

QUEER ESTUARY

A toolkit exploring
the intersection of
LGBTQAIA+ identity
and environmental
activism within the
Thames Estuary.

Queer Estuary Collective

Introduction

We are a newly formed multi-disciplinary collective of creative practitioners and academics, with specialisms in contemporary art, social practice and activism, narrative and storytelling; movement and gender; space and materials; collaborative and outreach pedagogy and queer theory and environmental humanities.

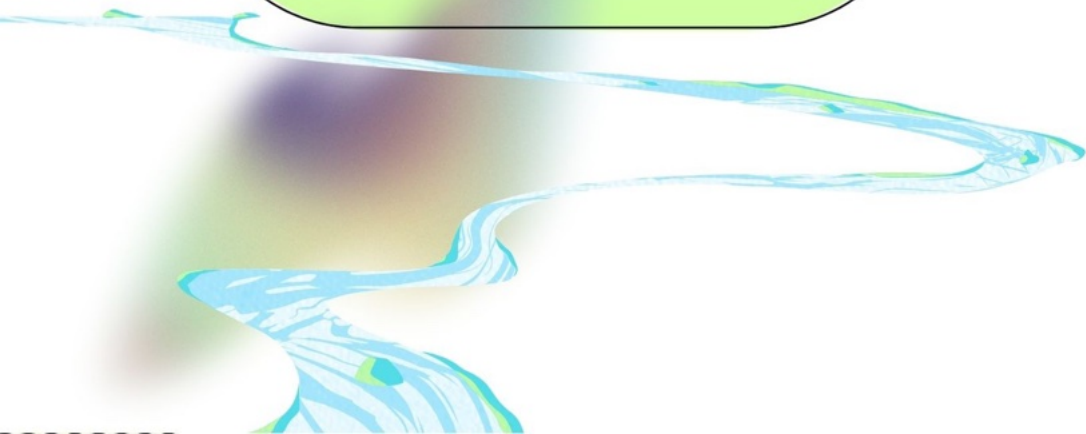
Born out of the 2021 Creative Estuary Ideas Lab, when we successfully gained Arts Council England Funding, we have now developed a Tool Kit (The Queer Estuary Zine) that explores the intersection of queer identities and climate change along the Thames Estuary.

We seek ways to engage, interact, facilitate and produce creative works alongside members of the LGBTQIA+ community to raise awareness of environmental issues and empower climate activism. Alongside research, discussion and making, our work wants to expand out of this zine, into collective action, walks and workshops, talks and tours and a desire to connect across disciplines to work towards equality and environmental harmony.



The guiding questions of our collective are:

- ✱ How can we imagine new modes of representation for both the estuary and queer people?
- ✱ How can questioning 'the natural' create space for queer people to engage with environmental concerns?
- ✱ Can the character of estuarine landscapes help reorient LGBTQIA+ communities towards climate activism?
- ✱ Can Estuary ecology open up ways to imagine what queer environmentalism might look like?





declan

Quarter

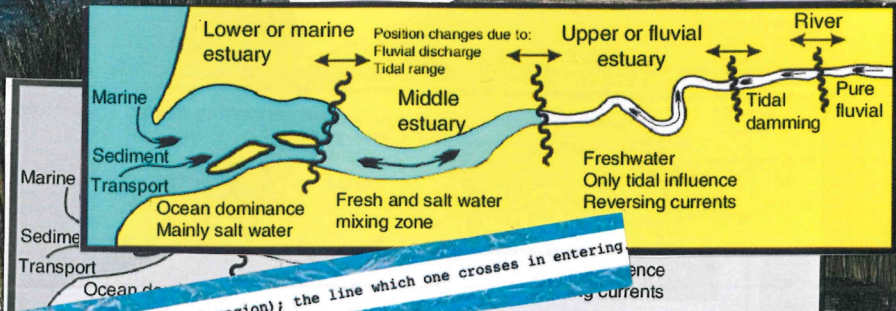
WATER SPOUT.

Estuary

WHAT

An

is estuary?



estuaries are thresholds (in-between spaces)

- between fresh water and salty
- between the open space of the ocean and the built-up area of the city.
- they have intertidal zones (sections which are sometimes land and sometimes water – always muddy)

Estuaries are connected to marshland or wetlands and boggy landscapes

UUS, OR WILL-O'-THE-WISP.

HET MOERAS

VOGELS, T 8

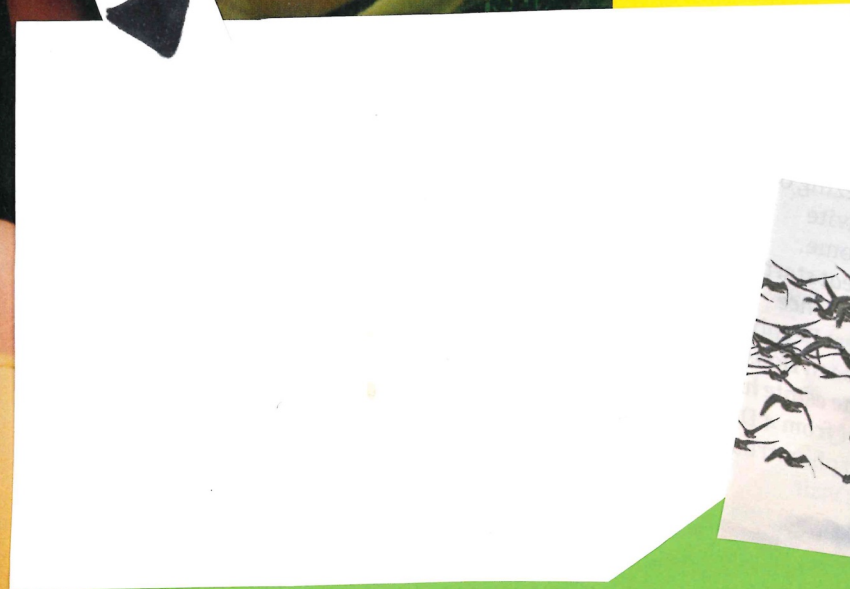
An estuary is an area where a freshwater river or stream meets the ocean. In estuaries, the salty ocean mixes with a freshwater river, resulting in brackish water. Brackish water is somewhat salty, but not as salty as the ocean... Water continually circulates into and out of an estuary. Tides create the largest flow of saltwater, while river mouths create the largest flow of freshwater.

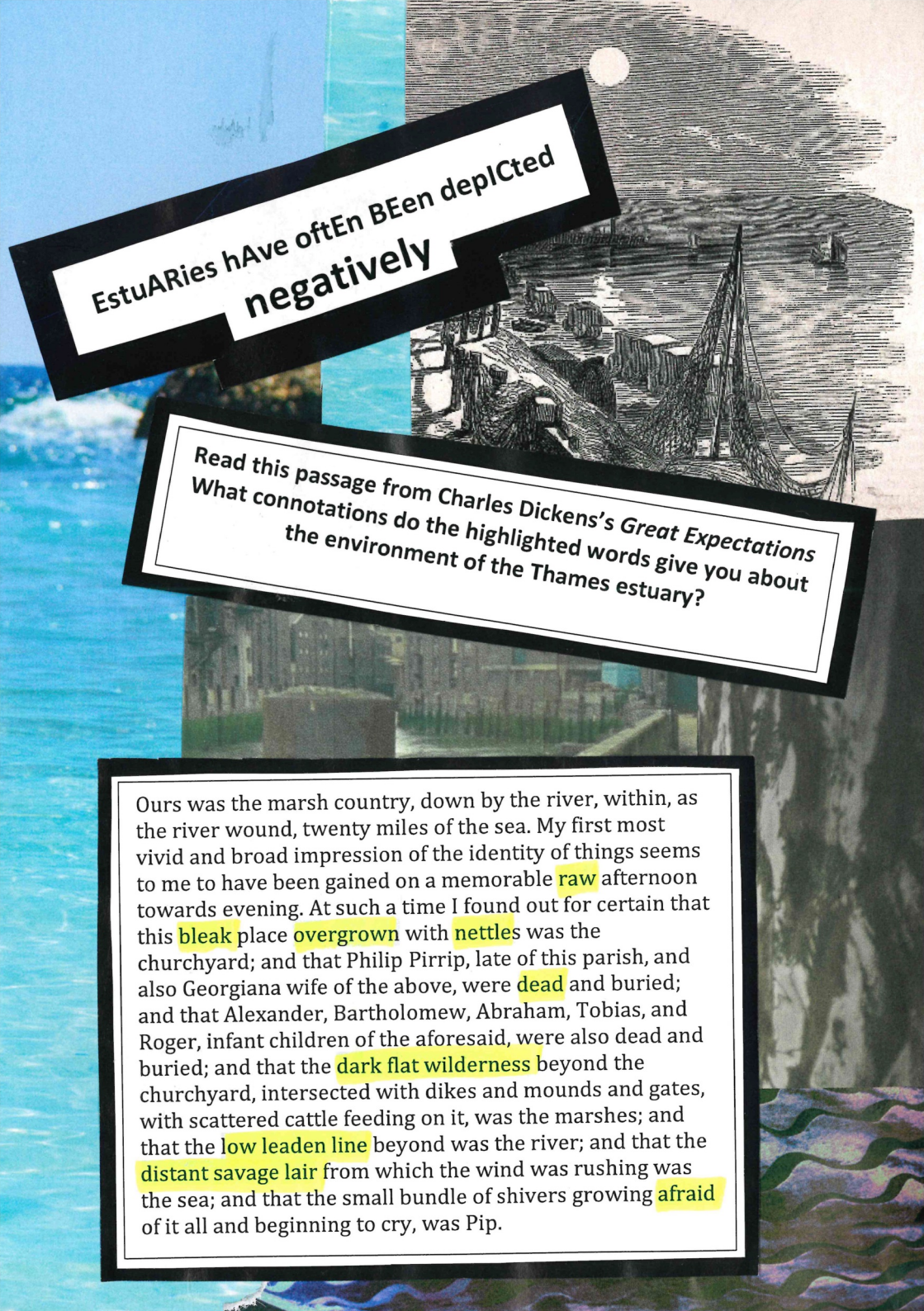
estuaries are not one thing but ~multiplicities~

~multiplicities~

Write a LIST of Words yOU
aSSociaTE wiTh tHE word ESTuaRy

WhaT aRe your eXperiEnceS of estuArieS ?

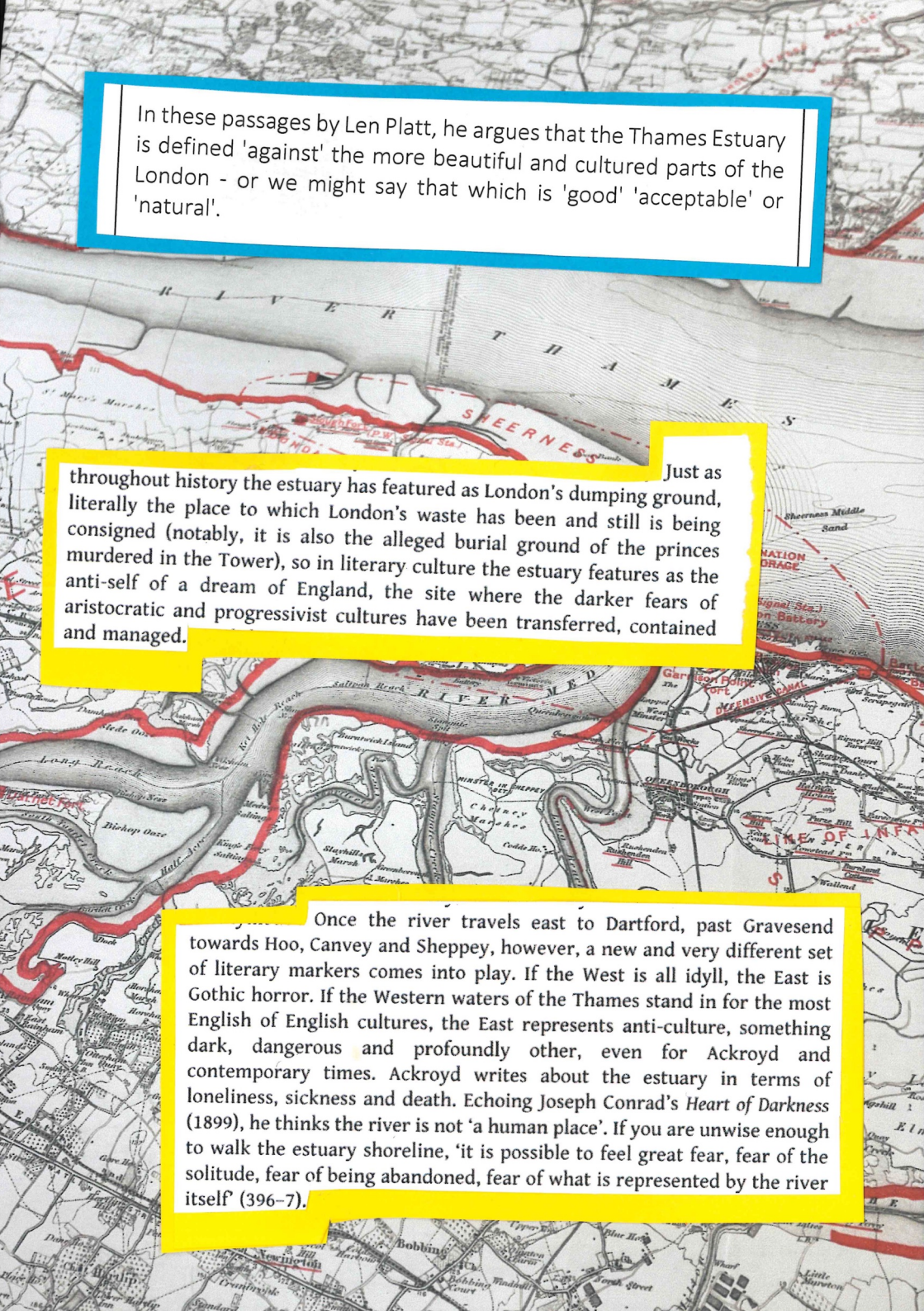




EstuARies hAve oftEn BEen depIcted
negatively

Read this passage from Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*
What connotations do the highlighted words give you about
the environment of the Thames estuary?

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable **raw** afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this **bleak** place **overgrown** with **nettles** was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were **dead** and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the **dark flat wilderness** beyond the churchyard, intersected with dikes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the **low leaden line** beyond was the river; and that the **distant savage lair** from which the wind was rushing was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing **afraid** of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.



In these passages by Len Platt, he argues that the Thames Estuary is defined 'against' the more beautiful and cultured parts of the London - or we might say that which is 'good' 'acceptable' or 'natural'.

Just as throughout history the estuary has featured as London's dumping ground, literally the place to which London's waste has been and still is being consigned (notably, it is also the alleged burial ground of the princes murdered in the Tower), so in literary culture the estuary features as the anti-self of a dream of England, the site where the darker fears of aristocratic and progressivist cultures have been transferred, contained and managed.

Once the river travels east to Dartford, past Gravesend towards Hoo, Canvey and Sheppey, however, a new and very different set of literary markers comes into play. If the West is all idyll, the East is Gothic horror. If the Western waters of the Thames stand in for the most English of English cultures, the East represents anti-culture, something dark, dangerous and profoundly other, even for Ackroyd and contemporary times. Ackroyd writes about the estuary in terms of loneliness, sickness and death. Echoing Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), he thinks the river is not 'a human place'. If you are unwise enough to walk the estuary shoreline, 'it is possible to feel great fear, fear of the solitude, fear of being abandoned, fear of what is represented by the river itself' (396-7).



WHAT

does

QUEER

?

Mean

Queer is a word that some people use as an umbrella term to describe sexualities and genders that are not heterosexual or cis-gender. It's original meaning was odd or strange, and was then used slur against homosexuals. In the 1980s, some people reclaimed the word to describe identities which challenged the binaries of sex and gender. Queer is fluid, difficult to define and as Eve Sedgwick says, constantly in flux. But it doesn't just relate to sexuality.

Read what bell hooks says and see if you agree.

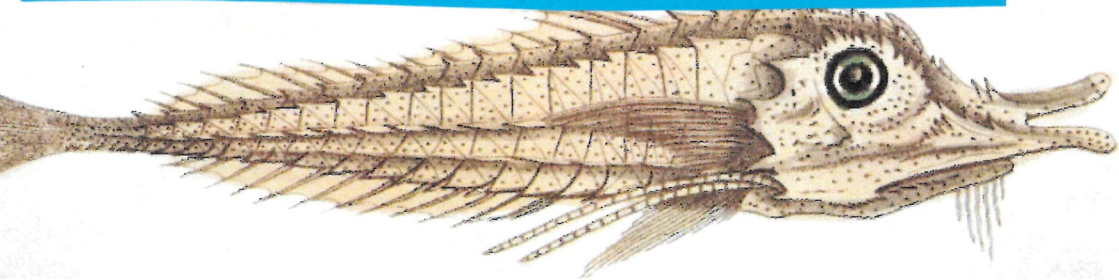
"Queer as not about who
you're having sex with,
that can be a dimension
of it, but queer as being
about the self that is at
odds with everything
around it and has to
invent and create and
find a place to speak and
to thrive and to live."

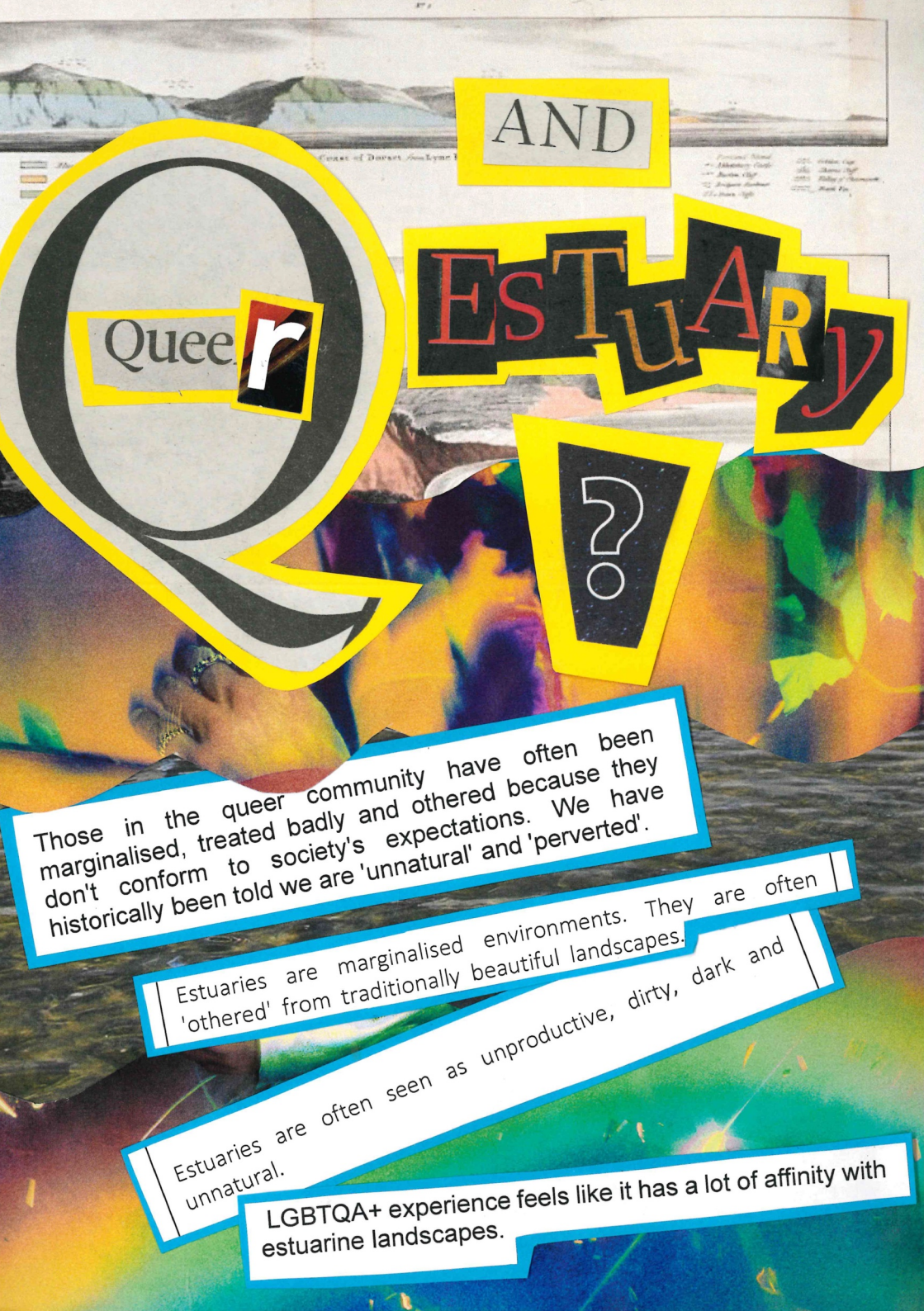
- BELL HOOKS

Queer is a continuing
moment, movement, motive-
recurrent, eddying,
troublant.
The word 'queer' itself
means across...

Eve Sedgwick

Write or Draw what Queer means to you.





Queer

AND

ESTUARY

?

Those in the queer community have often been marginalised, treated badly and othered because they don't conform to society's expectations. We have historically been told we are 'unnatural' and 'perverted'.

Estuaries are marginalised environments. They are often 'othered' from traditionally beautiful landscapes.

Estuaries are often seen as unproductive, dirty, dark and unnatural.

LGBTQA+ experience feels like it has a lot of affinity with estuarine landscapes.

When we say Queer Estuary, what we mean is:

- that we are estuaries and estuaries are queer
- both are fluid, moving, threshold spaces
- both have been othered by normative ideas of nature, beauty, usefulness
- they resist definition and prescriptive ways of being
- things which are not fixed but have permeable boundaries
- not individual 'landscapes' or 'identities' but ecologies entangled with others
- that which follows their desire
- that which may be seen as unruly, excessive, untameable

In what way do you think estuaries are queer?

In what ways are you an estuary?

When YOU say Queer Estuary what you mean is:

The Observer's Book of

Nature is never neutral.



A premise of this zine is that Nature is not a given, or natural thing, but has histories, is in some ways a created concept, interwoven with culture, ideas of power and privilege etc.

The concept of 'nature' can be used as an idealised norm with which to oppress queer subjects, to try and discipline queers into conforming to norms by claiming that they way we are is 'unnatural'

The Natural is often an appeal to fix biology, desire, bodies inline with state sanctioned & societal acceptability.

Landscapes are also socially understood and environments are interpreted from particular situated social positions and for particular social reasons.



This way of approaching nature & bodies
& identities is called

Queer Ecology

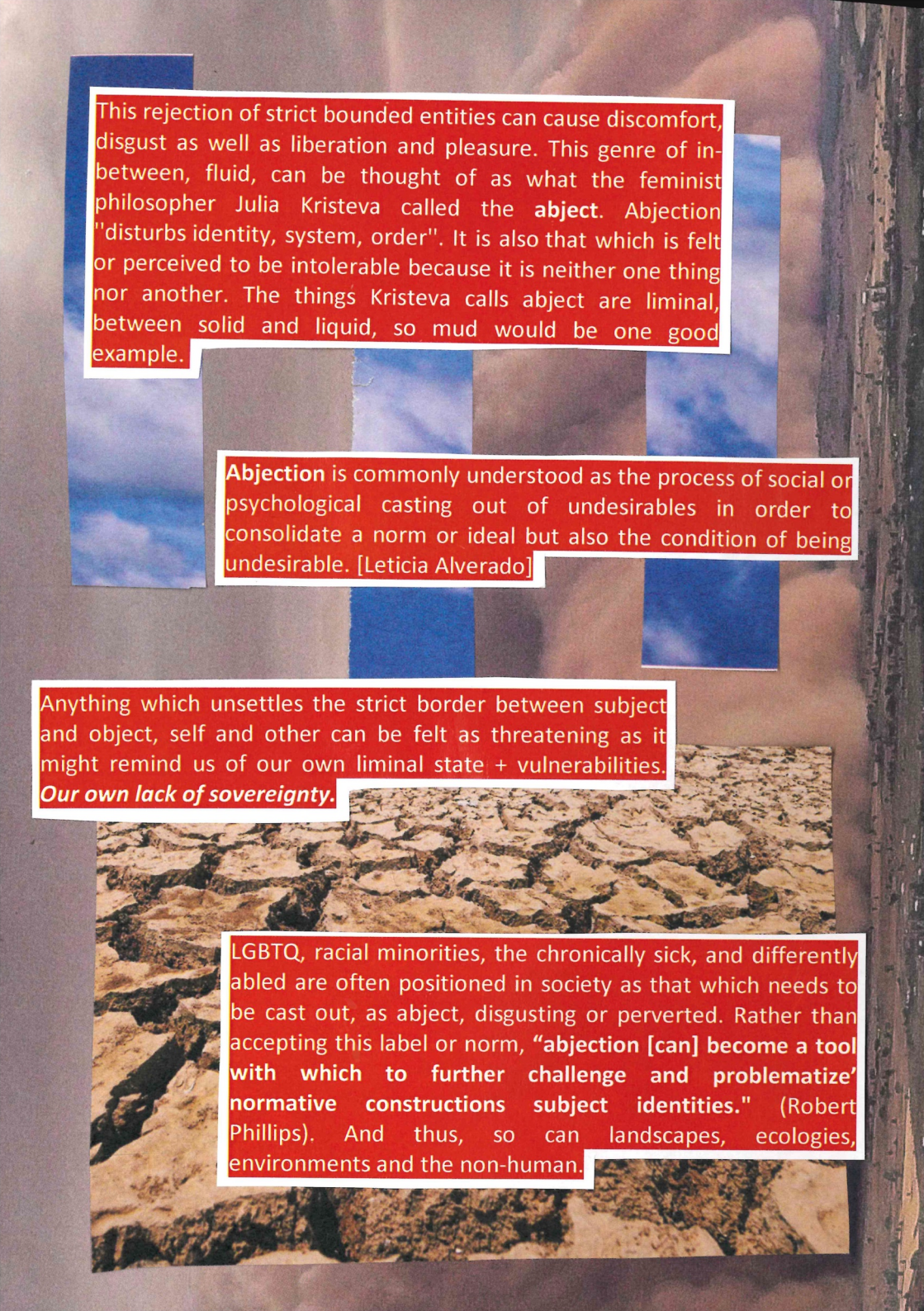
One thing Queer Ecologies seeks to do is
revalue what has been seen as worthless

Estuaries and Queer people are overlooked but when
allowed to thrive contribute to a healthy society.

Estuaries are important because:

- they are a buffer zone to protect from flooding
- prevent soil erosion
- wetlands absorb large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere
- unique ecologies and biodiversity

How are Queer people important to society?:



This rejection of strict bounded entities can cause discomfort, disgust as well as liberation and pleasure. This genre of in-between, fluid, can be thought of as what the feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva called the **abject**. Abjection "disturbs identity, system, order". It is also that which is felt or perceived to be intolerable because it is neither one thing nor another. The things Kristeva calls abject are liminal, between solid and liquid, so mud would be one good example.

Abjection is commonly understood as the process of social or psychological casting out of undesirables in order to consolidate a norm or ideal but also the condition of being undesirable. [Leticia Alverado]

Anything which unsettles the strict border between subject and object, self and other can be felt as threatening as it might remind us of our own liminal state + vulnerabilities.

Our own lack of sovereignty.

LGBTQ, racial minorities, the chronically sick, and differently abled are often positioned in society as that which needs to be cast out, as abject, disgusting or perverted. Rather than accepting this label or norm, "**abjection [can] become a tool with which to further challenge and problematize' normative constructions subject identities.**" (Robert Phillips). And thus, so can landscapes, ecologies, environments and the non-human.

Perca maritima



embracing

The artist Roni Horn says there is a dirtiness associated with the Thames Estuary that we might be drawn to, and that this attraction might be described as **perv**erted.

queer

HOMOSEXUALS

ARE

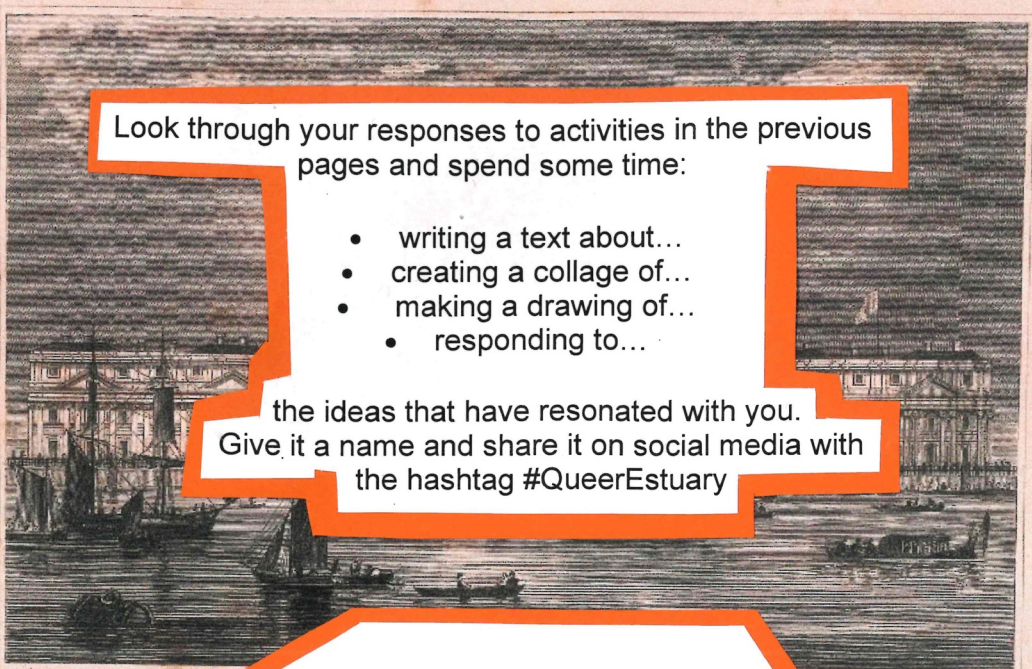
DIFFERENT...

ecological

abjection

How might we embrace part of an estuary's 'abject' nature?
Can you map queerness onto it? Describe a parallel between your identity and the estuary.





Look through your responses to activities in the previous pages and spend some time:

- writing a text about...
- creating a collage of...
- making a drawing of...
- responding to...

the ideas that have resonated with you.
Give it a name and share it on social media with the hashtag #QueerEstuary

This zine was made by declan wiffen for
Queer Estuaries Collective

Formed by Laura Whiting, Lu Williams,
Charlotte Edmonds, Alex Martin-Carey & declan wiffen.

With kind support from
The Institute for Culture and Creative Industries
& Arts Council England

This collection of zines are designed to be used to

- introduce you to our collaborative & creative approach to questions of ecology, gender and sexuality.
- help you facilitate your workshops on estuarine landscapes
- be used as individual or in groups
- look nice & be shared



Lu

I'm walking home and can
smell the sea air, damp, boggy,
the hint of mud, algae, lichen -
the dark damp forest of the
ocean.

Silt
&
mud





Estuaries
Cradle Mudflats,
sheltered Lagoons,
Slobs of coastal
wetlands.

Salt ponds
and swamps

- SILTS
- CLAYS
- ANIMAL
DETRITUS

I ONCE FOUND A BLOATED NAKED
ALIEN ON THE BEACH - WAS IT ONCE A
RAT?

THE WEIRD

"an outside that breaks through... Vague, elusive, fragmentary impressions of wonder, beauty and adventurous expectancy."
- Mark Fisher on H.P. Lovecraft

"an encounter with the unknown."

Fascination > Horror



mixed with a certain trepidation

↓
it compels
our attention

↓
cannot be
contained.

An interplay between the
known + unknown - an exchange,
a confrontation - a conflict
between this world and
others... through space
+ time.

THE EERIE

"cut out of
time"



The eerie clings to certain
kinds of physical spaces and
landscapes.

"something is present when there
should be nothing, or there is
nothing present when there
should be something."

Photo:
Leigh-on-Sea,
Essex

MUD FLATS



SOMETHING REGARDED
AS 'WEIRD' AND 'ECRIE'
COULD BE INCREDIBLY
USEFUL FOR FIGHTING
CLIMATE CHANGE.

IN THE PAST,
TIDAL FLATS WERE
CONSIDERED UNHEALTHY,
ECONOMICALLY UNIMPORTANT
AREAS + WERE OFTEN DREDGED
+ DEVELOPED INTO AGRICULTURAL
LAND.

THEY ARE INFACIT IMPORTANT
ECOSYSTEMS, SUPPORTING A
LARGE POPULATION OF
WILDLIFE + ALLOWING TENS
OF MILLIONS OF MIGRATING
SHOREBIRDS TO MIGRATE
BETWEEN THE NORTH
AND SOUTHERN
HEMISPHERE.

MUDFLATS
HELP PREVENT
COASTAL EROSION.
NOW THEY ARE UNDER THREAT
FROM SEA LEVEL RISES,
DEVELOPMENT, DREDGING,
SHIPPING + CHEMICAL
POLLUTION.

LIKE MANGROVES, MARSHLAND
AND MUDFLATS ACT LIKE WATER

CUT OUT OF TIME

AS A QUEER, NEURO DIVERGENT, WORKING
CLASS PERSON, I HAVE OFTEN FELT 'OUT-OF-PLACE'
AND MISUNDERSTOOD. SOMETIMES I FEEL ALIEN.

SPONGES.

ACTIVITY 1

• COLLAGE CAN BE A GREAT
MINDFUL ACTIVITY, JUXTAPOSING
IMAGES, MATCHING COLOURS AND COMBINING TEXTURES.

YOU'LL NEED:

- PAPER - to stick onto
- SCISSORS
- Glue, tape (something sticky)
- Magazines/ newspapers/
old books/ photos/ receipts/
dried leaves/ receipts/
old fabric....

Flick through your materials,
start to cut out colours, textures and
words you are drawn to. Start to
build a narrative between them
by sticking onto paper.
It doesn't have to make
sense! Trust your gut

PHOTOS:
TWO TREE ISLAND

ACTIVITY 2

AS WELL AS COLLAGE, AUTOMATIC WRITING CAN BE A GREAT, NO PRESSURE WAY TO BE CREATIVE 🧠

USE THESE SENTANCE STARTERS TO GET STARTED:

☀️ I'm lying on my back in salt water, around me is...

☀️ When out walking I push through braken and enter a secret world, it looks like...

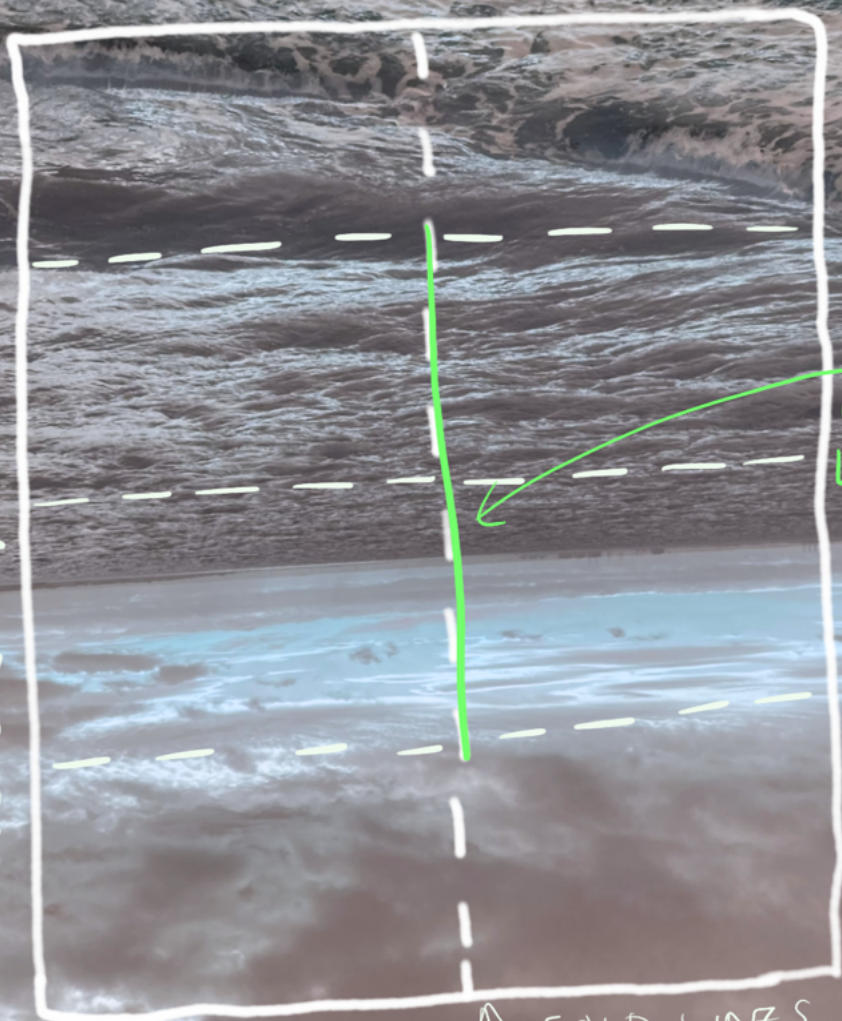
☀️ I push my hand into the mud...

JOIN US & MAKE YOUR OWN ZINE

ACTIVITY

1. FOLD
 2. cut
 3. OPEN UP
 4. Fold in half long ways
 5. Grab these ends
 6. PUSH TOGETHER!
 7. FOLD IN HALF
- your cut will have made a hole.

A3 OR A4 PAPER



CUT LINES

FOLD LINES

DOWN



Alex

Maps

Stories

Selves

What mapping the Estuary

can teach us about

mapping ourselves

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

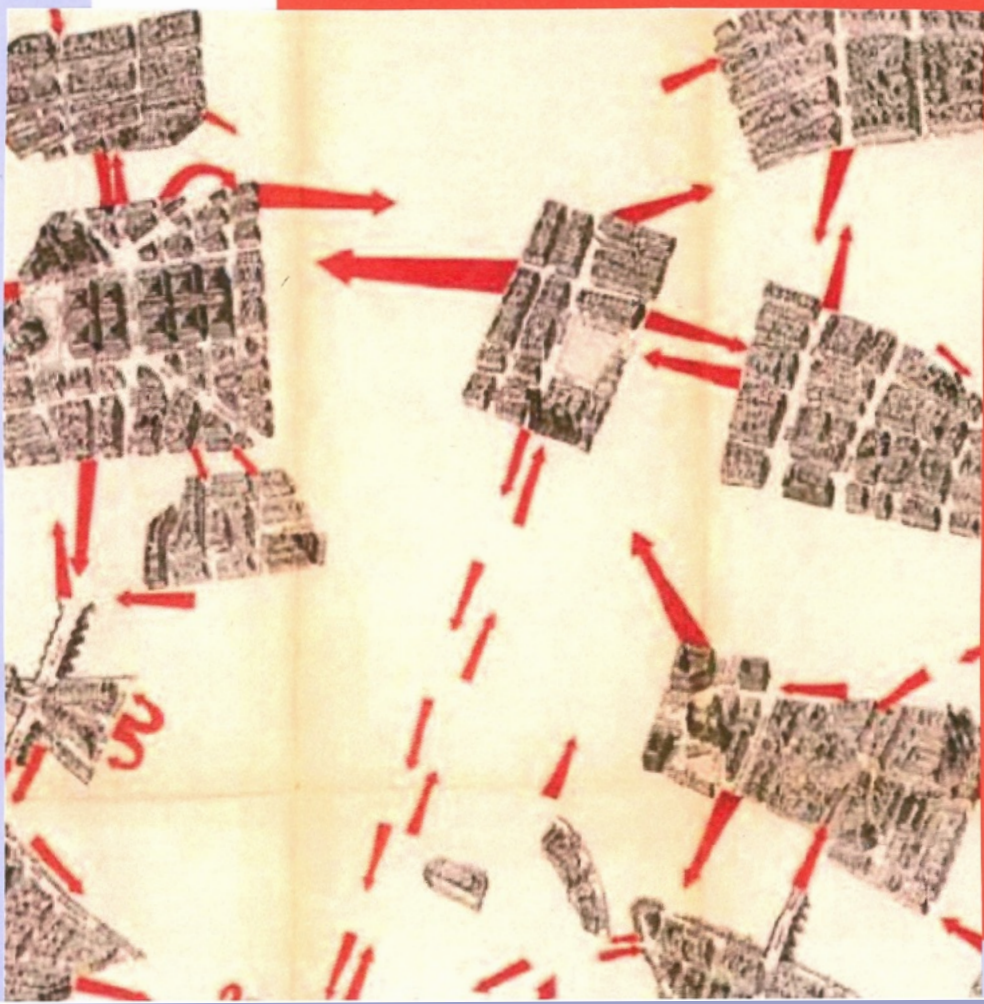
are based on systematic coordinates. They use a grid and look at the land from an abstract position.



Maps - both topographic and topological - are ideological; they do not exist independently of our beliefs and ideas. Maps reflect the limits and shapes of our knowledge.

TOPOLOGICAL MAPS

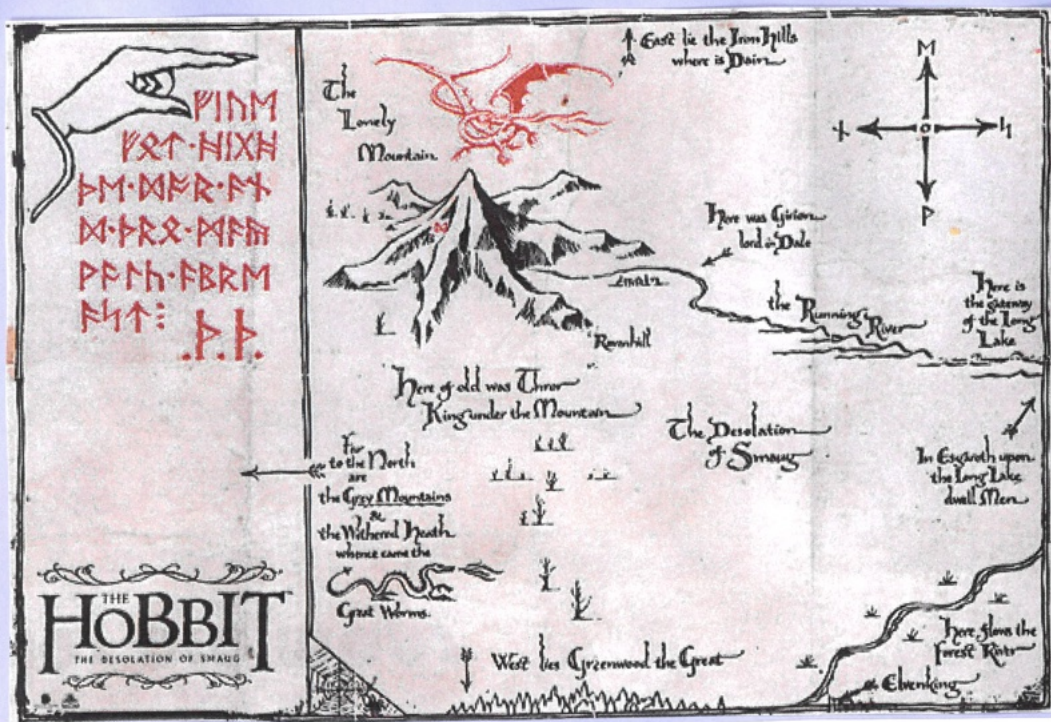
are based on the relationship between points. They look at the land from the point of view of the person moving within it.



Guy Debord
Cover of Psychogeography

Maps tell stories and
stories are maps . . .

Stories = Maps



Map: JRR Tolkien / H.E. Riddet

Stories create worlds and

writers are cartographers

Maps = Stories

Maps tell stories about

the map maker, about the

world, about the moment



"To chart the external world is to reveal ourselves – our priorities, our interests, our fears, our biases. We believe we're mapping our knowledge, but in fact we're mapping what we want –and what we want others– to believe. In this way, every map is a reflection of the individual or group that creates it."

- Peter Turchi, writer

Activity:

Create a self map –

a map which tells us something

about you.

Perhaps

your map charts the spaces that matter to you in a given area

Perhaps

it charts a narrative

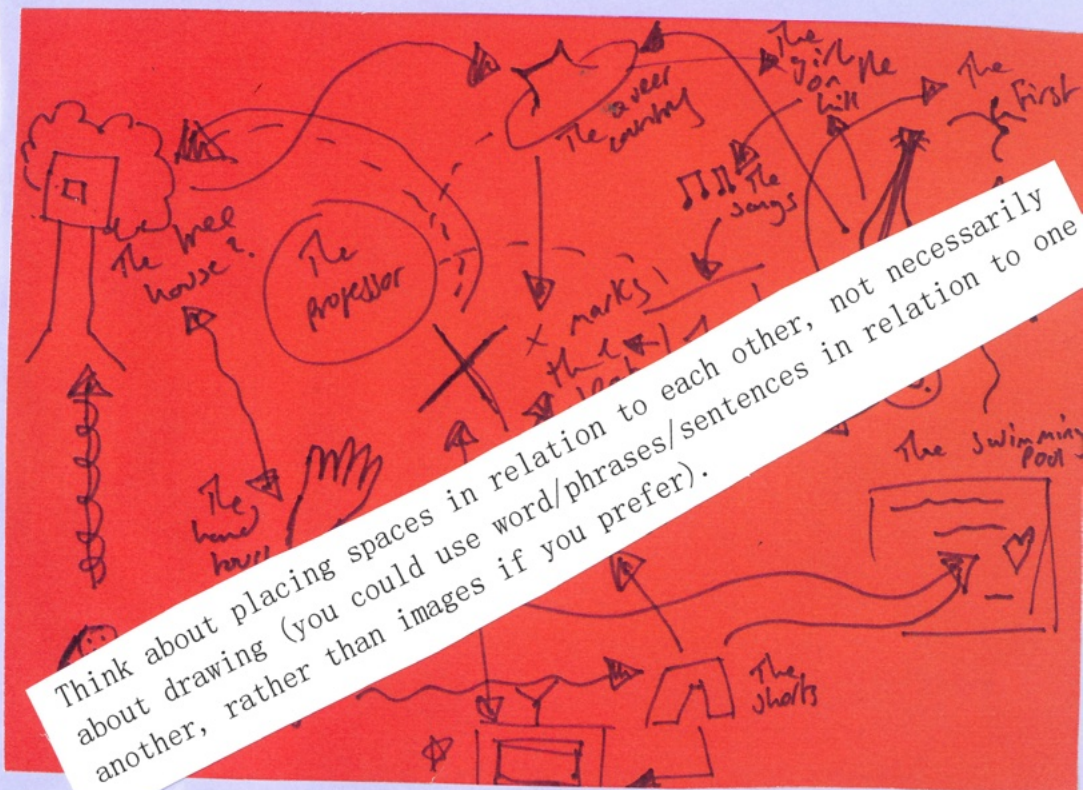
(your whole life, a period of life, a

relationship, a major event etc).

Perhaps

it charts memories that are important to you, or objects, or

songs or books.

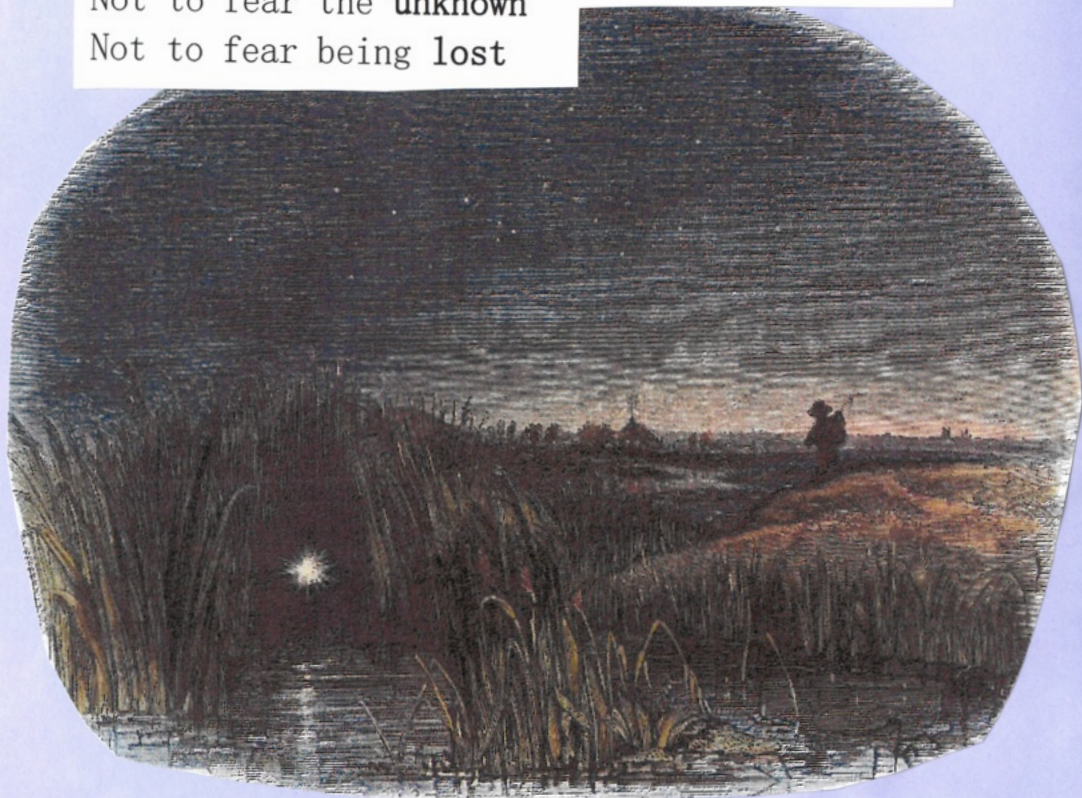


Think about placing spaces in relation to each other, not necessarily about drawing (you could use word/phrases/sentences in relation to one another, rather than images if you prefer).

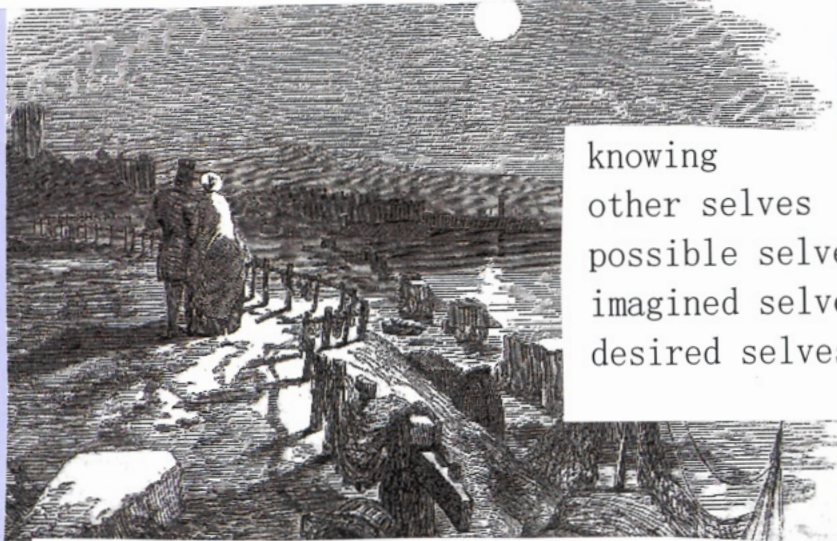
“The future is dark, which
is the best thing the future can be,
I think.”

- Virginia Woolf, in her journal, January 18, 1915

From Woolf we learn not to fear the **darkness**
Not to fear the **unknown**
Not to fear being lost



That in the darkness and in wandering
Is the beginning knowing



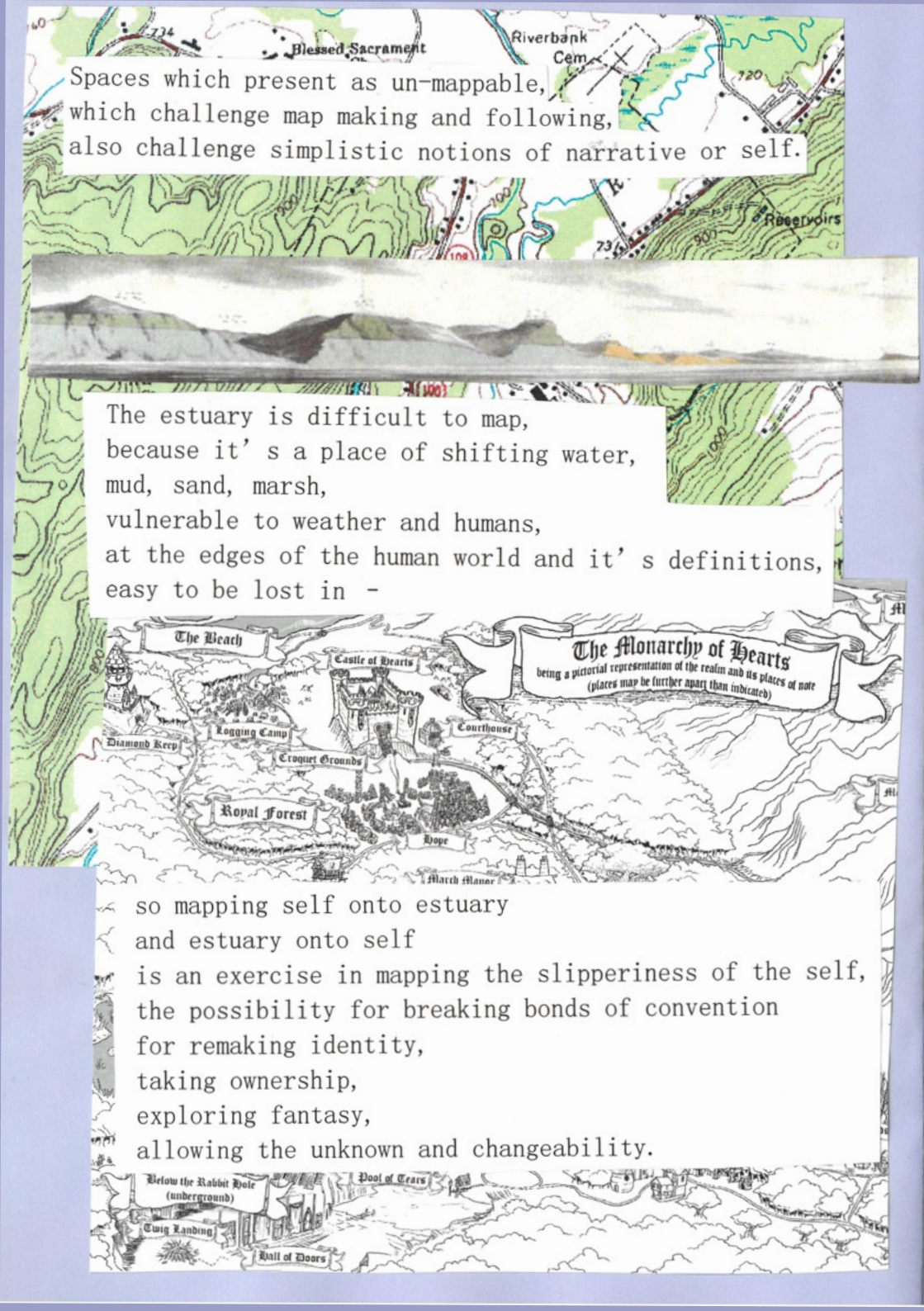
knowing
other selves
possible selves
imagined selves
desired selves

Rebecca Solnit quotes Woolf wondering
(in 'Woolf' s Darkness')

“Or is the true self neither this nor that,
neither here nor there, but something so
varied and wandering that it is only when we
give the rein to its wishes and let it take
its way unimpeded that we are indeed ourselves?

The goof citizen when he opens his door in the
evening must be banker, golfer, husband, father;
not a nomad wandering the desert, a mystic
staring at the sky, a debauchee in the slums of
San Francisco, a soldier heading a revolution,
a pariah howling with scepticism and solitude.”

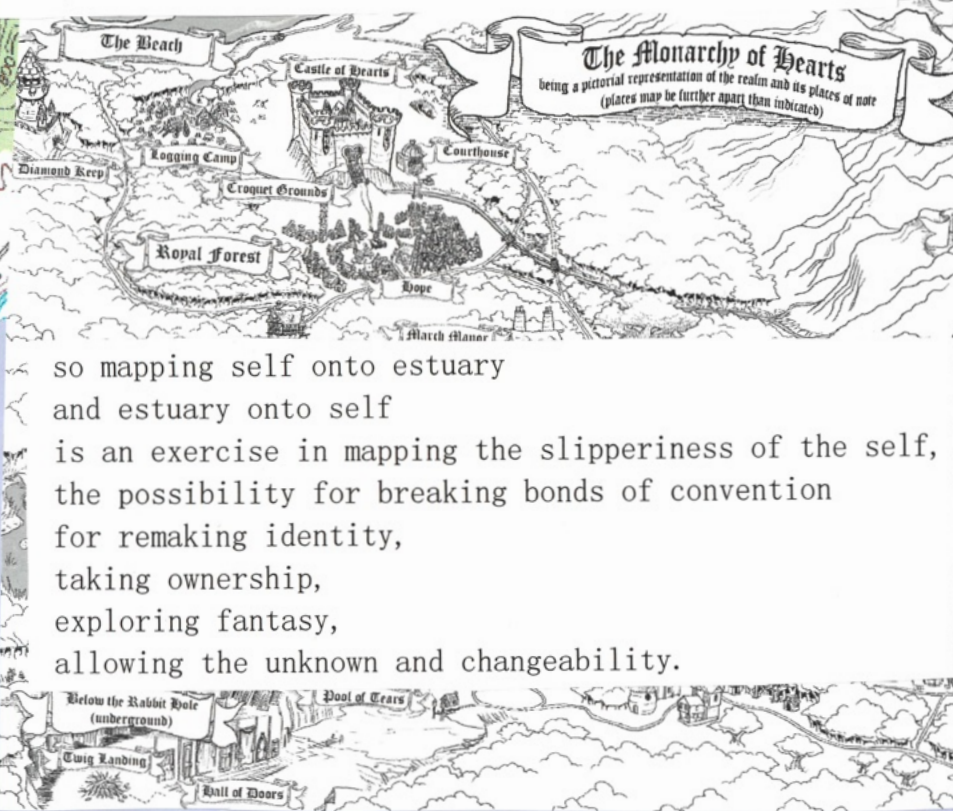
But he is all these others
she says
and the structures limiting what he can be
are not her strictures.



Spaces which present as un-mappable,
which challenge map making and following,
also challenge simplistic notions of narrative or self.



The estuary is difficult to map,
because it's a place of shifting water,
mud, sand, marsh,
vulnerable to weather and humans,
at the edges of the human world and it's definitions,
easy to be lost in -



The Monarchy of Hearts
being a pictorial representation of the realm and its places of note
(places may be further apart than indicated)

The Beach
Castle of Hearts
Courthouse
Diamond Keep
Loggins Camp
Croquet Grounds
Royal Forest
Rope
March Manor

Below the Rabbit Hole (underground)
Twig Landing
Hall of Doors
Pool of Tears

so mapping self onto estuary
and estuary onto self
is an exercise in mapping the slipperiness of the self,
the possibility for breaking bonds of convention
for remaking identity,
taking ownership,
exploring fantasy,
allowing the unknown and changeability.

The places you map may not
be there next time you visit.

So what' s to say the objects
you map today
are real tomorrow?



Who' s to say what is real
and what is fantasy?

Do fantasy selves contribute to the 'real' one?
Can fantasy and real lived selves exist as a kind of cannon,
in fugue and in conversation with one another?

And in the process
perhaps
it reveals everything else to be un mappable

maps of places
of communities and people
just another kind of fiction.

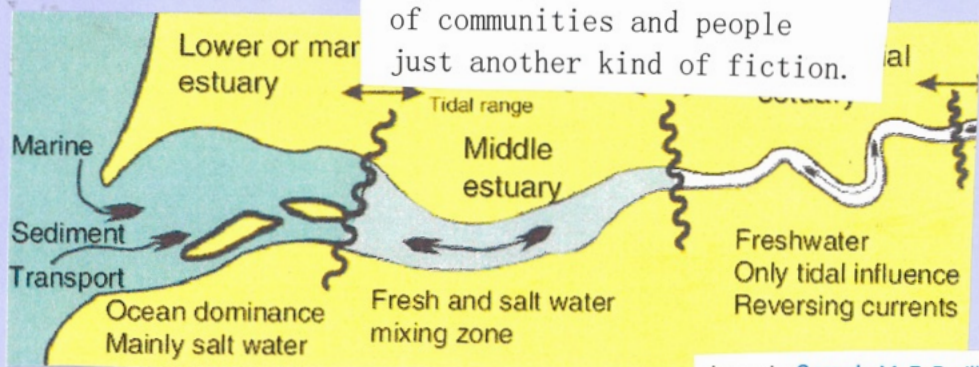
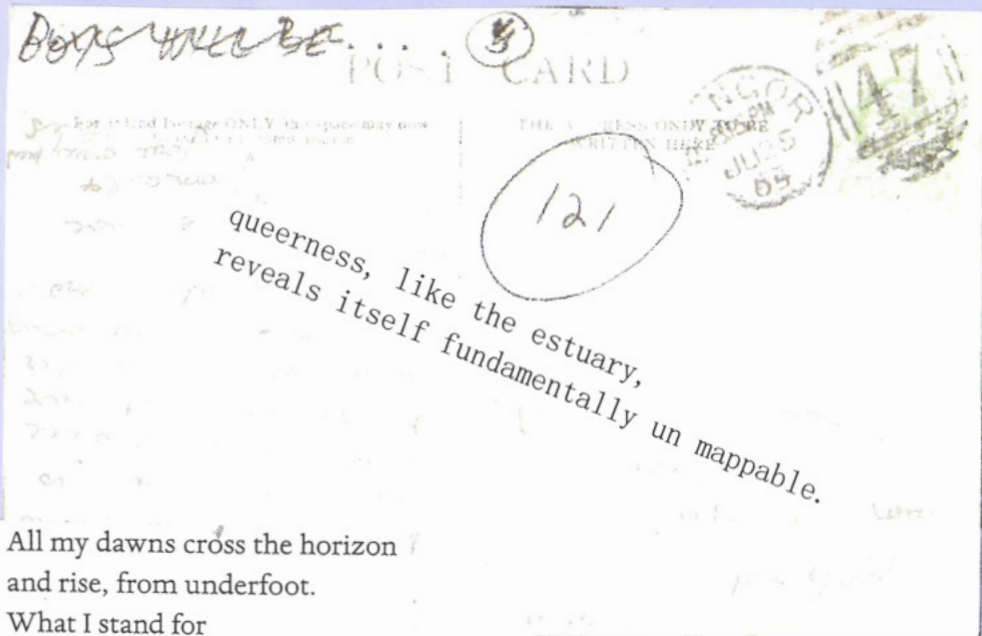


Image by [Gerardo M. E. Perillo](#)



All my dawns cross the horizon
and rise, from underfoot.

What I stand for
is what I stand on.

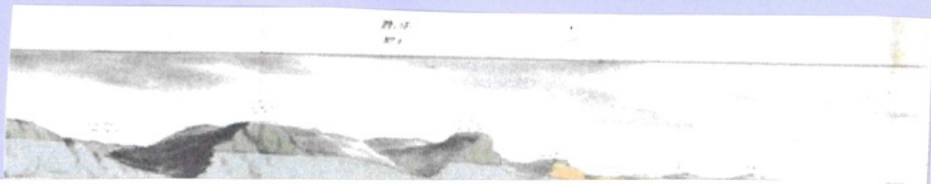
Wendell Berry



Activity:

Trouble your map

Or make a new, entirely fictitious one



Either overlay onto your initial map things which complicate it
Or make a new map of the same thing but built of fantasy

things you wish had happened or you wish you had said

different impressions

fantasies (secret, and outlandish)

paths not travelled

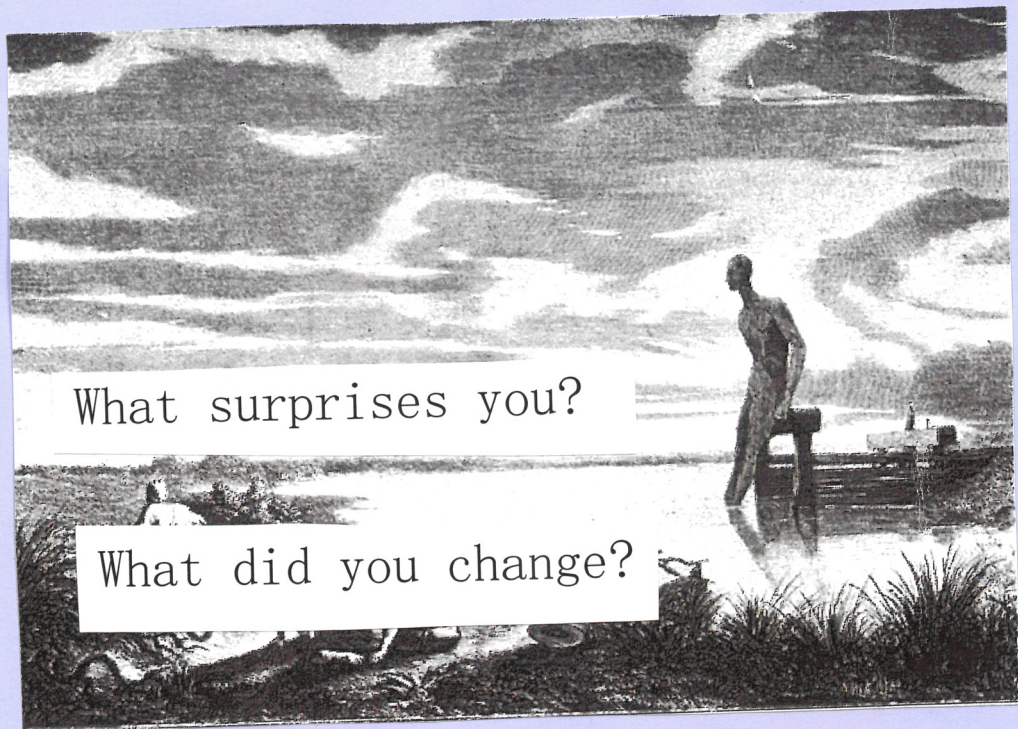
other people' s views

ideas that popped into your head

regret

hopes

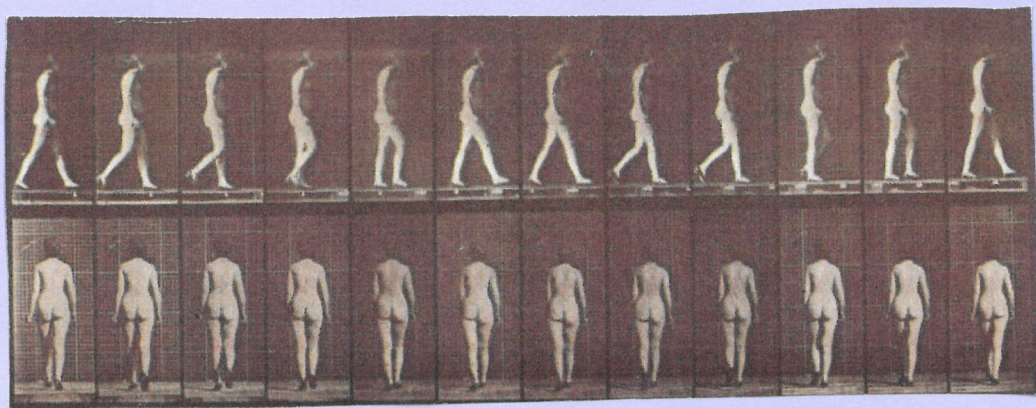
imagined or wished for encounters

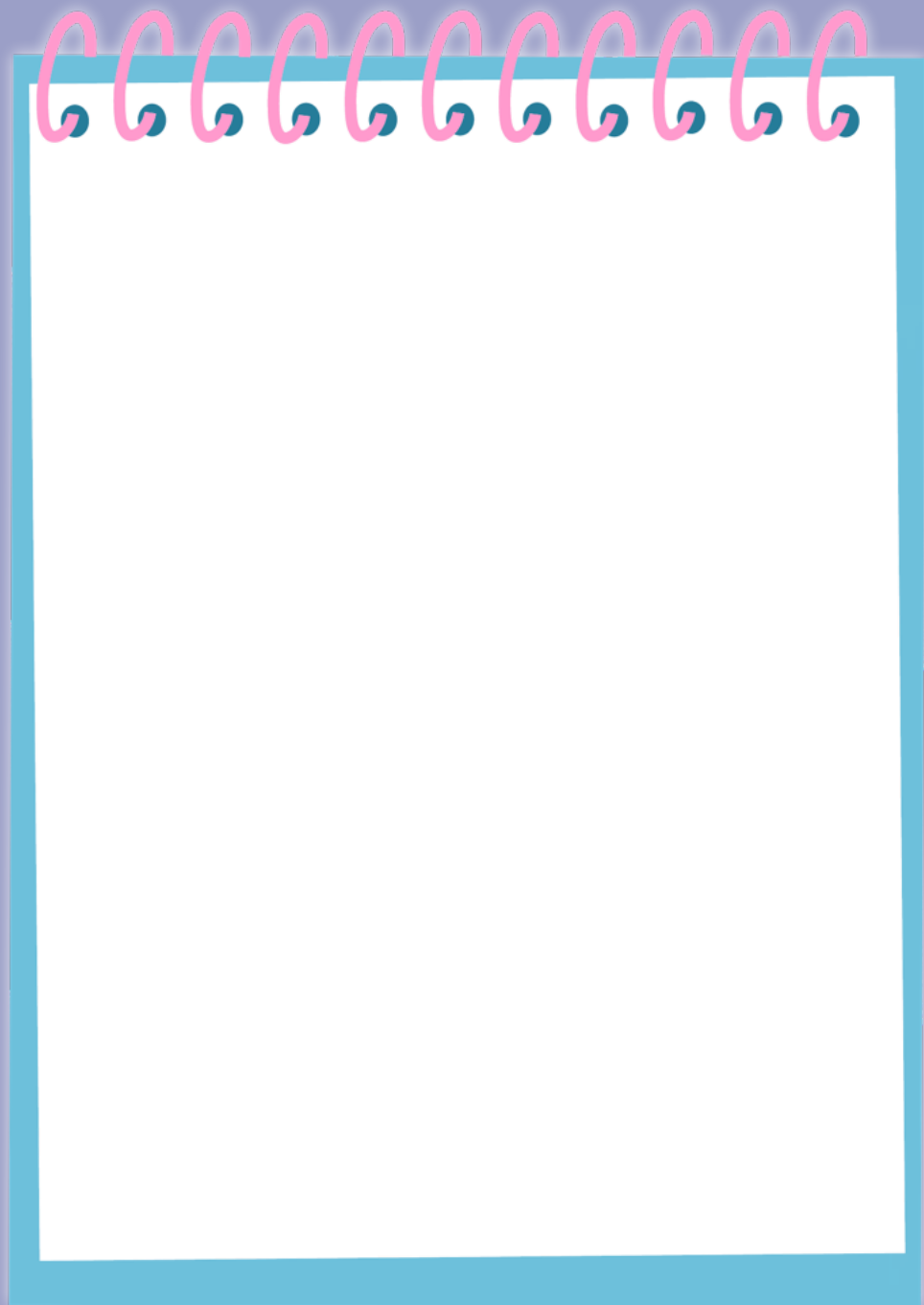


What surprises you?

What did you change?

What have you learned?







Laura



making your own dream space
ZINE BY Laura Whiting
Queer Estuary Collective november 2022





in this zine you will learn how
to design your own space, a
room for yourself - it can look
and feel exactly how you want it
too.

you will need
YBLANK greating cards , scis-
Bsors , pva glue and maga-
zines / collage materials

*tip -
you
can use
films to
inspire
you...*

Start by looking around you
- what do you notice in the
landscape ? what materials can
you see ? are they gentle or hard
materials ? what effect to they
have on you ?



write or
draw how
they make
you feel
below in
the box



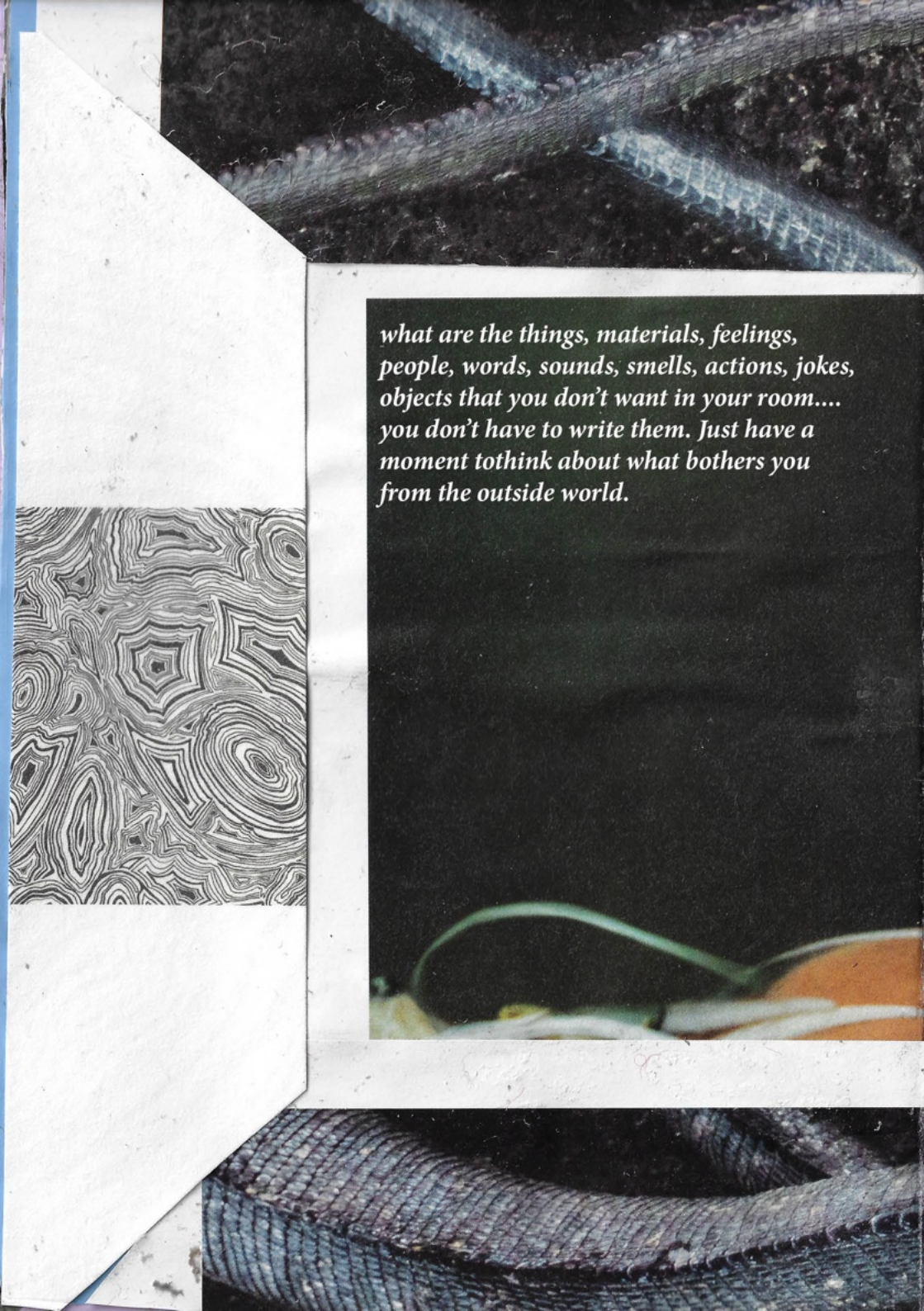
film landscapes of the
estuary from Essex Boys
e (2000) and The Quarter-
mass Experiemnt (1955) set in
Canvey

Look at the people around you?
What are they doing?
Would you like to
invite them into
your own private space ?

Write
Where
who will
use your
space with
you...







*what are the things, materials, feelings,
people, words, sounds, smells, actions, jokes,
objects that you don't want in your room....
you don't have to write them. Just have a
moment to think about what bothers you
from the outside world.*



Now imagine you are somewhere that
made you
happy, calm, joyful and peaceful.
WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS PLACE
THAT YOU LIKE?
is it the colours, the materials,
the light ?

Cu.
but US
La Réunion.
Seychelles: Sey
Rupee; United
Dirham; Oman: Omani Rial;

Language Maldives: Dhivehi;
Mauritius: Mauritian Creole, B
Seychelles: Seychellois Creole
Lanka: Sinhala and Tamil; Uni
and Oman: Arabic. English is v

Visa info Maldives and Seyc
if staying less than 30 nights
and United Arab Emirates: No
Lanka: An Electronic Travel A
required, see www.eta.gov.lk
Qatar: A visa is required for a
this can be obtained on arriva

Climate

Temperatures in the Maldives
the year, averaging 25-30°C. T
between December and April.
Réunion are located in the sou
their seasons are the opposite
Seychelles are glorious all year
season is during our summer m
to go to Sri Lanka depends on v
west, our winter months are be
our summer months. The UAE, C
best visited between November
temperatures are cooler.

°C Average daily maximum

* Average daily
(not h



write what you like about y
peaceful
place here....

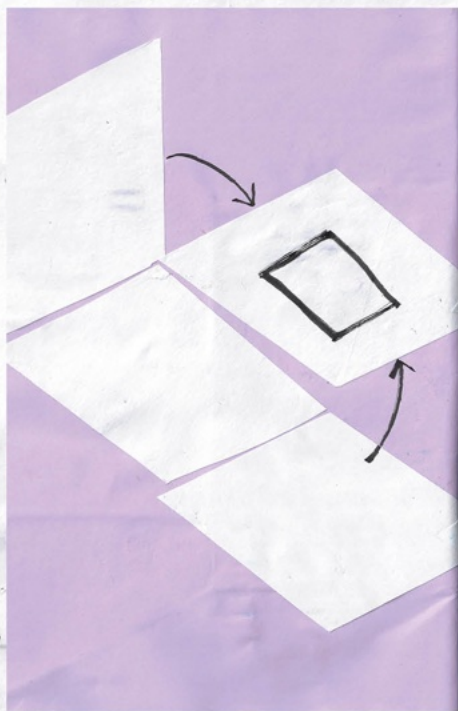


					25	
					8	8
				79	74	17
						34
Mar	°C	31	30	30	32	26
	☀	9	7	7	9	8
	☁	81	191	189	136	16
						24
Apr	°C	32	29	30	32	32
	☀	9	7	8	8	9
	☁	129	171	178	250	9
						7
May	°C	31	27	29	31	38
	☀	8	7	8	6	11
	☁	211	97	133	382	4
						1
Jun	°C	30	25	28	30	40
	☀	7	7	8	6	11
	☁	183	83	66	186	0
						0
Jul	°C	30	25	27	30	41
	☀	7	7	7	6	11
	☁	161	83	81	124	0
						0
Aug	°C	30	25	27	30	40
	☀	7	7	8	6	11
	☁	183	76	117	116	0
						0
Sep	°C	30	26	28	30	38
	☀	7	7	8	6	10
	☁	213	54	134	236	0
						0
Oct	°C	30	27	29	30	35
	☀	8	8	7	6	10
	☁	229	50	206	371	1
						0
			29	29	30	29
				7	7	9
						9
					3	2

your

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Maur
Seych
Sri La





take your card and make a shape like the one on the left.

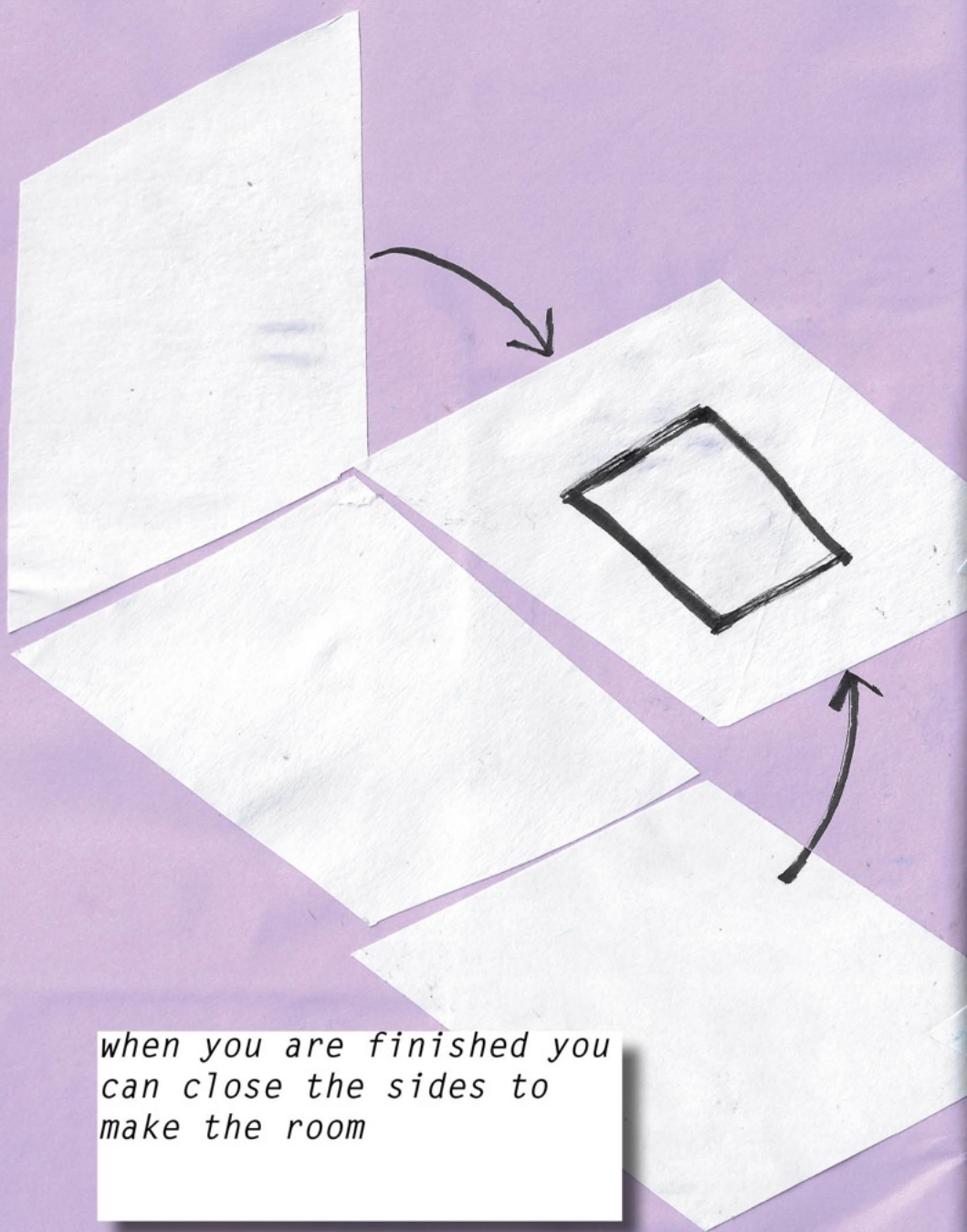
each square side will be around 15cm / 6 inches. I like to use these packs of blank cards ready cut, placing three cards together and sticking with PVA.

U can cut a hole in one or more side to make a window.

This makes the base of your room

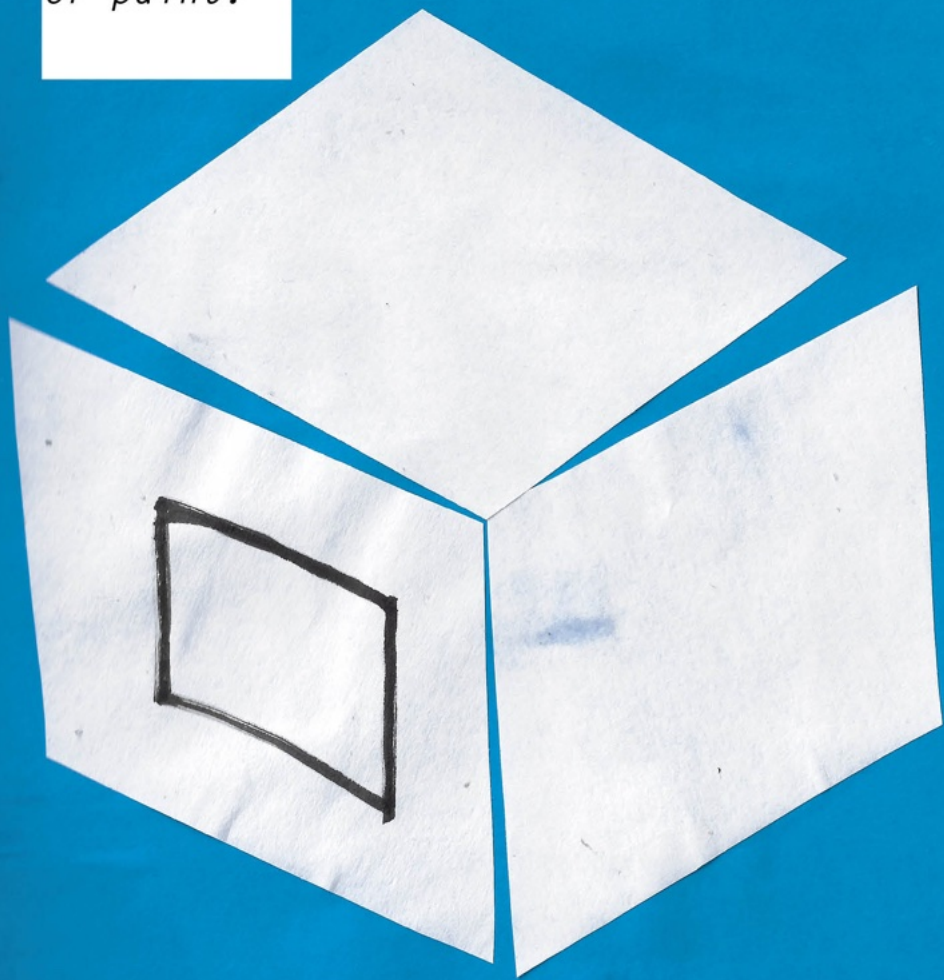
collect some clippings of furniture you like





*when you are finished you
can close the sides to
make the room*

*wallpaper
or paint?*



*think about the outside
and the inside together !*



arrange the room as you like
it with
your objects ! It can be exactly
how you want it

what is the
view
outside?



carpet ?
or rug?

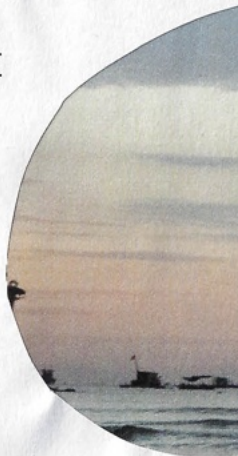
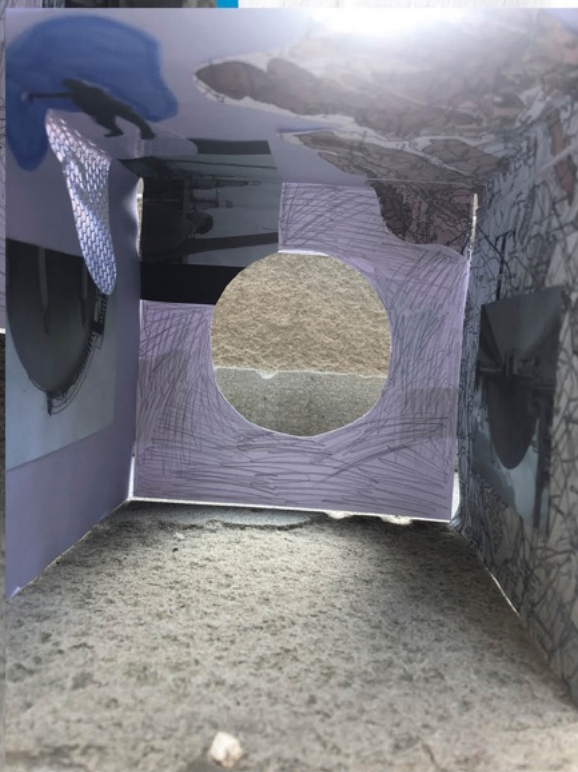
NOW ENJOY !

THIS IS YOUR ROOM
AND NO ONE ELSE CAN DECIDE WHAT IT
LOOKS LIKE.

WANT TO TRY SOMETHING ELSE?

PLACE THE ROOM TO THE WINDOW
CILL WITH A VIEW TO THE OUTSIDE.

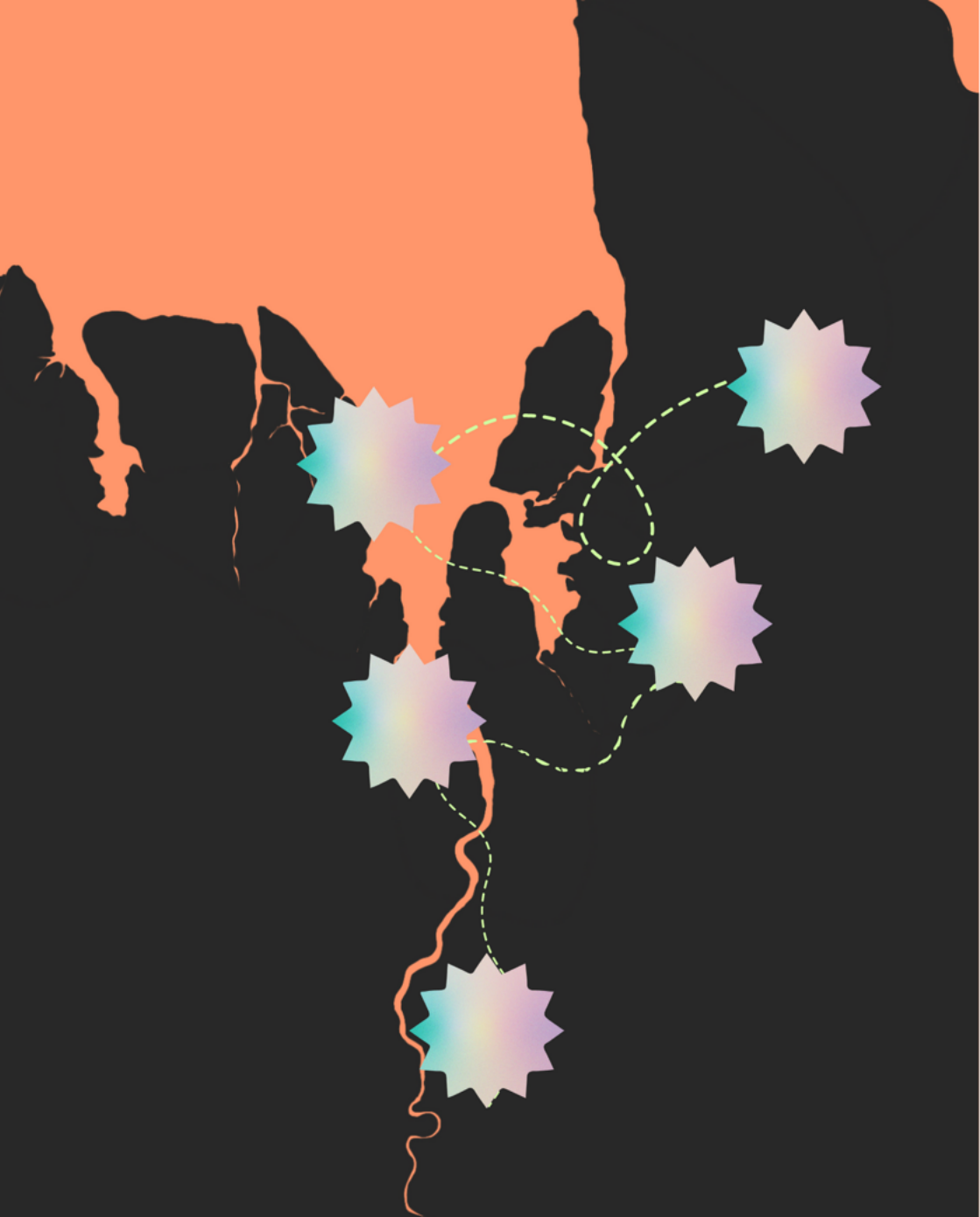
TAKE SOME SHOTS WITH YOU
MOBILE PHONE OF THE INSIDE
OF THE
ROOM, YOU CAN GET RIGHT
CLOSE UP AND IMAGINE YOU





HERE ARE SOME ROOMS THAT
THE QUEER ESTUARY
COLLECTIVE MEMBERS
MADE - WHAT DO YOU THINK?





Charlotte

queer estuary

mOvement

in

mOtion

What does queer

estuary mean to you?





How do
you feel right
now?

Moving to: **transitional** spaces

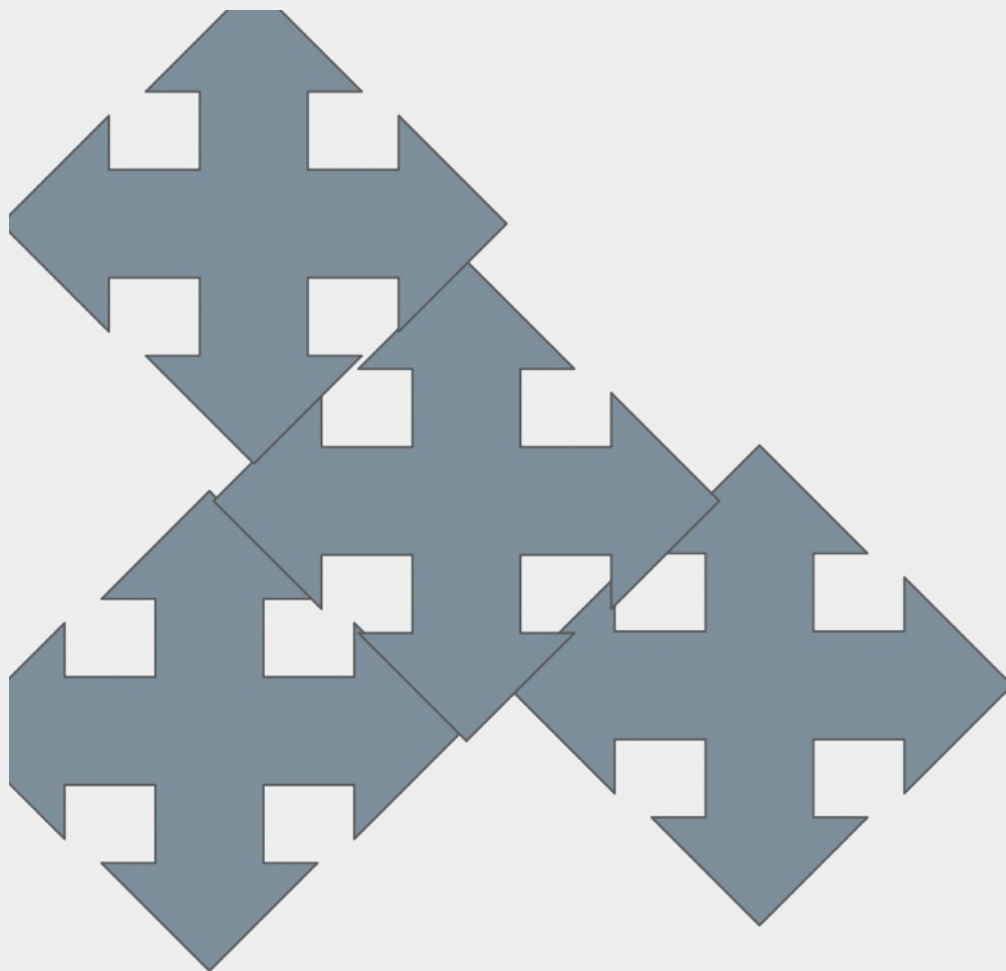
Start by

walking around the room or space you're in,

as you gradually walk around imagine the estuary clay surroundings

feel yourself melt into the ground curling the body and collapsing at times or
stand still, stuck

think_{about} direction



What is this word?

P e

T

R i

C

h

Or_{Sp}

ell the word out

using different
body parts

GO

**Take 5 – 10 minutes
to try this**

Think about the
meaning a little
further.

Choose a different body part to write the letter out and

then see what effect that has to the rest of your body

Try using different levels in the space

. high

. mid

. low

What is your body signifying?



Let's Design three moves using
the key of words below as a starting
point Draw inspiration from what you can see using the same technique as the
previous task

Index of Signs and Colours

**Blown Sand – Shingle –
Alluvium – Brick Earth –
Gravel and Sand – Lower Bag
Shot Sand – London Clay –
OldHaven Beds – Woolwich
Bed – Thanet Beds – Chalk –
Upper Green Sand – Gault –
Folk Stone Beds – Sand Gates
Beds – Hythe Beds – Ather
Fields Clay – Weald Clay**

Draw your interpretation of the three words you have chosen in the key here:

Use the designs and physicalise a response to what you see, you can speak aloud and describe these as you go.

Bonus

Find a partner and teach your phrase to the other person to create a duet

Once you have each other's material, try moulding your choreographies together, ebbing and flowing with one another in the space.

How do you feel now?



References



Jubilee (1978 film)



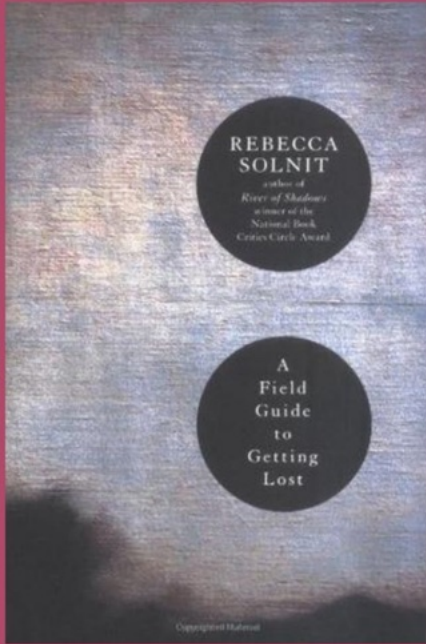
Essex Boys (2000 film)



Quatermass 2

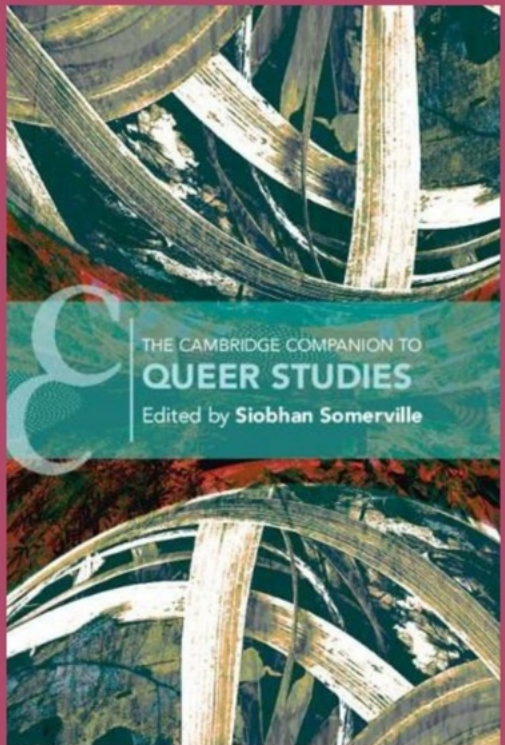
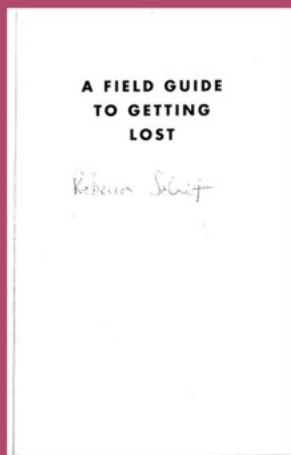
(1957 film)





A Field Guide To
Getting Lost by Rebecca
Solnit,
April 2006

The Cambridge Companion
to Queer Studies (Cambridge
Companions to Literature), by
Siobhan B. Somerville, June 2020



Woolf's Darkness

EMBRACING THE INEXPLICABLE

2009

"The future is dark, which is the best thing the future can be, I think," Virginia Woolf wrote in her journal on January 18, 1915, when she was almost thirty-three years old and the First World War was beginning to turn into catastrophic slaughter on an unprecedented scale that would continue for years. Belgium was occupied, the continent was at war, many of the European nations were also invading other places around the world, the Panama Canal had just opened, the US economy

85

Woolf's
Darkness
by Rebecca
Solnit
(2009)

Sandilands

[Back to Issue 9](#)

Invisible Culture

An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture

Unnatural Passions?: Notes Toward a Queer Ecology 1

by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands
© 2005

Introducing queer ecology: from perspective to power

In the opening of her 1997 memoir *North Enough*, Jan Zita Grover describes moving to the north woods of Minnesota from San Francisco: "I did not move to Minnesota for the north woods," she writes. "I had only the vaguest idea of what the term meant when I first saw them in early spring, the birch, aspen, and tamarack skinned of their needles and leaves. I thought they looked diseased."² Given that Grover had been a front-line AIDS worker in the 1980s in a city violently decimated by the disease, it is hardly surprising that she saw sickness everywhere. "I moved there," she writes, "to try to leave behind – or at least, at a remoter distance – the plague that had consumed my life for the past six years."³ Of course, Grover was not able to leave her plague behind; she was still "heavy with mourning, thick with sorrow."⁴ Although she moved to the north woods with the hope of finding some sort of healing in the natural landscape, a "geographic cure" as she put it, she soon realized that it was not possible.

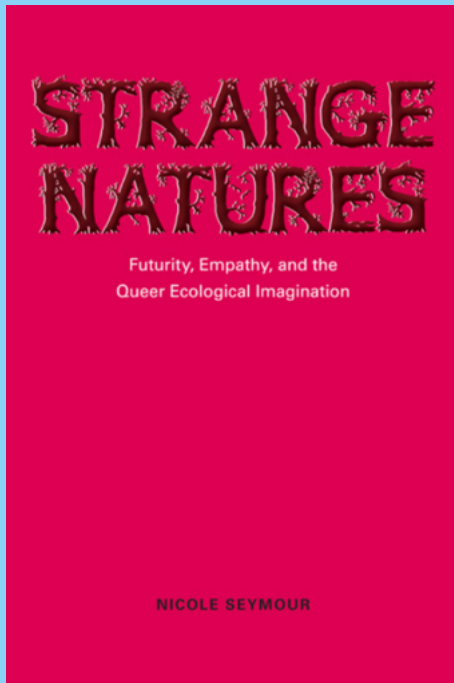
The idea that one might find natural

Sandilands
Issue 9
Unnatural
Passions
Notes
Toward
a Queer
Ecology
by Catriona
Mortimer-
Sandilands
2005

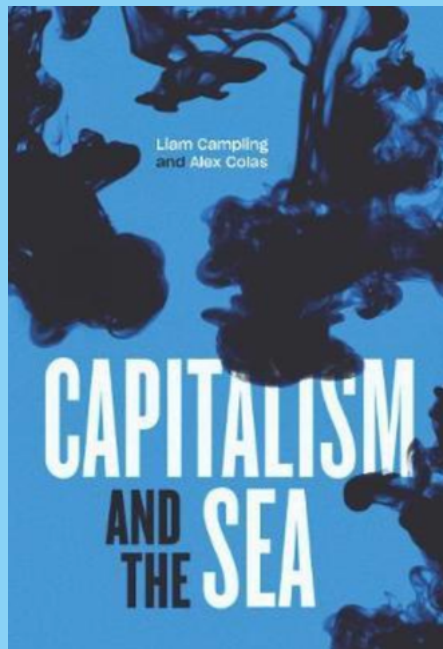
The Queer Art of Failure
by Jack Halberstam, 2011.



Capitalism and the Sea: The Maritime
Factor in the Making of the Modern World
by Liam Campling Jan. 2021



Strange Natures by
Nicole Seymour,
2013.





Red Desert, (deserto rosso) Dir Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964



The Weird and
The Eerie by
Mark Fisher
Sept. 2017

Queer Estuary
Collective

Laura Whiting

Laura Whiting is an architectural worker, researcher and organiser. The core value of her practice is collaboration and collective decision making to inform and deliver accessible cultural and creative spaces.

Since graduating with a master's in architectural history from London Metropolitan University in 2012, she has worked in the UK specialising in commercial interiors projects for creative environments across media and gaming sectors. From 2013-2016 she was visiting lecturer at Silpakorn and KMUTT Universities in Bangkok teaching architectural history and design.

Her interest is in the political and social dynamics of cultural infrastructure provision, especially in post war towns, and actively challenges avenues for intervention via planning law, local policy and grassroots community networks for more equitable places. She is a member of the newly formed ab_ spatial research network and an associate member of Resources for Change, she currently sits on the Essex Design Review as a panel member advocating for improved, sustainable cultural infrastructure.

declan wiffen

declan wiffen is Lecturer in Contemporary Literature and Critical Theory at the University of Kent. He is editor of Litmus: the lichen edition, a magazine exploring the intersection of science, poetry, art and...lichen; organiser of the writing workshops Cruising the Estuary and Cruising Nature; and a collaborator on The Unfiltered Coast, an arts project engaging young people in climate change. His pamphlet, indiscriminate lanking, was published by Invisible Hand Press.

Alex Martin-Carey

Alex Martin-Carey is a writer and educator based in Faversham, Kent. Alex trained as a theatre director at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and began work in arts education and community arts. Through this work she developed a fascination with the intersection between the arts and social change, and went on to explore this in a PhD in The Contemporary Novel. The author of novel *The Greater Thief*, Alex has been a lecturer in creative writing and drama, and is now the Curriculum Development Manager for Outreach and Widening Participation at the University of Kent. Alex works with academics, artists and students to make creative and participatory learning events that impact young people in Kent and Medway and support their journey.

Charlotte Edmonds

Charlotte Edmonds trained as a dancer at The Royal Ballet Lower School, Rambert School and Choreography at Central School of Ballet (MA). She started her career as a choreographer with The Yorke Dance Project in 2013 before graduating and becoming the Inaugural Young Choreographer at The Royal Ballet. After 3 successful years, Charlotte transitioned into a freelance artist working on movement in film, fashion, theatre and dance companies across the world. Charlotte has worked with companies including Dutch National Ballet Junior, Norwegian National Ballet, Company Wayne McGregor, Bayerisches Staatsballett, Northern Ballet and The Royal Ballet. Charlotte is interested in storytelling through movement that allows humankind to imagine and explore different social, emotional and moral perspectives. Her passion lies in nurturing creativity and honouring dance as an important source of expression. Charlotte is co founder of Move Beyond Words alongside Elizabeth Arifien. Move Beyond Words create artistic environments to amplify the voices of artists with dyslexia. Move Beyond Words (CIC) supports each individual's relationship and experience with dyslexia by stimulating conversations through a podcast and dance performances, both live and digital.

Lu Williams

Lu Williams is an artist who creates cross-disciplinary artworks, social practice, sculpture, print, zines, video, and events. They make art through the lens of queerness, neurodivergence and working classness. In 2015, they founded Grrrl Zine Fair, a place for self-publishing and DIY art, music and culture surrounding feminist publishing.

Grrrl Zine Fair platforms women and marginalised genders, artists and zine makers through Grrrl In Print zine, a self-publishing fair, panel talks, performances, live music and workshops.

In 2017, Lu founded Grrrl Zine Library, which hosts 600+ queer feminist zines housed at the Old Waterworks in Southend-on-Sea.

Educated at Central St Martin's (2012-13), Ruskin School of Art, Oxford (2013-16) and The Other MA in Southend-on-Sea (2019-21), Lu teaches and works with community groups and schools as well as universities. Lu is currently lead artist for Offset Projects Fuelled By Youth Commission in Milton Keynes and is currently producing a 20ft sculpture based at the top of Southend High Street after being awarded the High Street Commission early 2022 by Creative Estuary and Focal Point Gallery.

This zine is a collaboration of research and has been kindly supported by The Institute for Culture and Creative Industries, Creative Estuary, University of Kent and Arts Council England. Zine design and production by Lu Williams.



