

MATT NIGHTINGALE: Okay. Hi, and welcome to the second event in our Tracing the East online programme my name is Matt Nightingale, the producer for New Geographies, and I just want to run through a few housekeeping notes before I hand over to the panel. We are also live streaming on twitch channel for non-who needs live captioning. We're going to have time at the end for audience questions so please submit a question to the panel through the Q&A button in your bottom bar and feel free to post questions at any time throughout the event. Your questions will only be seen by the panel, not other audience members, but if you prefer not to share your name or any personal identifiable material, you can use the anonymous question option. Your microphones and cameras are disabled throughout the event so we also ask not to take any photos or screenshots. We are recording tonight's event and that will be available on the New Geographies website along with the other panel discussions if you want to watch again later. And just a brief introduction to New Geographies, as a project. In 2017 we asked the public to nominate locations across the six counties of the east of England, and they felt were overlooked or forgotten, and in some way, and could be an interesting location to inspire or locate a public artwork. We received a total of 270 locations which can be seen on the map on the website. We then held an open call for artists to submit proposals relating to any of these locations, and finally, shortlisted the ten artists projects to take forward over the past 2 years these artists have been working with their partner institutions from the east contemporary visual art network to produce these commissions. These online events we're running are an attempt to bring together these ten extraordinary projects and draw on some of the overarching themes that have revealed themselves. Tonight's event relates to landscape. From local to global, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to writer, publisher, and curator Sarah shin who is moderating the discussions, along with Daniel Fernandez Pascual and Alon Schwabe who practice as Cooking Sections, David Blandy, and Heather Morison of Studio Morison. So Sarah, I will hand over to you.

SARAH SHIN: Thanks very much, Matt. Thanks to everybody joining. Just to give you a sense of how this event will play out firstly we'll have a short presentation by all of the artists, followed by pan discussion between us, and then hopefully lots of questions from you. So to begin with we have Cooking Sections, then we'll have David Blandy present his work, then why any we'll have Heather from Studio Morison. So over to Cooking Sections.

COOKING SECTIONS: Hello, everyone, good evening, thank you very much, Matt and Sarah, for the introduction. I think before we start presenting our project and speaking about the process, we are going to start by listening together to just a short excerpt of moveable, the piece that was produced in collaboration with the NUA gallery, in Winterton by the sea.

MOVEABLE ESTATES (excerpt). Stand on the concrete rectangular surface and face the water. You are standing by the sea. But you could also be on, in, or out at sea. All in the same place. Being in water or near water is relative. It depends on your very precise timing. You see water ahead of you now, but land and sea have negotiated where to meet for millennia. The powers of waves and storms have repeatedly constructed and reconstructed this malleable seafront. Look down toward the shoreline. You are looking at billions of microscopic particles: shells, coral, fossils, quartz, silicates, the detritus of multi-species bodies, weathered pieces of bricks, stones, buildings, microfibres and nanoplastics. Together they record the slow processes of erosion, decay, and impossible disappearance. We call it sand.

COOKING SECTIONS: So at the beginning of Movable Estates, an to. Audio piece that explains the coast of Winterton on Sea and basically takes people for a walk around in the landscape, looking at basically the ways in which erosion, climate change and human induced environmental actions have been shaping the coast of East Anglia for thousands of years. And we started the project for New Geographies by looking at these shifting shore lines and what you're looking at is the place where the audio piece starts, which is the old concrete foundations of the fishermen's sheds that what you see is the edge of the cliff and basically, it was moved and pushed a bit inland for it to prevent it from falling to the sea. So the piece tries to track these kind of changes that have been accelerated by human action from offshore dredging to all kinds of processes, that actually have led to the evolution of that strip of land in Winterton in particular. And we became very interested in Winterton on Sea as one of the locations, precisely because of the fact that it's one of the places that is most affected by erosion in East Anglia, and the kind of of the notion of erosion, sea level rise, and threats to coastal communities is something that has been really exacerbated since the 1950s and the great flood that took place in 1953 and affected the whole area. Through a series of interviews and conversations with residents and local fishermen and users of the beach, coastguard etc, we really started to identify or kind of question how the coast has been moving and what are the structures, both environmental, and human, political, that are kind of manifested in this shift that is happening to the geography. And Movable Estates, what it tries to do is think about real estate and movable property is, and question also how we could flexibly adapt with that receding shoreline that has been changing over a while now. What you see here used to be water decades ago, but slowly we also see how the sea takes over or not. So with these approach we tried to

do future scenarios not only for the coast of East Anglia, but other places that can learn from those flexible forms of inhabitation along the coast. So we will keep it here, and continue later in the discussion.

DAVID BLANDY: Good evening. My project was to work with Canvey Wick. I became fascinated by Canvey Wick as a place, a small part of Canvey Island which was slated to become an oil reserve, but then in the seventies, because of the oil crisis, it was abandoned and left for decades until recently it was marked as a site of scientific special interest, and one of the most biodiverse places in the UK. The funny thing about the site is that walking around it you wouldn't think that it's a haven of hundreds of different types of beast but in fact there all there in the soil. There are arachnids and bugs, and different types of orchid hiding there because of the mixture of different types of soil and the conditions of being next to the river where really I thought this site, this place there nature had come back after the Rajs of industry, man's influence, seemed like a perfect metaphor where what we need to do in the future, now, really, as a result of the current climate crisis and thinking about the future ca thank youcallysm, a term I got from the Hopkins manuscript which was talking about the idea of the moon landing on earth and causing a Cataclism, but here we're corned our own one. I was looking to create a new collaborative mythology with the people from the area somehow, and I'd been playing a lot of roll playing games which are places of collective imagination where you imagine a space together and create a whole idea of the space together, and thought that I could merge these two things, the idea of creating myth and the idea of creating a collective creative space, together into one thing, and that's where you started with The World After. And the fiction around it turned into two things. There was a film which was made over a year charting the seasons in Canvey Wick, and the role playing game, and we are going to play a little bit of the preview of the film here.

THE WORLD AFTER (excerpt): Eons ago, the old world faded. Some tell of the sea of fire, some of air that spoiled and made throats raw. Some of us sickness that ravaged the land, but all referred to it as the cataclysm. Those that were left retreated to our havens, huge silos deep underground. [music]

DAVID BLANDY: There's -- oh, so it was built out of a whole series of collaborations, collaborations with a local role playing gamers, we sent a call out and a whole load of people came as regular participants, creating mythology around Canvey Island, this idea of Canvey Island 8,000 years in the future, the people coming back out of underground silos, havens, in order to discover what the new intersection, the new outside world would be like. All of this was inspired by a whole series of writers, Ursula Le Guin, Butler, Donna Haraway, and in a way, Haraway's idea which is a reft on HP Lovecraft's idea, an alien apocalypse, and it's linked to things like Call of Cthulucene, which is an early role playing game from when John's and dragons started, became a CPR natural for this PCT but it grew into this film, an installation at Focal Point Gallery where it's like you're entering into this site 8,000 years in the future, and looking out over this memory of Canvey Island. Yeah, shall I leave it there? Thank you.

HEATHER MORISON: Hello, everyone. Hi. Okay. So I'm just -- I'll tell you where I am. I am in my studio, in Herefordshire on the Welsh border. So this -- can we run the slides while I'm talking? Than so this piece of work, like when I knew about the callout and the fact that it was an opportunity, I could make a piece of work in east of England, and I had a really -- we had -- I had a really is really response to that because I grew up in nearby, so I grew P in Northamptonshire, and most of my paternal, like my father and some of my mother's family were all lived in the fens. So I have a kind of like a nostalgia towards -- and you know when it's a different thing when you make work in a place you know as part of your family, and you have a family history to it, and I felt like I could do that, just about, because the east of England for me was about going, driving east, not far, past Corby, near Stanford, then it would go flat, and then I would go and stay in a bungalow for my holidays in a field with Leyland eye all around it, and it was really boring, as a child, to go and do that and then occasionally I had an Aunt who had a bed and breakfast in Skeggie, and out of season I'd go there and sit and be afraid of the wash and quicksand in the wash, and it just seemed to be a holiday full of rows of cabbages, and also my family were quite odd and unusual, and my great grandfather had had a farm in the fens, and he had -- the farm had gone bankrupt, and he had committed suicide, and there was always this sort of like thing around all of that. And then on top of that, I, when I had read Richard Mabey's book, which is called Nature Cure, which is all about his depression, and how it together him -- it changed his life and he had to move from the Chilterns to the fens and he used that flat land in order to walk and think and look and see, and so there was this going on. And I read that book actually when I was -- I had postnatal depression after one of my children, and I read that book and I walked. So that kind of like all kind of came together, and then also there was this tension when we visited about rewilding and agriculture, those things. I wanted to sit somewhere in that. I wanted the work to do that. I had -- and then when we went on, we had one of our visits and we hired a boat, and for the day, and little teeny tiny boat and went up and down a lot of the waterways, and then Ivan got this terrible allergic reaction, and we had to spend the evening in A&E in Cambridge, because he'd got an flak particular shock from the water, and there was this sort of kind of -- this piece of work kind of came out of that, and some of the materials and I've got some of the early studies and things behind me and that's how the work drew out, and it got to be called mother, because it's smoothing and it's also silent and it's about solitude but also about anger and

frustration, and with the modern world, and it kind of pulled in all of that, like a visceral nostalgic feeling towards that place, which is not comfortable, it's sort of has an edge to it. And then is kind of where the manifestation of, it just came out and pulled out of all of it's really interesting that David -- I've written down -- I must mention Octavia Butler, Ursula Le Guin and Donna Haraway. I don't know about that, but that's sort of, and we've made very different pieces of work that look different. I don't think they are in that sense. So there was that going on and my son is called Clay, after Clay's. and my chicken is called Ursula Le Guin. Okay, I'm going to stop. .

SARAH: Thank you for sharing your work. We'll talk about the chicken later perhaps. But I thought we'd begin with where we are on Zoom with a question of what it is to talk about landscape when we're in conditions where our relation to space and place in the world around have become some so radically changed by Covid-19. And because this discussion is framed in relation to climate change, I was thinking of Elizabeth's compilation of anthro be seen of as much of a product of the coal fields as much as an analysis of their formation and she speaks about the figure of the virus and I'm going to read -- it seeks to disrupt the life and non-life by claiming there is a difference that makes no difference not because all of the life is potent or unpotent, and unmoving, duerent. Because a division of life and non-life does not define or contain the virus, it can use or ignore this division for the sole purpose of diverting the energies of existence in order to extend itself. It confuses and levels the difference between life and non-life while carefully taking advantage of the minute aspects of their differentiation. So to begin with, what light, if any, does the virus throw in your practices of art, sense making, life making? And further, the notion of the trace, I wondered if you could speak about the act of differentiation itself, saying to the before and after, which the trace confuses, because it's something that bridges and crosses over. How does that affect our concept of change from the before and after?

COOKING SECTIONS: Um, yeah, I think it's great that you bring kind of the sort of Pullineli into this. Apart from kind of that her work has been (inaudible) for our practice and these various questions and the question of how life and non-life get integrated, and I think this is that when we speak about the changing formation of the shoreline, this is extremely critical, but and how that also extends to our condition, right now, right? Like this idea of staying at home and in lockdown, and being removed from the landscape, yet all of our daily life is still forming. Like it's at the rely forming and creating landscape and creating features which are anthropogenic and influencing the planet around us. So I think in a sense, despite the fact that perhaps we are removed from a lot of the places that we are working on in the physical sense, I think, the past weeks have forced us to think what are kind of our long-term strategies and how do we actualise the work we're doing, and how we support various practices, groups of residents, social groups, to continue to maintain their livelihood's, which I think is something that they again, the virus kind of in a way exposes the fragility of, right? Exactly in the same way that it exposes the fragility between the definition of life, and non-life.

SARAH: Thank you. I wonder if, David, you might want to say something to this?

DAVID: Yes, I think the present situation is really demonstrated the incredible potential for change in society. I mean the fact that we're even discussing things like universal based income when it was just seen as a pie in the sky thing just a few months ago, and that's a real possibility, it shows that, you know, with some will, things could change. I've always had a sort of, I don't know I guess, E mancy paidy hope inside the practice but this has given me more hope that that might be possible but there's also the possibility that things may of course turn more like the cataclysm we're talking about. Yeah, it's a time of intense change and terror, really, but through that terror comes a sense of solidarity, I think. Something that is being exacerbated by The World After continuing through this period, becoming online games that I've been playing over Zoom and Skype, and getting new communities with new people I didn't know before. So it shows that the new connections can still be made, and, um, yeah, I think it's meant -- maybe it's made the impossible seem more possible. So that is positive. But it's also caused untold damage, so that's obviously horrible. Heather?

HEATHER: Yeah, okay. Because I find it quite hard at the moment to reflect on what's going on, because I'm in it. So in it. I know I've been through a phase, and I'm in a slightly different phase now in relation, personally, and for the -- and particularly -- and how -- what we're making and practice and what we're thinking about. You know, so it feels a bit -- it's quite hard. And what I know is, what I tell you now is going to change. So my feelings and responses are changing really quickly because everything is changing around us. I've got a really good -- well what I didn't mention is the way that we grow our projects with people, they're really -- hugely collaborative. There's loads of people involved and loads of projects and Commissions going on at the moment with lots and lots of people, and what's happen is I can't go and see people and that's what I normally do. I don't generally clam, I just feel my way round. It's that thing that Haraway talks about, about being with, like just try and be with, you know, and then grow things from there. And what I've -- I can't do that, so what I did very early on is I made maps of everything, everybody, everything they're reading, what we were talking about, and I made these sort of social sculptures of

things that are all going on, so that no one got left behind, and then also so that -- and so that I was connecting in with people all the time. And they are moving continuously, so sometimes things just go, and stuff goes forward, and then other times people are so in a position where, you know, like personal circumstances, are so terrifying, and I can't tell you, I've had -- I had three or four groups where we have had deaths in the groups, and how do you -- that's an extraordinary sculpture that we're building and pulling together, but also, just not letting go of it. So being really kind of sort of knowing when to push and when to set back and when to hold on to each other, because the thing is, as long as we keep -- I if we keep talking about the thing, so not about what's happening to us, but the thing we're working on, I think there's some comfort in that, and some soothing in that, in light of everything else that's going on around and it's feels very uncomfortable to feel incredibly, like, ecstatic at some point and brutal and hysterical at other points and trauma ties, and it's all in between those two things.

SARAH: Yeah, I feel like we're all speaking about, or you've all expressed something about orientation and how difficult it is to orient but also the emancipatory orientation that we would hope this moment can set us on the course for. I guess I think of this in context of the subject Tracing the East, but there's the east of England but also the idea of east perhaps where I'm from, as something that is an imaginary world as much as a real place, or geographical space. And then the orientation and also the word landscape makes me think of, you know, implies a presence of the perceiver, and thus to look back to Donna Haraway which you've mentioned, I guess I'm thinking of situated knowledges, where, you know, the frame of the landscape is within the perceiver's particular spatial temporal experience, our own placement, and in Movable Estates there's this part you played, the wonderful line of, you know, "Face the water, you're standing by the sea but you could also be on, in or out at sea all in the same place." And Gaston said something, that you may or may not agree with that inhabited space transcends geometric space but in pulling together all of the references I was wondering if you could speak about your understanding of space and this idea of inhabitation, and how you work with the coincidence of multiple worlds, which are simultaneously physical, emotional, virtual, and material, and how does this approach impact your approach to the site specific?

COOKING SECTIONS: It's a good question, I was thinking maybe connecting it also to Pocinelli again, in the talk last year, she was referring to the relationship between humans and soil, and how to decentre that position D right in the same way that you're talking about how we perceived geography from one part of the world in regards to other parts of the world, how do we start decentering those relationships, and then she referred to the example of gardeners that have been proved that they have less levels of -- or less depression rates because they feel happier than average people, or a certain level of empathy with the activity they carry out. So when she was saying that these enter things in our brain that actually get activated by getting in touch with dirt and soil while you're working in the garden? But she was saying actually it's not that we become happier by working in the garden, it's we should see that as the opposite: that it's actually the soil is so smart that it's making us happy in order to take care of it. Right? How do you change that relationship between object and subject? And I think that is, I don't know, for us, that could be a way of seeing how we see the role of all these offshore sands that are being dredged and that process is accelerating also the erosion of the coast, in spatial relationships, right. If you move something from one place, it has side effect in other place, and we need to understand those interconnections to see how also our position in the world can be rethought.

NEW SPEAKER: I think this is really why, when working on this project for New Geographies, and the fact that there was kind of on the eastern edge of the country, right, I think it was really crucial for us to kind of really question the extent of that edge and make where does the country ending aren't kind of where does, you know, like this part of the country that is almost kind of, but it's there and then there's kind of a bit sticking out, how -- what are it's demarcations? And I think the shoreline is kind of an object that we have been working on for many years now, and kind of reflecting on it, and in various ways. And what is -- always what we come back to, how it's a force, an object that has four dimensions, right, that it's being pulled by multiple stakeholders that are constantly trying to negotiate where land ends and where sea begins. And this was as we were saying, you could be at all these multiple places at once according to whether you're reading it from a real estate perspective, from a kind of political slash border perspective, from a kind of social perspective, from a community perspective, all of these things are like really defining coastal space in very practical terms, right, and this is like why we're in the zone, this space and is constantly moving twice a day between land and sea, is such an important space for us in our practice, because it's this constant shifting allows, you know, opens up for so many possibilities. Like really shows how we can start learning to live with adapted or forms of political action that adapt to change constantly.

SARAH: Yes, what you were saying about gardening, and the changing shoreline, really speaks to this idea of inhabitation, or, you know, like again to speak of Haraway, wilding, that is something that is happening and is in process. And I wondered if maybe David you'd like to speak about playing in relation to this? DAVID: Yeah, I guess, you know, in a way that play was essential to the project, and my approach to this site. Canvey Island itself is in a way, it's a place of fantasy it's a place that was created and reclaimed from the estuary. And then now it's become

this other site, this site that we -- me and whoever plays it with me, or other groups -- can create as a site for a new imaginative space in which new collaborations are formed, and new narratives of kind of how to come together in that space. Yeah, it kind of created an openness. The fact that this site could recover in such a way that even despite being almost destroyed, it was able to thrive within such a small space of time, really, in terms of geological time. I guess it gave me hope and that hope is kind of counselled by the multiple collaborations that occurred to make the project, like working with the orchestra to make the soundtrack and working with the local poet to create some of the words. So it's kind of, yeah, kind of seeing the site and the community as one thing, and kind of bringing it together somehow, into a total world. If that makes sense.

SARAH: And Heather, what you were saying about not planning really spoke to me, because I tried to plan but sometimes it can be a bit difficult and I tend to go in and do it. And I suppose what you're talking about is this doing & Co creating and being together, and so mother is a space for anger, for feeling, but also dwelling. I mean it makes me think almost like a wing-like place where these binaries collapse. HEATHER: Yeah, and I do -- I think we do try to create like a sort of different -- we tried to make it hold a different space when you step inside, like I'm not quite sure, I don't really mean threshold, I just -- it's not quite a threshold, but it's just that I hope that when -- because very often we make works that you can be with, and be in side, and that all those elements of everything that I just talked to you about, somehow they should connect with you when you're in side them. We had got -- we'd done one performance work, or which is showed a couple of images of, and we had more performances that we'd got planned, because they are really lovely way of picking up on certain parts of the work and just really digging into them and working really deeply with them, and then also collaborating. So we had a really lovely piece with Sam and Jacken who is a contemporary dancer and a musician, when we had the opening, and there was a really -- we created a sort of kind of figure, that Sam embodied, you know, and who walked around and danced, and, you know, and just the contemporary dance in particular was a really good way of bringing out some of those kind of really emotive parts, and dealing with the fact that there's a thread of nostalgia in the work which is tricky, nostalgia is really tricky to deal with, you know, and personal, so it doesn't necessarily always interesting to other people. And yeah, I hope -- I mean one of the things that happened in the work is that barn owls moved in literally the day we finished and so the floor was starting to get covered in, you know, bird poo, and someone will remind me what they're called, basically the little bones of the mice are there, and those were dotted across, which was just beautiful and dirty. I loved that. It was sort of perfect. You know. Those things together.

SARAH: What you were saying about nostalgia makes me think again of the traces and also that there's perhaps a particular possibility of lost connected to the site specific, because of its predication on a relation to the site. I don't know if that's resonates with any of you. And then obviously more broadly speaking our experiences have become permeated by a collective grief, and what grief is, I mean it's like traces. It opens up a constellation and a complication of time beyond the linear that capitalist clock time would impose. So I guess, you know, coming myself from a literature background, I'm interested in why all of you have engaged with storytelling as a method of form making, and if that kind of compares with or relates to other modalities of practice, such as sculpture or games, as a matrix for working with the kind of complexity of our experience of time.

COOKING SECTIONS: , well, I think yeah, it's a very good question. Also what is the time, or events, I think in our case when we were tracing some of the histories by talking to people, like in the region, I think it was very interesting to think what an event actually is. And also, this ties in with one of the questions from the audience, in terms of events, and what is the before and after of certain moments. We're looking at floods and the 1953 flood was a huge issue, still in living memory and before and after. And again, this repeated with the what was called the Beast from the East, which is a very problematic term, to that kind of create an enemy, or to kind of military eyes something that comes from the the east, and that discourse that was also proved as the enemy right. As what as humans we're creating trouble and messing with the sediment from the ocean but something comes from the outside and creates a problem and I think that perception of the event also is crucial to understand that the time is quite obvious. It's a very complicated thing. It's not just a linear narrative but those narrative around what things happened when, and over which duration, is actually crucial to understand in order to challenge those narratives of fortification of the coast, or compensation for losing their property, right. Who is to blame? And what we will realise throughout the process of the project is that actually many times it's all like weather is the scapegoat. To a certain extent.

NEW SPEAKER: And in that sense, and I think this is like we're being kind of, of course, there are these events that kind of restructure our kind of perception of the world around us, but I think one of the things with the kind of emergency, they think it really pushes forward, and that we really have to kind of engage with, and question ourselves, and this is I think where also the kind of emergency is almost the problem, like it has it's downfall as a term as well because it's a process of becoming constantly. Right? And it's not something that there is like a before or after; it's this continuous line that has been going on for like decades and centuries. And now we are in the midst of something. The same thing with the virus. There's not going to be a before or after. This is something it's a

process that has been happening for, like, decades of encroaching and on the natural environment that allow this kind of, you know, pathogen to pass on and to transform and kind of bring us to where we are, and we will continue to change our relationship, our holding of space for the time to come as well.

SARAH: This idea about the muddling the before and after, I'm just going to skip forward to a quotation by Walter, in which he talks about "The artist storytelling reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom is dying out. This, however is a process that has been going on for a long time. And nothing would be more fact Tuesday than to want to see it merely as a symptom of modern decay, it is only in the productive forces of history, a concomitant that has been gradually removed narrative from the realm of living speech and at the same time making it possible to see a new beauty in what is vanishing." I decide to try to skip forward and smoosh together the last two questions because I'm keeping an eye on the time, this phrase, a new beauty in what is vanishing. I immediately thought of that when I watched David's film *The World After* the first time and it resonates with *Movable Estates* as well and also with *MOTHER*, you say it's not quite a threshold but I'm sure when you step in and out, it is a transition. And this thing about a new beauty in what is vanishing is, you know, you talked about before how the virus makes us see what is so fragile and this idea of fragility makes me think of something which is really precious and sacred, and I think that perhaps your engagements with myths and speculation and science fiction is an attempt to kind of create new conditions in which we can find what is sacred, you know, perhaps engagement with others, new stories for survival that can get us beyond the patterns of stories which are about death, and extraction. And so I wanted to open it out to this question about mythology and its relationship to science fiction, and wild making seeing as some of you wanted to talk about Le Guin and Octavia butler.

DAVID: I was hoping to create a counter narrative to some of the dominant modes of fantasy, specially around the dungeons and dragons etc type worlds where it is really games, or whatever, there are sort of these great dichotomies that are set up, and the situation. We want to make something more complex, and nuanced, and more suitable for now, really. And I think there's a question here about whether video and board games it can be argued that these mediums can sometimes normalise the apocalypse if that was on your mind during the creation of the project? I guess I was keen on yes the apocalypse is often a backdrop to these sorts of narratives. I think I'm thinking of places like (inaudible) universe, like it's very much set in kind of a pseudo will there is tick Ragnarok, really. But the fantasies that I wanted to get into were sort of more the fantasy of the Wizard of EarthSea or something, a journey of discovery and an understanding that you have to find your place in the universe and that that is with the sacrifice, and it comes with becoming enjoined with other people. In many ways something like a role playing game is a ritual that gives you a space to communicate to create a new bond with people. And instantly share some sort of intense memories. [audio disruption] the way that gaming groups will reminisce about moments that they have had around the gaming table and the way they'd reminisce about climbing a mountain or something, it's like these moments become incredibly vivid and and important psychically that somehow a conversation doesn't, sometimes. There's something very visceral about this collective imagination which I really wanted to tap into with this, but I'm sure that there's a point to what I'm saying. But hey ho. Yes. I've run out now.

SARAH: Heather, would you like to say something?

HEATHER: I find it a bit like tricky to sort of like eloquently trace the connection between the amount of science fiction I read, and the work that we make. I just know that it's like, um an essential, to -- and that certain points in my life I read a lot of it, and it needs -- I find it answers questions for me. I find it really stimulating. I would say, like how do I explain that something like the *Left Hand of Darkness* and the way it affected that, is in *MOTHER*, because it is in *MOTHER*. It was certainly in the performance work. It's not aids for me to tell you how it manifests itself. I think it is really an important -- the spirit of it, of that work, is essential, and so I tried to bring something of that into the work without really kind of making the direct connection. I suppose the works are kind of like, they're really -- and the same with, you know, kind of thinking about particularly, I think, I feel that I have to bring in as many kind of women science fiction writers as possible, just because it's your sort of important to bring those voices, to listen to those voices. I like listening to women talk to me about the future. And they have very interesting things to say. And I feel that I need to listen, because many of them, you know, are not here with us any more and I need to listen and make my next move from the things they tell me. And so there's just a constant sound of that going on all the time, in the work. And it just sits there as, you know, just this like feeling all the time, you know. It's hard. Because actually we are sculptors, really. We make things. And that's quite a difficult kind of manifesting of something physical, you know, from something -- the fact that you've read it book, it doesn't really happen, and it doesn't really explain itself, but I know it's there. And I've an -- totally, we work closely together and it goes without saying that, you know, it's just kind of like a constant wave of the books that I'm reading and those particularly female science fiction writers in particular. Or someone like Anna Cavern, for example. I got totally obsessed with her. I read a whole show about her. I say about her. She's totally there. That it isn't as easy to say it's a manifestation of the book. It isn't at all, you know.

SARAH: I wonderer, without having actually been to Mother, perhaps what it cultivates is this sense of yin energy because Le Guin was engaged massively with the tower, and she did her rendition of that, and the yin yang thing is not necessarily the gender division so much as ways of giving articulation to polarities, and I'd say that, you know, right now, this is kind of a yin period where we're kind of in the more passive, I suppose kind of regrouping stages where there should be where we're dreaming and visioning how to rewild our world, and thinking about what tools and practices and methods we have for doing that, because as Donna Haraway says it matters what wilds wild wilds. That was a tongue twister. So we might have to move on to questions. Some of you have been great and already and some of them.

DAVID: Sorry.

SARAH: No, it's very good. So I guess there's a question from Lucia, I suppose Cooking Sections you already engaged with this as well, so there's one for Heather.

HEATHER: The one about the essay I haven't read?

SARAH: Okay if you haven't.

HEATHER: I have, I know the essay but it's quite hard to answer that kind of question in, like, the terms of a quick answer, in relation to that essay. I wonder, Tim, if you could ask me, we could probably talk about that question for 2 hours. I wonder if you could -- if I could just -- like -- yeah, just simple, maybe make that a little simpler? Is that fair?

DAVID: [laughs].

SARAH: Perhaps we could just talk a little bit more about this idea of apocalypse because, you know, it's so prevalent in -- well, the current situation, but I guess, it's so entwined with the science fiction, because you look at the other think that's so predominant in science fiction which is Utopia and to connect the to this panel and the way we're thinking about space and place, Ben refers made a film in which he talks about apocalypse as a place, like Utopia is a place as well. And for him, Utopia is a place in the future, but you can only approach it, because it's already happened. It's in the past. And with apocalypse it's, you know, again this whole thing about situated, you know, where you are, I mean apocalypse isn't something that's coming, it already happens if you're in Bangladesh sometimes, and if you're a colonised population then it's happen and the after effects and traces effect epigenetically as trauma. I wonder if anyone has anything to say about that.

DAVID: Yeah in many ways, that was something that I was trying to deal with, with the world after, because our time now became the deep past, though it's 8,000 years ago. So it's almost trying to uncover that trauma, and the of course, all the characters that you can inhabit in the game in that fantasy space are not human any more. They've evolved into other forms. It's sort of like trying to remember what the human was or trying to discover what the human was that led to this point here. And yeah it kind of becomes the world is expanding. I'm still building it, and it's becoming like almost a space for a confrontation between extractive mentality and commonality it has y and H how they can reconcile with each other, perhaps, or how one can defeat the other, perhaps. So game I flying that philosophical conundrum, I suppose.

SARAH: I guess something in what you said made, we think about this idea of the intersection in The World After. So, you know, after people have adapted somewhat, and have come to repopulate the hostile new world, The World After, this cataclysm, they call of the space the intersection, which is the meeting place between the worlds and the intersection, this idea of where things come together is something I see across all of your works, from the shoreline to, you know, this space. And actually going back to what you were saying earlier David about the very actual space, that's also where everything comes together, and perhaps it's not that different from the mythical space in which time works differently, and also all phenomena from kind of expression to idea to, you know, material, it all has an equivalence of meaning. So, you know, I tried to come up with a way to pithily end this event by saying the meeting place and intersection of virtual meeting place, but I wondered if anyone else wanted to say anything to this idea of the place where things come together, or?

COOKING SECTIONS: I think, it also ties a bit of the thinking, the question that someone posted right at the beginning, and this question of engagement, and I think how these projects are kind of trying to reach out to different kind of groups of people, and I guess also more than humans. And kind of to work in various ways with these constituencies, and I think how this is like now we're in the moment, that this is like really challenged in our

ways of working are being challenged, right, and I think perhaps one of the things I was thinking about today is all of this, the rise of the mutual aid right, and how there's a lot of support groups that are coming together at the moment to address, like various kind of social, medical needs in response to the virus, and I think perhaps this is -- and I think this is kind of also runs across all of the different geographies, projects, and it's not really specific to this panel specifically, it's like how this kind of engagement with the place and kin how trying to understand the specificity and kind of the environmental culture and political landscape that creates all of these places is what allows I think this project to perhaps transgress or kind of move between a space that is both fictional and Utopian and perhaps also like apocalyptic and kind of also manages to speak together. And I think there has just been I think a great commitment to these fundamental questions, which I think has been as a whole also like a really great experience, I think, to be part of this kind of consortium of projects that are so separated, but at the same time are kind of really bound together. And I think it's really interesting to think how that can continue and how that can be pushed forward to make a specific moment, when it feels that these questions are ever more urgent.

SARAH: Absolutely, thank you so much. I'm just going to wrap up soon with one final question from the audience, which I think is a really great question, which is what book would all of you recommend for lockdown?

COOKING SECTIONS: [laughs]. Yeah, in the past couple of weeks, I was Sarah Ahmed "What's the use?" And on the uses of use in the subtitle is really brilliant. And it makes you think, well, it starts like, to be through this almost like nonsensical but extremely deep reflections and then towards the end, it's a very specific case that happens in London. I think for lockdown it was very inspired.

HEATHER: I just typed mine. It's Rebecca Somnett, *Poke in the Dark*.

DAVID: I'll offer up the dispossessed by Ursula Le Guin as-if you haven't read it, it's a great time to read it. It offers two different worlds, two different ways of living, and a person trying to negotiate in the space. So yeah, it's a beautiful book.

SARAH: Any more?

DAVID: *Staying with the Trouble*.

HEATHER: I found it really hard to read because it's so -- I ended up getting through it because I listened to it. And it's really nice to listen to. I found it quite tricky to, yeah, it was lovely. I did a lot of work listening to it.

SARAH: The dispossessed has one of my favourite quotes in it which is "True journeys return" and I guess maybe we're in a place there we can return to some things, return to the self and that can be a journey as well. I have a quick recommendation to make by Alexis Pauline Gumbs, called *MM archive after it end of the world*. And it's a quite interesting and poetic exploration of the persistence of black life after a great cataclysm but it goes very deep. I'll leave it that, and you'll have to Google it or something. So, thank you so much, to the panel, and thank you so much to Wysing, and thank you so much to the audience for joining us tonight, and I know that it's a little bit awkward on Zoom but hopefully it has been as much of a pleasure for you as it has been for me.

COOKING SECTIONS: Thank you very much.

DAVID: Thank you very much.

HEATHER: Thank you.

SARAH: Thank you.