

27<sup>th</sup> September

# Come Hell or High Water

Number 10

There are Forces



*The Wisdom of Soloman, Pyramid St Anne's Church, Limehouse*

Iain Sinclair

*MOVEABLE PYRAMIDS* Edited extracts from *The Gold Machine*

Anne Robinson

*Over Time Over Time*

John Wild

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Danielle Imara & Yolande Brener

*Y&I Changing All the Time (No3 of 1 minute series)*

Fergus Kelly

*Spectral Vectors*

Sarah Sparkes

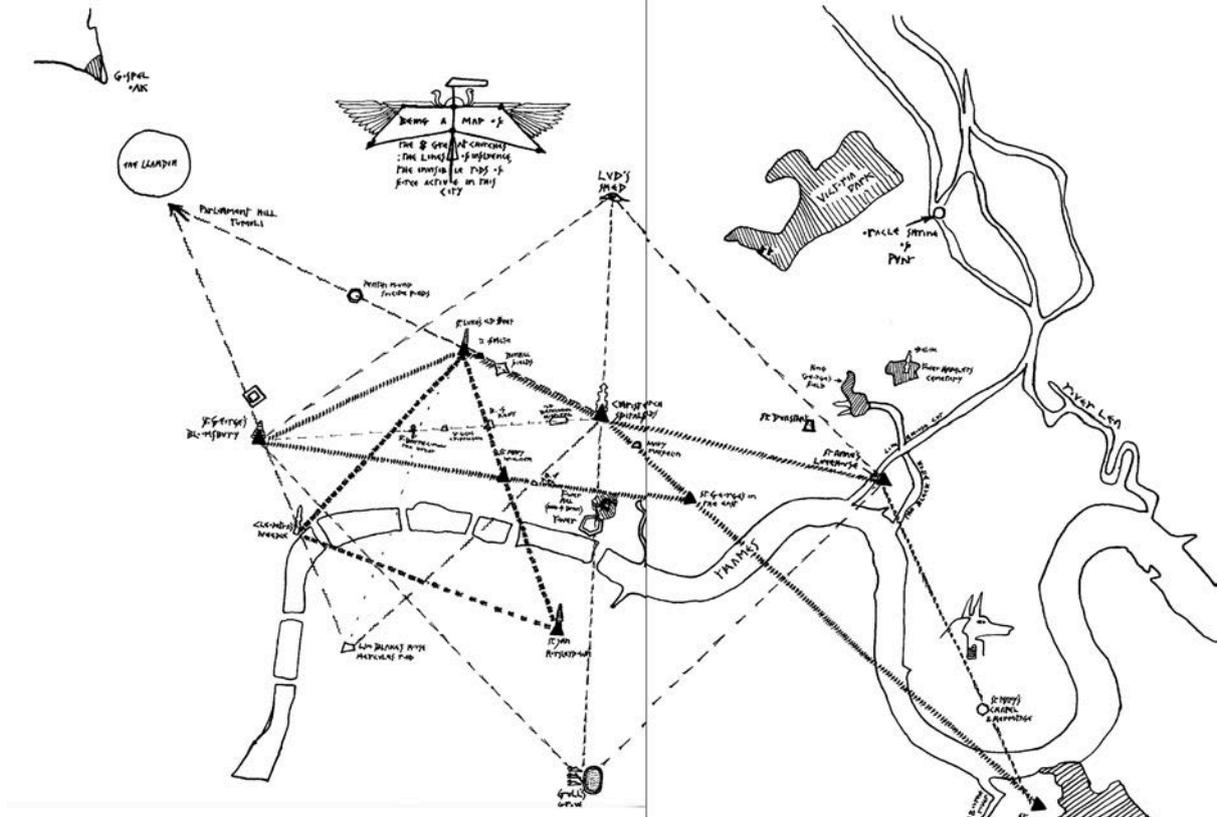
*Inspirial Ghost Dance*



*Blue pyramid corner of Three Colt St and Narrow St, Limehouse*

# THERE ARE FORCES

## BEING A MAP



*Lud Heat* map by Iain Sinclair and Brian Catling

St Anne's, Limehouse, is one point in the cryptic cartographic connections, 'rods of force,' between the six Hawksmoor churches in London, as explored by Iain Sinclair in *Lud Heat*, 1975. The church is also part of InspiralLondon's CHOHW walk *Memorial to Ward the Watery Commons* on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

## BEING A FLAG



A submerged flag, on reflection, becomes LIVE. Limehouse foreshore September 2020

## MOVEABLE PYRAMIDS

*Edited extracts from The Gold Machine*

### 1.

Back in the car, we seemed to be travelling in another direction entirely, perhaps bridges were down, sections of the track lost to landslips. I felt that, as penance or exorcism, we were being conducted by motorbike around the entire perimeter of this zone, the outermost reach of the Perené Colony.

The chief slows, parks his bike. He presents us, offering no explanation, with one of the barrack buildings of the old coffee plantation. Huge mats have been laid out for the drying and raking of the cherries. Further up the track from this sinister relic, which recalled Tasmanian houses of correction inspected by Arthur Sinclair, are domesticated gardens with neat and well-tended sections of coffee bushes. They look like Bethnal Green allotments worked by women who are happy to salute our group, to pass the time of day.

You have seen how we had to endure, the chief implied, and how we live now. But he said nothing. He walked on, flanked by Lucho and the bike jockey in the *dope* cap, through a green tunnel, alive with scarlet blooms, in the beautiful golden-hour of revelation. As he walked, Benjamin ran his bare arm against the bushes. And then, out of nowhere, with no preamble or warning, we were confronted with a brutal concrete pyramid. Judging from the way the chief posed, hands forming an arch across his chest, he anticipated, and indeed required, the recording of this moment. The

Mediterranean blue of his t-shirt set him apart from the deeper, flaking blue of the paint splashed across the base of the structure.

Here, the chief implied, is the Spike of Truth. We did not know what we were looking for but I think we found it. This road-hogging, overstated symbol reminded me of the Masonic pyramid tomb in the grounds of St Anne, Nicholas Hawksmoor's encoded Limehouse church. The Metraro pyramid was taller, closer to heaven, cruder in surface and proportion: more like a plaster cast maquette for another 'spike', Renzo Piano's city-dominating Shard. This unavoidable boast of dominion lacked the mysterious ambiguity of the Limehouse pyramid, speckled with the shadowplay of established London plane trees. The effect was more akin to the apparent openness and buried finances of the Shard. The more visible, it seems, the more mendacious. When you see a thing from every street in a city, you know that it is not really there.

The strangeness of the day hits the *dope* biker. He has to lean against the unyielding support of the pyramid, in the belief that it will not slide away into the ditch, or topple over and crush him. The pyramid has a purpose: it is a tribute to Fernando and Ana Stahl, and to their mission, spreading the love of God through the highlands of Bolivia and Peru. Whether the natives signed up willingly or not.

'This is a monument to conspiracy,' Lucho said, when we were back in the car. 'Stahl must have been a Mason, like all Jesuits, senators, drug barons and presidents in Peru. But it was a good ride today. We will do more tomorrow. Come on, vamos, let's go.'

2.

'I am struck by the radiant appearance of the object itself, as a kind of piled up series of repeated prayers, like a stack of crockery in a restaurant kitchen, forming a tower - or a "stupa", as the Buddhists call it,' the letter said. 'A monument recalling a sacred place on the earth, such as the tree under which Gautama sat to receive enlightenment. *That all is emptiness.* Stahl's pyramid is a much more brutal marker. But, for the first time, surely, you have father, daughter, great-grandfather, together on the road to Metrarro. A nowhere that is *there*, precisely. The presence in its absence. And it is not even dis-placement, but an abundance of "other" in the hollowed place of "same". Like the innumerable versions of a myth that is only a myth by virtue of not being one. Forgive me, Iain. I am exhausted to the point of death from interminable months of preparation, before in-and-out meetings like a papal audience with a revolving door, then tedious weeks of debriefings to frame the terms for new briefings, before more decided-in-advance postponed decisions. To unpick a culture that has long since decamped.'

It was the Advocate. Who else? How did he know that we had been led to Fernando Stahl's pyramid on the border of the old coffee estate? The village chiefs communicated through the internet, when connections were available. The Advocate's office would have ways of tracking and tapping. But I don't think it was that, reflex paranoia. The desire to be with us was so powerful: he was determined that we should miss *nothing*, and that we should be prepared for every eventuality or change of plan. This man with his double life, the hours

in trains and planes and cars with darkened windows, had devoured the books of the river, all of them. He was always a step ahead. He teased out the play in the vine.

The business of the sudden confrontation by the Adventist pyramid hit the Advocate as having special significance. It was an actively transmitting radio beam, feeding on missionary journeys across mountain and desert. It formed a triangulation with other pyramids, other lands. Erected as memorials, the surviving structures with their weather-erased inscriptions, and crusts of lichen, were memorials to forgetting. 'To subsist in bones and be but pyramidically extant is a fallacy in duration,' Sir Thomas Browne wrote.

I couldn't respond to the Advocate's traditional nine-page letter until I returned to London. But I would walk to the pyramid in Limehouse Church, where I had taken him before, to look at it again, in its new relationship to the structure in Metraro.

Everything happened at once. A plague hit the city. I began at the obelisk, which was an obelisk, for Daniel Defoe in Bunhill Fields. I stumbled across Michael Ayrton's Minotaur on its new plinth, at the revised centre of the broken London labyrinth. But the Limehouse vicar had not only sealed his Hawksmoor church, keeping the malignancy in, he had also padlocked the grounds. No close inspection of the pyramid was possible.

I tapped around the vertebrae of London wall, noting excavated hospices, deleted Bedlams. Terry Farrell, the visionary of that great Mayan jukebox, the MI6 building in Lambeth, all pyramids and swooping cameras, also delivered a set of quite distinct obelisks for a

new development close to the Barbican. A temple of worship for a set of beliefs as yet to be defined. A rough sleeper, nested in his bivouac alongside the Barber's Physic Garden, keeping the unwary away from the healing plants, sprung up to curse me, and spit.

*'Fuck off!'*

Safely outside the defensive and re-coded necklace of the Roman Wall, I finished where I started, in Bunhill Fields. A raven was sitting on the pointed feet of the sleeping effigy of Bunyan. Blake's ancient slab, shared for so long with his wife, had been recently downgraded in favour of a 'more accurate' site, where her services were no longer required. And no record was kept of the other paupers who went into the communal pit alongside the poet. Beyond these all too frequently visited monuments, I discovered for the first time a modest freestanding memorial. Its text, when I leaned forward to peer at it, was deeply incised, in honour of A MOST LABORIOUS AND PERSISTENT ADVOCATE.









## ***Over Time Over Time***

**Anne Robinson, 2020, 12mins. digital video, sound.**

Click [HERE](#) to view film on Vimeo



The short film *Over Time Over Time* revisits a 2014 art project curated by Anne Robinson, based on the Thames foreshore at Enderby Wharf, east Greenwich, a place you got to by passing from 'historic' Greenwich, through a blue metal, corrugated corridor by dry dock and scrap metal, reaching a beach of sorts and old wharf structures, a place seemingly stranded in time between tourism and the dome peninsula. The project explored *elastic* temporality and how we *live* in time, how we pass the precious hours and days of our life in ordered capitalist clock-time. Time travel is probably impossible.. but what speed do we *live* by?

Image: Documentation of performances in *Over Time*, 2014. L-R: *Flotsam* by Rachel Gomme, *Calling All* by The International Western *Over Time/Under Tide*, by Charlie Fox.

Original sites, 2014: Thames foreshore, Royal Museums Greenwich, Stephen Lawrence Gallery. Film researched, written, filmed and edited in 2020 by Anne Robinson. With special thanks to all of the featured artists here who participated in the Thames foreshore performances for 'Over Time' in 2014: Jo David: *Sightings*, Charlie Fox: *Over Time/Under Tide*, Katharine Fry: *Pulling Time Out of the Water* and *Tide Walk*, Rachel Gomme: *Flotsam*, Victoria Gray: *Clockwise Circles With The Left Hand*, Sarah Sparkes: *don't stop thinking about tomorrow*, Ian Thompson: *Litus Expromo* and The International Western (Ella Finer, Joe Hales, Robert Jack and Flora Pitrolo): *Calling All*.

The making of the 2020 film supported by 'Come Hell or High Water and Inspiral London projects and was made possible by artist support funding from ACE via Inspiral.

Artists also originally involved in *Over Time* (2014): Claudia Firth, Victoria Gray, Birgitta Hosea, Gavin Maughfling and Ian Thompson many thanks also due in particular to local historian Mary Mills, Helen Johnston from the FROG project, Louise Simpkins from Royal Museums Greenwich and David Waterworth, curator at the Stephen Lawrence Gallery. *Over Time* (2014 supported by: Arts Council England, Royal Museums Greenwich, Totally Thames Festival, London Metropolitan University, Greenwich University

More information at:

**[www. overtimeart.org](http://www.overtimeart.org)**

# Machinic Dreamings of the Limehouse Foreshore at Low Tide

John Wild



The machine dreams in hyperreal hallucinatory visions emergent from the convolutions of its deep neural network. It produces a cycogeographic mapping of site, an extraction of the essence of place through a process of forensic analysis and Bayesian probabilities. Machinic Dreamings are the output of a machine learning generative adversarial network (GAN) trained on 1000 photographs of a body occupying the temporary landscape of the Limehouse Foreshore, a triangular expanse of mud, silt and rocks on the northside of the Thames, just as the river sweeps south at Canary Wharf and only visible at low tide.



All dreamings are collective acts. Machinic Dreamings link anonymous humans and non-humans across time and space. They are dependent on a technical infrastructure of GPUs housed in data centres, located across national borders and interconnected through fibreoptic cables. Machine Learning algorithms have their own ancestry and lineage; the StyleGAN2<sup>1</sup> algorithm redefined StyleGAN<sup>2</sup>, which built upon wider style transfer research. It is impossible to map the network of actants whose labour has been essential in producing a single machinic image. My contribution was the gathering of a data set and the training of the GAN.

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<sup>1</sup> Karras, T., Laine, S., Aittala, M., Hellsten, J., Lehtinen, J. and Aila, T., 2020. Analyzing and improving the image quality of stylegan. In Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (pp. 8110-8119).

<sup>2</sup> Karras, T., Laine, S. and Aila, T., 2019. A style-based generator architecture for generative adversarial networks. In Proceedings of the IEEE conference on computer vision and pattern recognition (pp. 4401-4410).

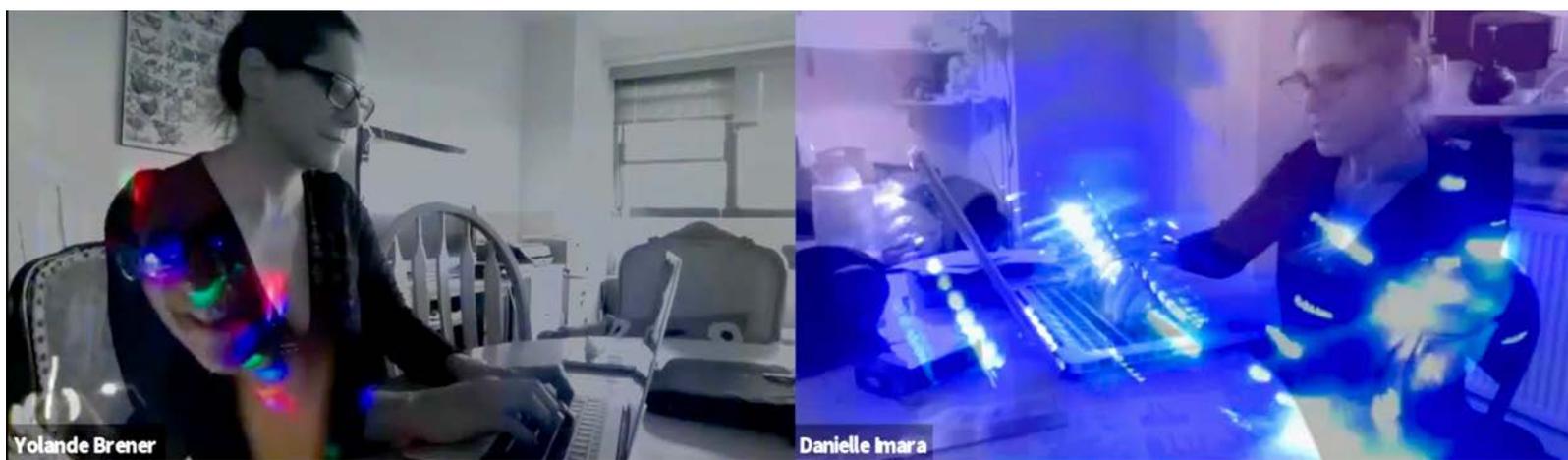


The initial results were a shock. They open up deep-seated cultural anxiety about human relations to the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The images suggest murderous intent. Severed chunks of flesh discarded on the beach, the possible abandoned residue of Capital's human meat stranded on the Foreshore between the rising waters of the Thames and the hostile steel and glass of Canary Wharf. Surplus to requirements in an era of AI. There is a generalised fear of the replacement of labour, but the real concern should be the already existing automation of the capitalist. A simple inhuman algorithm, the appropriation of ever more surplus value, has always driven the capitalist. An algorithm very easy to replicate in code. Inside the skyscrapers of Canary Wharf, high-frequency trading, places machine learning at the centre of capitalist accumulation.

The interpretation of dreams is notoriously difficult, and the non-human perspective of Machinic Dreamings opens up multiple alternative interpretations. The full set of images can be viewed at:

<http://www.codedgeometry.net/johnwild/CHOHW/>

# *Y&I Changing All the Time*



Video still *Y&I Changing All the Time*

*To break the monotony of working from home, Brener and Imara seek the perfect time to party online. They debate sunrise, sunset, choreography and communication at a 3000 mile distance. Fairy lights, window dressings, and wooden floors feature as extras in this ode to an online celebration.*

<https://vimeo.com/458585865>

## Spectral Vectors

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Fergus Kelly's Spectral Vectors was created for 'Come Hell Or High Water'. It takes as its starting point the idea of ghosts of the Thames; river revenants in the form of lost sounds of previous times from the river's busier industrial past, such as ship's horns, tugboat horns, foghorns and other industrial sounds.

<https://www.roomtemperature.org/2020/09/spectral-vectors.html>

## **'Inspirational Ghost Dance', Sarah Sparkes, 2018, 5'15"**

**Inspirational Ghost Dance is an Inspirational London Commission. Supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.**



**My film, 'Inspirational Ghost Dance' features a performance with members of the Inspirational London Collective, walking in spiraling formation, viewed by a mysterious 'watcher' above. Together, over three years, we walked an anti-clockwise spiral from the centre of London to Gravesend. This film shows us on the final leg of the walk. The singing was made by our collective at a workshop led by Anne Robinson and Mikey Georgeson. The Drone was operated by Ben Foong. It was all a joyful collaborative experience and I made this film to celebrate.**

You can see the whole film here: <https://vimeo.com/276719701>