



## **East to East**

*from Aldeburgh Beach to Landguard Point*

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4 July - 22 July 2013

As part of her ILTS (Implementing Teaching and Learning Strategies) Fellowship *East to East*, Jane Watt curates a series of visual, audio and film works that reflect on the contemporary land and seascape of this part of the east coast. Watt draws on archive and new work by UCS staff, alumni and students from the disciplines of Fine Art and Film.

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## East to East

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Edited by

Jane Watt

## East to East

The starting point for this project, *East to East*, is a rootedness in the east coast of Britain. I am an east coaster. Not from here, in Suffolk, but further north, Edinburgh and the East Neuk of Fife. We share the same spectrum of east coast greys, the power, resources and destruction of the North Sea and the biting prevailing wind that gets into your bones.

*East to East* is a long-term research project prompted by a desire to find out more about the particular landscape of the east coast and the responses that it evokes: physical, emotional, intellectual. It draws on topographical, sociological, historical and visual material. It seeks to allow students, academics and practitioners to examine questions such as: how can we use visual (and other) representations to decipher the rural and urban east coastal landscape in which we live? How do perceptions and experiences of the east coast change from north to south?

The scope, like the coastline itself, is long and meandering. Its resources cannot be fully catalogued or exhausted. Instead it offers opportunities for discussion, presentation and reflection at particular points. It elicits the placing of different responses in the hope that together they will create new understandings and points of view that enrich our experience of the east coast.

The exhibition, and this accompanying catalogue, *East to East: from Aldeburgh Beach to Landguard Point*, is one such gathering. It brings together a small sample of current and past work by staff, students and graduates from the disciplines of Fine Art and Film at University Campus Suffolk (UCS). The works respond to points along the Suffolk coast: Aldeburgh, River Alde at Snape, Slaughden, Orford Ness, River Deben at Woodbridge, Shingle Street, Old Felixstowe, Felixstowe and Landguard Point.

## Aldeburgh and River Alde, Snape

Writer Ronald Blythe<sup>1</sup> points out

The sea, and whatever sea it happens to be, is in a permanent state of cancellation as far as human activity is concerned, eventually wiping out our every mark.<sup>2</sup>

In *Wash away your sins* Amy Sage battles with this state of cancellation. Sage, in high heels and dress, is waving from the sea to us on the shore. The film is manipulated, slowed down and speeded up. It disorients us. Is she waving not drowning? Freeing herself from the shore. Her actions and depiction are cancelling each other out. In *Bittersweet Memories* Sage engages with beach goers in Aldeburgh to record and evoke their earliest seaside memories including the recounting of a near drowning in childhood.<sup>3</sup>

In *Misty Emergence* Kyle Richards directs fellow first year Film students to create a simple narrative of man's connection with the sea. Filmed and recorded on location at Aldeburgh Beach, the film depicts a solitary figure emerging from the shingle, he is one with nature and his surroundings.

The film was shot in thick North Sea fog, known in Scotland and the north east of England as haar, the type of fog that can envelop the coast obliterating the horizon and disorientate any sense of distance or place.

On the same day, first year Fine Art students attempted to capture the atmosphere of sites in Aldeburgh and Snape that are associated with their most celebrated resident, Benjamin Britten, in a series of works entitled *Tracing Britten* to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Britten's birth. The rhythm of the land, sea and sky, as well as human sense of scale, details and textures were observed and recorded using a range of old film format cameras, digital phone and SLR cameras in addition to pencil on paper and mixed media. The film cameras were used by all the students who created a collectively authored selection of photographic experimental images. The accidental double exposures, scratched film and unfamiliarity with the equipment and the medium contribute to a group of images which capture an ethereal spirit, or sense, of place.

## Slaughden

The American writer on landscape, John Brinckerhoff Jackson asserts that "It is my own belief that a sense of place is something that we ourselves create in the course of time. It is the result of habit or custom."<sup>4</sup> This rings true with David Baldry's digital image *Gulls* and his description of the moment he caught the image on his mobile phone camera

The ritual of eating fish and chips on the raised sea wall at Slaughden is part of my life. I have done it for over fifty years. Gazing seawards towards the Low Countries and scanning the horizon for activity is part of the pleasure. Invariably the view is at least partially blocked by the sight of gulls with their omnipresent laughter waiting for their share.

## Orford Ness

There is a strong tradition of scanning, looking and listening over the sea, eastwards, on this part of the coast. Early experiments in long-range radar were carried out on Orford Ness by the Ministry of Defence in the 1930s<sup>5</sup> and later Cobra Mist, the code name for the over-the-horizon radar station on Orford Ness, active in the late 1960s and early 70s. Now, nature is left alone to slowly take over man's brief intervention on the island.<sup>6</sup>

Sarah Jacques' *Sound Scope* and *Sound Shape* are inspired by the redundant architecture and objects from the Ness' past and the interaction of nature on these man-made structures. *Sound Scope* allows the viewer to focus on distant points or capture sound travelling near and far. By blowing into the zinc pipe of *Sound Shape*, the viewer makes her own note, or by cupping her hand over the pipe, the sound of the surrounding environment is captured. Jacques' work is made from redundant found objects similar to those found on this Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Today Orford Ness is an eerie place. The empty Cobra Mist buildings are still off-limits and only visible in the distance. Closer, is a series of concrete 'Pagodas' described here by W. G. Sebald in *Rings of Saturn*

From a distance, the concrete shells, shored up with stones, in which for most of my lifetime hundreds of boffins had been at work devising new weapons systems, looked (probably because of their odd conical shale) like tumuli in which the mighty and powerful were buried in prehistorical times with all their tools and utensils, silver and gold.<sup>7</sup>

In September 2012 first year Fine Art students visited this special site to take a series of photographs, *Orford Ordnance*, with black and white film cameras<sup>8</sup> from a fixed viewpoint. They recorded the vastness of a rapidly changing sky next to slowly deteriorating structures which, as Sebald points out, are powerful and stately in stature, but deadly in purpose.<sup>9</sup>



## Shingle Street

A few miles down the coast lies Shingle Street, a largely deserted stretch of coast apart from the Street of low-lying houses. Sebald states he has “never encountered a single human being”<sup>10</sup> here. It is a remarkably remote and quiet spot. But a tall mirrored box housing a small camera obscura was briefly placed on the shingle, it attracted people like magpies. This simple structure superimposed one horizon onto another, and provided a moment in which part of the coast was captured in refracted light in a dark, solitary space. It provoked discussion with those outside and quiet contemplation for him lying down, looking upward as *The World Turned Upside Down*.

## River Deben, Woodbridge

Tidal erosion on this part of the coast is forceful. Whilst some parts fight it (Bawdsey and Felixstowe) others accept it (Orford Ness). In Sahra Dunford’s *Tide Mark*, she uses the tide as collaborator, documenting the energy present within tidal movement on this part of the coast. Identically cast plaster forms were placed by the Tide Mill in the River Deben. They were then submerged and exposed to the river’s waters for a succession of tides. The sculptural forms are marked by the action of the tidal river, its energy, and the passage of time.

## Old Felixstowe and Felixstowe

At the mouth of the Deben, the Felixstowe horizon is punctuated by a constant moving tableaux of container ships coming in and out of Britain’s busiest container ports. These gigantic floating architectural structures bring daily supplies of commodities to sustain our hungry consumerist needs on routes from Rotterdam, Yantian, Guangdong, Port Said and La Spezia. Robin Warnes’ *Ships in the Night* evoke the looming sense of scale and luminosity of light on water. Warnes’ ongoing fascination with the play of light, horizontal and vertical planes is captured in this, and *Enchanted*, which reveals in the sublime experience of light, colour and immensity of looking out to sea.

In *Home from Home* LaLa, Laura Leahy, Mel Read and Sonia Symonds frame the view out to sea in a temporary installation next to Felixstowe Promenade that celebrates the tradition of staking a domestic claim to the beach.

## Landguard Point

Landguard Point provides of full stop to this meandering part of the coast. As it turns inland, the shipping channel slowly gives way to the rivers Orwell and Stour. At the point of the promontory lies Landguard Fort, an impressive Napoleonic Fort, with thick austere walls built to keep the enemy and canon balls at bay. Anne Welsh’s drawing *Nightscape (Landguard Fort)* captures the forbidding nature of the walls seen at night with the subtlety

in colour of the fort’s brickwork. This type of brickwork is echoed along the coast in the Napoleonic Martello Towers which stretch as far north as Aldeburgh.

The works selected for this exhibition all respond to a human sense of scale to this vast coastline. This is understandable in an attempt to respond to the immensity of the land, sea and sky, capturing transient moments on an every-changing coastline.

Jane Watt

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<sup>1</sup> Blythe is best known for *Akenfield* (1969), a vivid portrait of life in a rural, agricultural village in Suffolk from interviews he conducted in the 1960s with villagers from Charsfield, just over ten miles west of Aldeburgh.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Blythe, *The Time by the Sea* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013) p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Both works by Sage were made during a residency at Look Out Gallery, Aldeburgh in October 2012.

<sup>4</sup> James Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1994) p.151.

<sup>5</sup> During the Second World War the radar experiments were moved ten miles down the coast to Bawdsey Manor.

<sup>6</sup> On 28 June 2013 the light of Orford Ness Lighthouse was switched off. Now only metres from the shore, it is doomed to fall into the very waves its light shone upon for over two hundred years.

<sup>7</sup> W. G. Sebald, *Rings of Saturn* (London: Harvill Press, 1999) pp.235-236.

<sup>8</sup> The cameras were lent by Hugh Pilkington from his Collection and Archive.

<sup>9</sup> From 1956 to 1971 empty nuclear shells were tested for robustness against extreme vibration during transportation. The shell of Britain’s first nuclear bomb ‘Blue Danube’ was tested here.

<sup>10</sup> Sebald, 1999, p.225.

**Aldeburgh**

Kyle Richards (dir.)  
Amy Sage  
First year Fine Art students\*  
Carlos Gamboa-Fernandes  
Louise Rees-Stavros  
Jenny Butcher

**River Alde, Snape**

Kathryn Raffell  
Jen Sim  
Stephen Shiells  
Louise Rees-Stavros

**Slaughden**

David Baldry

**Orford Ness**

Sarah Jacques  
First year Fine Art students

**Shingle Street**

Jane Watt

**River Deben, Woodbridge**

Sahra Dunford

**Old Felixstowe**

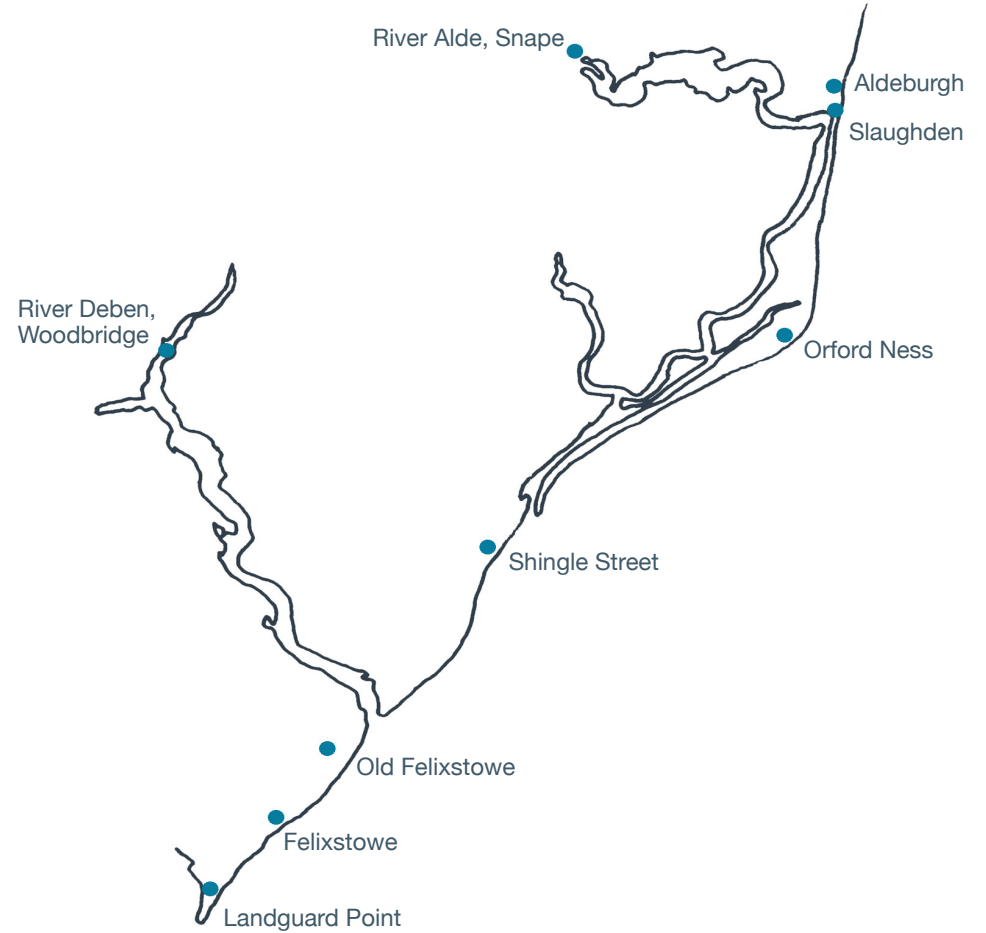
Robin Warnes

**Felixstowe**

Robin Warnes  
LaLa, Laura Leahy, Mel Read, Sonia Symonds

**Landguard Point**

Anne Welsh



\* First year Fine Art students

Jenny Butcher, Patricia Cottrell, Rabab El Shrif, Carlos Gamboa-Fernandes, Sheree Gardiner, Glenda Gerrard, Rosani Gomes Alves Samuel Hadgraft, Jen Hare, Elaine Hedges, Peta Hillier, Jamie Limond, Danielle Newman, Kathryn Raffell, Anna-Marie Scott-Garnham Stephen Shiells, Jen Sim, Louise Rees-Stavros, Sarah Tappenden, Alexander Woolcock

# Aldeburgh

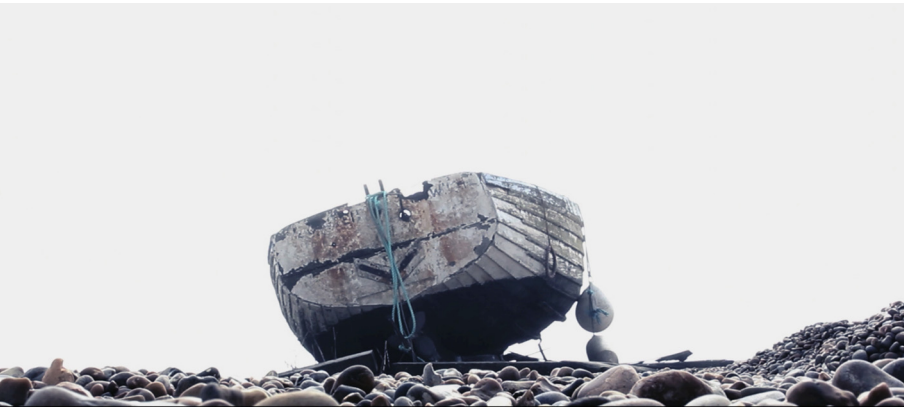
*Misty Emergence* (2013)  
HD film 2min 30sec  
Film stills

Director  
Kyle Richards

Cinematographers  
Kyle Richards  
Craig Fellas  
Jeff Aiden Moore

Sound production  
Rachel Leeder  
Paul Stuart

Actor  
Josh Osborne





Amy Sage

1. *Wash Away Your Sins* (2012)

video

Loop: 12 minutes, 12 seconds

Video still

2. *Bittersweet Memories* (2012)

video installation

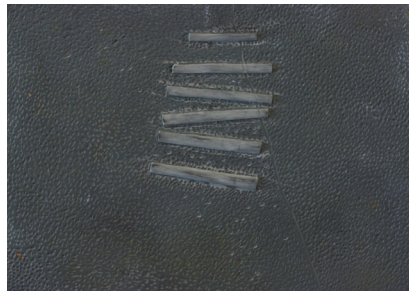
Loop: 17 minutes, 17 seconds



2

1. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Colour digital print from 120 film  
29.5x29.5cm



2

2. Carlos Gamboa-Fernandes

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Lino  
21x30cm

3. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Colour digital print from 120 film  
45.5x29.5cm



3

4. Louise Rees-Stavros

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Chalk and rubber tape on wood  
40x22cm



4

5. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
9.5x9.5cm



1

6. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Colour digital print from 120 film  
14.5x14.5cm

7. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Colour digital print from 120 film  
5.5x5.5cm



7

8. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
5.5x5.5cm



5

9. Jenny Butcher

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Colour digital print from digital SLR  
5x7xcm



9



8



6



1. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
41.5x41.5cm

2. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
83x53cm

3. First year Fine Art students

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
64.5x41.5cm



1



2



3



## River Alde, Snape

1. Kathryn Raffell

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Pencil on paper  
28.5x37.5cm

2. Jen Sim

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Digital colour print from digital phone  
5x7cm

3. Stephen Shiels

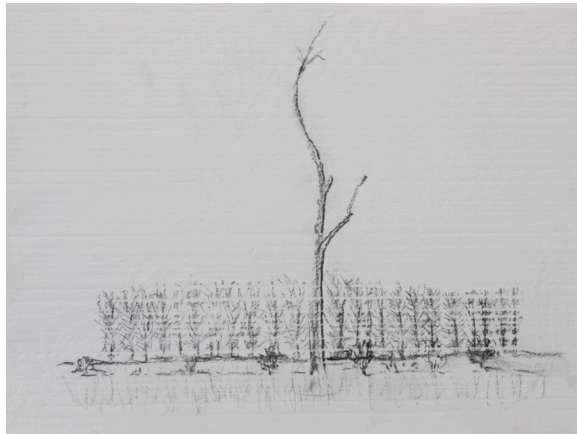
*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Pencil on paper  
14x20.5cm

4. Louise Rees-Stavros

*Tracing Britten* (2013)  
Chalk, pastel and rubber tape on wood  
14x21.5cm



4



1



2



3



## Slaughden

David Baldry  
*No Ships Tonight* (2012)  
Digital projection  
Dimensions variable





## Orford Ness

Sarah Jacques

1. *Sound Scape* (2013)  
Zinc, pebbles, steel and plaster  
198x21x66cm

2. *Sound Scape* (2013)  
Wood, zinc, string  
68x120x40cm



1



2

1. First year Fine Art students  
*Orford Ordhance* (2012)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
29.5x46.5cm



1

2. First year Fine Art students  
*Orford Ordhance* (2012)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
15x23cm



3

3. First year Fine Art students  
*Orford Ordhance* (2012)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
29.5x46.5cm

4. First year Fine Art students  
*Orford Ordhance* (2012)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
5.5x8.5cm



4

5. First year Fine Art students  
*Orford Ordhance* (2012)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
42x28.5cm



2

6. First year Fine Art students  
*Orford Ordhance* (2012)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
42x42cm



6

7. First year Fine Art students  
*Orford Ordhance* (2013)  
Black and white digital print from 120 film  
14.5x14.5cm



5



7



## Shingle Street

Jane Watt

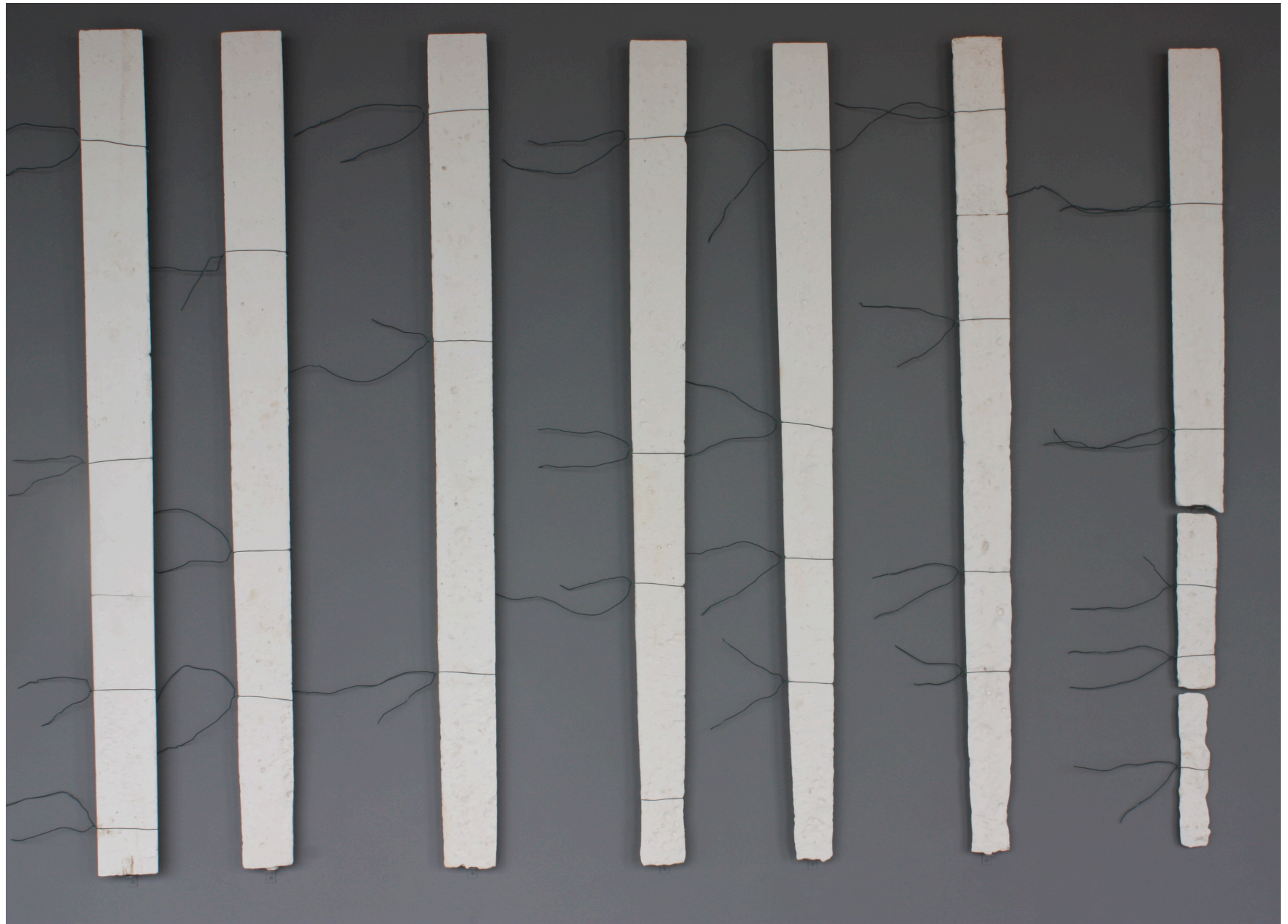
*The World Turned Upside Down* (2013)  
Wood, mirror film, mirror, glass lens  
245x47x51.5cm





River Deben, Woodbridge

Sahra Dunford  
*Time and Tide* (2013)  
Cast plaster  
Dimensions variable

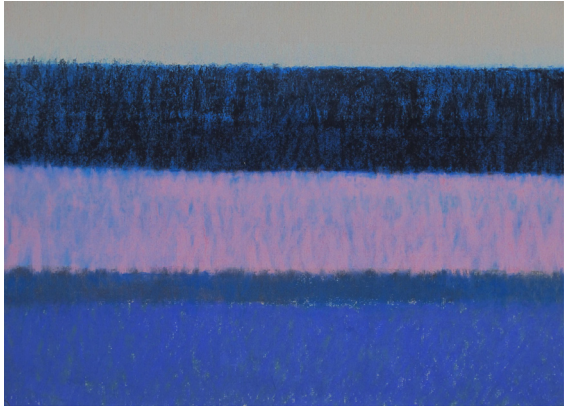


## Old Felixstowe and Felixstowe

Robin Warnes

1. *Enchanted* (2011)  
Pastel on paper  
33.5x47cm

2. *Ships in the Night* (2005)  
Oil on canvas  
94x103cm



1

2





## Felixstowe

LaLa, Laura Leahy, Mel Read, Sonia Symonds

*Home from Home* (2010)

Digital projection loop: 3 min

Video stills

Dimensions variable



## Landguard Point

Anne Welsh

*Nightscape (Landguard Fort)* (2013)

Pastel on paper

29.5x41cm









