



Finding Centre:
Pace: Depth Point:
Crossing water:
Energy Lines: Contact:
Scanning: Dead Trees:
Water Line: Assertive:
Holding: Transmitting:
Interpretation: Agency:
Thoughts: Time: Process:
Systems: Change:
Between: Passing:
Concept: Legacy: Walking:
Looking: Listening:
Feeling: Breathing:
Stillness: Pausing:
Movement: Pulse:
Rhythm: Scent:
Encounter: Recollection:

Perceptions of landscape are determined by our geographic place in the world, formed through historical, social and cultural contexts. Our experience of landscape is predominantly led by vision, learned instincts, for many often seeking the desirable view. The restrictions of 2020 created a need to re-evaluate our terms of engagement with the world, the physical spaces we could explore became smaller. With normal boundaries and time suspended, new interactions enabled the potential to explore as never before.

Letters to the void is a conversation about relationships, conversations to speak directly to the imperceptible energies, which underscore human experience but, which often exceed our ability to capture or represent them. It is a conversation with subterranean landscapes, the invisible shaping the visible. Here the void is understood as a tension of Presence through Absence, sitting invisibly under the North West landscape. More than a century of mining has left a void beneath Cheshire's surface. Salt's demand and commercial value outweighed any concern for the impact of mining and extraction on the landscape. Salt has many properties, which make it valuable but critically it flows and dissolves, running silently beneath the surface brine runs shape the landscape. Subsidence hollows have historically been present as a result of brine extraction and continue to appear anywhere where water and salt connect. Invisible energy flowing below the surface carving out ever-changing topographies.

'Imagine if there could be a geography of displacement. A geography that's not predicated on the fiction of a fixed point. You could even call it, not necessarily a relational geography, but a relativistic geography'. Fred Moten

Robert McFarlane observes that only 5% of the universe's mass is made up of the matter we can touch with our hands and witness with our eyes and instruments. Energies, which have a presence, refusing to interact with light, and which may not even exist. In his book 'Underland' he suggests that sometimes in the darkness you can see more clearly.

Beginning a conversation with the unseen.

I believe that ungraspable material forces affect human perception, which even if not perceived participates in our experience of walking in a landscape. Through exploratory drawings I specifically consider the human body as a porous and receptive threshold for sensing and attuning to the experiences of its milieu. Initial research connected me with 2 women: Deborah Bell – artist, walker and water dowser and Dr Rosalind Todhunter BSC PhD – walker, cyclist, Coal Mining Geologist (Retired) and Lecturer Geology / Geophysics (Retired). During lockdown our conversations revealed unique personal reflections connecting to unseen subterranean landscapes through walking. Each of us with a unique view and connection to the landscape, each decoding through walking, observing and sensing.

These conversations have become an important thread reshaping my thoughts, expanding the way I understand *Place* through my walking body.

'But by skill we can also investigate hidden and concealed veins..'

'There are many great contentions between miners concerning the forked twig, for some say that it is of the greatest use in discovering veins, and others deny it. Some of those who manipulate and use the twig, first cut a fork from a hazel bush with a knife, for this bush they consider more efficacious than any other for revealing the veins, especially if the hazel bush grows above a vein... It is said that the moment they place their feet on a vein the twig immediately turns and twists, and so by its action discloses the vein; when they move their feet again and go away from that spot the twig becomes once more immobile.'

'Exhalations' and 'The Forked Twig' as described by
Georgius Agricola 1556 De Re Metallica Book II

Words connected ideas and thoughts; words became a starting point for drawing. An unseen landscape mapped and revealed through body gesture and movement. Energies surround all human and non-human bodies as they move through the landscape. Each body is a receptor and potential de-coder if we listen and learn to read the responses.

When we seek to enter into a relationship with materials and movement we allow ourselves to question what we think we already know about material properties/techniques and their behavior.

Through the making of these artworks the conditions for a new knowledge is also created and allowed to emerge.

Drawing on stone experiments with ways to articulate movement and perception. Suggesting ways of feeling and composing, using material gesture – understood as a force capable of shifting experience, and opening it on to emergent potentials.

Water and tusche are dropped onto a ground lithographic stone. There is no right or wrong way to perform this gesture: each drop, each sweeping arc produces a rhythm of uncertain trajectories of grease, water and stone. Each line the tusche traces is a force of movement, expressing the interplay between material tensions, rhythms and their potential. By slowing the rhythm of this movement in and through the water on which it moves, and altering the concentration of the tusche the grease/ water interplay creates its own gestures, overriding the human gesture that produced them.

As the water and tusche dry the rhythms and movement are captured on the stone surface. Here, a new conversation begins.

'matter resolves itself into numberless vibrations, all linked together in uninterrupted continuity, all bound up with each other, and traveling in every direction like shivers'
(Bergson, 1990:208)

Such thinking proposes that movement of duration is expressed as rhythm, and that all matter possesses its own rhythm of duration, vibrating at frequencies above, below and between the rhythms of our own consciousness. These multiple rhythms of duration are in turn all linked together to express our multiple differences. By imagining these differences as temporal rather than spatial our view of and our relationship to the world is transformed. By allowing ourselves to think of matter itself as being animated by forces of creative differentiation we are able to think of all material movements as active participants extending our perception and understanding.

Continuing with a process of erasure and redrawing through negative space the images trace the exchange between the artist hand and material surface. This process of drawing is like the excavation of an archeologist. At first the surface rhythms are evident, obvious and superficial. It is only after a period of excavation that you start to uncover a more subtle, slow, fundamental flow of space.

In these drawings the play of the substrate carrying the image is key to capturing the trace of the rhythm. Amy Sillman describes drawing as an action verb. Here drawing is understood as the action of making with a tool and with your body: moving in different directions simultaneously. It is pulling something from something to something else in a multi-way relationship; substrate, surface and body.

There is a relationship between the eye, the body and the hand –the hand, the tool, the body and the drawing surface and finally the marks on the paper and between the eye of the artist and what lies beyond.

Such new layers of seeing are informing and building the imagery I am creating. Understanding how my body is receiving unseen energy when walking invites possibilities to explore how I translate my sensory response to walking in the landscape. Negative and positive charges surround us; which is more important, solid space or negative space?

'Drawings very intimacy is that it records what lies beyond the body but from the sight of the body and in the form of touch of the body'
Jean-Luc Nancy

For me drawing has enabled a way for me to think about my body in the world. Drawing one mark at a time, temporal, fragile, instantaneous, all drawing is of the moment, you are looking, acting and reacting while you are thinking and feeling. The drawing becomes the residue of these relationships and conversations, making them visible.

The prints in this series reflect the relationship between inside and outside, boundaries between energies of the body and materials cease to be clear and the

hand made marks serve as a kind of border between invisible energies and the body as receptor.

Bibliography

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