

Tidal Zones – Filming Between Life and Images

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>Informed by queer life practices, theories, and affinities, this documented artistic research project (doctoral thesis) draws from new materialist and post-humanist discourse in order to reconsider what role visual media play in the historical need to separate the human and the environmental. It asks, how do we challenge prevailing perceptions of film and photography as inexorably linked to ideas of progress and modernisation, to linear temporality, spatial separation, and to land-based thought? Based on the acknowledgement that we need to rethink our position as humans within the multiple habitats that make up the world, I investigate the ways in which the apparatus of film, rather than being an extension of human perception, attests to the material interdependences and co-productions that hold a potential for converging human and nonhuman perspectives. <i>Tidal Zones – Filming Between Life and Images</i> considers the cinematic space of the ocean alongside Jean Epstein’s film <i>Le Tempestaire</i> (1947); it follows early photographic chemical methods involving seaweed to both develop film and to examine the technical intra-activity of human and nonhuman regimes as part of photography itself. Within the scope of this research, I argue and demonstrate how film engages in a sensory and reciprocal involvement with the material world, one that addresses the ability to sense, not just with one’s eyes, but with the entire body.</p> <p><i>Tidal Zones</i> are real locations, the habitat of a multitude of organisms, and the home of seaweeds. It is a place that is neither land nor sea but constitutes a zone with its own specific relationships and living conditions. In its refusal to be either or, it forms a (non-binary) temporal figuration between presence and absence, solid and liquid, life and death, dictated by the motions of spiral and circular time. This space, <i>Between Life and Images</i>, is the chemical rockpool (the darkroom) out of which photography and film grew.</p> <p>The PhD submission consists of four film-works, <i>The Etna Epigraph</i> (2022), <i>Seaweed Film</i> (2023), <i>Coenaesthesia – It Is Not Even True That There Is Air Between Us</i> (2023) and <i>The Spiral Dramaturgy</i> (2019) along with the exhibition <i>The Tidal Zone</i> shown at Index - The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Stockholm, from 25 November 2022 to 12 February 2023 and at Havremagasinet, Länskonsthall Boden from 14 October 2023 to 11 February 2024. The films and documentation from the exhibitions are included in the submission, which also includes an “Opening Letter” and two texts called “Filming with the Ocean” and “Methodology of the Spiral”.</p>		
<p>Key words:</p> <p>Film, materiality, feminist methodology, cinema, art, moving images, Jean Epstein, queer cinema, temporality, queer temporality, eco-developing, seaweed, spiral dramaturgy, more-than-human realms, nonhuman, Ulla Ryum, post-humanism, queer life practices, high sensitivity, environmental illness, seeing with the body, non-linear storytelling, filming with the ocean, new materialism</p>		
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