

Walking art as palimpsest : writing, history and the film poem.

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Mark Parkin.

Presentation to: **Where To? Steps Towards the Future of Walking Arts**

Thursday 16th April 2015

Falmouth University. An international Symposium. Hosted by the Articulating Space Research Centre in partnership with the AHRC Walking Artist Network.

TITLE: Walking Art as Palimpsest – Film Writing and History.

PALIMPSEST I



I've used the Walking Research Group as an opportunity to address and exploit a dichotomy in my practice as a writer and cinematographer working primarily in narrative film. I've done this by selecting two framing devices.

Firstly, identifying *The Woods* as a location to walk and develop work, drawing on a number of cultural references. Secondly, using the idea of walking specifically, and film/art derived from it, as forms of *Palimpsest* – one text written over another, partially erasing it. While the acts of rewriting and reworking are central to narrative film and I also wanted to compare established 'structures' to the physical, social, psychic phenomenon of the 'Desire Path'.

PALIMPSEST II: 'BABYLEGS'



Babylegs is a film/writing project that articulates the idea of palimpsest in genre and myth – especially folk and fairytales. We rework the walks – real and imagined – of children through these ancient Rackhamesque woods. These elements/rushes/fragments are then reworked, with children as co-authors, in the studio with real sets and virtual environments. This reimagining draws in part on the work of Moon, Carter, together with Kitano's 'Card Narratives' and Favat/Piaget – *The Child in the Tale* – as an interpretation of the work of the Brothers Grimm.

PALIMPSEST III - 'An Old Wood. And Deep'



Work in Progress

An engagement with history, and the imaginary, by walking and making in two locations, this work is also a physical realization of the palimpsest made by passing 16/35mm film through a camera twice – once in each wood/forest. Film images will be 'half-made' in this wood on the outskirts of Sheffield.

It was here, in a POW camp, that Karl Donitz, the final Nazi leader, was held for 6 weeks at the end of the First World War. His diaries suggest it was then he conceived of the idea of the 'Wolf Pack'. What is certain

was that he feigned madness to ensure transfer to hospital. This camp was subsequently overbuilt with a WWII camp, and this is now in ruins. Film will be 'over and underwritten' with images of the Black Forest drawing on the so-called 'degenerate' art of Kirchner and Ernst and the postwar response to the 'imagined forest' found in the work of Gunter Grasse, Beuys and Anselm Kiefer. History, Memory, Image are fractured and contested.



An Old Wood. And Deep: Production Still.