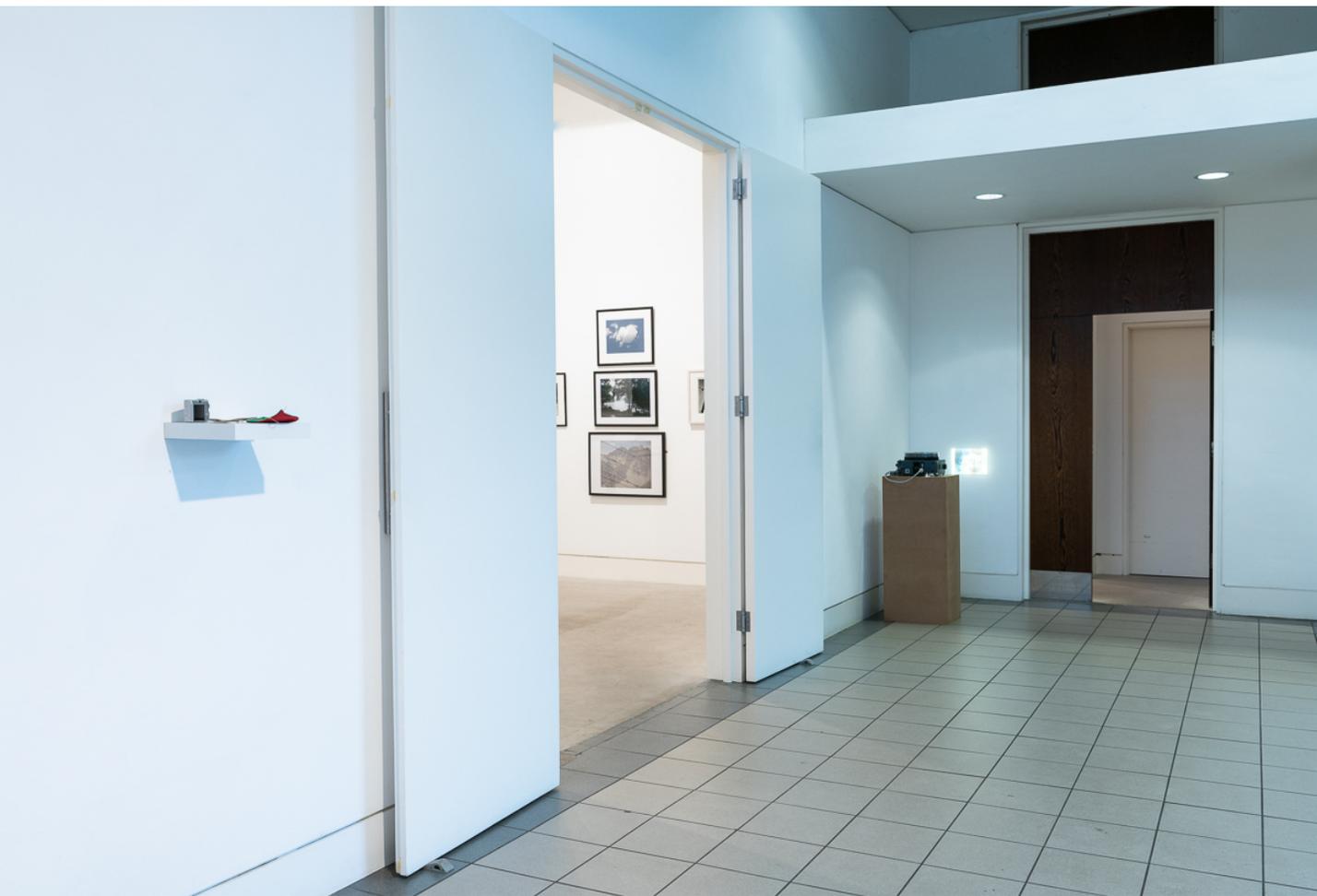
Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* : Installation view



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN FILM SCHOOL



Lewis Paul | RE// Dirty Bottom : Exhibition installation view



Lewis Paul | *RE// Dirty Bottom* : Exhibition installation view



Lewis Paul | RE// Dirty Bottom : Exhibition installation view

RE:

A Bermondsey Artists' Group Exhibition
10 October - 3 November



Image: Stephen Dunn, City Street (2019)

RE: A BERMONDSEY ARTISTS' GROUP EXHIBITION

Southwark Park Galleries // Lake Gallery (formerly CGP London)
10 October - 3 November 2019, Thurs - Sun, 11 - 5 Oct, 11 - 4 Nov
Preview: Sunday 6 October, 3-6pm



Stir to Incorporate

Southwark Park Galleries // Lake Gallery // Thurs 10 Oct // 11am-2pm

Join artist Holly [unclear] oral history workshop exploring local food-mant [unclear] age, with a visit to Peek Freans Museum, the for [unclear] story. Open to all!

FREE // To book e [unclear] learning@southwarkparkgalleries.org
020 7237 1230

Image courtesy of Peek Freans

OPEN

FAMILY ALLOTMENT GARDENING SESSIONS ARE BACK!!!!

FREE in the Gallery Garden, Southwark Park SE16 2UA
020 7237 1230 // southwarkparkgalleries.org

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN FILM SCHOOL

families with pre-schoolers.

**25, London Gallery West, London. 12
October – 31 October 2015.**

Paul, L. *Dirty Bottom* (Digital Film)

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

25

12 - 31 October 2015

You are invited to attend a specially commissioned art exhibition, and film screening. The exhibition will bring together alumni and representatives who have shaped the future of creative industries in the UK and informed the pioneering role of the University of Westminster in creative and media education in the UK and internationally.

The exhibition, film screening, and a range of documentary material will give rare insights into the history of art and creative education at the University of Westminster and its predecessor organisations.

The exhibition will reference the past, represent the present, and flag future directions. It will include twenty-five of our best artists drawn from our staff and student alumni, and cover a variety of media. Artists include: Charming Baker, David Bate; Rut Blees Luxemburg; Tom Corby; Alison Craighead; Shezad Dawood; Des Hughes; Malcolm Le Grice; Oscar Murillo; Joshua Oppenheimer; Lewis Paul; Clare Twomey; Keith Wilson.

LONDON
GALLERY WEST

London Gallery West
Watford Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3TP

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Berlin Horse image courtesy Malcolm Le Grice and the Richard Saltoun Gall



25

Yousif AlKhalifa
Alinah Azadeh
Gavin Baily
Charming Baker
David Bate
Mary Benson
Rut Blees Luxemburg
Christie Brown
David Company
Jack Carosso
Tom Corby
Alison Craighead
Shezad Dawood
Judith Dean
Roberta Einer
Ilan Godfrey
Des Hughes

Asif Kapadia
Aleem Khan
Malcolm Le Grice
Oscar Murillo
Zed Nelson
Joshua Oppenheimer
Lewis Paul
Perou
Max Schleser
Sunil Shah
Mitra Tabrizian
Clare Twomey
Mark Wilsher
Keith Wilson
Vanessa Winship
Michael Winterbottom

Continues in London Gallery West in The Forum



Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* (Digital Film) Installation Images ,25, London.



Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* (Digital Film) | Exhibition Images , 25, London.



Small white label with text below the photograph.

25

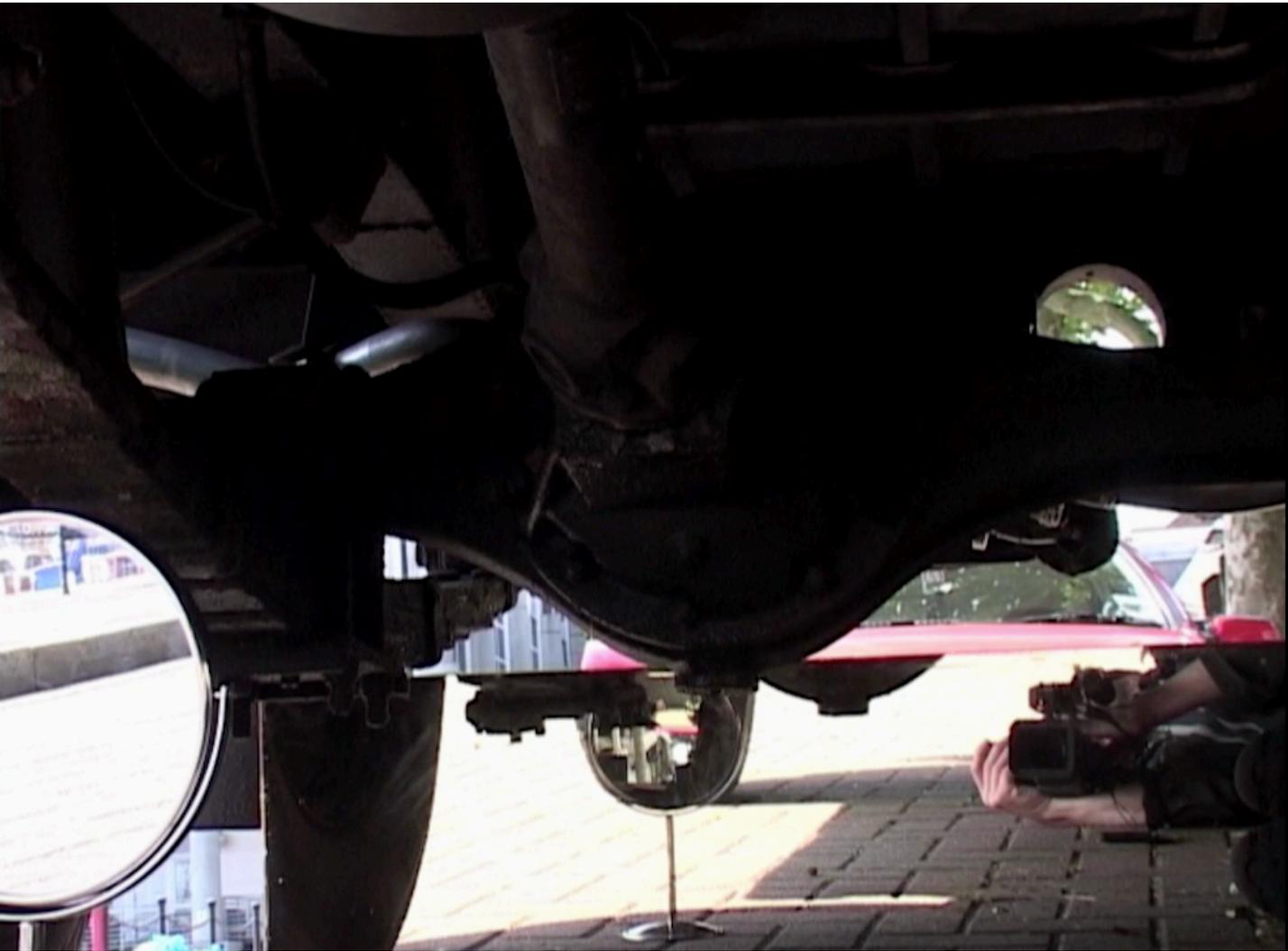
11 OCTOBER - 11 NOVEMBER 2015

25

Vertical text on the left wall, likely a list of names or titles.



Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* (Digital Film) | Film screen installation /
Film still , 25, London.



Lewis Paul | *Dirty Bottom* : Film still



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN FILM SCHOOL

Paper and Presentation of Artist Film, *Dirty Bottom*, Lewis Paul.

Title: Embodied space, A very Queer boy: Adoption and Gay identity as politicised motivators in the role of the grown-up artist.

Conference: 'Embodied Methodologies' 2016: The fourth annual Practice-based Research Conference, hosted by Royal Holloway, University of London. 4th to 5th December 2016.

Author: Dr Lewis Paul

Friday, 4 November

4 Welcome

4.15 Panel: *surveillance/resistance* (Room 0-03)

Michael Bodie – ‘360° Docu-Narratives: An Embodied Storytelling Methodology’

Erin Solomons – ‘Authentic Evidence: Dehumanizing narratives behind maladaptive behavior’

Elif Grant – ‘Shifting Spaces of Activism’

Panel: *violent sensations* (Room 1-03)

Catalin Brylla – ‘Undoing Blindness Stereotypes through Embodied Experience in Documentary’

Hazel McMichael – ‘The Voice in Exile: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s Mouth to Mouth’

James Telford – ‘Theorisations of Conflict in the Practice of Noise’

5.45 Break

6 Keynote: Lisa Blackman (Room 1-03)

7 Workshop: FYTA – ‘Conceptual Song-writing and Object-oriented Synthesis’ (Room 0-03)

Installation: Jennie Cole

Saturday, 5 November

10.30 Welcome

11 Panel: *knowledge within space* (Room 0-03)

Carson & Miller – ‘Game-Playing in the Museum's Mass’

Karen Fielder & Belinda Mitchell – ‘The Matter of a Manor’

Panel: *documentation* (Room 1-03)

Kate Sweeney – ‘Capturing The Body In The Digital Archive’

Lewis Paul – ‘Embodied space, A very Queer boy: Adoption and Gay identity as politicised motivators in the role of the grown-up artist’

Helen Clarke – ‘Streetwalker: the flâneuse and the electronic flâneur’

12.30 Lunch

1.30 Screening: Jodie Mack (Room 0-03)

2.30 Panel: *lines of site* (Room 0-03)

Jessica Worden – ‘Bodies in Research and Writing: A Performance of These Lungs’

Michelle Lewis-King – ‘“Pulse Project”: A Sonic Investigation Across Bodies, Cultures and Technologies’

Katie McCallum – ‘An Embodied Approach to Diagramming in the Field of Mathematics’

Edyta Maşior – ‘Media Translocations’

4 Break

4.30 Performance: Sandro Masai – ‘My Body, Your Room’ (Room 1-03)

Installations: Sally Waterman, ‘Against’; Jennie Cole; Edyta Maşior.

Paper Title: Embodied space, A very Queer boy: Adoption and Gay identity as politicised motivators in the role of the grown-up artist.

Conference Presentation: Paper and Presentation of Artist Film, 'Dirty Bottom' 2016, Lewis Paul.

Conference: 'Embodied Methodologies' 2016: The fourth annual Practice-based Research Conference, hosted by Royal Holloway, University of London. 4th to 5th December 2016.

Author: Dr Lewis Paul

Title:

Embodied space, A very Queer boy: Adoption and Gay identity as politicised motivators in the role of the grown-up artist.

The 5min artist's film 'Dirty Bottom' made in an enclosed space underneath the macho trappings of a 'Series' Landrover, 'Dirty Bottom' was filmed in locations across London. A very loitering affair.

As a gay artist one might think I had enough material in my psychological history to draw from, but not quite. I was also adopted. This film forms part of a body of work that tries to unravel these two, both quite 'queer' inter-liminal embodied spaces. They often conflict.

As Steve Pile identified, 'There is never one geography of authority... there is never one geography of resistance... the map of resistance is not simply the un-derside of the map of domination... if only because each is a lie to the other'¹. In this film, the body is hidden and fragmented, located beneath an icon of macho 20th century exploration. If the construction of identity is in the image, how might the image and the function of the gaze function when reversed? How do we 're-claim' an image of adult-self when fragmented by early childhood illusions of normality? What does that site look like?

Larry Knopp observes, 'A queer perspective, informed by embodied and lived queer experiences, can similarly help us to rethink some additional spatial ontologies, ...to consider... a radically different relationship to these notions... It is no surprise, then, that queers are frequently suspicious, fearful and unable to relate easily to the fixity and certainty

¹ Pile, Steve "Opposition, Political Identities and Space of Resistance" in Geographies of Resistance, eds. Steve Pile, Michael Keith (1997) Routledge.

inhering in most dominant ontologies of 'place'. Indeed, many queers find a certain amount of solace, safety and pleasure being in motion or nowhere at all.²

'Dirty Bottom' asserts a complex set of questions formed from the need to articulate the 'personal narrative'. The making process a physical embodied activity in this case, draws forth the deeper complexities of social embodied conditions of normality.

The 'being' in-between; some notes.

The in-between status of adoption is a complex subjective position to articulate. Conceptually, my work is trying to make sense of 'The 'being' in-between' informed by a matrix of boundary points, for example: masculine sexual identity and gender politics, and on an experiential level, genetic and learned behavior and aspirations (nature and nurture in relation to adoption). These conceptual positions become articulated by formally engaging strategies of doubling, reflection, hybridisation, stillness and movement. These are materially evident in the range of my creative practice for example: made objects, manipulated found objects and as in this case, the film 'Dirty Bottom'.

In his book, *Embodiment: Creative Imagination in Medicine, Art and Travel* (2007)³ Robert Bosnack sets out his practice of *embodied imagination*. His conceptual framework is supported by a range of approaches, one of which is 'embodied emotions' as defined by Antonio Damasio⁴.

Damasio defines the concept of 'embodied emotions' as formed from the intersection between the chemical agency of the blood, and the electro pulses of the nervous system as both chemical and electrochemical interactions ... 'acting on the body proper'.

The 'emotional state' as it were is considered then to be constructed in the between-space, the liminal intersection, rather than in a specific physiological domain.

² Knopp, Larry (2007) *From Lesbian and Gay to Queer Geographies: Pasts, Prospects and Possibilities*, in *Geographies of Sexualities*, eds. Kathy Browne, Jasom Lim, Gavin Brown (2007) Ashgate Press.

³ Bosnack, Robert (2007) *Embodiment: Creative Imagination in Medicine, Art and Travel*. Routledge 2007. P.38. This text sets out Robert Bosnack's practice of *embodied imagination*.

⁴ 'Antonio Damasio's research in neuroscience has shown that emotions play a central role in social cognition and decision-making' available at <https://www.ted.com/speakers/antonio_damasio> accessed October 2016.

If the production of something as tangible as emotion is formed not in once place, but is considered as a conceptual point of intersection, I wondered how this might be useful in making an embodied film.

I wondered what could happen if I took this concept as a starting point and worked backwards, outwards, externalised the concept, of literally being between two places, my outer body becoming the site of intersection located in the space beneath the Landrover, but above the geological political surface of London. I became very interested in considering the in-between as a real place of significance.

These liminal intersections might prove more primal and fundamental than I had considered. If the emotional intersection of Antonio Damasio creates fight and flight responses in our emotional responses to the world, perhaps the physical enactment, this in-between liminal position might allow me to find more agency of expression than more traditional fixed concepts or boundaries points.

The importance of a Dirty Bottom

During the making of Dirty Bottom, I continued to consider the nature of the Landrover as an icon of British motive endeavor. I had already established that by a long sideways link I was related to the founders of the Rover car company the Starley's of Coventry. I became interested in the link between the iconic object, masculine associations and the history of the Landrover and what it represented in the 20th Century masculine world.

As a symbol it embodies discovery, work, political domination, depending where in the world you might encounter it. In the streets of London, its Iconography allowed me to stop and film where I liked. What could be more normal than seeing a man in overalls step out of an old Landrover clutching a bag of tools, and slide underneath for a few minutes.

The image of a Landrover creates associations that are highly loaded. Like an inverse iceberg, all the immediate iconic meaning was in fact loaded in the most visible top two thirds. The power of this Icon dazzled and confused for just long enough to assert my own presence, method and aspiration. If I couldn't lay claim to the legitimate line of decent, I would lay claim to its dirty abject underbelly.

It was therefore the hidden third that fascinated me, creating as it does an actual liminal space, rather than a perceptual one. This filthy underbelly, rather like the exalted abject of the writer Jean Genet's affections, creates both the language and place of potential empowerment.

Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal: Other Queer spaces.

As you might imagine, there are not many artists that produce work that reflect both a gay and adopted sensibility in their practice, and even less that consider these issues from a child's point of view through to the realm of adulthood.

In Jeanette Winterson, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal*⁵ the writer Winterson charts her own evolution from early childhood through coming of age, to adulthood, from both a gay and adopted position. The title of the book comes from her adopted mothers response to Winterson's coming out.

The cover of the book tells as much of her story, as the text. The seaside view is out of season, there is no one else around to view the 'odd couple' of mother and non-matching daughter. Winterson is actually being physically put in a place 'out of the normal' that embodies her mother's relationship to her. ... Winterson discusses her emotional reaction to the event in the book as significant. She also selected the image for the cover. Did this event, and the documentation of it in the photograph create an embodied experience that later re-emerged to inform her creative practice and her 'lyrical' approach to story-telling? How does Winterson re-claim her own story?

Winterson has developed a lyrical use of language that positions her writing as a formal device of political aesthetic.

In Susann Cokal's article 'Expression in a Diffuse Landscape: Contexts for Jeanette Winterson's Lyricism'⁶ the context and concept of Winterson's form and style is examined. Winterson's lyrical form as an expression, offered against the intrigues of story form, her matrixical approach, lyrical 'poetics' verses lineation in storytelling might, in my view be considered as possible formally strategies that are influenced by her embodied experience of being both gay and adopted. The form allows for extending the possibilities of creating 'affect' within her readers. Considering Winterson's approach, Cokal asserts,

'Lyricism, particularly as connected to fantasy, represents Winterson's way of reinventing language and thus plot, even the world itself. Language has the ultimate power in her work because it shapes not only perceptions of events but also the events themselves. To "break the narrative," as she writes in *The PowerBook*, is to "refuse all the stories that have been told so far and try to tell the story differently—in a different style, with different weights" ...'⁷ (p. 17).

Winterson is most certainly interested in Story. The story here though, is the placing of her own history out into the word through her writing. Winterson, it could be considered, has one

⁵ Winterson, Jeanette (2012) *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal*, Vintage.

⁶ Cokal, Susann (2004) *Expression in a Diffuse Landscape: Contexts for Jeanette Winterson's Lyricism* (pp. 16-37).

⁷ Cokal, Susann (2004) *Expression in a Diffuse Landscape: Contexts for Jeanette Winterson's Lyricism* (p. 17).

clear story, her own, the nuance of which is expressed differently in each book she produces. This nuance critically described as style is her experience 'as lived' showing forth through her own love of language. In essence then, the story in Winterson's work is one of re-claiming and owning identity as lived though the critical position of a gay and adopted child, ...an embodied writer?

Jan Clausen identifies the important root of this, in 'The Gender of Genre'⁸(2012), Clausen reviews *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal* and considers it from the position of gender politics. In this article, Clausen cites Winterson, who at the start of 'Why be Happy...' asserts,

'Adopted children, are self-invented because we have to be; there is an absence, a void, a question mark at the very beginning of our lives....that isn't of its nature negative. The missing part, the missing past, can be an opening, not a void....Rewrite the hurt...Reading yourself as a fiction as well as a fact is the only way to keep the narrative open.'⁹

Haptic Affect

Often we look to cinema and film to cause a sense of affect within us, the audience responds to the scene, the music, the drama... the story of revenge, the love story... Film targets our senses, our social knowledge, our expectations, our memories, our emotional knowledge and combines them in a process of physiological and psychological intersection. One might argue that film embodies its-self within the viewer. I would argue this case, and its one of the core things I think about when developing a piece of work. I have an interest in considering how materials might be combined or manipulated to cause affect. In *Dirty Bottom*, part of the materials of the film are myself.

Its not often one gets to experience the filmmaker/artist in the material of the film. Most of cinema is designed to remove the hand of the maker. Documentary allows for the inclusion of the maker more often. Experimental film, artist film, allows for this inclusion the most often.

In my Film, the body, the site of the maker is embodied in the film making process. The camera rises and falls to the breathing of its holder. The feet of the maker (my feet) form part of the composition. The mirrors seen on screen align with the optics of the camera lens to create impossible visual tricks and manipulations made possible by physically squishing and crawling around under hot oily drips and scorching exhaust pipes. The rushing wind of the number 78 bus rocks the composition both above and below decks... the desire line of comfort and respectability is blurred and discomfort is aestheticized.

There is an importance in this experiential making process. Filmmaking is not often thought of as a 'haptic' making experience.

⁸ Clausen, Jan (2012) *The Gender of Genre*⁸

⁹ Winterson, J (2012), quoted in Clausen, (2012), *The Gender of Genre* (p. 11).

The embodied sense of touch as explored in Richard Sennetts book *The craftsman*¹⁰ is a process considered as both deep learning and haptic knowledge. The generation of knowledge is not often associated through the perspective of making physical things.

When I left school I made aeroplanes for a living. I was taught to make things in several ways, technical (measured) and optical (it looks right) and haptic. I was often told you can 'feel if its right or not'. And by the time I was 20 I had learned how to 'feel if something was right'. At this time, I didn't know what to do with this deeper haptic knowledge. It was not until I began making art objects that I was able to begin to see how these haptic sensibilities could be a route through which the embodied experiences of adoption and sexuality, could be re-imagined. The making of something, is then a primal activity.

The voice of the adopted child as an adult is not often heard in art. Like Winterson, I have been led to see the world through the intermediary of an identity imposed upon me. Like Wintersons lyricism, the haptic presence in *Dirty Bottom* defines an important process of reclaiming space and being in the filmic apparatus of representation.

The space under the Landrover retains a peculiar sense of calm. It is my space, it is a reclaimed Queer space, it allows for the site of illusion, looking, voyeurism to be inversed. Filmic space is reclaimed. In my work and particularly in this film, I have sought an exploration of how the concepts of 'being' - embodied experiences – and 'being in' – embodied space might intersect and contribute to new knowledge of **The 'being' in-between**, considering how concepts of gender, genetic heritage and identity might be further developed and articulated.

LP 2016.

¹⁰ Sennett, Richard (2009) *The Craftsman*. Penguin.