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A Tentsmuir Stravaig

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Fine Art

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A Tentsmuir Stravaig

A proposal for a mindful art walking forest trail,
in Northeast Fife in which the landscape is narrated by women.

Exhibition Proposal

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for a Bachelor of Arts (Hons)

Duncan of Jordonstone College of Art and Design
University of Dundee

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Abstract

A Tentsmuir Stravaig is a curatorial proposal for a mindful, women-narrated walking art trail set within Tentsmuir Forest in Northeast Fife. Combining site-specific artworks, poetry, and guided communal walking, the project explores how movement and shared experience can deepen engagement with both art and landscape. Drawing on the walking-based practices of figures such as Sophie Cooke, it emphasises accessibility, inclusivity, and the creative potential of gentle, rhythmic movement. Through collective pacing, discussion, and embodied observation, the proposal reimagines outdoor art as a reflective social experience shaped by women's voices and ways of moving through place.

Preface

This dissertation is written from the perspective of someone who moves through the world on foot. I walk every day through the streets, to study and through the Highlands on longer journeys, this rhythm shapes how I think, see and create. I write as a female Scottish hillwalker, whose experiences directly inform my research.

I am an artist, in my final year of studying Fine Art at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD). Each artwork begins with a lived moment, a story shaped by the landscapes of Scotland and the people within them. My practice documents experiences of joy, connection, and discovery, capturing memories that are deeply tied to place. By blending person and landscape, I reflect encounters across Scotland's wild places: the Highlands, woodlands, and coastlines.

My work is rooted in my experiences as a hillwalker. The rhythm of moving through the landscape, the pauses, textures, weather, and shared moments with friends shapes my paintings, prints, and ceramics. Each piece stems from a specific memory. I explore the balance between physical sensation and emotional connection: the strain of ascent, the cold of cloud or snow, and the deep calm that comes with being in the hills.

Including people is central to my work; even when figures appear anonymous, they represent real companions and shared experiences. Overall, my practice celebrates how Scotland's landscapes create not only beauty, but moments of connection, play, and meaningful relationships.

Introduction

This dissertation proposes *A Tentsmuir Stravaig*, a two hour-long interactive walking art trail through Tentsmuir Forest, Northeast Fife, in which the land is narrated by women. Groups of fifteen participants will be guided on foot by artists through the landscape, encountering eight interactive site-specific works. These include paintings hung on trees, sculptures emerging from the forest floor, poetry readings and an interactive group sculpture building workshop in which participants collect their own materials.

The experience unfolds through a female Scottish lens, with all artworks created by contemporary Scottish women artists, whose work is rooted in walking. The land will be reimagined not as something to conquer, but to nurture, encouraging a childlike attentiveness often lost in adulthood. Rachel Hewitt, a contemporary British writer, offers a personal and historical perspective on gender inequality in mountaineering in *In Her Nature: How Women Break Boundaries in The Great Outdoors*. She explores how women were historically excluded from outdoor spaces and how figures like Irish woman Lizzie Le Blond, a pioneering climber in the late 19th and early 20th century defied these barriers, challenging societal norms.

This research will explore the idea of walking through the forest as a meditative act, encouraging creative self-exploration. Artworks are roughly 15-minute walks between each other, allowing participants to process each piece, and share opinions. In which they are encouraged into a state of flow, to recover the pure sensation of being. Influenced by Nan Shepherd, Rachel Hewitt, Annabel Streets and existing art walking trails such as The Neverending Glen, at Kelburn; the project considers walking as both an artistic practice and embodied reflection. It offers an exclusive experience, grounded in the simple, universal act of placing one foot in front of the other.

This study considers the decline of communal activities in outdoor spaces and the reduced opportunities for social engagement, alongside the increasing prevalence of loneliness. The proposal addresses these concerns by creating participatory, site-specific artwork that

encourages interaction and fellowship. In doing so, it also engages with broader environmental concerns. With a shockingly high 25% of British adults unconcerned about climate change (Office for national stats, 2021). I want this experience to prompt environmentally conscious thinking, bringing awareness to the matter.

Multiple interviews with practitioners were conducted to explore individual perspectives on walking as a form of artistic practice. Among them, Sophie Cooke, a Scottish poet, creative writer, and walker, provided insights into her walking-based methodology, highlighting the ways movement, reflection, and rhythm inform her work.

Chapter One: Curatorial Thesis

1.1 Walking from a female point of view

In *In Her Nature; How Women Break Boundaries in the Great Outdoors*, Rachel Hewitt (b. 1979), a prize-winning British author, journalist and academic, turns to the outdoors as an escape. After losing five family members, she found healing in nature but also grieved the absence of women in outdoor spaces, an absence that made her feel she didn't belong there either. Hewitt was inspired by Elizabeth Hawkins-Whitshed (known as Lizzie Le Blond); a pioneering Victorian mountaineer who defied social expectations by climbing, photographing, and writing about mountains at a time when women were largely excluded from the outdoors. It empowered her to begin trail running and see the outdoors as a place for women, too.



Figure 1: Lizzie Le Blond crossing a glacier by moonlight. (Originally published in Pearson's Magazine)

This event aims to create an experience where women can lead by example and feel more confident and empowered within the outdoors, reclaiming it as a space of belonging and strength.

Hewitt highlights the deep-seated biases against women in adventure, explaining that for centuries, women who sought physical and mental liberation in the outdoors were dismissed as reckless, unfeminine, or even dangerous. (Hewitt, *In Her Nature*, 2023) This perspective reinforces the themes of this dissertation, which examines how women's access to the outdoors has evolved since the Victorian era, and how individual experiences, reflect these broader changes, and acceptance. Nearly 150 years since pioneering climbers such as Elizabeth Le Blond broke the ice; women are only now becoming perceivers and narrators of the landscape.

Harriet Tarlo (b.1968), professor of ecopoetry and poetics at Sheffield Hallam University, points out that “women have only relatively recently thrown off an objectified position as part of an idealised landscape in favour of a speaking one” (Widger, 2016, p.6) - moving from a passive to an active role within landscapes. Women have always been walking through landscapes but not had the chance to be heard. This event will give women the space to gain recognition, honouring their experiences in the outdoors, hearing their own stories of Scottish landscape and their personal journey through it.

Ecofeminism is a political movement and theory about the historical associations between women and nature, emphasising their shared devaluation in relation to male-dominated culture. Carolyn Merchant (b.1936) an American eco-feminist philosopher and historian of science, famous for her groundbreaking book *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980) explains “By reconceptualising reality as a machine rather than as a living organism, [modern science] sanctioned the domination of both nature and women.” (Merchant, 1980, p.193). Women, the land and non-human animals all became something which could be owned, these ideas were enforced by Hellenism and later by Christianity.

Nan Shepherd (1893-1981) the renowned Scottish author who shaped modern nature writing with her book *The Living Mountain* (1977), describes her unique connection with the Cairngorm range. She describes her annoyance with “Munro baggers”, who race to summits notching up the 3000 foot plus peaks, often with a lack of consciousness of their surroundings,

“To pit oneself against the mountain is necessary for every climber: to pit oneself merely against other players, and make a race of it, is to reduce to the level of game what is essentially an experience. Yet what a racecourse for these boys to choose! To know the hills and their own bodies well enough to dare the exploit is their real achievement.” (Shepherd, 1977, p.4)

This competitive approach to walking is primarily masculine. *A Tentsmuir Stravaig* will encourage a feminine, slower, more nurturing approach to the landscape. Allowing time to contemplate, and create connections between the land, the art and the people within them. Shepherd cherishes the Cairngorms, like a companion; “yet often the mountain gives itself most completely when I have no destination, when I reach nowhere in particular, but have gone out merely to be with the mountain as one visits a friend with no intention but to be with him.” (Shepherd, 1977, p.15)

1.2 Walking as a meditative act

To walk is to move at a regular pace by lifting and setting down each foot in turn, never having both feet off the ground at once. It's intuitive, it's child's play. Yet it's an evolutionary phenomenon which anthropologists have extensively researched. Walking allows us time to explore ideas and concepts, and learn, be wrong in our thinking. Frédéric Gros, a French philosopher and professor at Sciences Po, studies and analyses the many forms of walking – pilgrimage, protest, rambling and leisurely strolls in his book *A Philosophy of Walking* (2008). In his research he draws on other thinkers such as Thoreau, Rimbaud, Rousseau, Nietzsche and Kant, explaining how walking formed their intellectual, thoughtful and creative lives.

The revolutionary French poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) walked across Europe, including through France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy and extensively in the Middle East. He was inspired by walking, throughout his life. Walking between cities, walking for love, walking to find hopes and dreams. He walked so much it caused the loss of one of his legs and even his own death. He described himself as “a pedestrian, nothing more” (Gros, 2011, p.11).

As Gros writes “I find in Rimbaud that sense of walking as flight. That deep joy one always feels when walking, to be leaving behind. There's no question of going back when you are walking. That's it: you've gone, departed... You always know why you are walking: to advance, to leave, to reach, to leave again.” (Gros, 2011, p.24) This always knowing approach differs from Nan Shepherd's aimless rambles.

People are often busy doing set things instead of just being in everyday life, however “you're doing nothing when you walk, nothing but walking. But having nothing to do but walk makes it possible to recover the pure sensation of being, to rediscover the simple joy of existing, the joy that permeates the whole of childhood”. (Gros, 2011, p.87)

Meditation involves deliberate focus on awareness, which induces feelings of calm and stability. An easy way to bring one's mind to a meditative state is through walking. Buddhism,

founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who was also known as the Buddha, in the 6th century BCE, is a religion in which meditation plays a central role. Gautama instructed believers to apply mindfulness and clear concentration, when walking. This exhibition will encourage participants to focus their attention on artwork in the landscape to view while walking; hopefully bringing them to a meditative state. Anabel Streets, author of *The Walking Cure* explains “simply putting one foot in front of the other makes us feel as though we are doing something, taking (a very simple and undermining) act of sorts.” (Streets, 2025, p.251).

Most exhibitions are inside, with artworks crammed into rooms, allowing little time or space for viewers to process each piece. By allowing for a 10/15 -minute walk between pieces, participants will have time to reflect and avoid overwhelm which can easily occur within traditional gallery settings. Our eyes naturally scan ahead when walking in a forward motion; artwork suspended from trees, and emerging from the forest floor will force participants to lift their gaze, inducing a sense of calm.

Dr Andrew Huberman, a neuroscientist at Stanford school of medicine and founder of the Huberman Lab, describes this as “Panoramic Vision” - a way of looking that absorbs the entire scene around us. Panoramic vision is the antithesis of the intense focus which we use to work on a screen, read a book or look at our phones. When we engage our eyes in panoramic vision, we absorb the landscape in a process known as “optic flow”. Studies have shown that optic flow causes our eyes to scan the landscape, quietening the brain’s threat detection system (the amygdala) and making us feel calmer. “Wide panoramic vision relieves our brains of the narrow scrutiny that takes up so much of our time.” (Streets, 2023, p.37)

Spiritual rambling, a physical journey, like a long-distance walk or pilgrimage, taken for personal reflection and spiritual growth, allows you to reach a state of “flow”. A flow state is when action and awareness blur, and is characterised by intense focus, a loss of self-consciousnesses and a distorted sense of time. This has many health benefits. It was recognised and named by the Hungarian American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who described it as the “secret to happiness”. A flow state offers a break from the often-mundane demands of modern life. (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004, “Flow, The Secret to Happiness”, TED Talk)

Chapter Two: Curatorial Choices

2.1 Map of stravaig

A Tentsmuir Stravaig is intended for local audiences of all ages, with an interest in the philosophies of walking and landscape. No prior walking experience is needed, all are welcome. The event will happen twice a week during the month of May, when the forest is most alive. Groups of fifteen participants will walk through the landscape, accompanied by the eight artists involved. A minibus will transport the group to and from Dundee, creating a shared point of departure and return. Although the exhibited work is created by women, the event is designed for people of all genders, offering an opportunity for everybody to experience the landscape through a female perspective.

Participants will be given this map at the beginning of the walk; it portrays the route by a dotted line, with arrows showing direction of movement and 'P's' marking the drop of and collection locations. Artworks are shown with red crosses, with sketches of each piece in bubbles and a key displayed on the right allowing easy identification of works.

2.2 Eight Shortlisted Artworks:



Figure 3: Siobhan McLaughlin, Glen Muick painting, 2021, mixed media



Figure 4: Digitally made image of proposed site for McLaughlin's piece hanging in Tentsmuir

The first artwork the participants will encounter is by Siobhan McLaughlin (b.1993), a Glasgow based artist and curator, whose practice combines personal experiences of walking and nature with material experimentation to create nontraditional landscape paintings. Her piece Glen Muick will be suspended by cord, hung between trees to the right of the path. Light passes through the canvases introducing a dialogue between the paintings and elements. McLaughlin describes her practice as combining “personal experiences of walking and nature with material experimentation to create non-traditional landscape paintings” (McLaughlin, 2025).

Glen Muick is a series of five canvases, worked on with oil bar, pastel and oil paint on mixed materials. Evolved from in-situ sketches of the Glen during a walk, McLaughlin segments her landscapes into fragments, representing the man-made barriers, such as fields we have enforced onto natural spaces. The bold and warm colour pallet, some of which is made from raw materials, brings radiance to the pine forest. While the elements bring out new and ever-changing life to the paintings in turn.

Pilgrimage

Go out of the place you know
where each sight is familiar.
Let the road grow strange under your feet.
The old routine falls away,
the part you play in others' lives,
the role they need: constant.

These new scenes disappear, as you walk by them.
Everything passes – sky, hill – but
the fallen leaves mount up, inside the river
that flows, clear and slow, over them.

One foot, and then the other: you are
muscle, bone, heat, and this: a pinhole
in the muscle of your heart – to let in the light,
the blue sky you are in, from outside.
See what is here, you say.
See what is here, says your heart, in reply.

The air, between your left ear and your shoulder,
knows everything: it is listening,
cushioning your thoughts; *Tell me*, it says,
Tell me what is on your mind.
Your heart, by starts, begins to answer it.

Figure 5: Sophie Cooke, *Pilgrimage*, part of her collection *Wander*, 2025, Poem



Figure 6: Photograph of clearing in Tentsmuir, a couple of meters from the path, where the poetry reading will take place, with digitally edited tree stumps for seats (2025)

The second art piece participants will encounter is a poetry reading by Sophie Cooke, (b.1973) an Edinburgh based Scottish novelist and poet, whose work often explores questions of truth. Cooke will read her poem *Pilgrimage* aloud to the group in a mossy clearing in the forest, to the right of the path. Tree stumps will be arranged for participants to sit on. (Accessible to listen to here: [Pilgrimage, read by Sophie Cooke](#))

Cooke's recent collection *Wander* includes poems written from her local walks around The Water of Leith in Edinburgh, as well as from a winter residency in Sweden. Walking acts as both inspiration and release for Cooke - an essential process of discovery and recovery. The simple act of walking becomes a way to experience new ideas and sensations, allowing the body to speak when given time to listen.

In *Pilgrimage*, listeners are taken on a mental wander, touching on doing unfamiliar yet comforting things, and the importance of presence. “The air between your left ear and shoulder knows everything: it is listening” (Cooke, 2025). This particular clearing gathers the wind, and the soft rustling through the branches will enhance the reading. Participants may interpret the line in different ways, yet the overarching sense of being held or supported through listening feels comforting. Although the poem emerges from solitude it does not evoke loneliness.



Figure 7: Flora Fraser, Fun In The Sun, 2024, Mixed media on board, 80 x 70cm



Figure 8: Digital image of Fun In The Sun displayed in Tentsmuir forest

The third artwork participants will encounter is *Fun In The Sun*, a mixed-media piece by Flora Fraser (b. 2003), an Edinburgh-born, Dundee-based visual artist. Fraser's practice centres on shared moments of euphoria in Scotland's wild places, often inspired by long walks up Munros in the Highlands.

The work will be suspended from a tree just before a curve in the path, positioned so that participants glimpse it from a distance as they approach (approximately sixty metres away). This extended view builds a sense of anticipation and curiosity, drawing the viewer gradually toward the piece.

The painting follows an unknown walker through the Linn of Dee, Cairngorms. The pine trees tall and straight trunks look fragile; cast over a hazy morning. The painting itself will be hung on a pine tree, echoing the scene. The ground looks comforting, with interlocking curves of warm greens and Prussian blue - moving the viewer's eyes and inviting them in. The figure walks through the trees, faceless and silhouetted, who are we following? Both the viewer and the figure ahead are walking through the landscape yet are immersed in individual rhythms and both experiencing unique states of flow.



Figure 9: Lotte Glob, *Untitled piece from Sculpture Croft*, 2024, Ceramic sculptures on stone



Figure 10: Digitally made image portraying Lotte Glob's sculptures in Tentsmuir forest

The fourth artwork participants will encounter is by Danish born ceramicist Lotte Glob, (b.1944) who is based on the Northwest coast of Scotland and creates experimental ceramic pieces influenced by the Highlands. She's inspired by long walks into the mountains; both the action of walking, and the ground under her feet - which she collects, combining the rock and sediment with different clays. Her pieces are inspired by the natural forms and shapes of the land. By firing the pieces at 1,320°C (white heat) it alters the sculptures, just like how this landscape as the landscape was by volcanic activity, reliving the metamorphoses. This process makes her pieces come alive again.

This untitled piece is part of Glob's Sculpture Croft which "brings together ceramic art, sculpture, environment and landscape" (Glob, 2023). The earthy grey oxide and mossy green glazes are thick and break into organic lumps, giving a tactile, almost geological surface. The sculptures appear as if they have risen from the ground, natural sentient beings, that were not made by man. Their long legs give the impression these creatures might start ambling along too, joining the group.



*Figure 11:- Photograph of figure walking into clearing, off to the left of the path,
where the performance will take place*



Figure 12: Digitally made image of Jillian Bain Christie performing with Catherine Herriot in Tentsmuir

The fifth piece participants will encounter is by Jillian Bain Christie (b. Aberdeen) a Scottish artist and soprano, currently based in Norwich. She specialises in Nordic Art Song, Oratorio and contemporary repertoire. Her sound piece *An Gleann Sàmhaichte* (The Silenced Glen) reclaims heritage and identity while mourning the loss of Gaelic speakers in Scotland (accessible to listen to here: [An Gleann Sàmhaichte sung by Jillian Bain Christie](#)). The piece will take place in a cathedral-like clearing which honours the music's gospel sounds. Christie will perform the song live, accompanied by pianist. As participants approach, the music will already be audible, filtering through the forest and guiding them towards the clearing. Drawn by her voice, they will arrive mid-performance, experiencing a single live rendition before continuing along the path. The song will continue as they depart, gradually fading into the distance, creating a sense of movement and transience within the landscape.

The work was inspired by Ardclach, a hamlet near Nairn where some of Christie's ancestors are buried and draws on the heterophony of *Salmadaireachd* (Gaelic Psalm singing).

Christie reflects, "This sound sculpture is both a lament for the erosion of Gaelic language and culture, and at the same time a very personal way of trying to reclaim my heritage. It uses as its basis an old Gaelic song, *Fear à bhàta* (The Boatman), which itself was written in the late 18th century, when Gaelic was outlawed, and yet it survived" (Christie, n.d.).

The piece reminds participants that landscape is more than a visual setting, it holds layers of identity, memory, and culture embedded within it. Christie's great-grandmother was the last native Gaelic speaker in her family; like many others, she was discouraged from speaking the language. Through sound, Christie reclaims both personal and collective connection to place, voice, and belonging.



Figure 13: The Ardclach Bell Tower sits elusively on a hill

above the River Findhorn (Visit Forres)



Figure 14: Three works by Sarah McFadyen.

Safe Haven, That's Where I Have to Go and Moor Hill Swelkie.

2021, mixed media on card



Figure 15: Digitally edited image showcasing Sarah McFadyen's paintings in Tentsmuir Forest

The sixth artwork participants will encounter is by Sarah McFadyen (b. Isle of Hoy) an Orcadian musician & expressive painter currently living and working in Pathhead, Midlothian, whose work focuses on northern landscape and story. The three paintings will be hung from trees at different heights, as a triptych, seen from the main path. McFadyen often showcases her paintings hanging outside on trees, drystone walls or harbours. Her work tells stories of history, folklore and seasonal changes. McFadyen explains “I love a good story. As I walk through landscapes, I like imagining how things were in days gone by and projecting myself into the future.” (McFadyen, 2021).

The three chosen artworks are from her *Uncharted Series* - a group of sketches and explorations made from changes, seasonally, personally and universally. The mixed media paintings are on high quality paper attached to a wooden panel, UV varnished and sealed with wax finish.

*Rapid charts of marks
Reflect in-the-moment
Intuitive splurges
Of emotions thoughts stuff*

*Stuff that is better oot
Than in*

*Finding beauty
In the tangle
Finding tangle
In the beauty
Flutters of what is
Next to come
Future intentions
Yet to face*

Figure 16: Poem by Sarah McFadyen about her *Uncharted Series* (2021)

The rapid but considered mark-making in the paintings mirrors the dynamic nature of the forest environment. The works’ rough, scratch-like textures correspond to the surfaces of the Scots pines on which they are displayed, while their colours and formal gestures integrate elements drawn directly from the surrounding landscape.

After This You Can Go

Start with something easy: the only rules are
you can neither own nor control it, so
start with something beautiful.
The pink dawn in your street, perhaps, or
a bird which flies in to your garden. Then
try the wilder place: the forest and the lake.
Think of this as practice: to let your being
unfold into the world, to be here with this moment
and enjoy it.

You feel a little bit silly, but
this is normal.
Call it something else, if you want to:
aesthetics. Art and culture.
Though it's biology and physics:
you, being here, because you want to be,
because this beauty's calling to the beauty in your darkness.
A pinprick of light
you don't even have to believe in:
what has faith got to do with aesthetics, friend?
Or biology, breathing?
Look inward, then look out.

Spend as long as you like, in your street, at dawn –
with the birds in your garden – travel there, if you want to,
or – find a longer path, a road to go on.
Prepare, pack: imagine
all the situations that might happen.
Then let go.
The dawn will catch you.
It hasn't forgotten the mornings
on which you watched it.

Figure 17: Sophie Cooke, *After This You Can Go*, part of her collection *Wander*, 2025, Poem

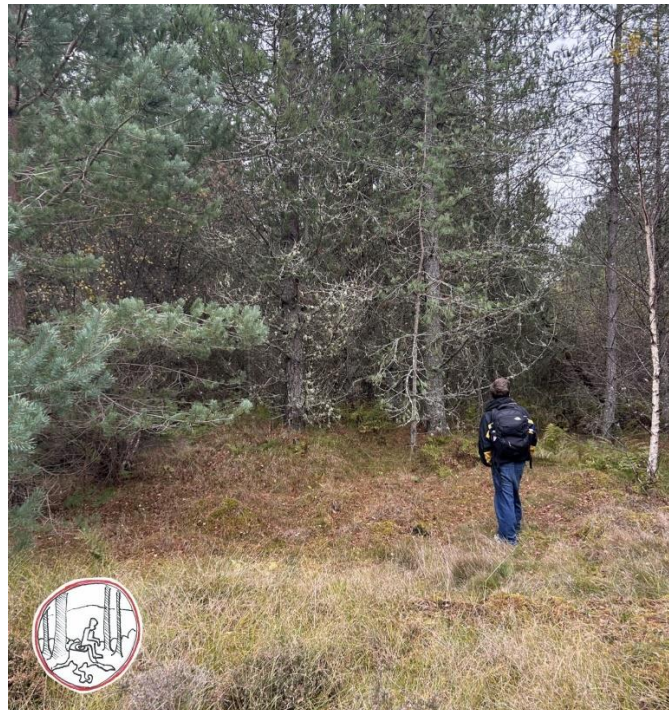


Figure 18: Photograph of mossy clearing in Tentsmuir; where the poetry reading will take place

The seventh artwork participants will encounter is a reading of *After This You Can Go*, a poem by Sophie Cooke. (Accessible to listen to here: [After This You Can Go, read by Sophie Cooke](#)) The reading will take place in a mossy clearing to the left of the main path. Participants will be given the option to sit or stand in this area, offering them the freedom to immerse themselves individually.

Cooke's poems are accessible most, she provides a certain level of specificity while still leaving room for the imagination to fill in the rest, giving the listener space to feel and connect. The poem is about observing your surroundings, feeling all your senses and living in the present moment. The flow of the poem reads similarly to breathing, or walking, allowing listeners to retreat to the pure sensation of being. "Think of this as practice: to let your being unfold into the world, to be here with this moment and enjoy it." (Cooke, 2025)

The final line is a reassurance to the listener, reminding them of the comfort a new day brings, "The dawn will catch you. It hasn't forgotten the mornings on which you watched it" (Cooke, 2025)



Figure 19: Susan Togut, A Spirits Sphere, 2012, mixed media sculpture



Figure 20: Digitally edited image of Tentsmuir beach with Susan Togut's sculptures scattered within the landscape

The eighth artwork that participants will engage with is a collaborative sculpture-building exercise led by artist Susan Togut, a Scottish environmental artist based in Woodstock, New York. Her practice centres on site-specific installations that respond to landscape, memory, and ecological restoration. From the beginning of the walk, participants will be encouraged to collect found objects, which they will later use to construct their own sculptures, in groups of five. Upon arriving at the beach, Togut will offer guidance as they gather additional materials and assemble these into unique sculptural pieces.

By gathering materials throughout the walk, participants shift from passive observers to active makers. Rather than simply looking at artworks, this experience requires them to engage their senses, judgement, and imagination. The act of searching for objects enhances their awareness of texture, form, and detail within the landscape, prompting a deeper level of attention than ordinary viewing allows. In creating with what they find, participants think critically and intuitively at the same time, making decisions, experimenting, and responding directly to place. Just as Togut discovers her materials through walking, participants use movement as a mode of thinking, transforming the exhibition into an embodied, creative experience rather than a traditional, static encounter with art.

Chapter 3 Curatorial Aims and influences

3.1 Why Tentsmuir Forest?

The exhibition will take place in Tentsmuir Forest, located on the Northeast coast of Fife, now covering 1,573 acres. The forest is a 15-minute drive from Dundee and easily accessible by minibus. The UK Government acquired the land in the early 1920s, and the Forestry Commission started to plant a mixture of Scots and Corsican pines starting in 1922.

Tentsmuir Wildlife reserve and forest is home to a fantastic array of wildlife, particularly in May, with migrating birds back for Summer. The forest will be most alive with an array of birdsong and blooming wildflowers attracting diverse insects, nesting seabirds, and mammals, red squirrels and roe deer, as well as on the shore, lounging seals.

The forest provides a tranquil setting. Japanese researchers were the first to discover the extraordinary effects of forests on humans through the practice of Shinrin-yoku or “forest bathing”, a form of tree therapy. This therapeutic act involves spending time in forests, offering several health benefits; increased levels of serotonin, reduced blood pressure and heart rate, boosted immunity, and a surge in vigour and energy. Anabel Streets, author of *The Walking Cure* explains “walking in a forest (‘dynamic forest bathing’) has a greater impact on our mental health than remaining static” (Streets, 2025, p.35). Tentsmuir is largely coniferous, these evergreen trees are rich in phytonicides, the forest emitted chemicals, which when inhaled by us - causes positive changes to mood and health. Natural sound exposure such as birdsong has also been proven to lower blood pressure, heart and respiratory rates, as well as stress and anxiety.

The route will follow a short section of St Duthac’s way (the patron Saint of Tain): a pilgrimage route from Aberdeen to St Andrews. The energy flowing from past walkers might offer a dynamic and reflective path for the motion of forward movement.

Follow the line of the harbour wall (L then R). Keep straight on through houses (following Fife Coastal Path signs all the time). Continue through a caravan park (toilets open to the public 0900-1600). The road veers R (car park to L). Turn L (Shadwell Rd South) after shop. Cross Lundin Bridge and keep straight on on good path. Just before a line of tank traps (concrete cubes), fork right towards Tenstmuir forest (cycle route 1 marked). After a green gate, arrive at a T-junction - turn R on to a track which then follows the edge of the forest for 1.5 km. Keep straight on at 'Junction 6' (SP Moreton Lochs), 'Junction 7' (SP



Figure 21: Section of St Duthac's Way Description

Pilgrimages offer a chance to connect with something larger than oneself - having had first-hand experience walking part of the Camino de Santiago, a pilgrimage route along the North coast of Spain, following the 'Way of St James' to Santiago de Compostella. Whether it's nature, a spiritual presence, or one's inner self. This setting provides an ideal backdrop for engaging with the artwork, encouraging slow attentive movement, creating a mindset of openness and receptivity. According to the British Pilgrim Trust, "it's not about the how long but the how." (British Pilgrim Trust, 2021)

Having the work in a 'wild' environment, also has positive environmental connotations. Building strong connections with outdoor spaces, especially from a young age helps people form positive associations with wild landscapes, promoting environmentally aware attitudes. As our lives shift into cities and indoor environments, there is a noticeable decline in community activities situated in wild, outdoor landscapes. Encouraging Scottish people to visit forests and other outdoor spaces could therefore foster deeper engagement with natural environments.

There have been several art related events hosted in the forest, such as a year residency (in 2013) with Derek Scott, an award-winning wildlife artist, and open days run by NatureScot with interactive creative activities such as building bug hotels. However, the forest has never

hosted a formal curated art exhibition. *A Tentsmuir Stravaig* would be the first art exhibition ever held in Tentsmuir.

3.2 Group activity and use of outdoor spaces

The event encourages communal outdoor learning and creating, challenging indoor gallery-based norms, and the shift into cities, through reconnecting participants with land and body-based practices. Being in outdoor spaces is crucial, exposure to green space provides improved mental health and cognitive function.

Dr. Ruth Allen (b. Feb 1982) is an author, artist, and outdoor psychotherapist with a PhD from Lancaster University, where she specialised in the intersection of philosophy and Himalayan geography. Allen conducts outdoor therapy, typically one-to-one in natural settings. She focusses on embodied relational mindfulness, using deep listening, intuitive movement and environmental conditions to guide therapeutic enquiry. In our online interview she explained that she “invites clients...to pay attention to what they are doing and be curious about why” (Ruth Allen, 2025). Encouraging this curiosity enables clients to reflect on their own responses and to inhabit the present moment with greater awareness.

While Allen’s sessions are generally intimate and individual, the principles she describes; mindfulness, curiosity, a sensitivity to movement, and attunement to environmental rhythms, resonate strongly with the goals of this event. In this dissertation’s context of walking, shared activity, and collective engagement with landscape, her methods reinforce the idea that outdoor spaces foster heightened awareness, sensitivity, and belonging.

Urbanisation is the predominant reason for the lack of communal activities in outdoor spaces with over 55% of the world’s population living in urban areas. In Scotland, urbanisation dramatically accelerated from the 18th century due to industrialisation, transforming it from a largely rural nation to one of Europe’s most urbanised societies by 1850. This was due to a combination of pull and push factors. Pull factors include growing trade, towns becoming centres of commerce, and expanding economic opportunities. Push factors include limited opportunities in agricultural life, social and economic shifts, and population pressures. (The Scotsman, 2017)

Participants will be encouraged to interact with the landscape throughout the whole event via the artwork - poetry readings within small clearing in the forest in which participants sit directly on tree stumps or the forest floor, and through prompting them to search for sculpture building materials. These elements allow participants to see, touch and interact with the land in a deeply personal manner. The landscape becomes both the context and content for the experience.

New connections and social interactions are important. The loneliness epidemic is a term describing a perceived increase in loneliness and social isolation, which has been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated by factors like shrinking social circles and increased social media use. The World Health Organisation has declared it a global public health concern, citing serious mental and physical illness risks, including a higher risk of early death, cardiovascular disease and dementia.

Interaction between participants will be encouraged through both walking and art -viewing, listening, and creating together. Discussing shared perspectives will foster connections and deepen collective understanding of the artworks. The event is structured to support communication throughout the entire experience, beginning with a shared minibus journey from Dundee to the forest, allowing participants to become familiar with one another before the trail begins. The presence of the artists along the route will invite questions, reflection, and dialogue. Each artwork will be encountered as a group, allowing shared experiences to naturally spark conversation, while the fifteen-minute walks between works provide further space for discussion. The paths are wide enough for at least four people to walk side by side, avoiding single-file walking and encouraging easy interaction. The final artwork, a group sculpture-building activity, will prompt participants to collaborate creatively. A reflective forty-minute return walk to the cafe and car park offers time to talk about the experience while still immersed in nature, followed by an opportunity for lunch, hot drinks, and continued conversation in the relaxed setting of the Salt and Pine Cafe.

The group should include people of all ages and genders, with interaction encouraged throughout the event; inclusivity is central to the aims of the project, supporting community building, shared experience, and collective learning. This intention aligns with the concept

of *Third Places*, public or commercial spaces separate from home and work, first described by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in *The Great Good Place* (1999) as essential environments for informal social connection. With rising costs in cafes, pubs, and other traditional third places, many people have reduced access to spaces that support casual community interaction. By situating the exhibition within a shared outdoor setting, hopefully it will create a small alternative: a nature-based event that offers participants the opportunity to meet, talk, and form connections through collective engagement with art and landscape.

3.3 Influential outdoor art trails

Sculpture parks such as Jupiter Artland and Kielder Art and Architecture Program have inspired the ideas to showcase art in a forest. Both integrate the land with the art, in which viewers walk between artworks.

Jupiter Artland is especially influential, having been brought up in Midlothian and spending countless days wandering the park with my family. Sculpture parks with outdoor art can be more accessible; by removing traditional barriers of entry and indoor gallery norms, they integrate creative expression directly into the natural world. Physical, sensory and social ease. “At the heart of this developing landscape is the inexplicable force that connects the unconscious speech of the landscape with the literate vision of artists. This powerful pull has inspired artists to notice small things that the casual viewer may not, but often great work is based upon the study of maps, research of papers, stories, anecdotes – the ephemeral legends that much Jupiter such a rich and vital place – but, most importantly, from listening to the landscape.” (Jupiter Artland, 2025).

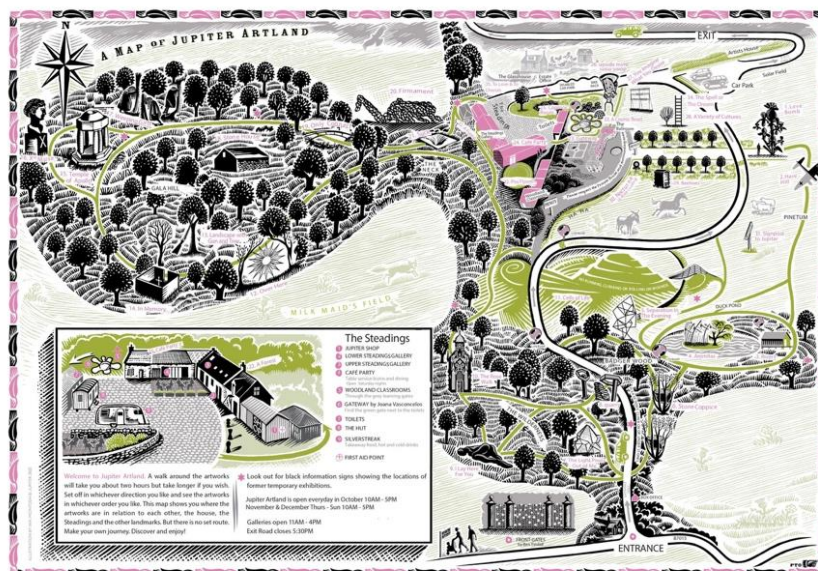


Figure 22: Map of Jupiter Artland

This map serves as a functional guide to the park and inspired the inclusion of longer walks between artworks, as well as the development of the Tentsmuir Stravaig map.

Kielder Art and Architecture Program is an art trail in Northumberland, which I visited in 2014, when I was only eleven and has left a strong impact on me, in particular *Silvas Capitilas* (Forest Head) - a giant wooden head made from larch. The sculpture was built and designed by Sim Parch, an art group from New Mexico. The work is interactive and allows visitors can walk into its mouth and look at the forest through its eyes.



Figure 23: Photograph of Silvas Capitilas. Photo taken by [Ian Fraser] (2014).

A Tentsmuir Stravaig offers a new approach to conventional sculpture parks, it is not passive but interactive. The participants are just as important as the art, they become part of the experience, interacting and participating in events, adding and changing each unique experience.

The Neverending Glen is a unique immersive outdoor multimedia art trail and gallery at Kelburn Garden Party, near Largs in North Ayrshire, set among ancient woodland, babbling brooks, thousand-year-old trees, waterfalls, and forest glades, where contemporary artworks are embedded directly into the landscape. “The trail features a compelling mix of Residency artists, commissioned contributors, and returning favourites each presenting site-specific works responding to this year’s theme” (Kelburn Garden Party, 2025) The project is managed by Marina Renée, with Fibi Cowley as the Neverending Glen co-ordinator. As Cowley notes, “You’re having these encounters with each other, with nature, maybe even with yourself” (Cowley, 2024).



Figure 24: - Ashley Dudley Smith's Forest Giant, Kelburn the Never Ending Glen 2025

Each year, the festival runs the ‘Glen Arts Residency’: a two-week residency for six artists from various disciplines, invited to live, research, collaborate, and create site-specific installations for display in the Glen. The resulting artworks - ranging from sound meditations, ecological interventions, sculptures and interactive installations respond to the forest’s history, ecology, and atmosphere. Festival visitors walk through the Glen on a mapped trail that guides them past these pieces, encouraging immersive and contemplative interaction with art and nature, creating a shared exploratory experience, often with strangers.

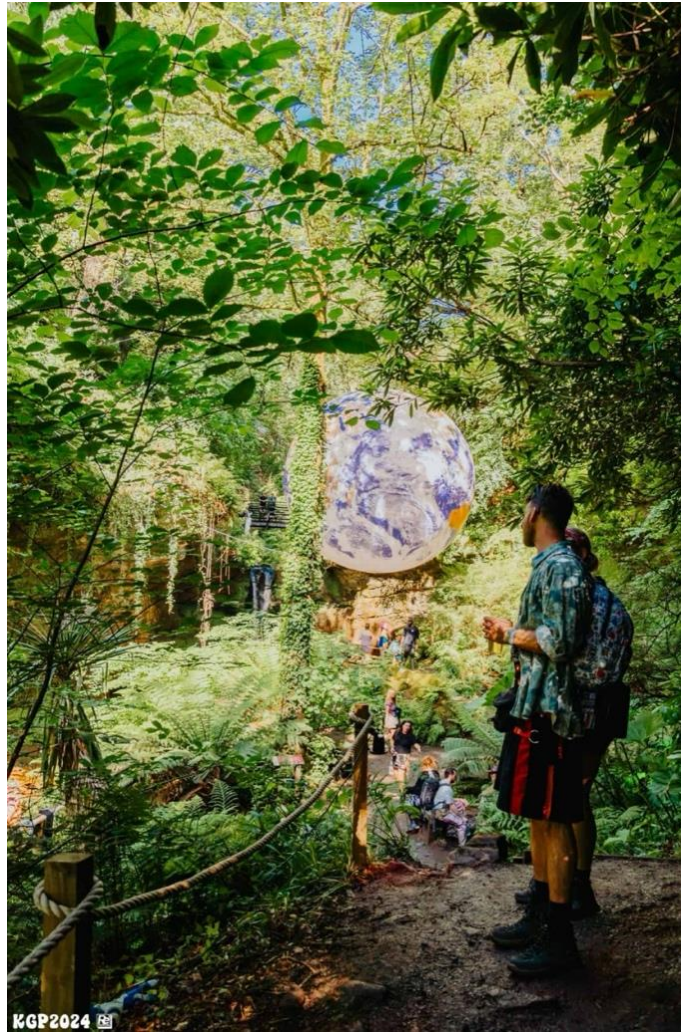


Figure 25: Luke Jerram's *Gaia*, Kelburn the Never Ending Glen 2025

These combined elements of the outdoor setting, collaborative creation, site-specific practice, and shared experience strongly resonate with those of *A Tentsmuir Stravaig's*. I aim to emulate this model of bringing people together through art and landscape, fostering connection, reflection, and communal engagement.

Chapter 4 Other curatorial influences

4.1 Interview with Sophie Cooke, a contemplative walker and poet:

As part of this research, an interview with Sophie Cooke offered insight into walking-based poetic methodology from the perspective of a Scottish female writer and artist. Conducted while moving through fields, the interview took place in a relaxed setting that encouraged free-flowing reflection. Three central themes emerged: spiritual rambling, walking as a generative creative act, and the parallel rhythms that underpin both poetic composition and the physical act of walking.

Cooke was awarded a walking and writing residency in Bengtsfors, Sweden, 2025, in which the short days and cold weather didn't permit the longer route she originally planned. Instead, she walked individual routes each day, bringing a stick, to give the walks more purpose. She feels her walks were short pilgrimages (a journey which she determines by state of mind rather than location – a way of mindful walking).

A Tentsmuir Stravaig follows a section of the pilgrimage St Duthac's Way. Participants will be encouraged to think about spiritual concepts during the event. Cooke explains "when you're walking in that way where you are thinking about or feeling or processing things inside yourself, I think that that it is also the route to a deeper understanding of your inherent value as a human being, your place in the universe. And those are spiritual concepts. You don't necessarily have to be religious, I don't think, to grasp those concepts. I think there's definitely something spiritual about pilgrimage that doesn't necessarily have to be religious." (Cooke, 2025)

Cooke uses walking as part of her works development. The movement is part of the methodology - a way of processing things inside herself, a method to access inner feelings.

This movement helps to open the barrier between body and mind, letting the body talk and mind listen.

“I think that the act of walking helps you trust your body more and that's relaxing. And also, obviously being in nature is relaxing. So, both those things I think are kind of calming the nervous system, which is a really important part of opening up towards what it is that you want to say. Rather than perhaps what you think you ought to say.” (Cooke, 2025)

Participants are encouraged to settle into the familiar rhythm of their own walking pace, allowing this embodied ease to support open and creative thinking. By integrating walking into the creative process, they will gather natural materials along the route and use them to build sculptures at the end of the walk. This mirrors Cooke’s approach to poetry, in which walking is embedded within the creative act, and a natural flow state can emerge.

Cooke explains that both “rhythm and poetry, speaks to our ears, probably because walking has a rhythm, breathing has a rhythm, our bodies have natural rhythms. And that's probably why all poetry appeals to us. Why we like rhythm at all is probably because our bodies are fundamentally rhythmic.” (Cooke, 2025). *A Tentsmuir Stravaig* is established on these rhythms, trying to create a comfortable and flowing experience for participants. Cooke reflects on how occupying your body in a simple rhythmic task (like walking), can help you to trust your body, and ease into a flow-state, relaxing the mind. Both rhythms and nature create calm, so when combined Cooke experiences creative freedom.

4.2 Site specific art

Walking art is a form of contemporary practice in which walking itself becomes the central artistic method. This is now an established art form and there are several organisations for walking artists, made to create communities and foster this genre. Some of the key organisations include Walk Listen Create (WLC), The Walking Artists Network (WAN) and Walking Arts & Local Communities (WALC).

A site-specific walking artist has inspired my research; Claudia Zieske (b. 1959), an Edinburgh-based British German curator, cultural activist, and art-walker, who creates site-specific walking artworks that foreground movement, place, and social connection. Her projects include *Home to Home*, an 1,800 km post-Brexit Walk from Huntly to Unterpfaffenhofen exploring the meaning of home, and *Kittelfrauen Walk*, a four-day journey through Brandenburg. They discussed female identity en route with women from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, in which they discussed female identity along the route.

Zieske's curatorial vision has informed several of the guiding principles behind *A Tentsmuir Stravaig*. Her participatory works integrate walking, material gathering, and conversation to foster meaningful connections between people and place. This approach closely aligns with the values of *A Tentsmuir Stravaig*, where movement, environment, and collective experience shape the curatorial framework.

During an informal interview conducted with Zieske, she explained her interest in both nature and walking with company, stating it's more interesting than walking alone. She migrated from Germany to Scotland in 1995, where found her hillwalking feet in the Scottish hills, and has since climbed all the munros.

Zieske is the founding director (1995-2021) of Deveron Projects, an arts organisation based in Huntly, where ‘the town is the venue’ rather than a gallery. The projects involve the community, bringing local issues to a global audience. Deveron Projects and Zieske also set up The Walking Institute “a peripatetic school of the human pace. The Walking Institute explores, researches and celebrates the human pace. It does this by bringing walking activities together with arts and other cultural disciplines and people from all walks of life.” (Deveron Projects, 2025)

4.3 Curators who create female narrative of wild spaces

Wanderers: A History Of Women Walking is a 2020 book by Kerri Andrews, a writer, editor and academic based in the Scottish Borders. Andrews adopts a curatorial methodology to assemble the histories of ten women who used walking as a form of creative and intellectual agency. Through retracing routes and interweaving research with personal reflection, Andrews constructs a collective narrative that repositions women's movement through landscape as an act of reclamation. Her approach parallels my own project, which similarly brings together female artists and writers who walk, using their practices to build a shared story through art. Both projects employ curation as a form of narrative making, gathering dispersed experiences of women in the landscape to reveal their cultural and artistic significance.

Petticoats and pinnacles: Scotland's pioneering mountain women (July 2021-May 2022) was an exhibition by the National Library of Scotland revealing "how women have overcome physical and social barriers to spend time in the mountains – not only as climbers but as writers, artists and leaders." (National Library of Scotland, date) from the 18th to 20th century.

Although *A Tentsmuir Stravaig* is not set in the mountains, its core values stem from viewing land as something to be nurtured rather than conquered. Tentsmuir was chosen for its accessibility, offering a welcoming alternative for those who may find mountain environments intimidating and allowing participants to discover walking as an enjoyable, restorative practice. While the project draws on the histories of demanding mountain journeys and on the experiences of pioneering women such as Lizzie Le Blond, who entered a mountaineering world dominated by men and restricted by class privilege it intentionally relocates the encounter to an inclusive forest setting. In contrast to the exclusivity of early mountaineering, this exhibition removes barriers and encourages all participants to connect meaningfully with their bodies and the natural world.

Into The Mountain is a site-specific performance art piece, set in the Cairngorms by artist and choreographer Simone Kenyon. The work was "inspired and informed by the lyrical and

embodied prose of Nan Shepherd's 1977 book, *The Living Mountain*, the project explores and celebrates women's relationships with high and wild places" (*Into the Mountain*, 2020). In May 2019 the piece was presented to a live audience in the Cairngorm Mountain range. The original immersive experience involved a 5:30 start and a day hiking in the rain.

Into The Mountain and *A Tentsmuir Stravaig*, both narrate a walk through a Scottish landscape by Scottish women. All aspects of Kenyon's project are informed and created by women. This was an inspiration to *A Tentsmuir Stravaig*'s core principles, as well as the idea to assemble a group to bring out into the landscape.

Conclusion

This proposal envisions an experience that should be both enjoyable and reflective, inviting participants to reconnect with their bodies and minds through walking, art, and shared encounters with nature. Grounded in eco-feminist philosophies and a meditative, flow-based approach, *A Tentsmuir Stravaig* guides participants between eight artworks. All while sharing experiences and creating new connections with the artists and each other along the way.

By placing the event in a forest rather than a traditional gallery setting, the project encourages positive relationships with the environment and highlights the importance of Tentsmuir forest. Its slow, steady pace celebrates walking as a meaningful practice, reinforcing its mental, social, and emotional benefits. The exhibition also creates a space for female voices - artists, walkers, poets and thinkers to be heard within a landscape historically shaped by exclusion.

The project engages directly with climate-conscious thinking: walking is a low-impact mode of movement, the artworks are site-specific and temporary, and the event encourages participants to develop care-based relationships with the land rather than extractive ones. By foregrounding ecological sensitivity and the value of minimal intervention, the experience encourages participants to consider their role in the climate crisis.

As a platform for both established and emerging artists and an accessible communal experience, the project has strong potential to succeed. Its combination of site-specific work, group participation, and non-traditional curation offers a thoughtful, inclusive model that invites everyone to take part while remaining attentive to environmental care and climate-conscious values.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview with Sophie Cooke

Question 1

I remember you saying to me you collect ideas on the walk like one would collect artefacts please can you explain this process in some more detail.

Yeah. I guess it's just observing, like consciously observing. But obviously you wouldn't be drawn to absolutely everything, so I guess it's a bit like if you had water divining rods. Something like that, just feeling what's drawing you towards it and then I would note down in my notebook things that I felt were interesting. And sometimes I would stop on the walk and just try and go a little deeper into what it was that was interesting, and it for me, and other times it might not be until I got back and was then writing at the table that I was then piecing things together. And what it was, you know.

Question 2

Do you think the rhythm of walking influences the rhythm of the poetry?

Oh, that's a really interesting question. Yeah, I mean, I think rhythm and poetry, speaks to our ears, probably because walking has a rhythm, breathing has a rhythm, our bodies have natural rhythms. And that's probably why all poetry appeals to us. Why we like rhythm at all is probably because our bodies are fundamentally rhythmic.

Lots of research is done on this as well. But the rhythm of walking does really help in terms of the formulation of ideas and so on. But maybe it's more, in terms of walking and writing, I

think there's something in occupying your body in a task that's very easy to complete. Like, you decide to walk a route. It's something you can do and it's something your body can do for you. So I think that the act of walking helps you trust your body more and that's relaxing. And also obviously being in nature is relaxing. So both those things I think are kind of calming the nervous system, which is a really important part of opening up towards what it is that you want to say. Rather than perhaps what you think you ought to say.

Question 3

Do you want your readers or listeners to relate directly to your own experience or do you prefer to leave space for them to create their own meanings from your poems?

Definitely the second. I think, It's an interesting thing, isn't it, because you want, you want there to be space for people to come in and inhabit the poems themselves and find meaning in it, but at the same time, it's almost like it's easier for people to do that the more clearly they can imagine the space you're making for them. So you're giving a level of specificity to create that space for them to come into. So it's both. But yeah, if you want you want them to be able to come in and have it the poem themselves and there needs to be room in it for them to feel something themselves.

Question 4

Rachel Hewitt, I don't know if you've read this book, but in her Nature, she wrote in her nature about Lizzie LeBlonde being the first female mountaineer, stepping into a space that was previously considered a man's world. Were you aware of her or any other pioneering women when you started writing about walking? How does this history affect the way you think about your own walks?

Oh, that's really interesting. Yes, I was aware I can't remember the name of the book, it is it's "Wild", Cheryl Strade, who walked that Pacific trail? I'd read that book. I mean, I think kind of walking I was doing was definitely very, very tame. It wasn't something that was physically challenging and I think that was intentional. I never had any plan to do something that I would find overly challenging. I wanted it to be something that I could do and more just to make it part of the practice of thinking and writing and developing the work. Rather than being like a big challenge in its own right, which then is a different kind of writing that comes out of that isn't then it's an account of the walk rather than using the walk as part of the process. If that makes sense. I think my poems aren't, they aren't really the accounts of the walk. It's more like I was using the walking as a way to produce the work. I mean, some of them have bits of walking in there, but I was more interested in the inward process of healing and using the walking as a way to access those feelings and write about them in a way that would hopefully be useful? To other people going through a similar experience? Yeah.

Question 5

This one's just, do you always feel safe walking solo in the wilderness?

Hmm. Not always. Yeah. Generally, but not. Maybe safer in the Wilderness than you would in a city walking? Yeah, I think I felt safer in Sweden than in Edinburgh. I think it's an odd one now, isn't it?

Question 6

Do you prefer walking with a group or solo?

They're totally different experiences. In terms of when I'm working on a piece of writing, I do really often walk as part of my preparation for it, processing my thoughts and so on and I have to be on my own for that. I wouldn't be able to be in my thoughts if I was with another person. I think. But then obviously walking with friends is really enjoyable. It's just a completely

different experience. Then it's not about then it's not about thinking and writing, it's about being social and being with people.

Question 7

What does the idea of pilgrimage mean to you? Can it be secular or is there always a spiritual element?

I think it can definitely be secular and that you don't need to have a specific religious faith. But I also think that pilgrimage is mindful walking. I would define it as. And I think when you're walking in that way where you are thinking about or feeling processing things inside yourself, I definitely think that that is also the route to a deeper understanding of your inherent value is a human being, your place in the universe. And those are spiritual concepts. You don't necessarily have to be religious, I don't think, to grasp those concepts. I think there's definitely something spiritual about pilgrimage that doesn't necessarily have to be religious.

And I also, I thought was really interesting, actually, the whole Scandinavian history of pilgrimage because it's quite different from the Catholic pilgrimage, which is about walking towards relics of a saint. Whereas I think, in the Lutheran Church's more of a history of it being about the walk itself.

Question 8

Does the meditative aspect of walking happen by chance or is it something that you can control?

I suppose going for a walk by yourself, you're more likely to be meditative. But also, it would be quite possible to go for a walk by yourself and think about nothing but what you have to do all week. There is an element of being intentional. I think there is intentionality about it, about

quietening the busy thoughts. You put yourself up to the deeper thoughts. But to do that you don't need to go on a big special pilgrimage. It can be, you can do that in your normal walk, in nature along your local riverbank, you know, to be I think it's about your state of mind rather than the location.

Question 9

Some writers describe walking as a way of dissolving the boundary between body and mind. Do you recognise this feeling in your own practice?

Definitely. Definitely, I think that's it. Yes, absolutely. Yes. And I think it's one of the hardest things, with writing it's almost like a battle against the ego side sometimes, which is what creates fear, is what kind of can stop you from saying, certain things. And that's why I think that whole aspect of of putting the body back in charge again. Yeah. Like I said, it's reassuring, it comes through a nervous system, and I think, yeah, like you said, it's yeah, dissolves that barrier and opens you up to things. I think it lets your lets your body speak.

Question 10

The poem pilgrimage, the one by you. which is the poem I would be most interested, including in my exhibition or proposed exhibition is written in blank verse with a few rhymes and I was wondering if this choice is linked to the subject of the poem and act of walking itself.

Oh, that's interesting. I can't say that it was intentional. I guess if I were thinking about it, I might say that's a poem about the starting off point. I think it makes sense for that to be less rhymed than once you're actually in the journey and process. and starting off the point.

Maybe. Okay, yeah, you're just getting into the walk before all kind of locks into place.

Yeah, you haven't actually begun the walk, which is. Yes, rather than on the journey, in the rhythm, in the rhyme. I don't know. I didn't do it on purpose, but that might be why I did it.

Question 11

Do you think this poem could or artwork could benefit from being read within headphones during a walking art exhibition?

Oh, that would be really lovely, yeah. Yeah. For the listener to hear it while they're also walking. Yeah. Yeah. Or maybe just before they set off.

Question 12

And even though your poems are rooted in specific landscapes, do you think they can be re-experienced in different settings? Could a reader walk in another landscape still connects meaningfully with them?

Yeah, I hope so. I think so. A lot of it, there's some recurring images and seems as well, like, you know, just like one foot in front to the other, which I know is very basic but it's because it's almost like that return to very basic sensations is what calms you and allows you to experience things differently. Yeah. And yes, and that obviously putting one foot in front of the other is something that happens every day in every place. Yeah, I do hope that they can be applicable to people anywhere.

Appendix B: Interview with Ruth Allen:

How do you encourage your clients or participants to connect with themselves and the land around them?

This varies depending on the client and the issues they are presenting with, I don't have a set methodology, it is all based on client-centred practice, deep listening and then intuition based on my experience working outside with others. Usually though it begins with some sort of quietness, paying attention and noticing to what's happening outside and in – asking the client to do this.

Does walking play a part in this process, and if so, how do you use it therapeutically?

Yes, walking has been a large part of my practice and again the meanings of walking depend on the client. What can we learn from the route chosen? From their pace? From how we start and stop? On any walk we may encounter different beings and scenarios, so all of this is a dynamic part of the process I am always keeping an eye on. I walk less these days as I explore working with a shelter on the land, and this enables me to see a difference between walking and not walking – the way walking can be a great processor, but also a great distractor, for example. Sometimes we move to avoid.

The outdoor landscape has often been framed as a masculine space. Do you feel your work offers a more feminine lens or approach to this?

I understand that the outdoor landscape has been framed as very male, but it's not something I feel within me when I practice. Not especially. I think we are all aware of the weight of history, but I am more attuned to how I bring my personhood of which my gender is only a part. More important to me, is how I bring my whole way of thinking and being and feeling – and these will of course be through a feminine lens, but I am loathe to specify binaries too clearly. Many would call it a feminine approach and perhaps it is becoming more so over time if I try and look at it as others might, but for me it's just...me.

How do you choose the outdoor locations where you work?

It is a mix of pragmatism (how can I and clients get to it) and affordances of the space. It needs to have variety and metaphorical diversity. Not too pretty, not too cosy, not too easy to disappear into and forget why we are there. It is important for me at this point in my practice 10 years down the line to work on land that is itself healing or has been harmed. I feel very strongly that we heal together in relationship, and this is reflected in the choice of spaces too – are they also regenerating.

You often use movement to release stress and develop awareness of the body and land. Could you describe how you tailor this to each individual? I'm particularly interested in how walking might serve as a simple, universal way of tailoring movement to everyone.

This is hard to explain in words because it evolves in the moment and is client dependent. Movement is also non-verbal, and so to describe a technique is a bit mysterious to me. Mostly, I am always inviting clients through embodied relational mindfulness to pay attention to what they are doing and being curious about why. I don't specifically use stress-release techniques, it is more trusting in a clients knowings that their movement is imbued with meaning and significance that we can ask questions of. Walking is a useful starting point. What do we notice when we walk? How are we walking? How is this relative to the rest of nature moving?

What techniques do you use to guide people toward deep listening — a state I'd also like visitors to reach through my walking-based exhibition?

This is primarily about listening with the whole body, so again, bringing attention to sensation, felt sense. Often it involves not moving. One thing I have learnt over time as I mentioned above is that when we are very busy moving, we are often not being mindful. I liked it to running. Is running connecting with the landscape? In some ways of course, it's very physical, but it's very possible to run and not really pay attention at all. The landscape becomes just a place to move through. Walking is the same. To really hear we have to be willing to listen, and to listen we have to stop, this can be confronting and difficult.

Do you integrate meditation into your sessions, and what do you see as the main benefits of that practice?

Not overtly, no. Just a general mindfulness. Most people are not good at listening and are confronted by silences for example, this is when we hear confronting inner critics, our body churning, the sounds of the world. So, it's a skill for some clients to become comfortable with.