

# WALK OUT



An Exhibition by the  
**Walking Arts Research Group**  
at  
**Sheffield Hallam University**



[www.walkingarts.co.uk](http://www.walkingarts.co.uk)



## introduction

WALK OUT is an exhibition of the work made by members of the Walking Arts Research Group at Sheffield Hallam University. Much of the work is a free-form response to the rural and urban environments experienced on the groups walks and residencials..

The Walking Arts Research Group provides a collaborative space for the investigation of cross-practice creative production linked to a range of walking practices.

The group has become a forum for practice and reflection, whereby it acts as a vessel, enabling individuals and collaborators to generate their own areas of research interest.

The benefits of group research are more than just the individual research outputs. Conversations have been playful and inventive. Trust, respect and understanding has developed between colleagues as well as the obvious aspects of well-being associated with walking. The positive impact of walking among the academic staff team has been noted, especially in terms of the increased sense of group cohesion and understanding amongst staff.

As the exhibition title suggests the activity of group acts as an antidote to the negative aspects of the corporate environment.

We aim to extend this practice to include students on our courses to provide a alternative setting for interaction between staff and students without the classroom hierarchy and with the benefits of being outdoors with an attitude of creative play.



images from walks in England, Germany and France © Andrew Robinson

## THE WALK OUT MANIFESTO

1. The production of art while walking is optional.
2. The discussion of work, including students, management, the bureaucratic system, assessment, the work environment in the pre-digital era, the effectiveness of meetings, the benefits of feedback forms, good practice and bad habits, is optional.
3. The sharing of personal information, lunch, dry socks, positive and negative outlooks is optional.
4. The acknowledgement that knowledge based occupations, including academic and research practices, require uninterrupted time for productive thought, is positively encouraged.
5. Wider participation including students, administrative staff, and management is encouraged.
6. Partial walks resulting from arriving late or departing early for reasons of childcare, workload, and nihilism are acceptable (independent travel plan required).
7. That trees can act as an antidote to the knowledge that the academic workplace in the digital era consists of a faulty, scaled-up bureaucratic system that values profit over people, may or may not be acknowledged.
8. That inspirational work requires commitment, focus, and an unpressurised environment for creativity to flourish for teacher, researcher, manager, and student may or may not be discussed.
9. The understanding that small changes can make big differences may or may not be shared.
10. Walking can be undertaken in any style or pace. Waiting for slower colleagues is compulsory with the exception of photographers using tripods and digital media producers using scanners, who may be abandoned and met later in the cafe or pub.

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### Susannah Gent - Rapid Response

Susannah Gent is a filmmaker, artist, and Senior Lecturer in Film Production at Sheffield Hallam University. Her films that have gained awards at international film festivals over the past twenty years explore experimental narrative approaches to representing subjectivity. She is currently undertaking an interdisciplinary, practice-led Ph.D. researching the uncanny and hauntology through film, philosophy, and neuroscience.

Susannah's practice-based research with the Walking Arts Research Group comprises of short films made as spontaneous responses to the act of walking. Susannah's wider research interests include the intuitive nature of the creative process and the embodied experience.

# michèle lazenby

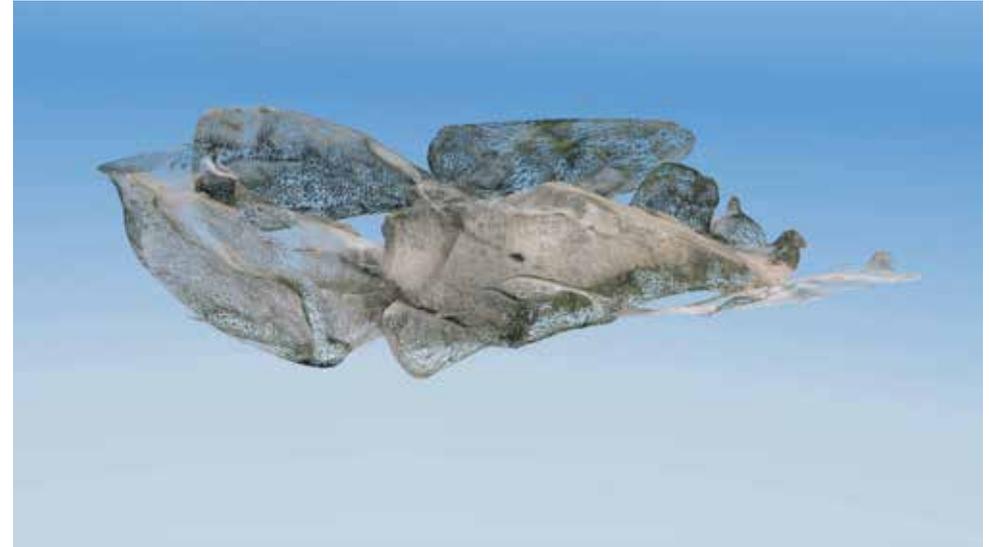


## Michèle Lazenby - La Condesa, Mexico City

Michèle Lazenby is a Senior Lecturer teaching on the BA Hons Photography programme at Sheffield Hallam University. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is held in various public and private collections including the Wellcome Trust and Dow Jones.

Working with still and moving image, much of Michèle Lazenby's walking art practice is concerned with ecologies, umwelts, and place as interactive experience. She is particularly interested in non-human perspectives, interspecies collaborations and vegetal subjectivity and expression. The risograph prints presented in the 'Walk Out' exhibition explore evolving interrelationships between plant figures and man-made organic forms in the urban environment of La Condesa, Mexico City.

# jeremy lee



## Jeremy Lee - Skins

Jeremy Lee is a Principal Lecturer in Media Arts at Sheffield Hallam University. His current work in 3D animation is informed by a strong background and previous practice in painting. His interest lies in the interpretation of space through digital media and specifically 3D processes to create the illusion of reality.

Spatially and experientially our interpretations are informed by a complex fabric of references. This layering is multiplied when working with the moving image, audio and actual space. It is this interaction or collision which structures his work, creating visual experiences enabled through the medium and reliant on the individual to fill, or leave empty, the gaps.

# mark parkin



## Mark Parkin

Mark is a film-maker, writer and Senior Lecturer in Cinematography.

His Walking Arts practice and research encompasses the creation of models and actions that relate walking to extra-terrestrial spaces (e.g. 'SOLAR' and 'MOONWALK') and to history & narrative (eg BabyLegs' & 'An Old Wood & Deep'). Central to the latter is the concept of walking as Palimpsest – a physical remaking and writing-over of stories and memories that are concerned with conflict, fear, doubt and blood.

# andrew robinson



## Andrew Robinson - Ridge, Forest, Mountain, Lake

Andrew Robinson is a Photographer, Artist and Senior Lecturer in Photography at Sheffield Hallam University, England, teaching on BA (Hons) Photography and MA Digital Media Management.

Andrew's photographic practice investigates notions of local identity and vernacular culture through a visual anthropology of people, place, and trace applying creative strategies that integrate still and moving imagery along with text, audio, and found materials.

The work presented in the 'Walk Out' exhibition represents a number of recent projects related to Andrew's creative and conceptual exploration of the journey as a photographic strategy and includes publications, prints and drawings resulting from journeys in Britain, France and Germany.

# sonya robinson



## Sonya Robinson - The Withdrawn Image

Sonya is an academic, artist, writer and Senior Lecturer on the BA (Hons) Photography course at Sheffield Hallam University who has exhibited widely and presented papers in the UK and at international conferences.

Images of landscape reflected on the surface of black Perspex, specifically the landscape architecture of English gardens and parks reminiscent of visual devices such as the Claude glass, form the premise of this work which is part of a wider research question about representation and that which is elided in the image.

# annie watson



## Annie Watson – Knitwalks

Annie is a BAFTA nominated filmmaker and principal lecturer in film production at Sheffield Hallam University. Her films and her current Ph.D. research explore the fictional viewpoint of teenage girls. Annie also makes film poems, which are projected onto buildings and screened internationally. She has been knitting since the age of 8.

Walking and knitting, I document the journey using two Go Pros; one filming my hands knitting, and the other strapped to my head, recording my view. The weather, conversation and terrain inform the knitting. Too cold, boggy or dark, I drop stitches. Sometimes I'm talking so much, gesturing with my hands instead of knitting, and little gets done. If the terrain is smooth and easy, the weather warm, and I'm listening more than talking, the stitches are good and the walk produces a large section. The knitting is a map of walks, each one defined through colour, amount and quality of stitches.

# patrick wichert



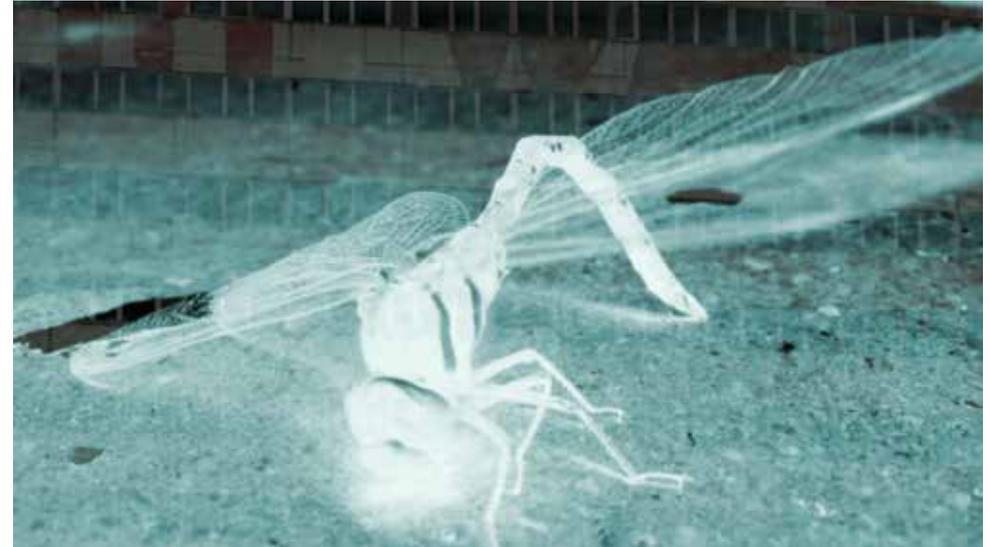
## Patrick Wichert – Lennart's Mill

Patrick Wichert is an artist photographer and Principal Lecturer in Photography and Media at Sheffield Hallam University.

Patrick's practice focuses on social documentary and landscape photography. He photographs on long walking excursions while researching historical socio-political contexts of the landscape environment. He is currently undertaking PhD studies on the subject of 'The Transient Landscapes of Migration' which focus on landscapes in Eastern Poland and Northern Germany.

Exhibitions of his work feature hand printed photographs, bespoke photo-books or, as in this case, video displays of still images.

# ron wright



## Ron Wright - SonUrban

Ron Wright is a senior lecturer in sound for Film and Media Production at Sheffield Hallam University. His practice includes sound design for film, gallery and live performance as well as his own short films.

His interests include exploring notions of space and place through the psycho-spatial language of sound and image.

His contribution for the 'Walk Out' exhibition comprises of work taken from his ongoing 'SonUrban' project which mixes sound, rhythm and images from field trips in England and Europe to create short decontextualized films that consider the activity, and emotional resonance of the natural and urban environment.

# essay

In *Spectres of Marx* Jacques Derrida employs the metaphor of the 'visor effect' of power; to see without being seen.<sup>1</sup> The 'ungraspable visibility of the invisible' of the one 'who makes the law, delivers the injunction', means we must 'fall back on the voice'<sup>2</sup>. Derrida discusses the wider implications of this characteristic of power in relation to the question 'Wither Marxism?', the title of the conference from which the book arose, and where Derrida explores the relation of capitalism to deconstruction through the critical framework of hauntology.

Contemplating the 'ungraspable visibility of the invisible' within the workplace and the 'voice' of the other, speaking injunctions through emails, I note that Derrida's text of 1993 was the same year as the first version of Microsoft's Outlook was released.<sup>3</sup>

Following Marx's theory of the 'annihilation of time and space' that refers to the requirement of cheap transport and communication for capital-based production, geographer David Harvey proposed 'space-time compression' in 1989, to reflect the contemporary shrinkage of distance that brings about the 'global village'. Harvey's 'space-time compression' describes an 'imperative to reduce the circulation time of capital'.<sup>4</sup>

Mental health issues among academics are well documented, with work intensification and email overload seen as the major culprits but also pressures arising the difficulty of maintaining a creative practice from which teaching is informed, the lack of focused time to prepare inspirational lectures, anxiety from never-ending deadlines regardless of the speed of work, demoralisation arising from a culture of increased observation and monitoring.<sup>5</sup>

It has become the academic's duty to gather student feedback in the form of questions they have not written, from which action points are made that result in further administrative duties. A recurring student feedback request is for more face to face contact while the process continues to erode this practice.

The pre-digital workplace consisted of a different relation of space to time. Information with colleagues and students was shared face to face. Wall mounted timetables forced movement through space into the proximity of others. The most significant difference about this workplace was that tasks were undertaken one at a time. In the digital workplace with improved communication everything can now happen simultaneously.

It is of the utmost importance that the current generation who recall the pre-digital workplace assist in ensuring positive future practice. There

have been countless improvements afforded by digital technology in the workplace, however the negatives are apparent. As we know these are part of wider economic and political issues.

The metaphor makes new ways of seeing and constructs new realities. 'Space-time compression' leads to an experience of increased gravity. The weight of intensified time fences off potential lines of creative flight. The Walking Arts Research Group aims to counter the effect of this implosion in a small but important manner. By leaving the office and heading for the wider world, the negative effects of gravity are reversed, the air lightens. Like an opened pop-up book, an unfurled work of origami, the release of vacuum packed coffee, one can think outside the (intensity of the in-) box.

The Walking Arts Research Group formed in 2014 with seed funding from the Art and Design Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University. The intention was to support and encourage research among Media Arts academic staff. While this did occur it became evident that the practice of walking together had other benefits for staff cohesion, stress reduction, sharing of good practice, and a decrease in the 'visor effect'.

Derrida's term relates to wider power-structures, however his metaphor of the unseen commander applies to email culture in which the sender of the global injunction is faceless. Granted, when walking the emails remain unanswered, however on return priority is more apparent, colleagues are closer, the tone is lightened, and time, rather than killed, is enlivened.

The Walking Arts Research Group at Sheffield Hallam University aims to meet once a month for an afternoon, or, at exceptional times of year, for a whole day to share a walk and maybe make art. In the overall time taken by this activity is small, the benefits large.

WALK OUT is an exhibition of some of the work made through engagement with the Walking Arts Research Group. Much of the work is a free-form response to the rural and urban environment.-

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx, the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf, New York, NY: Routledge 1994 [*Spectres de Marx: L'État de la Dette, le Travail du Deuil et la Nouvelle Internationale*, Paris: Galilée, 1993] p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Gibbs, 'How did email grow from messages between academics to a global epidemic?' *The Guardian*, 7/03/17 <<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/mar/07/email-ray-tomlinson-history>> accessed 9/10/18.

<sup>4</sup> Aejaz Ahmad Wani and Mohd. Rafiq Wani, 'Time, Space and Capitalism', *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, vol. 2, issue 9, 2015, 306-309.

<sup>5</sup> Academics 'face higher mental health risk' than other professions



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An Exhibition by the  
Walking Arts Research Group

Sheffield Institute of Arts at Persistence Works  
Yorkshire Artspace, 21 Brown Street  
Sheffield. S1 2BS.

PRIVATE VIEW  
Thursday 29th November, 16.00-18.00h

EXHIBITION OPEN  
Friday 30th November  
through  
Saturday 15th November

[www.walkingarts.co.uk](http://www.walkingarts.co.uk)



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The Walking Arts Research Group is supported by:

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Media Arts  
and  
Communications



Art and Design  
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