

# **RHYS BAKER**

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MA Photojournalism & Documentary Photography  
Part-Time

Unit: Major Project Project

PRACTICE COMPONENT – 500 word Proposal

This project proposes to conduct a photo-acoustic topographic survey of the small, North Yorkshire coastal village of Skinningrove. Utilising the inherent elemental and vital factors found in the fabric of the village - iron, salt, water, alum - all raw constituents of traditional photographic processes. The project focuses on audio-visual methods of representing the landscape but also explores the idea of a self-representing landscape. My investigation starts from the premise that vital forces can be accessed as a means for collaboration, recording, scrutinising, mapping and narrating the village, its inhabitants and the immediate surroundings.

My practical/theoretical enquiry examines the status of photographs and audio matter as physical traces rather than 'photos as illustrations' (Rose, 2008). The project will question the ability of images to function beyond conservative systems of comprehension. Instead, I intend to focus on their ability to express a consolidated encounter of Skinningrove allowing for both the human aspects and the 'more-than-human' (Lorimer, 2008) facets to emanate - the notion that nature/landscape is both 'humanised and humanising' (Malpas, 2018). In turn, the proposed work will ask 'how we might show what is not seen when it cannot be pictured and how we might think about vision not as an antithesis of touch but through a haptic register' (Crang, 2009). Hetherington (2003), eludes to the 'praesentia', 'a way of knowing the world... a form of the present and a form of presencing something absent'.

In order to communicate an experience of place beyond conventional reproduction I will employ traditional photographic processes (e.g. Cyanotypes, Salt Prints) and the ready-made ingredients of the local earth along with sound field-recording to answer the question - can images be created of, and with, the landscape, not simply as representations but as annunciations? Consequently, such practise and analysis will attempt to depict place and space as elemental - Smithson eludes to this as the environment controlling the emersion and the emergence of the piece (Smithson, 1968).

Skinningrove stimulates key questions, primarily, is it possible to create tangible immersive 'portraits' of the terrain - a topological analysis - of its material, community and territory? Can locations be re-

charted, can the images/sounds become new 'Maps' that 'attempt to record and represent the grain and patina of... everything you might ever want to say about a place', (Ridge, 2013).

Principal questions are:

- In what ways can images (and sounds) form a synthesis with indigenous elements using processes to become 'active players in the construction of different kinds of geographical knowledge?' (Rose, 2008).
- To paraphrase Cresswell (Cresswell, 2015), how does photography enact place? How are photographs themselves places?
- How can photography, traditionally a means for constructing figurative representations, be used to communicate the elemental complexities of space and place?
- To what extent can the use of photographic media be utilised to capture the ineffable? Can it be employed to transcend the function of illustration and offer an argument, enlivenment and understanding, perhaps even 'answer back'? (Rose, 2008).

(493 words)

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