Along the Waterline:

Cameraless Photography and the Haptic Register of Nocturnal Seaborne Activity

An exegesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Kevin Miles

BA (Hons) Film; MA Fine Art

Creative College of Arts | Toi Rauwhārangi
Massey University
Wellington, New Zealand
January 2022

Abstract

This creative practice research shifts the cameraless image from being an imponderable visual media already associated with experiential 'essences' of the sea from land or shoreline perspectives; to an assertive document associated with the tangible, processual and material notion of a seaborne place experience. Using a methodology in which haptic qualities and processes extend the field of cameraless photography as a post-phenomenological aesthetic, I engage the skin-like sensitivity of photographic materials to the place phenomena and materiality of seaborne sites and activities.

My research explores the aesthetic and ecstatic potential of cameraless photography, not as a critique of 'the everyday' as a concern, but as a retro-modernist application of photography's potential to defamiliarise the everyday. This attention to the common quality of things, and thus to perception and experience, grounds my study in critical phenomenological aesthetics. This approach of defamiliarisation underpins a unique cameraless interrogation of photography; to provoke and register a latent ecstasis harboured in 'everyday' seaborne experience. The research has consequently developed a methodology to confirm whether cameraless photography can be redefined in these terms.

I revise a standard photographic form by presenting a unique set of socio-autobiographical, critical circumstances and methods, enhanced by living aboard a sailing vessel. By extending previous and current enquiries beyond their traditional terrestrial limits, I expand contemporary understanding of how cameraless photography can be defined as a post-phenomenological aesthetic.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge, in a wider cultural context, the coastal region, the tangata whenua, and iwi to which I am, at the most, a very grateful pākehā guest who has developed an art practice and research study, while living aboard a boat in in Wellington Harbour/Te Whanganui-a-Tara. I am also thankful for the privilege of being able to work in the coastal areas of Tangaroa, Pōneke, Te Whanganui-a-Tara and of the historical and ongoing guardianship of Te Taha o Te Ao coastal waters by Te Atiawa, Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa and Te Tau Ihu iwi. My wish is that my study weaves a modest thread in the fabric of this takiwā/harbour. Many thanks to Liz Mellish MNZM of Te Wharewaka, for her informal advice on these matters.

Individually, I am most grateful to my supervisors, Associate Professor Wayne Barrar and Distinguished Professor Anne Noble for their encouragement in locating and refining my research practice. For Prof. Barrar's scrutiny of written structural content with the addition of more recent fine technical commentary from Dr. Simon Mark's invaluable support at a crucial stage of my exegesis. I am also eternally grateful to my partner Chanel for her devotion, encouragement and collaboration in all things. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the sailing vessel Zingara, for bearing us safely on passage between anchorages, our home on the sea.

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Table of contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to cameraless photography iterations and ontological positions

My study in the field of cameraless photography involves a seaborne context, which presents potentialities particular to living and producing work on and from the sea. By drawing together the maritime context with a contemporary use of analogue photographic materials I developed a set of broad-based preliminary research questions:

a) can cameraless photographic production (as a creative research practice) be redefined as a post-phenomenological aesthetic?
b) in what ways can cameraless photography help us to rethink our relationship to photography?
c) can I extend the field of cameraless photography through the exploitation of a seaborne focus and practice?

As a response to these initial contexts and questions, my research explores the aesthetic-ecstatic potential of cameraless photography, not as a critique of 'the everyday' as a concern, but as a retro-modernist application of photography's potential to defamiliarise. This attention to the common quality of things, and thus to perception and experience, grounds this study in critical phenomenological aesthetics. This approach of defamiliarisation underpins a unique cameraless interrogation of latent ecstasis harboured in a poetics of the maritime. Specifically,

my position as a 'liveaboard'[1] on a sailing boat in Wellington Harbour/Te Whanganui-a-Tara is a unique context to undertake research through the production of cameraless photographic images. It provides an opportunity to use a novel methodology which develops a poetics of maritime[2] and seaborne phenomena, exploiting the haptic qualities and processes of cameraless photography.

Interrogating ontological links within seaborne and analogue photographic contexts, I revise a standard photographic form with a unique set of socio-autobiographical, critical circumstances and methods. By extending previous and current enquiries beyond their traditional terrestrial limits, while informed by these theoretical concepts, I develop contemporary knowledge of how cameraless photography can be defined and understood.

Consequently I examine a contemporary photographic context, in which the enquiries of artists exploring cameraless techniques continue to break into new territories. As a way of thinking about how our relationship to photography has changed, my images draw attention to tangible connections between photography, the contingencies of the senses and understandings of place, as things often overlooked in our everyday life-experience.

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1 Liveaboard | lɪvəbɔːd | adjective and noun. "Designating a boat equipped with facilities such as a kitchen, beds, etc., which enable people to live on board (either temporarily or permanently). Also: a person who lives on such a boat." Oxford English Dictionary Online, last modified June 2021. Oxford University Press, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/view/Entry/271846?redirectedFrom=liveaboard#eid

2 Maritime | măr'ĭ-tīm' | adjective and noun. "Connected, associated, or dealing with shipping, naval matters, navigation, seaborne trade..." Oxford English Dictionary Online, last modified June 2021. Oxford University Press, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/view/Entry/114163?redirectedFrom=maritime

In chapter 1, I introduce my background and practice. I introduce the development of the conceptual ideas of my research in terms of its photographic and maritime contexts, and how my methodology of poetics and defamiliarisation develops as a framework informed by phenomenology. In chapter 2, I discuss the most important artists and authors of research within the fields of photography and phenomenological studies of place-experience. Here, a potential area of knowledge to which my study can contribute and develop is analysed. In chapter 3, I identify my main theoretical concepts with relevance to my aims and objectives, through which I narrow the focus of my main questions. Thinking around photography's materiality and tangible qualities relating to perception and the senses are brought together to define an interrogative conceptual framework. Chapter 4 is an explication of my methodology framework of poetics and defamiliarisation. This framework is informed by phenomenology and photographic theory concerned with contemporary cameraless and counter-practices which explore the materiality of photography. The two contextual ontologies of photography and living on the sea are explored to interrogate a theme of ecstatic transformation in the cameraless aesthetic.

I present my findings in an analytical and summarised form in chapter 5, by referring to key aspects of final works in detail. I highlight the areas of original contribution to knowledge in the field of cameraless photography as a post-phenomenological modality. Sightings of the ecstatic-aesthetic are located in cameraless works developed during my research practice. These concepts are discussed within critical analysis and reflection of individual works.

Over the course of my study, my preliminary research questions were refined to produce a primary research question: ***In what ways can cameraless photography provoke and register a latent ecstasis harboured in 'everyday' seaborne***

experience? As an objective, I confirm cameraless photography as a post-phenomenological aesthetic.

In this chapter, I describe in section 1.1 (***Initial explorations and iterations***), how experimental investigations into photochemical properties of analogue film and papers were made in order to explore concepts of photographic materiality and hybridity in contemporary practices. In section 1.2 (***Alchemical connections***) I discuss how through these interrogative outcomes, I was able to identify potentials and limitations of analogue materials used in their raw state; theoretical concepts emerged and related to a specific node of my literature review in the previous research/enquiry of artists using similar techniques in their production. Section 1.3 (*The context of my enquiry and its everydayness*) describes how I turned to my personal status as a liveaboard sailor to extend these investigations, and how an awareness of its processual nature challenged notions of everyday maritime aesthetics. Section 1.4 (*Entwining ontologies of photography and the sea as inhabited places*) discusses how these contextual developments of practice narrow the research focus to theoretical concepts of photography's tactile and liquid ontology, as a tool to investigate the ontology and phenomenology of place-experience.

Furthermore, I describe in section 1.5 (*A harbouring of latent* ***ecstasis***) how my problem statement or question, in proposing to register the processual nature of place experience using cameraless photography, creates a defamiliarised aesthetic of everyday life at sea; and how this notion of attention to and defamiliarisation of the everyday—a modern art trope—is also a basis of phenomenological study. I explain how my research recognises the concept of defamiliarisation as a distinctive characteristic and function of the photogram, overlooked in previous aesthetic studies; the implications of ecstatic-aesthetic

transformation deriving from such a defamiliarisation of place-experience; how this also interrogates the potential of analogue photographic materials to harbour latent phenomenological worth; and how these ontological materialities are unavailable as digital equivalents. In section 1.6 (*Anecdote: A storm-torn sail*), I recount an significant experience of a seaborne nature, in anecdote form. Anecdotes are used in this exegesis thereafter, to provide a biographic experiential reference point to the study in written form. In section 1.7 (***Nocturnal considerations***), I introduce the concept of the nocturnal as a recurring theme throughout this study. I discuss its role in shaping the working methodology of my research as well as nocturnal relationships between contextual and photographic considerations. Lastly, I reiterate the main themes of this chapter in section 1.8 (*Chapter summary*).

1.1 Initial explorations and iterations

With a prior knowledge of the cameraless photogram method and characteristics, along with experience in darkroom practices, I began my research for this project by experimenting with the cameraless use of chemicals and resists. I responded freely and abstractly to ideas of surface materiality and the environment of the port and city surrounds. I knew at this early stage that these things would form the basis of my research. Chemigrams[3] and photograms[4] were

[3] The chemigram process was discovered by Pierre Cordier on November 10, 1956. It is a unique process that uses resists on photographic paper, much the same way as wax is used as a resist in batik. Cordier discovered that, for a time, a resist can hold back the chemical effects of developer and fixer on black and white photo paper. Paper put into developer that has been exposed to normal room light for varying periods of time will turn black, except where a resist blocks the chemical reaction. Christina Z. Anderson, "The Chemigram," ***Alternative Photography,*** 20 November 2020. https://www.alternativephotography.com/the-chemigram/

exposed in the studio, taped down on the window ledge, or exposed to the elements outside. Film rolls were lost to the sea while being exposed under rocks. To deepen my focus on tactile reaction to materials, I started concentrating on using materials and objects found in and around in Wellington Harbour/Te Whanganui-a-Tara. For instance, I utilised traditional hand-coated, photosensitive silver nitrate solution on salted paper[5] to make photograms of sea glass and various flotsam found washed up on harbour beaches. I also used seawater from the harbour to 'salt' and sensitise paper, and later incorporated this water into lumen print, chemigram, cyanotype, and with hybrid-print/encaustic medium. These works expressed an early interest in how the photogram method and use of raw photographic materials held the potential to integrate the marine 'environment and chemistry' intimately within the image. These interests were key in informing the full extent of my research. Examples from these early explorations can be seen in *Sea Glass* and *Untitled*, figures 1[6] and 2[7] and 3 below, where I have used salted paper prints, cyanotype and gelatin silver paper, to produce photograms of maritime objects.

The nature of cameraless processes abandons the apparatus and technology of the camera and lens. Chemigrams are created by manipulation of the chemicals associated with photography, light, and as I increasingly found through my study, engagement with the very chemistry of the imaged environment. As the

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4 Photogram | fəʊtəgram | noun. "A photographic picture produced with photographic materials but without a camera." Oxford English Dictionary Online, last modified June 2021. Oxford University Press, https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/view/Entry/142815

5 "Salted Paper Print: In use primarily from 1839 through the 1860s, the salted paper print was among the first positive print processes." Sarah Kennel, *In the Darkroom: An Illustrated Guide to Photographic Processes before the Digital Age* (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 2010), 71.

6 *Sea Glass*, 2018, salted paper silver nitrate photogram, 20.3 x 25.4 cm. By Author.

7 *Untitled*, 2018, cyanotype photogram, 20.3 x 25.4 cm. By Author.

chemigram often involves the use of resists, such as oil or varnish, it draws an association with painting and printmaking. This is an important distinction to make, that cameraless photography interrogates the potential for the raw materials of photography to 'generate'[8] images. Figures 4 and 5, ***Untitled #1***[9] (below) and

Figure 1. *Sea Glass* (2018).

[8] Gottfried Jager, "Generative Photography: A Systematic Constructive Approach," ***Leonardo*** 19, no.1 (1986): 19.

[9] ***Untitled #1***, 2018, gelatin silver chemigram, 12.7 x 17.8 cm. By Author.

Figure 2. *Untitled* (2018).

Figure 3. *Genoa #1,* 2020, unique gelatin silver photogram, 45 x 60 cm

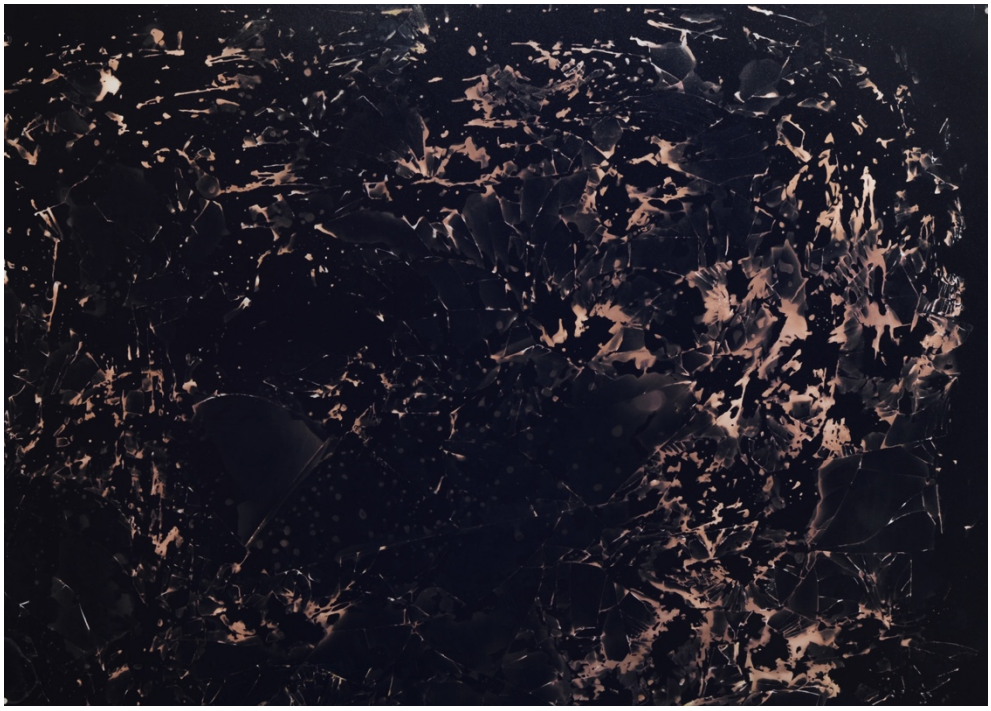

Figure 4. *Untitled #1* (2018).

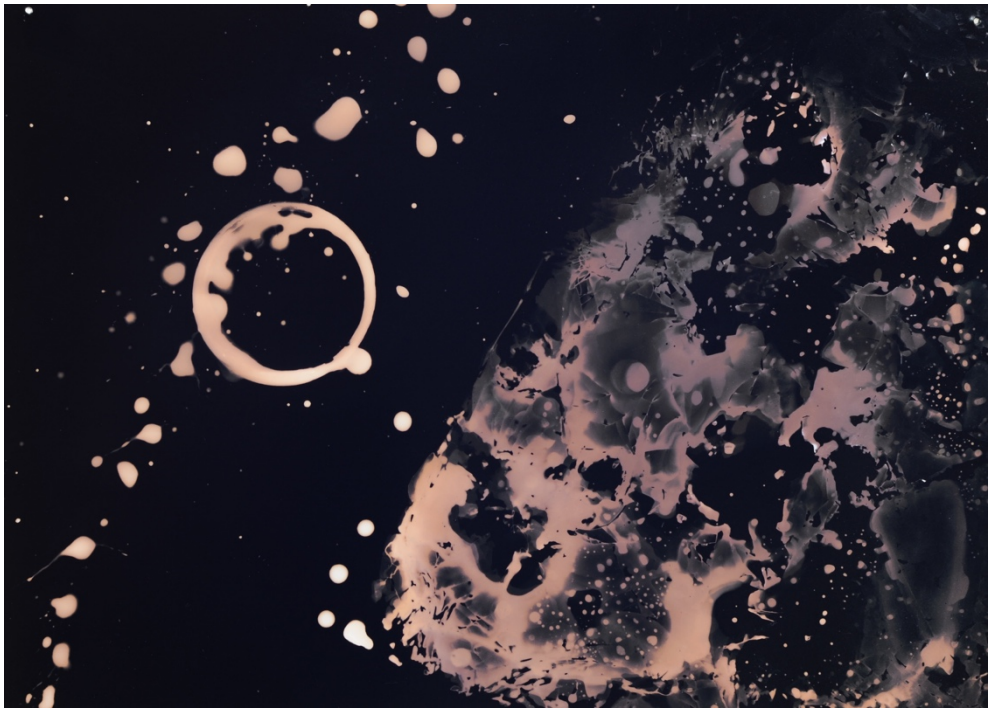

Figure 5. *Untitled #2* (2018).

Untitled #2[10] (above), demonstrate use of resists and chemical fixer coated onto sea glass and other marine objects and surfaces. These were brought into contact with photographic paper in combination with exposure to light and chemical development.

Led by photographic material explorations into "new surface landscapes,"[11] and theories of 'space and place,' the converging theories of 'place' and 'the imaginary' brought my research towards the "theoretical distinction drawn by Michel de Certeau between the 'concept city' of rational, urbanism discourse and the resourceful, often dream-like tactics which people use to make sense of the city and survive it."[12] To explore these themes, I linked the abstract effects of liquids and film with the city port, by collecting and depositing harbour water and inks onto film emulsion and allowing the chemical reaction to take place. This can be seen in figure 6[13]; in figure 7[14], these processes are undertaken on a negative photographic image of a Tokyo street, captured during a personal visit in 2018.

The cameraless iterations (shown in figs. 1 to 5 above, and figs. 6, 7, 8[15] and 9[16] below) responded to alternative ways to think about photography that challenge the perceived photographic image. I investigated methods and processes to produce chemigrams that accentuate the painterly and print-making

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10 *Untitled #2*, 2018, gelatin silver chemigram, 12.7 x 17.8 cm. By Author.

11 Gottfried, "Generative Photography," 19.

12 Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires, eds., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993), xii.

13 *Liquid 003#*, 2018, chemigram-negative scan, inkjet print, 20.3 x 25.4 cm. By Author.

14 *Tokyo #1*, 2018, chemigram-negative scan, inkjet print with graphite, 20.3 x 25.4 cm. By Author.

15 *Untitled*, 2018, gelatin silver chemigram, 40.6 x 50.8 cm. By Author.

16 *Tokyo #2*, 2019, photo-encaustic rice paper print on wooden panel 30 x 30 cm. By Author.

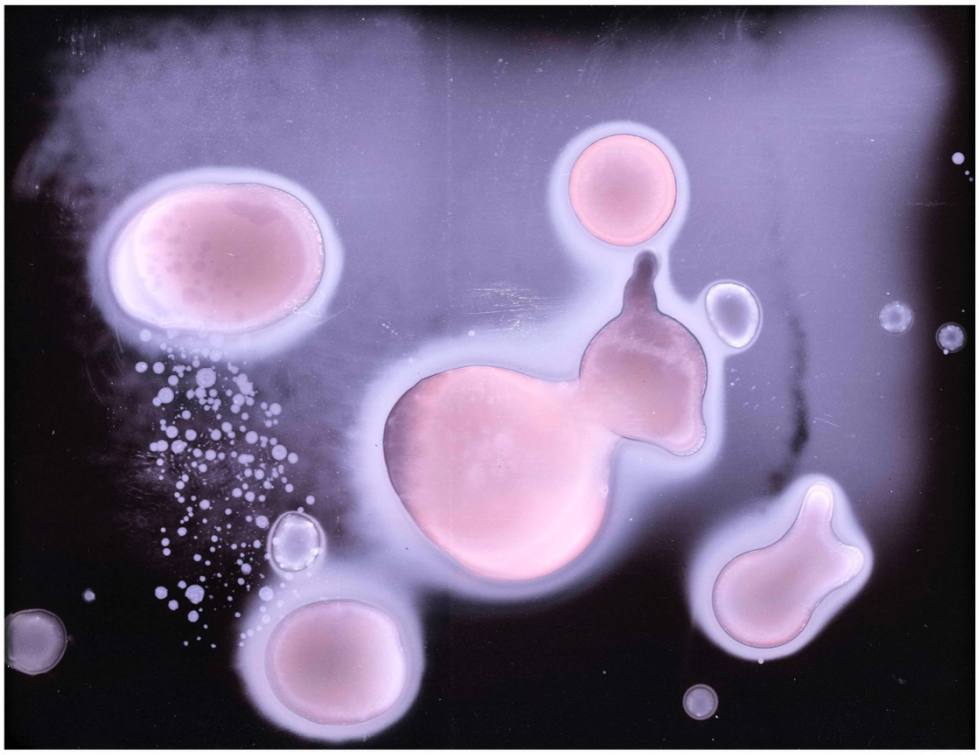

Figure 6. *Liquid 003#* (2018).

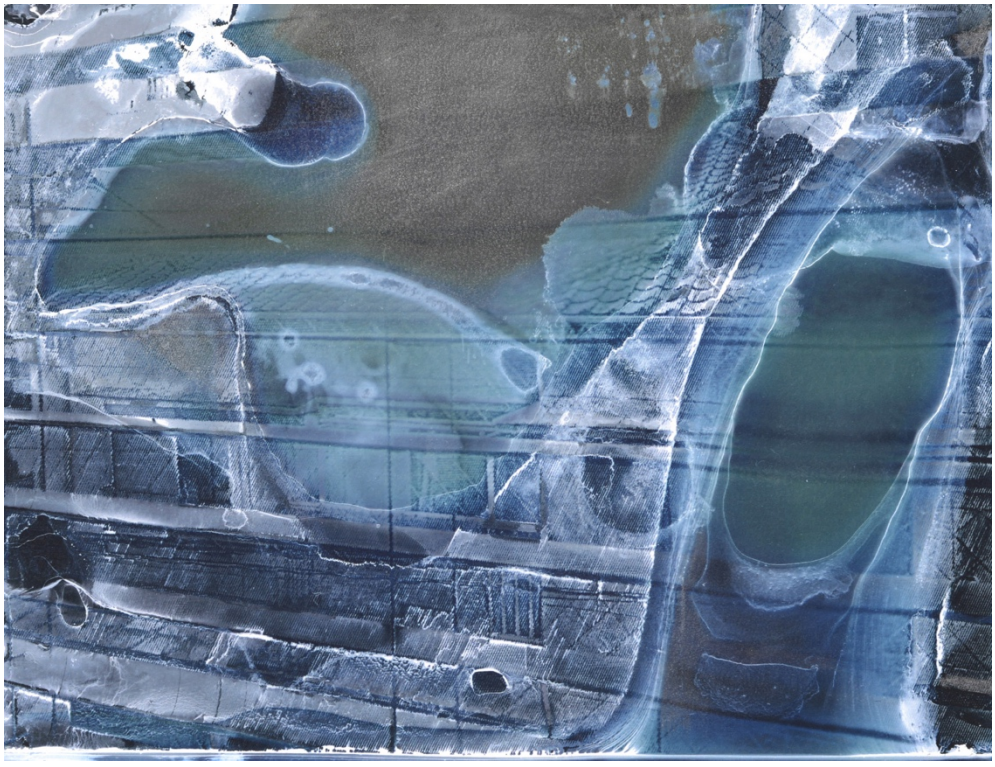

Figure 7. *Tokyo #1* (2018).

Figure 8. *Untitled* (2018).

Figure 9. *Tokyo #2* (2019).

aspects of photography, to emphasise the materiality and liquid-chemical processes of photography. I also explored the use of hybrid photographic work, such as Doug and Mike Starn's ***Blot out the Sun #1***[17] and their exploration of the photo-sensitive surface with encaustic, as well as other artists for whom photographic process, content and context are intertwined.

Anselm Kiefer is another artist of note that incorporates and interrogates non-conventional photographic materials. This is especially prevalent in his works ***Strike***[18] and ***Heavy Cloud.***[19] His otherwise featureless landscapes mix lead, shellac, synthetic adhesive and graphite with a photograph mounted on canvas.

> In ***Strike***, Kiefer over-fixed an exposed and developed negative, destroying the emulsion and causing stress and streaks that adopted the metaphor of lightning…. The lead is antithetical to the airiness of a cloud but appropriate to the weight of electricity and the following thunder that emanate from it.[20]

Kiefer's references to alchemy through his use of silver salts and lead are also significant and intentional. His recognition of the symbolic 'weight' carried by materials including those of analogue photography urged me to interrogate the photochemical surface in greater depth.

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17 Doug and Mike Starn, ***Blot out the Sun #1***, 1998-1999, lysonnic inkjet diptych on Thai mulberry and tissue papers with wax encaustic and wax, 208.3 × 346.1 cm, http://www.dmstarn.com/blot_out_the_sun.html

18 Anselm Kiefer, ***Strike***, 1985, lead, shellac, synthetic adhesive and graphite on photograph, mounted on canvas, 59.1 x 80.5 cm, The Met Museum, New York. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/486563

19 Anselm Kiefer, ***Heavy Cloud***, 1985, lead and shellac mounted on board, 59.4 x 87.6 cm, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/486567

20 "Strike, 1985", The Met Museum, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/486563

1.2 Alchemical connections

Cameraless photography has often been likened to alchemy in reference to photography's early history, prior to the camera obscura. For instance, in ancient history, salt was known to fasten the longevity of photo-sensitive fabric dyes. Later, the alchemist, Arabian Jabir ibn Hayyan (c. 721- c. 815), explored the blackening of silver salts in light. In the second half of the eighth century, he recorded that silver nitrate—the essential ingredient of the photographic emulsion—darkened in light.[21] The sensitivity of silver nitrate to light was later explored by scientists from the sixteenth century onward. Notably, German scholar Georg Fabricus (1516-1571) published in 1556 his discovery that a solution of salt and silver nitrate, when added to certain ores, would turn the metal from white to black when exposed to sunlight. Later experiments with photosensitivity were published by Johann Heinrich Schulze (1687-1744), who showed that silver compounds were visibly changed by the action of light rather than exposure to heat or air, as had been previously claimed.[22]

The continued interrogation of photosensitive materials by cameraless artists today suggests they continue to be "concerned with the genesis of the image, the fragility of its appearance and its future, and with photography as a medium that can materialise a relation to time."[23] Such concepts are reinforced, in many practices, by a concern with photography as trace. Today, while theories of photography as evidence of reality are widely questioned, the aesthetic power of

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21 Martin Barnes, ***Shadow Catchers: Camera-Less Photography***, 2nd ed. (London: Merril Publishers Ltd, 2012), 13.

22 Martin Barnes, ***Shadow Catchers***, 13.

23 Anne Immelé, "The Opacity of the Medium: The Return of Photography as Trace," ***Art Press*** 447 (July 2017): 61.

photographic traces is strongly felt among photographers who practice a kind of slow photography, closely linked to the use of photograms and nineteenth century photographic media such as cyanotypes, ambrotypes and heliogravures, and unusual hybrids of digital and analogue procedures.[24] It is with this same curiosity that I have proceeded with my own research and interrogation of analogue photographic materials.

As I will discuss in the literature review in the following chapter, there are a great many historical and contemporary practising artists using cameraless photographic methods, in a wide range of creative investigations. Therefore, it is necessary to narrow down the field of my enquiry considerably, in order to position my research. It is important to note that many key concerns with the extension of photographic image-making beyond the camera are shared concerns. Often, these shared concerns involve artists interrogating the specificity of the chemicals and raw materials of analogue photography. For these practices, the content, context and concept are inseparable from the cameraless process itself. This is due to the co-composition of visual and tactile response, which engages photography with temporal, spatial, physical and chemical phenomena. The complex composition of overlapping concerns and characteristics underpins all aspects of my research development here.

[24] Immelé, "Opacity of the Medium," 61.

1.3 The context of my enquiry and its everydayness

Sailing is an engagement of the senses with the boat and all its 'technologies' of rigging and sails. It is at the same time an equally multi-sensory engagement with the environment in which sailing happens. Even the sailing ship at rest or tethered to moorings or anchorage promotes a connection to this engagement. In this way, sailing sits alongside—but is different to—many other similar waterborne activities requiring direct contact with the sea. Activities such as kayaking, surfing and sailing are especially useful in understanding our experience of ocean phenomena, from a lived-bodily and tactile subjectivity. Jon Anderson discusses how kayaking is "experienced and understood as an 'actor-centred activity'," [25] practised for anything from competitive sport on rivers, sea or artificial courses, to a contemporary "means of transport and survival in many water-dependent indigenous societies." [26]

Sailing has its own set of historical origins, developments and associations, many of which have become sedimented in everyday cultural attitudes towards the maritime. The everyday-ness of the maritime world is something one becomes acutely aware of when living on a boat. The quotidian nature of the maritime is so all pervading in world cultures that language itself is saturated with maritime terms and references. Etymology of maritime sayings like 'sailing close to the wind' or 'batten down the hatches' have lost context through popular usage. In other words, our cultural connection to life-on-the-sea is so deep seated and archaic, and so quotidian that is overlooked as a part of contemporary life experience

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25 Jon Anderson, "What I Talk About When I Talk About Kayaking," in ***Water Worlds: Human Geographies of the Ocean***, ed. Kimberley Peters and Jon Anderson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 104.

26 Anderson, "What I Talk About When I Talk About Kayaking," 104.

worthy of our attention. Ecological or anthropocentric perspectives are seemingly preferred to one in which co-existences between human and non-human beings are informative in our understanding of the ocean as a place.

A volume on the philosophy of shipbuilding is correctly introduced by the statement that sailing ships were "the most complex construction of any society until just before the Industrial Revolution."[27] Furthermore, "as a floating container, the ship was a mobile home, a transporter of humans and goods, a military barracks, and a portable fort."[28] This suggests a much wider human experience of the maritime than now, but nevertheless hints at the layers of meaning and associations ingrained in culture, and continuing to reverberate into the present. Our proximity to maritime experience is not as intimate as it was, and yet most of the world's urban populations are based in and around ports that have ferries, docks and a maritime infrastructure of inland distribution of goods.

French author, essayist and film maker Georges Perec's experimental writings of the 1970s[29] on noticing and attentiveness, are referred to in *The Everyday* by editor Stephen Johnstone as a "poetics of noticing"[30] alongside artists and writers concerned with the everyday. It was towards this poetics of noticing that my research was informed by my own personal situation, of living aboard a boat, which gave me a unique position from which to conduct research using cameraless techniques in the boat and ocean environment.

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27 Frederick Hocker, "The Philosophy of Shipbuilding," (2004), quoted in Joseph Amato, *Surfaces: A History* (Los Angeles, USA: University of California Press, 2013), 74.

28 Joseph Amato, *Surfaces: A History* (Los Angeles, USA: University of California Press, 2013), 74.

29 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Places. Espèces d'espaces*, trans. John Sturrock (London and New York: Penguin, 1997).

30 Stephen Johnstone, "The Everyday," in *Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Iwona Blazwick (London: Whitechapel, 2008), 18-19.

My early experimental chemigram iterations demonstrated the responsiveness of photochemical materials to the oceanic world as a way of gaining access to the poetics of the sea as an inhabited place. This research is a way of responding photographically to the 'more than visual' experience of being on a boat at sea, the poetics of maritime space, and as an organising structure to think about cameraless photography. I develop this poetic phenomenological methodology in response to the lived space of everyday life aboard a sailing vessel. This space is a creative research studio where I conducted night-time photographic investigations. These investigations engage with the immediate surroundings or interface where boat meets sea. This encounter took place in whatever marine location the vessel has been sailed to, or at its mooring in the city marina. Any of these spatial-temporal locations and conditions bring unique materialities and consequent traces to the cameraless works—traces of things otherwise invisible.

Sailing provides a unique platform through which to spend time at sea and feel the liveliness of the world through the medium of the ocean. As author Adam Nicolson says, "if you hope the world is alive, then you should cast off and open the oceanic door."[31] Spending time on the sea, through the night or day, in different weather conditions and locations is a key difference to the other waterborne activities mentioned earlier which tend to be more briefly experienced. The practice of sailing and oceanic experiences are arguably more intertwined with 'everyday' activities than waterborne sports.

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[31] Adam Nicolson, *Seamanship: A Voyage Along the Wild Coasts of the British Isles* (New York: Harper Collins, 2014), 111.

Spending days and nights at sea, even at dock, develops a deep sense of marine cycles and awareness of the maritime relationship between ocean and human being. These aspects of everyday maritime experience go beyond the sea's liquidity, reaching inner senses of the haptic but also the scents, sounds, taste and feel of the sea in its extended sense. As will be discussed in subsequent sections of this exegesis, the sea goes beyond notions of a body of liquid bound by land.

My image making is able to exploit some of the ocean materialities as they occur, or appear around the structure of my waterborne living space, such as salt deposits and chlorination. Each location contains differences including light, water and air conditions. The mooring in Wellington Harbour/Te Whanganui-a-Tara for instance, has both water and air pollution from the city streets, and exhaust fumes of traffic—especially the ferry across the harbour, which can leave sulphurous residue on the deck. In addition, salty spray, carried by the often fiercely strong winds here in this region, stings the eyes and coats the skin. Salt deposits settle on exterior surfaces of boats, on the wharfs and far into the city. These characteristics of the ocean extending itself are utilised in the production of my images, which also carry these deposits in the fibres of the paper used, while bearing marks of abrasion made by the boisterousness of the wind.

1.4 Entwining ontologies of photography and the sea as inhabited places

In the following section I outline the main conceptual ideas and ontological positions of my research. These centre around phenomenological approaches to analogue photography's material and liquid ontology and how cameraless photography can represent an embodied perception, and post-phenomenological processual notion of place-experience. In brief, both of these ontological models are alternatives to historical developments to understanding place and vision.

Claudius Ptolemy's *geos,* for example, was based on a God's-eye view of the world, and has since dominated Western understanding of man's position in the world, hence the term *geography.* This perspectivism is reinforced by Leon Battista Alberti's optics, which centred the observer in a relationship to the object of their gaze, and Cartesian rationalism, which reduces place to homogeneous and objective space. Phenomenological and post-phenomenological understandings of vision and place support alternative notions of place as a responsive context and vision as an embodied sense, particularly in the theories of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

My study critiques the potential for cameraless processes to challenge the hegemony of vision and ocular-centrism of modern culture, as described by David Michael Levin in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (1993)[32]; thereby testing the hapticity and validity of the cameraless photographic process. My critique of ocular bias supports the notions of counter photographic practices resisting the digital image saturation of this age. Cameraless photography in particular does this by inverting the technical and visual primacy of the camera's 'black-box' and lens, returning to photochemical materials as the essence of photography.

As a branch, or more accurately, a root, of photography, which originated before photography's inception as a camera-based image system in the early nineteenth century, photogenic drawing[33] was noted for its unprecedented

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[32] David Michael Levin, *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

[33] Photogenic drawing is the name William Henry Fox Talbot gave to his first cameraless photographic process. Building on the research of others into the light sensitivity of silver salts, Talbot soaked a sheet of paper in a weak salt solution. After it dried, he coated it with a solution of silver nitrate to sensitise it, placed objects such as botanical specimens, lace or other semi-transparent objects on top of the sheet, and then directly exposed it to sunlight. In

accuracy of representation. These early photographs, while lacking perspective and central subjective positioning afforded by optics, entered the world of visual representation as strange bedfellows with other strictly perspectival representations—the accepted Western interpretation of the world. The distinctly non-perspectival qualities of early photogenic drawings were later brought into line with representational expectations, through the invention of the camera in 1825.[34]

While undoubtedly photogenic, the strangely reversed, non-perspectival subjectivity presented by the photogram was recognised by twentieth century modern artists such as Christian Schad, Laslo Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray among others, as something which challenged the humanist aesthetic. Alongside the modern art movements, avant-garde artists also employed these non-perspectival subjective qualities to challenge familiar representations of the everyday. This modernist application was made more effective by the everydayness of camera-based photographic images by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and facilitated through the already established associations with, and critiques of, perception, truth, reality and the everyday by modern writers and artists at that time. As Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei demonstrates, modernist writers and artists from Walter Benjamin to Cy Twombly[35] examined modernity in its relation to quotidian

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September 1840, Talbot discovered the phenomenon of the latent image: he briefly exposed a sensitised sheet of paper in the camera, removed it before an image formed, and then chemically developed it. The action of the chemicals revealed the latent negative image. For full reference, see Susan Faludi, ***In the Darkroom*** (London: Picador, 2017), p61.

34 This was the first successful attempt to produce a camera-based image by Joseph Nicephore Niepce, using the camera made by Charles and Vincent Chevalier in Paris.

35 In her book, ***The Ecstatic Quotidian***, Gosetti-Ferencei gives the example of Benjamin's essays on "the nature of toys and their relation to the transformation of the everyday world" (p. 58) and I will add his references to the 'optical unconscious' in ***The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*** (https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/benjamin.pdf) and ***A Little History of Photography***. Cy Twombly's blackboard painting, ***Untitled***, 1970, simulates trompe l'oeil, a

life, which was seen to harbour a latent ecstasis, or transformation, by 'stepping outside' familiar perception. My research explores the aesthetic-ecstatic potential of cameraless photography, not as a critique of 'the everyday' as a concern, but as a retro-modernist application of photography's potential to defamiliarise. This attention to the common quality of things, and thus to perception and experience, grounds this study in critical phenomenological aesthetics (through Edmund Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Gaston Bachelard) and especially the enquiry of Gosetti-Ferencei. This will be discussed further in chapter 3.

1.5 A harbouring of latent ecstasis

In an interview on ***Poetry and Truth***, Gosetti-Ferencei notes that

> poetry may draw our attention to aspects of reality, aspects of the world we may have overlooked. Or perhaps to connections we may have with other things in the world, for instance objects of nature, which we may not pay attention to in our everyday life, or even in our pragmatic thinking…but perhaps most often what poetry reveals is the reality of human experience, and the contingencies of human perception and feeling.[36]

This approach of defamiliarisation underpins a unique cameraless interrogation of latent ecstasis harboured in a poetics of the maritime. At the heart of this argument is a parallel between something that may characterise certain poetry and

technique that tricks the eye and its perception of objects. Typically, trompe l'oeil portray ordinary objects of everyday use in the environment exposing our susceptibility to fallible perception.

[36] Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, "Poetry and Truth", filmed August 21-23, 2017 in Amsterdam, video, 5:27, https://youtu.be/9zrhma4mV-k.

cameraless images, in terms of how they can reveal certain aspects of 'the real' reality which may ordinarily be overlooked.

Additionally, my study critiques notions of the contemporary photographic image, which arguably has become something increasingly non-material (digital) and a far cry from its photochemical predecessor. My use of the photochemistry of cameraless techniques may be seen as a confirmation of analogue photography's underlying differences as a departure from its dematerialised digital format. These ontological differences are tested within conceptual and contextual poetics. My testing of analogue and photochemical potential focuses on tactile characteristics, and in doing so, also draws attention to a phenomenology specific to the analogue photograph. These observations bring into question the ontology of contemporary images and our phenomenological relationship to them, supporting existing theories that suggest so. This is discussed later in chapter 4.

1.6 Anecdote: A storm-torn sail

The following account describes an experience where a sail on my boat was damaged in a stormy night in Wellington Harbour/Te Whanganui-a-Tara. Coincidentally, several months before this happened, I had been making practical studies of sails, and had conducted research into the sail as a technological part of the boat. This led to making drawings, rubbings, camera-based and cameraless studies of different sails in my studio practice. During these explorative few months, I had visited the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington and gained access to nineteenth century photographs and negatives of sailing boats and their sails in Te Whanganui-a-Tara and surrounds. I had no idea of what an impression nature was about to bestow on me.

On a boat many of the noises that come to you through the veils of sleep are the creaking of the mooring lines, the lapping of waves under the stern, and a singing, harmonic resonance that comes from the wind whistling through the mast, shrouds and stays. In stronger wind conditions, and from certain angles, these noises can build into a howl or roar. On the other hand, there are more gentle creaks and ticks that originate internally or come through the hull to the internal structures, which are linked to external structures like chainplates, bulkheads and stringers. Generally, the different sounds fall into a pattern that your mind monitors from a distance, and are gradually unconsciously accepted. Only strange, unexpected noises on the water or from land, or the smoke alarm which decides to go off every now and then for no apparent reason, tend to disturb your sleep aboard a boat. Everything else is rhythm.

At night when the wind is gale force, it feels like black air is bearing down on you, a stampede of wild horses, hooves all drumming closer and closer until they thunder over the deck and away; and for a while all is calm again. Even this becomes a kind of lullaby. Here it comes. Here it is! And there it goes...

A violent shaking brings me abruptly to. Is it an earthquake? Would I even feel an earthquake on the water? What is happening? I stumble around in the dark cabin as the whole boat rocks and shudders. A deafening noise grows louder as my grogginess leaves me, and guides me forward to the bow. Looking up through the hatch in the forward cabin, the sound is like sheet-metal but I see that it is our headsail, which has torn loose in the gale force northerly wind. The time is 3:35 am. I pull on some clothes and claw myself up through the companionway-hatch, out into the night and fifty knots of wind. A stinging spray from the attenuators fifty metres away flies into my face, erasing the last remnants of sleep. I try everything to control the sail sheets moving erratically and desperately. In the darkness, about two-thirds of the way up the mast, the torn-sail behaves like a thing possessed, whipping against the metal viciously, almost deafeningly. Large shreds of white fabric stream out into the starless sky. It is a forlorn and hopeless image.

I move carefully down the deck toward the sail in the same way as I would when sailing, semi-crouched and holding on—'one hand for yourself and one hand for the boat at all times'—so the saying goes. The clew at the outer corner of the sail, a heavy piece of wadding with a stainless steel ring attached, is thrashing back and forth as madly as a terrified beast. The wind's strength makes it difficult to move forwards. I try to pull in the furling line but nothing happens. I use the winch and the line breaks loose from the furler mechanism at the bow of the boat. This makes the situation far worse. The sail loosens even more, which shakes the rigging with increased vigour. Thirty square metres of heavy weight material is further unleashed. High up the forestay, I can see the tattered shreds of sail that have already torn free, caught on the stays, trailing flagrantly and scornfully into the night.

This unexpected event, while catastrophic and alarming, was the catalyst for further exploratory work with the enormous swathes of ripped sailcloth now at my disposal, as shown in figure 10. I was now able to work with sections of the sail, making cameraless images both on and off the boat. The material not only held an aesthetic potential to be explored photographically, it also made phenomenological reference to this storm event and other memories of experiences I have had as a sailor. In other words, the sail's 'destruction' as an object was a breakthrough event to accessing experiential material. As a quotidian maritime object and metaphor of sailing, this salt and wind-weathered–and now wind-shredded–sail was further defamiliarised using cameraless techniques. This unique set of circumstances were the foundational underpinnings of my research.

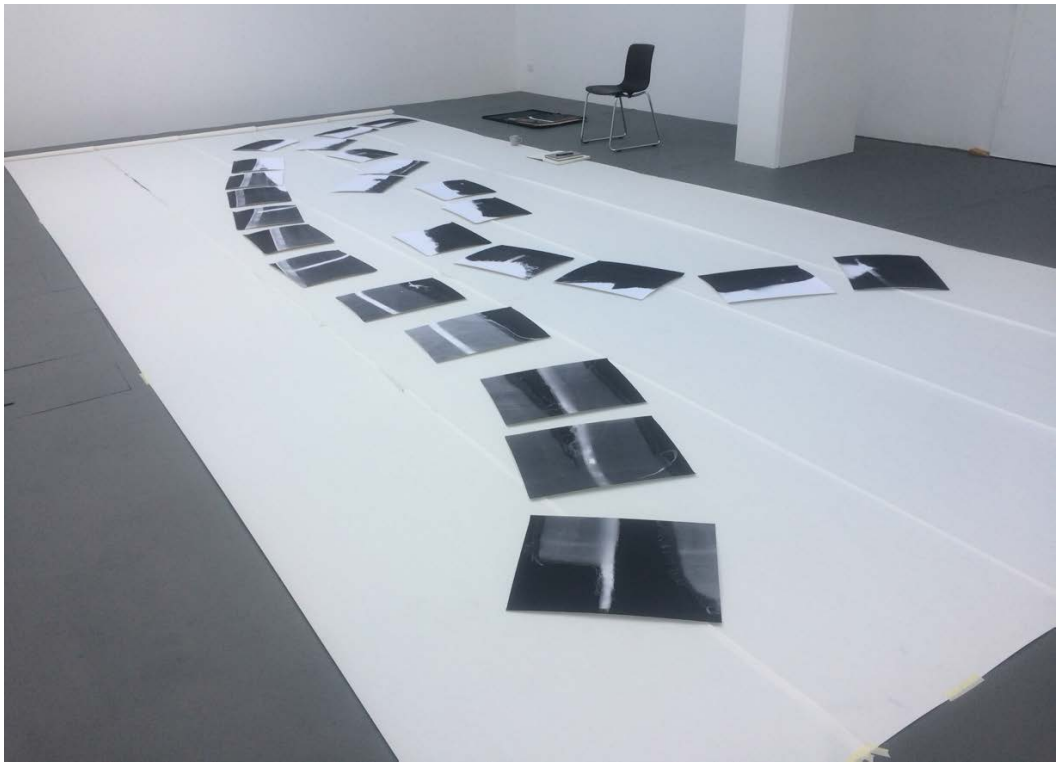

Figure 10. *Storm-Torn* series, image sequence testing in Engine Room Gallery, Massey University (2020).

1.7 Nocturnal considerations while working on the sea

In this section I will discuss the role of the nocturnal as a temporal context shaping cameraless landscape enquiries generally. I describe how taking advantage of ambient nocturnal light is a key factor in my own work and how the physiological phenomena of 'night vision' brings together photographic practice and the seaborne/maritime context.

Throughout my exegesis I make frequent reference to the nocturnal as a factor and premise for cameraless photographic practice and as a temporal context in which experiencing the sea is the focus of this research. In terms of analogue photography, 'working in the dark' is a familiar procedure if one is accustomed to

the processes of the darkroom. This is particularly relevant in the practice of cameraless photography where calculating a durational exposure is key to obtaining the desired image tonality and density. These considerations are seen as fundamental and also thematic in the enquiries of relevant artists discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Using cameraless techniques in the landscape at night requires the consideration of ambient light levels, as the practitioner removes all normal precautionary light-proof containments for a measured period. At the same time, a considered procedure can take advantage of low light levels which extend exposure times considerably and allow the photographer to position their photographic materials thoughtfully and meaningfully. Working in the dark also heightens the felt experience of making images in this way, allowing for a contemplation of the analogue photographic process, again a familiar notion to the darkroom practitioner used to 'feeling their way around a dimly lit or pitch black laboratory' and yet also working methodically and with absolute precision– again making use of night vision.

Cameraless photography made outside at night, under the moon and stars, references slower and more liquid processes of analogue photography, undergoing a kind of poetic deconstruction, the dark chamber removed, manipulating photochemical sensitivities and vulnerabilities. This handling of raw photosensitive materials, to produce an image through tactile engagement with objects, especially with nocturnal time within place, is curiously unique to this kind of practice. Such haptic exploration of nocturnal landscape references early pre-camera-based photography, but finds more conceptual significance in the hands of early Twentieth Century modern artists as well as contemporary practices.

Working at night as a cameraless photographer, describes a methodology both technically practical and aesthetically appropriate; to convey aspects of the sea and sailing perhaps often overlooked in familiar understanding of maritime experience of place. The concept of the nocturnal is profoundly significant for both contextual and methodological considerations. In the maritime context, the light of the stars along with that of the moon continues to provide navigational information and illumination even in a contemporary maritime context. Despite the presence of sophisticated technology on the seas, fundamental factors are at play that make the darkness of night an essential aspect of maritime travel. These include the necessity of travelling when weather and sea state permits as well as a reliance upon the tides and tidal currents in order to arrive at destinations in safety. Equally, in order to do this, sufficient darkness is needed on the vessel to allow maximum visibility of the sea world at night.

In terms of cameraless photography, making images outside in the landscape makes use of low intensity light sources such as the moon and the stars by enabling the photographer to extend exposures and thus make considered durational works. The motion of a boat and the sea surrounding it even at anchor during such exposures, is something that can be additionally considered and registered in the cameraless image.

In terms of context, when on a sailing boat at night it is common for the sailor to have to move around the outside structure with fairly limited visibility. Red light is used to help with this and many other examples of this nocturnal working environment. In order to safely navigate by visual means, a sailor needs relative darkness in their immediate field of vision. Methods can be used to enable them to see their surroundings more clearly, such as the use of red light in the cabin, cockpit or wheelhouse of a vessel. This technique avoids temporary night

blindness as they transition from bright light to dark in the same way that car dashboards, aircraft cockpits and other vehicles are lit at night.

Similarly, working in red or amber 'safe-light' is also a familiar and essential aspect of the traditional photographic darkroom. This is a low wattage, red or amber filtered light used in a darkroom to provide illumination for the photographic practitioner without interfering with the light sensitivity of orthochromatic gelatin silver print materials. Dim red light allows us to see our surroundings in darkness but a bright light can temporarily 'blind' us taking some time to fully recover. This is due to chemical reaction to light taking place in the eye's cones and rods. In critical conditions such as steering a boat at night, this chemical delay must be taken into consideration. This physiological adaption of the eye is called 'night vision' or scotopia.[37] Using low intensity red light to see around the boat while on watch, is equally important in my practice in which safe light is used in certain aspects of handling photographic materials in and out of the boat interior, so that exposure would occur at the intended moment. Also, working with night vision helped me to perceive surfaces and objects using the same nocturnal ambient light slowly registered by the photochemistry of my materials.

Night vision is something the analogue photographer, used to working in the darkroom, is likely to be familiar with and become accustomed to. Moving from the darkroom, to working outside at night with photographic materials, is in many respects a logical one, exploiting low light intensities in the nocturnal natural world. Once the traditional darkroom laboratory system is abandoned what one is

[37] "scotopia, n.". OED Online. December 2021. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/173164?redirectedFrom=scotopia (accessed January 15, 2022).

left with are photographic essences of light and chemistry which undergo coalescence with the sea environment. For the cameraless photographer, on the nocturnal sea, the physics and chemistry of that environment become a loosely governed external camera and darkroom-in-one, where light and liquids are freely at play.

1.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I introduced experimental cameraless work and explained how developing a practice onboard a sailing boat has brought together the contextual ontologies of analogue photography and living on the sea. The conceptual ideas respond to an evolved question: ***In what ways can cameraless photography provoke and register a latent ecstasis harboured in the poetics of 'everyday' seaborne experience?***

In the first part of this chapter, I surveyed my experimental work produced at the commencement of this research, which explored the potential uses of photochemistry without a camera. I provided an overview of photography in terms of its cameraless history and links to contemporary use. I outlined my context of living and sailing on the sea, and how this developed as a site for my research. Conceptual questions were raised that link materiality and phenomenology, and how these concepts relate to the tactile and tangible aspects of cameraless practices in the landscape. These concepts will be explored in more detail in chapter 3 and 4 of this exegesis. I introduced the notion that sailing and maritime life on the ocean is a quotidian lifeworld overlooked as an everyday experience. I end the section by describing the conceptual focuses of liquidity and materiality. I described how the practices of living on the sea and producing cameraless images

are a response to the tangible aspects of place-experience in this particular context.

In the next part of chapter 1, I expanded on ideas that cameraless photography has the potential to defamiliarise everyday visual representation by way of tactile chemical processes, and challenge objectivity and distance through originary contact. Through phenomenological perspectives of place-experience, and cameraless photography's potential to represent processual materiality of place, I extended relational questions around the liquid/material ontology of photography. Lastly, I have discussed the concept of the nocturnal and its role in shaping the working methodology of my research as well as nocturnal relationships between contextual and photographic considerations.

CHAPTER TWO

Enquiries into place-experience

In chapter 2, I begin section 2.1 (*Towards an understanding of a cameraless photography of place*) with a critique of the photographic theory author Liz Wells' writing on 'experiential' landscape photography especially cameraless enquiries exploring the concept of place, such as Susan Derges. In section 2.2 (*Contemporary cameraless explorations of place-experience*), I review other cameraless artists in more depth focussing on landscape enquiries. This critique leads the discussion, in section 2.3 (*Contemporary cameraless explorations of oceanic place-experience*), to practices involving the oceanic or maritime. The cameraless work of Nicola Naomi Coppola, Michael Flomen, Roberto Huarcaya, Klea McKenna, Meghann Riepenhoff and Harry Nankin are reviewed as particularly important for this research using supporting ideas from David Abram, Geoffrey Batchen, Martin Barnes and Paul Crowther. I then narrow the focus of my own enquiry in section 2.4 (*My departure from previous enquiries*) to indicate where my research sits within the field of cameraless photography. In section 2.5 (*Rethinking the maritime quotidian*), I present the world of the sea as an inhabited and phenomenologically overlooked space in more general contextual and conceptual thinking. Drawing on human geographical and phenomenological writing of Michel Serres, Kimberley Peters, Philip Steinberg, Jon Anderson and Roland Barthes, I reinforce the more radical concepts of Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei's analysis of the everyday transformed in poetry and art. In section 2.6 (*Stepping outside the quotidian image of the sea*), I apply these ideas of transformation to assumptions about the ocean and the maritime world. In section 2.7 (*The*

phenomenology of photochemical media), I consider the material ontology of analogue photography and photochemistry through the works of artist Tacita Dean and her extensive projects with photochemical media exploring themes of maritime-experience. Lastly, in section 2.8 (*The sea is not just wet*), I draw together the main arguments which support experiential interpretations of the sea, referenced through accounts by writers Jonathon Raban and Adam Nicolson. Their descriptions of being at sea are considered, alongside the more academic studies of Anderson, Peters, Steinberg, Tim Ingold and Astrida Neimanis, toward a post-phenomenological understanding the interconnectedness of seaborne experience. To conclude this chapter, I describe an encounter with light in section 2.9 (*Anecdote: A silver path, Arapawa to Onapua*) and summarise the significant propositions of this chapter in section 2.10 (*Chapter summary*).

2.1 Towards an understanding of cameraless photography of place

Professor Liz Well's book, ***Land Matters***,[40] critically discusses the way in which photographers engage with land and its conceptualisation. The chapter ***Sense of Location*** expands on practices that respond to human sensual relationships with the landscape. Wells considers the categories of landscape—topography (observational) and composited imagery drawing on personal experience—alongside more haptic engagements with the landscape as evidenced in the work of Hamish Fulton and Richard Long (artists whose practices are not necessarily

[40] Liz Wells, ***Land Matters: Landscape Photography, Culture and Identity*** (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

defined as photographic) as well as Ingrid Pollard and Susan Derges (whose work predominantly is).

Wells presents these artists in contrast to the 'authority' of the topographic, such as Jem Southam, Kate Mellor, Mark Power and Thomas Joshua Cooper. In Wells' discussion of these authoritative landscape practices, there is emphasis on a credibility necessarily earned by landscape photographers, which brings about the issue of authorship. Wells argues "that credibility rests not on photo-technologies (chemical or digital), nor on the expressive abilities of photographers as artists, but on the integrity of photographers as artist-researchers."[41] This suggests that in order to be credible, a landscape photographer requires certain working methods of ordering, analysing and displaying—often in catalogue style. These methods or tropes can be traced to the analytical cataloguing of subject matter seen in the work of Berndt and Hilla Becher and their students at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. The notion that an approach is methodological in many of these practices is probably accurate, and no doubt intended to create a photographic identity based on medium-specificity, the mechanism of the camera, the film-strip and the laboratory-like darkroom processes.

However, the condition of authenticity is presented here as a legacy of the photographic medium and the producer-photographer, which Wells first presents using Barthes' ***The Death of the Author.***[42] As Wells explains, in the Barthesian account, the modernist idea of the "Author-God' is subsumed to critique the "place

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41 Wells, *Land Matters*, 264.

42 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," trans. Stephen Heath, in ***Image, Music, Text,*** ed. Roland Barthes (London: Fontana, 1977), 142-48.

of writers (or photographers) within systems of discourse."[43] Rather than meaning springing from an authoritative source, Barthes suggests that in a text, a "tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture"[44] can be ***disentangled*** instead by the reader. Barthes concludes "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author."[45] In my understanding, this notion similarly collapses the roles of author-producer-viewer, and counters the notion of the photographer as a Cartesian dualist authority dissecting the world from an optically distanced point-of-view. As Barthes champions the reader, so too can photography champion the viewer.

For Wells, Barthes fails to explain who has orchestrated the words or framing of the image, preferring Michel Foucault's notion of the ***author-function***, which tends to be satisfied by 'systematic consideration' of subject matter. Wells believes this "lends authority to the photographer as investigator and storyteller…a legacy of the Bechers and…the Düsseldorf School."[46] This trend towards systematic, careful and informed documentation as a proof of authenticity is certainly evident in photography practices such as the artist Ingrid Pollard[47], whose work Wells cites. However, from the examples Wells presents in terms of authorship, the artists who draw on personal experience, including Pollard, often fall somewhere in between distinctions of Barthes' reader and Foucault's author-function. For example, Pollard often presents us with sequential workings of the photographic act by displaying cultural objects alongside photographs, and text alongside photographic

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43 Wells, ***Land Matters***, 280
44 Barthes, ***Death of the Author***, 146
45 Barthes, ***Death of the Author***, 148
46 Wells, ***Land Matters***, 281
47 Ingrid Pollard, "Hidden Histories, Heritage Stories," London: Lee Valley Park, exhibition brochure (1999), cited in Liz Wells, *Land Matters*, 277.

montages. Although her artwork has a degree of systematic consideration, her exhibits, while seeming archival and documentary in style, invite the viewer as reader to ***freely*** explore layers of cultural meaning within the 'text'. Wells remarks that "the form of [Pollard's] installation offers interpretative latitude."[48] However, I feel Pollard's use of gallery space in this way imparts so much more than the reassurance of a methodical approach or systematic consideration and, to the contrary, opens a dialogue or ***disentanglement*** of the "tissue of quotations"[49] for the reader or viewer, to which Barthes was referring. My reason for teasing this out is that I feel Wells' consideration of "the authority of topographic photography"[50] is overly stressed. Although she is correct to indicate topographic tropes, in my opinion photographers can and do give authority to the viewer or reader of their work, while maintaining authenticity. This is an important factor in the consideration of cameraless photography, which requires the viewer to interpret an image as neither their own or the photographer's subjective or authoritative view.

Susan Derges' process and motivations for making cameraless images in the landscape, especially around water, were foundational in the development of my own early practice prior to and during this research. Wells also refers to Susan Derges' work to re-enforce a notion of photographic credibility. For instance, Wells writes of Derges' earlier works, "the legacy of several trips to Japan is evident in the accuracy, minimalism and economy of form."[51] However, I argue that Derges' photograms, rather than reassuring the viewer for credibility's sake or seeking an

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48 Wells, ***Land Matters***, 277.
49 Barthes, ***Death of the Author***, 146
50 Wells, ***Land Matters***, 281
51 Wells, ***Land Matters***, 294

authoritative position, force us to consider another subjectivity, without the inclusion of topographic devices. Derges' use of the Japanese tropes of minimalism and economy are, in my opinion, superseded by the equally Japanese motifs of water, reflection and shadow. These motifs are an aesthetic tradition in the Japanese appreciation of nature in art and literature—subject matter which is "predominantly taken from natural objects and phenomena."[52] The lack of sublime and a preference for delicacy in her work is also explained by her identification with Japanese culture and aesthetics.[53] Therefore, my suggestion is that Derges achieves credibility through the agency of place and its phenomena, which for the viewer is tangible in her works.

As Wells notes, when Derges is creating her work, she "is open to the elements, not distanced as an on-looker behind the eye of a camera"[54] and, as with the artists Fulton and Long, "[Derges'] imagery is not about ***place*** in itself so much as about the ***experience*** of place."[55] It becomes apparent in Wells' text that Derges' work does not easily fit into the Becher's cataloguing documentary trope. The readings that Wells offers us are subjective, poetic and gently uncertain, as her description of ***Shoreline, 7 October***[56] illustrates:

> the ensuing image accumulates traces of movement of sand and pebbles during the ebb and flow of the tide. At first sight abstract, the horizontal strips stretch across the gallery wall (up to 2.5 metres wide). The pleasures are aesthetic, with

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52 Yuriko Saito, "The Japanese Appreciation of Nature," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 239

53 Saito, "The Japanese Appreciation of Nature," 294.

54 Wells, *Land Matters*, 294.

55 Wells, *Land Matters,* 288.

56 "Susan Derges, Shoreline, 7 October, 1998," Phillips, 2021, https://www.phillips.com/detail/SUSAN-DERGES/UK040111/152.

> patterning reflecting movement of matter and inviting metaphoric interpretation. Perhaps an illusory cloudscape is conjured up, perhaps fungus, or cascades of human hair. Processes of making the imagery are not immediately evident. But if we pause to reflect on this, we may also be assailed by tactile memories of sand between toes, and of the movements and sounds of sand and disarray of the water's edge.[57]

In one respect, Wells places Derges' work and practice as a photographer firmly in the landscape, even if

> process and existential experience are as important as geographic destination. She tells us where imagery has been made, but in her work the specification of place is not intended to anchor the images so much as to emphasise the authenticity of the artist's experience.[58]

This follows from Wells' earlier statement, that "photography cannot replicate actual experiences. But…photographs can reference, or substitute, through invoking equivalent memories."[59] Therefore, my argument is that perhaps a logical reading of Derges' and other cameraless practices is as a phenomenological study of the experience of landscape.

In making a parallel between Derges' work to Thomas Cooper's[60] monochrome photographs of the North Atlantic and Cornish coastlines, while expressed eloquently, I believe this fails to define Derges' work as fundamentally

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57 Wells, *Land Matters*, 296.
58 Wells, *Land Matters*, 297.
59 Ibid, 262.
60 Ibid, 293.

different to the other examples of landscape photography. Neither of the earlier categories of landscape proposed by Wells[61]—topography (observational) and composited imagery (drawing on personal experience)—sufficiently define *cameraless landscape* photography as a distinct practice exploring landscape intersubjectively. Wells' term 'compositing' does not fully account for cameraless processes. In my opinion, Wells' treatment of Derges is limited by neglecting the agency of place in cameraless works and how different this is to camera-based topography. However, Wells also highlights why Derges is important in my study, by drawing how an intimate experience of place is inherent in many cameraless landscape practices.

Writer Martin Barnes refers to Derges' interest in "the alchemist's imaginative involvement in the process of observation and exploration. This holistic fusing of observation and imagination"[62] can be made possible with cameraless photography. As Derges herself describes, "I wanted to visualise the idea of a threshold where one would be on the edge of two interconnected worlds: one an internal, imaginative or contemplative space and the other, an external, dynamic, magical world of nature."[63] It is by utilising the sensitivity of photographic materials, made explicit in her work, even in her later use of hybrid techniques, that Derges can make these links. The notion of alchemy brings a further dimension to consider, and is referred to frequently alongside cameraless art.

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61 Ibid, 264.

62 Martin Barnes, *Shadow Catchers: Camera-Less Photography*, 2nd ed. (London: Merril Publishers Ltd, 2012), 97.

63 Susan Derges interviewed by David Chandler, in "Susan Derges", exhib. cat., London, Purdy Hicks, June-July 2006, 7, cited in Barnes, *Shadow Catchers*, 97.

In writer-historian Geoffrey Batchen's seminal survey, ***Emanations: The Art of the Cameraless Photograph***[64], Derges' work is also compared with that of similarly-oriented artists, Roberto Huarcaya, Michael Flomen and Michael Snow. Batchen describes Derges' work as "allowing a conversation of dualities, including between self and other."[65] Derges' and these other such artists' works capture phenomena within a similar locus of enquiry to each other—one that allows conversation with the natural world. Martin Barnes describes this level of working as making links "between the physical world and the psyche."[66] In a personal communication with Barnes, Derges describes how

> working directly, without the camera, with just paper, subject matter and light, offers an opportunity to bridge the divide between self and other—or what is being explored. There is a contact with the materiality of things that allows a different kind of conversation to happen. One is changed and in turn changes—a kind of dialogue between inside and outside unfolds.[67]

What is being suggested here is that a re-insertion of the body in landscape can be evoked using the cameraless technique. Whereas a camera-based image tends to imply detachment, a cameraless image brings us closer to an experience that is both inner and outer. Such radically phenomenological research impulses are proposed as a defining factor for this particular type of practice, in which artists take 'raw' photographic materials into natural worlds, to disentangle experiential meanings and instigate haptic dialogues through cameraless images. However, I

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64 Geoffrey Batchen, *Emanations: The Art of the Cameraless Photograph* (New Plymouth, NZ: The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2016).
65 Batchen, *Emanations,* 40.
66 Barnes, *Shadow Catchers*, 97.
67 Barnes, *Shadow Catchers*, 98.

propose that these 'experiential' cameraless-practices lack clear definition within the research and methodological literature. My own cameraless practice sits alongside that of the artists mentioned above. However, through the context of my research, I aim to extend the cameraless into new areas and subject matter. In my opinion, cameraless images do more than *represent* experience of place through their *tangible connections* to it.

2.2 Contemporary cameraless explorations of place-experience

The following section will review the work of artists whose enquiries explore the phenomenology of landscape through cameraless photography. All of these artists conduct enquiries which exploit the photochemical sensitivities of raw photographic materials in ways which embody and question our perception of place. I propose that while the 'experience of place' is a useful broad brush to define certain enquiries, an engagement with landscape using cameraless techniques more specifically shifts focus to an alternative subjectivity. Rather than represent human-centred experience, these tactile-oriented images of the landscape activate the things, objects and artefacts located in a place and the 'processual register of experience' by putting agency into matter. Such approaches echo the post-phenomenology or non-representational theory developed largely through the writings of Nigel Thrift, which I discuss later in Chapter 3.[68] This development of phenomenology of place focuses on wider, more contextual issues, and considers place as process and encounter by

[68] Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theories* (London: Routledge, 2008).

expanding on human-centred approaches.[69] While I am not suggesting the following artists are consciously engaged in post-phenomenological practices, these concepts clearly resound with images which present a non-human centred view of place.

In 2014, Nicola Noemi Coppola travelled through Southern and Central Mexico, visiting many mineral-rich sites. While there, he placed various samples of rocks and soil on silver nitrate paper to induce a visible alchemical colouration of that paper. Coming from a scientific background, Coppola considers photographic materials as a means to generate representations of variations in the state of matter arising from contact between two or more elements. He presents his cameraless images as tools to represent invisible forces of matter, which inscribe the history of the landscape and "solidify the symbolic mark of society, and the voice of the environment that will never be silenced."[70] Coppola here makes reference to a more political aspect to the works, and the deep connections of indigenous peoples with the land and its minerals. Batchen describes Coppola's images as "bearing witness to native relationships to this land but also to the current exploitation of Mexico's natural resources."[71] Coppola's chemigrams are a melding of the scientific and photographic practice in every aspect of methodology and context. However, the outcomes are anything but scientific. His chemigrams are individually captioned as "emulsified fibre paper with silver nitrate

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69 Nima Talebian and Turkan Ulusu Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place: Moving Forward from Phenomenological to Post-Structural Readings of Place," *Open House International* 43, no. 2 (2018): 18.

70 "Nicola Noemi Coppola," Abstraction in Action, http://abstractioninaction.com/artists/nicola-noemi-coppola/

71 Batchen, ***Emanations***, 46.

exposed by contact to the salt of the landscape,"[72] yet we are left to speculate what is being represented as factual information, and led to marvel at the 'synergistic' states of matter—or the signification of matter—which these chemigrams represent. Like these chemigrams, his more recent works, using the wet collodion process, are also impermanent or unfixed images of clouds on layered glass, suggesting an interest in states of flux and fluidity. Coppola's *Quimiografia*[73] is relevant in that my own enquiry has made similar contact engagements with natural salts occurring in the landscape.

Coppola's enquiry reflects new materialist concerns relating to the human environment, and relates to the 'creative entanglements' of Tim Ingold. Specifically, Ingold discusses, in his essay expanding on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's ***A Thousand Plateaus***, how "materials of all sorts, with various and variable properties, and enlivened by the forces of the cosmos, mix and meld with one another in the generation of things."[74] Coppola's concerns echo many of these notions, as his works are appropriately illusive or fugitive, not fixed or inanimate; cameraless photographic materials are the medium to best express this materialist concept. To expand on Coppola's philosophical concerns, in "The Intertwining—The Chiasm" in ***The Visible and the Invisible***[75], Merleau-Ponty explores "the synaesthetic correspondence between visibility (or vision) and tangibility (or

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72 "Nicola Noemi Coppola," Abstraction in Action.

73 Nicola Noemi Coppola, "Quimiografia," *Abstraction in Action*, http://abstractioninaction.com/artists/nicola-noemi-coppola/attachment/getimage-18-2/#

74 Tim Ingold, "Bringing Things to Life: Material Flux and Creative Entanglements," in ***State of Flux: Aesthetics of Fluid Materials***, eds. Marcel Fink and Friedrich Weltzien (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag Gmbh, 2017), 21.

75 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm", in *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, ed. Claude Lefort (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 130-155.

touch)."[76] Coppola's work appears as chemical photographic imprint of this synaesthetic correspondence. Merleau-Ponty expands on this thought,

> we must *habituate* ourselves to think that every visible is cut out in the tangible, every tactile being in some manner promised to visibility, and that there is encroachment, infringement, not only between the touched and the touching, but also between the tangible and the visible, which is encrusted in it.[77]

Merleau-Ponty describes this confluence of the visual and the tactile senses as a relationship that he calls 'flesh', in which synaesthesia " 'is the rule'—because they are part of a bodily framework which is part of the world."[78] Coppola's inquiry involves the political exploration of 'invisible' cultural and environmental phenomena that lie hidden within the visible, and he uses the photogram as a way of revealing and drawing attention to both the existence of, and threat to, these phenomena.

Michael Flomen has for many years made intimate links to the natural history of place, producing photograms in the landscape that have involved fireflies, a response to the 2011 Fukishima plant accident, and recent work around fresh water lakes, such as ***Waterworld No. 32***[79] (see fig. 11, below). Flomen allows the water of the lakes and his own body to play a part or effect the images, rather than

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76 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm", in Clive Cazeaux, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty", in ***The Continental Aesthetics Reader*** (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 453.

77 Merleau-Ponty, ***The Visible and the Invisible***, 134.

78 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Phenomenology of Perception", in Clive Cazeaux, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty", in ***The Continental Aesthetics Reader*** (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 453.

79 Michael Flomen, ***Waterworld No. 32***, 2018, unique photogram, 112 x 117 cm, http://michael-flomen.squarespace.com/2019/6/16/water-world-number-32-2018

Figure 11. Michael Flomen, *Waterworld No. 32* (2018).

find ways of avoiding the marks left by staining or other forms of chemical contact. In a personal correspondence with Flomen, he described his process:

> For the Water World photograms, I immersed the photographic paper vertically into a lake. I exposed the paper through the lake water as I dove underwater. The resultant image is a portrait of the water, my energy, weather, and the pollution and energy of the natural elements at the time of exposure. The prints are unique. All of my cameraless work is done under the cover of darkness.[80]

[80] Michael Flomen, email to author, August 11, 2020.

Flomen takes his raw photographic materials into nature in the dark "seeking a photographic collaboration with elements of the natural world…capturing phenomena like snow and wind directly on light-sensitive sheets of film or paper."[81] While his use of the term 'collaboration' could be challenged, as nature plays a passive role, Flomen's recent artwork has evolved to record his own performance or presence immersed in, and physically wrestling with, the Canadian landscape. Cameraless photography allows this intersubjective temporal experience to be captured in all the varying tones of liquidity and tactile surface marks registered during each exposure.

Similarly, Klea McKenna's work is founded in the ways that light-sensitive paper can embody the senses of touch and vision as they interpose with the landscape and natural phenomena. Like many of the artists discussed above, McKenna works with light, chemicals and paper; foregoing the more mechanical aspects of photography, yet producing highly resolved photographic images that reference location through elemental form and colour. Using a range of analogue techniques, including pinhole cameras and outdoor photograms, she searches for images that are less predictable than lens-based images. Bringing a sculptural quality to photography by folding or hand-embossing photosensitive paper over surfaces such as tree stumps or fissures in rocks, *Automatic Earth*[82] (see fig. 12, below) is an exemplary example of this method. Her overriding context is the profound role of light and touch in the bodily experience of landscape, and how

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81 Batchen, ***Emanations***, 41.

82 Klea McKenna, *Automatic Earth*, 2017, gelatin silver photograms, 60 x 60 cm, www.kleamckenna.com/AUTOMATIC-EARTH

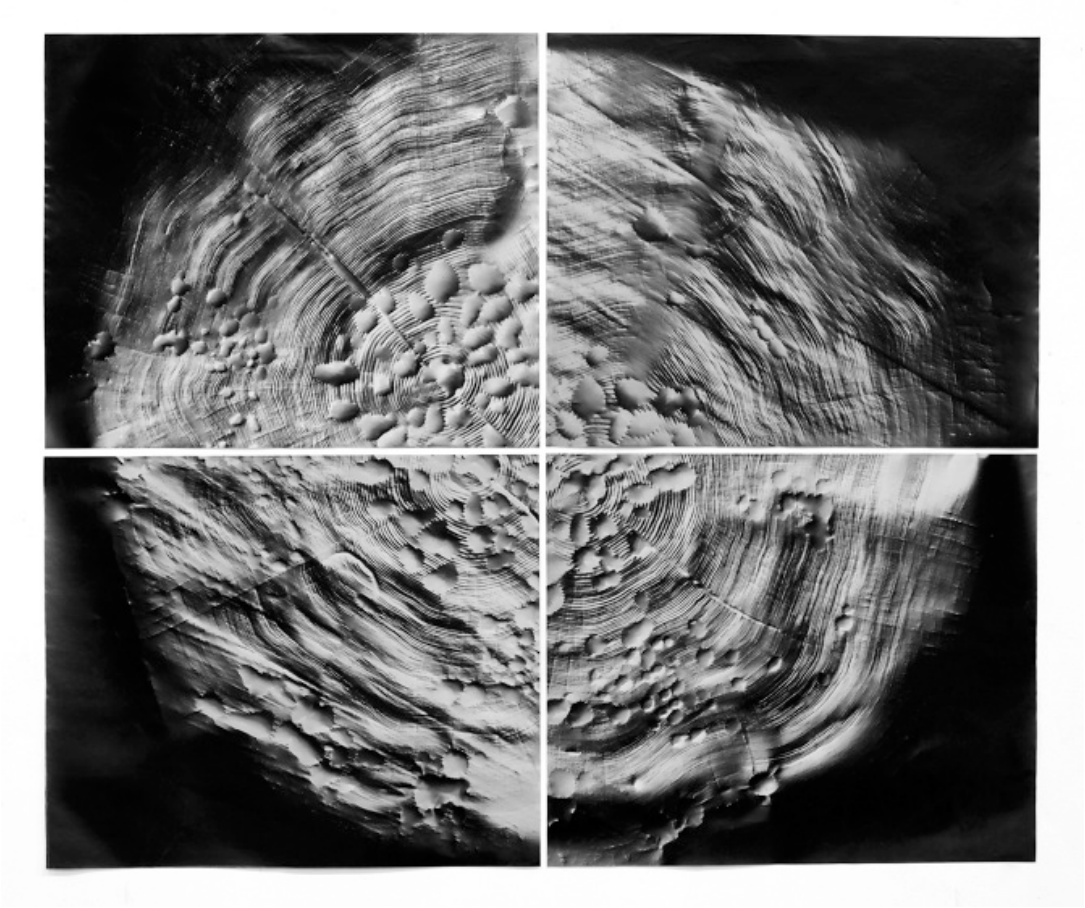

Figure 12. Klea McKennna, *Automatic Earth* (2017).

this is made apparent through the materials of photography. In these hand-embossed images, she uses raking light to reveal texture. Choosing landscapes that have a personal significance or that "mark a collective history," her aim is to "make the materials interact with the place, to figure out ways to make the landscape imprint on my materials. I'm trying to orchestrate an interaction."[83]

[83] Klea McKenna, "Contact: Direct Reflections of Landscape," interview by Alexander Strecker, n.d., https://www.lensculture.com/articles/klea-mckenna-contact-direct-reflections-of-landscape

Nevertheless, she insists that her method is a deeply photographic observation of that place and of nature.

By coming into direct contact with a landscape and producing work that is a result of direct contact with it, McKenna's approach could be seen as a response to the ecological philosophy of David Abram. Abram builds on Husserl's, Bachelard's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology towards "understanding the strange difference between the experienced world, or worlds of indigenous, vernacular cultures, and the world of modern European and North American civilization."[84] Abram, as a contemporary ecological thinker, calls upon phenomenology for its questioning of the modern assumption of a single objective reality. Abram looks to reacquaint us to the sensuous landscape, with which we have lost touch. It is the 'direct sensuous reality' of the 'life-world' that McKenna ventures into as a photographer or an artist armed with materials, responding directly to this reality through chemistry and light.

Moving away from landscape, more recently in her *Generation* series,[85] McKenna combines her embossing cameraless technique with textiles; the antique remnants of silk Spanish piano shawls or *manton de Manila*, "objects that carry a rich legacy of touch—from the labour of their making to signs of wear."[86] The inscription of the wearers of the garments into the textiles is translated with unusual detail into her photograms through pressure, and by a compulsion to

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84 David Abram, ***The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*** (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1996), 31.

85 Klea McKenna, *Generation*, 2019, gelatin silver photograms, various sizes, https://www.kleamckenna.com/GENERATION

86 "Generation", Klea McKenna, https://www.kleamckenna.com/GENERATION

communicate in a tactile way with women from a different time than her own. Again, McKenna is driven by the embodied experiencing 'self' that defined Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. McKenna's photographic embossing of these shawls are in effect imprints of the "living, attentive body—which Merleau-Ponty called the 'body subject';"[87] and both the shawls and her photographic works are acknowledgements of the life of the body, of its physical form, and of its existence. These later works are examples of how the metaphorical may merge with the documentarist camp, telling the story of the Spanish shawls, their makers and their wearers. Similar to Anne Ferran's photograms of antique feminine garments,[88] McKenna attempts to close the gap in time by showing us a synergy of tactile and visual phenomena, where the existence and absence of the referent is confirmed by haptic visuality, or in other words, the visible and ***tactile*** traces of a photographic referent.

While McKenna's work investigates the presence and absence of the referent, the works of Australian artist Justine Varga are about the body and its absence, experience of place, and the passage of time in an inhabited place. Her images are not made using conventional photographic processes, but with an accumulation of marks upon a photographic object. As such, Varga's work is generative rather than representational. Her images are a form of chemigram on colour sheet film, which is then used to produce a colour print. These works are closely related to my own practice in technique, and to a degree in some conceptual capacity, sharing concerns with the evocation and embodiment of place, light and photographic

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87 Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 46.

88 Anne Ferran, *Untitled (Christening Robe)*, 2001, unique gelatin silver photogram, 125 x 98.5cm, Sutton Gallery Melbourne, www.suttongallery.com.au/artists/anne-ferran/

materiality. Nevertheless, our practices differ in context. "Each frame [of Varga's work] operates as a drawing or test, as a provocation that solicits the participation of worldly forces in her image-making,"[89] echoing ideas of writing or drawing in Fox-Talbot's early conception of photography. At the same time, Varga synthesises this concept through late twentieth century conceptual use of photography as an autobiographical tool, "encircling the mark-making potential of qualities and substances enlisted from her immediate environment, the activities of multiple scales of life can be co-opted into the body of a single image,"[90] in the mode that Bernadette Mayer's *Memory*[91] investigates the surfaces, textures and materials of memory in written, photographic and audio recordings.

New Zealand photographer Anne Noble is renowned for her engagement with environmental issues and human relationships to land and place. Her work on honeybees and their global and historical relationship to people led to a series of experimental colour photograms of bee wings. Having been produced on film, Noble was able to enlarge the images to accentuate the subtle detail and fragility of the bees' wings pressed against the film's surface. The wings were taken from dead bees which had suffered the effects of pesticide poisoning. These images were exhibited as part of a series of installations called *No Vertical Song*[92]. The works function as an ode to the honeybee, again illustrating the depth and diversity of potential for photographic materials to convey meaning. Similarly, in

89 "Justine Varga, Memoire," Two Rooms, https://tworooms.co.nz/exhibitions/memoire/
90 Two Rooms, "Justine Varga, Memoire."
91 Bernadette Mayer, *Memory* (Plainfeild, Vermont, USA: North Atlantic Books, 1976).
92 Anne Noble, *No Vertical Song*, 2015, pigment print on archival paper, 91.5 x 116.5 cm, Two Rooms, Auckland, 28 May – 4 July, 2015, https://tworooms.co.nz/exhibitions/anne-noble-2/

Observations from the Critical Zone,[93] Noble employs the 'witnessing' material of photography in its raw state to interrogate the concept of tree communication by burying film under soil (see *Observations from the Critical Zone #2*[94], fig. 13, below). As Noble describes, she approaches this concept

> with the idea of tracing tree signatures—musing about the possibility of capturing some form of tree language through the conceit of burying a line of film—a medium receptive to the passage of time and chemical signatures—in the ground between two trees.[95]

Her pseudo-scientific application of the cameraless technique to record material traces, while drawing attention to an environmental issue of biodiversity loss, is a reoccurring cultural critique among many of these artists' enquiries.

Auckland-based artist Joyce Campbell also utilises a physical connection to process and material photographic practice in order to conduct pseudo-scientific investigations into the landscape. She often chooses 'anachronistic' photographic techniques such as daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and gelatin silver photograms. These methods are slow, procedural analogue processes that allow an involved engagement with the subject. By working within these parameters, Campbell acknowledges cultural histories, and highlights the 'act of making' in collaboration with landscape and people. Like my own practice, Campbell's images can be seen

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93 Anne Noble, *Observations from the Critical Zone*, Two Rooms, Auckland, 31 October – 30 November, 2019, https://tworooms.co.nz/exhibitions/observations-from-the-critical-zone/

94 Anne Noble, *Observations from the Critical Zone #2*, 2019, buried film, scanned and inkjet printed, Two Rooms, https://tworooms.co.nz/exhibitions/observations-from-the-critical-zone/

95 Anne Noble, "Observations from the Critical Zone," artist's statement (Auckland, New Zealand: Two Rooms Gallery, 2019).

as a conscious departure from the aestheticised picturing of landscape photography, towards a more interconnected relationship with place.

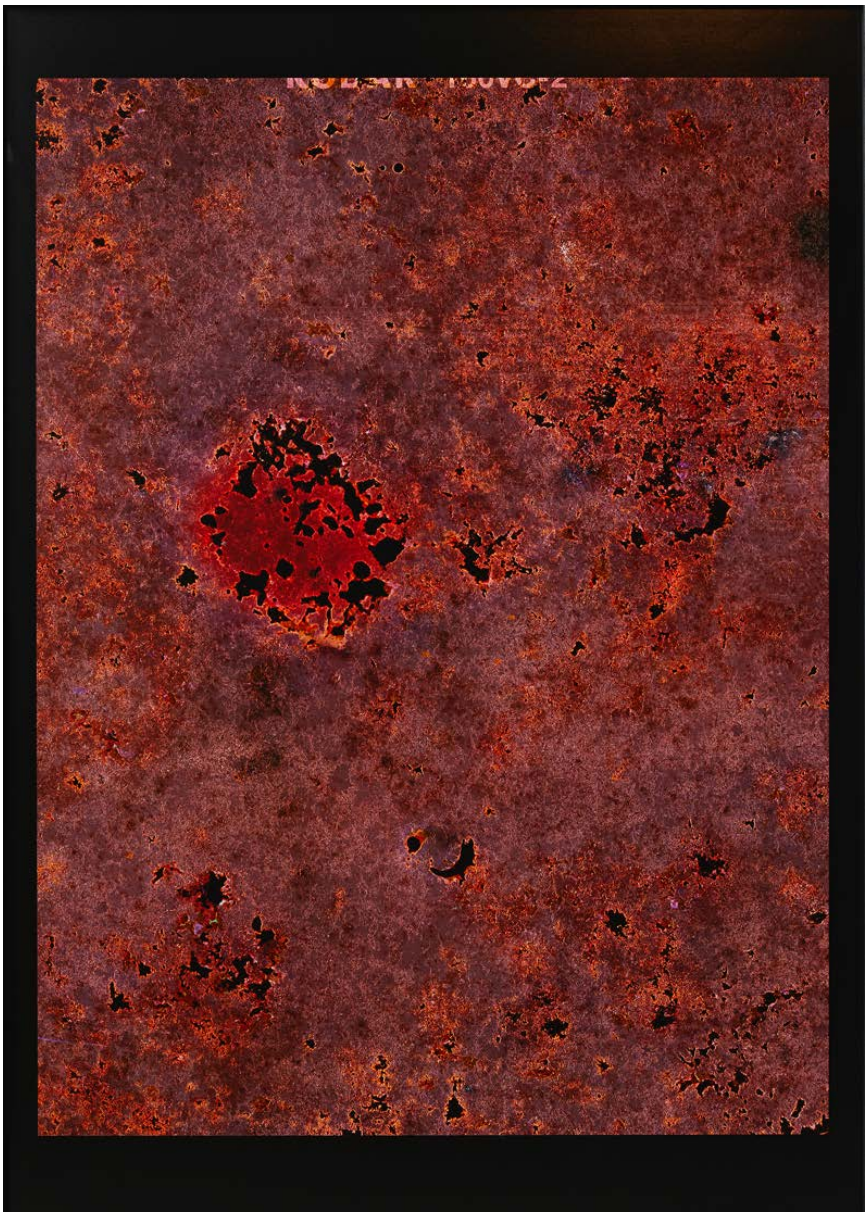

Figure 13. Anne Noble, *Observations from the Critical Zone #2* (2019).

2.3 Contemporary cameraless explorations of oceanic place-experience

Australian artist Dr. Harry Nankin also produced cameraless work in the landscape for his doctorate ***Gathering Shadows.***[96] An earlier body of work, ***The Wave,***[97] reflects Nankin's predominantly ecological enquiry using photography. ***The Wave*** is a project which sits in a similar context to my own research, as well as that of Huarcaya's and Riepenhoff's as mentioned earlier. Nankin describes his work as having been made on a 'raft,' which acted as a support for the paper and other objects placed upon it, on the beach during nocturnal exposures of incoming tides. His work also reflects a scrutiny of photography at the end of the 1990s, which "extend the materiality of the photograph by revealing sprocket holes and negative frames, by tearing photographic paper, printing on oversized sheets and allowing prints to hang freely against the gallery wall"[98]—something that can also be seen in the work of Fiona Hall and aforementioned Varga. Nankin does a similar thing in his use of rolls of paper stretched across a frame to make a large number (over 200) of cameraless images. The resulting installation of *The Wave*, which includes the 'raft' or frame, is part photographic and part sculpture. Nankin, who summarises his methodology as an antidote to a "culture dominated

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96 Harry Nankin, "Gathering Shadows: Landscape, Photography and the Ecological Gaze" (PhD, RMIT University, 2015).

97 Harry Nankin, *The Wave*, 1996-1997, toned gelatin silver fibre paper shadowgram, Melbourne, State Library of Victoria.
"The majority of artworks consist of images of ocean waves in motion, recorded on gelatin silver paper, which was lashed to the raft and immersed in the sea, and then exposed to moonlight and artificial flash. The resulting images are exquisitely detailed, life-scale shadowgrams of churning seawater, foam, kelp, detritus and sub-marine light refraction, overlain by the linear marks of marine cables that held the raft together, the imprint of paper enfolded by backwash, film negatives, handwritten texts and diagrams on acetate stapled or applied to the paper surface before submersion and various post-development chemical and penciled modifications." "The Wave," Harry Nankin, https://harrynankin.com/artwork/the-wave/

98 Claire Williamson, "Mirrors and Windows," *Art Monthly* 124, October (1999): 4-7.

by anthropocentric hubris,"[99] instead critiques this assumption with an ecological emphasis drawing attention to natural phenomena and nature's ongoing struggle with the human centric subject. His work can be seen as a defamiliarisation of that hubristic image of landscape. My own research framework likewise avoids an anthropocentric perspective, to foreground the agency of human and non-human aspects of place, using the haptic defamiliarising qualities of cameraless photography to do this.

Roberto Huarcaya is a Peruvian photographer whose work is also grounded deeply in a social and political conscience and commentary in his country. Through numerous projects, he has sought to "pursue the definition of visual devices that transform his reading [of,] and allow open and critical experimentation with, the generation of signs and symbols."[100] His work is also a critique of photography's role in the critical theory of art and art history. He has, for example, used photographic sequences as a means to explore these visual devices. Huarcaya's photo-documentary of a mental asylum in the 1990s in Lima, *The Ship of Oblivion* (Lima, 1996, Paris, 1997 and Barcelona, 1998), among other bodies of work, and his critical approach to documentary subject matter, has evolved into his ***Andegramas*** and ***Amazogramas***, which photographically engage with two aspects of Peruvian cultural identity, the Andes and the Amazon. When he turned his attention to cameraless photography, he did so conceptually with what he identifies as 'frames'. These frames are a critical revisualisation of the notion of the frame in the early twentieth century European historical avant-garde, in which

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99 Harry Nankin, "The Wave," https://harrynankin.com/artwork/the-wave/

100 Jorge Villacorta Chávez, "Roberto Huarcaya: Political Sightings in a Photographic Process," Arte Aldia, 2014, www.artealdia.com/International/Contents/Artists/Roberto_Huarcaya

members made a critical use of the frame. In Huarcaya's photograms, he often uses a roll of photographic paper, several meters long and a meter or more deep, as one frame. Jacques Derrida describes the pictorial space and its edges in empirical perceptual terms, as defining the picture itself or indicating where the world outside the picture begins. The frame's symbolic importance is furthermore described by Georg Simmel, who claims that it is included in the aesthetic whole of the artwork, and therefore,

> what the frame achieves for the work of art is to symbolise and strengthen this double function of its boundary. It excludes all that surrounds it, and thus the viewer as well, from the work of art, and thereby helps to place it at that distance from which alone it is aesthetically enjoyable.[101]

Paul Crowther analyses the way pictorial space "intervenes on perception"[102] by immobilising a represented subject and setting it aside so that "subject matter is referred to, but is also, in symbolic terms as it were, 'bracketed off' from the phenomenal flow of real time."[103] Huarcaya's images, while lacking frames around them, are real frames in themselves, and subsequently challenge the notion of the separation of real-space from viewed pictorial space. This is further complicated by the material contact made between real-space and framed/pictorial space as an inherent aspect of Huarcaya's cameraless practice, as discussed.

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101 Paul Crowther, ***Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (Even the Frame)*** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 59.

102 Crowther, *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts*, 43.

103 Crowther, *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts*, 43.

In *Amazogramas*[104], Huarcaya uses the photographic ground as a physical witnessing device without a 'distancing' lens, 'bearing evidence' through direct contact with the 'territory' of the Amazon Rainforest in Peru, to highlight the eco-political situation of that region. His cameraless photography method involves carrying suitably large-scale rolls of unexposed paper into the enormity of the Amazon rain forest, unrolling the entire roll of photographic paper, and exposing the paper (with flash and moonlight) to whole sections of the forest. In one 'frame', Huarcaya and his assistants exposed the trunk of a tree, which was on the forest floor, rolling the tree onto the paper during a lightning storm, to make one massive image as a testament to the monumental scale and materiality of the forest.

Huarcaya's work is not only a political act—by visualising the trouble in this region—but also reveals the "spectral impact that these shreds of 'jungle' can have without colour"[105]; their monochromatic phantasmagorical presence and haptic means of production makes critical use of these 'frames' in a way that only cameraless photography can do. Cameraless photography is unique in this sense, because when applied to such a subject, not only is it different to the optically-mediated and perspectival distancing of lens-based photography, precisely because it touches and is touched by the material of the referent, it is also because there is a direct correlation of scale, that is, 1:1 scale. The negative image created by the referent's interception of light echoes the indexicality of the negative/positive system in camera imagery—in which light is reflected from the

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104 "Robeto Huarcaya: Amazogramas," Dina Mitrani Art Gallery, http://www.dinamitranigallery.com/roberto-huarcaya-1

105 Villacorta Chávez, "Roberto Huarcaya: Political Sightings."

field of vision and darkens a light-sensitive emulsion, thus creating a reversal of tones, or negative, from which a positive print can be made. In both cases, with and without a camera, light indicates the presence of the referent. A cameraless image indicates additionally that tactile contact with the referent occurred in concert with the reception of light.

In ***Andegramas,*** a series of photograms were created in collaboration with the children of Cusco, Peru, who appear on eighteen meter-long panels, as part of a six-day photography workshop. The thirty-six children were all wearing traditional clothes of the region. ***Andegramas***, and Huarcaya's series ***Oceanos***[106] (see fig. 14 below) and ***Q'eros***, also apply the same scale of image to respond to culturally threatened aspects of his native country. All these projects—but especially the cameraless series—directly and physically engage with cultural aspects of the landscape. Furthermore, the photographic frame is critically employed through scale, format and methods of production, including collaboration and technique. The cameraless images in particular record the phenomena of the land, the sea and the people through the tactile and photochemical nature of the photogram.

In a recent correspondence with Huarcaya, he confirmed to me how he works:

> With a group of friends at night we stand where the waves break, waiting for the waves to hit the paper and at that moment I shoot the flash. The wave breaks [on] the paper, then [I] have to go looking for it.... [After this,] I go to a tent lab to

[106] Roberto Huarcaya, *Oceanos*, 2019, series of two photograms, 500 x 108 cm, https://robertohuarcaya.com/mares

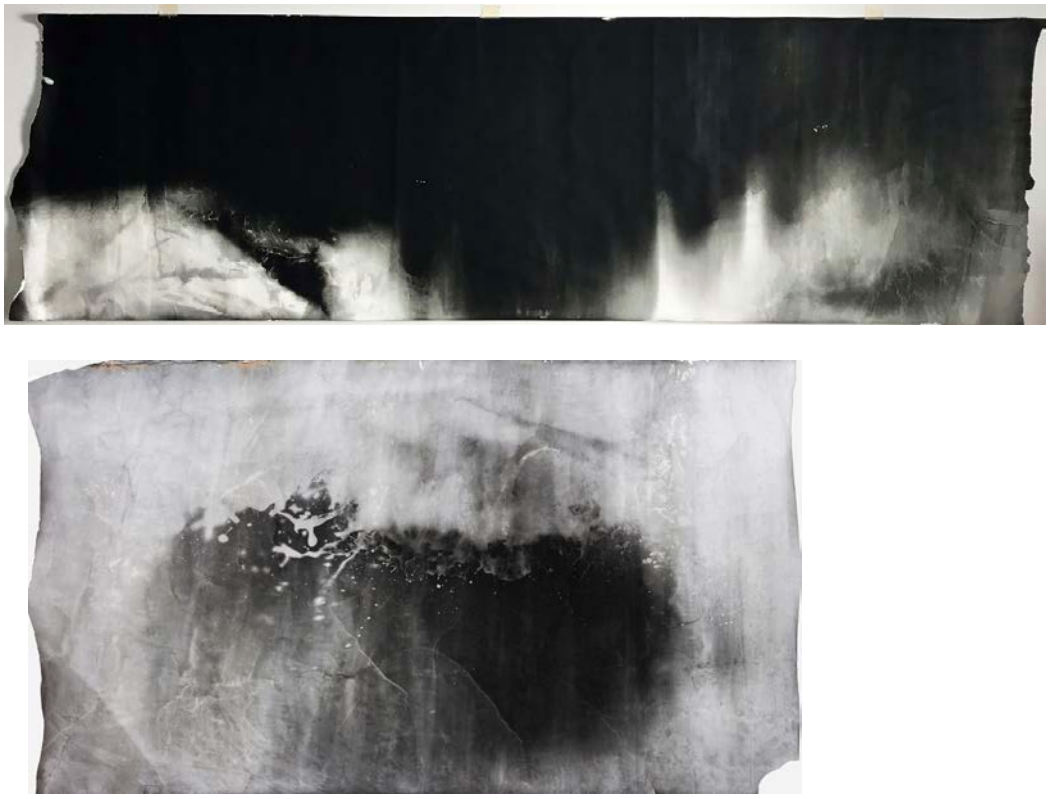

Figure 14. Roberto Huarcaya, *Oceanos* (2019).

> reveal it. In addition, the photographic chemicals are mixed with seawater, this materially give[s] a very particular finish to the texture of the matte paper.[107]

In his more recent work, his family helps him on the beach to collect and place "garbage directly on the surface of the colour paper.... [We] wait approximately half an hour so that the garbage and the sea water impregnate the colour paper."[108] Although stemming from a documentarist background, Huarcaya brings his cameraless materials into contact with objects, people and sites containing

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107 Roberto Huarcaya, email to author, August 30, 2020.
108 Roberto Huarcaya, email to author, August 30, 2020.

powerful metaphor/allegory for cultural and social consideration. He utilises the anti-distancing properties of cameraless imagery as a means of questioning and politicising the relationship between Peruvian culture, and its historical roots in the landscape and coastline.

Meghann Riepenhoff also works directly on the beach, using cyanotype on paper as "an investigation into impermanence. I also wanted to push back against the idea of the archival image, something that seems to imply that photography is exempt from the very nature of life itself, which is change…"[109] Her choice and application of materials and processes are integral to understanding the recurring concern of direct connection. Her use of cyanotypes incorporates changing colours and tones as a processual factor of this photochemical technique. The viewing experience includes detailed information in titles that specify date and location, for example, the durational piece, ***Tidal Chart V: Daily NOAA Tide Predictions, Half Moon Bay, CA 07.10.20 - 11.29.20***,[110] is placed outside where the atmosphere continually alters the work. Another example is shown below, in figure 15.[111]

Riepenhoff and Huarcaya both work with the ocean and its action, at the coast or beach. While fundamentally related to my work, all the above artists are nevertheless making enquiries ***from*** the land; even Riepenhoff's and Huarcaya's

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109 Sophie Wright, "Littoral Drift," Lens Culture, https://www.lensculture.com/articles/meghann-riepenhoff-littoral-drift#slideshow.

110 Sophie Wright, "Littoral Drift."

111 Megann Riepenhoff, ***Littoral Drift Continuum #13 (Three Moments in Forty-eight Hours, Rodeo Beach, CA 07.21.13, One Wave, Poured)***, 2013, archival pigment print of re-photographed unique cyanotype, 40.64 x 93.98 cm, https://www.lensculture.com/articles/meghann-riepenhoff-littoral-drift#slid

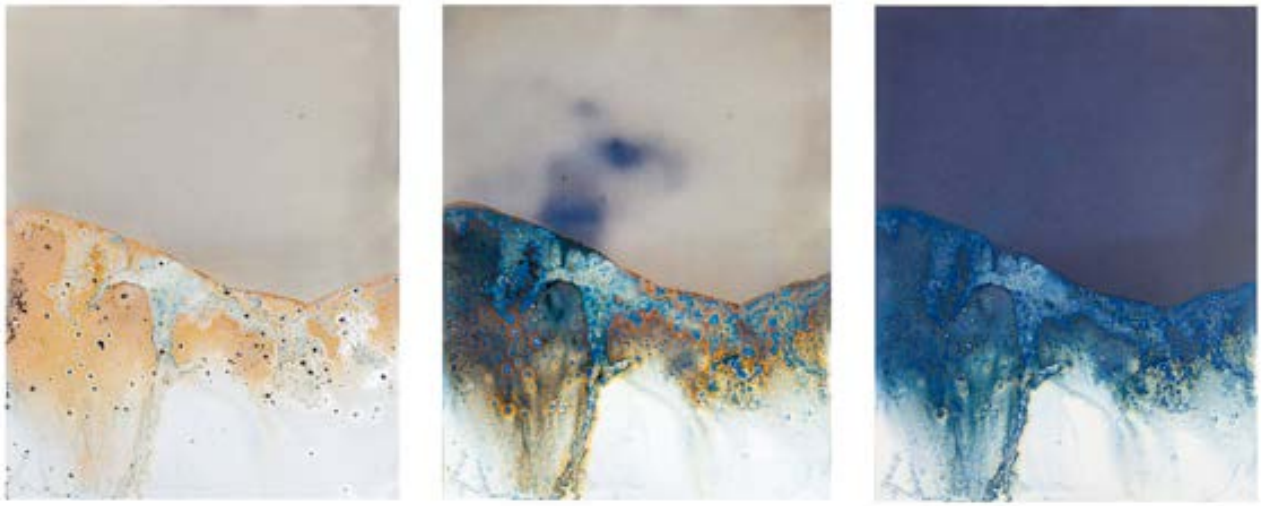

Figure 15. Meghann Riepenhoff, *Littoral Drift Continuum #13 (Three Moments in Forty-eight Hours, Rodeo Beach, CA 07.21.13, One Wave, Poured)* (2013).

projects are beach- or surf-based explorations of the ocean's edge as a place. For my own enquiry to go further than these existing studies, it was necessary to make work which considered these ideas of process and encounter *from* the sea. This contextual link is developed through the theoretical concepts, and methodological concerns of my research and discussed in depth in chapters 3 and 4 of this exegesis.

2.4 My departure from previous enquiries

There are many ways of thinking about the ocean, in terms of proximity and physical engagement with the sea. Living on a boat provides different opportunities to study experiences of inhabiting, working, sleeping and being generally immersed in the sea's phenomena. Living in a boat allows me to develop a familiarity and knowledge of tidal activity and wave dynamics of the sea—something I allude later in section 2.8 (*The sea is not just wet*). These things are felt through my habitation of the boat on the water night and day. For instance, the boat's movement on the sea is continual, even if moored to the floating pontoon in the marina, rising and falling through nearly two metres on the tide twice a day. At anchor, movement is greater still as the boat travels through the scope and catenary of its anchor chain length, propelled by the winds and currents. The sea and everything in it flows past the hull continually while the wind carries salt-spray beyond that surface. Equally, the boat has its own objects and qualities of agency—displacement, electricity, materials and chemical reactions with the sea—constitutional in the phenomena of its location.

In terms of making cameraless work, many of these factors create opportunities not available to the artist working from the fixed position of the shoreline. For instance, water and waves behave differently around a boat than waves that break or surge onto the beach, as they also do around other structures. The boat moves with the water, as it lies in the water, above it and below it. Above the waterline, the sea continues to extend itself, onto and into things such as sail cloth or rope. This presents a set of key potentialities for my study which differ from previous enquiries. The concept of the sea's phenomena extending into the materiality and experience of inhabited place can be interpreted through contact with the chemical and tactile properties of cameraless photography.

Similar to the closely-related cameraless artists discussed above, my study exploits the sensitivity of cameraless techniques to access the agency of objects, things and encounters, in places where the processual notion of experience and materiality occur. In contrast to these other enquiries, the phenomenological place of my study has contextual dynamics where human encounter with the ocean has a sound socio-cultural and autobiographical resonance. Detailed aspects of artists' works, shown in figures 11 to 15, also bear traces of this 'onflow' of everyday life and the body's co-evolution with things,[112] in the form of the artists' hand and fingerprints, or the creased and watermarked paper—also autobiographical, as has been described. What differs from their works emanates from the dynamics of my site of production. The man-made marine structure is an inhabited place, on the sea, and experienced as a merged network of human and oceanic things.

My research also responds to the motion of the sea, the body of the artist, and in addition, the merging of these things or encounters around an interstitial floating maritime structure. These unique site dynamics increase levels of visual and tactile activity, which can be responded to with my cameraless technique. My study can be best understood as a cameraless post-phenomenology of place, which goes beyond the "reduction of place to mere social construct by de-centerizing human being's intentionality and putting emphasis on the role of technology, things, artifacts and activating 'materiality' in the place-experience."[113] As a result of early experimentation, it was expected, for instance, that materials such as steel and salt would leave marks and discolouration—perhaps reacting

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112 Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theories* (London: Routledge, 2008), 10.

113 Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place": 20.

with silver salts in the emulsion. This proved to be the case, as did the appearance of marking from other boat-related surfaces and their environmental coatings. The structure of my site also provided an opportunity to make works of longer exposure duration and processual immersion in the oceanic space of the vessel. These aspects of image-making are different on a boat because the seaborne structure, and everything on it, is subject to the hydro-dynamics of the sea. These dynamics, not limited to motion, are necessarily implicated in the processes, method and production of making photographic images in this context. In short, making cameraless photographic images while on the sea, is a practice undoubtedly affected by the sea's fluid dynamics and other maritime factors not present at, for instance, a beach.

2.5 Rethinking the maritime quotidian

The ship and its maritime presence is ubiquitous in most cultures and has been since ancient times. This is not surprising, understanding that port cities make up more than two-thirds of the globe's biggest urban centres. Almost ninety percent of merchandise trade today is transported by sea, touching thousands of ports and reaching through them to inland territories.[114] Cultural links between land and sea have become more invisible through containerisation and decentralisation of commercial activity, away from the wharf area of typical modern ports. In my opinion, a social disconnection with modern shipping and maritime transportation of goods and people has increased the sense of dismissal of the sea as an

[114] "Ports and Global Cities: What Future?" Italian Institute for International Political Studies, 2021, https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/ports-and-global-cities-what-future-29829

inhabited place of interest. The world of commercial shipping is characterised by human marginalisation within global transport systems and invisible maritime economies, generating a common belief in which the maritime world and the sea itself is somehow seen as obsolete.

Phillip Steinberg describes this activity of the ocean, experienced in the maritime or other, as being "reduced to a set of vectors that cycle in endless monotony, a space with neither a history nor a geography."[115] For Michel Serres, the monotony of waves or *belle noiseuse*, a nautical murmur, "is…a matter of being itself. It settles in subjects as well as objects, in hearing as well as in space, in the observers as well as in the observed," and in doing so, the belle noiseuse reveals its own apparent mystery. The lived-experience of being at sea, as opposed to the 'terro-centric' side of the argument, is the one to which my research turns.

From a phenomenological point of view, the boat at sea is an environment in which we become aware of the relationship between the senses of touch and vision more profoundly. We feel the sea's motion through the boat and through our bodies. The sea gets onto our skin but also into us; we taste the saltiness like tears, it stings the eyes and splits the lips. The boat's exterior, like a body, touches the sea wherever it sails to, carrying and transferring materialities of worlds between worlds.

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[115] Philip Steinberg, ***Free Sea***, quoted in Philip Steinberg and Kimberley Peters, "Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33 (2015): 249.

Looking at the maritime anew, the cameraless technique exploits the photo-chemical and haptic nature of photography, as it is brought into contact with worlds and objects of physical and chemical properties. Cameraless photography provides a co-composition of visual and tactile reaction to quotidian maritime 'assemblages' and the possibility for an ecstatic-aesthetic experience.[116]

To make some sense of how boats resonate as spaces, I will refer to a comparison made between two literary maritime vessels in Barthes' ***Mythologies.***[117] The first is Jules Verne's fictional ship *Nautilus*, in ***Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*** (1870); the second is from Arthur Rimbaud's poem, ***Le Bateau ivre*** (*Drunken Boat*) (1871). Barthes' short essay first condenses the premise of a third novel by Verne, ***L'Ile mystérieuse*** (*The Mysterious Island*) (1874), a sequel to ***Twenty Thousand Leagues,***

> in which the man-child re-invents the world, fills it, closes it, shuts himself up in it, and crowns his encyclopaedic effort with the bourgeois posture of appropriation: slippers, pipe and fireside, while outside the storm, that is, the infinite, rages in vain."[118]

Here, Barthes sharply summarises Verne's extravagantly dense plot in ***L'Ile mystérieuse***, while satirising Verne's tendency to add more and more humanistic details to his fictional maritime worlds. Barthes illustrates how the archetypal

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116 Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian: Phenomenological Sightings in Modern Art and Literature* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007). 'Ecstasis' is the Greek spelling of the word ecstasy meaning 'to step outside of or transcend (oneself), mainly relating to mysticism. Gosetti-Ferencei extends this term to include phenomenological ecstatic considerations of the 'everyday' in certain poetry and modern art painting.

117 Roland Barthes, "The Nautilus and the Drunken Boat," in ***Mythologies*** (London: Vintage, 1993), 65-67.

118 Barthes, "The Nautilus and the Drunken Boat," 65.

quotidian image of the ship is one of closure rather than adventure, "which one also finds in children's passion for huts and tents: to enclose oneself and to settle, such is the existential dream of childhood and of Verne."[119] Such images are distinctly reminiscent of Foucault's image of the ship as heterotopia[120], but more importantly, presents a quotidian image for my research to challenge or break.

It is not until the final few sentences of his essay that Barthes contrasts this seafaring 'mythology'—the desire to enclose oneself in a den filled with the objects of humanity—with Rimbaud's image of an abandoned ship drifting freely on, and finally succumbing to, the ocean. In defining the origin of Rimbaud's ***Drunken Boat***, without the controlling and possessive control of man, "the ship is no longer a box, a habitat, an object that is owned; it becomes a travelling eye, which comes close to the infinite…freed from its concavity."[121] Barthes describes succinctly how Rimbaud, perhaps inspired by his contemporary Verne, poetically inverts the mythology of the ship. Liberated from the banality of control, the ship becomes the vessel of poetic-ecstasis, going far beyond the mariner's experience of the ocean:

> I know the skies bursting with lightning, and the waterspouts
> And the surf and the currents; I know the evening,
> And dawn as exalted as a flock of doves
> And at times I have seen what man thought he saw![122]

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119 Barthes, "The Nautilus and the Drunken Boat," 65.

120 Michel Foucault, "Des Espace Autres," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, October (1984): 46-49.

121 Barthes, "The Nautilus and the Drunken Boat," 67.

122 Arthur Rimbaud, *A Season in Hell and the Drunken Boat*, trans. Louise Varèse (New York: New Directions, 1961), 14.

Finally, giving in to the attentions of the ocean as if overwhelmed by a sheer wonder for the world, Barthes ultimately proposes that only in Rimbaud's drunken boat, may we "proceed from a psycho-analysis of the cave to genuine poetics of exploration."[123]

Barthes draws our attention to the possibility of a more genuine poetics of the 'ship' or the maritime and its relation to exploration. This is a poetics that looks outwards rather than closing in on itself. In Michel Foucault's boat, a "heterotopia par excellence,"[124] while setting sail with a flag of the imagination, is always weighed down by socio-political ballast and the trafficking of its sordid cultural cargo.[125] While myth is undeniably supported by history, Foucault suggests "in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates."[126] Evidently, for Foucault, and perhaps Barthes too, if we lose sight of the imagination and the desire to go beyond the familiar, we allow systems of control to take over and we ultimately lose sight of hope.

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123 Barthes, "The Nautilus and the Drunken Boat," 67.

124 Michel Foucault, "Des Espace Autres," 49.

125 Michel Foucault, "Des Espace Autres," 49. Towards the end of this essay, Foucault concludes that "Brothels and colonies are two extreme types of heterotopia, and if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence."

126 Ibid., 49.

In confession, there is definitely an aspect of the cubby-hole about being on, and especially living aboard, a sailing boat. It is our home after all, and it is natural to turn it into a cave and a habitat. In contrast, the locus of my research looks outward rather than inward—more *Drunken Boat* than *Nautilus*—from the decks, hull and waterline. In order to do this, I must step outside the cosiness of the cabin and into the night (and into the raging storm on occasion) with an armful of photochemistry, in order to break the quotidian maritime image.

2.6 Stepping outside the quotidian image of the sea

In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes' makes the emphatic note that, "in a single day how many non-signifying fields do we cross? Very few, sometimes none. Here I am, before the sea; it is true that it bears no message. But on the beach, what material for semiology!"[127] This kind of dismissal of the oceanic is brought to our attention in *Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume and Through Oceanic Thinking*[128], which surveys a range of theory and writers, citing the anthropological writings of Claude Lévi-Strauss, the political theory of Carl Schmitt and the semiological musings of Roland Barthes. For Lévi-Strauss, the ocean is 'a diluted landscape'; while Schmitt muses, "on the waves there is nothing but waves" and "to imagine a 'maritime globe' would be strange, indeed."[129] These terrestrial denigrations of the ocean serve to point toward a paradox where the ocean is

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127 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, 112.

128 Philip Steinberg and Kimberley Peters, "Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33 (2015): 247–64.

129 Carl Schmitt, "Carl Schmitt's Land and Sea, Part 1," Counter-Currents, 2011, https://counter-currents.com/2011/03/carl-schmitts-land-sea-part-1/

simultaneously mundane and yet somehow mysterious. Is the shoreline where life and semiology really ends? Are there only waves and more waves? What about the maritime world? After all, it *is* a maritime globe. Do we need to rethink the sea and its meanings through an alternative subjectivity? Perhaps the everydayness of the maritime harbours a latent ecstasis, allowing for a deeper understanding of ocean and maritime poetics? Could cameraless images be a defamiliarising window of access to the maritime interface?

The reflexive 'jolt' that we experience when viewing a cameraless image, at the very least, can offer us a transformed and hopefully expanded perception of the recognised world. This jolting of a subjective/objective viewpoint, as an aesthetic methodology, mirrors the "ecstatic-aesthetic"[130] in phenomenology's methods of studying quotidian life—by "stepping outside or 'ecstasis' of the ordinary feeling of the self's familiarity with the world."[131] Cameraless photographs place the viewer on the other side of the subject as a matter of process, forcing the viewer to consider another subjectivity to their own familiar experience. As a modernist enquiry, intensifying and defamiliarising of the 'everyday' can be expressed in poetic and aesthetic interpretation. The ecstatic concept is grounded in post-Husserlian phenomenology. Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei identifies certain modernist aesthetics as harbouring latent ecstasis, and examines the poetics of artists and writers such as Benjamin, Paul Cézanne, Rainer Maria Rilke, Jean-Paul Sartre and Cy Twombly, among others. As Gosetti-Ferencei says of the poet Rilke, the notion of realisation reflects a shared creative objective "to bring the essence of things, not their ordinary aspect, to the reader's (intuitive) perception, an intuition that

130 Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian*.
131 Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian*, 1.

requires active engagement with the real within a departure from prosaic seeing."[132] Like many of these artists' and writers' enquiries, my research involves an intuitive, active engagement and reflection upon a quotidian world.

The everydayness of the maritime pervades terrestrial life, to such a degree that a study of it requires a disorientation from the ordinary representation of it. Examples of the maritime quotidian filter down through language and objects. These objects may only be seen in their essence when our perception of them is shifted or distorted in representation. This approach bears similarities to modern artists and writers such as Sartre, Charles Baudelaire, and Franz Kafka's attention to often domestic or urban situations, through which they "present the world with a defamiliarised perceptual eye, and ponder the experiential and ontological consequences of this estrangement."[133] In other words, the quotidian object, when removed from its usual state of being, informs our understanding of the structure of ordinary existence, which we would otherwise overlook. Only when familiarity is broken do we see the object, other than its function, which makes explicit the way that human existence is structured.

For artists and writers, the 'obtrusiveness' of objects can be communicated or provoked through estrangement, dislocation or distortion. Gosetti-Ferencei describes examples of this, including Salvador Dalí's treatment of everyday objects, subjected to absurd transformation. Similarly, Cy Twombly's abstract paintings of smudged paint and pencil scribbles are evocative and distorted presentations of the classroom and blackboard. Artworks such as this "force the

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132 Gosetti-Ferencei, ***The Ecstatic Quotidian***, 171.
133 Gosetti-Ferencei, ***The Ecstatic Quotidian***, 25.

reader or viewer to face this reality in isolation."[134] Gosetti-Ferencei might well have used cameraless artists and their works as examples of reflecting on the relationship between the obtrusiveness of things and the possibility of ecstasis. To follow the themes of her critique, if she had done, these examples may have been American/French artist Man Ray's ***Rayograph,***[135] a photogram of celluloid film rolls, Russian artist El Lissitzky's cameraless photograph involving a fountain pen, ink-bottle and stencilled lettering in ***Pelikan Tinte***,[136] Robert Heinecken's ***Untitled Lunch (Pasta Salad),***[137] and Anne Ferran's ***Untitled*** *(Christening Robe)*[138] photogram of an antique lace dress.

Equally, many more cameraless examples go beyond the domestic object as sites of everyday abstractions and distortions. These concerns are replicated in my own treatment of maritime things such as sails, rope and anchor chain, which as quotidian objects, appear as ghostly distortions of themselves. Cameraless engagements with these and other elemental phenomena, which are wholly aspects of the maritime experience, emphasise and activate 'materiality' in the process of place-experience. The touch-oriented and fetishistic power generated in such images helps to decentre the viewer's tendency towards intentionality or objective distancing. My images encompass a tangible material-oriented, maritime

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134 Gosetti-Ferencei, ***The Ecstatic Quotidian***, 29.

135 Man Ray, *Rayograph*, 1923, gelatin silver print, 23.7 x 18 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York, www.moma.org/collection/works46483?artsist

136 El Lissitzky, *Pelikan Tinte*, 1924, photomontage, 21 x 15 cm, www.christies.com/lot/lot-el-lissitzky-pelikan-tinte-photomontage-1924-5617463/?

137 Robert Heinecken, *Untitled Lunch (Pasta Salad)*, 1984, colour instant print (Polaroid), Museum of Modern Art, New York, www.moma.org/collection/works/47196

138 Anne Ferran, *Untitled (Christening Robe)*, 2001, unique gelatin silver photogram, 125 x 98.5 cm, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne, www.suttongallery.com.au/artists/anne-ferran/

place-experience and so promote a consideration of the process-driven essence of place and the re-situation of the human subject within this place-experience.

2.7 The phenomenology of photochemical media

Throughout this research I have encountered a puzzlement when describing how I value the analogue material outcome of my images. Increasingly, this convinces me to choose to resist their reproduction as digital outcomes, beyond digital copies for ease of documentation. There is always the idea that digitisation 'opens doors' of free interpretation or expression. This notion may have some truth in it, but I am also of the opinion that the new digital version would be of a different medium, and I am more concerned about what is lost than what is gained in that transformation. What is lost is also a contentious issue often countered by defensive claims to superior digital 'alternatives', which overwhelmingly favour visual over tactile processes. In my opinion, the loss is an easy one to define: a material ***process*** and not just the outcome or production. The material process is missing from the digital image in all ***but*** the aforementioned 'luminous imprint' as propagated by Barthes, and discussed below by Rosalind Krauss. While this is a crucial component of photography's indexicality, it refers only to the phenomenology of the photograph as a registration of light rather than the processes in development and printing a photograph. In addition, with digital image technology, the trend is seemingly towards the screen, widening this gap further. However, technological obsolescence is not an issue for this exegesis, whereas the evaluation of material process is.

Multimedia artist Tacita Dean uses a number of media in her work, including ink, chalk and graphite, and passionately campaigns to keep analogue

photographic technologies available. Dean's practice predominantly interrogates the medium of analogue film and other analogue media. In a discussion about Tacita Dean's ***FILM***,[139] Rosalind Krauss relates to Dean's ongoing championing of medium specificity, especially the specificity of analogue film, its preservation and projection. Krauss had also just published a book the same year titled ***Under Blue Cup***,[140] in which she explores the relationship between aesthetic media and memory.

In her introduction for ***Tate Talks***, Krauss illustrates Dean's artistic enquiry with one of Dean's earlier films made in 2001, titled ***The Green Ray***,[141] which encapsulates two key aspects of her practice: Dean's fascination with maritime themes, and her belief in the indexical nature and specific importance of analogue film and photography. While in Madagascar to watch an eclipse of the sun, Dean decided to capture the green flash which accompanies the last light of the setting sun as it dips below the horizon. The green ray phenomenon relies on a clear, unobscured horizon without distant clouds in order to provide a good chance of seeing the green part of the spectrum, as the sun's light bends beneath the horizon. As Dean describes it in ***Selected Writing***,

> sailors see them more than the rest of us, and they have come to signify for some the harbinger of great change or fortune in their lives. For years I have sought out the green ray, peering at horizons for that last fractional second of greenness, not

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139 Rosalind Krauss, "Rosalind Krauss on Tacita Dean's 'FILM' | Tate Talks," August 19, 2016, video, 1:02:18, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCU9CV7BAAk

140 Rosalind Krauss, *Under Blue Cup* (Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press. 2011).

141 Tacita Dean, *The Green Ray*, 2001, 16 mm film (colour, silent), 2 min, Museum of Modern Art, New York, www.moma.org/collection/works/110983

> knowing or daring to imagine how extravagant a green splash it might be, but never have I seen it.[142]

However, her faith in the existence of the ray, and in film's capacity to capture it, drove her to set up her camera alongside two other enthusiasts on the beach who neither saw nor captured the ray on their digital video cameras, claiming this as proof that Dean had not either. However, Dean's 'vigil' was rewarded

> when my film fragment was later processed in England, there unmistakably, defying solid representation on a single frame of celluloid, but existent in the fleeting movement of film frames, was the green ray, having proved itself too illusive for the pixellation of the digital world. So looking for the green ray became about the act of looking itself, about faith and belief in what you see. This film is a document; it has become about the very fabric, material and manufacture of film itself.[143]

As Krauss notes, Dean was asserting the "unimpeachable evidence held on the chemical emulsion"[144] of the film, and ultimately, the acknowledgement of what the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce called the index—to denote, a difference between the photographic and hand composed pictorial image. The index, Peirce argues, is a trace or phenomena of a sign, which in film and photography is causally registered in the same way that fingerprints are left at the scene of a crime. By contrast, the handcrafted or painted image is what Sanders Peirce calls 'iconic'.

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142 Tacita Dean, *Selected Writing and Complete Works and Filmography* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2018), 42.

143 Dean, *Selected Writing and Complete Works and Filmography*, 42.

144 Krauss, video.

As Krauss tells us, these iconic images "indicate that the relation they have to their referent is not causal but contrived. This is why Dean insists that analogue and digital are two different mediums, which is to say two different supports for the image, with a great chasm dividing them."[145] Dean acknowledges the materiality of film, something which can register the materiality of the world it depicts.

In a piece of writing titled ***The Flick***, Dean analyses her practice in terms of the material of film as one of her mediums as an artist. She explains how she still cuts and splices the film print as if it were her clay or paint, how she needs "the physical resistance of the material", and like analogue photography, "images are formed by light affecting the silver crystals in the emulsion, which becomes the grain in film."[146] Dean's anguish toward the "intentional mischaracterisation of film as merely technology"[147] is something that extends to photochemistry generally. It has been remarked that Dean's projects are filled with unconscious investigations that have drawn her to unlikely places, including ***FILM***, to which the Tate Talk was directed. As Dean herself says,

> FILM is a visual poem. I found its rhythm and metre from the material itself, relying not only on the images I had, but on what is normally considered as waste: the picture fading at the tail end of a roll, the shimmering metamorphosis of a colour filter change and the flash frames of over-exposure as the camera stops and

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145 Krauss, video.
146 Dean, ***Selected Writing***, 283.
147 Dean, *Selected Writing*, 285.

> starts. FILM is about film, and in the end, I let the material's intrinsic magic be my guide.[148]

This statement frames Krauss's arguments for the specificity of mediums, presented in the writings ***A Voyage on the North Sea***[149] and again in ***Under Blue Cup***. In ***FILM***, Dean uses medium specificity to

> figure forth the filmstrip itself as the material support for the image…. Dean is thereby figuring the specificity of film. By doing, so she runs against the current conviction that there is no 'itself' in which a medium of any kind can be specific.[150]

In ***Under Blue Cup***, Krauss offers comparisons with artists such as Ed Ruscha, William Kentridge and James Coleman who are deeply committed to medium-materiality; as well as to the medium's automatism, rules, aspects and uses to be discovered through the artist's hands-on experiments.

In my research, the specificity of analogue photographic materiality is an equally defining and instructive foundational consideration in many respects. For instance, in early experimental tests I explored how the reactive qualities of film and photographic paper were sensitive to marine and maritime surfaces. These findings led to further scrutiny of how these chemical and material sensitivities could eventually be engaged in a seaborne context. In short, there was never any doubt that the medium of photochemistry could relate specifically to the chemical and physical world of the boat on the sea. In addition, the tactile qualities of the

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148 Dean, *Selected Writing*, 89. Exhibition wall text for *FILM*, 2011, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London.

149 Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition (Walter Neurath Memorial Lectures, 31*) (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 2000).

150 Krauss, video.

cameraless technique could specifically relate to the tactile aspects and experience of this context.

2.8 The sea is not just wet

> I hoped to...come to terms, somehow, with the peculiar attraction that draws people to put themselves afloat on the deep, dark, indifferent, cold and frightening sea.[151]

This section discusses artists and writers whose enquiries inform our understanding of the ocean, often expressed through experiences of being at sea in various ways. I raise these issues here to frame the context of my research, which includes my site and socio-autobiographical background of living aboard a sailing boat full-time in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As a lived context of place-experience, my boat connects memories of sailing since I was a child, afterwards as an adult in the United Kingdom, to more recent times here in, and around, Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington and the Totaranui/Marlborough Sounds. According to Nima Talebian and Turkan Ulusu Uraz, the wide scope of post-phenomenological place formation includes other concepts such as space, time, mobility and process; as well as "how the soil, material, peoples, artefacts, things and also memories and experiences are moving and flowing into the on-going process of places (trans)formation."[152] In my research, and in the practices that follow here, there is

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151 Jonathon Raban, ***Passage to Juneau: A Sea and Its Meanings*** (London: Picador, 1999), 6.

152 Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place":19.

always a concern for the importance of materially-oriented manifestations of place-experience in these aesthetic enquiries.

As only a part of her wide-reaching thematic concerns, Dean's fascination with the sea and the maritime covers a wide range—from ***Girl Stowaway***,[153] a 16 mm colour and black and white film, to installations including chalk on blackboard drawings with a vast array of related works in between. Several of these projects, such as ***Girl Stowaway***, evolve from factual stories in maritime settings, that started with Dean researching the story of a young girl, Jean Jeinnie, and her strange voyage from Port Lincoln, Australia to Falmouth, England as a stowaway dressed as a boy, hiding in the hold of the racing windjammer yacht, the ***Herzogin Cecilie***, in 1928.[154] Dean's methodology could be described as forensic in the way that she immerses herself in the story and phenomena of the event.

Dean's immersive approach extended to camping out above the wreck of ***Herzogin Cecilie*** in Starehole Bay, Cornwall, where she later shoots her film. The shooting of the film and the collection of objects and chalk drawings around her enquiry, including those that signify the experience of her research (such as sailing, swimming and other activities in the area), later become part of an installation that includes ***Girl Stowawa***y, writing, drawing, newspaper models of boats, framed newspaper clippings, found photographs and a video.[155] This installation can be compared to the installation of Ingrid Pollard (mentioned earlier in this chapter), whose interpretation invites the viewer to conduct their own 'search' and form their

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153 Tacita Dean, "Girl Stowaway," in *Selected Writing*, 17.
154 Dean, "Girl Stowaway," 17.
155 Dean, "Girl Stowaway installation," 1994, cited in *Selected Writing*, 16.

own conclusions to the mystery. Such immersive methodologies link to my study in respect to being immersed in the encompassing processual relationships of the site, which in Pollard's and Dean's projects involve development of a 'poetics' surrounding the site or event in question. In the same manner, and with the advantage of living aboard, I am able to draw together the contextual and conceptual elements of the boat and the sea; gathering supportive information and materials; drawing in theories and evidence from different sources and disciplines. Pollard, Dean and myself develop a poetic framework led by specific materialities of the medium and techniques relating to events, memories and experiences of settings.

This method of working can be seen in Dean's other projects, such as *Teignmouth Electron* and *Disappearance at Sea*. Dean's work, although exploring within a relevant maritime sphere, is often reliant on additional structural details, through which she interrogates with her approach; her installations resembling the detective's fragmentary 'wall of evidence' brings the artist and viewer into the temporal space of the experience.

According to phenomenologist Jan Patočka, the structures of lived-experience "bring out the originary personal experience. The experience of the way we live situationally, the way we are personal beings in space,"[156] and in this sense, we can see Dean's work as a broader inquiry explicating the embodied nature of our existence. This reminds us that, "on the basis of their corporeity humans are not

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156 Jan Patočka, *Body Community, Language, World*, trans. Erazim Kohák (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), 172.

only the beings of distance but also the beings of proximity, rooted beings, not only inner-worldly beings but also beings in the world".[157]

The same concerns for an embodied phenomenological approach, in this case as a methodology for human geographic research, can be found in ***What I Talk about When I Talk about Kayaking***.[158] In this essay, Dr. Jon Anderson makes frequent reference to Jonathon Raban's experience of the ocean in ***A Passage to Juneau: A Sea and its Meanings***[159], which is an account of a solo sailing trip from Seattle in the United States of America to Juneau in Canada. Anderson's inquiry, in his own words, aims to

> outline some experiential understandings of the practice of kayaking on the coastal ocean. Rather than focussing on a particular watery world—a specific geographical ***place in the sea*** (perhaps one coastline, one current, or one tidal flow for example); it rather draws our attention to the ***space of the sea*** itself, and the experience of kayaking on it.[160]

Anderson (as well as Peters and Steinberg, as discussed elsewhere) makes reference to Raban's travels aboard ***Penelope***, as he sails from his Seattle home to the Alaskan Panhandle, hoping to decode the various meanings of the sea—in the art and mythology of the Northwest Indians, in the waves and turbulence of the Inside Passage from Puget Sound to Alaska, and the journals of the British

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157 Patočka, ***Body Community, Language, World***, 178.

158 Jon Anderson, "What I Talk about When I Talk about Kayaking," in *Water Worlds: Human Geographies of the Ocean*, ed. Kimberley Peters and Jon Anderson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014)," 103-117.

159 Jonathan Raban, *A Passage to Juneau: A Sea and its Meanings* (London: Picador, 1999).

160 Anderson, "Kayaking," 104.

exploration ship, captained by George Vancouver in 1792. Raban's descriptions of the water's intense material presence are crucial in conveying the internal, as well as the external, aspects of his voyage. For Anderson, they provide a link to key phenomenological concerns in his practice.

In Anderson's survey, the participants reflect his own observations and those of Chris Duff, to convey a strong affiliation between sense of self and belonging with the ocean, expressed in anecdotal descriptions which serve as phenomenological material. To 'find the words' to describe his own affiliation to the sea and get to the essence of its 'something,' Anderson takes to the water in his kayak to engage with the sea's liquidity. He writes,

> I become aware of the world of sky above, and the world of water below. Unlike the ground, the water beneath me isn't static. It's moving…I feel it as if it were a body…I'm the join between the sea and sky. My body could become a sail…catching the wind and moving me whether I want to or not.[161]

What is more important for Anderson and my own research, is that "there is something different about (being in) the sea."[162] Anderson's use of 'in' rather than 'on' is rather interesting, in that it differentiates the boat from other seaborne conveyances, such as the surfboard, that feel as if they are much more on the surface. He describes that being in a boat,

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161 Anderson, "Kayaking", 107-108.
162 Anderson, "Kayaking," 106

> doesn't feel as if I am under the sea, or simply on the sea. The hull of the boat is a few inches under the water, and in the cockpit it is only this thin plastic hull that separates me from the deep."[163]

Although, this proximity to the water is amplified in the kayak, being inside the cabin of a larger vessel is a similar concept for the sailor.

Anderson's chapter in ***Water Worlds*** examines in more detail how being in or on the water allows participants to encounter the world by thinking through this watery engagement or, as Peters and Steinberg propose, "thinking ***with*** the sea can assist in reconceptualising our geographical understandings."[164] Anderson suggests that these activities hold the potential to focus his "attention on the minutiae of life, so much so that it can render me as witness to and participant in something bordering on the artistic."[165] However, it is an act of contemplation, enabled through the ocean's liquid or wet ontology, in which to "critically challenge terrestrial assumptions of solidity, pace and permanence."[166]

Furthermore, in Peters' and Steinberg's ***Wet Ontologies***, the liquid 'materiality', motion and temporality of the ocean allows for a discussion beyond land-based notions. They also introduce ideas that they develop and refine in ***The Ocean in Excess: Towards a More-than-Wet-Ontology***,[167] and move the perspective to 'from

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163 Anderson, "Kayaking," 108.
164 Steinberg and Peters, "Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces": 248.
165 Anderson, "Kayaking," 112.
166 Anderson, "Kayaking," 113.
167 Kimberley Peters and Philip Steinberg, "The Ocean in Excess: Towards a More-than-Wet Ontology," *Dialogues in Human Geography* 9, no. 3 (2019): 293-307.

the sea' as a way to challenge terrestrial notions of the sea as a place experienced as a contained body of liquid.

Contextually, my study is positioned to respond to these ideas of fluid materiality and experiences of it, from the sea itself, working directly from the floating structure of my boat as a laboratory or studio, from which various photographic 'analyses' are made. Many of Anderson's and others' observations above are haptic accounts of 'felt' experiences, for which a visual description alone is inadequate. This makes the haptic and tactile qualities of a cameraless interpretation of this subject all the more valid and appropriate.

Furthermore, the concept that the ocean can be understood "not simply as the movement of water but as the mutation of atmosphere—space and time—as assembled from multiple elements"[168] is interrogated in my research through extension of cameraless sensitivity to various materialities and events. Atmosphere, space and time are manifested as a cameraless image by exploiting "photography's indexical grounding in a world of chemical and physical reactions to physical phenomena."[169] This indexical grounding, particularly of cameraless photographs, includes temporal and spatial traces incorporated as "documents of their own coming into being, rather than just of a world outside the photograph"[170] due to the crucial factor of contact. One could go as far as to say that the *ocean*, 'in

168 Steinberg and Peters, "Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces": 250.

169 Joan Fontcuberta and Geoffrey Batchen, "Coda: Photography in the Age of Massification," in *Photography off the Scale: Technologies and Theories of the Mass Image*, ed. Tomáš Dvořák and Jussi Parrika, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 283.

170 Fontcuberta and Batchen, Coda, 283.

its excess,' has made the images in my research, in addition to light reflected from the ocean's surface, the moon or other 'objects' within an ongoing process.

Peters and Steinberg argue, contrary to assumptions, that the "sea and land do not just meld in littoral space: the ocean exists far inshore, above ground, underground, in our senses, and as part of fantasy. The ocean is not an entity then; it is an ***extension.***"[171] I propose that this concept of the ocean's extended ontology, beyond its liquid state, and how this extension can be evoked through the processes of cameraless photography, reveals a gap in knowledge and a navigable route through my practice.

As mentioned above, Peters and Steinberg build on the assertions of ***Wet Ontology*** in three parts in ***The Ocean in Excess: Towards a More-than-Wet-Ontology***, to explore ways in which the ocean permeates "*within* bodies that inhabit, constitute and transcend the marine environment.... *beyond* the liquid wetness that is typically assumed to be 'the ocean'.... [wherein] the representational power of the ocean is considered in terms of being in excess."[172] In their analysis, they draw on Tim Ingold's writing around the interconnectedness of human life and the wider systems of the world as a "meshwork,"[173] as well as Mark and Dianna McMenamin's theory of the ***Hypersea***,[174] and illustrative sources

171 Peters and Steinberg, "Ocean in Excess": 295.
172 Peters and Steinberg, "Ocean in Excess": 294.
173 Tim Ingold, ***Being Alive*** (London: Routledge, 2011).
174 Mark McMenamin and Dianna McMenamin, ***Hypersea: Life on Land*** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

such as Yann Martel's *The Life of Pi*.[175] These perspectives support and reflect the materially immersive and post-phenomenological structure of my methodology.

Peters and Steinberg's use of Martel's *The Life of Pi* profoundly illustrates how the body can be saturated by the ocean to the brink of destruction—a "particularly tactile entanglement between body and ocean", as described by the narrator, Pi Patel. Martel's story follows a Pacific castaway's existence on a raft following the sinking of the ship *Tsimtsum*, which was voyaging from Pondicherry to Toronto. The ship was carrying his family and their zoo of animals (including a zebra and Bengal tiger). After days and nights at sea in the salty spray, Pi's world begins to become physically and mentally shaped by the ocean:

> my clothes disintegrated, victims of the…salt. First, they became gauze thin. Then they tore until only the seams were left. Lastly, the seams broke…. Salt-water boils—red, angry, disfiguring—were a leprosy of the high seas, transmitted by the water that soaked me."[176]

Pi's entanglement, an allegory of the scientific term the 'hypersea', illustrates Peters' and Steinberg's notions of 'ocean beyond,' 'ocean within' and 'ocean imagined.' Such harsh maritime conditions are often overlooked as material characteristics of the sea and sailing. For Pi, the sea is leaving alarming and painful traces of its chemical presence on the salt-sensitive surface of his clothes and skin. The natural salinity of his body makes this invasion of its surface worse, and draws attention to the body's liquid ontology. His skin is also sensitive to light, heat and wind, and these sensitivities work in concert to transform him. These observations

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175 Yann Martel, *The Life of Pi* (Orlando: Harvest, 2001).
176 Martel, *The Life of Pi*, 192.

are not merely about the appearance of the raft on which Pi finds himself, but are included in his experience of it as a place. The same phenomena are recorded in my cameraless images exposed in a similar environment, whose surfaces are also sensitive and vulnerable to the same natural conditions. The skin-like sensitivity of photographic materials is an aspect of tactility utilised directly in my cameraless images. In addition, the liquid ontology of photochemistry, emulsion and paper are all exploited for their propensity to absorb and react materially and visually to these ocean processes.

The environmentalist scholar and feminist thinker Astrida Neimanis[177] makes parallel feminist provocations around human and non-human bodies, and the ocean as an embodied place. Her book, ***Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology***,[178] is a discursive interrogation of ocean embodiment and thinking through or with water, in which she foregrounds what she terms "hydrofeminism."[179] An earlier publication ***Thinking with Water*** features Neimanis' and Mielle Chandler's proposition that we are all 'watery bodies,'[180] an idea that is also extended to consider what watery embodiment means in worlds that are dramatically shifting. Accelerating climate change and associated environmental degradation are accompanied by a global pandemic, institutionalised brutality and

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177 Astrida Neimanis is a lecturer at the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney, and Researcher in the Sydney Environment Institute. She is co-editor (with Cecilia Chen and Janine MacLeod) of *Thinking with Water* (2013), and author of *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* (2017).

178 Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

179 Astrida Neimanis, "We Are All at Sea," *RIBOCA Talks*, Rīga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Rīga, Latvia, video, 58:07, Jul 17, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp1wo1irkQA

180 Cecilia Chen, Janine MacLeod and Astrida Neimanis, *Thinking with Water* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 61-83.

desertion, but also mass social uprising, suggests a global feeling of being lost. Indeed,

> to be 'at sea' is an idiom that suggests one is discombobulated or confused. It means to have lost ones' bearings. While this might accurately describe a widespread contemporary feeling…. If we are all bodies of water, perhaps we have always been at sea.[181]

Being at sea with cameraless photography is an application of the technique which cannot avoid engaging with the realities of watery embodiment. In a Cartesian sense, it also suggests a visually disoriented and subsequently fumbling navigation of the world. Perhaps as Neimanis suggests, we may rethink this idiom from more feminist, post-humanist questions of how might being at sea invite us to acknowledge the many beings—human and non-human—that have long been held in different kinds of worlds? "What would it mean for me as this particular body of water, to let go of inherited compass points and cartographic comforts, and instead build alternative forms of refuge and renewal?"[182]

There are several concepts in Neimanis' thinking which overlap with theories of post-phenomenology discussed earlier, such as the acknowledgement of other 'things' or beings that exist within our understanding of marine or maritime place-experience. Her metaphor of letting go, or untethering from, the comforts of geographical space precisely echoes previous theories of thinking ***from*** the sea, and responds to the same concerns around a terrestrial dismissal of the ocean, in favour of an understanding of the processual index of experience. Neimanis

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181 Neimanis, "We Are All at Sea," video.
182 Neimanis, "We Are All at Sea," video.

questions the idea that being at sea means to be lost, and is perhaps suggesting that this is the basis of a fundamental flaw in our wider understanding of the ocean and its meanings. Her suggestion, that being at sea may allow us to acknowledge a diversity of maritime phenomena, reflects the fundamental principles of my study aboard my boat. While agreeing to these ideas in principle, the hope is that my cameraless images do more than merely register ideas in practice.

2.9 Anecdote: A silver path, Arapawa to Onapua

It is late February and the height of summer here in New Zealand. We sail to Matiu/Somes Island and anchor at the southern end in a small bay surrounded by rocks. In the evening, after making several cameraless exposures, I stay awake to keep an eye on the anchor, checking the GPS and our track. In the worst-case scenario, something could cause the anchor to drag—like a sudden wind and tidal change which could swing the boat towards the shore. Usually the anchor resets in the seabed within a few metres or less, but not always.

In Totaranui/Queen Charlotte Sounds, two months earlier, we were swept away from shore into deeper water between some islands. As we edged through the darkness, we could see only dim shapes of the land, until the moon slid out from behind the clouds, laying a silver path in front of us.

I look down now at the moon's reflection, its dry surface dancing on the watery body of the Earth. The same light, entwines phenomena and image, in a mysterious, material form.

2.10 Chapter summary

In section 2.1 of this chapter (*Towards an understanding of a cameraless photography of place*), I identified in Liz Wells' writing on Susan Derges, as an opening to the more specific cameraless enquiries into place; and in section 2.2

Contemporary cameraless explorations of place-experience, I interrogated relevant landscape photography practices relating to my research. In section 2.3 (*Contemporary cameraless explorations of the sea*), I examined in particular the haptic cameraless interrogations of oceanic place-experience in the artists Huarcaya and Riepenhoff. Section 2.4 (*My departure from previous enquiries*) clarified the departure my practice presents as a conceptual extension away from terra-centric perspectives of the sea. In section 2.5 (*Rethinking the maritime quotidian*), I considered Barthes writing on Verne's and Rimbaud's contrasting images of the ship, and in section 2.6 (*Stepping outside the quotidian image of the sea*), I introduced the concepts and theories of authors and artists interested in oceanic thinking from or on the sea, including Dean, Raban and Nicolson. In section 2.7 (*The phenomenology of photochemical media*), I discussed Dean and other artists and writers whose enquiries inform our understanding of the ocean, often expressed through tangible experiences of being at sea in artworks, which draws in theoretical contexts and concepts in my research. Finally, in section 2.8 (*The sea is not just wet*), these ontological positions are explored alongside Patočka, Anderson, Peters, Steinberg, Ingold, Martel and Neimanis to build a case towards the post-phenomenological leanings of my study. Overall, this chapter has developed an opening or space in previous cameraless practices and their contextual positions, which have tended to look at the seas as an ecological place in which the human experience of these places is positioned as a secondary concern in their work. My own research looks at the sea from a maritime or seaborne perspective in order to consider the sea, not from a cool and observational humanist viewpoint, but from a post-phenomenological, process-driven, materiality-based study of human and non-human agency on the sea.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical concepts:
Epistemological foundations and conceptual notions of photography's materiality

In this chapter, I survey and review the literature to identify previous enquiries with relevance to my conceptual ideas, with the aim of narrowing the focus of my question. Predominant authors and conceptual theories are analysed to develop a theoretical framework to interrogate my research contexts. I begin, in section 3.1 (*Anecdote: Passage into darkness*), by recounting a night-sail between Wellington Harbour/Te Whanganui-a-Tara and Totaranui/Marlborough Sounds, highlighting the close relationship between vision and touch while at sea. Then in section 3.2 (*The everydayness of photography*), I draw on the ideas of Geoffrey Batchen, Joan Fontcuberta, Carles Guerra and Ariella Aïsha Azoulay around the photograph and its dematerialisation. In the next section, 3.3 (*Slowness as a form of resistance*), I examine the thinking of Kim Knowles, Ernst van Alphen and Marc Lenot toward analogue photographic practices resistant to the complexities of digital images. In section 3.4 (*Beyond transparency*), I return to Batchen and Barthes to explain the emergence of new 'post-photographic' concerns with photographic materiality and non-materiality. In section 3.5 (*Resisting the primacy of vision*), Juhani Pallasma's writing frames a tendency towards a hegemony of vision in shaping technology and the arts, with its opposition in the thinking of Merleau-Ponty and others. This leads to the next section, 3.6 (*The embodiment and tactile photography*), in which the hapticity of the photogram continues to be under-considered as a representation of a more embodied perception. Relying on the

supporting arguments of Susanne Ramsenthaler's research on the photogram, along with the theoretical writing of Max van Manen, I consider the notion of cameraless photography as a phenomenological practice in section 3.7 (*Towards a cameraless post-phenomenology of space*). In section 3.8 (*Fossils and fetishes*), I draw upon these concepts to extend Ramsenthaler's critique of Benjamin and Deleuze's terms in Marks' writing on hapticity in film, before summarising the chapter in section 3.9 (*Chapter summary*).

3.1 Anecdote: Passage into darkness

We need to leave at 2.00 am to catch the tide across the strait. We are meant to go with another boat from the marina but they don't show, so we set off anyway. Out of the marina and away from the lights of the city and port, it suddenly becomes very dark. There is low cloud obscuring any light from the sky, but small navigation lights dance in the dark ahead. I am aware of their positions and significance, but it is so dark I am suddenly disoriented. I doubt my judgement, the chart plotter, my own eyes. You have to take it all in, remember what each light means and in the order in which you see them. Looking again, I see the pattern, get my bearings, and am back on course. We pass the channel markers, slowly edging towards the harbour mouth. Dark land mass looms either side of us.

Senses become strained, but really, it is all about planning and following a course. So this is what we do. We pass the treacherous Te Tangihanga-o-Kupe/Barretts Reef as widely as we can afford to, heading into the middle of the channel as we approach Te Moana-o-Raukawa/Cook Strait. It is now around 3.30 am. As each minute passes, we become more vulnerable as we head toward what appears to be a black hole ahead, out into the notorious stretch of water. The two light houses of Te Raeakiaki/Pencarrow Head and the more distant Ōrua–Pouanui/Baring Head flicker into view on the east side of Te Whanganui-a-Tara, their beams stretch south and west into the darkness of the strait. For safety, we head out away

from land rather than hugging the coastline. Time passes but the lighthouses still seem to be in the same position. We must be going against the tidal currents. Did I calculate correctly? My heart races as we slew across a particularly large swell. The darkness becomes palpable, pressing closer from all sides; I feel like I could reach out and touch it. I also feel slightly breathless, as if air had been sucked out of my lungs. It's as though we have somehow sailed into a small dark pocket. I grip the wheel and try to concentrate on the immediate surroundings, the engine's tone and the hiss of the swell as it passes by. I feel the direction of the swell as it builds from the south, and am comforted slightly by the confirmation of my tidal calculations. Our GPS chart plotter indicates we should turn to the west in thirty minutes. Chanel is huddled down and staring forlornly out to sea. It is her first night sail and to be doing this with just the two of us suddenly seems a bit of a risk. I reassure myself that, as planned, it will not be long before the dawn breaks and all we need do is steer straight and sure. We get the flask out and drink some hot black coffee with biscuits. Feeling warmer now. Listening to the engine rise and fall. The VHF radio crackles briefly. It is 4.30 am and still pitch black. Finally, the beam of the lighthouses recedes as we roll with the tides, increasing speed now to five knots or more. Ahead in the distance, I see the navigation lights of one of the Cook Strait ferries coming towards us, on its way to Wellington port.

The air feels warmer as we gybe slightly more downwind, heading northwards up Raukawa/Cook Strait towards the mouth of Tory Channel/Kura Te Au. The boat rolls a bit more on the swell. It keeps me busy at the helm. The ferry passes us half a mile away towards the coast, increasing our sense of isolation. However, we are safer here beyond the tidal rips and whirlpools. At least, that is our hope.

Almost imperceptibly, something is starting to change. The world emerges from the liquid night, like a latent image appearing on exposed photographic paper in darkroom development processes. I remember Teju Cole's analogy between Tomas Tranströmer's poetic imagery, and the direct contact print where "the sense is of the sudden arrival of what

was already there, as when a whale comes up for air: massive, exhilarating and evanescent."[183] Straining our eyes we make out waves further ahead and… yes all around. The space around us is slowly but surely expanding as the darkness recedes. It's easier to breathe now, as if we have passed from a narrow tunnel, through a cave, and now into something more cavernous. I look up and the sky has become a dark grey, the first inkling of dawn. Immediately, our spirits are raised. We sigh with some relief. Later, as the sun emerges from the horizon bringing colour to the world, a pod of dolphins welcomes us, riding the bow wave, coming alongside so close we could almost touch them.

3.2 The everydayness of photography

In *Photography off the Scale: Technologies and Theories of the Mass Image*,[184] a dialogue between the artist/writer, Joan Fontcuberta, and Geoffrey Batchen, explores what Fontcuberta calls the "massification" of images and its potential resistance by artists. Batchen's response to Fontcuberta's suggestion—that a solution to media saturation is creative resistance—cites the work of Shimpei Takeda and Justine Varga. In relation to these artists' work, he notes that

> having abandoned the perspectival focus provided both by the camera and centralised referent, such photographs also actively decentre the observer. They force us to cast our eyes back and forth over their opaque surfaces because these offer no singular resting point, and thus no visual confirmation of a stable position

[183] Teju Cole, *Known and Strange Things*, (New York: Random House, 2016), 37.

[184] Joan Fontcuberta and Geoffrey Batchen, "Coda: Photography in the Age of Massification," in *Photography off the Scale: Technologies and Theories of the Mass Image*, ed. Tomáš Dvořák and Jussi Parrika (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 253-287.

> in space and time. They insist on their identity as photographs but keep us, and the world we inhabit, in flux and on the move.[185]

Batchen explains how cameraless photography questions the conventionally accepted, rational-framing and figure-ground distinctions of camera based images. In doing so, he suggests "we are freed from the passifying [*sic*] grip of this humanism and forced to seek another kind of viewing position, even another kind of subjectivity; indeed, another kind of position in the world at large."[186] Batchen suggests that in particular, cameraless artists are already making a resistance to the implications of image saturation through modernist or '*retromodernist*' concerns.

Analogue cameraless photography turns to the raw phenomena of photography, photochemistry and its interaction with the world—and so by nature, but not necessarily by design—always disputes the primacy of the camera and lens-based image. Digital photography further complicates this relationship, because while retaining all the basic principles of camera-based photography, the digital image is produced by digital simulation of the photochemical process of recording light reflected from the world outside the camera. This simulation however, cannot replicate the cameraless photograph's ontology of photochemistry and direct contact with a referent. Relying on photochemical materials of various kinds, a cameraless photograph is made through contact with an object and exposure to light, as well as other material, chemical or physical factors—the world as we ourselves experience it. There cannot be a true digital simulation of the cameraless image, as the digital image cannot be produced by an equivalent material contact with the object even though it shares other ontological links with time and light.

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185 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 283.
186 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 283.

Accordingly, cameraless photographs may, on one level, be seen as a contemporary critique of the digital image. By resuscitating a more tactile version of the contemporary and everyday image, we are forced to confront its presence and phenomenology. This critique can be contentious, according to Batchen, who writes,

> to excavate photography—to extract from it a something that is neither photograph nor non-photograph, and yet belongs to both categories—is to disembowel modernity itself, to turn what seems so certain and incontestable inside out and available for further inspection. It is, in other words, a political act.[187]

In another critical dialogue between the writers Carles Guerra and Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, the contemporary political role of photography is brought into question

> to look at the role of photography in the new ways of perceiving political action. More specifically, at what photography can do to improve this world of ours without yielding to the temptation of humanism, which has dominated such a large part of its history. Political imagination needs photography, but not in its current form.[188]

These statements echo other conceptual ideas discussed elsewhere in this exegesis, suggesting that the hegemony of the visual sense and the Cartesian perspectival distancing of the humanist subject are historically linked. Cameraless photography is a political format when, as an artistic practice, it runs counter to the

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[187] Joan Fontcuberta and Geoffrey Batchen, " Well, What is Photography?," Foto Colectania, October – December, 2016, http://correspondencias.fotocolectania.org/en/2016-en/

[188] Carles Guerra and Ariella Aisha Azoulay, "Photography on Strike," Foto Colecania, May – July, 2020, http://correspondencias.fotocolectania.org/en/2020-en/

global industrial capitalisation of digital technology of which photographs are a part; behind which, there is a great deal at stake, in terms of the collection and dissemination of information. While belonging to the realm of analogue photography, which for many years was also very much a global industrial money making enterprise, cameraless photographs are nevertheless outside our normal understanding of how images are made and used today.

3.3 Slowness as a form of resistance

As Kim Knowles argues,[189] the recent association of analogue technology with 'slowness' should be understood in relation to the materiality and slower temporal aspects of analogue media, in opposition to material infinitude and 'speediness' of digital media. In this sense, contemporary analogue media practices have a counter-cultural potential, as they "outwardly reject the forward drive of capitalist progress and its obsession with the relentlessly new."[190] The notion that certain analogue or 'slow photography' practices can be seen as counter-practices in experimental photography[191] tends to be based around ideas that "experimental photography does not pretend to be an accurate representation of reality, but rather an exploration of photography's nature and the photographic process itself."[192] As the digital image prevails, analogue photography has adopted a new

189 Kim Knowles, "Slow, Methodical and Mulled Over: Analogue Film Practice in the Age of the Digital," *Cinema Journal* 2, no. 55 (2016): 146-51.

190 Knowles, "Slow, Methodical and Mulled Over": 147.

191 Marc Lenot, "Flusser and Photographers, Photographers and Flusser," *Flusser Studies* 24 (2017): 1-18, www.flusserstudies.net/sites/; Ernst van Alphen, *Failed Images: Photography and Its Counter-practices* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2018); Michal Šimůnek, "The Failed Photographs of Photography: On the Analogue and Slow Photography Movement," in *Photography Off the Scale*, ed. Dvořák and Parrika, 140-157; and Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 253-287.

192 Marc Lenot, Jouer Contre Les Appareils: De La Photographie Expérimentale (Paris: Libella, 2017), 204-5.

critical capacity and freedom to explore its pre-mechanical ontology once again, with the added juxtapositions of its digital counterpart.

As a general enquiry, experimental photography makes a critical stance toward, or critical rejection of, mainstream photographic rules and apparatus of production. Ernst Van Alphen describes counter-photography practices as those that "challenge our everyday experience of the perceptual,"[193] echoing the modern artist's fascination with reinvigorating the study of everyday, quotidian life in and beyond the early twentieth century, including the photography and cameraless photography of that time. Cameraless practices, such as those utilised in this research, more often than not exemplify the recent associations between analogue technology and slowness[194] by exploring "the inside of the black box and the processes that occur within it,"[195] simply by removing the box altogether, and treating the space of exposure as an open 'black box.'

In Batchen and Fontcuberta's discussion, which criticises a global 'visual saturation' of images, Fontcuberta offers a solution in Serge Latouche, who

> likes to refer to himself as a 'growth objector' and proposes eight interdependent actions that will contribute to the 'virtuous circle of serene, convivial and sustainable degrowth: revalue, reconceptualise, restructure, redistribute, relocate, reduce, reuse and recycle'—eight Rs we must constantly bear in mind. But there is another R, and this is the one that invigorates and gives meaning to all of the previous eight: resist. Against excess and saturation, resistance.[196]

193 van Alphen, ***Failed Images***, 10.
194 Knowles, "Slow, Methodical and Mulled Over": 146-51.
195 Lenot, "Flusser and Photographers, Photographers and Flusser": 4.
196 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 277.

Resistance to the mass image is a concept discussed repeatedly in the essays gathered together in ***Photography off the Scale,*** including those of Sean Cubitt, Michal Šimůnek, and others.[197] Batchen suggests we might call this resistance a "retromodernism",[198] but also that cameraless images can be seen as "self-conscious about the materiality of both the photograph and the act of producing it."[199] Batchen suggests this tendency to return the medium to its beginnings is a historically critical response typical of this medium. He concludes that work made in this way is evidence to suggest that a "politicised photographic poetry…is still possible and has never been more necessary."[200]

To 'go analogue' is a choice akin to the 'slow' movement and its concepts of 'downshifting'[201] or 'going off grid.' In Michal Šimůnek's, ***Failed Photographs of Photography: On the Analogue and Slow Photography Movement,***[202] he discusses Lomography[203] practices, which he sees as developing a "metapictorial questioning of photography."[204] He goes so far as to suggest Lomography artists

197 Sean Cubitt, "Mass Image, Anthropocene Image, Image Commons," in ***Photography Off the Scale***, ed. Dvořák and Parrika, 25-40; and Šimůnek, "The Failed Photographs."

198 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 280.

199 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 280.

200 Ibid, 283.

201 Downshifters are people who adopt long-term voluntary simplicity in their life. They accept less money through fewer hours worked in order to have time for more important things in life. Downshifters also place emphasis on consuming less in order to reduce their ecological footprint. "Slow Movement". ***Footprint Choices***. https://www.slowmovement.com

202 Šimůnek. "Failed Photographs of Photography: On the Analogue and Slow Photography Movement ". 140-57

203 "Lomography. International vernacular-photographic movement founded by two Viennese students, Matthias Fiegl and Wolfgang Stranzinger. In the early 1990s they discovered the Lomo Kompakt Automat, a basic auto-exposure 35 mm camera made in Leningrad (St Petersburg) since 1983, and found it ideal for taking uncomposed, spontaneous snapshots, especially in the street and in low light…From 1997, however, it became a classic Internet phenomenon, with dozens of websites and thousands of pictures exhibited online". ***The Oxford Companion to the Photograph.*** (version online, Oxford University Press. 2006). www-oxfordreference.com

204 Šimůnek, Failed Photographs. 152.

"call for an analogue revolution against the digital."[205] Šimůnek concludes that Lomographs fail in their stance against the digital because in the end, they are part of a vast file sharing network, and thus "itself turns analogue photography into an ever-present and automated practice, resulting in the production of a growing mass of tautological and trivial metapictures."[206] Regardless, of these observations, I suggest that the ***context*** in which the images are created is more effective in producing a subversive gesture.

My view is that artists who make the choice to return to photography's beginnings are already politicised by working outside the technology and system of the digital image. These artists have turned off the information highway to travel along the back roads, even if exploring a temporary but critical diversion. Such decisions to 'go cameraless' are not made lightly in my experience. To finish the analogy, the more compliant road user sees the country lane-taker as eccentric and obtuse. Why take the slow, difficult, pot-holed, winding, perhaps dangerous, and much longer route when all this trouble (and expense) has been gone to, to make things better? Is this some kind of protest, they ask? Maybe it is a protest of sorts. If it is about 'having a choice', then that is a potentially political decision. Realistically, and in my experience during this survey, the slow photographers are not anti-digital. Instead, they are interested in the possibility that there are things on the back roads which are still interesting (and perhaps necessary) to explore.

Perhaps, an enthusiasm for using analogue photography is about exploring a process seemingly not subject to the additional complexity of electronic communication technology. I believe any form of perceived resistance is to the

205 Šimůnek, 152.
206 Ibid, 152.

idea that photographs have only changed in terms of production. Artists, in my opinion, recognise that analogue photography has a separate chemical ontology, which offers a way of rethinking our relationship to the electronic photograph while maintaining an important historical link.

As Marc Lenot explains, the digital era has left the contemporary role of analogue photography in a renewed space of artistic and phenomenological liberation. This, he says, is comparable to the relationship between photography and painting in the nineteenth century, demonstrating that "the development of digital photography in the late twentieth century freed analogue photography from its role of representing the real, allowing it to refocus on the photographic material, and thus on its essence."[207] In terms of my study, I definitely exploit my freedom to focus on the photochemical essence of photography and its value as a tangible tool for phenomenological studies of a physical world.

It is important to mention that there is also a suggestion of resistance in the notion of 'slowness', and this resistance has become a cultural movement called the 'slow movement'. However, is the so-called slow movement a resistance to change, or a resistance to acceleration? To begin with, the slow movement is not a group of old-fashioned, pre-digital technology users who yearn for the good old days and refuse to 'get up to speed' with the new.[208] As a cultural movement, it seems to reflect an existential angst that derives from a weakening of social

[207] Lenot, "Flusser and Photographers," 11.

[208] In fact, the slow movement began as a culinary movement rejecting fast food in 1989, when many of the world's best chefs signed the Slow Food Manifesto in Paris. With various iterations afterward, including fashion, the movement has developed around a general concept of resisting the world of fast consumerism and growth. More recently, this concept has extended to include slow city planning and social structures, with an overarching aim of connection. "Slow Movement," Footprint Choices, 2021, https://www.slowmovement.com/

connections as a result of 'fast-paced living.' Before thinking about living on a boat, I was only vaguely aware of this movement as a kind of 'yuppie syndrome', effecting the young or thirty-something age group following the 2008 global financial crisis and other events. After I bought a sailing boat and began living aboard it full-time, I became aware of an entire population of people who live on boats and in vans, buses and tiny homes. A lot of the appeal of this was being part of a community of like-minded people. In addition, being seaborne in particular, it offers ways to potentially travel extensively off-grid. The decision to live on a boat not only coincided with the development of my study towards cameraless photography, but critically informed my practice involving the material slowness of both these things.

3.4 Beyond transparency

As a snapshot of Barthesian notions of the indexical, the following passage from *Camera Lucida* describes how the

> photographic referent, not the ***optionally*** real thing to which an image or sign refers but the ***necessarily*** real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph…in Photography I can never deny that the thing has been there. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past.[209]

If we understand the photograph's unique means of production and its physical presence, we are able to make a 'direct' connection between object and image. Batchen opens his book, ***Emanations,*** with a quote from Barthes' ***Camera Lucida***,

[209] Roland Barthes, ***Camera Lucida: Reflection on Photography***, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 1993), 76.

"the realists (of whom I am one)…do not take the photograph for a 'copy' of reality, but for an emanation of past reality, a magic, not an art."[210] Furthermore, Batchen writes that cameraless photographs go beyond the accepted 'transparent' representation of the object, suggesting that "a cameraless photograph is not just of something—it is something. A reversed-tone inversion of the natural order of things, such photographs even appear to emit their own light, to emanate rather than record their images."[211] A cameraless image is experienced as an imprint of an object, rather than its copy.

The cameraless image can offer a consideration which involves a contact or exchange between things. The interactivity between materials and processes, of which the photographic is a part of, can be recorded by bringing photosensitive materials directly into contact with worldly phenomena. The cameraless photograph reveals a tactile relationship to its referent, and to the viewer, in important and unique haptic qualities. These will be discussed further in section 3.6.

In the essay ***Post Photography,***[212] Batchen discusses an era where photography is lamented, where artists engage in work that considers the photo-object in reflection, as the 'era of post-photography', and while originally written almost thirty years ago (and revised from earlier essays), it still seems to be the era in which we are in now. In this essay, Batchen describes the photographic work of Edward Ruscha, David Hockney, Ellen Garvens, Lynn Cazabon, Mike and Doug Starn and others, which all explore sculptural and morphological outcomes of

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210 Barthes, ***Camera Lucida***, 88.

211 Batchen, ***Emanations***, 5.

212 Batchen Geoffrey, "Post-Photography", in ***Each Wild Idea: Writing Photography History*** (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2001), 109.

photography. Batchen's observations, and those of Peter Bunnell (who also discusses the notion of post-photography[213]), pre-empt his later discussion with Fontcuberta in ***Coda,***[214] indicating a continuing concern for photography's identity.

In ***Post Photography,*** Batchen refers to the exploration of the photographic artefact, and sculptural form, from as early as 1969. He describes a commitment among a large group of artists whose work "exploits the properties unique to photography itself."[215] In addition, and most relevant to my research, he cites Bunnell's concern with the problem of (re)defining the medium of photography. Batchen describes how this redefinition emerged from the growing conceptual movement of the 1960s, which had a major influence on the 'porosity' of photography and demise of photography as a separate entity. Batchen's post-photography takes into account all the permutations of photo-media of that era, such as the sculptural 'morphing' of photographic and non-photographic materials in Ellen Garvens' '***assemblages'.***[216] Batchen draws our attention to the way Garvens' work makes

> materiality—specifically, the matter of photography's physical identity—a central issue. A tension is proposed between the photograph's function as transparent window onto another world and its opacity as an object, sitting before us in the here and now. The photograph is revealed as two kinds of object then—as simultaneously image and thing (a schizophrenia equally enjoyed by Garvens' non-photographic materials).[217]

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213 Batchen, "Post-Photography", 108-127
214 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 253-287.
215 Batchen, "Post-Photography," 110.
216 Ellen Garvens website https://www.ellengarvens.com/assemblages/
217 Batchen, "Post-Photography", 114.

While Batchen's examples are several decades old, his argument, as well as that of Bunnell's, as to the problematic identity of the photographic, has new relevance. Whether analogue, digital or digital-hybrid[218], a study of photography's on-going permutations can perhaps deepen our understanding of this medium through an examination of current practice.

As personally viewed in ***Photo London***,[219] an international photography art fair, some of the cameraless artists that were featured in this space, such as Klea McKenna, have already been mentioned in the previous chapter. Another particularly illustrative example was the artist, Wu Chi-Tsung's ***Cyano-Collage 072***.[220] These examples were validations that cameraless techniques have the potential to evolve and extend understanding and knowledge of photography's tangible materiality, beyond ideas of transparency, in the practices of contemporary artists.

3.5 Resisting the primacy of vision

The technique of the photogram references the history of the medium, in a time before the discovery of photography became synonymous with the much later invention of the camera. In the pre-camera period, images were produced using photochemistry alone, and involved an aspect of physical contact in concert

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[218] The digital-hybrid medium is a combination of digital and analogue processes, such as a digitally-produced 'negative,' used in the contact print method required in the contemporary execution of many nineteenth century processes. An example of this is in the work of Antony Cairns and Lilly Lullay, cited in Lisa Hostetler and William T. Green, ***A Matter of Memory: Photography as Object in the Digital Age*** (Rochester, New York: George Eastman Museum, 2016), 23.

[219] Michael Benson, Fariba Farshad, Ben Goulder and Toby Skeggs, eds., ***Photo London 2019*** (London: Candlestar, 2019), 169.

[220] Chi-Tsung Wu, ***Cyano-Collage 061***, 2019, cyanotype photography, Xuan paper, silk, acrylic gel, 70 x 135 cm, New York: Sean Kelly Gallery, https://www.skny.com/artists/wu-chi-tsung2

with a response to light. The existence of this early form of haptic photography has consistently questioned the accepted primacy of lens-based photography as an expressive form. This questioning is partly because it incorporates touch—a sense whose own primacy has been suppressed by the dominance of vision in Western culture—and partly because it highlights the contradictions of a medium defined by science, technology and art.

In his book on architectural theory, *The Eyes of the Skin,* Juhani Pallasma traces the history of how the 'lesser' senses became subjugated to the dominance of vision. From Greek philosophy's assurance that knowledge was "analogous with clear vision and light is regarded as the metaphor for truth,"[221] to the Renaissance's hierarchical system of the five senses and the invention of perspectival representation, the odds for vision were clearly stacked in its favour. Later, in its mechanical genesis in the camera obscura, "the invention of perspectival representation made the eye the centre point of the perceptual world as well as of the concept of the self."[222] Pallasma's account of vision's dominance over other senses makes clear the problematics of the tactile sense in a world of visual privileging toward our concept of knowledge. He responds to this by challenging vision's hegemony or anti-ocular positions, which were adopted by seminal French philosophers (often of phenomenology), from Henri Bergson to Emmanuel Levinas. Pallasma explains that these thinkers, especially Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, took a counter-stance towards the sense of vision and its overruling of the other senses.

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221 Juhani Pallasma, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 15.

222 Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 16.

For Merleau-Ponty, this visual hegemony led to his longstanding critique of the "Cartesian perspectival scopic regime" and its "privileging of an ahistorical, disinterested, disembodied subject entirely outside of the world."[223] In contrast, Merleau-Ponty proposed an 'embodied vision' as an intertwined part of the "flesh of the world"[224] as a means to relocate the body as an object within the world, rather than observing from outside. Subsequent critiques of the continued dominance of sight in modernity by Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida, centred on the critique of the technological velocity of visual image reproduction. The visual image is now, more than ever, a purely visual screen affair, although virtual reality technology promises simulated combinations of touch and vision.[225]

It is not surprising that the initial revival of cameraless images came about alongside the avant–garde movement in art, as a response to the First World War of 1914-18, by eschewing 'humanistic' representational perspective, and exploring the relationship between light and the senses of touch and vision. Its association with Dada, in the hands of Christian Schad, established the cameraless photograph's identity as the enfant terrible of the medium. Since then, the cameraless photograph has always presented itself as a messenger from the world of wider sensory inclusion and embodied perception. According to the writer Elizabeth Edwards, this leaning towards photography's relationship with more than just visual phenomena reveals a burgeoning interest in analysing photography's integration with the senses, and how the medium is experienced by its makers and

223 Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in ***Vision and Visuality***, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 10.

224 Merleau-Ponty, ***The Visible and the Invisible***, 146.

225 "Will This Glove Finally Let You Touch Stuff in VR?" Sci-FI Visions, Futurism, 2020, https://futurism.com/stretchable-sensor-vr-touch

viewers. Edwards sees this as a coming together of discussion and critical practice that,

> on the one hand, challenges the assumed hierarchy of the senses and the primacy of vision, positioned in a broader notion of sensory scholarship…[and] on the other, phenomenological approaches to the work of affect in the apprehension of objects.[226]

The questioning of ocular dominance, made more acute by the global industrialisation of photographic technology and images in the twentieth century, has seen a return to the raw materials of photochemistry, and an interrogation of the notion of everyday experience. As a contemporary critical practice, cameraless photography forms the basis of continued political-poetics of photography (to be discussed further in chapter 4) and a general motivation for exploring a cameraless practice in the context of the contemporary photographic image.

3.6 Embodiment and tactile photography

> 'Lived experience' is the active and passive living through experience. Lived experience describes the ordinary and the extraordinary, the quotidian and the exotic, the routine and the surprising, the dull and the ecstatic moments, and aspects of experience as we live through them in our human existence.[227]

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[226] Elizabeth Edwards, "Objects of Affect: Photography Beyond the Image," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 221-34.

[227] Max van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014), 39.

The similarity between existential phenomenology's approach to studying human experience and meaning, and cameraless photography, is that methods of existential phenomenological inquiry are analogous with the optical mediations described previously. In a Husserlian sense, 'opening-up to', or the epoché, is a methodological approach to empathetic contact with the phenomena of human experience. His expression, to get "back to the things themselves,"[228] really means "setting aside personal, cultural, ideological, and conceptual prejudices so that one might offer the phenomenon a supportive venue in which it can appear in a way that is most real."[229] Even more poignant as an analogy for the photogram, is the Heideggerian phenomenological directive: "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way that it shows itself from itself."[230] Aside from this being a seemingly cryptic description of phenomenological aims, one could almost directly apply it as a description of the photogram or cameraless image. How else can we better describe a cameraless photograph as an image of an object that is not of the object as we see it, but which is an image of the object from the position of the object, as it shows itself?

Furthermore, in cameraless photography, the image is achieved by removing the camera and moving closer to the object, to the point of close-contact. Heidegger's phenomenological method to open oneself to direct and pre-reflective analysis of experiential material, known as the reduction, "aims at removing any barriers, assumptions, suppositions, projections…that prevent the

228 Edmund Husserl, ***Logical Investigations***, ed. Dermot Moran (London: Routledge, 2001),188.

229 Dermot Moran, "Introduction to Phenomenology," (London: Routledge, 2000), 9, cited in David Seamon, "Lifeworld, Place, and Phenomenology: Holistic and Dialectical Perspectives," in ***Lifeworlds: Space, Place and Irish Culture***, ed. Tim Collins and Nessa Cronin (Cork: Cork University Press, 2014), 3.

230 Martin Heidegger, "Being and Time," (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 58, in David Seamon, ***Lifeworld, Place, and Phenomenology***, 3.

phenomena and events of the lifeworld to appear or show themselves."[231] Likewise, if we are to extol the removal of the camera in this research, then it makes sense that for these purposes, the camera is regarded as analogous with being a 'barrier' to phenomenological access to the ''lifeworld'—Husserl's term to describe the collective world of intersubjective perception, which is universally present and effective for grasping objective or near-objective truth.[232] This idea of the camera as a removable 'barrier' is to a degree, shared in recent academic research,[233] in which researchers draw some similar conclusions around cameraless photography, hapticity and phenomenological applications in a variety of contexts. In particular, Dr. Susanne Ramsenthaler defines the photogram in detailed terms including those of indexicality, the trace, absence and presence, the haptic, fossils and fetishes, and the non-representational aspects of the cameraless image. A chapter of her research cohesively and comprehensively presents the writing and practice of cameraless artist Floris M. Neusüss, and many other writers who look to adequately describe the differences between the cameraless and camera-based photograph.[234] The most emphatic differences are expressed in terms of notions of contact and touch, with which a photogram associates its referent. As Ramsenthaler states, "the photogram shares with the photograph the physical process of rendering the image visible, but differs greatly in the way it visualises

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231 Max van Manen, ***Phenomenology of Practice*** (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014), 220-221.

232 Edmund Husserl, ***The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology***, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 133.

233 Wendy Beatty, "Contemporary Photographic Landscape Practices and the Affective Gaze," (PhD diss., Deakin University, 2017); Christl Berg, "Tracings: A Photographic Investigation into Being in the Land," (PhD diss., University of Tasmania, Australia, 2004); Susanne Ramsenthaler, "On Distance in Photography,"(PhD diss., University of Glasgow, Faculty of Arts, 2006).

234 Ramsenthaler, "On Distance in Photography," chapter 1.2.

the encounter of subject matter and sensitised surface."[235] More specifically, the photogram visualises the tactile exposure of sensitised surface to subject matter.

Ramsenthaler's exhaustive discussions converge to compare the implications of touch by contrasting the descriptions of 'depiction' and 'manifestation'.[236] She gives the example of a fingerprint appearing by accident on the surface of a photograph, in which "even though we may be able to briefly immerse ourselves in the photographic three-dimensionality of the scene on offer, the fingerprint forces the eye back to the surface."[237] This analogy "as an incarnation of the photogram, presents an intervention, both to our perception of the photograph and as an alien intruder into the imagined reality of the photograph."[238] While such photograms stem from the beginnings of photography, and are thus familiar in that sense, Ramsenthaler suggests they operate in a different 'perspectival space' to lens-based photographs. Fingerprints and photograms as 'imprints' do not necessarily depict the object, but confirm its presence. From the point of view of my study, the photogram's ontological relationship to vision and touch, developed by Ramsenthaler and her associations with the photogram and the uncanny, are similar to a consideration of the cameraless image as a means of defamiliarising the everyday. However, the functions of intervention and intrusion, along with a collapsing of vision and touch within a single image, are all aspects of a cameraless image's potential to access such a defamiliarising aesthetic.

In seeking to locate and define cameraless practices in the landscape more accurately, I see phenomenological methods as analogous to the action of opening-up and putting-aside the 'apparatus' of photography in order to get

235 Ramsenthaler, "On Distance in Photography," 119.
236 Ramsenthaler, 125.
237 Ibid, 125.
238 Ibid, 126.

deeply close to phenomena—thus, a defining notion for cameraless practitioners, even if it is not a new one. This would suggest that artists whose practices are cameraless are interested in gaining access to the lived interconnectedness between themselves and their worlds—perhaps, if not necessarily as phenomenological studies per se, instead presenting their own experience as a quasi-tactile experience for the viewer.

The vocative aspects of phenomenology employed by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre involve many methods that enable the embodiment of meaning in the phenomenological text to be more concrete than ordinary prose. The term 'vocative' stems from the Latin word, *vocare*, meaning to call, bring or recall (a feeling, memory or image) out of, from, or to the conscious mind. Vocative methods

> involve an aesthetic imperative, a poetising form of writing. Most research we encounter in professional fields is of the type whereby results can be severed from the means by which the results were obtained. Phenomenological research is unlike such research in that the link with the results cannot be broken.[239]

Looking at cameraless practice as phenomenological research, a poetised photographic image is also a way of describing images that 'emanate' from the world.[240] In order to be vocative, cameraless photographs do more than just 'get close to the things'. 'Nearness', and its relationship to memory, is both a photographic and an experiential concern, which again speaks of an embodied vision and one that relates to touch. Laura Marks expands on theories of embodied

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[239] van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice*, 241.

[240] 'Poetising' (van Manen's term) is not the making of lyrical verses, but "thinking on original experience and is thus speaking in a more primal sense", van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice*, 241.

spectatorship developed in phenomenology and feminist criticism, to explore the notion of haptic images in film and video. The notions of visual tactility take on a particular solidity and depth when applied to the practices already mentioned here. However, for Marks, this metaphor of nearness suggests "the way film signifies through its materiality, through a contact between perceiver and object represented. It also suggests the way vision itself can be tactile, as though one were touching a film with one's eyes."[241]

Marks' haptic image acknowledges literal contact between image and object and represents the presence of absence, or a material trace of what is no longer there, through a (photochemical) reaction to reflected light. This kind of contact is however, a mental rather than a physical touch, although it illustrates the close relationship between tactile and visual senses. Cameraless photographs surpass this concept of the haptic through actual physical contact with the object.

3.7 Toward a cameraless post-phenomenology of place

The concept of place, and our experience of it, developed from a discipline of humanistic geography in the 1970s. This introduced 'phenomenology of place' as a radical approach to thinking about place "largely condemned by Marxist, Feminist and Post-Structuralist critiques"[242] throughout critiques from the 1980s onwards. As a consequence, the newer theory of post-phenomenology emerged from post-structuralist modification of phenomenology, adapting many of its

[241] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), xi.

[242] Nima Talebian and Turkan Ulusu Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place: Moving Forward from Phenomenological to Post-Structural Readings of Place," *Open House International* 43, no. 2 (2018): 13.

concerns but maintaining themes such as 'embodiment' and 'lifeworld.' Thinkers such as Don Ihde[243] have criticised and "modified phenomenology in terms of materiality and the sources of experience."[244] This theory seems like a logical reading of cameraless processes, although as far as I am aware, there is a gap in any such research into a ***post-phenomenological reading of a cameraless photography of place***. In this section, I will aim to contextualise this notion.

> Following Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the role of the 'body', the main concerns of Non-Representational theory have shaped the structure of Post-Phenomenology; 'onflow' of everyday life, the materiality of experience, the processual notion of experience, the role of things in the process of experience formation, un-purposive and involuntary process of the encounter. Therefore, the importance of 'body' and 'things' became the key concern of Post-Phenomenology. [245]

The ideas behind non-representational theory originate mainly in the writings of Nigel Thrift.[246] In an expansion of the human-centred approach to human geography, non-representational theory puts agency into matter and the body's co-existence with things, objects and artefacts located in place.

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243 Don Ihde, ***Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context*** (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995).

244 Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place": 15.

245 Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place": 17.

246 Nigel Thrift, ***Non-Representational Theories***, (London: Routledge, 2008); Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place": 18.

As the phenomenology of place was developed to encompass a wider focus by "considering place as process, network, event, meeting place, encounter,"[247] it has eventually developed into 'actor-network theory' and a post-phenomenology of place, expanding the notion of place as site in continual flux. According to Tim Cresswell,

> place in this sense becomes an even rather than a secure ontological thing rooted in notions of the authentic. Place as an event is marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence. This significantly alters the value put on place as it is constructed from the outside rather from the inside.[248]

This idea of what place can be, or what processes a place can be, is a key concept for my research in terms of the context of where the work is made and how it is made. Thinking about 'place as encounter' has been explored in the writing of Kirsten Simonsen,[249] alongside the actor-network theory of Bruno Latour.[250] Latour's theory became the main paradigm for the post-phenomenologists Ihde and Verbeek,[251] since it incorporates the role of 'context,' 'technology,' and 'artefacts' as active in the formation and functioning of 'networks.'[252] The interrogation of these concepts provides a theoretical framework that solidifies my research as material-oriented. According to Talebian and Uraz, post-phenomenological place is "experienced to be inseparable from its materialistic

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247 Diane Massey, ***Space, place and gender*** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994); Kirsten Simonsen, "Place as encounter: Practice, conjunction and co-existence," in ***Mobility and Place: Enacting Northern European Peripheries***, eds. Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt and Brynhild Granås (Ashgate: Hampshire. 2008), 13-25.

248 Tim Cresswell, ***Place: A Short Introduction*** (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

249 Simonsen, "Place as encounter", 13-25.

250 Bruno Latour, ***Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*** (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005).

251 Peter Verbeek, "Artifacts and Attachment: A Post-Script Philosophy of Meditation," in ***Inside the Politics of Technology: Agency and Normativity in the Co-Production of Technology and Society***, ed. Hans Harbers (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2005).

252 Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place", 18.

characteristics, things (objects) located in or shaping it, the observer's body-based consciousness of place and unconscious aspects of the subject's mind."[253] Therefore, the inseparable concepts incorporated within place require a grasping of these elements in an aesthetic interpretation. Cameraless photographs of place can offer a partial, though silent, grasping of these phenomena. However limited, a cameraless interpretation is nevertheless profound, as it incorporates co-existence and materiality as a necessary aspect of its process.

To contextualise these theories with cameraless photography, images made in the context of place activate the things that they touch; and are themselves activated by the things photochemically. Furthermore, in my research, the fibre-based paper I use becomes saturated by the seawater and other elements of the contextual space. This soaking eventually softens the fibres and cracks appear in the emulsion. During development, the salts and other chemical components in the environment effect the photographic process, and often leads to staining. As an aesthetic parallel in line with post-phenomenological theory, these images can be said to discard essentialist searches for singularity, and instead make visible the 'multidimensionality', 'multi-stability' and the 'multi-voices' of things,[254] in their experience of place, not least the 'various worlds of experience' taking the place of one singular and unique world.[255] The images created are largely about opening-up-to, exposure-to, or the uncovering-of meaning as a quasi-tactile experience of place for the viewer, utilising the distinctly material and processual characteristics of chemical-based cameraless photography. As experiential material, these images

253 Talebian and Uraz, "Post Phenomenology of Place", 20.

254 Don Ihde, ***Postphenomenology–Again?***, Science and Technology Society, Working paper No. 3 (Aarhus: The Centre for STS Studies, 2003), https://sts.au.dk/fileadmin/sts/publications/working_papers/Ihde_-_Postphenomenology_Again.pdf

255 Peter Verbeek, "Artifacts and Attachment."

can be analysed as evidential to the state of continuous change inherent in the co-forming of place from a post-phenomenological perspective. Therefore, it is suggested that these conceptual ideas can be fruitfully explored and investigated through my research context and methodology.

3.8 Fossils and fetishes

Laura Marks' writing in *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (2000)[256] explores key notions of fossil and fetish that she seizes upon in the writings of Deleuze and Benjamin, respectively. As the title suggests, Marks develops a discussion around intercultural cinema, embodiment and the senses, and applies these ideas to film studies and to her own experimental work.

I agree with Ramsenthaler's proposal that these concepts of fossil and fetish, applied to the cameraless photograph, speaking of trace as denoting absence, and "takes the photogram into the territories of the fossil and the fetish, as well as the…working of religious relics."[257] She argues that the cameraless image is a 'fossil-image' and is becoming increasingly so in an era that moves beyond the material image, responding to ideas of contact. The fetish ('commodity fetish') is much more widely discussed by Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin's concept leading to 'aura' and defetishisation of the commodity (as discussed further below).

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256 Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000).

257 Ramsenthaler, 18.

> Fossils retain the shapes of the cultural upheaval, perpetually inviting the decoding of past conflicts. Their "radioactive" quality may diminish as connections are made to the historical stratum in which they were created, but they do not go away. Fetishes, although they are similarly dense in meaning, tend to dissolve away after the need for them has dissipated.[258]

The association between the fossil and the photograph appears as a theme of a very recently published book ***Off Camera***[259] which reflects many of the ideas of my research. Ramsenthaler uses the two terms, fossil and fetish, together and illustrates the photogram's greater relevance through original tactile contact. I also would like to explore these analogies more deeply, to ascertain which is a more accurate link, as follows.

When a marine organism is left on the surface of the sand, it may be covered, buried under sediment, and fossilised over millions of years. What remains of the organism is only its shape or form—now solidified as stone—while the material body of the organism is absent. It is, nonetheless, a confirmation of its presence/absence, and thus temporal movement in space, because without the organism, the fossil would not exist. At the same time, the existence of the fossil confirms the sediment, mud or sand's existence during the time of the organism life, and the subsequent petrification of both.

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258 Laura Marks, ***The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses***, 124.

259 Steven Humblet, "The Photographic Fossil," in ***Off Camera*** (Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2021). "The photo essay focuses on contemporary artistic practises and experimental approaches to photography, divided into four themes: The Photographic Fossil, Chemical Matter, Optical Confusion, and Performing the Image…. engages a discourse among artists and intellectuals on defining photography and technique. ***Off Camera*** is the conclusion of a research project carried out by Belgian researcher Steven Humblet's group, Thinking Tools, at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp." (From the editor's description of the book.)

Our fascination with the fossilised organism is understandable, as we are able to 'look across' unimaginable time spans to a minute snapshot of life on Earth, and the upheavals that both created and exposed these representations of 'originary contact'[260]. A photograph can be referred to as fossil-like, because the film's surface transforms the momentary cadence of light, reflected from an object, onto a photosensitive layer. This photosensitive layer is then 'fossilised' through the chemical solidification or hardening of the silver-containing emulsion wherever light falls upon it, generally creating varied silver to black tones (or colours in other techniques, such as the use of iron in cyanotype).[261] In truth, it is actually the ***light*** which becomes fossilised in this process, with the object or referent shaping the light into a reflected form, which through process, becomes the image of the object. It is through this original contact with the object that photography claims to be indexical.

Shaping of light is mediated and transformed by the camera- and lens-based photograph in a similar, but not identical, way to the human eye. A mediation of apparatus and eye means that contact is not direct, or at least not as direct, as it could be. Consequently, we do not say that we touch the object we see with our eyes, but in a haptic way, we 'sense' how the object may feel. In photography, the only way of making truly direct contact between object and photosensitive layer is to remove the lens and camera. Now when light moves between object and film or paper, the materials of both touch, and the photo paper is marked by light,

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260 Originary | \ -jəˌnerē \ | adjective and noun. "That which originates from a particular place or thing; native, indigenous." OED Online. June 2021. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/view/Entry/132569?redirectedFrom=Originary

261 Sarah Kennel, ***In the Darkroom: An Illustrated Guide to Photographic Processes before the Digital Age*** (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 2010), 15. "And many later colour techniques of which Autochrome was the first commercially successful…patented in 1903 by Auguste and Louis Lumière and introduced to the public in 1907."

shadow and in many cases by the object itself (pressure, incision, chemical, erosion). Light no longer is made to pass through another material or bent through a prism. In this way, cameraless images collapse notions of contact between image and originary object further, and in doing so, can "breach, in effect, the virtual walls of photographic image,"[262] as Batchen describes remembrance photographs, whose owners seek to find ways of closing the gap between past and present, memory and history.

Marks describes cinematic images as transitional insofar as they are dense, sedimented, and crystallised. In fact, she calls them 'travelling images with fetishistic auratic character', which dissolve the originary object's power by connecting it to memory, change fossil-images to 'recollection-images', and calls attention to other material presences that can be carried by the image, such as touch and smell. Similarly, as Batchen says of 'remembrance' photographs,

> they all enact a practice that breaches the virtual walls of the photographic image, forcing us to simultaneously project our mind's eye back and forth, into and out of, the photograph they incorporate. They punctuate the 'chafed reality of time', for Barthes the noeme or essence of the photographic experience, with the more immediate and tangible realities of physical space.[263]

Although Marks seems to ascribe fossil-like qualities to the whole of photography, I would suggest that while these attributes unquestionably apply to photography in general, they are even more pertinent to touch-orientated

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262 Geoffrey Batchen, ***Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance*** (New York, USA: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 39.

263 Batchen, ***Forget Me Not***, 26.

processes, such as the photogram, because direct touch with the referent is a contingent factor of the fossil, the fetish and the photogram (but not a contact print from a negative). Marks describes the similarities of the two processes fossil and photographic image, but ignores the mediation of the lens and negative as follows;

> fossils acquire their meaning by virtue of an originary contact. A fossil is the indexical trace of an object that once existed, its animal or vegetable tissue now become stone. Consider the similarities to the photographic process. Fossils are created when an object makes contact with the witnessing material of earth. Photographs are created when light reflected by an object makes contact with the witnessing material of film. In both cases, this contact transforms the material's surface so that it becomes a witness to the life of the object, even after the latter has decayed.[264]

Pertinently, Marks' analogy hangs on the phrase 'to make contact with the witnessing material', and yet she says the fossil is created when the object makes contact with the earth, and the photograph is created when ***light reflected by an object*** makes contact with film. It may be useful to look at this more carefully. First, it is the object which is transformed into a fossil through direct contact with the material processes of earth, and this leaves an impression of the object. Second, light is reflected ***from*** (that is, light is not emitted ***by***) an object, and this reflection falling onto the film is a ***resemblance*** of the object. In this case, the film's surface is transformed but the object is not, except in the mind of the viewer who sees the photograph as a past event. This anomaly between the terms of engagement in the two examples challenges notions of photography's indexicality.

[264] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 84.

Ramsenthaler has similarly argued[265] that such notions, deriving from Charles Peirce, have been wrongly misconstrued and propagated as the 'luminous imprint' by Rosalind Krauss and Roland Barthes. The popular theoretical notion of a photograph's indexicality is disclaimed in a rereading of Peirce, where his contradictory statement asserts that photographs are '*iconic*'. This, he says, is because photographs are *resemblances* and are not the action of '*indices*', which "depends upon association by contiguity, and not upon association by resemblance or upon intellectual operations."[266] Ramsenthaler's interpretation of contiguity as connection or contact, is also key to her argument. According to Ramsenthaler, in contrast to the lens-based photograph, the photogram, by means of direct contact, qualifies as an index in all respects. I agree that the photograph's connection to the object through light has more to do with resemblance in comparison to the photogram's tactile contact, although this difference takes nothing away from the photograph's ability to make an intellectual connection. Both forms of contact can be seen as witnessing material, but I think that one is visual and the other tactile in the same way that, as has been shown earlier in this chapter, a fingerprint is tangible evidence of tactile contact with the originary object, without depiction.

My own cameraless enquiry reinforces a contiguity with the place or site of production as intrinsic to making the image. Contiguity can be extended as an aspect of place-experience, referring to flow and interrelatedness between human and non-human, and tangible and non-tangible things. Cameraless images are made in these circumstances when objects touching a photosensitive surface may

[265] Ramsenthaler, 194.

[266] Floyd Merrell, "Nature's Tireless Circles," in *Peirce's Semiotics Now: A Primer* (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1995), 87, cited in Ramsenthaler, 194.

intercept light, leaving an imprint, shadow, mark or stain. The surface of the paper is also transformed by direct contact with objects (on and around the boat), salt water, organisms, chemicals, wind and wave action. To a degree, these aspects of place are also altered by the physical contact or contiguity between the photographic materials, the boat, its location and myself. Non-tangible aspects, such as memory and time, are included in the images' contiguity.

In terms of power to conjure up memory, Deleuze's concept of the fossil functions in a similar manner to Benjamin's fetish, which requires a certain type of original contact in order to successfully function. The notion of the fetish is particularly powerful because it has the aura of having touched the object. In fetishism, as Marks suggests, "power does not inhere in beings or objects but flows among them."[267] Fetish objects can encode meanings that become buried in the process of temporal displacement but are volatile when reactivated by memory. As with the fossil, fetishes get their power not by representing that which is powerful, but through contact with it:

> Benjamin's fetish and Deleuze's fossil have in common a disturbing light, an eerily beckoning luminosity. In the fetish it is called aura; in the fossil it is called radioactivity. Aura is what makes the fetish volatile, because it incites us to memory without ever bringing memory back completely. Similarly, when a fossil is 'radioactive' that is because it hints that the past it represents is not over, it beckons the viewer to excavate the past, even at his or her peril.[268]

[267] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 85.
[268] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 81

Fetish objects, such as the amulet, talisman or relic, can get their power not by *representing* that which is powerful, but through *contact* with it—a contact whose materiality has been repressed. As such, fetishes, like fossils, have an indexical relation to an original scene like that of a photograph. Photographs are fetishistic in that they "hypostatise an instantaneous visual aspect of a scene before the camera"[269] making concrete what would otherwise be abstract light reflections. The terms *Benjamin's* fetish and *Deleuze's* fossil are similar, and photographic media may be accountable to both.

For a photograph to be also a fetish, one must accept that reflected light is the medium of 'contact'. As Ramsenthaler suggests, "the notion of the fetish is particularly powerful because it constitutes a physical, rather than mental, contact between objects; it is not a metaphor."[270] As has been previously suggested, the potential of cameraless photographs to be associated with these terms more distinctly than other forms of photography stems precisely from the touch-oriented aspects of the cameraless process. This tactile ontology, responding visually to the touch of light and contact as if 'bruised' (like fruit or skin) by these things, is exploited in my own study by engaging these reactive qualities with a particularly volatile maritime environment.

The indexical claim of lens-based photography theory relies on the transmission of light between object and photosensitive surface. For light to be a trace of the object, it has to be transformed into the darkened tones of the photosensitised surface of film or paper where light falls, but where the object is absent. This process makes a visual representation of the object, constituting a

269 Ibid,86.
270 Ramsenthaler, 132.

mental rather than physical contact, being only an association of the object remaining as an image, nevertheless confirming its presence and signifying its absence. In the fossil, the object leaves its imprint in the material of the earth and therefore physical touch was involved in its making. In the fetish, it is the physical contact with the object of power that conveys that power onward. For the camera-based image, both the fossil and the fetish are clearly conceptual analogies of the indexical.

The relationship between vision and touch so clearly illustrated in these analogies, is, in my opinion, an affirmation of Merleau-Ponty's theory of '*embodied*' senses and phenomenology of perception. Additionally, in the examples of fossil and fetish, the sense of touch is more acutely associated with the physical body, and not the mind. As such, the tactile sense is regarded as more primal—and as a result, disturbing—as a bodily-sense associated with primal and sensorial functions, including pain, pleasure, tasting, feeling and smell; tactile senses are also associated with intimacy or closeness. Therefore, there is a tension between the concept of 'seeing is believing' and 'physical evidence' confirming the importance of both but a tendency towards vision as a mental sense although this is of course false. This highlights how a critical challenging of visual bias has been developed as a philosophical enquiry especially in the architectural theory as discussed in section 3.5, and also in contemporary photography theory, as seen in the contemporary discussions in *Off Camera* in which a whole section theme is titled *The Photographic Fossil*, generated from research defining photographic techniques at The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp.[271]

[271] Humblet, *Off Camera*.

Cameraless photography makes its impact through an interconnection of the visual and tactile senses, and can draw its aura and potency from a fetish-like association with material-oriented, contact-based engagement with place, which I believe confirms my post-phenomenological position.[272] Lastly, because of their touch-oriented ontology and fetish-like contact, cameraless images create an aesthetic tension, to decentre a familiar everyday perception, leaving footprints to an ecstatic-aesthetic transformation of place-experience.

3.9 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have surveyed and reviewed relevant practices and literature to support my research concepts, context and methodologies. In section 3.2 (***The everydayness of photography***), I looked at writings and conceptual ideas exploring our evolving relationship to contemporary photography in its dematerialised digital format, and how artists practices interrogate that relationship through the continued use of analogue formats. Retro-modernist interrogations are suggested as particularly valuable to an understanding of cameraless photography's materiality, and can be seen as taking a resistant stance to photography's dematerialisation. In section 3.3 (***Slowness as a form of resistance***), the notions that the slow movement developed as a resistance to the fast pace of modern living and the fast production of the digital image are outlined, and linked to analogue photographic practices, pondering as to the objectives of cameraless practitioners and suggesting a response to fundamental differences in the two modalities of

[272] "Within the context of post-phenomenology, place is experienced to be inseparable from its materialistic characteristics, things (objects) located in or shaping it, the observer's body-based consciousness of place and unconscious aspects of the subject's mind." cited in Talebian, Nima and Uraz, Turkan Ulusu. "The Post Phenomenology of Place: Moving Forward from Phenomenological to Post-Structural Readings of Place." Open House International 43, no. 2 (2018): 20.

photography (analogue and digital). These differences, or rather the attributes unique to analogue photography, are important for my research because they are key to engaging with environmental contexts in tangible ways, lost in photography's digital counterpart.

In section 3.4, (*Beyond transparency*), in order to acknowledge prior thinking around the materiality of photography, I discussed notions of indexicality according to Barthes, Batchen and Bunnell. These thinkers, along with the work of artists Garvens and McKenna, are presented to develop the argument that the problematic identity of the photographic has new contemporaneity. Next, in section 3.5 (*Resisting the primacy of vision*), I discussed Pallasma's historical text which questions the Cartesian assumptions of vision's primacy as a sense. In section 3.6 (*Embodiment and tactile photography*), I clarified links between tactility—as a distinct characteristic defining cameraless techniques—and the embodiment of the senses in the phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. In section 3.7 (*Towards a cameraless post-phenomenology of place*), I aimed to contextualise this notion that a cameraless enquiry of place incorporates co-existence and materiality as a necessary aspect of its process. Finally, in section 3.8 (*Fossils and fetishes*), Marks' analogy between photographic index, Benjamin's fetish and Deleuze's fossil are analysed to draw a closer association between cameraless photography and the significance of its tactile properties, to be found and explicitly investigated in my study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

In this chapter, I address what I did to achieve the research aims and why I chose this particular approach over others. As such, this chapter regards the methodological concerns of my practice. In the first section, 4.1 (***Anecdote: Photographic Soundings***), I recount a night spent outside the boat, handling the raw photochemistry of analogue materials in the liquid atmospherics of that environment. In section 4.2 (*The intelligence of liquids and importance of tactility*), I discuss how my use of cameraless techniques to study seaborne place experience relates to Walls' essay, *Liquid Intelligence*,[272] on the liquid ontology of analogue photography. In section 4.3 (*Cameraless photography as an instrument of intersubjectivity*), I explain why I have chosen to use the decentring and intersubjective aesthetic of cameraless photography to register a wider, more tangible lived-experience in the context of place. In section 4.4 (*Poetic development*), I outline the concept of poetics as an organising strategy for a study of seaborne activity and experience. In section 4.5 (*The poetics of a seaborne place*), I extend Peters', Steinberg's and Anderson's provocative appeal to a 'more than liquid' oceanic ontology to describe the poetics of a seaborne place, in order to develop the contextual foundations of my study. A seaborne poetics of living on the sea reinforces the departure my research makes from previous enquiries in the

[272] Jeff Wall, "Photography and Liquid Intelligence," in ***Another Objectivity***, ed. Jean-Francois Chevrier and James Lingwood (Paris and Prato: Milan: Idea Books for Centre National des Artes Plastiques, 1989).

literature review, that have their own poetics of the shoreline, the beach and the surf. Finally, I recap the chapter's main themes in section 4.6 (*Chapter summary*).

4.1 Anecdote: Photographic soundings

Handling the photographic paper at night in a marine environment around water is messy: fastening it securely to a structure, to enable the tide to move across its surface, over several hours alongside the hull; leaving it to become submerged while I sleep for a few hours, recovering the sodden paper carefully from the water in the rain, wind and spray, in the dark. It is similar to sailing and planning a passage; I must make calculations based on wind strength, tide level and sea-state, as well as atmospheric conditions. When will the moon rise, is it waxing or waning, and will there be clouds obscuring its light? Is it going to rain or get so windy that everything becomes ten times more difficult? Will there be waves, spray, and movement?

I plan to position the photosensitive material in a way that touches, or will touched by objects and liquids; and will be exposed to visible light sources—sometimes direct and sometimes reflected. I am aware of the light from the moon, stars and artificial sources and intensities; I imagine the things that will be touched and the image that is latent on the paper until developed. I want the influence of salt from the sea to become a part of the making of the image.

A persistent buzzing disturbs me from drowsy half-sleep. I look at the time on my phone as I silence the alarm. It is 2:00 am, and by this time, the moon is high enough in its transit above the harbour that I can see that it is shining through the portholes into the cabin. As I pull on clothes, the wind freshens outside, whistling through the steel rigging above, gently rocking the boat. The mooring lines creak dryly as they strain against the gust. The taught

wires above resonate with a low metallic hum. In the wind, a mournful choir of voices seem to fall and rise. They pass us by, high overhead.

A light patter of rain on the deck has just started. It increases in little showery gusts. Dressed now, I slowly slide open the companionway hatch, trying not to make a noise, swinging my legs up and over the washboards and into the cockpit. I tread quietly along the deck, hooded and gloved like a cat-burglar. The moon beams down alongside the brightest stars, as passing clouds grow and shrink away around its silvery orb of luminance. I can see clearly as I place my equipment into the dinghy tethered to the stern. I climb in too, and draw alongside the hull attaching the inflatable to the midship's cleat.

Pulling out a sheet of photosensitive paper, I unfurl it and suspend it next to the hull. The ropes are resting on its surface, seaweed rising and falling in the black water, the moon casting strange shadows over silver salt surfaces, rust bleeding from the steel nails piercing the pinkish surface of the skin-like photosensitive paper. I take out a strobe-light and direct it toward the sheet of paper, as perpendicular as I am able to. Waves, swell and wind twist the paper. The boat lurches and the dinghy rolls and spins. The water's surface a mesmerising multitude of wavelets of every size. Swirls, troughs, peaks and splashes. Each wavelet reflects a tiny piece of night sky, an endlessly shattering liquid-mirror. Everything is on the move: the paper, the boat, dinghy and me. I wait for things to align, following the rhythm, one hand guiding the dinghy alongside, the other on the strobe.

The strobe-flash freezes a vision of the world around me into an electrified flicker-show. First, the optical image of the whole scene is illuminated outwardly, momentarily, eerily, colourlessly. Second, shadows from the water seem to leap upwards onto on the photo-paper in a stark but fleeting relief. This strange effect is an imaginary preview of the image to come; itself a latent image of sorts, lingering there as briefly as a wavelet, burnt into my retina and

then transferred to my mind's eye. I will carry it with me until at last, the photographic image appears in the darkroom tray.

After about ten minutes further exposure under the moon and stars, I grapple the paper onboard. The wind catches the wet, heavy paper, and it twists mischievously, threatening to tear, as I roll it into the carry-tube slung over my shoulder like some waterborne archer's quiver. This process is repeated until all paper is used from the dry-tube and coiled into the wet, exposed tube.

As I climb back into the cockpit, a squall hits. Throwing everything quickly under the canvas, I shelter inside the wind-dodger. I can still feel the salt on my hands and my face as I crawl back into bed too tired to wash it off. I can taste the sea as I close my eyes. Outside, the wind continues to hum through the stays. I have a vague feeling of moving, forwards, sideways, rising and falling. It is like the blissful moment of coming off watch when sailing on a long passage. I have some hours now to lie flat and drift as the pillow takes the place of the salty night air.

4.2 The intelligence of liquids and importance of tactility

Cameraless photography can produce images, but only within the limitations of the photographic materials. Nevertheless, these limitations can serve to replace a cool, human-centred, visual aesthetic with a touch-oriented, processual technique that is more synchronous and immersive with the materiality and physics of place. Cameraless photography is also a manual process. The hand places the materials in contact with the object and controls the exposure by taking them away. Aspects of touch within the procedure develop a closeness with the object. This closeness is conveyed in the image by sharp definition of the object, where the paper has touched it and affected the opacity of the surface around it. These

characteristics of cameraless artworks imply the hand-placed and handled, the manoeuvred and manipulated, and are intrinsic to their process.

Cameraless images also have the appeal of the hand-made, even if the photographic materials are the products of machine-made consistency and predictability. A reasonable connection can made with the manual aspects of the activity of sailing a boat, and the importance of the hand as a broader philosophical notion. In his book *Seamanship*, Adam Nicolson recalls a conversation with an old Breton sailor, who tells Nicolson,

> what is important in the relation of man to the world is the hand.… As long as the hand is the shaping organism of an enterprise, or a relationship, as long as it is the hand which governs your connections with the world, those connections are healthy, living and warm.[273]

The hand's touch, plays a vital connective role in my study, as the photographic materials are predominantly sheets of heavy fibre-based paper, which when dry, are impossible to flatten out. When wet, the paper becomes looser and softer. Handling the sheets is difficult at first, especially if it is windy or choppy with swell from the open sea or a passing ferry. However, after a number of attempts, the materials become familiar to the touch. There is a moment when the paper relaxes in the humidity of the surroundings, and suddenly becomes pliant. If a wave catches the sheet with force, it is better to release the grip to avoid an unwanted tear in the fabric or possible loss of the paper altogether. Similarly, on the deck when fastening down, unfurling or applying pressure to sheets, the wind can suddenly get a hold of the paper, and again a certain dexterity is needed to avoid

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[273] Adam Nicolson, ***Seamanship*** (Leicester: Ulverscroft Large Print Books Ltd, 2005), 78-80.

damage or loss. This manual guiding of materials into place is an intervention to elements of chance at play in the boat's setting. By handling the materials in this way, the images represent a human interaction with maritime flows and processual phenomena.

Manoeuvring the materials into a position and exposing them is fraught with difficulty because of the often erratic motion of the waves and boat. However, my familiarity with the sea and seaborne activities has taught me that controlling this motion is not an option. The same wisdom applies to the wind, in which it is best not to fight against if possible. A preferable option is to use its force by being flexible and patient. Consequently, there is quite a lot of waiting for quieter moments where things can be prepared, as well as planning when to create work, based on weather patterns. Going with the rhythms of the wind and the waves is a fundamental aspect of seaborne activity and part of the process of making these images. Going with the agency of the sea *and* turning the limitations of the cameraless process into advantages, opens the study to the nuances of the sea in the images. The kinds of natural forms or movements found around a boat would be represented very differently using the optical mechanisms of camera-based photography.

In his essay *Photography and Liquid Intelligence*,[274] Jeff Wall explains that photography is "perfectly adapted for representing this kind of movement or form,"[275] as it derives from the "mechanical character of the action of opening or closing the shutter"[276]—an underlying factor of all camera-based photography—

[274] Wall, "Photography and Liquid Intelligence," 109-110.
[275] Wall, "Liquid Intelligence," 109.
[276] Wall, 109.

and is "the concrete opposite kind of movement from, for example, the flow of a liquid."[277] This mechanical versus natural movement is, he notes, a "logical relation…between the phenomenon of movement of a liquid, and the means of representation."[278] This contrast is what makes a photograph of any natural form so compelling. As the title of Wall's essay suggests, there is also a confrontation between the " 'liquid intelligence' of nature [and the] glassed-in and relatively 'dry' character of the institution of photography."[279] Acknowledging the historical role of water as a very *controlled* aspect of the photographic process, he sees water as symbolically representing an "archaism in photography,"[280] and embodying a "memory-trace of very ancient production processes—of washing, bleaching, dissolving, and so on."[281] Wall imagines a prehistory of photography before the invention of the apparatus, a prehistory evoked by the archaic "echo of water in photography."[282] This, he suggests, allows us to better understand the dry aspects of photography more clearly. These mechanical components of image-making, such as the lenses and shutters of cameras and enlargers, have separated vision from "the sense of immersion in the incalculable"[283] with liquid production process and liquid phenomena.

Wall's essay, written in the context of the emerging digital era of 1989, expresses a perplexity, in recognition that the digital "expansion of the dry part of photography,"[284] now more than ever, is "behind a barrier of perfectly engineered

277 Ibid, 109.
278 Ibid, 109.
279 Ibid.
280 Ibid.
281 Ibid.
282 Ibid.
283 Ibid, 110.
284 Ibid.

glass, [and] surveys natural form in its famously cool manner."[285] Subsequently, digital photography loses sight of "a historical self-reflection, a memory of the path it has traversed to its [present and future separation] from the fragile phenomena it reproduces so generously."[286] Conversely, and in relevance to my study, a removal of the dry mechanism readdresses the liquid or wet ontology of photography.

While I agree with many of the concepts presented by Wall regarding the "interrelation between liquid intelligence and optical intelligence in photography,"[287] the importance of Wall's essay in this part of my exegesis is to contemplate the ways in which an 'echo' of photography's past appears in images where the dry mechanical apparatus is absent from the photographic process. Cameraless images do not attempt to represent the fragility of natural phenomena in the same way that the kind of images Wall refers to do—images which are dependent on the speed of the shutter and focus of the lens to reveal the form and movement of liquid.

Cameraless images do not employ the confrontation between liquid intelligence and dry, glassed-in technology. What is it that makes them nevertheless compelling? The answer to this question has to be that we are compelled precisely by the opposite of this conflict. Photography's prehistorical link to the "archaism of water, of liquid chemicals,"[288] which "connects photography to the past, to time,"[289] is tangible in the cameraless photograph. Cameraless photography *is* a liquid intelligence.

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285 Ibid.
286 Ibid.
287 Ibid.
288 Ibid, 109.
289 Ibid.

More than thirty years after Wall wrote his essay, my study can be seen in some ways as an exploration of the assertions set out by Wall in his work. My research draws in this perspective, in the context of the equally archaic watery relationships between the sea and boat environs, studied through an engagement with photography's prehistorical liquid intelligence. In my images, evidence of this engagement can be seen in shadows and fluid traces of the sea's motion, or of objects, beings and things in the sea. For example, in a detail of ***Procession #10, Arapawa***[290] (fig. 16 below), visible marine beings and particles can be seen, as well as the refraction of repeating shafts of moonlight reaching down though the water, waves and ripples. In the negative, the marine beings look almost fairy-like, ethereal and mysterious. These images are not the cool visions of a dry, mechanical photography, or instantaneous apprehensions of time; through these cameraless images, we feel the echo of water and we are immersed in the incalculable seaborne experience of place.

4.3 Cameraless photography as an instrument of intersubjectivity

The photogram's lack of perspectival focus and displaced subject orientation can open a space for the contemplation of an alternative subjectivity. This contemplation is shifted to a haptic reading of the image, as the viewer scans its

[290] ***Procession #10*** (detail), 2021, unique silver gelatin photogram. By Author.

Figure 16. Detail from *Procession #10, Arapawa* (2021).

opaque surface, and is forced to consider another interpretation of phenomena. This aim and working methodology, of ecstatic provocation, shifts the focus of the images produced in my work to a wider contemplation of material-oriented, processual, intersubective, place-experience.

Cameraless images of place, lacking the humanistic viewpoint generated through optics, thus question the primacy of the visually-oriented, objective camera based-image by being equally compelling. This introduces an argument for cameraless images to present a more post-phenomenological register of lived-experience, inseparable from material characteristics located in, or shaping, place,

something arguably not achievable by optics alone. ***Genoa #2***[291] (fig. 17 below) encapsulates this possibility.

To "gain access to the pre-reflective experiences as they occur in the taken for granted spheres of our everyday lifeworld?"[292] describes the phenomenological questioning that the Husserlian method of epoché (bracketing) and reduction makes in order to focus on pre-reflective experience. And, an analogy can be made with the setting aside of assumed or fixed understandings, and the setting aside of the camera and its rationalist optics, in order to get closer, or go back to, the "things themselves."[293]

Cameraless photography puts aside the protective apparatus (camera body) that normally prevents photochemical materials from really 'touching' the world; except through the optics of the lens and light, which privileges vision while distances us from the tactile sense. Cameraless photography 'brackets' the camera/lens and allows the viewer to re-gain access to embodied vision, by means of images created both through light and touch. As 'witnessing materials' to the world and our experience of it, cameraless photographs can be seen as being instrumental documents of both tactile and visual phenomena.

The camera in my study is placed in parenthesis, as an assumption that might stand in the way of access to an originary meaning of phenomena. The 'reduction'

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[291] ***Genoa #2***, 2020, unique gelatin silver photogram, 45 x 60 cm. By Author.

[292] Max van Manen, ***Phenomenology of Practice*** (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014), 215.

[293] Edmund Husserl, ***In*** *Logical Investigations*, ed. Dermot Moran (London: Routledge, 2001 (1900/1901), 168.

Figure 17. *Genoa #2* (2020).

in phenomenology, ***reducere*** (or 'redux,' as a correct English translation), is the methodological term that describes a positive action or gesture that permits us to rediscover, through 'direct or primitive contact,' the uniqueness of the particular phenomenon to which we are oriented. In my study, the practice of the cameraless technique is considered a means to phenomenological reduction, through the gesture of exposure—external to any protective container. This action aims to remove any barriers that may prevent "the phenomena and events of the lifeworld to appear or show themselves as they give themselves."[294] By making this

[294] van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice*, 221.

photographic redux in the maritime conditions described, an attentiveness and sense of wonder are gained as the work is produced, and a closer access to phenomena is achieved.

This attentive attitude is also reflected in the development of evocative latent images as they emerge in the darkroom. The process of reduction and production of vocative materials alludes to the production of vocative writing in a conventional phenomenological study. My methodology involves stepping outside the familiarity of camera-based photography and into the maritime world, to reveal mysteries of every-day ocean experience, through the latent ecstasis of cameraless images.

As has been described already in chapter 3, however, post-phenomenology of place moves beyond the reduction of place as a mere social construct, by decentring human being's intentionality and putting emphasis on the agency of materiality in the process of place experience. For the purposes of my methodology, my research shares aspects of phenomenology's roots, along with the common grounds and the distinctions of post-phenomenology. One of the key concepts to take from phenomenology is 'intentionality,' which in post-phenomenology, is replaced by 'intersubjectivity.' "Therefore, post-phenomenological reading of intersubjectivity will activate objects [things] and places in the process of experience formation."[295] In other words, experience of place incorporates the active role of 'things' rather than seeing those things as secondary to human agency. A post-phenomenological reading of cameraless images made in the study of place may interpret their process of 'becoming' as

[295] Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place," 17.

decentring human intentionality and registering intersubjectivity. This reading of cameraless photography, as decentring humanist perspectives and activating intersubjectivity, is echoed in the analysis of photographic theory that has been discussed previously in chapter three. These readings explain how cameraless photography forms a natural partnership with a methodology concerned with materials, processes and phenomena as active stakeholders in the reading of my context.

4.4 Poetic development

Poetics is a philosophical methodology, originally from Aristotle's *Poetics* (c.335 BC), and is his analysis of dramatic tragedy.

> Like all representation, drama selectively condenses and structures what it presents. It reveals the inner logic and causal organisation of an apparently disconnected series of events, encompassing them to form a single extended, self-contained and completed activity.[296]

This literary theory can be applied or adapted to many disciplines, including photography. A poetics of space, for instance, can be a structure for thinking about the arts or the poetic image, as in Gaston Bachelard's philosophical text, *The Poetics of Space*.[297] In a collection of essays, *Poetics of Space: A Critical Photographic Anthology*,[298] Steve Yates draws writing from a range of artists and

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296 Rorty Okesenberg, "The Psychology of Aristotelian Tragedy," in *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, ed. Rorty Okesenberg (Chichester and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 4.

297 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1958).

298 Steve Yates, ed. *Poetics of Space: A Critical Photographic Anthology* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

critics, including Moholy-Nagy and El Lissitzky, around Bachelard's oneiric-poetic phenomenology,[299] and its implications for the representation of space in art and photography. Although the basic premise of the essays in Yates' book would seem key to my research, apart from Bachelard's central text, only Jean-Claude Lemagny's *Is Photography a Plastic Art?*[300] explores similar concerns with photography's association between vision and tactility.

These contemplations of the photographic image and poetics of space undoubtedly inspired my research to develop a poetics of maritime space as an organising principle for a critical practice of cameraless photography. The poetics I have developed throughout this research draw reflexively on a range of inputs that can generally be referred to as 'processual'. These poetics, beginning with the context of being seaborne, derive from practice involving such inputs as experimentation, recorded observation, theory, criticism and dialogue; and influences from other disciplines, such as scientific and philosophical thinking, encounters, experiences and instincts.

Poetic development may include: technical aspects and knowledge of the medium or genre, understanding history, the world and its politics, the contemporary, pushing boundaries, rethinking and remaking. All these aspects converge to constitute the active flow between process and self-contained, complete creative outcome.

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[299] oneiric | ə(ʊ)ˈnʌɪrɪk | adjective formal. "Relating to dreams or dreaming," ***Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged***, 12th ed., 2014, S.v. "oneiric." Retrieved from https://www.thefreedictionary.com/oneiric

[300] Jean-Claude Lemagny, "Is Photography a Plastic Art?" trans. Thomas Gunther, in *Poetics of Space: A Critical Photographic Anthology*, ed. Steve Yates, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995),133-43.

4.5 The poetics of a seaborne place

> We turn to the ocean itself: to its three-dimensional and turbulent materiality, and to encounters with that materiality, in order to explore how thinking *with* the sea, can assist in reconceptualising our geographical understandings…a *wet ontology* not merely to endorse the perspective of a world of flows, connections, liquidities, and becomings, but also…a means by which the sea's material and phenomenological distinctiveness can facilitate the reimagining and reenlivening [*sic*] of a world ever on the move.[301]

Steinberg and Peters engage with "the growing numbers of human geographers who are turning away from the plane geometry of points, lines, and areas that have long grounded the discipline,"[302] including Doreen Massey,[303] who challenges several of the more denigrating theories that have been written around oceanic space. The various flat-ontologies that "abolishes the notion of scale and replaces places with *sites*," and theories of volume which "have sought to reanimate space as both context and site of politics by emphasising its verticality, its materiality, and its temporality,"[304] are found to be lacking in an account of "the chaotic but *rhythmic* turbulence of the material world."[305] In Steinberg's and Peter's text, they thoroughly dismantle some of the *dismissals* of the ocean in political theory, particularly Carl Schmitt's *The Nomos of The Earth*,[306] in which he perceives the ocean from an immaterial, unknowable, and consequently 'insubstantial'

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301 Steinberg and Peters, "Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking," in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33 (2015): 248

302 Steinberg and Peters, "Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces": 248.

303 Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004).

304 Ibid, 248

305 Ibid.

306 Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* (New York: Telos, 2003).

perspective compared with the land. In his earlier work ***Land and Sea,***[307] Schmitt is less dismissive, "identifying a substantive logic of the ocean, as well as the other three fundamental elements—earth, air and fire,"[308] in what is described by one commentator as a work of 'mytho-poesis'. In ***Land and Sea***, Schmitt "draws on the works of Herman Melville, Jules Michelet, and others to identify the ocean as a contentious space of power conflict among humans as well as between humans and nature.

In addition to Schmitt, Steinberg and Peters draw our attention to other viewpoints that are also dismissive of the ocean as a meaningful space, citing both Claude Lévis Strauss (1973) and Roland Barthes (1972). For these thinkers, the ocean is "a space rendered ideologically and physically insignificant in reference to sociocultural and geopolitical concerns."[309] However, in their article, Steinberg and Peters dispute these ideas with those of Michael Serres and others, who repudiate such denigrations of oceanic space, and instead view the ocean as a complex phenomenon and a vital arena for our understanding of place.

Further contention is explicated through Jonathon Raban's analysis of wave formation in ***A Passage to Juneau: A Sea and its Meanings,***[310] in which he describes the shaping of waves and the ocean's movement from his observations aboard a boat while on a voyage between Seattle and Juneau. This account of the author's solo journey, aboard a 10 metre sailing yacht, brings us a concept of the ocean from a maritime perspective, which recognises and alludes to the sea as a

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307 Carl Schmitt, ***Land and Sea*** (San Diego, CA: Counter Currents, 2014).
308 Steinberg and Peters, 249.
309 Ibid.
310 Jonathon Raban, ***A Passage to Juneau: A Sea and its Meanings*** (London: Picador, 1999).

three-dimensional, atmospheric form. While acknowledging the ontology of land-based, or 'dry,' concepts of space, a 'wet ontology' such as Steinberg's and Peter's forces us to recognise that the sea "presents us with a space that is emergent through a particular co-composition of matter and forces. In turn, this hydro-elemental assemblage allows us to rethink motion and matter and how it shapes the world as we know it."[311] Steinberg and Peters continue to address this through a maritime lens in the human geographical practice and relational research of Jon Anderson, and his interest in the activities of kayaking and surfing. Anderson discusses these activities in terms of convergences with the ocean, and describes how the 'surfed wave' can be understood as a relational place. Generally, this is expressed through an intimate and intense connection to the sea and swell, or more specifically, "those who actually *engage* the ocean, like sailors and, perhaps more profoundly, surfers and swimmers, become one with the waves as the waves become one with them, in a blend of complementarity and opposition."[312]

Steinberg's, Peters' and Anderson's provocative appeal to wet ontologies requires us to "go beyond considering matter as static substance and leads us to consider the various ways in which matter changes physical state as it moves through, and simultaneously constructs, both space and time."[313] These ideas are in stark contrast to territorial concepts of space and solid land. These provocations are developed around Paul Virilio's writings on the materiality of water and the "hydrosphere,"[314] and contrasted with other thinkers who critique terrestrial or state ontologies with those of the volume of the sea. Virilio argues further that

311 Steinberg and Peters, 250.
312 Steinberg and Peters, 245.
313 Steinberg and Peters, 252.
314 Paul Virilio, *Bunker Archeology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1994), 10.

understanding the Anthropocene world as an 'assemblage' is an effective way of describing the "churnings of the ocean, that both enables and disrupts (or reterritorialises and deterritorialises) earthly striations,"[315] including those of matter and time.

Steinberg and Peters present their argument for "an alternative perspective in which time, as expressed through *assembled* matter, is nonlinear and fluctuating, and matter is mutable and leaky—part of a process of ongoing reformation."[316] These ideas are articulated in my research in the mutable leakiness of cameraless photography's processes and materialities. The chemical, temporal and physical materiality of the ocean, integral to my images, "can never be separated from either the experience of the ocean or the meanings that we attach to oceanic experiences."[317] The authors also differentiate between geological land-time as referenced by Massey[318] (which is generally speaking, not experienced) and the lived-time encounter with ocean mobility. Their example suggests that

> one can hike on a mountain trail without realising that one is traversing a landform whose existence is the result of tectonic subduction. It is much more difficult to step into the surf without encountering and reflecting on both water's mobility and its depth.[319]

These same concepts of lived temporal experience, in, on and around the ocean relate to the key concepts of my methodology in this research. A crossover between these practices and my own can be made in reference to the previously

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315 Steinberg and Peters, 255.
316 Ibid, 256.
317 Ibid.
318 Massey, *For Space*.
319 Steinberg and Peters, 258

mentioned surfing and kayaking experiential work of Anderson. His description of engagement with the sea on a kayak presents a maritime experience of the sea that is perceptually different to land-based experiences of place and time. My research also makes use of these ideas as a methodological framework for interrogating cameraless photography's potential to document the kind of engagement with the sea that Anderson refers to.

Drawing on this issue, and the previously discussed concepts of cameraless photography as a witnessing material to record intersubjective experience of place, informs my study's key methodological concerns. This approach employs cameraless photography's aesthetic qualities as uniquely able to interpret and respond to the poetics of seaborne phenomena. Working with tactile-oriented aspects of photochemistry and raw materials of photography, my study acknowledges the various agencies co-forming and co-existent in place and experience of place. Widely intersubjective, post-phenomenological readings require reference to the tactile senses and the 'onflow' of tangible activity in place, between objects, beings and processes, in time and space. This tactile exchange is particularly true of the sea, as a place of constant flux, volatility, and more than liquid materiality; things which are often 'felt' more than they are seen, especially when on the sea. As has been discussed in section 4.5, the seaborne or maritime place is also conceptually fogged by land-oriented dismissals and quotidian accounts of it as both featureless, and yet mysterious. I have also shown that other accounts invite us to step outside such everyday interpretations to consider a wider materialist understanding of the sea and the seaborne as place. Consequently, my methodology implements the cameraless aesthetic and its decentring, ecstatic processes; as instrumental to a post-phenomenological interpretation of place, from an intimately seaborne perspective.

4.6 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has described the methodological concerns of my practice through a discursive survey. In section 4.2 (*The intelligence of liquids and importance of tactility*), the liquid ontologies of analogue photographic processes were extended to include the significance of liquid, tactile and visual phenomena in context. Following this, in section 4.3, (*Cameraless photography as an instrument of intersubjectivity*), I explained how cameraless photography addresses notions of intersubjectivity and decentring of intentionality in a study of place. In section 4.4 (*Poetic development*), I outlined the concept of poetic development as a methodological structure; and in section 4.5 (*The poetics of a seaborne place*), Steinberg's, Peters' and Anderson's provocative appeal to a 'more than liquid' oceanic ontology was extended to include a consideration of the poetics of seaborne place that draws attention to the temporal and tangible qualities of being at sea. These conceptual approaches ground my methodology and relate to my ontological positions. My discussions have related to my ontological positions of tactile sensory experience and tangible materiality in understanding the place of the sea, and the role cameraless photography can play in documenting this seaborne experience. I have chosen this approach over others, in order to focus on a tangible aspect of sensory place experience which would be overlooked by the culturally preferred representations of visually-oriented media, to witness the phenomena of place. The reasons for these cultural preferences have been explained briefly, and as I have shown in chapter 3, expose a contemporary relevance for artists and critical photography thinkers and writers. I agree with the notion that sees the critical challenge of ocular centrism, to be found in our culture as a relevant narrative, and I see my work in this research study as contributing to this critique.

In order to achieve these research aims I have taken advantage of my own experience and knowledge of context and field of research. Drawing on my seaborne experiences and living situation onboard a boat, together with my knowledge of analogue photographic materials, I have been able to produce the unique conditions which extend cameraless practices beyond previous related studies of oceanic place from the land or shoreline. Living on a boat especially has given me unique insights into the experience of being seaborne, while understanding how I might best employ photographic materials to document its tangible aspects. It has also allowed me to work nocturnally in places only accessible by boat, effectively turning my living space into a practice-based research studio and vessel.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Findings:
Phenomenological sightings in a cameraless study

5.1 Anecdote: On watch

I am seated low in the cockpit, strapped in with a harness. I can trail a hand in the water on the leeward side, to starboard looking toward the coast of Brittany. I see nothing other than the waves that charge underneath us and away into blackness, leaving white, effervescing foam hissing on the surface as we slide past. As the sea rises up towards me, I become fascinated by the patterns as they appear and disappear. There are periods of relative silence as the wind rises and falls; the rigging quietens as another squall builds behind us.

To port, on the windward side, the waves tower up and up, steep, dark and thunderous. At first I think we are going to be overwhelmed by the pace and height of these juggernauts as they sweep eastwards. After a while, I get used to the 'ride' of the little yacht as she slips across the swell, down into the trough, then up. It feels like the moment you arrive at the top of a hill.

5.2 Response to theory and methods

This chapter discusses how I have developed a methodological enquiry that extends our understanding and scholarship of cameraless photographic production in an autobiographical maritime context. Specifically, I address the research question: *In what ways can cameraless photography provoke and register a latent ecstasis harboured in the poetics of 'everyday' seaborne experience?*

Through this study, cameraless photography's ontological bond with visual and tactile phenomena is taken advantage of to defamiliarise an otherwise quotidian context. This methodology aims to identify latent phenomenological worth, harboured in analogue photographic materials and exploited by the tactility of cameraless process. In other words, analogue photographic materials (especially when used with cameraless techniques) were used to register aspects of experience, and be witnessing materials to a sensory experience of phenomena.

My research was aided by reviewing the practice of other artists with cameraless and cross-disciplinary practices to identify a contextual gap in knowledge in this field. My own practice initially interrogated the properties and potentialities of analogue photochemistry, through exposure to environmental phenomena, using a range of cameraless techniques. These experimental investigations built the foundations for processes which would develop within a phenomenological framework and context.

My aims and achievements will be discussed by relating, wherever possible, to conclusive artworks, using the following criteria:

1. How my findings/artworks relate to the theory and methods discussed previously:
    a) rethinking our relationship to photography,
    b) sightings of ecstatic transformation in cameraless aesthetics; how do the findings relate to my research questions, aims and objectives?

2. How my findings/artworks relate to the gaps in the literature I identified earlier:

a) redefining cameraless photography as a post-phenomenological aesthetic; why I have reached this particular conclusion?

b) extending the field of cameraless photography through context; what implications do the findings have for the discipline and for existing understanding?

5.2.1 Rethinking our relationship to photography

Cameraless artists are generally interested in the photochemical response of analogue materials. There are some exceptions however, for instance, Andreas Müller-Pohle's use of the scanner and Thomas Ruff's simulated photograms. Both these artists, as Batchen suggests, are "studiously replaying an analogue process in digital terms so as to make a spectacle of its logic."[320] However, artists engaged in this kind of 'replay' of analogue photography (such as the handmade, and the unique contact or photogram print) are also, in some way, responding to digital photography's "ruthless dematerialization of the photograph."[321] In the book, *Photography off the Scale*[322] (discussed in chapter 3), several authors argue that the photographic image has become unrecognisably transformed due to digital overproduction and circulation. The overall conceptual argument raised is that our relationship to photography has changed for better or for worse, and that this needs to be addressed to better understand this transformation.

As the title of Dvořák's and Parrika's book claims, photography is now 'in excess' of what is notionally accepted, and therefore our relationship to the photograph is considered as something different to its pre-digital condition. Several of the essays in their book demonstrate that creative practices already

320 Batchen, *Emanations*, 42.
321 Ibid, 42.
322 Dvořák and Parrika, ed., *Photography off the Scale*.

challenge common assumptions around our relationship to current photography. In particular, Batchen[323] suggests cameraless practices can be seen to be political, as they work outside the digital global power dynamic of the photographic/digital image industry, and are therefore, potentially are able to critique the mainstream systems of information technology. This retro movement often reverts to an archaic production method, while the images' aesthetic quality may be seen to subvert the drive toward the complexity of the technological model.

In the practice of an artist using cameraless techniques, any sense of the political arising from the technique is arguably implicit, whereas its use as a political medium more often transpires from the context in which the artist chooses to work. However, because digital images are so inherent to socio-cultural metaphysics,[324] it is feasible that artists make a subtle political statement simply by choosing to work with analogue media.

Similar to slow movement practitioners and downshifters, as discussed in chapter 3 (section 3.3), I am conscious of a definite sense of 'going against the grain' of *mainstream* commercial photographic technology, among cameraless photographic artists. I also have a certain satisfaction in producing photographic works without complex technical apparatus taking advantage of a deepened knowledge of photochemistry, albeit unconventional use. In addition, seeing a revival amongst a seemingly growing number of practitioners of cameraless techniques, there is a sense of community knitted together by their interest in the

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323 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," in Dvořák and Parrika, ed., *Photography Off the Scale*.

324 Meaning the nature of consciousness, and the relationship between mind and matter in the evolution of culture.

technique's material responses. Often, it is these qualities that lead practitioners into contexts and phenomena which the cameraless technique responds uniquely. To clarify my aims, I present my own research as an enquiry which highlights some outstanding features of analogue photographic materials, such as chemical and material ontology, and haptic potential in the witnessing of phenomena; rather than a subversion of its successor.

My findings in this study have likewise been steered by the technique and its materials, along with events and decisions, and my development of the context and methodology for a cameraless application. By bringing together analogue photography and the seaborne context, the ontological connections between photography's prehistory, and an equally archaic maritime context, collide. Both are ontologically linked by liquidity and the materiality of liquid. The images I have produced represent aspects of the maritime which this study presents as manifestations of post-phenomenological place. The role of liquid in the making of an analogue photograph highlights a similarity between photochemical materials and processes with the archaic production methods of dyeing, washing and bleaching (as I discussed in section 4.1, *The intelligence of liquids and importance of tactility*). This liquid ontology of photography both reveals, and is revealed by, the ontology of the seaborne. In particular, in ***Procession*** (series), we may contemplate a range of processual phenomena accessed in a distinctly tangible form. Placing cameraless photography in this ontological context opens up the possibility for the viewer to rethink our relationship with photography, both in its past and present conditions.

My presentation of works in the International Artist's Residency Te Whare Hēra,[325] with its position only metres from the harbour's extent, makes an obvious contextual link to the research. However, especially in the ***Procession*** series, aspects of context appear as components of the material condition of the images. The ***Procession*** series images are displayed openly, without glass or frames, so that close observation of material qualities can be made. In many of the images, non-photographic details can be seen, caused by chaffing or the action of water and salinity. For example, in a detail of *Procession #11, Ngaruru*[326] (fig. 18; below), the emulsion has ruptured, revealing paper fibres beneath; salinity seeps in to inhibit and react with silver salts as they bleed and drift, darkening freely. These are reactive elements that can only be attributed to the raw cameraless application of analogue photographic materials in this context.

Throughout the images, there are traces of photochemistry touching objects, and reacting with liquids, chemicals and light. My works confirm that these processual manifestations are inherent to the maritime context of the works, and to an experience of the environment beyond the gallery door. I have presented them as overtly contextual images, which, as Batchen notes, are "all documents of their own coming into being, rather than just of a world outside the photograph."[327] Similarly, my images document their 'becoming' into the world.

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325 The International Artist's Residency is situated on Clyde Quay Wharf, Te Aro, Wellington. The residency programme is a Massey University College of Creative Arts, Whiti o Rehua (School of Art) and Wellington City Council initiative. http://www.tewharehera.ac.nz/about

326 ***Procession #11, Ngaruru*** (detail), 2021, unique silver gelatin photogram, 7.6 x 5 cm. By Author.

327 Fontcuberta and Batchen, "Coda," 283.

Figure 18. Detail (a) from *Procession #11, Ngaruru* (2021).

To an extent, this world is *carried within*—rather than just represented by—my images. During its creation, the image absorbs its fetishistic power through contact with the sea's hydro-elemental assemblage. This can be seen in areas of colouration; for example, in ***Procession #5, Te Whanganui-a-Tara***[328] (fig. 19; below). In a detail of ***Procession #5, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*** (fig. 20; below), rust swirls caused by oxidisation or metallic reaction have soaked into the paper and

[328] ***Procession #5, Te Whanganui-a-Tara***, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.

Figure 19. *Procession #5, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

Figure 20. Detail of *Procession #5, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

image. This colouration (bearing in mind the images are made with black and white photographic papers), as well as more sculptural reactions such as warping of the paper, are all subtle confirmation of this processual register of phenomena. These aesthetic details clearly support the methodological aims and conceptual objectives of the research. Not only that, the images present an overlapping and co-forming of image and place—unique to the context, time and the method of making. It is evident that these findings confirm an entirely different way of thinking about photography than is feasible with a contemporary digital image, perhaps inspiring a rethinking of our *relationship* to the photograph now.

5.2.2 Sightings of ecstatic transformation in cameraless aesthetics

In this section, I discuss how my images can be seen as invoking the ecstatic-aesthetic—a stepping outside of the quotidian—in the realm of the maritime. A cameraless photograph presents to the viewer a defamiliarised image of the world as objects of reflection. The viewer of a photograph generally expects to see a 'view' of a scene or object, provided by the camera's positioning and the optic of the lens—even if this challenges normal perspective. These expectations can be disrupted when one is confronted with a cameraless image; an image which instead forces the viewer to scan the opaque surface for information, seen out of context. Instead of 'looking through' to the object, as the viewer would normally expect with a photograph, the object appears on or immediately at the surface of the paper as if, for instance, it was pressed against the under-surface of ice.

Cameraless images can also include traces from their contextual surroundings. For example, *Procession #9, Matiu*[329] (fig. 21) and its details (figs. 22 and 23; below) display surface stains and flaws that act as a suggestion of the touch of something more toxic or corrosive, on or just below the surface of the image. Transformations like this are not mere distortions of optics, but visions of another subjectivity, altogether different to our own. On the other hand, there is a familiarity with certain forms sharing our physical and chemical world, touched by and absorbed into these images, as can be seen in *Procession #11, Ngaruru*[330] (fig. 24) and its detail (fig. 25; below). This tension, between the familiar maritime aesthetic and its defamiliarisation, can provoke an ecstatic transformation for the viewer.

Figure 21. *Procession #9, Matiu* (2021).

329 *Procession #9, Matiu*, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.
330 *Procession #11, Ngaruru*, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.

Figure 22. Detail (a) of *Procession #9, Matiu* (2021).

Figure 23. Detail (b) of *Procession #9, Matiu* (2021).

Figure 24. *Procession #11, Ngaruru* (2021).

Figure 25. Detail (b) of *Procession #11, Ngaruru* (2021).

To create the images of this study, I carried photosensitive 'cargo,' stowed below the decks onboard a seaborne vessel. This act intertwines the narratives of the camera (as a container of photosensitive materials and captured images) with those of the ship (with its equivalent concepts of acquisition, enclosure and distancing). These narratives, all of which are essential elements of Cartesian rationalist philosophy, are inverted through the cameraless process by removing the optically distancing lens and camera, in favour of a tactile-oriented exposure. Instead of being enclosed and protected from the volatility of the maritime environment, reaction and transformation is encouraged through direct contact. Consequently, the essence and aura of maritime place-experience is evoked by, and transmitted into the image, through the fetish-like association of direct contact (as discussed in section 3.7 *Fossils and fetishes*). A tension develops between the 'everydayness' of the maritime aesthetic and the defamiliarising ecstatic tactile qualities of cameraless photography of place.

When the cameraless image is scrutinised for the familiarity of focal depth and 'comforting' objectivity, the viewer is forced to step-outside this familiarity and consider the unfamiliar subjectivity of other tangible things. This defamiliarising function of the cameraless image can be a source of ecstatic transformation of how place is perceived. The ecstatic transformation opens a 'window' of perception to demonstrate that "within the context of post-phenomenology, place is experienced to be inseparable from its materialistic characteristics."[331] My cameraless photographs witness these 'materialistic characteristics' as haptic images of "things (objects) located in or shaping [it], the observer's body-based

[331] Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place": 20.

consciousness of place and unconscious aspects of the subject's mind,"[332] while enfolding time and space into a tangible image. In doing so, the viewer is therefore decentred from their familiar human perspective and forced to confront their own state of continuous change.

As mentioned earlier in section 2.5 (*The quotidian sea*), Gosetti-Ferencei draws on Heidegger's analysis of Rilke, and Merleau-Ponty's analysis of Cézanne, for 'sightings' of "ecstatic exposure of the everyday."[333] Cameraless photography, as evidenced in my study, can extend the ecstatic-aesthetic of the everyday as profoundly as any of her examples. This is achieved through a closer association with a post-phenomenological reading of place and experience of place, with its extended emphasis on the significance of the agency of objects, processes and materiality within an understanding of place. As covered in chapter 3, post-phenomenology moves from a more human centred study of experience to one in which the agency of objects, things and processes intertwine with memory and experience in a wider focus of place studies. Accordingly, my images encompass a tangible, material-oriented, maritime place-experience, which promotes the consideration of the process-driven essence of a place and the re-situation of the human subject within this seaborne place-experience.

Cameraless images, such as *Procession #8, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*[334] (fig. 26) and its detail (fig. 27; below), defamiliarise the quotidian landscape and confront

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332 Talebian and Uraz, "The Post Phenomenology of Place": 21.

333 Gosetti-Ferencei, *Ecstatic Quotidian*, 6.

334 *Procession #8, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.

Figure 26. *Procession #8, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

Figure 27. Detail of *Procession #8, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

the viewer with an ecstatic place-experience. They are documents of the liquid register of material and tangible things, which are recorded by touching the surface of the paper, soaking into its fibres, and reacting with the chemistry and fabric of the medium.

5.3 Expanding on previous enquiries

5.3.1 Redefining cameraless photography as a post-phenomenological aesthetic

Unlike more ecologically focused cameraless practices, my studies of place acknowledge the non-human and human as co-forming place-experience. This is because a seaborne experience of place incorporates a tangible co-existence between the human and non-human, on or around the sea. Rather than separating nature from the human, a post-phenomenological study can make ecstatic transformation possible through an intensity of vision. This intensity of vision may be interpreted through the phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, which provide a means of approaching the experience of vision ascribed to certain paintings: the invisible made visible, the exposure of place-materiality, and the entwining of time and space into an event. This intensity of vision through exposure, revelation and entwining are not only evident in my works, but are evident as phenomena as they show themselves in the seaborne context.

For example, in *Procession #1, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*[335] (fig. 28) and its details (figs. 29 and 30; below), a layering of fluid and photonic phenomena in the shapes

[335] *Procession #1, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.

Figure 28. *Procession #1, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

Figure 29. Detail (a) of *Procession #1, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

Figure 30. Detail (b) of *Procession #1, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

and forms is made, as light, liquid, contact and time have all worked together on the surface of the paper. These images are not created with a mechanical shutter exposure, glimpsing the world outside itself, as Batchen remarked. Time and the sea have washed over the surfaces of both paper and boat; time and light have 'soaked' into the image, leaving traces of this overlapping. The surface pattern of a synthetic texture looms beneath a distinctly natural fluid one. Temporal and spatial manoeuvre have not been composited in any mechanical sense of the word, but are all there in the one unique exposure made at that time and in that place.

Exposed on the waterline of the boat's fibreglass hull, the photochemical emulsion of the paper sheets come into contact with the sea, and is transformed by it, like the blistering surface of Pi's skin.[336] Light is filtered through the ripples and particles, beings and non-beings; temporal and spatial movements layer the imprints of a processual place-experience. During exposure, a change in the wind can also flutter the paper as a cloud covers the moon. The boat points into the breeze, shadows of the rigging fall across the deck, as a wave breaks lazily against the bow. The co-composition of these forces and matter are materialised in the images.

The various physical and chemical traces that can be seen evoke the more tactile-oriented experiences of nocturnal seaborne activity—as these materiality are often more 'felt' than seen. This also reflects the experience of making the work, which takes place in darkness. During such forays down by the waterline, you become very aware of the undeniable materiality of the ocean as it begins to occupy all aspects of your sensory experience, in particular one's haptic or felt senses. The sea is on every surface, even the air is wet and salty. As an embodied perception you can hear, see and feel the sea—not just its wetness but also its motion around and within your body, through the marine structure of the boat, and all other beings and non-beings move and flow with this motion—within the formation of the image.

As has been discussed in chapter 4, post-phenomenology is material-oriented and can gain meaning from cameraless studies of place, since both are concerned

336 Martel, The Life of Pi, 192.

with the tangible aspects of place. This tangible focus distinguishes the cameraless from the camera-based landscape image. This tangible material-oriented ontology is clearly apparent in work such as *Procession #12, Ngaruru*[337] (fig. 31, below). The humidity and salinity of the ocean can be seen, in a detail of *Procession #12, Ngaruru* (fig. 32, below), to rupture and warp the paper's surface, dissolving the layers of gelatin and silver nitrate compounds, while they react to light. During and after exposure, the process of reaction continues to occur, (for example, in the oxidisation around fastenings seen in fig. 33, a detail of *Procession #11, Ngaruru;* below) where objects leave their imprint, as the liquid and more-than-liquid agency of place co-forms the images.

5.3.2 Extending the field of cameraless photography

In order to demonstrate the implications of my findings for the discipline of cameraless photography, and our existing understanding of it, this section describes how I have extended the field of cameraless photography through my contextual, ontological and epistemological positions. The contextual setting of my research involves the immersive poetic structure and dynamics of an autobiographical, seaborne experience. This extends previous enquiries, which have contributed to studies of coastal places, on or near the sea, using similar cameraless techniques. Although the contexts of these previous investigations are ocean-related, there are also differences in my work, which have been identified as defining factors for many theoretical and non-theoretical ocean thinkers,

[337] *Procession #12, Ngaruru*, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.

Figure 31. *Procession #12, Ngaruru* (2021).

Figure 32. Detail of *Procession #12, Ngaruru* (2021).

Figure 33. Detail (c) of *Procession #11, Ngaruru* (2021).

considered already in this exegesis. For instance, where the concept of the ocean's extended ontology, beyond its liquid state, has been explored, and evoked through the processes of cameraless photography; and my redefinition of cameraless photography as an instrument to witness post-phenomenological place.

The contextual dynamics of site, for example in the image Procession #10, Arapawa (fig. 34) and its detail (fig. 35, below), made at the boat's waterline, are directly affected by the temporal and spatial structure of the boat; what part of that

Figure 34. *Procession #10, Arapawa* (2021).

Figure 35. Detail of *Procession #10, Arapawa* (2021).

structure, the images were made on; what surfaces and substances the photosensitive paper came into contact with; where the images were made, in terms of the location of the anchorage or mooring of the yacht ; the environmental conditions, in relation to different temperatures (of the water and air), salinity, atmosphere and ambient light (from the moon, stars and other sources) present at the time of the exposure; when the images were made; as well as the techniques and materials specifically adapted to making the work on the sea. These fluid and material assemblages of lived and temporal encounter with place-experience, are exclusive to my images, and sets them apart from previous enquiries.

My research extends land-bounded enquiries to one bounded fully by the sea. The differences between these two spheres are not particularly subtle. The movement of the sea from the position of being on a boat on the sea, and its haptic manifestation as an image, the fluctuating, nonlinear, liquid aspects of the sea echoed in cameraless photography's processes and materiality (see sections 4.1 and 4.4). The co-composition of visual and tactile reactions to the maritime environment as place come together to form a haptic vision, carried within the image, not as a resemblance of the place, but as an indexical link to place itself.

When we inhabit the sea as humans on a boat, the sea becomes a place. That place exists around the boat and where the boat is located. The boat (and everything on it) is part of that immediate place; and is active along with all the everything else in the seaborne environment. Additionally, this seaborne place is an intimate living and working place for me. Images created here, in nocturnal anchorages and moorings, are indexical imprints of my own tangible and non-tangible co-forming of place. For instance, in both the images *Procession #4,*

Matiu[338] (fig. 36) and ***Procession #2, Te Whanganui-a-Tara***[339] (fig. 37; below), while lacking the perspectival depth of an optical image, there is nevertheless an illusionary depth. Surface details are sharply focussed, and pitch-black incisions break through the veils of foggy grey, into which soft, white speckles melt. These effects are created by the real temporal and photographic overlapping of materiality. Seaborne and bounded by the sea, the images are also bound by time. Many or all of these 'things' are in concert at a unique durational 'moment,' silently grasped and fixed onto paper, documents of the trace of visual and tactile phenomena.

The implications for the field and discipline of photography are: for a cameraless practice to be used as a post-phenomenological instrument in the study of the sea as place and experience of sea as place. Through my application of this technique, it is proposed that the cameraless aesthetic may provoke an ecstatic response, drawing our attention to overlooked, post-phenomenological aspects of this otherwise familiar context. I have used the defamiliarising, decentring, tactile-oriented aesthetics of cameraless photography, to support this argument. This is demonstrated and made evident through my research practice and exegesis, which has investigated the potential of the cameraless photographic process, to extend our understanding of seaborne contexts.

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338 ***Procession #4, Matiu***, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.

339 ***Procession #2, Te Whanganui-a-Tara***, 2021, unique gelatin silver photogram, 46 x 106 cm. By Author.

Figure 36. *Procession #4, Matiu* (2021).

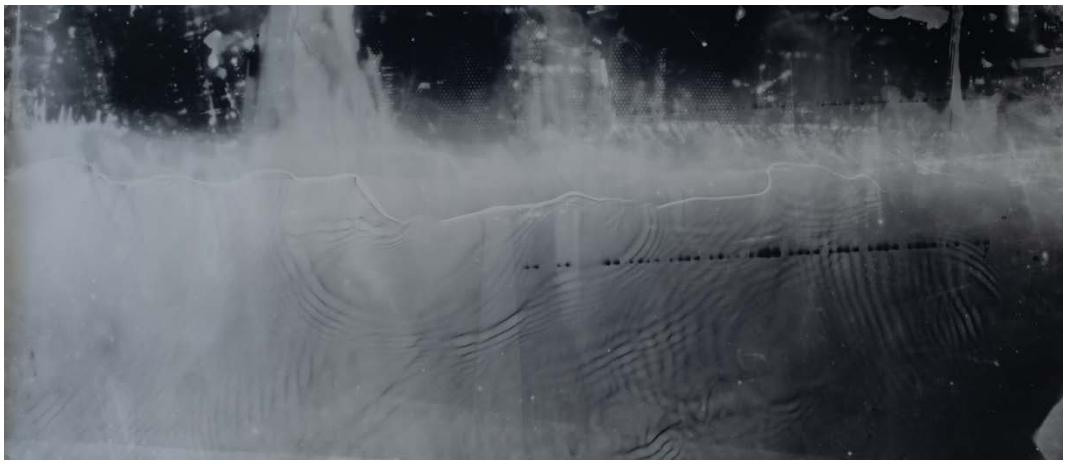

Figure 37. *Procession #2, Te Whanganui-a-Tara* (2021).

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions

In this final section, I summarise the resolution of my research questions; how I have addressed my aims and objectives; what the significance and implications of my findings are; and how they relate to my key concepts. In addition, I will discuss the contribution this study has made to the field, and finally, the limitations of the study and questions for further research.

1. *In what ways can cameraless photography provoke and register a latent ecstasis harboured in the poetics of 'everyday' seaborne experience?*

I have addressed this question by identifying particular processes and characteristics of cameraless photography which promote the viewer to confront a defamiliarised aesthetic, as a way of describing an otherwise ordinary aspect of the world. Recognising the images as photographic, the viewer is also aware that these images defamiliarise our understanding of what a photograph is, through a technique which has removed the camera apparatus and its familiar optical traits. Many of these traits are associated with ideas of reality, objectivity and representational truth. These characteristic traits are further defamiliarised by other attributes, such as the marks of tactile contact and the revelation of chemistry– which are not normally part of a lens-based photographic image. My research takes advantage of these haptic qualities and processes, in order to re-examine how photography can be used in certain contexts that may require a more

embodied representation, such as a seaborne experiences. This challenges our assumed role of photography as a coolly visual, optically-mediated medium, and draws attention to a more tangible ontology. This ontological link of photography's visual and tangible qualities strengthens ideas of embodied perception. Cameraless photography can display this ontology as a genuinely haptic representation of an object—or as in my study, a place. As haptic representations of a seaborne place, these images register visual and tactile contact with visible and invisible aspects of that place. These haptic qualities of cameraless photography can contribute to a defamiliarised representation of place and subsequently bring our attention to aspects of place normally overlooked in conventional photographic representation. Contemplation of the decentred subjective view presented by cameraless images, which is something other than a humanist viewpoint, also operates to reveal and question our conventional ways of thinking about the world. This can be interpreted as stepping outside of familiar experience, or ecstasis of place through cameraless photography.

2. *Can cameraless photography be redefined as a post-phenomenological aesthetic?*

When cameraless photography is undertaken in the landscape, it may draw attention to other aspects of the world—or places of experience—we may have previously overlooked. Instead of reassuring our human tendency towards a rationalist view—to look out at the world reinforced by optical devices—cameraless images acknowledge our intersubjective relationship to the material and tangible world of experience. Through ecstasis, the viewer is able to contemplate the co-formation of place. Accordingly, my two questions—first, *in what ways can cameraless photography provoke and register a latent ecstasis harboured in the poetics of 'everyday' seaborne experience?* and second, *can cameraless*

photography be redefined as a post-phenomenological aesthetic?—are closely related; and both are informed by further phenomenological reading of the cameraless technique, toward the more accurate identification of it as a post-phenomenological aesthetic output. Through analysis, I have expanded the interpretation of cameraless photography from phenomenological associations (see 3.6 *Towards a cameraless post-phenomenology of place*) to considerations of non-representational and post-phenomenological concepts. This shifts the cameraless image from being an imponderable media associated with experiential 'essences' to an assertive document associated with the tangible, processual and material notion of experience.

A desired aim of my research has also been to 'rethink' our relationship to photography through the application of the theoretical concepts above. Rethinking implies 'opening a discussion about' rather than 'redefining' photography. I suggest my research is limited in its ability to provide any empirical knowledge in this area. However, as a desired outcome, the focus aims and outputs of my study can be seen as openings for discussion and perhaps further development. As a study that uses analogue photographic materials in an interrogative context, questions around processes and applications for contexts provide good opportunities to discuss differences between analogue and digital images.

As a way of thinking about how our relationship to photographs has changed, my images can be set beside historical examples of cameraless photography, analogue camera-based photography and digital images. My images may draw attention to the connections we have with photography, things overlooked in our everyday life regarding human perception, and the contingencies of the senses. My research also takes place in a contemporary context, in which—especially with

the utilisation of cameraless analogue photography—the enquiries of artists continue to break into new territories.

I have fundamentally achieved my aims by extending the field of cameraless photography within a seaborne context. These aims were to take the field of cameraless photography beyond its land-bounded limits, and into a world which is instead bound by the sea. I researched the field and found related cameraless practices, which were shore-based enquiries exploring oceanic themes. Within these parameters, I saw a gap in research, which I set out to fill by taking my research-practice onto (and into) the sea. I was able to do this by exploiting my position as a 'live aboard' on a sailing boat in Wellington Harbour/Te Whanganui-a-Tara, and utilising it as a platform and context to work from.

Although I have had many years of sailing experience, some living on a boat and travelling extensively to different locations, this research undertaking was a new experience for me. By bringing together the use of cameraless techniques in this setting, under all the conditions inherent in such an activity, it was obvious that, although a boat is a 'solid' platform, it is by no means stable or static. As has been expressed earlier in this exegsis, a boat on the sea (and even moored) moves continually with the tides, currents and winds. Living intimately onboard Zingara, working from her deck and down on her waterline, presented circumstances and opportunities for making cameraless images unique to being seaborne. The onflow of phenomena in the mileu of seaborne location, wherever we were moored or anchored, became potentially available for cameraless photography's haptic interpretations. In this seaborne site, the very liquid materiality of the sea that bound my investigation also became a resource for production, testing and contemplation.

Throughout my research I have examined scholarship that positions cameraless photography in the landscape as a representational tool drawing on experiential and haptic material qualities of this technique. Often these existing studies present an ecological or anthropocentric view of landscape or oceanscape, in which natural phenomena are predominant, and the natural site of the work is the meeting of land and ocean. The human context within these studies has tended to be either incidental or impositional, such as Huarcaya's *Oceanos*[1] or Nankin's *Wave*[2] (discussed in chapter 2). In comparison, my own work integrates context, aiming to represent the *co-existence* of human and non-human phenomena in similarly oceanic places. This shift in focus from previous studies has been made possible by removing the stability of the land or shore as a site, and replacing that terracentric (and often ecologically sympathetic) position with a seaborne vessel, whose context is fully bound by the hydrological and fluid position of being at sea.

This modified positioning has been framed by conceptual theories in phenomenological and post-phenomenological readings of the oceanic and of place. Wider aesthetic literary readings of the maritime world that lean towards experiential thinking around the sea, and our relationship to it, inform and expand these theroetical discussions. This positioning has illuminated a tendency to favour humanistic viewpoints in previous considerations of place—including those of phenomenology—and instead, adopts the wider focus of post-phenomenology's onflowing notions of place. I have extended these concepts to include a maritime or seaborne context as an inhabited oceanic place.

[1] Roberto Huarcaya, "Oceanos", 2019
[2] Harry Nankin, "The Wave", 1996-97

In developing this work, I have interrogated the potential role of the cameraless as an aesthetic for studying the 'everyday' seaborne context from a post-phenomenological position. This development has utilised aesthetic theories and viewpoints related to photography, especially in regard to contemporary analogue critique of photography's dematerialisation, as well as critiques of visual hegemony and the primacy of vision from other disciplines, such as film and architecture. Through my discussion of these theories, and previous studies that have addressed the haptic qualities of cameraless photography in particular, I have extended my analysis toward exploring the potential for these cameraless qualities to provoke an ecstatic-aesthetic response in the viewer.

Fundamental to the realisation of these ideas has been my development of a cameraless practice that exploits the chemical and material sensitivity of the processual and co-forming aspects of lived and seaborne maritime environments. These sensitivities include the temporal and spatial activity of my own intimate relationship to this context as a site of work, as well as a place to live and use for travel. Making the images, especially those in the *Procession* series, has brought me into a deeper engagement with the tactile aspects of photographic materials, and has allowed me to make visible the invisible phenomena they depict.

This project contributes to recent scholarship that positions cameraless photography in the landscape as a witnessing material. It extends this scholarship by developing a poetics of nocturnal seaborne activity, through which cameraless photography's haptic witnessing and ecstatic provocation can be addressed. Post-phenomenological readings of cameraless photography are engaged with and drawn upon to develop post-phenomenelogical sightings of the ecstatic in everyday seagoing activity, and a decentred aesthetic that engages with human and non-human aspects of place and experience of place.

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Appendix

Procession #13, Ngaruru (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #12, Ngaruru (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #11, Ngaruru (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #10, Arapawa (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #9, Matiu (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #8, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

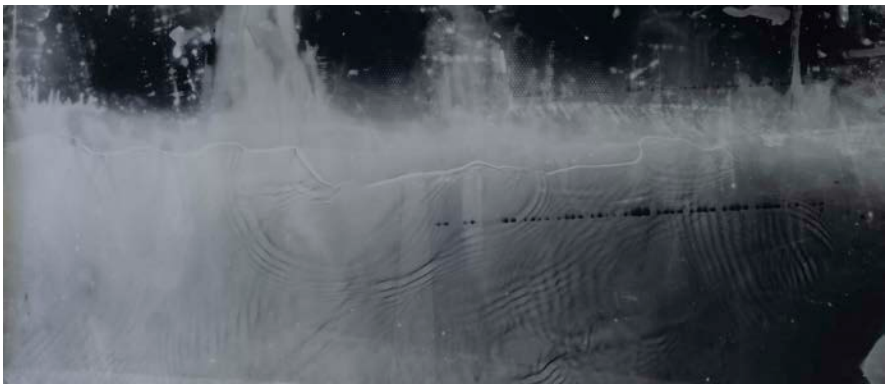
Procession #7, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #6, Matiu (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #5, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #4, Matiu (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #3, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.



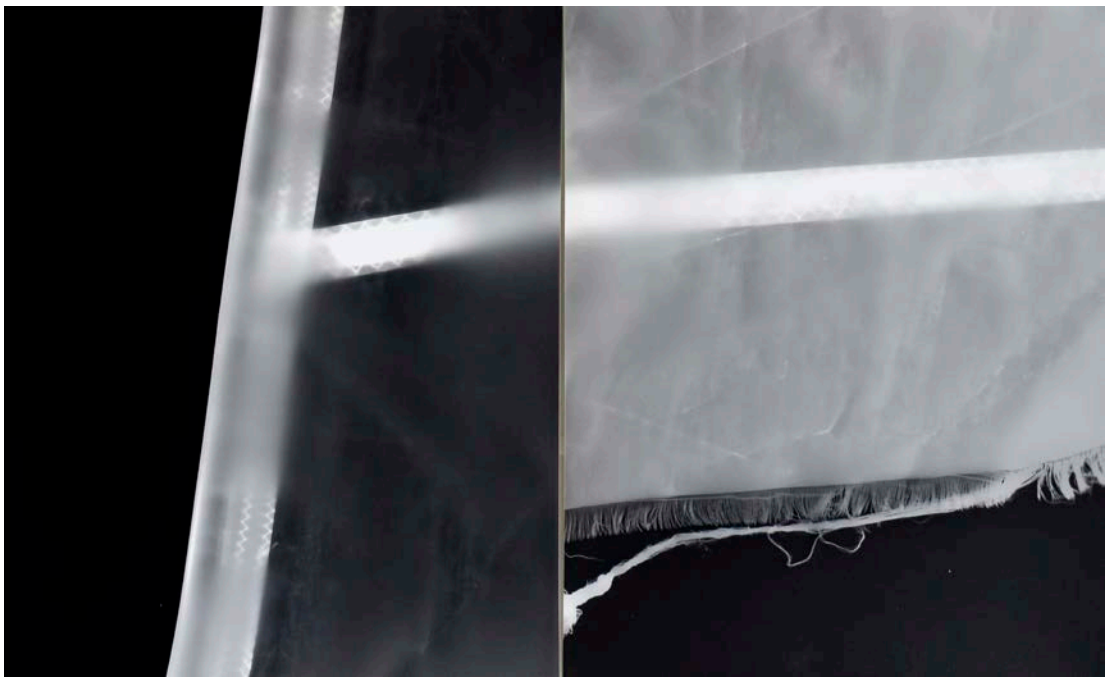
Procession #2, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Procession #1, Te Whanganui-a-Tara (2021). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 46 x 106 cm.

Genoa #1 (2020). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 45 x 60 cm.

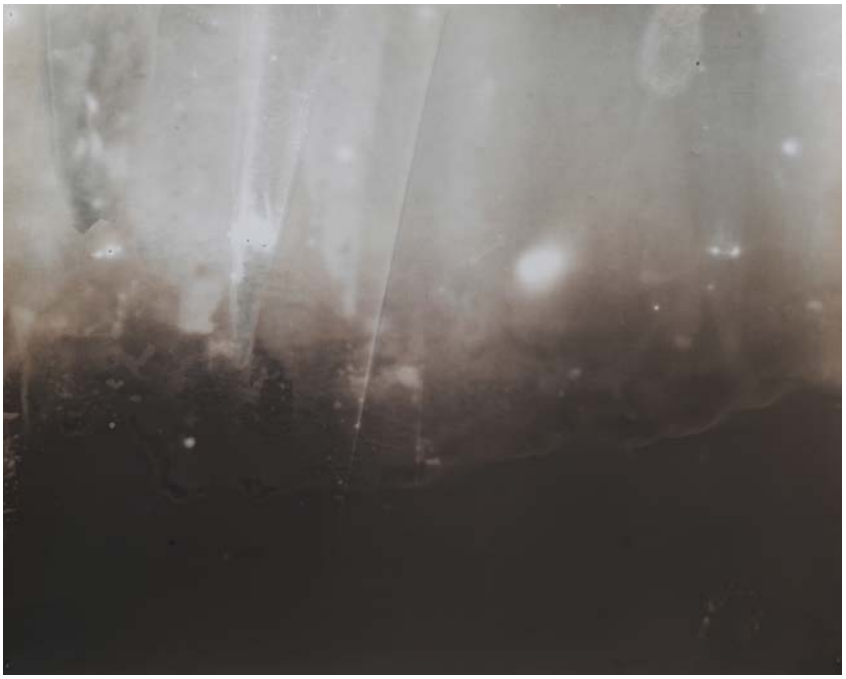
Genoa #2 (2020). Unique gelatin silver photogram. 45 x 60 cm.

Storm-Torn Sail (2020). Image sequence testing, Engine Room Gallery, Massey University (2020).



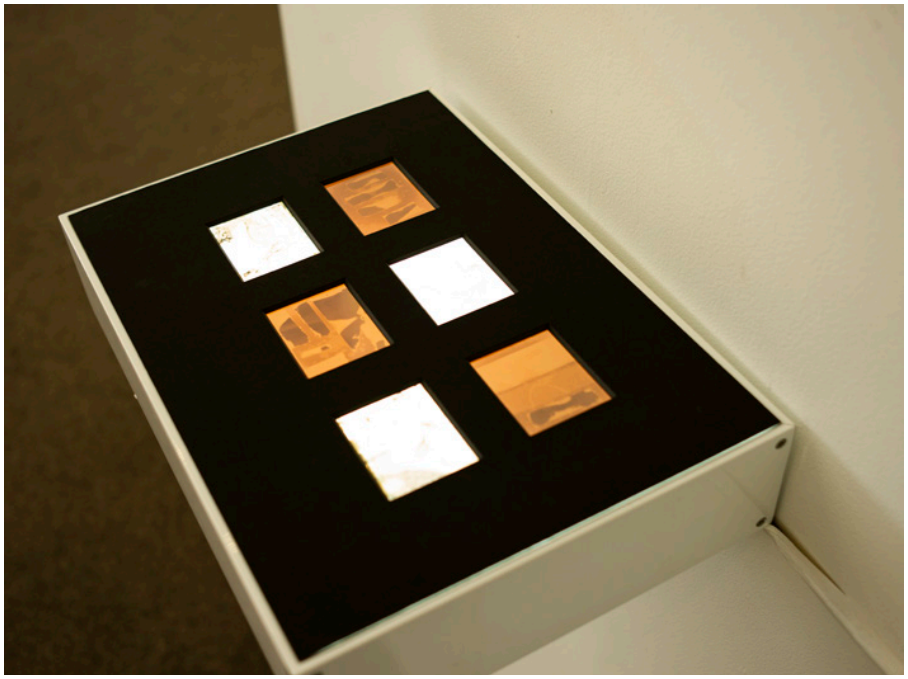
Storm-Torn Sail (experimental dyptych) (2020). Gelatin silver photogram. 50.8 x 81.2 cm.

Following Venus (2020). Gelatin silver photogram. 40.6 x 50.8 cm.

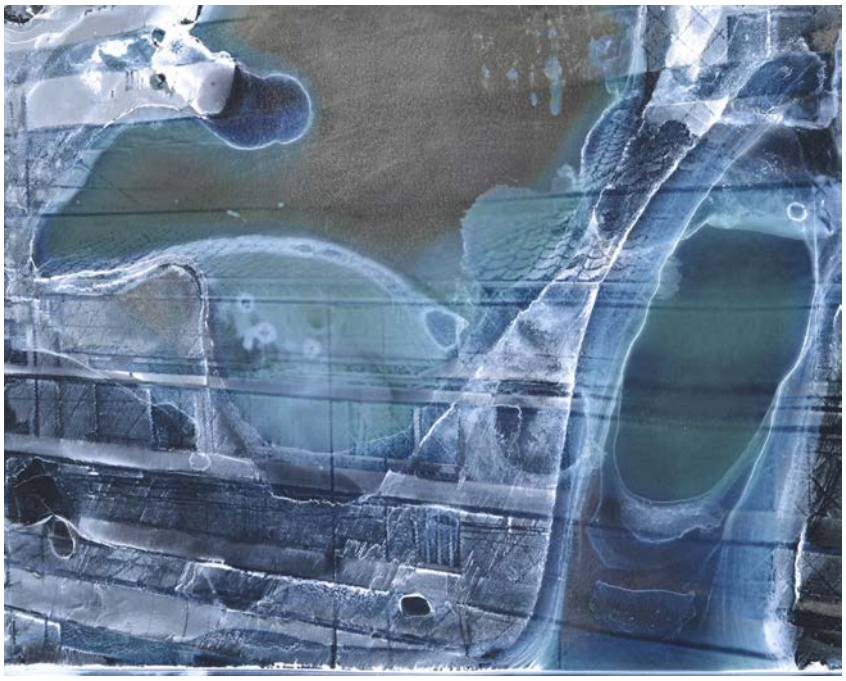


Bow Wave #1 (2020). Gelatin silver photogram. 40.6 x 50.8 cm.

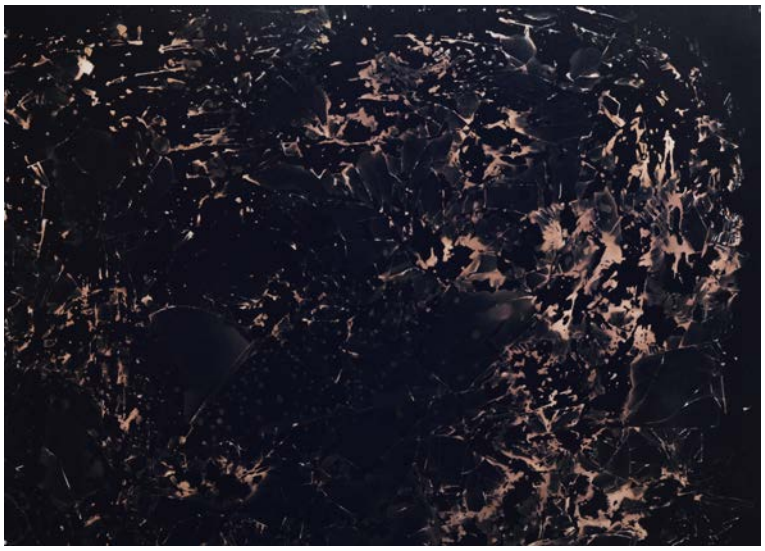
Anchor Chain #1 (2020). Gelatin silver photogram. 40.6 x 50.8 cm.



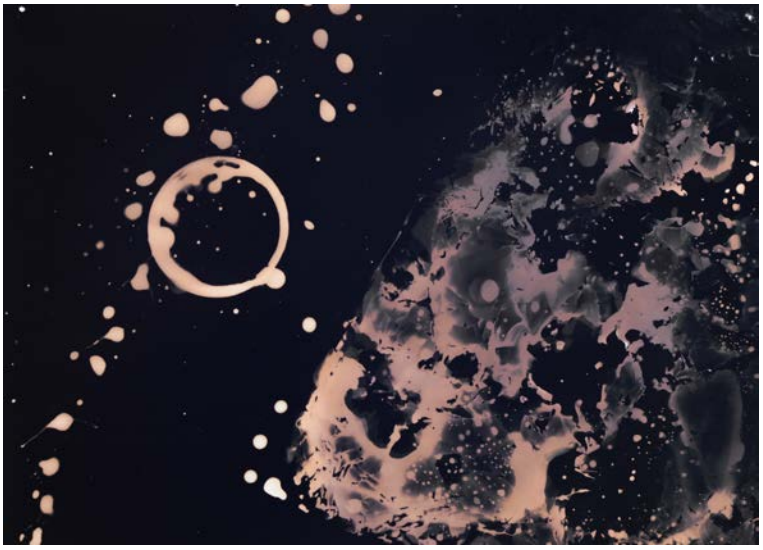
Lightbox with chemigram-negatives leading to *Photo-encaustic* exhibition (2019).



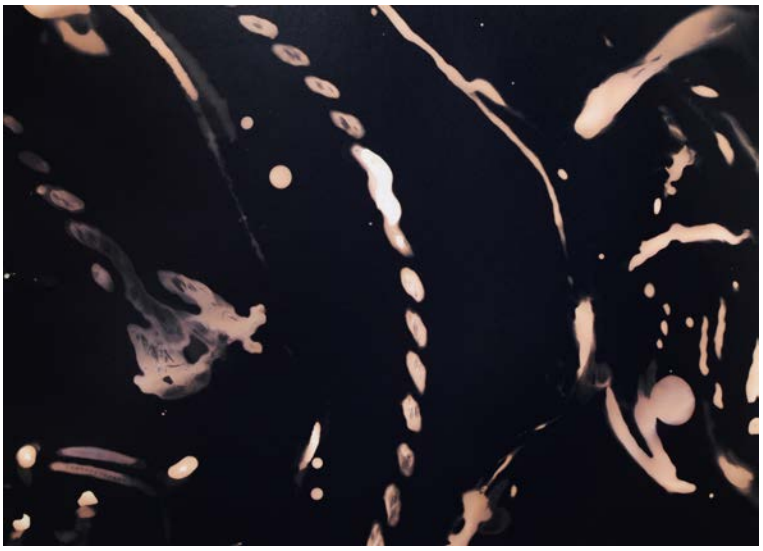
Tokyo #1 (2018). Chemigram-negative scan, inkjet print with graphite. 20.3 x 25.4 cm.



Untitled #1 (2018). Gelatin silver chemigram. 12.7 x 17.8 cm.



Untitled #2 (2018). Gelatin silver chemigram. 12.7 x 17.8 cm.



Untitled #3 (2018). Gelatin silver chemigram. 12.7 x 17.8 cm.

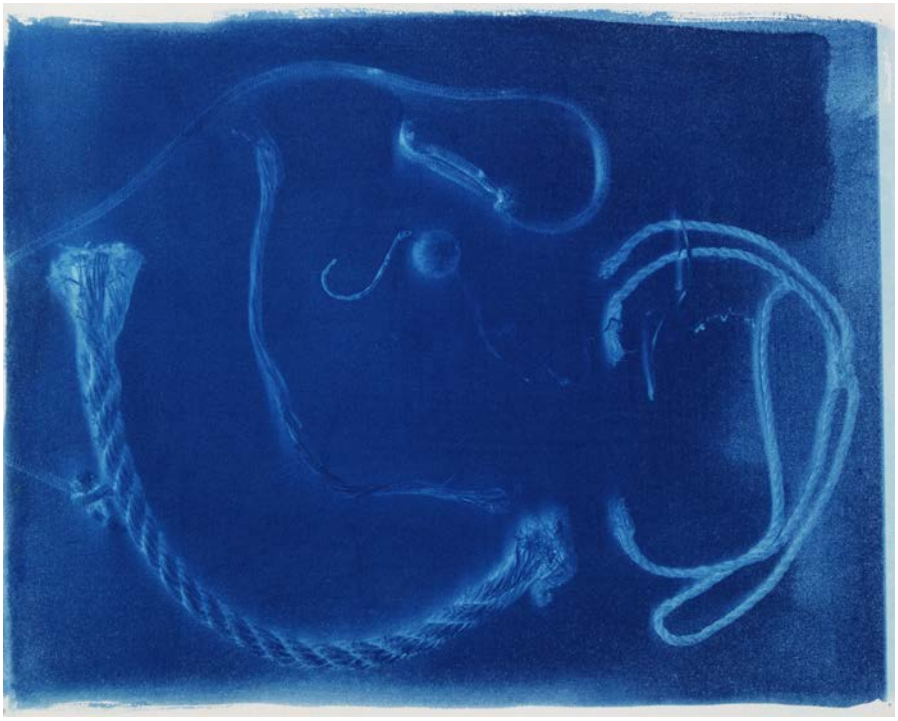
Refraction #1 (2018). Gelatin silver photogram. 12.7 x 17.8 cm.

Refraction #2 (2018). Gelatin silver photogram. 12.7 x 17.8 cm.

Untitled (2018). Gelatin silver photogram. 20.3 x 25.4 cm.

Untitled (2018). Gelatin silver photogram. 20.3 x 25.4 cm.

Untitled (2018). Gelatin silver photogram. 20.3 x 25.4 cm.



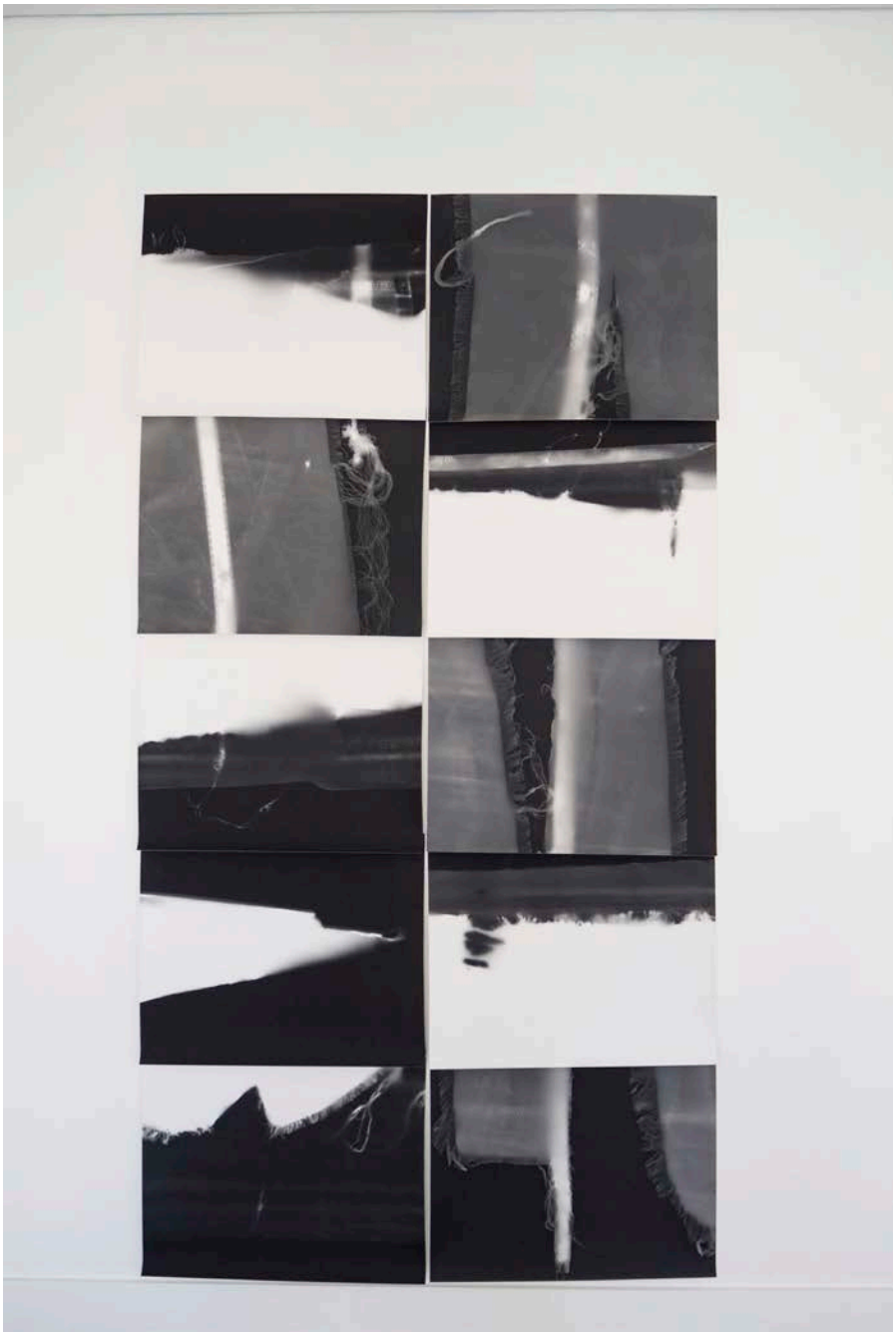
Untitled (2018). Cyanotype photogram. 20.3 x 25.4 cm.

Sea Glass (2018). Salted paper print silver nitrate photogram. 20.3 x 25.4 cm.

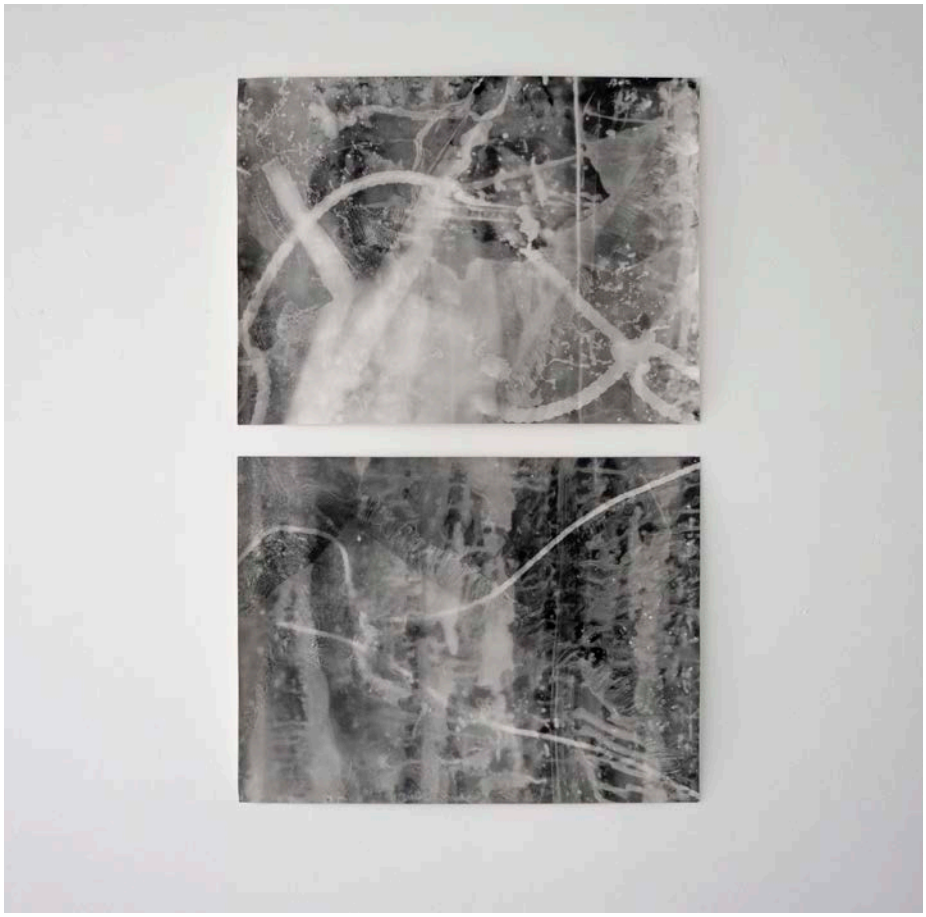
Along the Waterline: Cameraless Photography and the Haptic Register of Nocturnal Seaborne Activity Exhibition at Te Whare Hēra, October 2021

Procession (2021) series 11 x gelatin silver photograms approx 46 x 106 cm each

Seaborne (2018-202) series of 12 cameraless photograms various sizes and techniques



Storm Torn (2021) series of 10 gelatin silver photograms presented as a single work overlapping and loose hanging 110.5 x 193 cm



(Storm Torn) Genoa #2 and #1 (2020) series of 2 x gelatin silver photograms 45 x 60 cm each