

## Elephant Atlas

Essay Title:

A Potent Charm

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Eyes closed. On the train. 12 minutes a day. Drawing circles. The movement affects the simple shape. Newton tells us an object at rest, remains at rest, and an object in motion, remains in motion, unless it is acted on. The pencil does just that. Moving in time with the train, piercing the skin of the page, as if in a silent Newtonian dance.

Beside me there are mountains of note books, full of optical shapes, collected over the year. In my mind's eye these drawings are a way of bringing good fortune to the day. My homemade potent charms.

Ring

Round

Sphere

Circuit

Cycle

Disc

Ecliptic

It's the repeated ritualistic action, the mass of books full of drawings, the curiosity of fellow commuters, that together produces such potency

Returning to the Cumming Museum after 20 years of absence, I am again seduced by the talismans. Back then I was looking for items related to English Witchcraft, returning is like coming full circle finding old friends.

I want to be drawn to the strikingly visual objects in the collection, those understood to be important. But as the Hag Stone sits in my hand I know it is to these understated almost forgotten, objects tucked away at the bottom of the dusty box, that I am bound to return.

Carved by the sea and imbued with powerful magic, they are gathered from the shore and hung on the threshold of homes, warding off evil spirits.

In the museum they are a bundle of miss formed shapes stacked in boxes, with random labels to match. They came from Edward Lovett, famous not only for his collection of talismans from Londoner barrow boys in the 1920's but for the stories that accompanied them.

The collection in this vitrine tell their own new stories, it's in the gaps and silences that we are able to dream of our own magical talismans, where ever they may be.