

Andrew Brown: Annual Review 2023-4

Artist and ...

A practice-based exploration of plurality in collaborative art and multi-disciplinary enquiry

Fourth year

Professional Doctorate in Fine Art

Part time

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Supervisor:
Dr Debra Shaw

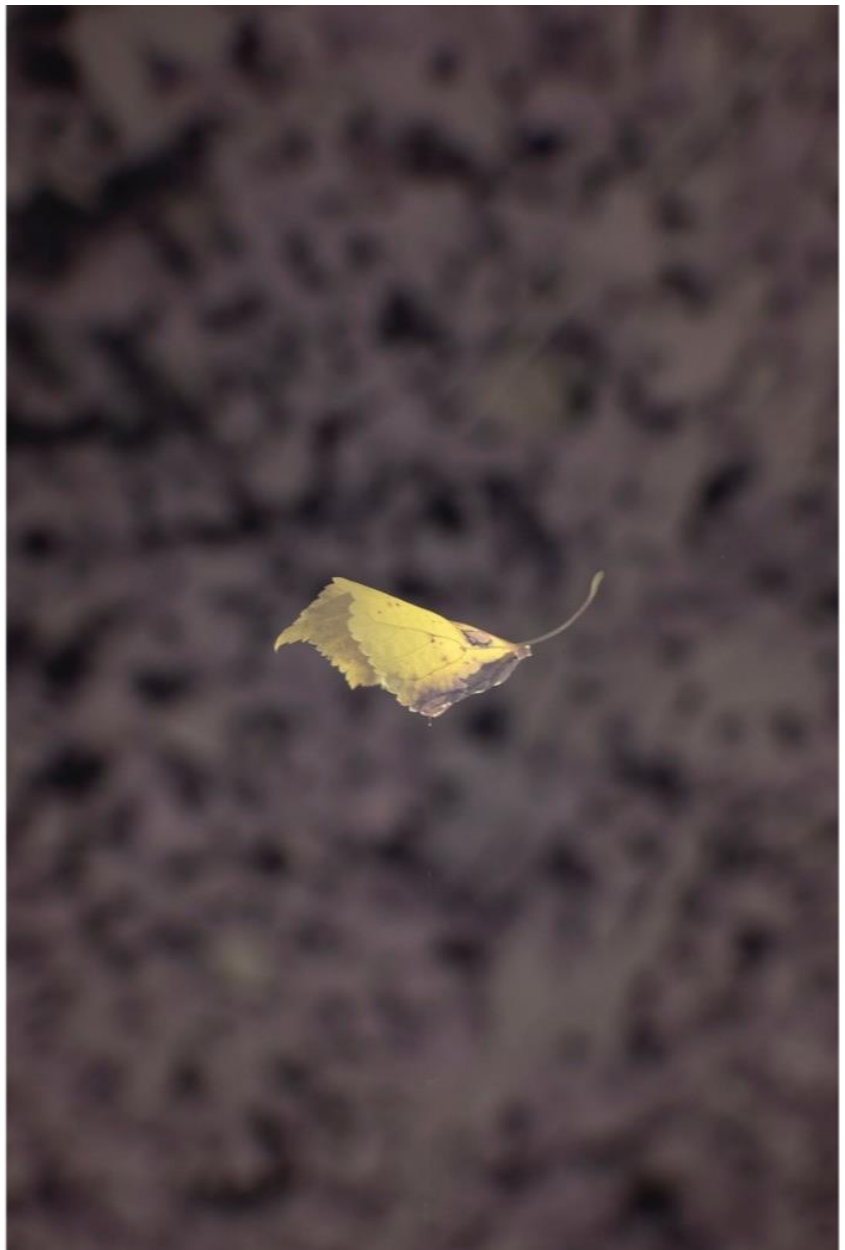


Figure 1: Andrew Brown, *Untitled (full-spectrum photograph)*, 2023

April 2024

1. Introduction

I am an artist and educator based at SPACE Studios, Ilford. I use digital, analogue, historic and alternative photographic processes alongside soundscapes, texts and artefacts to explore the impact on communities of rapid changes in the built and natural environment in east London. This mostly entails working as a member of, or alongside, community and activist groups and has to date involved three forms of photographic image making: participant image-making as the basis for discussion and mutual understanding, collaborative image-making to build repositories of images for advocacy, and my own artistic work. My work has predominantly been exhibited in the places that it has been produced, for instance in and around community centres and libraries, in maker spaces, at community events and along high streets and river paths. Workshops involving the exchange of skills and knowledge have been an important part of the work.

In my 2022 review I described my research as follows:

‘This practice-based research explores plurality in contemporary art, through the design and implementation of a series of collaborative multi-disciplinary projects and the dissemination and analysis of the artistic work produced. Artists commonly lead double or multiple lives, often as a response to economic precariousness. At a time of disruption and transformation of established practice provoked by a succession of global challenges (for instance, the Covid 19 pandemic, persistent social injustice and accelerating climate crisis), this study explores the creative potential of the ability to move between multiple and diverse contexts and forms of activity, and the benefits of the critical dialogues this facilitates’.

The notion of plurality I am using derives from the work of sociologist Bernard Lahire (2011). Lahire develops an understanding of social action that is 'both dispositional and contextual' (2011, p. xi), that considers our embodied past and the present contexts in which activity takes place. In his study of writers (cited in Richman, 2010), who, often through economic necessity, combine literary activity with at least one 'second trade', Lahire explores how this multiple, plural, life shapes the rhythm and form of literary creation. This movement across

fields enlarges and enriches the pool of resources on which we can draw in all areas of life and work. My research seeks to explore how this plurality operates in practice.

Over the past four years my artistic practice has developed substantially, with several public art commissions and grants, collaborations with academic researchers and citizen scientists in the natural and social sciences, and incorporation of sound, moving image and creative writing into my practice. My pedagogic work has also extended from community focused photography workshops to encompass undergraduate teaching. The scope of my exploration has consequently increased to consider the nature of embodied expertise, the use of photographic devices and processes as means of investigation and speculation, and contexts for production of and engagement with art, including the potential of the gallery to act as what François Jullien (2016) refers to as 'écart', a space 'between'.

2. Critical evaluation of creative practice

In terms of development of my creative practice, this year has been disappointing. From June 2023 I was increasingly involved in the care of my mother, sadly culminating with her death at the end of September (my father also died earlier in September). Consequently, between June 2023 and January 2024 I only did work to which I was either contractually or morally committed. Whilst this has limited what I have been able to achieve artistically this year, I am now well-placed to fully commit to the DFA and the production of work for my final year exhibition. In this section, I present a critical account of my work over the past year.

A. Terra Privata: DFA Showcase 2023

The prevalence of private housing developments on previously industrial sites in east London has led to a proliferation of privately-owned public spaces (POPS). These include parks and other 'green spaces' that are freely open to the public, but subject to any conditions the owner wishes to impose, including possible restrictions on photography. For

the 2023 DFA Showcase I brought together work from three new series of images to explore three privately owned public spaces in east London.



Figure 2: Andrew Brown, *Blueprints for a Connected Community 1-9*, 2023

Blueprints for a Connected Community 1-9 (2023) comprised of nine handprinted cyanotypes from digital negatives. I fed my in-situ descriptions of three private housing developments in east London into DALL-E2, 'an AI system that can create realistic images and art from a description in natural language' (Open AI website, accessed 29.05.23). I made digital negatives from the resulting images and used these to make cyanotype prints, exposed in natural light, processed in water and dried in the air in each of the three locations. This raises questions about what counts as photography and the rationale for restrictions imposed in these places.



Figure 3: Andrew Brown, from *Mature Stage of Life* series, 2023

There are no mature trees on the three developments. For the *Mature Stage of Life* series (2023) I made infra-red photographs of the nearest ancient or veteran tree to each development, identified using the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory. Veteran trees are complex, support biodiversity, have cultural and heritage value and provide continuity in a changing world. They are usually in their second or mature stage of life and bear 'the scars' of age such as decay in the trunk, branches or roots, fungal fruiting bodies, or dead wood' (The Woodland Trust, 2008, p.5).



Figure 4: Andrew Brown, from *New Kind of London Living* series, 2023

For the *New Kind of London Living* series (2023) images were made at the edges of each of the three developments with a digital sensor that simulates late nineteenth century photographic emulsions. These emulsions are sensitive to just ultraviolet and blue light, and unable to register chlorophyll, which is only perceptible in the near infra-red portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. This gives the landscape a muted and distant allure, producing images that supported the spurious colonial notion of 'terra nullius'. Historian Jarrod Hore (2022, 2021) has explored the role of colonial photography in shaping settler relationships to place, arguing that the images produced by colonial photographers hid the presence and ancestral ownership of aboriginal and First Nations people, presenting their homelands as 'a wilderness through a photographic sleight of hand' (Hore, 2021, online). For this series, I produced text (in poem form) to accompany each image, using extracts from the marketing material for each of the developments (see Appendix 1). The images from this series and the *Mature Stage of Life* series were exhibited as UV cured pigment prints on dibond, an industrial printing process used for my 2021 public work, *Entangled Ilford*.



Figure 5: Andrew Brown, *Terra Privata*, installation shots, UEL, June 2023

The work extended my use of alternative and historic photographic processes and making images using solar radiation which is not visible to humans. The intention was to build on earlier exploration of the ways in which human and more than human perception shape relationship with place. In producing the work for exhibition, I created unique cyanotype prints in-situ, exploring the use of situated environmental resources (light, water, air) in the production of images, alongside the adoption of industrial printing processes used for the computer-generated images of an idealised future that adorn the hoardings around new developments. The creation of all three series involved movement back and forth between analogue and digital processes and raised questions about what can be considered as 'realistic' depictions of a place. Visitors to the exhibition often said that they recognised the developments in the cyanotypes, ranging from various locations in London, across the UK and Europe, and in Asia, highlighting the generic nature of contemporary housing development architecture and the erasure of the visual distinctiveness of place. Discussion with J.J. Charlesworth at the Showcase seminar raised questions about how the elements of the exhibition and the devices used affect the viewers, and what they need to know to enable them to make sense of the relationship between the different series presented and between the images and the places. We discussed the possibility of using AI to generate building interiors as well as exteriors (thus producing a sense of the projected cultures and lifestyles of intended inhabitants) and finding ways of taking the work created for the exhibition back to the community.



Figure 6: Andrew Brown, *Blueprints for a Connected Community*, Flight Lines exhibition installation shot, Four Corners February 2024

I intend to add further images to all three series. In February 2024, I was able to exhibit *Blueprints for a Connected Community* as one of four artists featured in the Flight Lines exhibition exploring the politics of public space, at Four Corners Gallery, Bethnal Green.

B. A Pleasant Place: exploring urban micro-climates

This is a collaborative project with Dr Oscar Brousse, Research Fellow in Urban Meteorology and Environmental Modelling at UCL Institute of Environmental Design and Engineering, and Judit Agui, a science communicator and project manager for The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures. It is funded by UCL East Public Engagement. The aim of the project is to explore the environmental factors that affect how people feel in different urban microclimates through engagement with a variety of creative arts activities. The work emerges from a wider Wellcome Trust funded research project *Health and Economic impacts of Reducing Overheating in Cities (HEROIC)*. In August 2023 we designed and ran a photo-walk in Hackney, which knitted together the making of photographic images using non-visible parts of the solar radiation spectrum (infra-red and ultra-violet) with experience and discussion of five distinctive urban heat climates. We began the walk with making cyanotype prints together and discussing the effects of ultra-violet radiation. On the walk we introduced near infra-red photography using modified digital cameras, and participants made and discussed images. At each of the five stops we focussed on the heat characteristics of each setting (using portable data collection devices), discussed how it feels subjectively and considered

how it affects us physiologically. At the final stop by the River Lea, participants made prints using a portable dye sublimation printer.



Figure 7: A *Pleasant Place* photo-walk, Hackney Downs, August 2023

The event was notable for the way in which making and discussing images provoked discussion of both the science of urban heat accumulation and the social, cultural and economic causes and consequences. The feedback from the seventeen participants was overwhelmingly positive. In addition to the formal and informal evaluation, Oscar, Judit and I wrote short pieces about the experience of working together and the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration. This summer we will be conducting further walks around Hackney, Newham and the Olympic Park, involving a range of local community groups and linking in with the network of climate sensors being set up by the project across the area.



Figure 8: Participant infra-red photographs, *A Pleasant Place* photo-walk, August 2023

The opportunity to do my own work in this pilot was limited. The two images below, for instance, are starting to explore the distinctive thermal characteristics of waterside environments (so called 'blue spaces'), and in particular the effects on the feel of the place

of trees, water and built environment, using near infra-red photography. We have secured funding for an exhibition and event at UCL East later this year. The exhibition will include my own work alongside images made by participants in the walks.



Figure 9: Andrew Brown, from *A Pleasant Place* series, 2023

Feedback and discussion at DFA seminars focused on clarifying what I bring to these kinds of inter-disciplinary projects as an artist. This lies at the core of my DFA work and is discussed in Section 3. We have also discussed how the issue of data is woven through this work, both how the artistic work produced can make data accessible to participants, and ways in which the work itself might be seen as a form of data (see Fuller & Weizman, 2021 for discussion of this in relation to the work of *Forensic Architecture*).

C. River Roding: the path to *Roding Rising*

Over the past five years I have produced a substantial body of work focusing on the urban sections of the River Roding and surrounding areas in east London, most recently as Arts Associate for the River Roding Trust. This has included the 2023 *Changing Currents* project and exhibition at SPACE gallery (a collaboration with Arup, super/collider and Beal High School), my 2021 DFA Showcase exhibition (*Matter Out of Place*) and the *River Roding: Sacred River* series, which was exhibited along the river for almost two years (June 2022 to March 2024) and featured in *Minority and Indigenous Trends 2023: Focus on water* (Sutil &

Söderbergh, 2023), in print and online. I am planning to focus my final DFA exhibition on Roding related work.

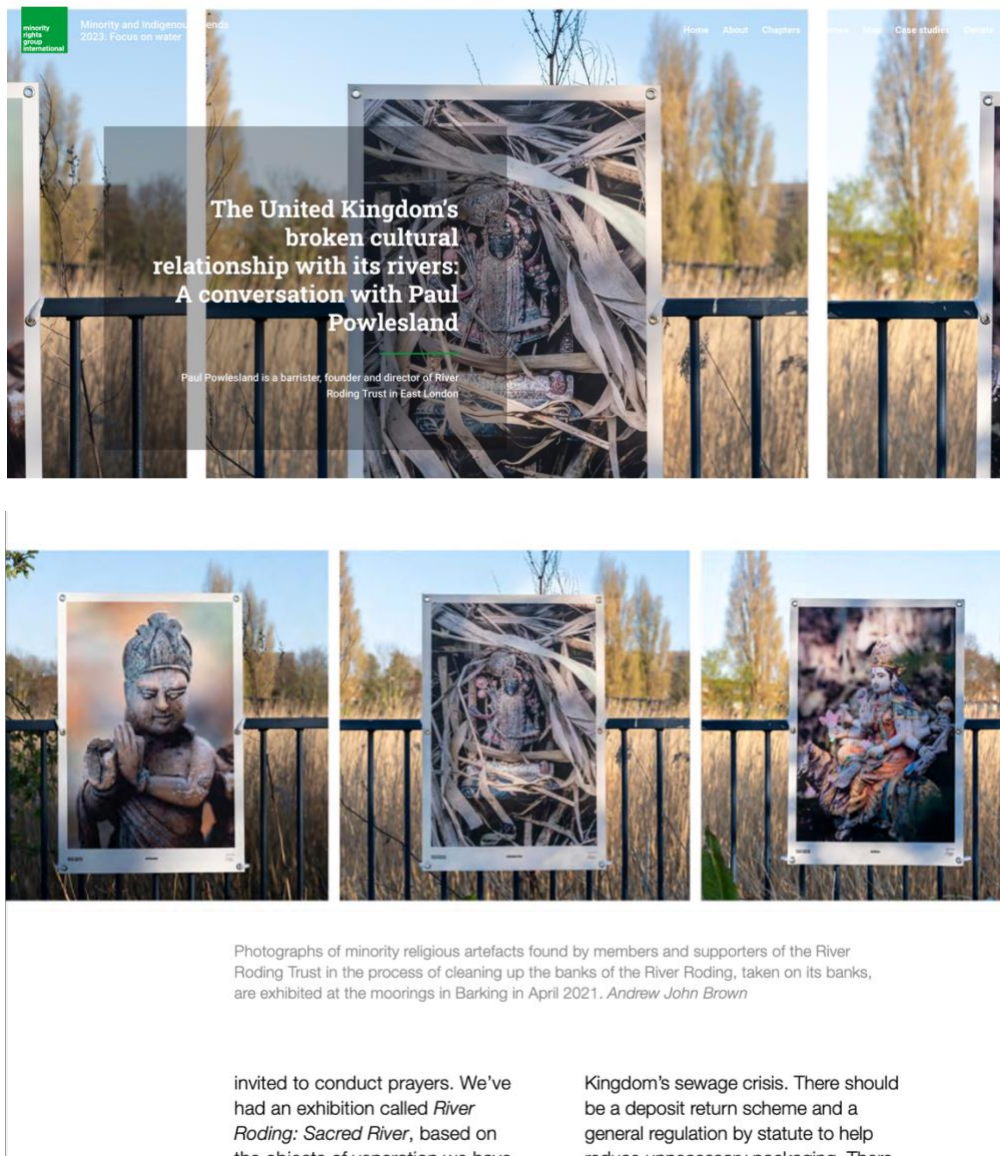


Figure 10: Andrew Brown, images from *River Roding: Sacred River*,
Minority and Indigenous Trends: Focus on Water, 2023

Work produced this year includes a soundscape and animation exploring human generated vibration and sound within the river (*Beneath*, 2024), for instance caused by underground train lines, and parts of the non-visible solar spectrum that are absorbed or reflected by the water (see below).

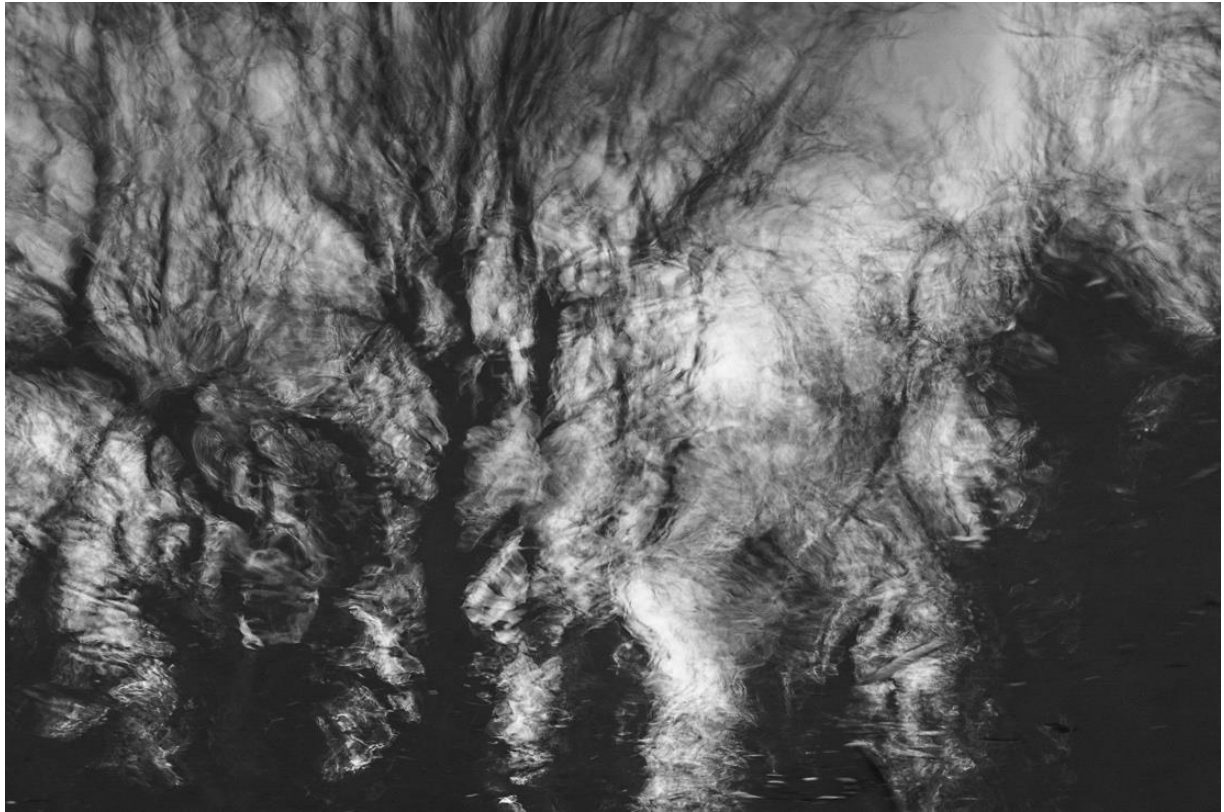


Figure 11: Andrew Brown, still image from *Beneath* animation, 2024

I have also drawn inspiration from the work of artists and photographers who have produced images of rivers, for instance Anselm Kiefer's (2023) Liffey paintings, imagined by way of *Finnegans Wake*, Kate Orff and Richard Misrach's (2012) exploration of the petrochemical toxicity of the Mississippi, Mark Ruwedel's (2023) urban hinterland Los Angeles River series, and Ansley West Rivers' (2017) large format *Seven Rivers* series, for which she frequently kayaked up river for days and set up camp. I have explored the 'local sublime', edgelands (Farley & Symmons Roberts, 2011), no more than a 5-minute bike ride away, making images using a range of different photographic techniques and devices. Below I have placed one of my images of the River Roding (simulating an early twentieth century emulsion) alongside an image by Ansel Adams.

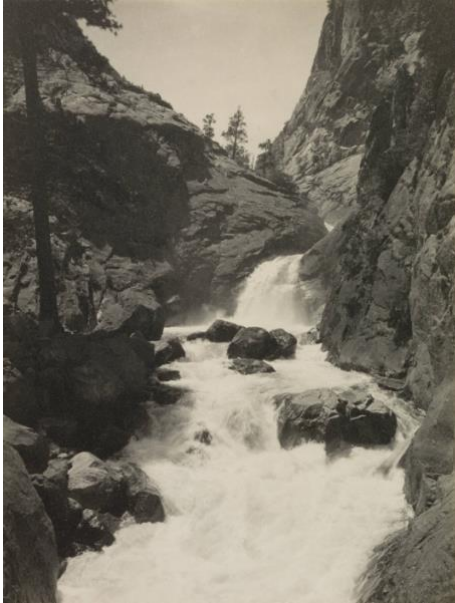


Figure 12: Ansel Adams, *Roaring River Falls* from the portfolio *Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras*, 1925

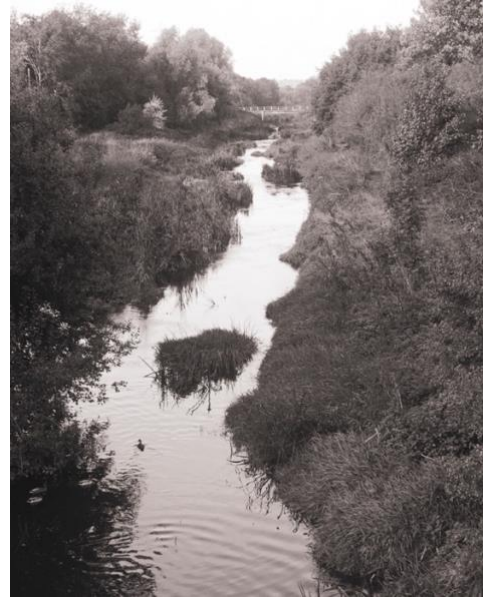


Figure 13: Andrew Brown, *River Roding*, 2023

Over the past three months, I have re-photographed this scene using a range of devices, materials and processes (some examples below). Feedback on this work at DFA seminars has raised questions about aesthetics and the place of beauty in my Roding related work, and the tensions this creates around the aestheticization of urban environments. I have drawn particular attention to this by, for instance, juxtaposing images with soundscapes through which the aesthetic qualities of the images are disrupted and disturbed by the thunderous sound of major roads running just metres away (and just out of shot).

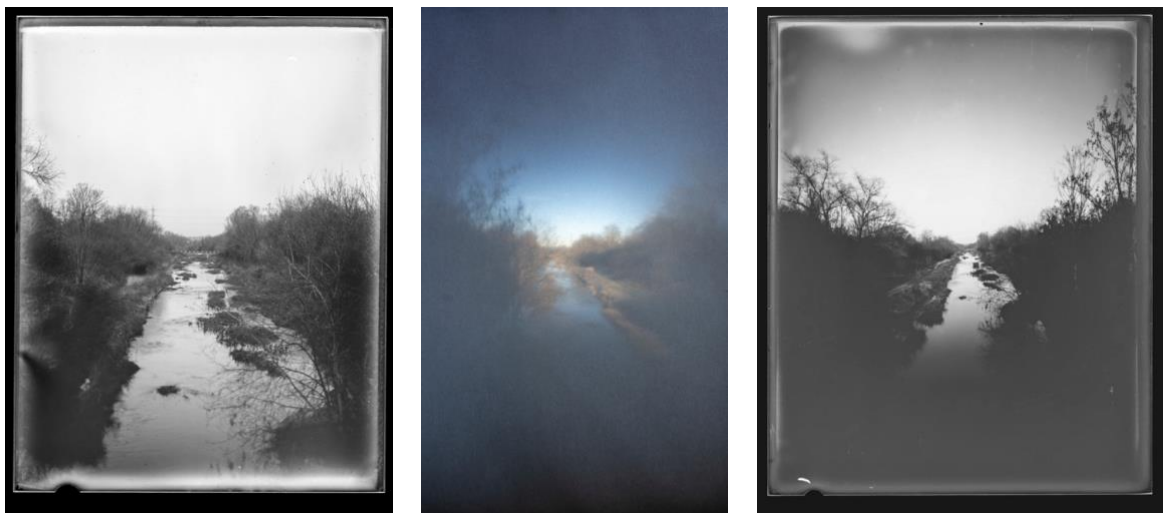


Figure 11: Andrew Brown, *Roding Re-photographed*, 2024

As a local artist and as Arts Associate for the River Roding Trust, I supported a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid by Thames 21, with the Trust is a community partner. Over the coming year, funding of £168 000 has been granted for a full plan for the *Roding Rising* project to be produced, to be followed by the implementation stage (with a grant of £1.5 million) consisting of three strands: river enhancement and improvement, citizen science, and community engagement (including arts related activities). My advocacy-oriented images have been used in the promotion of this project. I am hoping that the project will provide a productive context for my River Roding related work.

D. Photography as Material Practice: UEL BA Photography module



Figure 12: Andrew Brown, *Untitled*, analogue in camera multiple exposures, 2023

Designing and teaching this 12-week Level 5 BA in Photography module provided an opportunity to extend and reflect critically on the work I have been doing with community groups. The workshops explored a range of approaches to the production and presentation of photographic images and examined how we engage people with our work. There was an emphasis on experimentation in image making, the hacking of technologies and techniques, and the translation back and forth between analogue and digital forms. The starting point was an installation in which students explored a range of analogue, digital, alternative and historic forms of photographic image making and associated apparatuses. This was an opportunity for me to consider how I might include this kind of installation in my own work, focussing on the way in which the devices and processes we use actively influence our understanding of and relationships with people, places and things.



Figure 13: Andrew Brown, *Untitled*, portable scan and full-spectrum images, 2023

I also used a range of different forms of material realisation of images (for instance, on different types of paper, on glass, on textiles, industrial printing processes, screens, projections and so on). Throughout the programme the emphasis on the materiality of the production and dissemination of photographs mirrored the development of my own work. I produced new work alongside the students (see examples in Figures 12, 13 and 14).



Figure 14: Andrew Brown, *Untitled*, riverside shadow cyanotype and river reflection, 2023

Student work, exploring the relationship between people and place, was presented in the *Analogue +: a photographic exhibition focusing on the intersection of digital and analogue processes* at Way Out East Gallery, 14th – 18th February 2024.



Figure 15: *Analogue +*, installation shots, Way Out East Gallery, February 2024

E. Flight Lines: exploring the politics of public space through attitudes towards pigeons.

This was an Arts Council funded mixed media art project led by artist and film-maker Ryan Powell. The aim of the project was to explore the more-than-human worlds that layer the city and explore both exclusion and care across species. I ran a series of photography workshops at Crisis Skylight Brent for people who have experienced homelessness.



Figure 16: Flight Lines photography workshop, Crisis Skyline Brent, January 2024

We explored a range of different ways of making photographs, including primitive cameras, cyanotypes and scanning, drawing on my own practice of moving between analogue and digital forms and using historical and alternative photographic processes as a means of investigation, speculation and engagement with the environment. Work produced by participants was exhibited at the Flight Lines exhibition at Four Corners Gallery.



Figure 17: Participant cyanotype and scanner images, Flight Lines workshop, 2024

F. NovelEco: exploring subjective responses to urban nature

This is an EU funded multi-site international project based at Trinity College, Dublin.



Figure 18: NovelEco photo-walk, Barking, October 2023

‘NovelEco is a citizen science project that will measure, for the first time, societal attitudes towards urban wild spaces and species (or novel ecosystems) by working with citizens to study them and generate data on these unusual and perhaps overlooked urban ecosystems’. (NovelEco website, accessed 24.04.24)

In October 2023, I organised a photo-walk along the River Roding with Research Fellow Clair Cooper and River Roding Trust trustee Louis Rutherford. We traced a route along the River Roding in Barking, stopping periodically to talk about the area and for the participant to take photographs, explore and ask questions. At the end of the walk we printed a selection of the photographs and held a workshop in which participants made artworks exploring their feelings about the urban river and ways in which they would like to see the nature in the area nurtured and enhanced.



Figure 19: NovelEco photo-walk workshop feedback session, Barking, October 2023

The next steps in the project are to produce a piece of collaborative writing, conduct a backcasting/envisioning workshop with participants and develop a case study of this urban wild space, which provides another opportunity for me to explore how the arts can make a distinctive contribution to understanding our relationship with the natural, or more than human, world.

G. Granta Magazine Nature Writing Programme

This was an eight-week programme for experienced writers. My aim in doing the course was to refine my creative writing and consider how I might incorporate this into my artistic practice. My tutor was Jessica J. Lee, a Canadian born creative non-fiction writer and environmental historian, of Taiwanese and Welsh parentage, who is an advocate for diversification of nature writing and founder/editor of the *Willowherb Review*. For the weekly writing activities, I focused on my personal experiences and work around the River Roding. This enabled me to work through elements of the artistic exploration of the river that had been difficult, for instance relating to the encampments along the river and the tragic murder of a migrant worker. Jane Alison's (2019) work on the shape of narratives, *Meander, Spiral, Explode: Design and Pattern in Narrative*, was particularly influential in considering the relationship between visual and written forms. Her analysis of Anne Carson's *Nox*, a poem that is presented as a 192-page concertina book in an archive box (see Figure 20), with source material, including images, interleaved into the poem, has inspired me to return to my earlier work using archive boxes and collections of materials (see Figure 21). Whilst my collections have been unstructured and deliberately left open for exploration and reorganisation by users, Carson's work is very deliberately organised around a ten-line untitled Latin poem (revealed as *Poem 101* by Catullus) that appears at regular intervals on left-hand pages, opposite more personal material (Motion, 2010).



Figure 20: Anne Carson, *Nox*, 2009

For my final piece of writing, I explored ways of laying out the text on the page, creating a text that can be read in sequence from beginning to end or as three columns (draft text available [here](#)). One option, for instance for the 2024 Showcase, would be to re-orientate the text to read paragraphs from left to right, to create a wall mounted work or a concertina book, into which I could weave visual material.

3. Critical evaluation of artists and theory

In her forthcoming environmental history of photography (University of Chicago Press) Michelle Henning refers to my work on the River Roding and surrounding areas of east London.

‘Brown’s work combines new and old processes including infrared and composite techniques, sensitised glass plates coated using emulsion formulae from the 1880s and 1890s, video and soundscape, to address the photographic history of the locality and the legacy of industrialisation that affects the land and the river even now. His workshops engage the present population of Ilford with that history, and with their environment’. (Manuscript, no page)

She further observes that:

‘these projects are community focussed, intensely engaged with specific location, modest in scope and reflective about the relationship between the history of photography and the histories of places and ecosystems ... these artistic projects set out to build these [community] bonds, not only between humans but with creatures and other nonhumans ... When the scale of ongoing environmental destruction seems overwhelming, and while large-scale political action is urgently needed, there is also a need to connect with and rebuild what is immediate and present and nearby’.
(Manuscript, no page)

While Henning was doing research for her book, our paths crossed virtually in 2022 in the archive at the Redbridge Heritage Centre in the Central Library, opposite my studio in Ilford. I was carrying out research for my UP Projects commissioned workshop series, exploring ways of using public art to connect the present day pre-dominantly south Asian heritage population of Ilford with the town's photographic history. This focused specifically on Ilford Ltd, the film and photographic materials brand which started as a local cottage industry in 1879 and grew into a global brand with its principal manufacturing plant and headquarters in Ilford until 1976, when the head office was moved and the plant demolished. The Ilford Ltd archive is held in Redbridge Heritage Centre. For the workshops I drew on the archive, made images of the area using historic methods and materials, created a collection of Ilford branded cameras and materials, and designed a range of activities, including walks, for participants to use the materials and create images.



Figure 21: Andrew Brown, *Ilford to the World and Back Again*, portfolio box, 2022

From the beginning of the DFA programme, my practice has been strongly influenced by Stephen Wright's (2018) exploration of the 'useological' turn in the arts, in which the opposition between production and consumption breaks down, creating a tension with previously dominant principles of expert culture, spectatorship and ownership. Kathrin

Böhm (who was my mentor on the 2019-20 London Creative Network scheme) applies and extends many of these concepts in practice. For Böhm, art is important but not special, and the gallery provides a setting for art on a one to one scale, that is 'art on the scale of life' (see van Noord, O'Neill and Wilson, 2023, for an in-depth exploration of Böhm's work, including a conversation between Böhm and Wright). For Böhm art is not a representation of something but is rather the thing itself. Galleries provide a space for interaction, making, collaborative work, discussion, not in relation to art but as art.

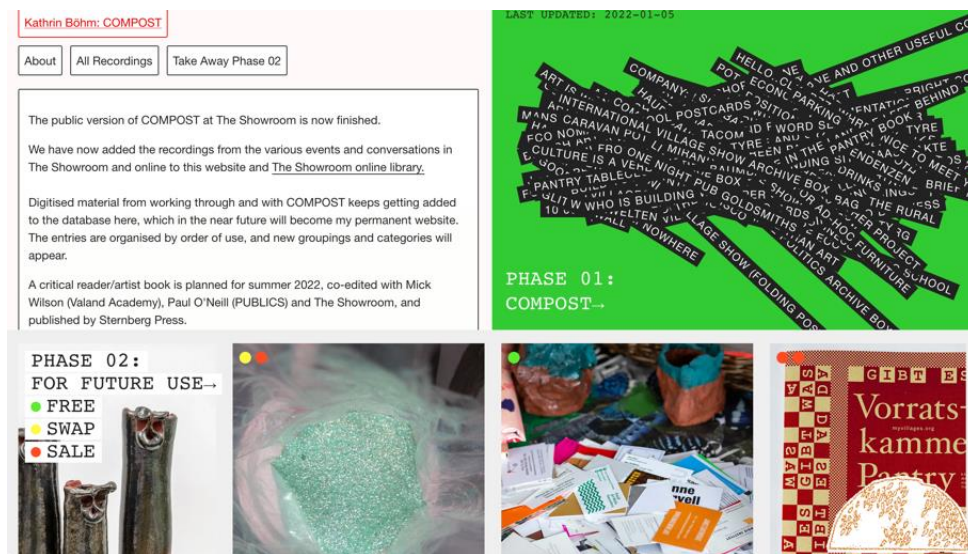


Figure 22: Kathrin Böhm, *Compost Phase 2: For Future Use*, 2021

For me, the sharing of expertise and competence, and mutual care and insight into life-worlds through art is particularly important. Coming to artistic practice later in life, I am less confident in, and less committed to, the gallery setting. My making and doing alongside others continues to be predominantly within my own locality and the places in which community activity takes place, for instance community gardens, re-wilding places, libraries and maker-spaces. With the 'A Pleasant Place' collaboration, walks have become increasingly important as a context for creating and engaging with art alongside other forms of engagement and analysis (in this case urban climatology, design, health and demographics). In developing this work, I am drawing on Bloom and Sacramento's (2017) practice of deep mapping, which we are enriching with the incorporation of real time local climate data and other forms of sensing, such as full-spectrum photography, historic and alternative photographic processes, and audio field recording with binaural recorders,

hydrophones and contact microphones. These devices project our sensing and sense-making speculatively into the lifeworld of the more than human, as explored, for instance, by photographic artist Robert Zhao Renhui and his creation of a fictional 'Institute of Critical Zoologists'.



Figure 23: Robert Zhao Renhui, *Institute of Critical Zoologists* website, accessed 23.04.24

The use of walks as a context for engagement with the locality and making of art is also inspired by the work of cognitive scientist Alexandra Horowitz (2013). Walking the same New York block in conversation with a succession of people with distinct expertise (from geologists to urban zoologists to social workers and more) provides Horowitz with a context for exploring how the exchange of expert knowledge can transform how we see and engage with a place. The model of learning that I am adopting is closer to an anthropological model than Horowitz's more psychological model (Bloch, 2012), placing greater emphasis on learning through interaction and working together within a group or community. To return to the motivation for my DFA enquiry, the issue of plurality, my initial expectation was that the relationship between different areas of expertise would, in practice, be best understood in epistemological terms: that being, thinking and acting as an artist, and being, thinking and acting as a sociologist would produce forms of knowledge that would complement, supplement or challenge each other. Reflecting on my own practice over the past four years, the relationship is better understood in methodological and dispositional terms. Both my sociological research and my artistic practice are grounded in the creation of contexts in

which meaningful activity can take place. The characteristics of the context in turn shape how different forms of expertise and experience come into play and interact with each other.

To maximise the number and diversity of people who can engage with our work, for 'A Pleasant Place' we are working with makers to develop a portable exhibition framework which we can take to both gallery and community settings. We are also running activities and doing walks for The Great Get Together, a day of events on the Olympic Park for all ages. Likewise, for the 2023 Changing Currents exhibition, I ran a drop-in workshop on *Exploring Nature Using Photography*, where I brought activities developed in the field into the gallery (including hand colourising, infra-red photography, cyanotypes, camera obscura and digital microscopy). Over a period of four hours we had 101 participants, most of whom stayed for the whole session.



Figure 24: *Exploring Nature Using Photography* workshop, SPACE Gallery, Ilford, 2023

The development of my final DFA exhibition provides an opportunity to explore this relationship between the contexts within which people make and engage with art, and how galleries can play a productive role. It also provides an opportunity to address the relationship between work produced over time from a succession of individual projects, each with its own specific communities, processes and outcomes. Kathrin Böhm has adopted a process of 'composting', in which work from her past projects is put into 'piles' and made available to others to reconfigure, recombine and reuse. Sorting through these heaps of work from twenty years of practice and making new work is the basis for the two-phases of Böhm's show *Compost* at The Showroom in 2021, which, according to curator Lily Hall

'involved making instances of practice in-progress public, through the assembly and disassembly, re-distribution, and the dissolutions of material remains of Kathrin [Bohm]'s practice. This generated a set of tools for decision-making within and beyond that immediate context' (Hall, 2023, p. 47).

My creation of dynamic archives and collections, which can be used in a variety of activities and contexts, and to which participants can add (and from which they can take) can function in a similar way. Drawing on Jane Bennett's (2010) exploration of a vital materialism and Bruno Latour's (2004) concept of matter as an actant enables us to see the material that is composted, collected, assembled or archived as active in our engagement with it, and active in the development of a relationship with and knowledge of a place. The devices we use in our engagement and our material production (for instance, the cameras, photosensitive materials and sensors used) are also active, and, as Flusser (2000) asserts, we can productively work against the agency of these devices. The point here is to recognise this agency, and to be clear that neither the things we create nor the devices we use can be seen as passive objects to be exploited or bent to our human will.

Bennett and Livingston (2011) take a walk around Baltimore to 'catch a glimpse of the fugitive power of "things" at work' (p.12). They describe the walk as 'philosophy in the wild' and note when encountering rubbish in streets and alleyways that it has a life of its own which 'we discover as we explore its habitat in the alleyways of Baltimore. It exceeds whatever use or meaning we assign to it' (p. 12). Drawing on the principles of Bennett's philosophy, they provide illustrations of its power to produce alternative interpretations of our experiences and actions which acknowledge the active influence, or agency, of things acting in ever shifting configurations.

'Like Deleuze and Dewey, vital materialists are also pragmatists. For us today, living in the wealthy and profoundly unequal democracies of North America, vital materialism is a strategy for sensing the visceral dimensions of our destructive political culture and discovering alternatives to it. It is a way of opening ourselves to things so our minds and bodies can be changed by them, as well as a theory of agentic material assemblages' (Bennett and Livingston, 2011, pp. 12-13)

Furthermore, such encounters are not only an opportunity to think about the humanising of objects, but also to think about objectness in the human.



Figure 25: Paravel & Castaing-Taylor, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* installation shot, Amsterdam, 2024

V r na Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor describe themselves as anthropologists, artists and filmmakers. Castaing-Taylor is Director of the Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab and Paravel worked with Bruno Latour in Paris prior to moving to Harvard. Earlier this year, I went to their first retrospective, *Cosmic Realism*, at the Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. The seven immersive video installations included the first public showing of an eight-screen installation based on their 2022 film *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*. This is the result of long-term visual research and filming in five Parisian hospitals. The piece forcefully conveys the complexity of medical practice and the way the devices used, the characteristics of the settings and the lifeworlds of the human agents (including social, cultural and economic factors beyond the medical setting) intertwine and interact to shape practice. Material includes casual conversations from an intensive care ward, after work club scenes, moving images from medical devices that penetrate the human body and close-up operating theatre scenes. This resonates with the anthropological work of Latour and colleagues, which explores how practice is shaped through the interaction of human and non-human actants, often in ways that runs counter to professional accounts of the activity and its dynamics (see, for instance, Latour, 1987, Mol, 2002).



Figure 26: Paravel & Castaing-Taylor, *Leviathan* installation shot, Amsterdam, 2024

The one single-channel work in the exhibition, *Leviathan* (2012), is based on months of filming on a fishing vessel and explores the relationship between humans and the sea. Using dozens of small video cameras, the film entwines perspectives of human and more than human actants against the ear-crushing soundscape of industrial deep-sea fishing. As with the other works in the exhibition, it illustrates the practical accomplishment of plurality in its making, spanning anthropology and art. The works also convey the complexity of practice in a range of fields, including medicine, sheep farming and commercial fishing, through the entwinement of human and more than human perspectives.



Figure 27: Nguyễn Trinh Thi, *47 Days, Sound-less*, installation shot, Singapore 2024

In her most recent work, Vietnamese mixed-media artist Nguyễn Trinh Thi combines found material with her own current and earlier work and real-time data from outside the gallery. In her installation *and they die another death* at Documenta 15 (2022, Kassel), she connects wind sensors in Vietnam with controllers and air compressors which activate traditional flutes, specially made to be playable remotely, in the gallery in Kassel. The sound, in turn, activates lights which shine through chilli plants casting shadows on the darkened gallery walls. For her piece at the third Thailand Biennale at Chiang Rai, she worked with activists protecting the Mekong River to set up a water turbine which feeds data on the ebb and flow of the river into her 2023 sound installation *Ri sēiṅng (Sound-Less)*. Traditional xylophones are activated by real time data on water levels, and two sets of flutes are activated by sets of historical data, on water levels before and after the construction of a dam. Nguyễn Trinh Thi attempts to decentre human subjectivity by incorporating data gathered that is not directly perceptible by humans (though may be by other species). In *47 Days, Sound-less* (2024, Singapore Art Museum) she again combines old, new and found video with natural soundscapes and recordings of indigenous instruments. In addition to two large video screens, a central downward projection is reflected by several circular mirrors to create peripheral images around the room, suggesting other ways of seeing. Although not explicitly stated, the increasing complexity of Trinh Thi's work and the layering of new work on elements from previous work resembles Kathrin Böhm's composting process, for instance in treating her own video material as found footage. She also celebrates learning new ways of working and developing new forms of expertise in the production of artistic work. The difference is, however, the extent to which this work is made available for others to use in creating their own work. For the development of my own work, Trinh Thi's installations illustrate how climate data, and particular real time data related to the river and sensory stimulation that is beyond human perception, can have agency within the gallery.



Figure 28: Hito Steyerl, *Green Screen*, installation shots, London, 2023

Hito Steyerl's *Green Screen* (2023, exhibited in *Dear Earth: Art and Hope in a Time of Crisis*, Hayward Gallery, London) uses a grid made of LED illuminated bottles as a large screen. Each bottle acts as a pixel, the colour of which is determined by bio-electrical signals from a living wall of plants behind the screen. The changing image is thus created by data relating to the condition of the plants, fed through in real time, another example of the agency of the more than human in a gallery setting, and making that which is imperceptible to humans visible.



Figure 29: Simryn Gill, *Forest* (1996-98), installation shots and detail, Singapore 2024

In last year's review, I discussed Simryn Gill's work at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. My interest in Gill's work, and its influence on the development of my own practice, has extended this year into the way in which text can be an integral part of artwork. I was able to see two additional pieces of Gill's work this year. The series *Forest* (1996-98) comprises of a set of 16 large black and white photographs of plants to which handwritten text on biodegradable media have been grafted and left to decay over time. The text are fragments from notable English writers, signifying the colonial imposition of English in Southeast Asia. This early work lays foundations for more intricate work exploring the relationship between experience and written text, and how these accounts change over time, through decay or revision.

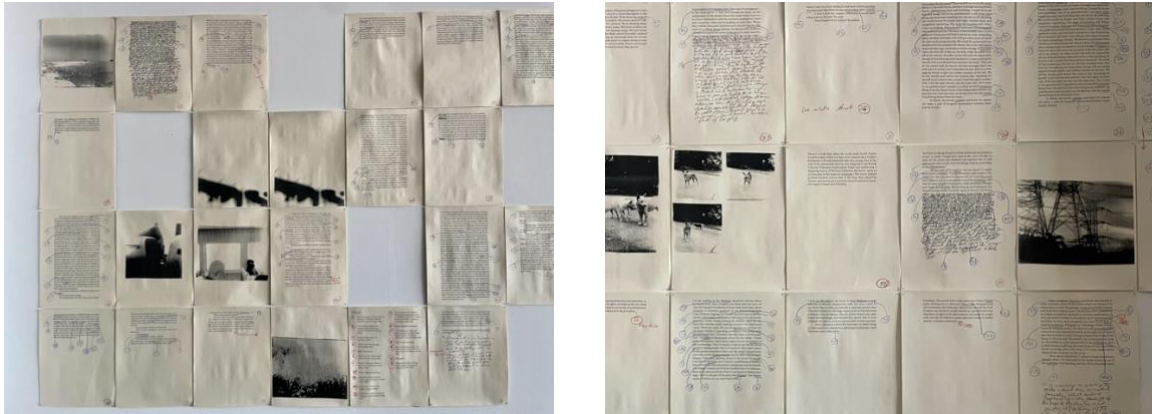


Figure 30: Simryn Gill, installation shot, Singapore 2024

More recently, *The Sea is a Field* (2024, Singapore Art Museum), is the result of a collaboration between Gill and Singaporean artist Charles Lim Yi Yong. Gill travels 300 km from her home in Malaysia to Lim's home in Singapore, and Lim travels in the other direction, each using a network of local ferries. Gill records her 12-hour journey through photography and writing, Lim uses video. For the resulting installation, Gill displays the pages of printed text of her account, with handwritten annotations, corrections, edits and indexing codes, alongside photocopied photographs from the journey, emphasising the provisional nature and instability of the written account in bringing the experience of the journey into the gallery.



Figure 31: Martin Venezky, *What I Know About Photography*, installation shot, San Francisco 2019

In developing my practice, I also want to explore ways of referring to the devices and processes involved in the making of the work. Martin Venezky's *What I Know About Photography* (2019, San Francisco State University) illustrates one approach. This exhibition, designed and curated by Jon Sueda, displays artefacts and images stretching back to Venezky's first camera, and maps out a photographic practice which supports and runs alongside his more public artistic work.



Figure 32: Mike Nelson, *Extinction Beckons*, installation shot, London, 2023

In an apparently less organised way, Mike Nelson's *Extinction Beckons* at the Hayward Gallery (2023) includes a storage area with racks of materials (as does, on a grander scale, Anselm Kiefer's 2023 *Finnegans Wake* at the White Cube), and a red lit, fully equipped but down-at-heel darkroom, with prints hung to dry. The way I designed and presented the BA module *Photography as Material Practice* was inspired in part by this work and the desire to make processes visible and to present the devices and materials we use as actants in the production of photographic work. Discussion of my work at DFA seminars has raised the potential of greater use of moving image in my work, which I will explore in the 2024 showcase (see still from 2023 *Plate Dev* animation below).

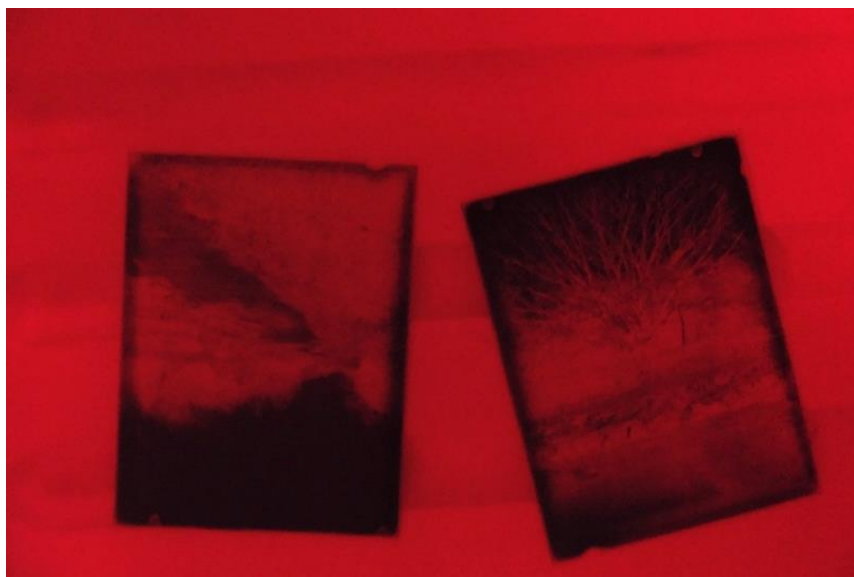


Figure 33: Andrew Brown, *Plate Dev*, still image, 2024

4. Critical evaluation of professional practice

A. Professional activities

Exhibitions/public works

- 2024 [*Flight Lines*](#), Four Corners, London. Nine A3 landscape cyanotypes from digital negatives on Canson Imagine paper. 26th to 29th January.
- 2024 [*History of East London Textile Arts*](#), Art Workers Guild, London. Six 500mm x 750mm inkjet photographs. 19th January to 18th April.
- 2024 [*Romeo and Juliet for All*](#), East London Textile Arts, Stratford Library. Seven 500mm x 750mm inkjet photographs and 7-minute stop motion video.
- 2022/4 [*River Roding: Sacred River*](#), River Roding Trust Moorings, Barking, permanent installation. Eight 500mm x 750mm photographs printed on foamex boards, mounted on railings along the riverside path. June 2022–March 2024.
- 2022/4 [*Entangled Ilford*](#). 50.2m x 2.2m, UV printed on aluminium with anti-graffiti coating. Nine 3m x 2m images April 5th December 2022–date.
- 2023 [*Ilford Roots and Branches*](#), SPACE Gallery Billboard Commission, Ilford. Photographic print on vinyl mounted on illuminated billboard (5.2m x 2.2m with text panel). 1st April–1st September.
- 2023 [*Terra Privata*](#), UEL DFA Summer Showcase, University of East London. Nine A3 landscape cyanotypes from digital negatives on mixed media paper, six 70 cm square UV cured prints on dibond. 22nd-27th June.
- 2023 [*States of Exchange*](#), Hyphastudios, East Village, Stratford. Group show. Two works: *Contribution to Knowledge* (installation including 15 framed 210mm x 297mm monochrome giclée prints on smooth pearl paper) and *Untitled* from *Crosscurrents* series (329mm x 483mm giclée print on bamboo paper with text panel). 31st March–2nd June 2023.
- 2023 [*Changing Currents*](#), SPACE Gallery, Ilford. Collaborative work with Beal High School, Arup and super/collider. Various media including photographic prints, projection, audio and 3D work. Curated by super/collider. 8th February–1st June 2023.

Publication

- 2024 Matthews, R. [*Rag Manifesto: Making, Folklore & Community*](#), Stroud: Quickthorn Books. East London Textile Arts and Rag School photographs.

- 2023 Sutil, N.S. & Söderbergh, C. (eds) [Minority and Indigenous Trends 2023: Focus on water](#). London: Minority Rights Group International. Roding Artefacts photographs. Licenced for web and print.
- 2023 Brown, A. "[Precarious entanglements](#)", *Access: Critical explorations of equity in higher education*, 11(1), pp. 63–69.
- 2023 [Access Journal, 11 \(1\): Space, Time and Precarity in Higher Education: Exploring Configurations of Power and Inequality in Precarious Times](#). Cover and seven images. Licenced for web and print.



Figure 34: Andrew Brown, sample pages from *Access* journal, 2023.

Other outputs

- 2024 *Re-wilding London Golf Courses*. Co-presenter. London National Park City. 5th April.
- 2024 BA Photography, final year review. UEL. 22nd February.
- 2023/4 *Photography as Material Practice*. BA Level 5. Module Leader. UEL. 25th Sept 2023 to 19th Jan 2024.
- 2023/4 [Flight Lines](#). Series of photography workshops for people with experience of homelessness. Crisis Skylight Brent. Arts Council funded. 7th November 2023 to 16th January 2024.
- 2023 *A Pleasant Place: urban microclimate photo-walk and workshop*. Hackney. UCL East Engagement funded. 4th August.
- 2023 [NovelEco Photo-walk and workshop](#). Barking. 15th October.
- 2023 [Exploring Nature with Photography](#). One day drop-in workshop, SPACE Gallery, Ilford. 100+ participants. 22nd April 2023. Workshop leader.

B. Exhibitions attended

- 2024 [In Event of Moon Disaster](#), Sainsbury Centre, Norwich. 19.04.2024
- 2024 [Liquid Gender](#), Sainsbury Centre, Norwich. 19.04.2024
- 2024 [Jeffrey Gibson: no simple word for time](#), Sainsbury Centre, Norwich. 19.04.2024
- 2024 [The Paston Treasure](#), Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery. 18.04.2024
- 2024 [Daniel & Clara: The Lost Estate](#), Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. 18.04.2024
- 2024 [Membranes](#), HyphaStudios, East Village, Stratford. 04.04.2024
- 2024 [Tropical: Stories from Southeast Asia and Latin America](#), National Gallery, Singapore. 23.03.2024
- 2024 [Simryn Gill & Charles Lim Yi Yong: The Sea is a Field](#), Singapore Art Museum. 16.03.2024
- 2024 [Nguyễn Trinh Thi: 47 Days, Sound-less](#), Singapore Art Museum. 16.03.2024
- 2024 [Look Climate Lab 2024](#), Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool. 09.03.2024
- 2024 [Future Forecast: The Greenhouse Project Young Event Producers with Mark Leckey, Silv-o, Roy Claire Potter and Kim Coleman](#), Tate Liverpool. 09.03.2024
- 2024 [You Get a Car \[Everybody Gets a Car\]: RESOLVE Collective](#), Tate Liverpool. 09.03.2024
- 2024 [Kenneth Lam: A seat at our table](#), SPACE Gallery, Ilford. 07.03.2024
- 2024 [Zineb Sedira: Dreams Have No Titles](#), Whitechapel Gallery. 06.03.2024
- 2024 [Edge Effects](#), Whitechapel Gallery. 06.03.2024
- 2024 [Andrew Pierre Hart: Bio-Data Flows and Other Rhythms – A Local Story](#). Whitechapel Gallery. 06.03.2024
- 2024 [Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2024](#), The Photographers Gallery, London. 27.02.2024.
- 2024 [Bert Hardy: Photojournalism in War and Peace](#), The Photographers Gallery, London. 27.02.2024
- 2024 [Flight Lines](#), Four Corners, Bethnal Green. 26 - 29.01.2024
- 2024 [Fran Copeman: Folk Discourse](#), SPACE Gallery, Ilford. 07.03.2024
- 2024 [Véronique Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor: Cosmic Realism](#), Eye filmmuseum, Amsterdam. 28.01.2024.

- 2024 [Nan Golden: This will not end well](#), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 28.01.2024.
- 2024 [Stefi Reimers](#), Foam, Amsterdam. 27.01.2024.
- 2024 [Tarrah Krajinak: Shadowings, a Catalogue of Attitudes for Estranged Daughters](#), Huis Marseille, Amsterdam. 27.01.2024.
- 2024 [Eddo Hartmann: The Sacrifice Zone](#), Huis Marseille, Amsterdam. 27.01.2024.
- 2024 [Symbiosis](#), Hundred Years Gallery, London E2. 24.01.2024
- 2024 [Photography on the Move: The Half Moon Touring Shows 1976 – 1984](#), Four Corners, London E2. 24.01.2024
- 2024 [Hiroshi Sugimoto](#), Hayward Gallery, London. 05.01.2024
- 2024 [Keith Arnatt: Eden 69-89](#), Sprüth Magers, London. 05.01.2024
- 2023 [Dear Earth](#), Hayward Gallery, London. 31.09.2023
- 2023 [Life is More Important than Art](#), Whitechapel Gallery. 31.09.2023
- 2023 [Somali Museum: Any-Space-Whatever](#), Whitechapel Gallery. 31.09.2023
- 2023 [It All Starts With a Thread](#), Whitechapel Gallery. 31.09.2023
- 2023 [Seismic Mother](#), HyphaStudios, Stratford. 31.09.2023
- 2023 [Capturing the Moment](#), Tate Modern, London. 17.08.2023
- 2023 [A World in Common: Contemporary African Photography](#), Tate Modern, London. 17.08.2023
- 2023 [Landscape Trauma](#), Centre for Contemporary British Photography, London. 12.08.2023
- 2023 [Mandy Barker: Plastic Soup](#), Centre for Contemporary British Photography, London. 12.08.2023
- 2023 [John Blakemore: Seduced by Light](#), Centre for Contemporary British Photography, London. 12.08.2023
- 2023 [Helen Sear](#), Centre for Contemporary British Photography, London. 12.08.2023
- 2023 [Jermaine Francis: Storied Ground](#), Centre for Contemporary British Photography, London. 12.08.2023
- 2023 [Kay Abude: Be Creative Remain Resilient](#), The Showroom. 29.07.2023
- 2023 [Anselm Kiefer: Finnegans Wake](#), White Cube, London. 29.07.2023.
- 2023 [Peter Kennard: Silent Coup](#), a/political, London. 01.07.2023.
- 2023 [Sarah Sze: The Waiting Room](#), Peckham Rye Station, London. 21.06.2023.
- 2023 [Sonia Boyce: Newham Trainside Wall](#), London. 16.06.2023.

- 2023 [Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2023](#), The Photographers Gallery, London. 12.05.2023.
- 2023 [Photo London](#), Somerset House, London. 12.05.2023.
- 2023 [Sonia Boyce: Feeling Her Way](#), Turner Contemporary, Margate. 26.04.2023.

C. Critical reflection

As in previous years, my creative and professional practice are closely related and driven by funded projects and commissions (discussed in Section Two). This year there have been more opportunities for inter-disciplinary collaboration, for instance with climate scientists. We have created the *Urban Heat Collective* as an umbrella group for urban micro-climate related work, through which we are getting requests to run bespoke walks. With this and the prospect of substantial funding through the *Roding Rising* project, I am not going to seek further funding in the coming year. I am actively exploring how my work relates to initiatives such as the New School of the Anthropocene and London National Park City (see websites). I continue to have a very productive relationship with East London Textile Arts (including exhibitions and publications), and am appreciative of support from SPACE, where we have recently formed a Photography Peer Group across studios. The critical issue, as always, is creating space for creation of a coherent body of fine art related work and maintaining constructive interaction between different activities.

5. Forward plan

The priority for the coming year is the completion of the final report and production of work for the final exhibition, alongside ongoing projects and professional practice. For the final exhibition I intend to produce an installation focussing on the urban sections of the River Roding into which I will weave new Roding-related work and work that I have produced over the past five years. The installation will link with my community and locality-focussed work and explore ways in which these activities and their outcomes can be brought into the gallery. The installation will also make explicit reference to the processes by which the work is produced, including the devices used and associated practices, and will explore how

relevant environmental and climate related data can be fed into the work, drawing on my collaborative work with climate scientists at UCL.

<i>September 2024-April 2025</i>	Plan final exhibition, organise, schedule and produce creative work.
<i>September 2024</i>	Draft Personal and Creative Context and Professional Practice report sections.
<i>October 2024</i>	Work in Progress seminar 1.
<i>October 2024</i>	Draft Theory and Creative Practice report section.
<i>December 2024</i>	Final year meeting to plan exhibition and examination.
<i>January 2025</i>	Submit first draft of report.
<i>February 2025</i>	Work in Progress seminar 2.
<i>April 2025</i>	Submit final report.
<i>May/June 2025</i>	Install final exhibition.
<i>June 2025</i>	Viva.

Appendix 1

A New Kind of London Living (2023)

where city meets village life
the close-knit community feel
surrounded by greenery and biodiversity
live sustainably with retailers
a new kind of London living

calm and connected living
feel the river wind in your hair
recharge in secluded gardens
the beating heart of the east
retail therapy is only 9-minutes away

a connected community
more than a place to set up home
a place where you can live life to the full
putting down roots, socialising, raising families
restoring a sense of ecological balance to this once industrial site

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