

(DIS)ENCHANTMENTS AND PERAMBULATIONS:

*walking-with intangible cultural heritage,
coerced walking and reluctant heritage*

Richard White

Corsham Court Long Gallery July 2019

Installation of creative practice as research from PhD submission

PV Thursday 18 July. Short walk Saturday morning, July 20.

Details here <http://www.walknowtracks.co.uk>

NB exhibition will be closed on Sunday and Monday

Research question:

How can a critical, socially engaged, participatory, performative, walking arts and multi-media practice attend to coerced walking and reluctant heritage?

Key themes

- *The body and embodiment*, developing understandings of the corporeal activity of the walking extending into a consideration of embodiment and embodied experience with regard to my creative practice;
- *Memory, affect and heritage*, a consideration of the content and processes the practice engages with, exploring understandings of memory, affect and heritage towards engagement with specific heritage contexts;
- *Walking and materialising practices*: developing the walking, making, doing practices and the multi-media materialising practices towards generating empathic dialogue and calls to action.

Richard White presents iterations of *walking-with* approach, as a participatory walking, questioning and listening practice drawing on critical pedagogy, nonmodern understandings and infused with a social justice ethos. Steps towards accountability. The work is enacted with reference to contemporary resonances and legacies of specific historical contexts: the Holocaust and British slave-ownership.

Creative Practice as Research:

...a participatory critical walking arts approach challenging the amnesiac conditioning of authorised heritage ... in which 'lived messy materiality seeps into cerebral knowledge'

Honouring Esther (2015-17) conducted with Lorna Brunstein. Two walks each lasting two days in Somerset, England and Lower Saxony, Germany. The line of a Nazi Death March transposed, returned and retraced, working with the testimony of a Holocaust survivor. A re-minding, re-membling, connecting Holocaust survivor testimony to contemporary human rights issues

Sweet Waters: (2016-17) sense-ing legacies of slave-ownership in Bath and along the River Avon. An eight-day cycle of participatory performative walks and creative dialogues, *walking-with* cycles of water, life and trade, exploring legacies and revealing resonances of slave-ownership. Folding and layering time and place, from an embodied experience of temporal and spatial dissonance empathic dialogues emerge.

Artist bio

Richard White: walking and multimedia artist/researcher with specialist interest in walking practices and reluctant heritage.

Senior Lecturer in Media Practice at Bath Spa University

Richard's work reaches out to an understanding of knowledge making and being through walking together, listening and questioning. He is discovering in participatory walking arts practices a productive contribution to social justice and repair.

Current projects include *Workhouse Walks* a cycle of walks on social justice issues to and from the unmarked burial ground of Bath's former Workhouse.

Richard continues to work with Lorna Brunstein an exhibition follows in September at Hundred Years Gallery in London. They are collaborating on a major project for the Lake District Holocaust Centre for exhibition in 2020

Portfolio: <http://www.walknowtracks.co.uk/>

Honouring Esther blog: <https://forcedwalks.wordpress.com/>

Twitter/Facebook @walknowlive

Insta @richardw25

In the classroom/entry space:

- On iMacs, a dedicated looped sequence of slide shows and documentary from each project.
 - Short films include:
 - *Honouring Esther on the route of a Nazi Death March transposed to England, returned and retraced in Germany* (34:05)
 - *Sweet Waters starting points* working with Sarah Connolly's podcast interview and images artwork from the walks (7'17")
 - *An Awful Arrow* spoken word captured responding to social media trails (6'16")
 - *Dont Mention the Sugar* live recording of spoken word piece at Saltford Brass Mill (3'24")
- Soundscapes/ambience
 - **Sweet Waters** Looped playlist includes composite sound narratives from Day 2, Day 4 and Day 5 of the walks, half heard readings of letters to the commanders of Bristol slave ships from their investors, lists of cargo on their ships and a reading of the first stanza of Derek Walcott's poem, *The Sea is History*
 - **Honouring Esther** Looped playlist:
 - *documentation ambience* looped in documentation space for installation after Somerset walk 2015 (8'22")
 - *installation ambience* looped in installation space after Somerset walk 2015 (8'36")
 - *soundscape contemporary resonance* for final exhibition July 2017 (10'32")
- A table display for each project shows
 - walkers notebooks
 - a selection of resources
 - marketing materials
 - walk scripts and intervention cue cards
 - orientations for each project's installation/closing event

In the Long Gallery

Installation of short films, authored media outputs, using field recordings and walkers' social media posting

The two projects are separated by the entry space. The sound spill is intentional.

Long Gallery loop playlists, films are randomised within each project loop

Honouring Esther

Belsen Ballroom (3:18)

by the skin of our teeth (3:34)

Exile (2) (1:58)

Frome to Belsen (3:44)

Joys of the Forest (4:01)

Bearing Witness (3:23)

Belonging (4:16)

Exile (5:00)

Indifference (3:20)

Inheritance (1:08)

Resistance (5:17)

Sweet Waters

Seawater (3'59")

Cloudwater (9'59)

Riverwater (4'56)

Foulwater (8'17")

more online here:

<http://www.walknowtracks.co.uk/blog>

PV Thursday 18 July. Short walk Saturday morning, July 20. Meet 09.30 at the main gate.

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Abstract:

This submission presents findings and makings drawn from an emergent hybrid participatory walking and multi-media arts practice, contextualised within and around specific heritage narratives. The thesis features two walking arts case studies: *Honouring Esther* (2015-17), a project based on walking the route of a Nazi Death March, and *Sweet Waters* (2017), a cycle of walks exploring the legacies of slave-ownership in Bath. In both case studies registers of walking are juxtaposed in a creative exploration motivated by a social justice desire to realise agency in heritage as process. *Honouring Esther* represents an early iteration of *walking-with* exploring dissonant interventions to stimulate empathic dialogues. *Sweet Waters* develops a further iteration of the approach as a critical creative disturbance of an authorised heritage narrative. In the Humanities, an interest in affect, sensation and the corporeal, described broadly as the 'affective' turn, has unfolded a space valuing contributions from artistic practice. This Creative Practice as Research undertaken in that intra-disciplinary space contributes to the 'creative' turn thus afforded; this is a walking arts engagement with the practices of heritage.

The submission brings together activist concerns underpinned by a focus on the walking itself. Through developing an understanding of the corporeal and embodiment, embracing an alertness to the more-than-representational, a co-creative walking and multi-media approach has emerged. Attending to matter and the power of things, drawing on embodied experience and curated content, a critically questioning and retelling of heritage narratives begins. Grounded in the body and bodies in motion, walking and questioning, new knowledge and understandings are produced as part of an intangible cultural heritage process. Walkers become critical story carriers.

The submission presents iterations of *walking-with* as an emergent walking arts practice exploring particular heritage contexts. In these contexts *walking-with* generates empathic dialogues and builds solidarity in attending to difficult, reluctant, heritages. In addition to indicating new directions for this creative practice and observations of possible interest to research in related fields, I propose *walking-with* as a non-confrontational approach of potential value for working creatively with other dissonant and complex heritage narratives.