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<https://vimeo.com/album/1712151/video/30077905>

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Cornelius Holtorf/Angela Piccini (eds.)



# Contemporary Archaeologies

Excavating Now

**PETER LANG**

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## Guttersnipe: A Micro Road Movie

Angela Piccini

*Respect the kerb line — the kerb can be the key to making a street look like a street. It acts like the pediment to a Greek column, it provides continuity between adjoining buildings. Buildings have a typical life of 100–200 years; the alignment of a road can have an indefinite lifetime. Changing the kerb line, or removing the kerb altogether can have a detrimental effect on the appearance of a street.*

*Institution of Civil Engineers. n.d. Paving Aesthetics Briefing Sheet*

58"—1'13"

A long, rusty nail

Lipsticked cigarette

Silver birch leaves

Chewed gum from countless mouths

Worked and painted kerbstone, the presence of nineteenth-century stonecutters and contemporary cable, water, sewer, telephone, road workers.

A drain.

Tarmac and sandstone rub up against each other and hoard the grimy castings of the passersby. Plastic, soot, particulates, the remains of fossil fuels from across the centuries, produced and consumed on a global level. It's what connects my house to yours, my mouth to yours.

*This is not a film. I wanted to explore how to practice an archaeology through a video practice but I am not a video practitioner. I work in a university drama department but they think I'm just an archaeologist. I work in a university archaeology department but they think I'm just a drama type. What I do once a week is research and teach archaeology for screen media, thinking beyond the standard broadcast expository documentary. I don't know about available light and white balance, but I am there in the shadows, on those screens, here now.*

*This doesn't work as I skip ahead and slip behind time. But then that's the point, too.*



*Figure 10.1 Photograph: Angela Piccini (video still)*

**2'05"**

*A ring and an M connecting kerbstones, Neolithic and now. Bob Jones, city council archaeologist tells me that no one's paid much attention to the kerbs. These masons' marks might be saying something about where the stone was quarried or where it was worked or it might indicate a production batch or be a location key. My interest sparks Bob's and he tells me that this is a good field for documentary research.*

The above words are the first few minutes of script from *Guttersnipe*, a fourteen-minute video/live-spoken-word performance, which I shot and initially scripted in November 2003. Between 2003 and 2005 I revisited the script for a range of different events, from archaeology conferences to locative media workshops to local arts and music festivals. My aim in the video project was to explore the potentialities and limitations of a photographic practice as archaeological practice, archaeology *in* the modern world. Given the central role of camera-based technologies in archaeology and the generative tensions between the live archaeological 'event' and its various recorded artefacts (Pearson and Shanks 2001; Phelan 1993; Piccini and Rye forthcoming; Reason 2006; Rye 2000; 2003), I wished to attempt a different way of thinking about the rela-

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tionships between record and event. Rather than seeking to reproduce a 'commonsense' use of camera-based technologies to contain and transmit 'knowledge', I wished to work with John Grierson's famous description of documentary as the 'creative treatment of actuality' (1926) as a starting point. What might the juxtaposition of video and live spoken word specifically contribute to archaeological practice that is qualitatively different from a textual account of place? How is this practice performative of place? How might this practice organise space — screen space, stage space, suburban space, family space, depth and surface, now and then — and place — the specificity of locale, city, neighbourhood, street, gutter, housing, pavement, roadway — as they intertwine variously?

The video comprises a largely unedited tracking shot (there is a fade in from black at the beginning and fade to black at the end) along one unbroken stretch of gutter in Brislington, Bristol.

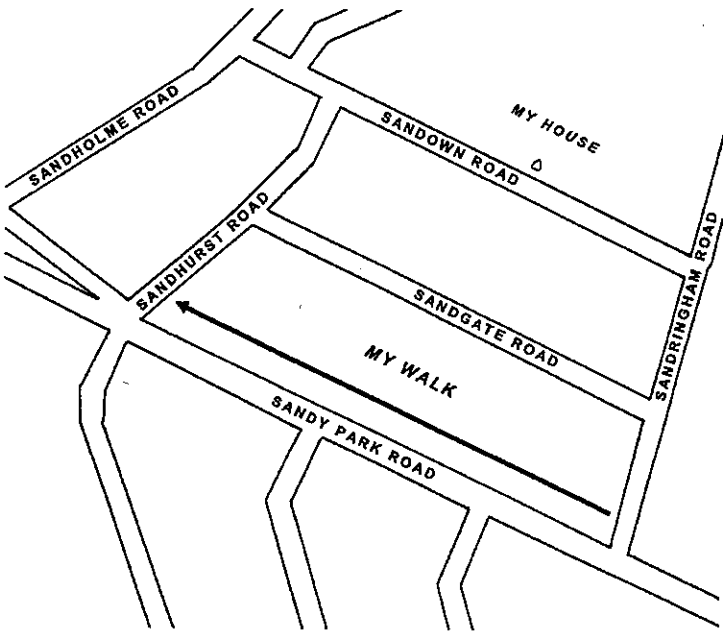


Figure 10.2 A walk along the north side of Sandy Park Road, from Sandringham Road to Sandhurst Road.

The camera focuses in on the 90° angle where the street meets the kerb. I shot the screenwork in one take with a consumer miniDV video recorder, lashed onto a pushchair. In performance I have not used the synchronous recorded sound, but rather a soundtrack composed by Jem Noble, which layers the original synchronous sound with multiple sound recordings of the script. I then read the script in performance.

While the time-base of the screenwork is necessarily absent from these pages, the script reproduced here in the indented passages emerged from the moving image mate-

rial just as this chapter emerges from the performance. The screenwork was the initial artefact that I used to construct an archaeological narrative that sometimes referenced what I saw on the screen and sometimes became a departure point from which to discuss a broader archaeology. This practice is in the spirit of Benjamin's 'philosophising "directly" out of the objects of cultural experience' (Benjamin and Osborne 1994, xi; Benjamin 1999). The screenwork also refers to the embodied practices that characterise archaeological endeavour: surveying, planning and drawing, fieldwalking, electronic sub-surface survey, excavation, photography, recording, looking (see also Holtorf 2001; Wylie 2002). Thus, a videoed gutter brought me to consider the briefing paper from the Institute for Civil Engineers quoted at the beginning of this chapter, which then allowed me to make a connection between pediments and continuity and the notion of the gutter as performance space with its kerbstone proscenium arch. The practice of making the video together with my watching practice shaped the emergent archaeological narrative. In this way, the forensic camera view framed the markings on top of the kerbs, such that I began to consider the relationships between the contemporary past and the cup-and-ring marks of the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age.



*Figure 10.3 Photograph: Angela Piccini (video still)*

My writing here in this chapter is clearly not the performance, nor is it intended to be an explanation or representation of the work. My aim here is to organise this writing practice in such a way as to resist the expository drive and yet expand a contemporary archaeology. It is an attempt to write in proximity to the performance piece. In so doing I deliberately and occasionally awkwardly juxtapose discursive registers. Anecdote, informality, opacity sit in relation as do the various artefacts in the gutter. In this way I

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suggest that the project is cognate with archaeology's recent experiments with the languages of symmetry, situation, relationality, percolation, multivocality (see esp. Buchli 2002; Campbell and Ulin 2004; Hicks 2005; Holtorf 2005; Pearson and Shanks 2001; Shanks 2004).

## 2'21"

Sweet wrappers. A Bounty bar. Just bought from the Newsagents at the bottom of the road, or maybe leftovers from last night's Halloween treats. The coconut, sugar and chocolate a perfect Bristol snack. The story of slavery and Bristol's wealth all in one convenient bar. But I don't suppose anyone else was seeing it that way, that day. It's always the archaeologist who brings up that kind of thing.

And so for me the contemporary ephemera of consumer litter are performative of a range of themes. Here they articulate a slavery narrative, with which the city of Bristol has grappled. Yet it is not *about* slavery. This is a chance to make a political archaeology, to suggest that the story of slavery is not out there in the received spaces of slavery such as the Clifton area of Bristol, or safely imprisoned in museums; its legacy exists today beyond the 'exotic' of British Afro-Caribbean communities, mediated as urban, violent. It is here in Brislington, where the BNP campaign and where a large number of slave-dependent Bristol plantation owners and merchants made their country retreats. It is here, under our feet.

Here is James Ireland (1724–1814), sugar refiner and high sheriff of Somerset. His family, the Clayfield-Irelands, built Brislington Hall in the 1770s, with the profits of this 'respectable trade' (Rowe 1986: 6). At the time of beginning this chapter the remains of Brislington Hall were hidden beneath a B & Q hardware superstore. Since then, the hardware store has become a Toys R Us®. In 1733, Josiah Wharton's cousin Michael went to Virginia to start up his plantation (Lindegard 1994: 18). Another Wharton cousin, Thomas Murray, sailed with Captain Waring in the slave ship Antelope. He later died in 1742, somewhere between Guinea and Jamaica (Lindegard 1994: 46). On 13 December 1816 John Duncombe Taylor, of Antigua, became a Brislington resident (BRO 8032[3] and [13]). However, some traffic went the other way. On 29 November 1658, before the monopoly of the Royal African Company ended in 1698 and the official slave trade began, James Cugin was one of many indentured servants sent to the New World; he is likely to have died in Barbados in the service of Francis Parsons (Lindegard 1993: 37). On 27 May 1680 Tobey Grey was sent to Jamaica. And on 12 June 1686 John Purnell travelled on the Maryland Merchant to Virginia (Lindegard 1994: 60).

Perhaps the most famous of the Brislington slavery links is George Weare Braikenridge (1775–1856), merchant, collector and antiquarian. He was born in Virginia, son of planter and slaver George Braikenridge, who was in turn son-in-law to Virginia merchant Francis Jerdone (1720–71), said to be the originator of the chain store, the precursor to that B & Q hardware store up the road (Stamp 1994: 9). In 1818, young Weare

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Braikenridge held title deeds to and was mortgagee on land on the island of Nevis, land that he eventually inherited in 1836 (BCC Libraries, Jefferies collection—Bristol MSS Miscellaneous). Often painted as a quirky Brislington collector (Stoddard 1981) he moved to the area in 1816/17 and in 1823 bought Broomwell House on Wick Road. Demolished in 1928 to make way for early council housing that stood at 240–286 Wick Road — which has, in turn, been demolished in the past four years to make way for semi-private Housing Association houses — the house became known as a museum of local and general antiquities. Unlike Thomas Goldney III (1696–1768) up in Clifton, Weare Braikenridge did not collect and display material directly associated with the West Indies trade but rather sought to create an idealised English heritage. However, both men shared a similar approach to material culture: in keeping with Goldney's Atlantic World bricolage (Hicks 2005), Weare Braikenridge would break up medieval church pews, stained glass and other items and combine the pieces to construct new, hybrid antiquities. Many of these pieces were removed from Broomwell House after Weare Braikenridge's death and installed at the family's summer home on Highdale Road, Clevedon, where it faced west, across the Atlantic.

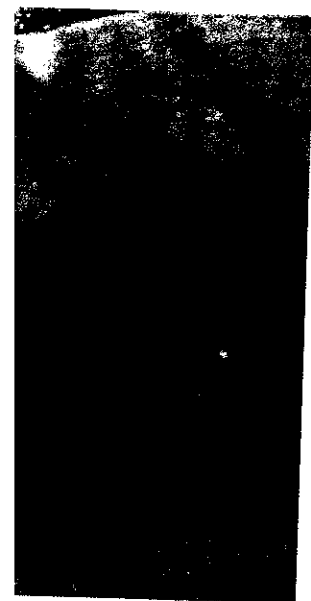


*Figure 10.4 Photograph: Angela Piccini (video still)*

#### *Institution of Civil Engineers: Paving Aesthetics*

*Design from the pedestrian's perspective – pedestrians view paving from a height of 2 metres. A drawing board however provides an aerial view equivalent to about 25 metres when the designer is working to a scale of 1 in 50. Some paving schemes include patterns that can only be appreciated from nearby office blocks, or passing aircraft. The design of many buildings falls into the same trap.*

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A runoff drain cuts through one of the kerbs.

And in a minute there's a gap coming up, mirroring the change from tarmac pavement to brick paving.

13,598 cm, 168 kerbstones

*This is the north side of Sandy Park Road, Brislington. A short stretch of high street in a once vibrant village, now a rundown neighbourhood on the up again due to the housing boom that confines me forever to tenancy. Further down the road, out of shot, was the Brislington Picture Palace, 1913-1955. There is a late 3rd, early 4th century Roman villa up at Winchester road. During excavations mosaics, a coin and the remains of twelve cattle and four humans were found. And there's the incongruous WW2 pillbox tucked away below street level in the Sandy Park Road car park. Writer and asbestos campaigner Julie Burchill walked down this street when she lived here. And the 60 men and 89 boys from the so-called honeytrap at 49 Churchill Road, just around the corner, walked this street, their secrets safe, for over 20 years. No one had any idea. And perhaps some of those on their way to the Chapel of St Anne in the Woods, the third most important place of medieval pilgrimage, travelled this route. Henry VII visited twice - in 1486 and 1502. The Quakers were here in the 17th century. At St Anne's Woods the State used dogs, whips and guns against the large dissident congregations. It's a multi-valent byway, the world in a gutter. The absent have all been down this way.*

*And I was walking this stretch of my neighbourhood on All Saints Day, 2003.*

These archaeological silences, the absent presence of structures, seem to deafen Brislington. St Anne's Chapel was built by Roger la Warre in 1276 to commemorate his marriage to Clarice and celebrate his elevation to First Baron la Warre (Lindegaard 1992: 12). It was reputed to be 58' x 15', with nineteen buttresses and candles renewed yearly at £5 each (ibid.). In 1538, the chapel was suppressed, the roof stripped, the lead given to the exchequer and the windows removed (Lindegaard 1992: 24). Some of the glass eventually made it into George Weare Braikenridge's house (Stoddard 1981). There is also a silence collecting in the gutter. I planned to do document-based research into The Bristol Urban Sanitary Authority, the body responsible for the city's planning and its roadways, but their archives were destroyed in a fire 1969 (Bristol Record Office communication).

Then there is the Brislington Picture Palace. On 18 July 1913, Howard James Usher of 46 College Road, Clifton applied for a licence for '*Singing, Music and Dancing*, at the House and Premises thereunto belonging, now in my occupation, situate at the corner of Belmont Road and Sandy Park Road...to be used as a picture hall and cinematograph house' (Bristol Records Office Pol/L/13/15). By 13 October City Engineer Lessel S McKenzie wrote to Police Chief Constable Jas. Cann that the 'New Cinematograph hall' has been 'certified under Section 36 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 as to substantiality and means of egress. The Cinematograph Act and Regulations are also complied with so far as my Department is concerned...' (ibid.). The Brislington Picture Palace fell victim to post-war cinematic decline and became a local bingo hall in

1956. By the 1990s it had been comprehensively gutted and converted into flats. Only the crenellated pediment above the katy-corner door hints at the art deco glory days of early cinema, which, like that Bounty bar, brought the world to Brislington. The enfolding journeys of chocolate bar, cinema and chapel disrupt easy distinctions between global and local, space and place (Massey 2005: 177–95).



Figure 10.5 Photograph: Angela Piccini (video still)

### 5'34"

There's a small castor encrusted with road grime. The sad social life of a thing. How did someone lose that? I know that out of shot is the end of the terrace, where the houses change to shops. One sold a few months back. Looks like whoever lived there now has a lopsided Ikea coffee table somewhere. No one thought to look in the gutter.

And then there was the circumflex and A carved into one kerb, or was it a theta? There is no pattern to the distribution of these marks, no sense I can make that they were intended for one stretch and not the other. Did the parish council buy up a job lot of different batches in order to complete modernisation? An archaeologist told me that once the kerbs wore down, they were turned over. The mason's marks weren't meant to be seen. But I've looked all round the city and haven't found anything to compare. Are Brislingtonians particularly hard on their kerbs or is something else altogether going on?

A lot of the Pennant sandstone in Bristol kerbs came from Snuff Mills, Stapleton, quarried by Maberly Parker after he bought the place in 1889. Thomas Henry Kinchin ran the mill on Parker's behalf. Is that why in land-locked Brislington it's either Sandy Park, Sandown, Sandholme, Sandwich, Sandhurst? Even the 90-year old keeper of the church

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*crypt key, who's lived here since she was a baby doesn't know why and tells me that her family spent a lot of time once doing some unfruitful research.*

*The daily shopping at green grocer and butcher, the school trips, visits to the post office, friends, the local funeral director – our retracing the steps of this 19th-century avenue of industrial expansion, itself overlaying those earlier pathways, makes this gutter-scape.*

In both the screenwork and in this paper objects (and words) are 'circulating temporalities of recurrence and iteration' (Lefebvre 2003: 49). A recurrence of mason's marks on the kerb is given new meaning through iteration: the earlier cup-and-ring referencing is now associated with industrial mass production. I may also re-consider slavery through the appearance of the sand-prefixed roads as they occupy what were the grounds of Weare Braikenridge's Broomwell House. Recurrence and iteration create the conditions by which I evidence how slavery physically underpins the contemporary life of the Sandy Park Road area. But these roads have always been implicated in the performative production of 'normalised and governable individuals' (Marshall 1999: 309). The school walks and daily shopping along Sandy Park Road are performative of this space as suburban high street, with a full array of industrialised public and private conveniences.

This is further evidenced in the records. On 23 June 1902, E Smith of the Bristol Urban Sanitary Authority posted notices of works on Sandgate and Sandhurst roads:

By virtue of the Powers and Provisions of "The Public Health Acts," WE, THE URBAN SANITARY AUTHORITY of the City and County of Bristol, *Hereby give Notice* that so much of a certain Street, situate and being in the Parish of Bristol, in the said City and County of Bristol, within our District and commonly called or known by the name of ...as lies between the points marked A and B on a plan of such Street deposited at our Offices, and not being a Highway repairable by the inhabitants at large, having been Sewered, Levelled, Paved, Flagged, Channelled, Metalled, and made good, and provided with proper means of lighting, to our satisfaction *We Hereby Declare* the said portion of the said Street to be a Highway repairable by the inhabitants at large. (BRO 40287/6/29).

And back on 22 June 1215, Brislington men were ordered to make a 'perambulation' of the highways and byways in order to prove which Chases belonged to the King (Lindegard 1992: 8). Later, after Brislington's roads were described in 1634 as 'founderous and in decaye', a committee was appointed to resolve the matter (1633–34 Quarter Sessions at Bridgewater, Somerset Records Society). It did not work: in 1637 Samuel Magges, Constable of the Hundred of Keynsham, refused his part in the upkeep of the highways (Lindegard 1993: 27). The recurrence and iteration of roads describes various understandings of their human traffic.

Watch for the boiled sweet wrapper. There's something quite beautiful about the way it blows along the gutter. The plastic is the only stuff that moves here. While kids stick with cola bottles, flumps and the gelatine menagerie these occasional sweet wrappers seem to point to elderly women out for their morning walks, just popping in a humbug to soothe a cough. My gran was one of those and my mum's becoming one. But then again, it was Halloween last night. Maybe the kids get rid of these sweets first so they can get to the chocolate.

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8'02"

Out of the corner of your eye is a passing child on a bike.

Excuse me love, what are you doing walking in the middle of the road? I'm not using the pushchair or the streetscene in the proper way. Who ever heard of putting a pillow in a pushchair and tying a camcorder on to it with pipecleaners? I don't think I've left anything behind, but my wheels grind through the grit, making it hard to keep a steady pace. So I leave subtle tracks in this gutter and embedded in my wheels are the remains of the other people who've gone this way, their traces worked into the fibres of my own front hall carpet.

8'21"

I have to walk around a jeep about now. The jeep and the well meaning woman from Sandy's Diner, the place you can't see with the sausage-eating pigs on the plate glass, force me to acknowledge that I have disturbed the natural order of things with this time-coded walk in the road. My street just another mediated place. The jeep is the proper American kind. It's parked on the double yellows so it shouldn't be there but it got there via the docks at Avonmouth, row after row of cars fresh off the boat, economic migrants – just like me.

The creep of the tarmac up the sides of the kerbs makes me want to peel it back, like a scab.

My fascination with ground level, with the boundary separating over and under, with the city's skin calls up the work of Gordon Matta-Clark (1943–78), although I found out about him later. In *Substrait (Underground Dailies)* and *City Slivers, NY* (both 1976) and then *Sous-sols de Paris* (1977) Matta explores the secret archaeologies of the urban, making unprojectable films that mix film stock and still images:

the next area that interests me is an expedition into the underground: a search for the forgotten spaces left buried under the city either as a historical reserve or as surviving reminders of lost projects and fantasies, such as the famed Phantom Railroad. This activity would include mapping and breaking or digging into these lost foundations. (Matta-Clark in Walker 2003: 163).

Matta-Clark undertook expeditions into New York's networked service spaces — aqueducts, sewers, subway — and into the storage spaces beneath Paris — catacombs, wine cellars, undercrofts — the 'mappings' of which were shown as film in galleries. While the stratigraphy of the cities is clear, images like that of the river beneath the Paris Opera and the catacombs with their bones piled up to the under surface of the Parisian streets serve to make the familiar strange. Matta-Clark's work references Baudelaire's *Le Voyage* — we travel 'deep in the Unknown to find the new' (quoted in Lefebvre 2003: 56) — thus bringing me back to archaeology via Julian Thomas's explorations of the tensions of depth and surface via a modernity seen through a lens of Freudian psychoanalysis (Thomas 2004: 27–29). The objects that we see and feel displace time into things to become 'bearers of the potential of modernity' (Lefebvre, 2003: 58). We 'call to the object in hope and expectation' yet modernity fails when we fail 'to rec-

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ognise and realise the objective qualities of temporality' (56-8). Matta-Clark calls to the under surfaces, the forgotten objects and spaces, which then call to us. The power of screen-based media within archaeological practice is in such an ambiguous displacement of time, into film and filmic artefact. Archaeology can remind us of the objective qualities of temporality while a mediatised archaeology reminds us of the temporal qualities of objects.

Unlike Matta-Clark I do not go underground. But in the great, decaying, leather-bound building plan volumes at the Bristol Record Office I find elevations and sub-surface drainage schemas. I discover that on 13 September 1899, Thomas Pearce of 117 Wells Road put in plans to build six houses on Sandy Park Road: 'brick, stone, tile, timber, etc, damp proof course, 6" socketed drain pipes flowing into existing 12" sewer' (Building Plan Volume 37 19f.). William Bindon logged similar plans on 24 February 1899 to build numbers 7-13 (Building Place Volume 36: 20d). In December 1900 Henry Crewe of 10 Grosvenor Road put in plans to build numbers 74 and 75 (Building Plan Volume 39: 21b) and in June 1901 numbers 76-79 (Building Plan Volume 39: 33b). But on 4 May 1901 he put in for permission to build an additional drain at number 69 (Building Plan Volume 39a: 73c). And it was during the nineteenth-century excavation of the new drainage system for the housing project on Winchester Road that builders discovered the Roman remains referred to in the video piece. Hints at the importance of these commingled dwelling/sewage, clean/dirty spaces emerge at the 13 June 2005 Institute of Civil Engineers conference 'The Geospatial Future of Buried Services':

The increasing demand for utilities by society has resulted in examples of a saturation of buried services. In the United Kingdom the infrastructure we enjoy has been created over a very long period. The efforts of great engineers, such as Joseph Bazalgette, has changed the way society deals with the effects of concentrated populations that we now accept as the norm. The use of buried services has supported the development of communities by providing water supply, sewerage systems and energy. With the recent advances in technology we have added telecommunications and cable television to the list of buried services. Paper-based records of where buried services are located have been kept in various formats but generally as a relative position, e.g. gas main in London Road 6ft from kerb. On the map used as a record, is the information accurately positioned? Which kerb is used as the reference? ([http://www.ice.org.uk/news\\_events\\_conferencedetail\\_ice.asp?EventID=1478&EventType=ICE&FacultyID=](http://www.ice.org.uk/news_events_conferencedetail_ice.asp?EventID=1478&EventType=ICE&FacultyID=), 15.09.2005)



Figure 10.6 Photograph: Angela Piccini (video still)

### 13'01"

A beautifully tied ribbon: surprisingly clean and fresh like it's just slipped out of a little girl's hair or off a Saturday birthday present.

And have you noticed all the tire marks on the kerb? But like I said, it's double yellows all the way so there's some serious contravention of the highway code going on here. The plastic, the soot, the tire marks – it's all about the petrochemicals in this place. This is the quotidian, the everyday of global capital exchange. The kerb and the gutter are where Brislington meets the rest of the world.

A firework casing points to ritualised Halloween behaviours and makes me notice the spectral white face painted on the tarmac.

The 168 kerbstones average 81cm. But the shortest is just 33cm while the longest is 153cm. The ebb and flow of individual measurement reads like poetry: 78, 145, 125, 87, 92, 81, 54 or 59, 46, 92, 91, 91, 91, 91, 92, 45. Those mass-produced 91s tell of the construction of the zebra crossing with its intrusion of concrete kerbs.

As in Matta-Clark's work there is something in both my screenwork and my concerns in this chapter of Bergson's 'matter' as 'existence placed half-way between the "thing" and the "representation"' (Bergson, 1911: xii). Matta-Clark's focus on the 'under surface' and my own fascination with what I suppose I could term the 'over surface' also calls up Bergson's analysis of sensation and perception:

Pain is therefore in the place where it is felt, as the object is at the place where it is perceived. Between the affection felt and the image perceived there is this difference, that the affection is within our body, the image outside our body. And that is why the surface of our body, the common limit of this and of other bodies, is given to us in the form both of sensations and of an image (Bergson, 311).



Figure 10.7 Photograph: Angela Piccini (video still)

What is beneath our feet is concurrently experienced as the sensation of footfall and as image. Matta-Clark's explorations attempted to bring matter 'back into play as an active dimension in our relationship with the world' (Walker 2003: 173). My own attempt works towards unsettling Matta-Clark's understanding of archaeological practice as the uncovering and reconstituting of whole objects; it is all about the lateral movement of the camera coupled with a fascination with things 'down there'. While Matta-Clark actually takes his camera under the surface, I wanted to presence the idea of archaeology existing in the present through the use of the tracking shot along the surface of the tarmac. In my concern with the present presence of material culture I do not uncover or move deeper. While I combine those surface traces with other research activities, my aim is not to show things as they 'really are' (Pleasants 1999: 22, quoted in Dewsbury 2002). I measured these kerbstones, this gutter, as I walked along it, and re-measure them each time I screen the video. However, these numerical folds of space-time are sensate, first through my feet and then via an embodied practice of looking (Merleau-Ponty 1969; Wylie 2003).



*Our neighbours, Heather and Les, have lived here for 40 years. She volunteers at the St Peter's Hospice shop on Sandy Park, which connects her to my mother in a different way. Heather and Les remember this as a nice area where all the housewives would scrub the front step every day. They don't like multiculturalism around here, but I'm OK because I'm Canadian. There's also Mary, whose Polish-born husband died a while back after a short struggle with cancer. She and my mother talked together for a while but my mum drew the line – grief support is fine but she didn't want friendship. These street relationships are all about drawing and redrawing sacred boundaries, social ley lines.*

*Just around the corner is the European capital of the Brethren, a millennial sect that believes Brislington will be the epicentre of the apocalypse. Most people I talk to think they're the Plymouth brethren, but in 1738 the Moravian church of the Unity of the Brethren was carried to Great Britain chiefly through the mission work of Peter Boehler, who was also instrumental in John Wesley's spiritual pilgrimage. The congregation was settled in Bristol on January 26 1755.*

### 13'55"

Another storm drain and more fag ends. No evidence of rollies. We're a proud community here and Brislington is also one of the worst, or best, areas in Bristol for heart disease.

*The amount of material accumulating in the gutter is increasing now. Is this due to the fact that I'm nearing the bottom of the hill and the wind howls down this road? But I'm also just outside the newsagents and nearing the Sandringham pub. My mother and son refuse to walk outside the Sandringham – they call it the dirty side of the street in a strangely Levi-Straussian mapping. I could have shot the whole of this outside the pub but figured vomit, dog mess and sputum might offend more polite audiences. My mother refers to it as that dreadful place.*

As I reach the end of this I find the best stuff. Two empty bottles of fake blood, different brands. I imagine someone applying this viscera in the dark, on the pavement. What other ways could these squeezed-dry bottles have reached this spot? Perhaps people leaving the Sandringham on their way to a Halloween party, a little worse for wear.

My interest in kerbs now borders on obsession. Everywhere I go I look at the kerbs, with the passion of a megalith hunter. There is something about the miniature monumental physicality of these features, the ways in which they snake through some streets or mathematically bisect others, the ways in which they harbour insects and dust, litter and loss that makes them wholly appropriate. The intersection of kerb and gutter is both midden and architecture, ephemeral and solid. It is a space to be filled, a structure to be marked. The rich gutterscape I filmed back in 2003 no longer exists. As I write this chapter, in addition to the daily ebb and flow of matter along this road, on 15 September 2005 Bristol City Council has chosen to resurface Sandy Park Road, one layer scraped off before another is slathered on. As I edit this chapter in October, the work finishes. The gutters are now empty; the kerbs appear considerably shorter and are marked with deep, diagonal striations from the quaternary movements of heavy machinery. But just as 'the persistence of the arcades within the fabric of Paris embodied...the memory of different possible futures which continued to haunt the perceptual co-ordinates of [Walter Benjamin's] present' (MacPhee 2000: 584) so, too, do these gutters for me. The gut-

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terscape becomes perceptible as it communicates '(whispering and glancing) varied possibilities of temporal experience' (Lefebvre 2003: 48). The event of my walk in 2003 can never be repeated and the material culture of the gutter has long gone. Yet, the video piece and my subsequent iterations enact that disappeared space and all the futures no longer possible.

*So here is a locale, 13,598 cm. But of course these words and the 14 minutes of video and sound are just material traces of the space that I paced and together they tell just one story of that morning, and even that is different each time I tell it.*

#### *Institution of Civil Engineers: Paving Aesthetics*

*Paving matters – About one third of a typical streetscene is occupied by road, kerb and footways and these surfaces greatly affect the appearance of a street. As a rule paving should be of secondary importance to buildings. Items which influence the streetscene include:*

*Buildings*

*Verges, trees and landscaping*

*Street furniture and signs*

*Street lighting*

*Road and footway surfacing materials*

*Yellow and centre lines*

*Any curve to the road surface or super elevation*

*Kerb*

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