Canon imagePROGRAF

arm, just

tips on th

MID SHOT[1]

Alongsiding with Alice Walton

1
A mid shot is typically shot from the waist up, in which the subject is seen with equal importance to the surrounding context. It is often used in dialogue scenes cutting between people as they speak. The lens used would be most akin to what the human eye sees. I think of it in relation to how Alice and I have collaborated, both in the studio looking together at the same subject matter, and in terms of a kind of equality and balance with one another and in our surroundings.

‘Permission by proximity’ is my term for a methodology in which working alongside, and with deeper awareness of another’s practice, brings with it a kind of permission to explore an aspect that they are an expert in.

Within our community of artists there is a generous sharing of ideas and interests and these cross-pollinate amongst us in ways that are acknowledged and discussed but might nonetheless ‘tug’ sometimes. The ‘tug’ is an internal realisation that an idea you have circulated or felt ownership of has been taken up in a particular way. This might be by another artist, a student or schoolteacher with whom you willingly share(d) ideas. In some cases this produces a productive open on-going dialogue and the work remains clearly identified as your own, in others it can feel as though someone has picked up something and run with it before you have had a chance to investigate it yourself.

We need to acknowledge this working practice as productive and generative. But we may also need to be honest in identifying what ‘tugs’ and why. How might we define and identify the aspects of practice we currently want space and time to ‘own’, or when we use terms with one another, how we clarify which aspect of the phrase or term we mean. Often we agree, and we know we use a linguistic shorthand because we know each other’s practice well. But whilst we are often broadly agreeing, we also have interesting differences of perception, which are worth unpacking a bit.

(Aside: What are the potential ‘tugs’ or at least ideas circulating? Can ‘tug’ be used as a password for identifying an idea we need to unpack in a given moment?)

Artist Alice Walton[2] and I have worked together intermittently since 2018 and known one another for many years, connecting initially through our work in Gallery Education in the early 2000's. The relationship developed through wider shared interests in art and relational practice, working together in learning contexts and in geographic proximity, and then managing motherhood as working artist educators. Over recent years we recognised a shared sensibility in which her work with found images and installation has been brought together with my interest in film and photography.

What has been learned from sustained shared looking with one other person? The films, images, installations, publications and performances we have made together, within the context of my research around 'alongsiding', have informed my investigation of what it means to look closely with others. Working with a consistent, detailed and precise noticing, making decisions and selections together, and the ongoing dialogue with another very aligned artist, has pushed the depth of research through new films, publications and live sharing. The collaboration offers affinities and differences, reassurance and new understandings as we become more attuned to one another's interests and habits. The works made would not look or feel the same without our shared input. There are nonetheless uncertainties, internal unshared thoughts, individual perspectives and vulnerabilities that are inherent to the practice.

I've often collaborated with performers and choreographers through an improvised, devising and sharing process, in which I have a clear role as a filmmaker to capture what is occurring in live movement. These are usually low paid public funded opportunities, where creative autonomy and unspoken structures of group working are defined through collective understanding of creative processes. I am the camera, and artist/art school graduate, among people who have found a connected but different route through dance or drama.[3] My work with Alice borrows from these experiences but there is a different framework around equality and ownership of the work.

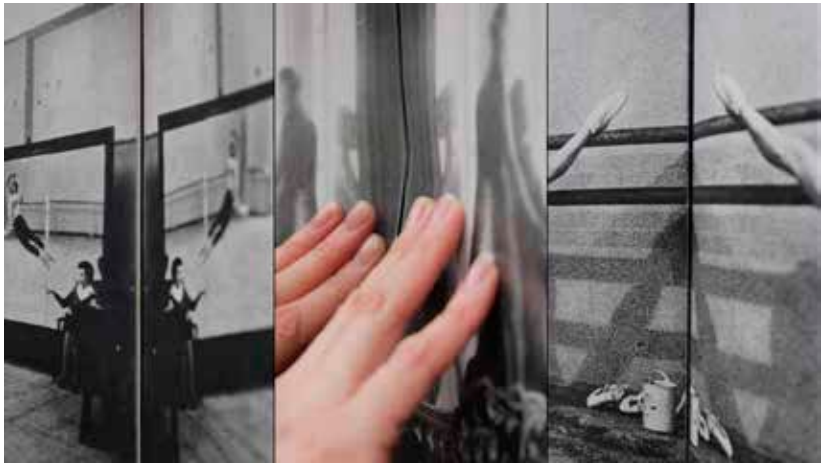
Material here gathers shared correspondence, personal reflection, images and relevant references to our process and a chronology of finished works incorporating specific themes within 'alongsiding' including touch, dialogue, process and material.

2
Biography for Alice Walton is in the Appendix.

3
Which might often be derived from the influence and sensibilities of ephemeral experimental practices and teachings from 1960's emerging from Black Mountain College, North Carolina, Judson Memorial Church, New York, the Fluxus movement, Dartington College, UK and among key figures John Cage, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Merce Cunningham or and later Matthew Goulish of Goat Island, Chicago, The Wooster Group, New York and Forced Entertainment, UK. These would also have connected to the beat poets and spaces such as Anthology Film Archives, New York or London Film-makers coop, UK.

UNTITLED
(ETERNAL, PAS DE DEUX, PLIE)[4]

Anna Lucas and Alice Walton
4 mins 15 secs colour stereo HDV 16:9
3 channel looping 2018



Coming about through a series of collaborative studio experiments *Untitled (Eternal, Pas de Deux, Plié)* explores a shared interest in the printed photographic image. Activating a feeling of movement through the repetition of simple gestures in relation to the printed page, this moving image work develops an interest in close looking. In this instance, black and white book pages (of reflected bodies in dance rehearsal or an embracing Rodin sculpture) from Walton's archive are turned and reflected back on themselves, revealing and concealing their subject matter to set up a correspondence across the pages and draw attention to the particularities of the images. The formal qualities of line, texture and juxtaposition are as enticing here as the reflexive touch of a real hand across a (printed) body.[5]

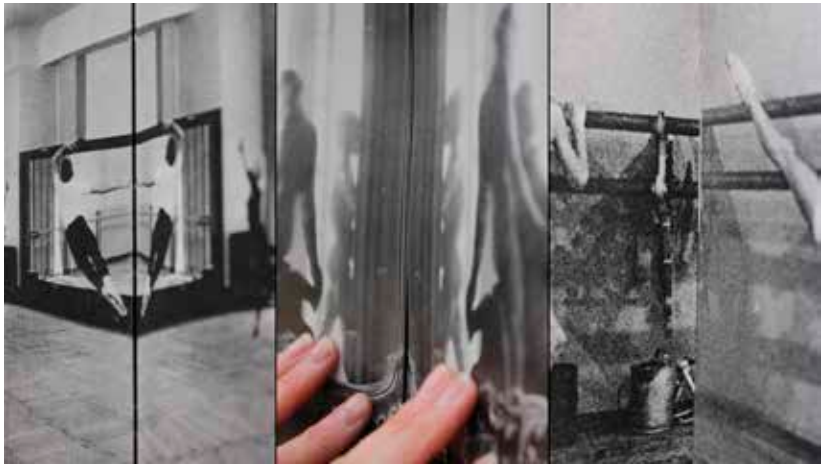
Pas de Deux

'Pas de deux' translates as 'footstep of two'.
We are two women, building a kind of duet.
a double look, repeated gesture.

4
Untitled (Eternal, Pas de Deux, Plié) was first shown at Late at Tate St. Ives, Cornwall, UK as part of the launch of the exhibition *Virginia Woolf: An exhibition inspired by her writings*, April 2018.

5
Extract from Press Release for *Untitled (Eternal, Pas de Deux, Plié)* co-written with Alice Walton

She tips out a folder of images. Glimpses of beautiful, lithe supple bodies, dancing, posing, stretching, folding, frequently naked, muscular, firm. Part obscured with end pages, mauve, aqua, black, an occasional topiary tree, an eighties shoe, enlarged eyelashes scratching out of thick turquoise eyeshadow. (I sort of know why she has have chosen them. They tell me something about her, but I'm not totally sure.)



One is a black and white image of a dance studio in which a duet is being rehearsed. The dancers are reflected in the wall-to-wall studio mirror and in the studio space itself - doubled. A seated female teacher is pointing, a hand gesture that activates the filmed hand turning this printed page over and over. The image covers a double page, so it has a broken symmetry across the space of the studio, and the physical page of the book. The film reveals a duplication of the physical image, taped back-to-back as an identical pair, and reflected in a mirror, visually multiplying the reflexive layering we are interested in.

Rehearsal/studio/test

Our films are a speculative attempt to connect shared concerns, and work together on a practical, and conceptual level. We both experiment with gesture and movement and recognise the value in being performer/camera.

We have no known outcome or score. The process is one of devising and responding. Sensitive, informed and rigorous decisions are made visible. Potential for change, uncertainty and deliberation are evident in the dance/

artists studio, and simultaneously in the hesitation and repetition of the hand that turns the page.

The dance rehearsal space mirrors the investigative space of the artist's studio in which we work, reinforcing the sense of a work in progress, and the iterative nature also present in our methodology. We have been in training or warm-up perhaps, rather than rehearsal.[6]

6
We come together for the precious social, creative act of making, looking, discussing. Working out, 'do you see what I see? '. Prioritising those Thursday mornings in the studio over chasing commissions, fundraising and hustling for the next show. It's a practice in the sense of dance, yoga or meditation – we keep at it, we know it is good to do it, easier to do it together and we might slowly get more precise. Through it we know one another better, our doubts and uncertainties are confirmed or allayed, we push each other on. See *Duet* in Appendix for an expansion of how this works.

Narrative and ambiguity

In selecting the images we consider narrative, ambiguity, material reflexivity and formal composition appreciating print, qualities of paper, colour and a resonance in images we are drawn to.

There is an affect that occurs in viewing an image of two bodies embracing or performing, and the spaces implied within the image, as well as material qualities such as the lines of a fold re-enforced by the lines of architecture, or the punctured hole left from a stitched binding. Do we see and feel similar nuances? How closely does she see what I see? Whilst we are not social anthropologists, we might be exploring the photo as object and one another's experience of it in a kind of micro way along these lines:

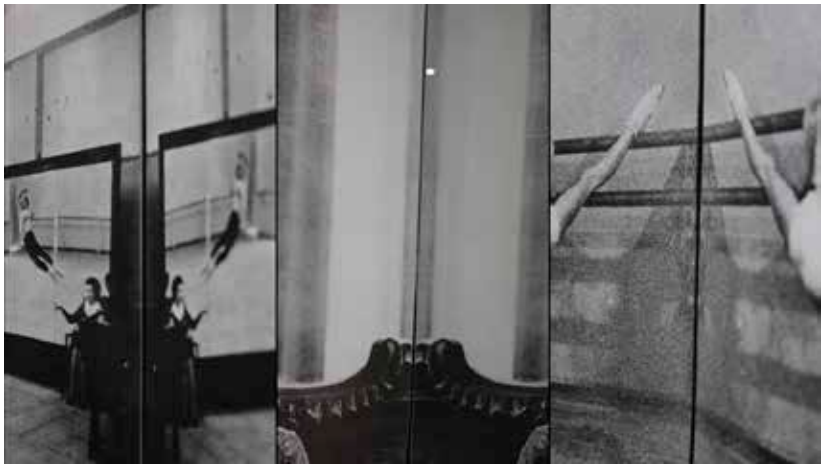
> An object cannot be fully understood at any single point in its existence but should be understood as belonging in a continuing process of production, exchange, usage and meaning. Enmeshed and active in social relations, not passive.[7]

7
Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart. 2004. *Photographs Objects Histories* (UK: Routledge) p. 4

We are looking for qualities of light, positive or negative space, implications of touch or movement, that might relate to the content of an image. (Are we looking for moments where we connect, agree, feel the same? Where we fall into step and know something is working?). We select intuitively, learning our responses and understanding of the material through looking, touching, and filming in silence.

Identifying what is happening often occurs through minimal language to articulate decisions, 'mmm, um, errr, 'that', 'no', 'yes' in relation to what we are re-watching. We are building a shared language, reading one another's responses, with room for internal processing. If we start too much talking the moment might break.

The action and the images reinforce one another, and it is this quality of layered intention that generates a richness from an apparently simple and concise gesture.



Eternal

The Eternal Idol, (1889) Rodin's sculpture of a male and female embrace is reflected in an ornate baroque mirror, creating a second view, a ghost or double of the sculpture, and a mystery figure beyond that. Despite depicting an erotic scene implying sensuous movement, these naked bodies are sculpted and fixed solid in their marble embrace. We are seeing them indirectly as a reflection, in a grand interior flattened through a camera lens, and further distanced from a real-life view, through reproduction in black and white. They are mass-produced images, evidenced here in duplicate. We work with two identical pages. One upside-down and one the right way up. These are reflected again in a studio mirror and re-filmed through my moving image lens.

> Butting up, touching the crease, kissing.
> Touch becomes more important. We both notice.
> Pushing down the central crease. Smoothing out the edges of the page.
> Hands, wrists, but not cuffs.[8]

8
Process notes

What is the role of the hands and fingers and what are they doing when we see them? Sometimes we like the tactile gesture they appear to make in relation to an image: a diagonal stroke of the hand, not to scale but still resonant. They attempt to reach the figures, to emulate a taught instruction, to feel the cool mirror glass, to understand the dry page of a printed book. Sometimes the movements are practical, incidental. At other points they are unwelcome, clumsy and distracting. There is a balance between how they might be choreographed or simply working to turn a page or move an image.

Perhaps they occupy the equivalent of the edge of the rehearsal space, where the warmed-up body bends to pick up a bottle, retaining the structured movement of a performance with the utilitarian necessity of a practical gesture.

What are the tensions and uses of this duality of gestures?

Touch adds intimacy, a tingle – not as strong as a tingle: an awareness: of a fold, stroking, smoothing.

The stroke across the flat paper somehow compensates for the denied opportunity of touching the smooth cold marble contours of the Rodin sculpture itself, and the warm fleshy bodies it conjures. Does it activate an internal sensation, the ache of a muscle, skin on skin, adding to what we conjure through seeing alone?

Scanning

In his chapter *The Image* in *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*,Vilém Flusser defines the wandering observers eye across an image as 'scanning':

> The significance of images is on the surface. One can take them in at a single glance yet this remains superficial. If one wishes to deepen the significance e.g.: to reconstruct the abstracted dimensions, one has to allow one's gaze to wander over the surface feeling one's way as one goes. This wandering over the surface of the image is called 'scanning'. In so doing, one's gaze follows a complex path formed, on the one hand, by the structure of the image and, on the other, by the observers' intentions. The significance of the image as revealed in the process of scanning therefore represents a synthesis of two intentions: one manifested in the image, and the other belonging to the observer.[9]

[9] Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography.* (London: Reaktion 2000) p. 8

In *Untitled (Eternal, Pas de Deux, Plié)* the images are being moved in front of a static camera, not 'scanning' in the way a moving camera might reveal an observer's point of view. The hand pushes the page flat, smooths it out, lifts a caught edge, denying and revealing the image, so we only ever see partial sections of it. We feel the thickness of the page, the paper's surface texture, edges, and the grain of the enlarged photograph. Attention shifts between the object or action (sculpture, dance), the architectural space (grand gallery, dance studio): to the original photographer's capturing the event: and the act of re-looking at the printed photograph, in the artist's studio. I propose 'scanning' as a kind of touching with the eyes. Returning to Flusser's

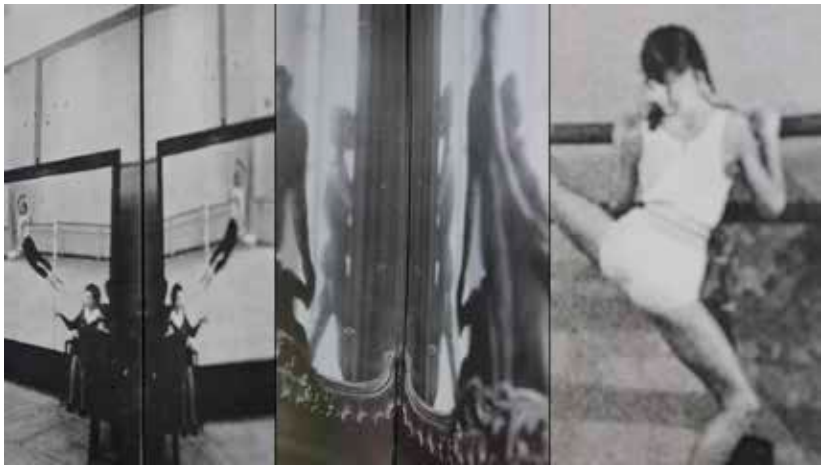
idea of the wandering eye he adds, 'It can return to an element of the image it has already seen, and 'before' can become 'after': The time reconstructed by scanning is an eternal recurrence of the same process.'

The scanning eye settles and shifts differently over time. Eventually a pattern of looking, or scanning might emerge, creating a rhythm or internal choreography generated by pleasure or curiosity across these images.

Plié

The right image in the triptych is a black and white photo of a young girl stretching her legs at a ballet bar. Alice has three versions, with slightly different page sizes. Turning pages for the camera, we notice the girl's head is inclined differently in two of the images, though this detail is only fleetingly visible. Investigating the visual nuances, we experience a heightened sense of listening. A phone chime or aeroplane brings too much location specific narrative, (and has consequently been removed) whereas the close creaks, brushes and audio textures of hands, sleeves, paper moving add to the intimacy of the work and the sense of material touch.

Experiencing these printed pages changes, when guided by the close view of the lens, along with the awareness of the sound of pages turning within the acoustic of a particular space.



ELEKTRA

Anna Lucas with Alice Walton
6 mins colour stereo HDV 16:9
2 channel looping 2019



DUET

Anna Lucas with Alice Walton
Publication 40 A5 pages performance script 2019



The methodology of the studio collaboration whilst we are making *Elektra* and our performance lecture *Duet* within *One Second Feature*.[10] includes questions written live, on the day of making, revealing my internal and our collaborative enquiry. Duet reveals and contextualises our practice to an audience, often through questions (to self, and each other) posed in the moment of making.

Over time we develop our own rhythms, moving in and out of close looking, both with the camera and in a studio. We find a kind of strategy for bursts of time on fortnightly Thursdays until three- catch up, move to studio for practical decision-making, work in near silence while shooting, (oatcakes and hummus), fast dialogue, reflection, questions.

Then later (after the dinner bath bedtime routine) I'm editing, sharing email responses which generate both practical to-do lists, ideas for future studio sessions, and ongoing text and edit progress.

10
One Second Feature, The Gallery, De Montfort University, Leicester March 2019. Anna Lucas invited Alice Walton to contribute and we included *Elektra* film and concertina publication, gave a performance lecture entitled *Duet* and each presented a still image as partner works.



Cutaway – *Alice Studio* 2018

FLASHBACK
INTERIOR shed studio with Alice – date 2019?

LIVE ACTION
moving the image under the copy stand
changing the mirror and black paper to reveal/conceal
the apparatus of making –
a trick/surprise, disruption

Multiple planes near / far above / below stack
(how does this relate to choreography?)

Shifts between image content, movement; the pull of a page reflecting in the curtain, hand on pole relating to the tripod - replace the under image with an ugly or difficult image, or one from another of our collections. Aware of the need to balance choreography and planning without deadening the act, and the work itself.

Can our experience of shared looking and making reflexively translate our practice and process to an audience?

Extracts from email to Alice
after studio filming 5th July 18

Duet

… there is a different sense of ownership and angst, that feels lighter, slightly more detached, as though just out of reach some of the time yet tangibly connected at others. I felt that today standing with/ behind you turning the pages.

Something to do with us being in my studio with the familiarity to me of that, my kit, the light etc, but also watching you turn the pages from your own collection with such considered practice. And then when I tried it I was so clumsy! So you sort of embodied the knowledge of those images more effectively than me. I wonder if that is to do with living with them in your space for so long, as well as handling them for our project. But I would quite like to learn your movement and looking, to sort of own it myself. I think this is what the proposal I have included in the working doc around working with a choreographer for a collective event is about – something to do with all owning that action and look.

When I re-filmed the work for *Things that had stories rubbed out*[11] for Whitstable. It was not intended at the start, but I got a lot from the re-staging of other people's looking decisions.

It may be that my *Blanks Snap*[12] had something of that too.
…

11
Experimenting with a studio-based process, *Things that had stories rubbed out* 2010 (9 mins, 16mm transferred to digital, colour, stereo, 4:3, single screen commission for Whitstable Biennale) extends from investigations into perception, projection and vision. Working from a collection of photographs of objects that could be seen as screens or blanks, the images were used as a starting point for filming torch-lit visual dialogues with a group of artists. The film uses raw and tentative footage from these shared moments of looking, in which glimpses and fragments of connection may be all that is discernible.

12
Blanks snap is a kind of game made of 6x4" photos of things (objects) that could be 'blanks'. The pack of about 100 photos has since been used as a prompt for a kind of 'alongsiding' in which two 'players' agree on images that go together, even though none are directly reproduced. Alice and I began working on a series of *Rocks, Bodies, Trees, Water*, with a similar but broader potential use in mind. These were used as part of a participatory exhibit in *Pursuits of Happiness* at The Gallery, De Montfort University, curated by Dr Stacy Boldrick with Hugo Worthy and postgraduate students from Art Museum and Gallery Studies, University of Leicester, May 17th-June 3rd 2018.

It would be good to situate the depth of the friendship and connection as a way of proposing the intimacy of creative production. It might also be a space to discuss disruption, beauty, politics, trust.

> ... friendship is, at its most relevant in relation to a labour process: as a way of working together....of friendship as a form of solidarity: friends in action. Also, as we know, working together can both start from and create forms of solidarity and/or friendship, which are therefore pursued as both condition and intent, motivating actions taken and allowing work undertaken.[14]

14
Condorelli, Celine. 2012. 'Notes on Friendship', Mousse <https://celinecondorelli.eu/text/notes-on-friendship/> [accessed 25 October 2024]

Meeting at The Bower[13] with Joyce and Alice (spring 2019?)

13
The Bower was a gallery and cafe in a former public ladies' toilet in Brunswick Park, Camberwell, South London. Run by curator writer Joyce Cronin with Louisa Bailey 2018-2023

Tea was spilt
It missed all the publications. (lucky)
I wondered about the shape of the splat. For some reason the pale brown spill across the blue floor, lodged in my mind whilst they were talking.
I was trying to work out if it had some diagrammatic relationship with the content and spin offs they discussed.

Alice and Joyce used words like web, map, network. I was feeling more like a splat. Clumsy, and with varied negative impact on those around me – small or larger stains, unwanted droplets, misshapen forms in the wrong places.
Ill articulated words and thoughts, landing randomly. Mistimed, misplaced.
A bad energy spreading out, uncontained. Inadvertent, unintended. Slightly shocking, possibly mildly hysterical. Dismissed. Then wiped up, and moved on, with a couple of traces to deal with later.

They sat in the dappled light of a tree outside the gallery to hear Joyce's thoughts on writing a piece around collaboration and the performance talk *Duet*. Joyce kept going inside and coming out into the doorway, holding up independent publications from organisations and individuals that connect with our practice. She was like a little slideshow, entering the dark doorway, and returning in the same stance with a different publication. Each one, held to her chest, with a different lo-fi format, designed for sharing in small and specific communities of artists, women, learners.

We flicked through them as we talked, discussing the nature of the conversations held within them and the information they intend to impart. And where their own conversation might sit within that context, and what it might contribute.

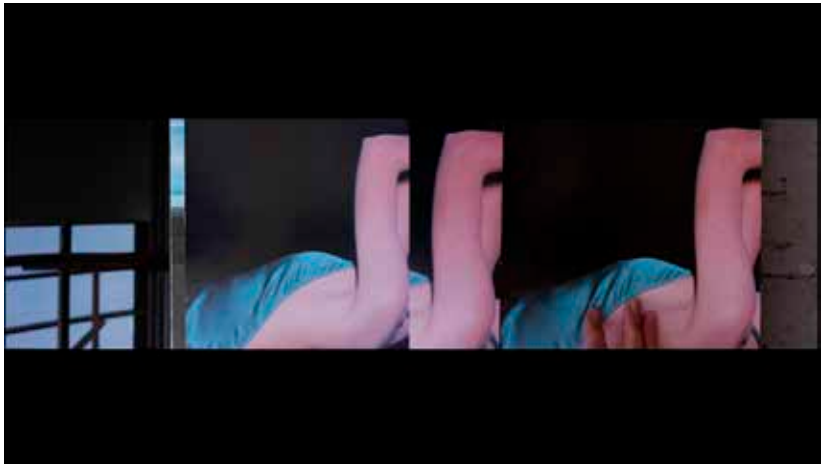
113

5 mins colour stereo HDV 16:9
2 channel looping 2020



DAPHNE

11 mins colour stereo HDV 16:9
2 channel looping 2021



LOCATION
Porthmeor studios St Ives, Cornwall, August 2019.
One Week Residency

CUT TO
Daphne film stills
Partial score for choreography

Responsibility and guilt
Serendipity
Positive negative space
Zoned out
Camera on
Battery
Three bits of logic to fit
Together
Daphne/Daphne over
Mountain
Daphne remove
Face Rock upside down
Visible Hands
Daphne
Coloured paper removing images
Blue/Blue
Curtains Elektra
Daphne out
Taking away to hands
Camera - Hissy
Children’s voices, screams
3 elbows
Corner, page seagulls
Ridge
Page edge Depth
H Newton
Seaside Woman
Moon hands
Sea St Ives tradition
Horizon

August 2019 Day 4
Take 1
INTERIOR (reflection)
25 frames per second[14]

Making friends with images from another archive
What is my role? Beyond technician.
Internal struggle
Wanting to document Alice's absorption in the wider space
What are the 16mm clips for?
Documentation
Single screen?
Sequences.
Loop[s]
Daphne/Rebecca Skelton
(Skinner releasing, Merleau-Ponty,
Understanding embodied movement from within)
Using cameras to try to read/capture internal movement motivation
Is that possible?
Does it translate?
What is the physical presence of my body with the camera bringing
to what we see?
What is it bringing to what Alice is doing?
(Aside The problem of the seaside/windows/
Heron/Hepworth/St Ives Porthmeor/Helmut Newton?)
We are dealing with imperfection and beauty
Changing light
Performance spaces
Formal/texture
Am I alongsiding – or collaborating?[15]

14
When I am shooting, I equate the speed of my thoughts, questions and decision-making to frames per second. So these notes represent the way in which my thoughts might be working whilst filming. And this is twenty-five thoughts, so one second of thinking.

15
What are the challenges of 'alongsiding' with someone else's material?

In more formal reflection taking longer than one second, these questions arise:
How much understanding is reliant on verbal dialogue, how are other forms of understanding tangibly evident?
How much can be determined through audio-visual adjustments?
What is enabled through setting a static camera that allows a collaborative action 'to camera'?
What is the role of the camera, and the cameraperson (who is also one of the artists)?
How does refining formal characteristics of the staging, performing, and choreography affect the sense of 'alongsiding'?
What are the dynamics in relation to equal input, shared understanding, space for accessing the action and outcome through varied and different perspectives? How is the work 'owned' by each contributor? How is this ownership acknowledged?
How much does trust, friendship and shared understanding inform the tests and finished works?
How much does that affect engagement and commitment to looking, and shared understanding?

Daphne sequence 2019





CUT TO
EXTERIOR STUDIO a hammock in France
Tuesday, 20 August 2019
ACTION INTERIOR (reflection)

The white noise of the stream and cicadas creates a kind of fuzzy thought space.
I am sometimes here without responsibilities for others.
There were discussions about what worked.
Certain images were rejected because she couldn't connect with them.
She still does not understand the choice of images in the way the other artist does. How can she?
She was not there when they were first noticed, in the second-hand bookstore or charity shop. She has not reopened that book, seen the light reflect off its pages as they are turned, and turned again, and re-opened, with days, weeks or even years in between them.
She is inheriting a prolonged internal relationship that she has with these images.
She cannot see what she sees.
She sees soft tanned girls; she sees long supple legs, open, closed, bodies stretched, posed, and indirect. Parts of bodies, drapes, rocks, light, pools, windows. She sees turquoise, mauve, dark shiny inked pages; she sees staple holes, creases, and sharp edges.
Hair. Armpits.
These are images that have been around a long time.
So here, she is sharing a look, and understanding it a little, understanding formally, colour, edges, light, and building her own narrative.
What happens when one image moves towards, creases across, slides over another? What happens when the images chosen resonate with the space they are being looked at in?



Cutaway – *hammock studio* 2019

CUT TO
INTERIOR STUDIO
Porthmeor Beach, St Ives

Outside the windows below the studio, a sandy Cornish beach where men are knocking windbreaks into the sand, building encampments early in the morning. The women come later with children and picnics, stretching out their bare legs. The sound of this summer holiday activity infiltrates the studio.

What happens when the beach is audible whilst they film sleek women's legs by the pool, or patches of light and colour building up and shifting?

> Listening keeps the action going for longer. Simultaneity of senses. Touch, vision, audio triangulating connections as we film.

What is interesting in this close looking? Is it just an optical illusion, a formal experiment?

> We are looking for something that satisfies, disrupts, points outside itself…

Is it simply a beautiful mesmeric action that she is witnessing, or is there a genuine participation?

> She wonders how the presence of the camera is linked to her own presence. That sense of the camera making its own decisions… choosing what it sees, so she is free to see better, or drift away, into listening. The camera as a stand in, allowing her to leave - physically or mentally. It's a strategy for connection and heightened awareness. And in this way it is participation.

How does it change what we see?

> When she has to perform as part of the choreography of pages, she gets it wrong. The pages feel distant. She cannot connect to the images directly.

She sits at the edge, (they are both on the floor, in front of the copy stand, and she is to the side of it and the other artist is right in front of it, under the cameras) with an eye on the cameras above them, an ear on the sound, waiting for a prompt.
They are working alongside each other, closely looking at photos on film.
But she is not sure she is 'alongsiding'
After lunch they move upstairs and the dynamic changes.
It becomes more of a performance to camera. One artist behind the camera, the other in front. Neither intending to perform or document. They are testing, exploring, trying to reach a new, better work than what could be produced alone.
Are they alongsiding now? Even though the positions are different?

> They are no longer shoulder to shoulder, there is a distance between them, a few metres.
> One faces the other, who is in profile, avoiding the camera's gaze.

Are they collaborators now?

> It is a moment of shared looking from different points of view. They can't see what the other sees from this perspective, they can only guess.

This is more like working with the dancer.
This is more about using the camera to capture a moment of someone else's absorption.
Their agreement is fast usually and quite easy. Both have a strong opinion, but both are also willing to accept the other.
Both have arrived at this moment in a spirit of wanting it to work. (Constructive and ameliorative?)[16]
Connections occur between colour and light in the space. Years of artists paint, revealed in the wood of the window surround.
Daggers of light
come through the window in the early afternoon.
Is she inside or outside the moment?
Both moments are improvised, repeated, so that the performer's action can be replicated almost exactly in an edit, with pace and rhythm changing almost imperceptibly. (this is also like a dancer)

16
De-authored lineage that aims to embrace collective creativity – one is disruptive and interventionist the other constructive and ameliorative. Clare Bishop, *Participation* (London: Whitechapel 2006) pg 10–17
In *Artificial Hells*, Clare Bishop (Bishop 2011) critiques other writers (Lind/Kester) willingness to accept references to community, and collectivity, if not directly participatory. She questions valuing those aspects within art contexts above aesthetic values, or social science values. She articulates how participatory work 'seems to operate with a twofold gesture of opposition and amelioration'. Clare Bishop *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso 2011) p. 12

Thinking of alongsiding as occasional, more fluid than collaboration, more specific than participation.

The requirements of alongsiding are definitely a heightened engagement and awareness brought about through the presence of a camera. But whilst alongsiding, it is unlikely that any person feels specifically the subject of the camera's gaze. They may be within the frame of the camera, but they will be simultaneously absorbed in the act of looking closely, and likely performing or enacting a gesture or something that fully absorbs or engages them, so the presence of the camera is secondary to their action. They are aware that the camera frames not only their action, but also the moment, so that even a continuous repetitive act changes in significance when they know the camera is running.

So can alongsiding happen without a camera present?

> Maybe, if the moment feels heightened as it might be in a moment of crisis, or intimacy, such as bearing witness to an accident, at a hospital bed, or watching the moonrise. The feeling of being in a film….

Alongsiding' is unlikely to happen in a moment of simply looking at an artwork, or film in a gallery or cinema. Although these moments of collective shared looking can feel significant and valuable in terms of understanding or sharing another's point of view. They lack the intensity of 'alongsiding' because there's no camera.

She can't tell if the photo object is still significant, or the alongsiding – whether they are connected or different elements.

She can't tell what she is being encouraged to pursue.

She knows people are attaching their own idea to her definition of alongsiding (as a verb and different to being alongside) but she doesn't know what they think it actually is.

She doesn't know if it matters.

Can alongsiding be one thing for her, and another for something else?

What is it suggesting that other words are not describing?



Cutaway – *Porthmeor studio* 2019

Email from Alice
Autumn 2019?

Hi,

To save for a rainy day!

I've listened to BS with headphones, this is what I've found! Mainly I think it's great. One section that seems to give too much away - I prefer the real whispers - closer to sound than words!

Not sure how helpful this is but interesting for me - will do Conformist too!

Xxx

0.11	'Starting again' (Alice in a whisper)
1.30	'Do you want me..could..Elektra…I could get that for you' (Anna, not entirely audible whisper)
1.36	Footsteps
1.45	Footsteps
1.55	Footsteps
2.03	'On this one I can't see the pink so if it doesn't come up its not seen' (Anna, fairly clear) I'M LEAST SURE ABOUT THIS - VERY CLEAR AND POSSIBLY TOO CLOSE TO ACTION, ALSO PUTS TOO MUCH 'SOUND/ TALKING' INTO FIRST HALF AND IS CLOSE UP TO LIFEGUARD (??)
2.08-2.30	Lifeguard
2.40	Seagull
3.17	edit on left seems too light on my screen]
3.40-4.08	Seagull
4.26	Voices?
	Seagull
4,31	Beach
5.27	Car/plane/boat?

6.13	Beach?
6.36	Seagull
6.52	Car/plane?
	SEA SEA SEA SEA SEA? (IS THIS WHAT I CAN HEAR?)
7.17-7.31	Sound slippage?? No sound on left for a time? Possible additional sound offscreen (probably not an issue)?
7.37	'Okay' (Alice, whisper)
7.42	Shout/kid
7.58	Seagull
8.20	Call
8.30	'Carry on' (Anna, whisper) and footsteps
8.40	Door shuts
8.52	Loud seagull!
9.01	Loudspeaker??
9.29	Mumbles??
9.58-10.12	Door and footsteps returning
10.54	Seagull
11.33	Kid talking
	SEA SEA SEA SEA SEA? (IS THIS WHAT I CAN HEAR?)

CUT TO
INTERIOR (reflection)
Autumn. Shed studio South London.

The laptop screen reflects a branch moving restlessly and the rooflight with muddy fox paw prints on it. Trying to...
Taps
Trying to...
I stare at the plywood wall, out of the door
What is it about? - these two female bodies working in an intense week carved out of fifty-two in a year. Our choice of 'holiday'. This space for looking and testing. The images do matter, they are driving something, but they don't matter as much as the action, the process, the frame of time to look together.
Tilt the screen to see the work better. It suddenly catches the light to reveal all the tiny particles of dust on the glass surface, and these partially obscure the image. They light up against the filmed sheets of paper pulling over timber boards on the timeline.
(Mind flips (like the turning paper?)
fast spin whirling washing machine thoughts
stops and clicks
the thoughts empty out in soggy clumps or heavy single shapeless forms, then stretched and tightened on a line, whipped into shape by a warm wind, never quite forming a crisp neat pile, easy to put away
there's always a couple that fall into the dirt)

Trying to untangle what I see, and what I know I filmed; that privileged act of close looking, trying something out, being together in a space.

The neighbour's staff terrier is pacing in the dog shit and dry leaves on his back patio.
Trying to connect with the making work
(disconnect from the teaching work, stay connected to the parenting work)
...to connect to that airy Porthmeor studio space two hundred miles southwest from this one in Brixton.
The neighbour yells down his phone, 'you're a 'f***ing c**t'.
(That's how L learned to say it)

Trying to process the relationship with non-violent resistance and communication.[17] Occupying a space

17
I took a course in Nonviolent Communication with Ceri Buckmaster during the research process, primarily to support communication in personal situations of conflict within family dynamics. Basic NVC principles are observations, feelings, needs, requests elicited using active and reflective listening, curiosity and empathy. There are useful aspects of NVC principles that can cross over into collaborative work and teaching and learning contexts. I have observed over the period of the research within an increasingly divided and conflicted world, awareness of this movement and methodology is increasing.
Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is an empathetic model that focuses on identifying and addressing unmet needs to resolve conflicts. NVC is based on the idea that conflicts arise from unmet needs which need addressing to achieve resolution. Nonviolent Communication was developed by Marshall Rosenberg who drew on the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers and the nonviolence of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, to give you the tools to approach life in a way that includes your own needs, while considering others and the needs of the wider environment. It is a process and a support for complicated times. Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a process, skill and consciousness which can be learned. It rests upon the ability to sense into and reveal your own internal world and sense into and be curious about the internal worlds of other people. At its core, NVC is about: non-harming, truth-telling, courage and compassion, inner peace, interdependence.
Nonviolent Communication - Ceri Buckmaster

of empathy for another person. Trying to see from their point of view, even when their actions are harmful and challenging. So now my mind flicks from a policeman murderer to an aggressive boy, to a man pissing on my wall, telling me to f*** off. A muddle of fear and fury for which the act of feeling empathetic also feels like an aggression towards oneself.

The rhythm of the planes overhead marks time passing, every two minutes.
(the sound of paper scraping over timber from the laptop speaker like an ASMR video that is not working for me)

At the same time, I am thinking about these images.
About *Daphne* the woman in the teal backless dress, who in my mind is Rebecca[18], a dancer choreographer with whom I made a last work also called *Daphne* (before she died of a brain tumour). Her own research enquiry was around 'skinner releasing', an embodied somatic practice in which the performer improvises based on internal visualised imagery (as I understand it). I feel that experience and Rebecca's influence gently feeding into this moment of filming. Another woman, carried from the past into a live space. The space she and I worked in was an empty two roomed attic of a large historic house just behind the beach in Brighton. The bare timber and high location sharing similarities with this location where again I find myself using the camera to witness another woman engaged in an act of slow choreography. I feel the interiority of this activity, I can't really access what this woman is motivated by, what is she seeing and feeling? What is intriguing her? What do we gain by watching this action? The action itself is valid, I don't question that. I question my part in it. What does my presence bring?

18
Rebecca Skelton (1968-2005) was an artist; dancer, choreographer, teacher and researcher at the University of Chichester. I made a short film with her in 2004 entitled Daphne in which she was exploring Skinner releasing choreography for her PHD. For Daphne she wore a backless teal silk dress which our found images reminded me of, along with the concerns of her research with an interest in psycho-physical interior/exterior being.

What is the role of the camera for the performer?
In both cases, I set the camera and left the space. For Rebecca, this unlocked her and enabled her to achieve the visualisation and movement she had been unable to access whilst I was there with the camera.
(what conditions do we need to make the work work?)
It made me think of Warhol's *Screen Tests*[19] portraits series in which he set the 16mm film camera rolling and left his subjects to 'perform' or not. Filming while not present, directing and framing but letting the performer become absorbed in their own space. This is perhaps analogous to how I try to frame workshops in teaching and learning contexts, or filmmaking with a subject. Whilst controlling or creating a certain atmosphere, I am intentionally trying to remove myself as director to provide space for participants to inhabit the space and lose themselves.

19
Screen Tests. 1966. dir. by Andy Warhol (New York: Museum of Modern Art)

And then there is the new work Daphne.
It's about paper as much as image, light and what is reflected by it.
Touch, and where a finger falls, pinches, strokes and connects.
A thumb on a shoulder blade, fingerprint on breast.
A flesh pink end page
Unexposed sky-blue sheet of gloss photo paper
Reflective silver sheet of card
Women outstretched
Head down, leaning on elbows
Crawling, anguished
Performing, posing against dark backgrounds
Staged
Requested? By whom, for whom?



Cutaway – *Kitsch Renactment* 2021

TOGETHER WITH THEM SHE WENT[20]

Alice Walton with Anna Lucas
Tintype Gallery, London, April - May 2020

Together With Them She Went was an exhibition at Tintype Gallery, London which was due to open March 2020. As one of the gallery artists, Alice had previously tested a model of inviting others to share her exhibition slot in *Almost all the girls raise their hands* 2016. I had invited her to contribute to my commissioned exhibition *One Second Feature* in 2019. There was a natural, practical and political benefit in sharing the opportunities in order to make something happen together rather than individually. We both know the Tintype curator Teresa Grimes and have shown work in the space previously. This made for an open and discursive approach to planning the show.

We share an interest in movement – and fundamentally we're interested in how another person looks or sees, and the challenge of ever precisely knowing or embodying that view.

The exhibition was installed but opening was delayed due to the first Covid 19 pandemic lockdown. This resulted in a documentation film made from hasty installation shots and edited within lockdown. There was a later opportunity to open the show to individual visitors by appointment..

Two of our collaborative films *113* and *Elektra* were presented within a sculptural structure where the use of reflective and translucent materials drew the viewer into becoming an active element of the work. The female body is a recurring subject, sometimes appearing as a sculpture, on a stage or in a rehearsal space along with the elements of drapes and windows, light and shade. The simple gesture of turning pages, creates a quietly hypnotic engagement of shared looking and touch. Sound creates space, alluding to an off-screen narrative; footsteps over the floor, a window opening - distant sounds that ebb and flow throughout.

During the lockdown period, based in geographically distant locations and abruptly cut from the intensity of making in the studio and gallery, Alice and I continued our conversation as an account and reflection of what was happening. (*Together With Them She Went (TWTSW*) A Conversation online) included in the appendix.

20
Tintype Gallery website includes Press Release from March 2020 and documentation video. An essay by Joyce Cronin, Co-Director of The Bower, accompanied the exhibition as part of the image concertina publication from *Elektra.*



CONFORMIST 1970

Anna Lucas and Alice Walton
13 mins colour stereo single
channel HDV 2021





Press Release

Conformist 1970 was shot during winter 2021 (Covid lockdown). Prompted by Alice leaving her long standing studio, we made use of the space as a backdrop for re-considering ideas and material we had been unable to enact within our exhibition *Together With Them She Went* at Tintype Gallery 2020. The studio provided a space of focus and companionship intermittently as we devised and revisited performed gestures for the camera.

From left to right, right to left, a body enters the frame, to place images over a series of panels leant against a studio wall. A stool is scuffed across the floor into shot, a sheet of Perspex propped against it and a folded book page placed across its edge. From right to left, left to right, like a finger swiping across a s creen, her hands remove and drop images into place, perfunctory, testing, looking for some connection.

The reflective surfaces of the materials onto which she choreographs the images shift and slip to reflect back a camera witnessing the activity. There appears to be a process at play; an absorption in setting up and breaking down the resonances that crisscross the screen. The movement scans across a tight frame, with only partial visibility of the body at work, of legs passing back and forwards between a number of front-on planes, like stage flats. As the images slide into play they intersect across the depth of the set, a hand reaching back to press down on a dancer's back, the blur of a body close on to the camera.

Hands feature prominently, the repeated gestures of the intent activity, sometimes confident and smooth, sometimes teasing or hesitant; the recurring hand motif across the images, held to another's body, gloved and pressed into the thick pile of a carpet, touching, holding, pulling. These hands call across image and plane, reaching to each other, sliding over surfaces, stroking and folding.

The space around the activity enters the frame through sounds from beyond the studio, glimpsed reflections and the apparatus of filming. A second person, out of shot, is implicated in the action, a hand caught behind the camera, clicking fingers. This correspondence between bodies in the space and the bodies in the images, the reoccurrence of object, sound and shifting light, sets up a looping monotony from left to right, right to left. With no end.[21]

21
Co-written Press Release for *Conformist 1970*

It carries the weight
paper weight
seat
plinth
border
block
it holds us
punctuation
full stop
full
STOP (they shouted, over and over
again)
It comes from a quarry at the end of
the field (terrain)
digger dumped (by drunk proprietor)
Not chosen
I choose it
I look at it
I draw it, every day
I photograph it, every year
I am looking at it closely because I'm here
Still life
A stopping stepping point
It keeps me still
PresentPause
(Holding all the images)
Commitment
A random commitment. A basic form. A blank.
A 'mythic stone'
A destination.When a rock is removed from the quarry,
it becomes a destination.
To stop vehicles entering the field, beach, layby,
settlement, site
To mark a grave, the movement of light, a visit
To lead the eye through the landscape
To sit by a fire



Cutaway – *Moulin rocks* 2021

EXTERIOR
Campsite Studio

In the toilet. Light coming under the door. Someone brushing their teeth at the basin opposite. I think of Ball Block Blank and Rock Bodies Water.
I think of Rock, Cloud, Grass. Here.
Trying to get to a structure for some photos. Not to repeat, but to revisit.
People are leaving.
I went to the quarry tip
There are cow parsley dense heads open and flatly covered in white flowers or closed into a many fingered loose fist.
There are two or three rocks I am looking at.
I walked along the path and through the dry field and photographed some. One felt like a head, but I also thought of it like a rabbit, nestled in an area of long dry grass, not really hidden.
Another, white and sharp on the edge of the field.
And a heavy flat one I tried to lift but could not bring back. The light and shadow of shimmering leaves across its surface. You can move the rock, but you can't move the light effect with it.
There are no clouds so far today. I am waiting for the light to be right and hoping the wind will not be too strong to try a double exposure rock photo sequence.
The rock needs life. Movement, light.
It is its silent still reliability that I think I like. People come and go and the rock remains.

LATER
Reading Sam Shepard. Setting the scene – a lake and jetty.
P80. It wasn't Proust.[22]
Dialogue between a couple: long relationship; kids; past history; France
Observations of the natural environment in brackets – diving bird, turtle, punctuating their conversation.
What were you looking for?
Nothing I liked to wander
(--------)
Could I just go on with this please and not get sidetracked by every little...
Sure. Go on with it. I'm just trying to keep tabs.
(Another pause while they watch a painted turtle stick its neck up through the lily pads and blow water out its slitted nostrils)
I like how he acknowledges the tangents.

22 Sam Shepard. *Great Dream of Heaven* (Arrow 2003) p.80

LATER
A man in black shorts with a white stripe at the side calling out after a young woman, blonde hair on top of her head, in a bright pink dress. They are walking towards the quarry tip. He has a lean muscular physique which catches the morning light emphasising the muscles. How would they look if carved in marble?
She is ahead. Ten metres maybe.
He is walking and calling her. Walking, not chasing. But there is an atmosphere.
I don't know if it is because I know what is down there.
I saw another man in swimming shorts walking down there the other day.
And walking back around fifteen minutes later.
To the curve of the stream, at the end of the field. To the broken rocks. To the piles of splintered timber. To the broken roof joists. To the smashed-up digger, the broken jeep. To the 4x4 with fluorescent jackets hanging off the wing mirrors. To the pick-up with tools on the seat and beer bottles in the back. To the dusty upholstery of abandoned vehicles. To the spiderweb of broken windscreen glass. To the spiky headed teasels.

LATER
Three books I have brought have drowning mothers who are artists or writers.
Female authors, experimental publishers.
Lake sea sea estuary. In a longer passage the drowning mother observes the father

> My choice to read the book necessarily involves the worry of the possibility of neglecting the children. While you read your book with the attention your lack of worry affords, information enters your brain making you more interested, or interesting, engaged or engaging, and intelligent, and so you become less like me who, not lacking the worry about neglecting the children, does not become any of these. I can no longer see, from across the bay, which of these two things you have chosen to do.[23]

23 Joanna Walsh. *Vertigo* (London: And Other Stories 2016), p. 115

LATER
Reading Rachel Cattle La a dybird in the hammock. I can't tell what she wrote and I experienced:
I'm drifting, the book in my lap has a damaged spine, a barely visible image murmurs from the page[24]
Tree shadow flicker across stubble brown skin, and knotted cotton
hammock
Pink scabious

24 Rachel Cattle. *Ladybird* (London: Ma Bibliotheque 2019) p. 24, 44

Crinkled black rubber ring. Fake tyre. Held against a stump with white nylon rope.
Nothing ruptures the smoothness like a cold cable loop drawn tight.
Lost child. Downy long haired soft brown boy. artist.
Charcoal.[25]
Overheard sentences.
flattened grass

LATER
RC says
----------tiny black
k
k
kkkkkkkkkk and white motifs
breathe across the picture plane
p24 she keeps saying
the connection breaks
p44 description of view/place/home/garden

the wind rises, knocks things over. Rustles the trees. Bends branches
Silver undersides of leaves, like sequins
Pixel sequin leaf
Light on light off light on light off
Zero one zero one zero one
Shutter gate frame pull
Silver grain (dots holes checks weave)

25
Max Porter. *Lanny* (UK: Faber & Faber 2019)