the fate of Sesselja Meyer



As it turns out, reality and imagination are completely intermixed in our brain, which means that the separation between our inner world and the outside world is not as clear as we might like to think. If our imagination is vivid enough, we will think it is real and we use our imagination to create our perception of reality, which means, [as Hume told us,] “We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are.”

[Nadine Dijkstra 2021]

PHO710 22/23 Illustrated Research Project Proposal
Adrian Bregazzi. December 2022

the fate of Sesselja Meyer

Divested of the need to be certain, to be objective, to be ‘real’,
our ragged old forms - art, fiction, the ‘unreal’ manifestations of
experience - can venture freely into this wild unknown -

The unknowable -
The alchemical -

This is nothing and everything, all at once -

[Kavenna 2016]

(cover image)
Fig. 1: Bregazzi. 2014. a silver cloud of paint escaping the confines of an exhibit, Tate Modern.

I still have significant concerns about planning one’s work, one’s entire creative process, for a twelve-month period. This could make sense purely from the viewpoint of an intellectual or pedagogic exercise, but I can see no reason to deny the unforseen and to blinker one’s creativity.

Having said that, I have to outline some possibilities for developing the ideas that I have been nurturing throughout this study block and before. Since Sesselja Meyer has now been outed as a construct rather than a ‘real’ person, I have tried to identify ways forward, and at this stage there appear to be three positive development routes specifically addressing her fate:



Fig. 2. Bregazzi 2014. Store Tindevatnet, Bergen, Norway.

a. to complete work on the book, Sites of Incantation, then move on, leaving Sesselja Meyer entirely behind...
In one sense this is the simplest solution - just cut off all ties and move on. But this realises the problem of where to move on to. I also sense that there could be curious moral issue in simply abandoning a creation without bearing any responsibility for that creation. Meyer also has a history of seeking and gaining retribution.

b. to complete work on Sites of Incantation, and develop a new relationship with Sesselja Meyer...
This option is enticing in that it offers both a continuation of some aspects of my current work with Sesselja Meyer, as well as that which may come from whatever new relationship develops.

c. to complete work on Sites of Incantation, and Sesselja Meyer becomes another artist whose work could be the focus of my work...
Here, Sesselja Meyer ceases to exist as such, morphing into a new artist (who may even be haunted by her previous selves)[1]. This morphing may solve the moral issue raised in (a).

But is s/he the subject of my work, and/or do I “become” her/him as the creator of work?

And what is the function of my openly assuming an alter ego, if this is what is under consideration? What is there in this other person that enables them to undertake work that I cannot?

Questions about veracity and alter egos will be implicit parts of the work in this option.[2]

I am looking here at the work of, inter alia, Patrick Keiller (online), Cindy Sherman (online), Jonas Bendiksen (2021), Elina Brotherus (2019), and W. G. Sebald (2004).

There is also the option of abandoning Sites of Incantation altogether. However, while I have invested a lot of time, effort, and expense in this project, not only would giving up at this stage be tantamount ot creative self-harm, but it would be entirely pointless - it would achieve nothing.[3]

1 An ongoing summarised account of Sesselja Meyer’s recent history can be found on my website: https://bregazzi.com/Sesselja_Meyer.htm

2. I am planning a discussion around truth and photography on my website after submission of this assignment.
3. A fifth option has been suggested by a tutor: I should complete the book, then populate Sesselja Meyer’s back story with images (and texts?); I should also be showing her current work (which does not exist). This could have been an interesting and viable option were it not for the fact that in the current back-story she has ceased making physical/visual work; and this option was raised even after I had explained why she does not make physical/visual work today. And in my Reflective Presentation I had clearly stated, “With Sesslja Meyer, the incantation (the utterance) actually realises the entity. That the entity may seem inconceivable does not deny its existence. Therein lies the frisson.” Moreover, her curent back-story is based on detailed writing undertaken for over a decade, thus and changes made today will need to be undertaken on a much larger scale in her history - a time-travel conundrum.

the year ahead



Fig. 3. Brotherus. 2003. Der Wanderer 3.

Mapping a possible development route over the next year is still rather difficult for me, so here is how best I see my dealing with the next three study blocks at this point in time, and given the information available.

Informing Contexts

From the four introductory videos, this study block appears to be referencing the photographic object *per se*. It does not visually engage with either the photographic within a photobook; text and the photographic object; installation and performance; or the moving image. It does not seem to address the broader base of lens-based media, or, specifically in my case, a broader overarching narrative context to text and image.

And this in turn appears to reflect what I see as a predilection for the photographic object, exemplified in this study block's attention to the ***of/about*** construction.

I am still mindful of the run-in I had in my first group seminar in which I was explaining that the work I was showing was very new, and that its own embryonic context was not fully-formed. As it had just been suggested as reading for me, I cited the cover of Liz Wells' **Land Matters** (2011) as an example of the importance of context - that the cropped Elina Brotherus' photograph used on the cover of the book was from a series

nominally based on Caspar David Friedrich's 'heroic' **Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer** (c. 1817) - and all that that could entail under the scrutiny of sexual politics.

I really do not want my work to become *sophisticated* (one of the stated aims of the study block), either in the sense of sophistry, or with the need to be fashionable. Sophistication is not a valid ambition for me - it smacks of elitism.

Having said that, I am looking forward to the lively critical discourses that are bound to be fostered by the (hopefully) significant increase in students engaging in discussions in seminars.

Sustainable Strategies

This study block encourages the possibilities of interdisciplinary approaches in the making and



Fig. 4. Bregazzi 2022. from '17 Views of Falmouth Bay'.

presentation of creative output, and it fosters exploring new materials, processes and creative strategies as appropriate to one's work.

It does address the broader field of lens-based media in direct contrast to **Informing Contexts**; as such, it seems to have a greater relevance (context, if you wish) to my own work, and my attitude to the use of lens-based media in the broader world of creative media. Indeed, I am very much looking forward to the broad tasks, activities, and assignments in this study block, particularly the documentary, and the *Ruscha homage*. I am already engaging with similar ideas for small books (e.g. 17 Views of Falmouth Bay).

The study block moves away from the single, iconic, graphic, photographic object. Moving from the ***of/about*** ('meaning'), to ***of/is*** (materiality). Roll on, interdisciplinary challenges!

Collaboration and Professional Development

I cannot remember any instance of collaboration (save for management training) prior to topic 3 of this study block. I did enjoy that experience, though collaboration is still *terra incognita* for me. So it will be an interesting challenge to be part of a live collaborative project, assuming I have the skills and knowledge required.

The assignments are clearly geared towards preparation for the Final Major Project which makes abundant sense.

Sites of Incantation

Each page in the book, Sites of Incantation will be A3 - this will give the texts and photographs appropriate physical space for being and interacting without crowding.

Double A3 spreads will also require a different approach on the part of the viewer, given that it is unlikely that the book could be hand-held.

The book is an object.

The incantation and the photograph are on separate pages, but the spread itself, the palpable leision of incantation text and the photographic image, creates something new that is both word-and-image, and simultaneously not word-and-image.

An elusive outcome erupting from a binary opposition that may or may not satisfy deconstruction.

The following four spreads are current drafts for the book:

Fig.7. Bregazzi 2022. Incantation #17

Fig.8. Bregazzi 2022. Incantation #173

Fig.9 Bregazzi 2022. Incantation #51

Fig.10. Bregazzi 2022. Incantation #191

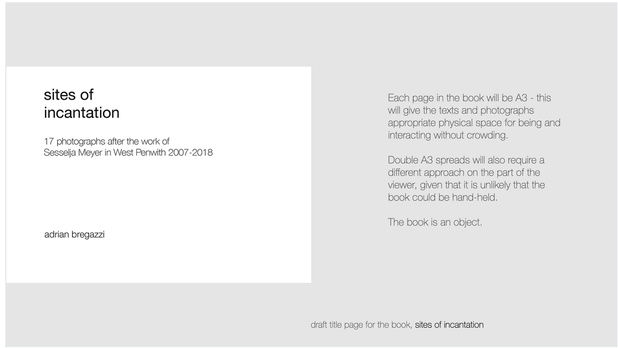


Fig. 5. Bregazzi 2022. slide 52 from my Reflective Presentation

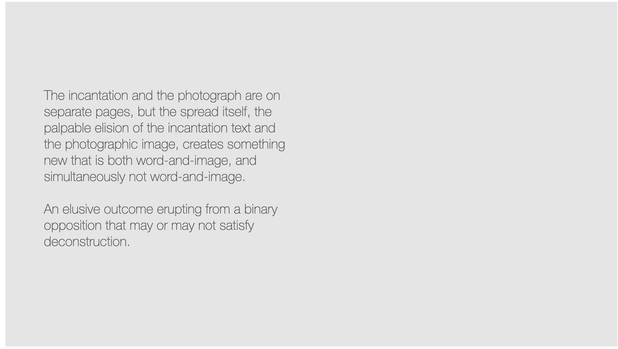


Fig. 6. Bregazzi 2022. slide 57 from my Reflective Pre6entation

Incantation #17

(c. 2007)

I am 17^3 paces from my starting point:

here, there is now

a static cylindrical entity with zero opacity nor reflection;

which entity has a girth of 17 paces,

and a loft of 17^4 paces.

Carn Guthenbrâs

12th October 2022

This is very typical rolling coastal heath in West Penwith.



Incantation #173

(c. 2016)

Tol Pedn Pennwydh:

all that is between here

and Cabo Ortegal.

Tol Pedn Pennwydh (Gwennap Head)

19th October 2022

Cabo Ortegal is located on the far north-west Atlantic coast of Spain, in the Province of A Coruña, in Galicia.

It is 717km south of Tol Pedn Pennwydh.



Incantation #51

(c. 2009)

a 17 metre diameter spherical entity
with zero opacity nor reflection;

located one metre above ground level,

on a steep slope down to the sea.

Carn Lês Boel

1st December 2022

Falling 60 metres down to an Atlantic swell.



Incantation #191

(c. 2017)

the Iron Age hill fort on Carn Lês Boel:

a solid white line

drawn in the sea, between here

and Salinópolis.



Carn Lês Boel

2nd December 2022

Salinópolis is a city in the State of Pará, on the north coast of Brazil.

Salinópolis is 6879 kilometres from Carn Lês Boel.

current and future objectives

The primary objective of the project is to complete the book, Sites of Incantation.

This involves both acquiring and assembling the most appropriate images to accompany selected texts.

The secondary objective of the project is to identify future possibilities for working with current themes - three options have been outlined on page 3.

I will also be exploring other media for realising my ideas. These could include moving image; still moving image; installation; books/ photobooks; and online events and exhibitions.

There has also been a very generous offer of collaboration.



Fig. 11. Bregazzi. 2022. the seaward daymark, near Gwennap Head.

the week in Porthgwarra

Vision is out there and we will walk, hobble, swim or crawl, to find it.

[Sinclair 2016]



Fig. 12. Bregazzi. 2022. Gwennap Head from Carn Barra.

At the end of November 2022, I spent a week based in a cottage in Porthgwarra[1], West Penwith. The objective of this move was to have unlimited access to the environments in which some of Sesselja Meyer's incantations may have been uttered, taking advantage of the opportunities in on-site light, weather conditions, and time of day.

The week was replete with seductive visual phenomena (see left), oblique to the work in hand, however pleasurable. Though images of this visual drama do highlight (literally) the value of the less contextually distracting, quite images.

I use a tripod-mounted camera for my work as this tends to encourage careful consideration of the intended image, rather than the impulsive, "just look at that!" image (see left). Accordingly, I have just a dozen of so images that could be used in Sites of Incantation.

The location also gave me some excellent brain-space, given how quiet it was, save for the sound of the sea a few metres away; and all I had to do was read, write, walk, think, and take photographs.

1. what3words locator: https://what3words.com/plotted.corporate.quietest

progress to date



Fig. 13. Brotherus. 2019. Tombeau imaginaire 15 (part 2 of a diptych).

The project is having a rocky ride at present, and sadly, I see no change in this. The issues are well-known to fellow students and tutors.

However, I was delighted to find this image[1] by Elina Brotherus: part two of a large diptych, an imaginary burial location in Corsica, based on a fragment of W. G. Sebald's unfinished book, Campo Santo (Sebald 2006).

While the geology in the image is eerily like that of West Penwith, it was Brotherus' (herself based in a 'northerly' country) imaging her locative imagining of Sebald's own imagination that is so fascinating. There was a kindred spirit at work here - and W. G. Sebald (himself an immigrant) has been one of my favourite authors since first encountering his writing in the early 1990s.

This has given me real confidence that I am on the right track.

The following twelve potential images are not yet colour graded.

1. Actually on the day before submission of this assignment.



Fig. 14: Bregazzi 2022
part of the Iron Age hill fort at Carn Lês Boel
this image may be used in the Salinópolis incantation



Fig. 15: Bregazzi 2022
part of the Iron Age hill fort at Carn Lês Boel
this image may be used in the Salinópolis incantation



Fig. 16: Bregazzi 2022
part of the Iron Age hill fort at Carn Lês Boel
this image may be used in the Salinópolis incantation



Fig. 17: Bregazzi 2022
an assemblage of large rocks at Carn Barra
this image may be used in the facsimile incantation

progress to date



Fig. 18: Bregazzi 2022
looking down into the sea from Carn Barra
this image may be used in the sphere incantation



Fig. 19: Bregazzi 2022
looking down into the sea from Carn Lês Boel
this image may be used in the sphere incantation



Fig. 20: Bregazzi 2022
on the heath inland from Roskêstal West Cliff
this image may be used in the saddle/folding incantation



Fig. 21: Bregazzi 2022
on the coatal grass slope above Roskêstal West Cliff
this image may be used in the saddle/folding incantation



Fig. 22: Bregazzi 2022
on the heath inland from Roskêstal West Cliff
this image may be used in the facsimile incantation



Fig. 23: Bregazzi 2022
on the heath inland from Roskêstal West Cliff
this image may be used in the facsimile incantation



Fig. 24: Bregazzi 2022
old willows circling wet ground, below Carn Glaze
this image may be used in the willow incantation



Fig. 25: Bregazzi 2022
old willows circling wet ground, below Carn Glaze
this image may be used in the willow incantation

The un/foreseen

Fig. 26 Bregazzi. 2022. The un/foreseen.

By definition, we cannot foresee the unexpected, But it has been suggested that we look at how another lockdown, loss of primary subject-matter, or a sudden prohibition and/or disability, would affect our work:

a. If there is another lockdown that proscribes travel to my current area of work, I could consider learning terraforming software to create suitable virtual environments in which the artist(s) can work. This is more than a tad Fontcuberta, but I wiukd be reworking the images. Intriguing interactive worlds can be created without the need for the involvement of weaponry to make them 'interesting'. But there is a low technology alternative readily available - writing - detailed descriptions of as yet untaken, and maybe never, photographs (see opposite).

b. As I will probably be working with Sesselja Meyer or another artist of my making, there is no danger of a sudden loss of subject matter unless this is initiated by myself. And in such a scenario there would be an alternative.

c. Likewise, were I to become injured or incapacitated such that I could not physically leave my house, both (a) and (b) would become active solutions.

d. Any scenarios worse than (c) would probably require my withdrawing from the course.

This is a landscape. Not a landscape image (save for its orientation), nor an image of landscape, as both are tautologies. This is an image of land, and sea, and sky; and maybe some birds, some animals, a human being even, but I haven't decided yet on the participants, as this is also a landscape in time. I am the creator of this image, and it will be completed when it is completed - in time. So now, there is a sharp breeze from the southeast. The sky is grey, with ill-defined clouds that also conceal the horizon. The sea is grey (on account of the sky), and well-defined until it merges with the sky. There is a long, deep swell whose interstices are filled with chaotic unease. Gannets are scouting inshore, stark black and white against the grey, plunging delta-winged into surface shoals of unknown small fish. Waves are breaking bleached against the headlands and outer reefs, sending up clouds of salt spray, silenced in a general hiss of sea and wind, moreover, by the stillness of this image itself. Gulls will become dull blurs as they pass below the cliff-edge. Up here there are slabs of yeast-coloured rocks, scattered with honey-coloured gravel, their cracks filled with stunted plant-life. Behind me there is a single busy chough, two barking ravens, and further still, the rest of England and all that that means. To my left is Logan Rock and the more distant Lizard peninsula; to my right, Wolf Rock, Scilly, the Longships, and Land's End. This commanding view is from the site of an Iron Age hill fort - rather more an act of faith than evident to the naked eye today, though entirely plausible in its expansive visible domain. There is another view, so to speak, that suggests that these constructions were not simply defensive 'forts', but also sites to be seen from a distance, impressive markers of territory, though here this would be 50% churning sea and unassailable. Due south, beyond the Runnel Stone, itself decapitated by the colliding SS City of Westminster on a foggy day in October 1923, is the Galician coast of northern Spain. And if I look south-southwest there's no land until the town of Salinópolis in the northern Brazilian State of Pará; now, just sea, ships, pelagic birds, and air traffic; squalls, and storms, and flotsam. One wonders what the former occupants of this space thought about the irregular chunks of Scilly breaking up the horizon on clear days; though we think that we know that they would not be thinking about Brazil nor South America. A seal briefly appears in the sea far below.

Fig. 27 Bregazzi. 2022. a landscape in West Penwith.

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Fig. 28. Bregazzi. 2022. Treryn Dinas, an Iron Age hill fort located due north of Logan Rock.

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please note that unless otherwise stated, all the above images are in my personal collection

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Estimated costs, and skills and resource requirements

Estimated costs for SB2, SB3, and SB4

Fixed costs

SB2 fees	£1,682.71	
SB3 fees	£1,682.71	
SB4 fees	£1,682.71	
total fixed costs	£5,048.13	

Variable costs

books	£200.00	I have already purchased some relevant books
printing paper	£400.00	I already have a good stock of papers
ink	£400.00	
travel (estimate)	£200.00	
miscellaneous	£50.00	
total variable costs	£1,250.00	
total fixed and variable costs	£6,298.13	

cost notes

I have not included energy costs for working at home as these are costs that I would be paying anyway off-course.

skills and resources requirements

I will be shooting video and recording sound next year - I have experience already, but any new skills can easily be accrued online and/or through Adobe's own books.

Impact Assessment Plan

Project Narrative

I am currently working to create a book, **Sites of Incantation**, which features locative photographs that respond to incantations made by artist, Sesselja Meyer. The book is planned to be in A3 landscape orientation, using an Epson printer on Hahnemühle paper. I use Sony cameras and lenses.

The book will be formed from A3 spreads as I wish it to be a physiacl object, per se; with distinctly separate fields for photographic imagae and incantation text.

Sesselja Meyer's own work has minimal environmental impact in that its does not use any materials in its production. The work is undertaken within walking distance of where she lives. I, however, live over 60 kilometres from her location, requiring a minimum 90-minute drive each way.

At the end of November 2022, I rented a small cottage in Porthgwarra both to minimise my travelling, but also to be able to go out and take photographs whenever the weather, light, and time of day were appropriate in the actual environment of Meyer's incantations.

Social Impact

The project does not have any social impact in its production nor in its final form, as there are no direct nor intended third-party engagements with people. Indeed, on three out of the six days working/walking in West Penwith, I saw no other people - this is the very opposite of street work.

In a broader social sense, I would like to think that any person viewing the book may realise that The Quiet can be just as interesting as The Loud, and that they have an attention span longer than a handful of seconds.

Resources and Materials

The book is planned to be in A3 landscape orientation, using an Epson pigment inks on Hahnemühle paper. I currently use Sony cameras and lenses exclusively for the project.

Both Hahnemühle and Epson have impressive environmental strategies in place, given the consumable nature of their products; likewise for Sony with regard to its generally non-consumable products.

Here are the suppliers' respective environmental statements:

Epson and the Environment

Hahnemühle sustainability

Sony Sustainable Development

Transport and Accommodation

I live over 60 kilometres from Seselja Meyer's location, requiring a minimum 90-minute drive each way. At the end of November 2022, I hired a cottage in Porthgwarra both to minimise my travelling, but also to be able to go out and take photographs whenever the weather and light were appropriate in the environment of Meyer's incantations.

It is unlikely that I will be able to afford a nother week on location, so very careful planning will be needed to complete the location work.

Energy

There will not be a significant increased consumption of energy for the project than would normally be the case were I not to be working on this project. Heating, lighting and computer power will still be required. The only additional power requirements are for printing, and those will be kept to a minimum mainly due to the cost of paper and ink.

Carbon footprint

I do have a relatively large carbon footprint as I live alone in an old house and I have a 14 year old diesel Saab. But this is the case whether of not I am on the MA.

Having said that, I have tried to mitigate these issues by renting accommodation at the intended locations for my photographs. Simply driving to Porthgwarra, not using the car for a week, just reading, writing, wlaking, and taking photogaphs on-site.

I will still need to re-visit the site, but I now have an informed idea of the locations I need to work with, thus minimising the number of visits required.

Risk Assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Student Name:	Adrian Bregazzi
Programme:	MA Photography
Activity/Equipment being assessed:	taking photographs, using a purpose-built racksack for camera equipment and tripod, near (but not ***on***) sea cliffs, inland heath, and wetlands in West Penwith.
Location:	in coastal areas between Cribba Head and Nanjizal with West Penwith, Cornwall

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Inherent risk score (before control measures)	Control Measures What are you already doing?	Residual risk score (after control measures)
injury walking near sea cliffs (but not ***on*** cliffs)	myself	3x3 9	looking where I am putting my feet; ensuring that I am not carrying overly-heavy equipment; carrying phone (though often no signal there) - what3words app; clocking-out and clocking-in with a relative (who can track me when I am in signal)	3x1 3
ongoing isssues with my right knee - tibial plateau damaged in RTC in 2009	myself	3x3 9	not overdoing things, wearing appropriate footwear; ensuring that I am not carrying overly-heavy equipment; using walking poles where possible/appropriate; I also have a knee brace should this be necessary	3x1 3
winter/poor weather	myself	4x1 4	wearing all appropriate Gore-Tex clothing; anorak with RECCO technology; carrying a high-intensity torch; knowing the area	2x1 2
injury walking on boggy ground	myself	3x1 3	looking where I am putting my feet; ensuring that I am not carrying overly heavy equipment; wearing all appropriate Gore-Tex clothing; anorak with RECCO technology; carrying a high-intensity torch; knowing the area	3x1 3

RISK ASSESSMENT

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

driving to/from sites (from Falmouth)	myself	1x5 5	driving carefully, driving with regard to conditions	1x5 5
driving to/from sites (from Falmouth)	other road users	1x5 5	driving carefully, driving with regard to conditions	1x5 5

Assessment carried out by:	Adrian Bregazzi	Assessment shared with:	Jesse Alexander, Laura Hynde, Colin Pantall
Date written:	5th December 2022	Date of last review:	

Likelihood of occurrence	Likelihood Level	Severity of harm	Severity Level
Very Unlikely	1	Very minor injury	1
Unlikely	2	Minor injury - less than 3-day injury	2
Possible	3	Major injury – over 3-day injury	3
Likely	4	Severe injury – RIDDOR Reportable	4
Very Likely	5	Fatality	5

Risk = Severity x Likelihood

Likelihood	Severity				
	Very minor injury	Minor injury - less than 3-day injury	Major injury – over 3-day injury	Severe injury – RIDDOR Reportable	Fatality
Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very Likely	5	10	15	20	25