

Unfreezing Sylvia Pankhurst: Animation as a prototypical medium for embodying archival knowledge

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The rich array of creative and rhetorical means developed by Sylvia Pankhurst to challenge legal and political attitudes towards women's rights are recorded in a number of social history and art archives. Reflecting Pankhurst's interrelated positions as a campaigner for social and political change, and as an artist trained in Painting these collections encompass her paintings, sketches, records of public speaking, published texts and visual spectacles. Disparately located throughout the UK and in the Netherlands, Europe the archives function as both a canonical record of her methods for questioning the conventions of her time, and a lens through which the thinking underlying her activism might be reviewed.

The archives house an array of objects and articles, letters and notes, which while materially static command an engagement with Pankhurst's work and life in motion. The documentation of her campaigning provides both a first-hand set of records and an exceptional insight into her political and creative motivations. The poignancy of these documents is reflected in the myriad forms of campaigning developed by women activists after her death in 1960. In exploring this sense of a 'living' archive, my research over the past 24 months has aimed to investigate the potency of animation to unlock or re-enliven Pankhurst's ideas and experiences. By positioning animation as a prototypical medium for archival research, and within an archive that focuses on activism, I aim to explore ways in which the archive itself might be activated as a site of progressive change.

The overall aim of this research is to encourage a narrative engagement with the archives, drawing on the formal processes outlined above to create a dynamic interpretation of Pankhurst's drive for social and political change. Sharing characteristics with critical biography and contemporary approaches to documentary filmmaking, my research draws on empathy and literary devices to identify the thought processes underlying Pankhurst's creative and political practices. By activating knowledge through inhabiting, sensing and feeling the archive, I aim to position animation as a vehicle for exploring and conveying the materiality of Pankhurst's contributions to the campaign for women's rights. Using animation to situate these processes within a contemporary narrative the research looks at ways in which Pankhurst's ideas might be expressed outside the archive, and for a multiplicity of audiences.

Animation is a remarkable medium for expanding the representation of history and the passing of time. In essence a compressed form, animation has the potential to manipulate duration, unfreeze time and configure experience. To elicit a richer understanding of Pankhurst's importance as an artist and a campaigner I have developed a range of formal animation techniques, focusing on the potential

of animation to disrupt, visualise and activate embodied archival knowledge, memory and materiality. Drawing on Adorno's theoretical positioning of the shudder as a primal component of experience, these techniques aim to jolt viewers engaging with the animated archive into a heightened state of receptiveness, questioning authorial accounts of Pankhurst's working practices.

Locating Sylvia Pankhurst

Sylvia Pankhurst is best known as a suffragette, but the archives documenting her life and work reveal that she studied at both the Manchester Municipal School of Art and the Royal College of Art, and had intended to be an artist. The paintings, sketches, public speaking, published texts and visual spectacle produced by Pankhurst to support her campaigns are also housed in these archives. Pankhurst was born into a politically active family: her father, a lawyer and social reformer, was an early supporter of women's enfranchisement; her mother, Emmeline Pankhurst, was the founder of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), and her elder sister Christabel was a gifted speaker and campaigner for women's education rights.

Pankhurst had tried to reconcile her twin passions by being both an artist and an activist, and by using her artistic skills to underpin her political arguments and make them visible to a wide audience. She questioned 'whether it was worthwhile to fight one's individual struggle [...] to make one's way as an artist, to bring out of oneself the best possible, and to induce the world to accept one's creations, and give in return one's daily bread, when all the time the great struggles to better the world for humanity demanded other service'¹, while also commenting that 'the idea of giving up the artist's life, surrendering the study of colour and form, laying aside the beloved pigments and brushes, to wear out one's life on the platform and the chair at the street corner was a prospect too tragically grey and barren to endure'².

Pankhurst's dilemma and utilisation of art and design skills within her campaigns, deserves further exploration. This research aims to identify if animation could be used to invoke a new understanding of Pankhurst's importance as an artist and campaigner, both examining her work in its own right and bringing it to a new audience. Applying animation thinking in order to test what can be revealed, the project looks at the potential ways in which animation might be used to reinterpret the vibrant political contexts and latent movement implicit within Pankhurst's artwork.

In the period 1906-1910 Sylvia Pankhurst made unromanticised paintings of working women at a time when graphic depictions presented put-upon but heroic maids, matchgirls and so on, as gentle vulnerable prey for the middle-class gaze. Her sketches of suffragettes in Holloway Prison were intended to expose the conditions there.

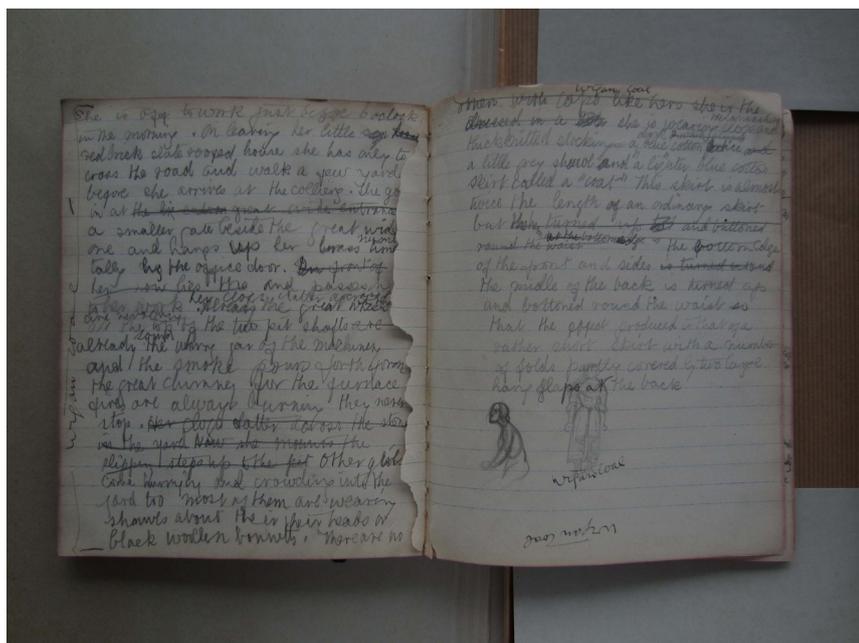
More than most, her images suggest the feminist possibilities inherent in the subject of female labour. The women Pankhurst portrays vary from mature matrons to young girls, from workers with stunted bodies, adversely affected by years of poor nutrition, to those with clear skin and nice clothes. Together, however, they cut a swathe through the sexualised vision of femininity that was so commonplace in the turn of the century visual culture. Gone are the alluring beauties and devoted mothers typical of late Victorian and Edwardian images of women. In their place is a recognition of the material realities of paid employment that structured so many women's lives. The paintings acknowledge women's crucial presence within the industrial arena, their economic agency, their productive activity and their public community. In the hands of Sylvia Pankhurst the image of women's labour posed an intrinsic challenge to the restrictive codes of femininity promulgated by so much Victorian visual culture.³

¹ Pankhurst, Sylvia. 'Sylvia Pankhurst.' in Asquith, E. A. M. Countess of Oxford and Asquith. ed. *Myself When Young, by Famous Women of Today*. London: Frederick Muller, 1938, pp.284-5

² Ibid.

³ Huneault, Kristina. *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture 1880-1914*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2002

Challenging contemporary representations of women workers, the innovative approach to painting developed by Pankhurst is evident in the work made during her tour of the north of England and part of Scotland in the summer of 1907. Here she painted a range of working women engaged in manual labour with the aim of highlighting women workers' essential importance to the economy. Where possible, Pankhurst kept notebooks of this tour, in which she describes women workers' conditions and pay. In Glasgow, towards the end of her tour, she describes the cotton spinning room conditions 'The mule-spinning room, where I started my work, was so hot that I fainted in the first hour, and the manager, who had not so much as asked my name, but liked the notion of an artists painting pictures of the mill, gave permission for a little window be kept open near me. The girls told me they were all made sick by the heat and bad air when they first began work in the mills.'⁴ She painted during the day and spent evenings speaking about women's suffrage or writing about the conditions of the women workers. She made sketches in her notebooks alongside or running over her texts.



Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst papers: Inventory nr 28 IMG_1311.jpg

This research uses these and related texts to unfold the *narrative* and *material* potential of the items and the information they hold, in preparation for making an experimental animated documentary film. Providing a critical lens through which to interpret the networks, sites and contexts associated with Pankhurst's work, the project situates her notebooks in the context of Lorraine Daston's description of objects and their friends, interpreters or 'aficionados':

[...] anything or anyone who cannot speak for itself, thereby inviting representation by those who can speak and to whom the objects matter. The capacity to call such a society of friends into existence is as much a part of a thing's thingness, of its reverberations in the world, as its material properties like weight and chemical composition [...] Friends of interpretable objects don't just guard the objects singled out for care; they attach meanings to them.⁵

Through primary research in the Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst Papers at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; the personal archive held by her son, Richard Pankhurst; the Pankhurst Centre archive, Manchester; the collection of suffragette material at the Museum of London; the voice recordings held at the Women's Library, LSE (formerly part of London Metropolitan University); and the

⁴ Pankhurst, Sylvia Estelle. *The Suffragette Movement, An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*. London: Longman, 1931, p. 271

⁵ Lorraine Daston. 'The Glass Flowers' in Daston, Lorraine. ed. *Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*. New York: Zone Books, 2004, p. 228

BBC Motion Gallery Archive, this application of thinking and making through animation focuses on a number of artefacts created by Sylvia Pankhurst including:

- Paintings made during the 1907 Northern painting tour, published in The London Magazine in 1908 as Women Workers of England
- Texts and sketches made in notebooks by Sylvia at the time of her painting tour
- Texts made whilst she was held in Holloway Prison
- Preparatory drawings made for an unrealised large painting
- Books published by Sylvia and Richard Pankhurst

In her lecture 'Unhealing Time', Marina Warner proposes that 'the archive has become a mesmeric place, not only for memory but also for creative energy, for fantasy'⁶. She also states that:

the rise in the interest in archives and archiving has been happening in the aftermath of the Holocaust and many other grim events of the 20th century because we are all aware of the authoritarian potential of memory-keeping on the one hand, and resist it in some post -Sixties spirit of liberation, and on the other, because we are conscious of collective responsibility for the atrocities.⁷

Warner highlights here the way in which this authoritarian memory-keeping of a few is now being challenged by contemporary attitudes towards re-exploring and re-evaluating the ordinary, the peripheral and the everyday, calling on Walter Benjamin's interest in the ordinary:

Benjamin collected toys and small trifles: he wanted to find the trace of the voice of the unconsidered and the unremembered. A large and impressive literature now shows how writers are trying to disturb the dust, to receive the stirrings back again from its deposits.⁸

Pankhurst was a highly unusual and original campaigner, and it is this understanding of both her well-documented history, alongside the revisiting and re-evaluating of her notebooks, artworks and sketchbooks to examine the marginalia, the textures, the layout on the page or canvas – the non-textual communication of her work – that is of interest here. The aim is to reveal the hitherto unrealised potential of the work provoked by close scrutiny and the application of animation thinking and techniques. By examining Pankhurst's notebooks, typescripts, sketchbooks and photographs, this research attempts to locate Sylvia Pankhurst, to view the marks she made in order to intuit a hidden aspect of her life.

What it's about is the mark that has been left in the past, somehow. And the forensic trace leads to its relationship to time. That thing was there, that line of writing was there, was made then, at that point in time. And we, coming into the archive, have the benefit of hindsight. And when we look at things in the archive, they begin to speak when we know something which the person who made the thing, used the thing, wrote the line, didn't know.⁹

Animating the Pankhurst Archives

Engaging with the Pankhurst archives, the research uses a range of narrative processes to create a dynamic interpretation of Pankhurst's drive for social and political change. Drawing on references to texts and images associated with the materials held in the archives, narrative is used as both a means to interpret and communicate the emotive experiences of the women depicted in Pankhurst's paintings, and as a strategy through which the extensive documentation might be navigated.

⁶ Warner, Marina. 'Unhealing Time', Lecture transcribed by Martin Greaves. October 2010. Royal College of Art

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

As a vehicle for exploring and conveying the materiality of Pankhurst's contributions to the campaign for women's rights through animation, a form of letter writing was used to critically activate the documents. Identifying the thought processes underlying Pankhurst's creative and political practices, the letter sought to empathetically re-construct the subjective experiences captured in her paintings. Used as a mechanism through which the sensation of becoming the woman depicted in Sylvia's sketch of Holloway prison might be captured, the letter sought to activate knowledge through inhabiting, sensing and feeling the material.

This imagining of being a prisoner in Holloway was used to acknowledge feelings and observations about Sylvia, momentarily and fleetingly encountering her as if she were some sort of companion. Observing Sylvia from inside the site of the drawing being sketched by Pankhurst, and encountering sensations of admiration and jealousy, the letter was used to feel what it would be like to be Sylvia, to slip on one of her discarded dresses as she left the prison. Andrés Di Tella describes a phantasmic dimension that can operate in films:

In autobiography...there is always an element of fiction, inevitable when you are telling 'your story'. You have to at the very least make up that character, the I of the story, the narrator of the autobiography and the protagonist of the documentary. I will not deny there is a discrete fictional operation at work there. But it is not a fictional construct of any kind whatever. It is a construct that reveals a kind of truth... You will make a kind of construct that will inevitably talk about who you are. Whatever you say, you will end up by confessing who you are [...] But I am certain that there is something else at work, a phantasmic dimension usually assigned to fiction that I find much more appealing to operate with in my films, without leaving the documentary territory.¹⁰

As with preparation for any film, the filmmaker must immerse in the material and inhabit the people being portrayed to try to understand them and therefore be able to represent them to an audience. In this case the filmmaker is entering Sylvia's artwork, to feel the movement of her lines, and to feel what it is like to be scrutinised and drawn.

Carolyn Steedman...discusses...something she called a fever...the idea of the fever, the illness that comes with this contact with the living past and the dead past – the living dead past.... What keeps you awake, ... is actually the archive, and its myriads of the dead, who all day long, have pressed their concerns on you.... She is describing her own relationship with this oppressive vitality that crowds in on you from the unordered, disordered accumulation of evidence, testimony, traces of people in the past. She takes issue with Derrida, she makes that clear. She doesn't see the past as this entirely oppressive – emotionally, yes, but within the accumulation of dust you hear people who have never been heard before – and that's what she's interested in.¹¹

Through a close examination of Sylvia's paintings, drawings and typescripts the marks laid down by Pankhurst can be revisited to bring a new understanding to the way that she valued her own art as a means of expressing her activism. Filmmaking tools such as high-resolution scanning, high-definition photography, oblique lighting, focus pulling, granular shifts of emphasis on an image and other techniques can be used to examine how we might look, reflect and understand an image: to hear a hidden voice.

[...] the sensory contact with such things gives such a pleasure and a different degree of knowledge and understanding. As objects, they have evocative qualities, from their tactile properties, their weight, their scale, their fragility. If you go to the archive, you are allowed to touch them. The reason that many of them have been digitized – and many archives are digitizing their collections – is of course that the fewer hands touch them,

¹⁰ Andrés Di Tella, 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime', in Lebow, Alisa. ed. *The Cinema of Me: The Self and Subjectivity in First-person Documentary*. London: Wallflower Press, 2012, p. 236

¹¹ Steedman, Carolyn *Dust* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001 and Derrida, Jacques *Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996

the more they will last. But memory is haptic and you have a much stronger, deeper relationship to something you've touched than you do to something you've seen online." The real objects of archives are currently still available to the scholar.

This is a unique time to take advantage of that possibility before fragile items make handling impossible. It's a chance to let those things talk, to let the working women have a voice, with the idea that their voices resonate with and inform workers today.... In the archive are things, these are inert things, these are silent things, things that have almost escaped from grasp, being brought back and having life breathed into them. To go to the archive is to animate.¹²

The research explores a number of ways of addressing the range of artefacts associated with Sylvia Pankhurst. Extending the technical definition of freeze-frame as a filmic device that can be used to draw attention to a moment in time, animation is positioned as a mechanism to deliver a condensed experience that invites the audience to see the work in a new way. Digital and physical animation tools are used here to unfreeze a still photograph or painting through animation, creating a new set of processes for documentary filmmaking. By applying these tools to the Pankhurst archives through a series of practical experiments, the research positions animation as a valuable form of disruption that echoes the disruptive activities of Sylvia Pankhurst and the other suffragettes, exploring the sophistication of the technique and its relationship to both the artist's intention for, and production of, the original artworks.

Experiment 1 - Cotton Mill Worker



In a Glasgow Cotton Mill: Minding a Pair of Fine Frames, gouache and watercolour. E Sylvia Pankhurst 1907

This experiment brings together two figures, one represented through sound, the other through animation, to interpret the contemporary treatment of workers and women in the early 1900s. In this instance the image explored through experimental animation is that of a female cotton spinner "minding a fine pair of frames", painted by Sylvia Pankhurst at a Glasgow cotton mill on her 1907 Northern painting tour. Pankhurst does not name her sitter and the anonymous cotton worker represented in the painting

¹² Warner, Marina. 'Unhealing Time'. Lecture transcribed by Martin Greaves. October 2010. Royal College of Art.

becomes a representation of every cotton worker of the time. In animating the image a subjective understanding is projected onto the neutral everywoman, offering the viewer an opening through which to interpret the drawing.

Focusing on the material and implied movement recorded in the brushstrokes and marks made, animation is used to draw attention to the person depicted in the image and her surroundings, her perched-ness, stillness and potential for movement. Through the altered perspective of the present curiosity about the sitter is invoked. Was she glad of a break from her work? Did she feel awkward or embarrassed at being so closely scrutinised? What did she make of Sylvia Pankhurst, this middle-class woman coming into her workplace and needing the windows opening because she felt faint?

Sylvia notes, in the published supplement 'Women Workers of England' (The London Magazine, 1908):

The work in all the different processes of cotton-spinning consists in keeping the machines clean, supplying them with fresh cotton, taking away the cotton that has been spun, and rejoining together the threads which are constantly getting broken as they become longer and finer. This work is not really arduous but it requires a light, quick touch, and a great deal of practice is needed before the operative can become expert.

Wages vary considerably. The Scotch women operatives, who are doing much of the work that in England is done by men, earn, roughly, from 6s. or 7s. to 17s. a week. In Lancashire the wages are higher, the machinery and the work itself are exactly the same.

The most unpleasant features of the life in the cotton mill are the almost deafening noise of the machinery and the oppressive heat. Cotton will not spin, it is said, if the windows are open and the fresh air is allowed to come in. In Lancashire the operatives live in fairly well-built cottages. In Glasgow the women have not only to complain of lower wages, but higher rents, and terribly bad housing accommodation.¹³

In manipulating Pankhurst's painting the sitter is unfrozen from her background and given the voice of the suffragette Elizabeth Dean. Dean was a suffragette from Manchester, interviewed in the 1970s for the BBC. As voiced in this experimental animation, Dean's reason for becoming a suffragette is striking, as are her insights into issues of class. Dean commented that it wasn't just upper class women involved in the Suffragette movement but many working class women too who had joined the movement for a variety of reasons. Giving Pankhurst's worker a voice releases something that is not yet seen or heard, a chance for the worker to speak for herself.

The style of animation employed in this experiment was developed to preserve the illustrative style of the painting: not too smooth or too real, but to give the character life through appropriate movement. Digital cut-out techniques were used to animate the painting, which was originally made with gouache and watercolour on paper. The crudeness of the movement is intentional, to purposefully tell the viewer to be suspicious of this moving, talking witness and ask questions of her. Is she mocking Sylvia; is she mocking herself, what does she think of being represented in this way? What information can she give us, as one of the workers who were not recorded at the time and were seen as minor details of the bigger cause?

All these facts, multiple views of women's lives and workers' conditions, can be evoked, spoken, and shown through this one scene. Care must be taken by the artist/filmmaker not to overdo it. To leave calmness either side of the scene so that when she speaks, after years of stillness and silence, she will be heard. But will she be believed if she is animated? Is her evoked voice too conjured? Or can the filmmaker offer the audience a new truth intuited from a series of fragments and evidences? Reconstructing the evidence of working conditions and those who experienced them is much like creating a crime scene in forensic animation reconstructions.

¹³ Pankhurst, Sylvia, 'Women Workers of England'. Supplement, *The London Magazine*, 1908.

Experiment 2 - Holloway Prison Sketch



Prison sketch of inmate of Holloway Prison, E Sylvia Pankhurst 1909

The prison sketch needed a different animation treatment. The black-and-white line drawing needed something simple, perhaps abrupt, to underpin the idea of the filmmaker being thrown into the narrative almost involuntarily. This first test involved the turning of the characters head only using very limited animation. When this showed promise, a fuller animation test was made. But this then looked too animated, too explanatory and illustrative, rather than surprising/disruptive. So for this image, work is continuing to develop this movement alongside developing the narrative.

Experiment 3 - Skirt and Shoes



Part of a series of studies for a large painting (unfinished), E Sylvia Pankhurst, 1911.

This animation is based on of Sylvia's sketches produced in 1911, from '...a series of studies for what was, though she did not realise it at the time, to be her last, unfinished attempt at a big picture – a crowd of girls dancing'¹⁴. As these drawings already implied movement, and several drawings were obviously drawn as a series, it was irresistible to place the drawings in a time-line to animate the drawings by played these together and in repetition. The aim was to jolt the time and movement out of the drawings that Sylvia had so carefully tried to capture. Esther Leslie reflects on Theodor Adorno's ideas on the importance of the shudder and jolt as a way of shaking the audience to remind them of their relationship to nature:

For Adorno, the shudder is a primal component of experience, emerging just as humans began to conceptualise the world and differentiate themselves from amorphous nature (they shudder to think...). The shudder indexes terror, a register of the uneasiness induced by strangeness (and, as such, it is the Enlightenment impulse for mastery over nature, its subjugation into the schemata of instrumental rationality). At the same time, though, the shudder is a manifestation of wonder and recognition of the possibility of anti-egoistic human interrelationships with other or non-beings. Its twitching indicates a capacity for mimesis, for a connection between self and otherness. The shudder, then, is on the cusp. It inaugurates the attempt to master nature, to overcome all that is different. But it also marks the point of an afterwards that might still – if only bodily, unconsciously, involuntarily - remember what it was like to once be touched by something different, unassimilated. Cinemas have long been a place where people go to reproduce the shudder synthetically. Film, from its earliest days, and no type more so than animation, used a technological pre-disposition (the shutter) to play with the shudder – the shudder – or animation – of its object as well as its viewing subjects. (Adorno wrote of the shudder and enlightenment – the shudder is the frisson that comes from humans letting in the light of reason. Analogously, the shutter and light – the shutter is the jerk in the camera mechanism that lets in the light of the world).¹⁵

Borrowing from this idea of the jolt or shudder aims to surprise the audience into reassessing this image: not to pass this woman by but to listen to what she has to say. Visual motion is not just in the world, the mind needs to construct it. The mind constructs natural motion and cinematic motion differently. This perception of movement is commonly described as persistence of vision but it can be more accurately understood as phi movement. Phi movement is used to describe the visual effect when small movements of drawings or objects are made. When the movements between objects are much bigger then flicker or strobing occurs.

The point is that motion isn't just 'in the world', the visual cortex reconstructs it for you. However, the way in which the visual cortex engages with natural-world and cinematic motion is different, even if they 'look' the same. The experience of cinematic motion is made possible by visual phenomena called phi movement. All of you as animators will understand this better than most, but to create smooth movement in film, each frame should only vary a little bit from its neighbour. This is common knowledge, but the reason behind it is less widely known. Phi movement is an optical illusion that allows us to experience continual movement instead of a rapid sequence of pictures. If the distance between two objects in a frame is sufficiently close and the time interval between their transitions is sufficiently brief, we perceive a single object. This does not only occur in cinema - flipbooks, mutascopes and other optical toys work on the same basis.¹⁶

Animation can be used to manipulate this visual phenomenon to produce required effects, create disruption, visual jolts, or smooth movement, or to flip around and between to play with anticipation and expectation.

¹⁴ Pankhurst, Richard. *Sylvia Pankhurst, Artist and Crusader: an Intimate Portrait*. London: Paddington Press, 1979, p. 140

¹⁵ Leslie, Esther. 'Shudder – Shutter - Shatter'. in *Shudder*, exhibition catalogue, London: The Drawing Room, 2010. Available at: http://www.animateprojects.org/writing/essay_archive/e_leslie_2 (accessed December 2013).

¹⁶ Paul Taberham, 'Robert Breer and The Dialectic of Eye and Camera', PhD symposium paper, *Animated Bodies*, Royal College of Art, 2013.

Most animations are made in some way or another out of a combination of incremental moves and abrupt moves: the shifts from frame to frame that produce the illusion of mobility. The shudder is just such a smallest gesture, a flicker, a hint of life. (Was that a glimmer of a smile on the barely formed face? Is that stick a man breathing his last breath.¹⁷

Experiment 4 - Materiality: Animating Books



Experiment 4.1 by Joan Ashworth. 2013. Frame from animation of Ethiopia, A cultural History, by E Sylvia Pankhurst.

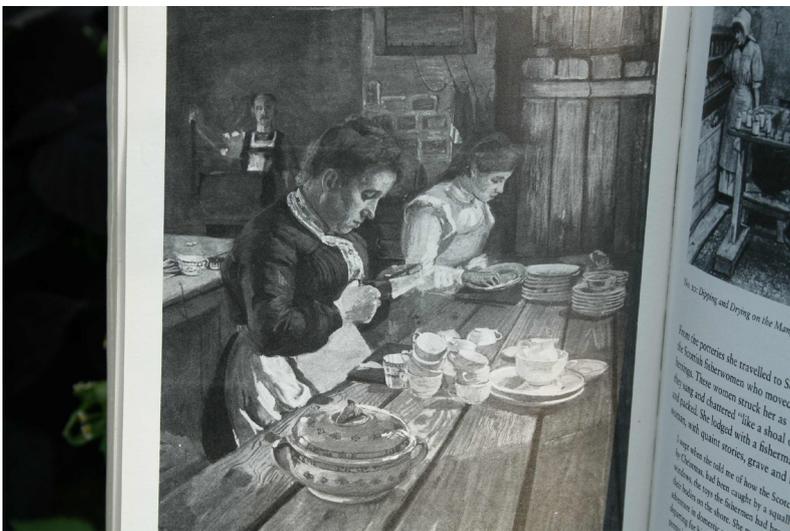


Experiment 4.2a by Joan Ashworth. Frame from animation of book: Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader by Richard Pankhurst.

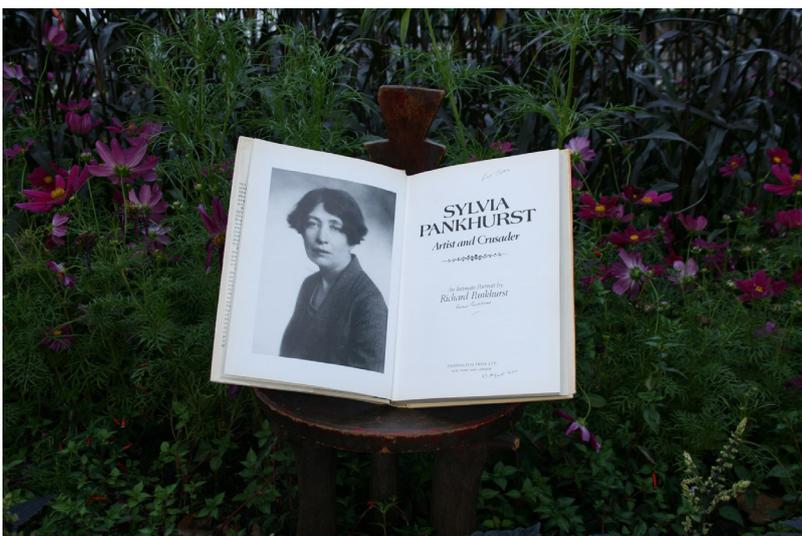
¹⁷ Leslie, Esther. 'Shudder – Shutter - Shatter'. in *Shudder*, exhibition catalogue, London: The Drawing Room, 2010. Available at: http://www.animateprojects.org/writing/essay_archive/e_leslie_2



Experiment 4.2b by Joan Ashworth. Frame from animation of book: Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader by Richard Pankhurst.

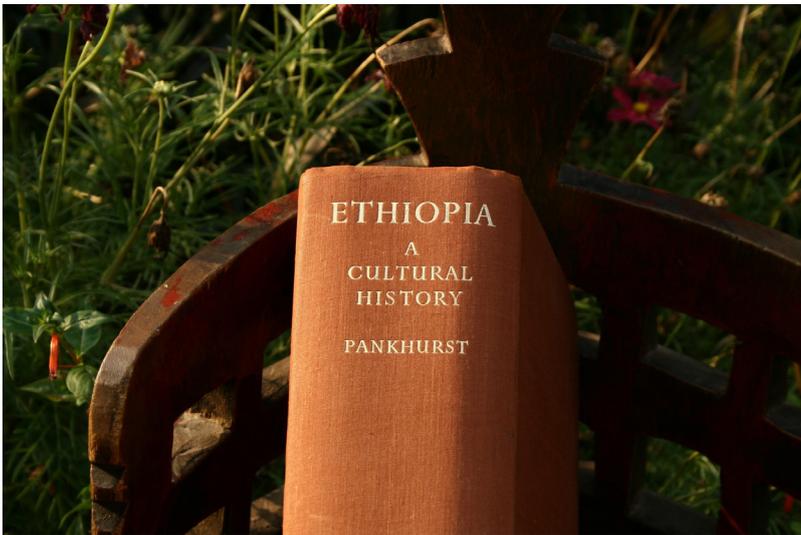


Experiment 4.3. by Joan Ashworth. 2013. Close Up frame from animation of book: Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader by Richard Pankhurst



Experiment 4.4. by Joan Ashworth. 2013. Mid Shot frame from animation of book: Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader by Richard Pankhurst 1979

Later, and by contrast, some tests were made to animate a number of paper publications outdoors, allowing light and wind to play with the page on which the image was printed. This subtle play of light suggests 'liveliness' and movement, without the certainty of actually manipulating the image. More experiments will be made using these methods as the results fit well with the feeling of bring light and air to an archive object and placing it under the gaze of a new audience.



Experiment 4.5. by Joan Ashworth. 2013. Frame from animation of book: Ethiopia, A cultural History, by E Sylvia Pankhurst, 1955.

Embodied Memory

This research attempts to show that animation is a valuable medium, with a rich set of tools, for interrogating and probing archives that can bring unique solutions to reviewing archived material both text and image. Animation tools have the potential to offer a portal into the object life of paintings, drawings and texts. Disconnected elements can be joined and represented to offer new insights into historical evidence through the lens of today, offering multiple viewpoints investigational layers.

... while movement tends to assert the presence of 'now', stillness brings a resonance of 'then' to the surface [...] the still photograph represents the unattached instant, unequivocally grounded in its indexical moment of registration. The moving image, on the contrary, cannot escape from duration, or from beginnings and ends.¹⁸

Sylvia's paintings are already a form of animation, with duration implied: they contain fragments of time, presented as an instant but painted over time. Each brushmark marks time. Through a process of animation, now-ness is offered to the painting, formed from the material evidence of then-ness.

But something must leave, or have left, a mark or trace of its physical presence. Whether it persists, as in the then-ness of a preserved fingerprint or the now-ness of a sundials shadow, the 'thing' inscribes its sign at a specific moment of time. Thus, the index has a privileged relation to time, to the moment and duration of its inscription; it also has a physical relation to the original of which it is the sign.... The cinema combines, perhaps more perfectly than any other medium, two human fascinations: one with the boundary between life and death and the other with the mechanical animation of the inanimate, particularly the human figure. These porous boundaries introduce the concept of the uncanny and Freud's debate with Jentsch about the power of the old over the new and the

¹⁸ Mulvey, Laura. *Death 24 x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*. London: Reaktion, 2005 p. 13.

hold that irrational belief has over the human mind...¹⁹

The gaps and omissions in an archive leave space for interpretation from one text to the next in the way that in animation from one drawing to another, an interpretation, a best guess, needs to be made. The brain and eye use logic to assess what happened in between. This research attempts to reveal new insights within the artwork and texts of Pankhurst to add information and knowledge, to get behind the surface of the work and pull out what it means to us and why is it valuable. Pankhurst's innovation was choosing to paint working women in an un-romanticized way, documenting, illustrating and underpinning her argument that women were an important and essential part of the workforce and should not be invisible. She made them visible, placing them squarely before the eyes of middle and upper class newspaper readers. Ultimately Sylvia gave up painting to focus on writing as her tool of persuasion. By not giving details of her sitters she has left open a space for the artist to animate her drawings, give a voice to the working women, and bring her ideas to a new audience.

¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 8-9.

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