

American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting

16th – 20th November, 2016

Significant Walks : Synthesizing Qualitative and
Quantitative Reflections on Movement and Place



University of Brighton

wellcometrust



Collaborative research team :

Dr Shirley Chubb

Reader in Interdisciplinary Art (University of Chichester)

Emeritus Professor Ann Moore CBE

Musculoskeletal physiotherapy specialist (University of Brighton)

Neil Bryant

Artist & Digital Media Specialist (University of Chichester)

Dr Kambiz Saber-Sheikh

Biomechanical engineer and Coordinator of the biomechanical research and teaching facility (University of Brighton)

Focusing on the act of walking the project involved working with 12 participants to explore

- the resonance of walking as a metaphor for understanding our individual place in the world
- walking as a part of our daily existence, providing opportunities to consider how we interact, navigate and respond to our environment
- walking as a measure of physical ability and wellbeing



Significant Walks Exhibition 2014

Thinking Path 2003




Darwin's close friend and mentor, botanist Joseph Hooker,, recounts how they often

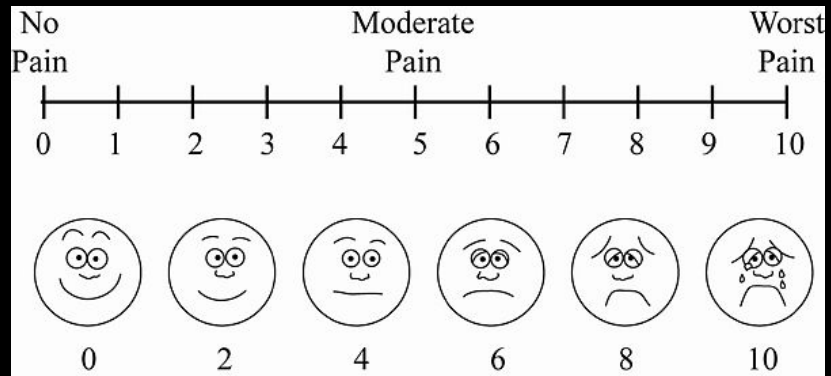
'...trudged through the garden, where there was always some experiment to visit, and on to the Sand-walk, round which a fixed number of turns were taken, during which our conversation usually ran on foreign lands and seas, old friends, old books and things far off both to mind and eye'

Keynes, R., Coulter-Smith, G. & Forgan, S (2004) Thinking Path. Shrewsbury Museum Service. p.16

Familiar interpretive representations of pain



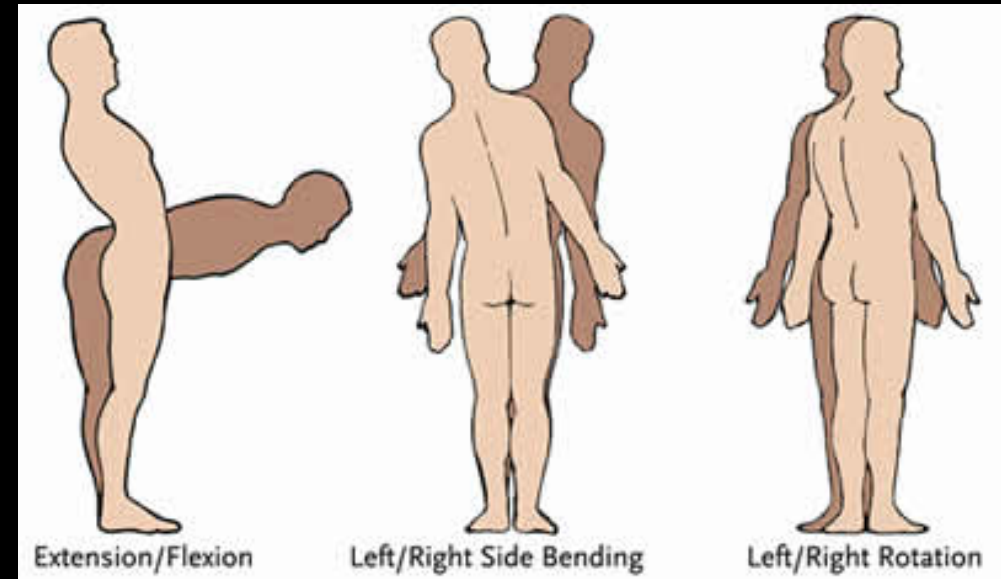
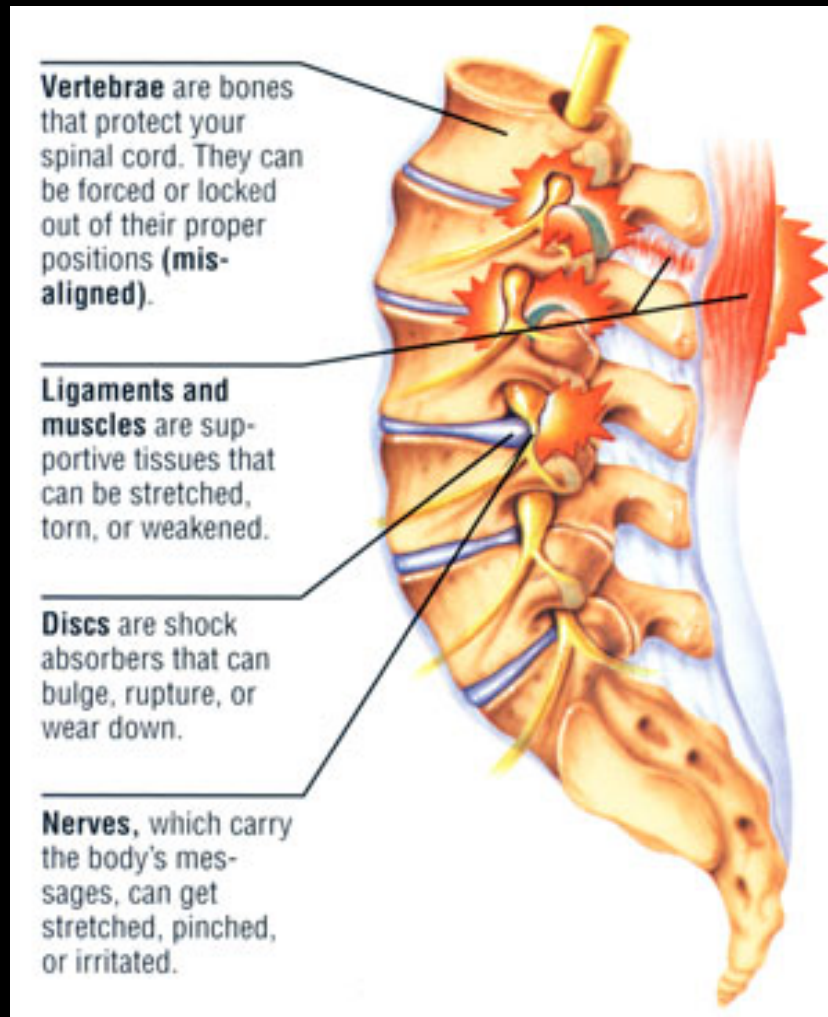
 **THIS PERSONS
PAIN IS INVISIBLE
SO IS THE PAIN THAT
YOU CAUSE WHEN YOU
DO NOT BELIEVE ME**



**NOT ALL PAIN CAN
BE SEEN.**



Clinical representations of low back pain



Back pain can be Axial, Referred, or Radicular

Axial: left or right or both in the Lumbar spine

Referred: Pain referred from the lumbar spinal structures to the buttock and or leg unilaterally or bilaterally

Radicular: Referred pain via nerve involvement to the leg or legs accompanied with Parasthesia (pins and needles) or with analgesia (numbness)

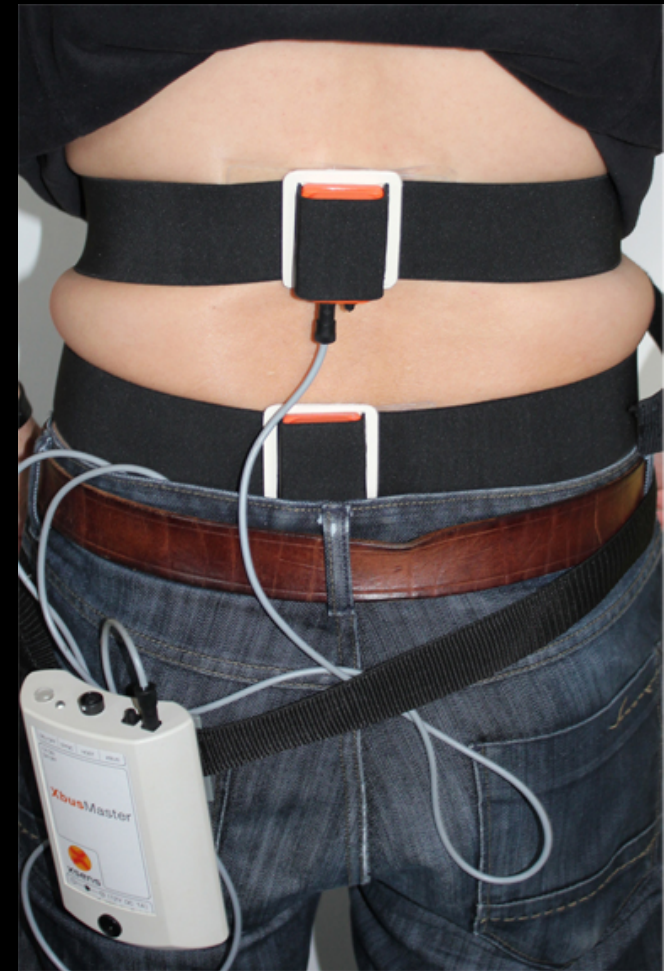


As a group the team and participants considered Rebecca Solnit's observation that...

Walking is usually about something else – about the walkers character or encounters, about nature or about achievement, sometimes so much so it ceases to be about walking.

Solnit, R. (2002) *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London: Verso. Pg 132

Methodology = the combined use of inertial sensors & lightweight head mounted cameras that simultaneously gathered data monitoring posture, movement and acceleration data whilst walking



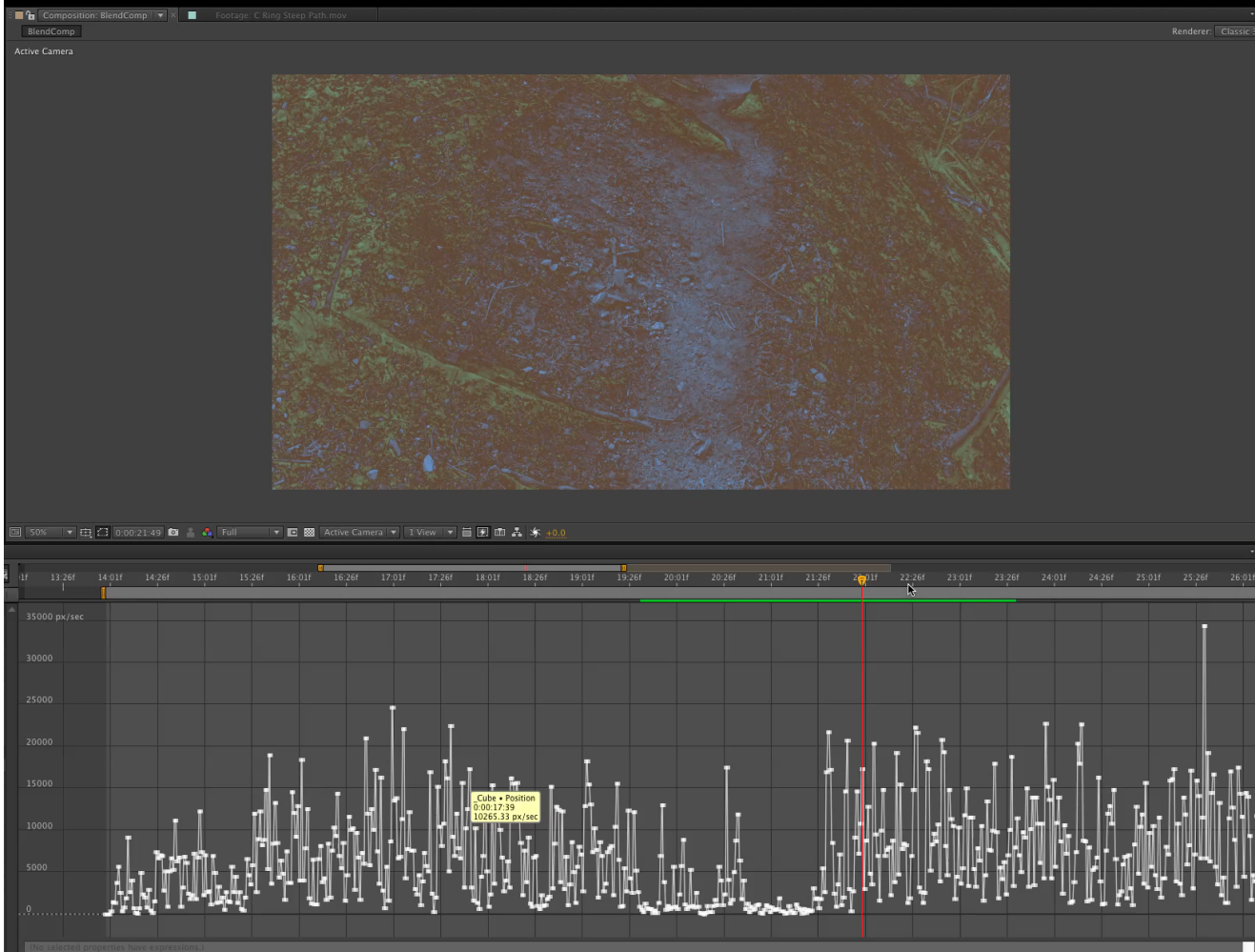
Participant walks



Participant walks



Participants used editing software to explore digital effects to interpret their individual experience of walking



By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative methods the research revealed where knowledge and reflection intersected, creating a series of micro journeys which manifests Doherty's recognition of

'situated practices', suggesting a more fluid engagement with location and its discursive and social contexts'

Doherty, C (2004) *Contemporary A: From Studio to Situation*.
London: Black Dog Publishing

The project acknowledges and reveals the porous, interconnected nature of seeing as a multifaceted physical and conceptual experience that includes

- Seeing what is visible
- Seeing what is invisible but present
- Seeing what is conceptually, or emotionally, understood
- Seeing a physical understanding of pain or sensation

And, crucially, reveals the interdependence of these modes of seeing.

Individual accounts spoke to the discourse that underpins Contemporary art practice, reflecting for instance Merleau-Ponty's observation that

when we try to seize "sensation"...we find ... A formation already bound up with a larger whole, already endowed with a meaning.

S u b j e c t 0 2



Participant original point of view footage



Synthesized data & footage manipulated by participant

Each of our walkers interpretive analysis of their personal circumstance also spoke to scientific or clinical understanding, visually articulating that

... pain is never just in the mind or just in the body. It is a complicated mixture of signals from the body and how the brain interprets them.

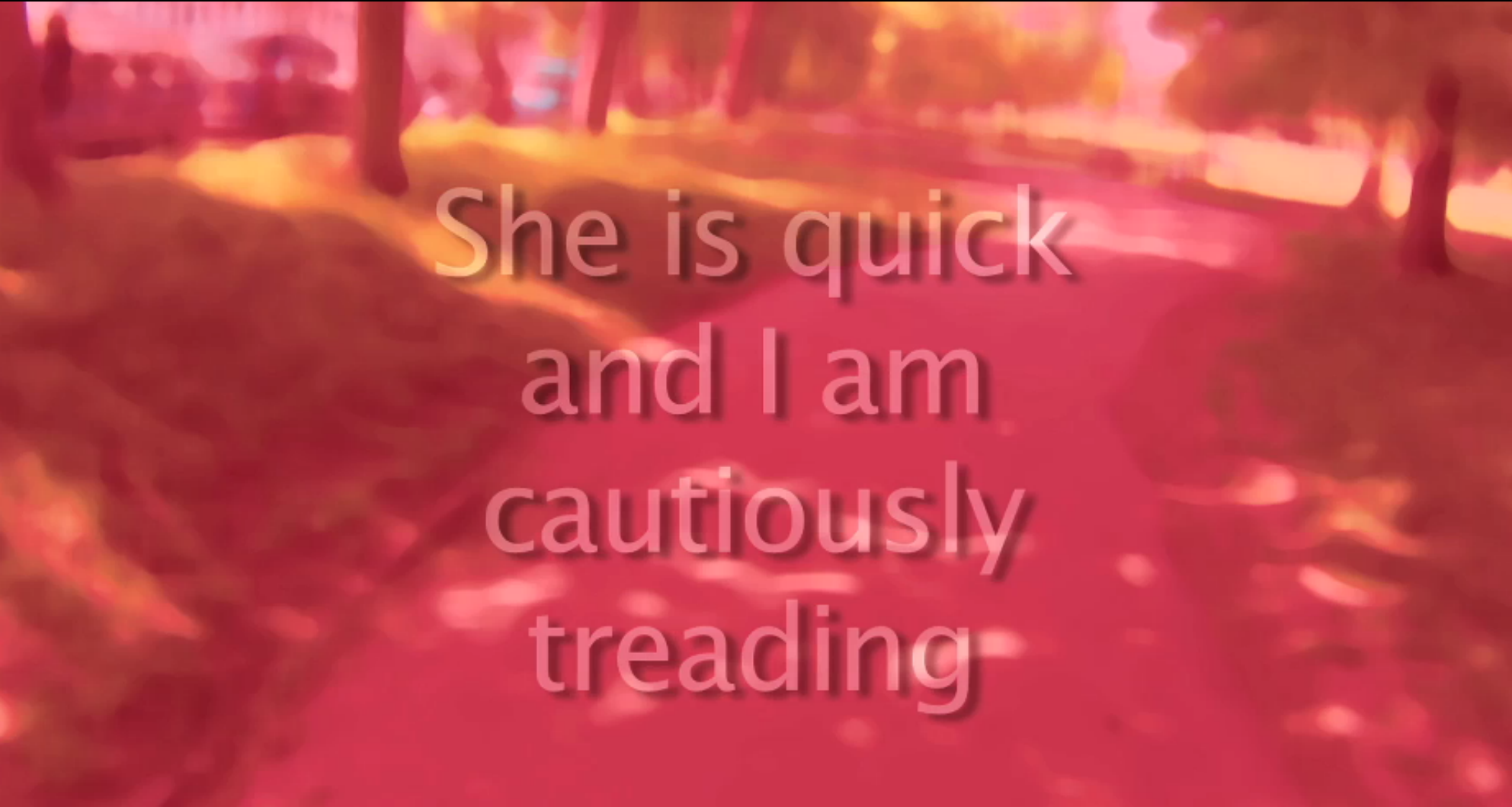


I have come to see it
as part of my
everyday life

Overall the research outcomes bind science, art, participants and the viewer together, prompting a consideration of these daily experiences, not, as Henning observes, as a

‘single centred and disembodied ‘gaze’ but as part of a new visual practice which presumes an embodied viewer.’

Henning, M (2009) ‘The Subject as Object: photography and the human body in
Wells, L. Photography : A Critical Introduction London: Routledge. Pg

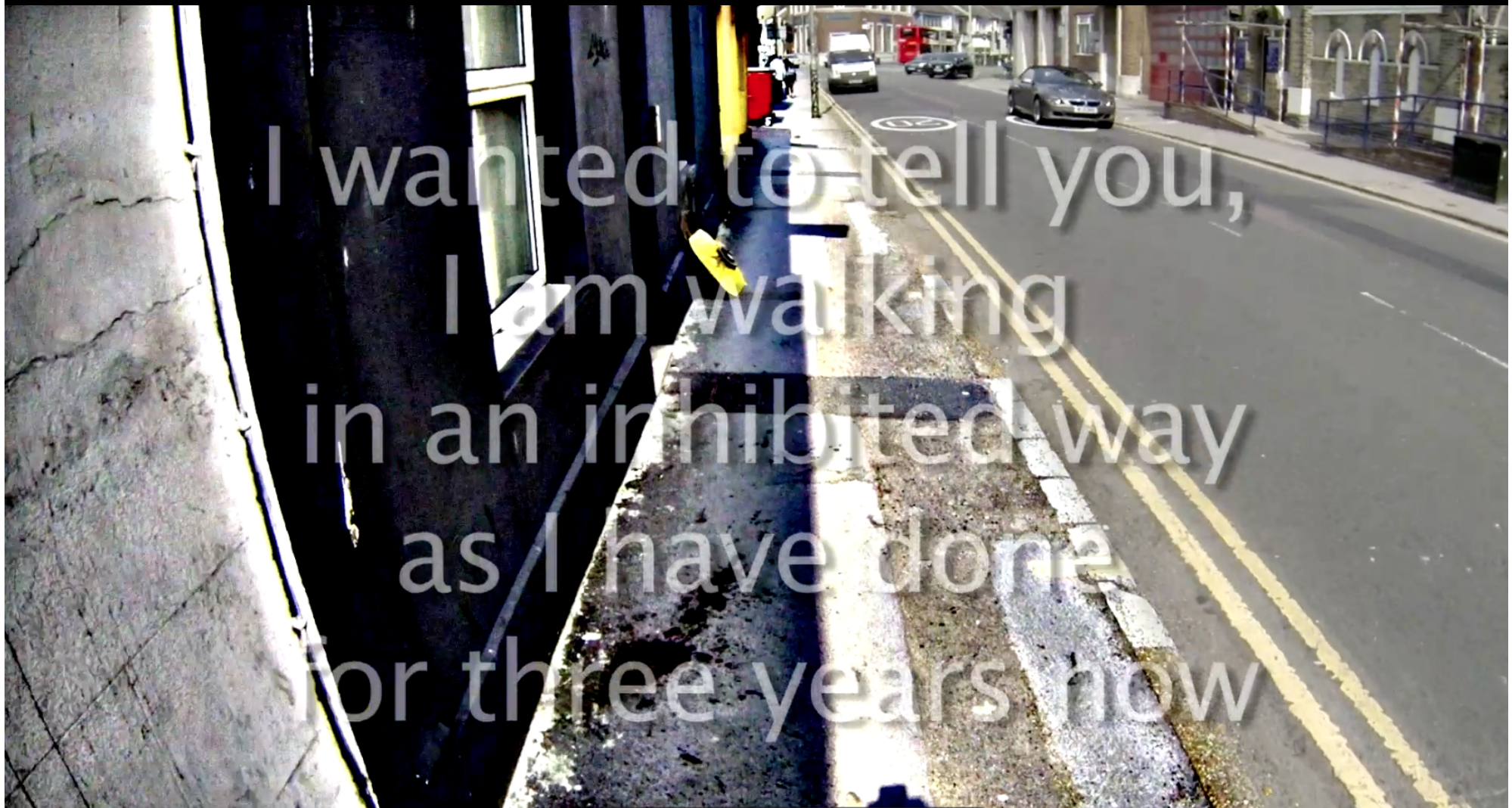


She is quick
and I am
cautiously
treading

Significant Walks suggests a new role for hybrid forms of media – reflecting what Mark Hansen considers as an evolving, digitally based world of visual experience where

‘the formal act of framing reality vacates the artwork of its Romantic trappings... [and] relocates the impact of the work squarely in the domain of experience, this is all in the service of a redemption of embodied experience : a renewed investment of the body as a kind of converter of the general form of framing into a rich, singular experience.’

Hansen, Mark B.N. (2006) *New Philosophy for New Media*. London: The MIT Press. Pg 3.





<http://significantwalks.com/>