

The (Amusement) Arcades Project

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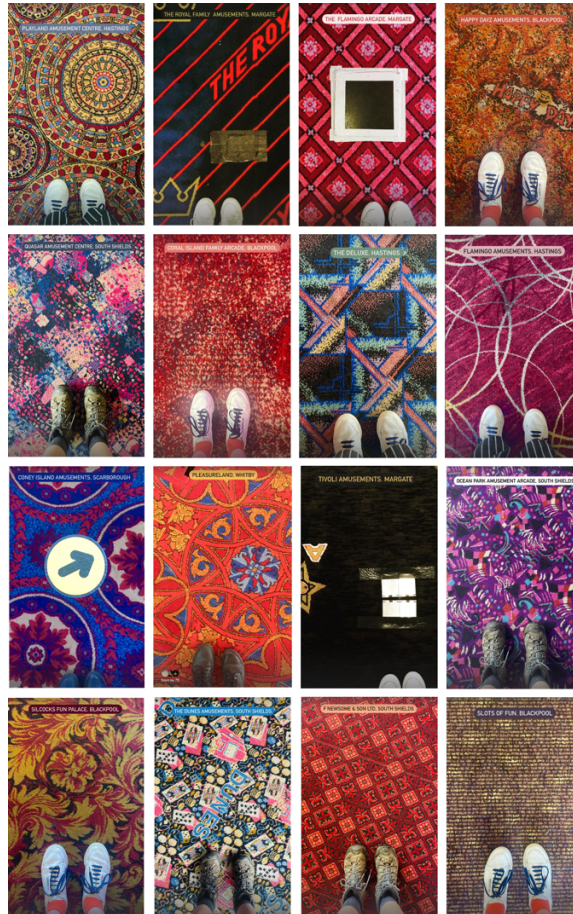
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Abstract

This PhD project by thesis creatively and critically explores the contemporary British seaside amusement arcade as a uniquely sensory and affective space. The project sits at the intersection of art and ethnography, opening up ways of considering, creating and communicating under-represented qualities, experiences and atmospheres of seaside amusement arcades in their contemporary contexts. Due to their undervalued nature, seaside amusement arcades remain neglected in the arena of research despite persisting as popular sub-holiday or daytrip destinations throughout the UK. The project moves beyond historical reductive understandings of amusement arcades as dejected commercial spaces primarily constituting sites of deviance and gambling, challenging negative perceptions that situate these sites as places of declining and low commercial culture. The project presents a newly termed artist-ethnography research methodology that develops an innovative mix of methods through exchanges of fieldwork and theory. Fieldtrips to selected British seaside resort amusement arcades including returned visits to Blackpool as the project's primary destination have been undertaken over a 6 year period, gathering extensive original place-based fieldnotes, site-writing, photography, soundwalk recordings and litter picking; this data has been analysed via a newly comprised theoretical framework on sensation, affect and atmosphere. The research reveals the uniqueness of experience in these places, sustained through diverse kinds of illumination, eclectic and lively surfaces, and layered, excessive sounds that have developed into a distinctive assemblage over time. The project demonstrates how the effects of illumination, surface and sound combine with bodies, practices and other materials inside a seaside amusement arcade to generate compelling atmospheres. The project evidences British seaside amusement arcades as places that do and mean more than they are commercially designed for, and that stimulate nuanced experiences for visitors that go beyond blatant consumer means. The project goes beyond existing research that explores these places from tourist destination and socio-historical perspectives, demonstrating them as places of distinctive, multi-sensory experience and cultural significance.



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Abstract

This PhD project by thesis creatively and critically explores the contemporary British seaside amusement arcade as a uniquely sensory and affective space. The project sits at the intersection of art and ethnography, opening up ways of considering, creating and communicating under-represented qualities, experiences and atmospheres of seaside amusement arcades in their contemporary contexts. Due to their undervalued nature, seaside amusement arcades remain neglected in the arena of research despite persisting as popular sub-holiday or daytrip destinations throughout the UK. The project moves beyond historical reductive understandings of amusement arcades as dejected commercial spaces primarily constituting sites of deviance and gambling, challenging negative perceptions that situate these sites as places of declining and low commercial culture. The project presents a newly termed artist-ethnography research methodology that develops an innovative mix of methods through exchanges of fieldwork and theory. Fieldtrips to selected British seaside resort amusement arcades including returned visits to Blackpool as the project's primary destination have been undertaken over a 6 year period, gathering extensive original place-based fieldnotes, site-writing, photography, soundwalk recordings and litter picking; this data has been analysed via a newly comprised theoretical framework on sensation, affect and atmosphere. The research reveals the uniqueness of experience in these places, sustained through diverse kinds of illumination, eclectic and lively surfaces, and layered, excessive sounds that have developed into a distinctive assemblage over time. The project demonstrates how the effects of illumination, surface and sound combine with bodies, practices and other materials inside a seaside amusement arcade to generate compelling atmospheres. The project evidences British seaside amusement arcades as places that do and mean more than they are commercially designed for, and that stimulate nuanced experiences for visitors that go beyond blatant consumer means. The project goes beyond existing research that explores these places from tourist destination and socio-historical perspectives, demonstrating them as places of distinctive, multi-sensory experience and cultural significance.

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Introduction

*To journey to Blackpool from Manchester
leave the city, out and on via road or railway,
cutting through the pastoral landscape of fields, cattle, pylons, telegraph poles and phone masts.
Past the distant Little Marton Windmill.*

*On a clear day
the landmark Blackpool Tower can be seen first,
across the flat plains, on the shores of Lancashire,
followed by the mounting sea.*

*What is this feeling, this mood, this affect
on the way to Blackpool?
Anticipation? Apprehension? Reassurance? Melancholy?
There is a shift in us when we journey to the land's edge.
I begin to imagine and recall the seaside before reaching it,
forging connections with
land and air, light and dark,
sound and surface, time and space,
binding plans for the excursion ahead
with recollections of seaside experiences gone by.*

*On Blackpool arrival
I walk down to the seafront.
Familiar, leisurely pleasures and recreational rituals lay themselves out before me.
A walk down a pier.
A sit-down seaside bench breezy vista.
An ice cream, bag of hot doughnuts or can of pop.
A souvenir shop peruse (postcards, snow globes, shell merch, stick of rock flavours).
A go on a fairground ride or amusement arcade game.*

(Site-writing developed from research fieldnotes).

Project rationale

Situated within the persistent, everyday landscape of newsagents, pubs and betting shops, the amusement arcade is an overlooked space of consumption. Although found on many British high streets in homogenised, adult orientated forms, amusement arcades are rooted in fairground culture, persisting plentifully and eclectically within traditional British seaside resorts. Amongst emerging 'knowing' vintage seaside arcades that appeal to an Instagram user-visitor (Dreamland in Margate, Blackpool Amusements in Blackpool), old time penny slot machine arcades (Williamson's Old Penny Arcade in Norfolk, The Vintage Penny Arcade in Rye) and video games machine arcades for the retro gamers (Arcade Club, Retrodome), seaside amusement arcades might be labelled deplorable or marginal by certain middle-class tastemakers (Edensor and Millington, 2009). Such views, however, would overlook the rich and nuanced history of the British seaside amusement arcade as a uniquely experiential and atmospheric place. Whereas existing research on seaside amusement arcades examines them from tourist destination (Chapman and Light, 2016, 2011; Elborough, 2010) and socio-historical perspectives (Meades, 2022; Walton, 2000), much less is known about their sensory culture and the individual's experiences of contemporary British seaside amusement arcades.

Beyond the amusement arcade goal-oriented experience of winning and losing, there is much more at play. The (Amusement) Arcades Project moves beyond reductive historical understandings of amusement arcades as abject, outmoded commercial spaces primarily constituting sites of deviance and gambling (Fisher 1999, 1993, 1992; Griffiths and Fisher, 1995), challenging negative perceptions that situate these sites as merely places of low and problematic consumer culture (Griffiths, 1993a, 1993b, 1991, 1990, 1989). Due to their overlooked contribution to seaside experience and culture, seaside arcades remain neglected across research in the social sciences and humanities despite persisting as popular holiday attractions throughout the UK. This project draws attention to the seaside amusement arcade experience within a day excursion or holiday, addressing them as visiting places and contributing to research that acknowledges seaside amusement arcades as sites of fun and entertainment in British culture (Chapman and Light, 2022, 2016; Pratt, 2013). Visiting places are foregrounded as destinations (places we go to and return from) that are experienced in moderation, for recreational, leisure and/or tourist purposes, as part of a trip (day and/or evening trip, weekend or longer holiday). The project distinguishes between different kinds of amusement arcades in contemporary culture and the distinctive history, development, and persistence of what might be referred to as longstanding family orientated British seaside amusement arcades within the broader contemporary amusement arcade arena.

The project works to uncover the place experience of British seaside amusement arcades within these contexts, as providing occasional, site-based activity that many people participate in, often over a number of years, analysing these themes through an artist-ethnography research approach.

Project research questions and aims

The project asks four key research questions. How are British seaside amusement arcades experienced by individuals beyond their blatant consumer means, and why is this important to acknowledge? What kind of research approach could be developed to investigate the place experience of British seaside amusement arcades in their contemporary contexts and further empirical understandings of these enduring places? What are the particular material and sensory qualities of British seaside amusement arcades and how do these differ from other places? How do seaside amusement arcades affect visitors, and what atmospheric affordances are co-produced inside British seaside amusement arcades?

The project:

- 1) Aims to develop a mixed-methods research approach to place experience through interdisciplinary study, drawing on ideas and techniques that pertain to the visual (Pink, 2021; Mirzoeff, 2012; Grasseni, 2007), material (Connor, 2011; Lavin, 2011; Bennett, 2010; Highmore, 2002), sonic (Street, 2020; Gallagher et al., 2017; Ebbensgaard, 2015; Augoyard and Torgue, 1995) and spatial (Edensor, 2023a, 2017, 2012; Edensor et al., 2020; Ingold, 2008, 2000; Massey, 2005). The project proposes a new artist-ethnography methodology through an innovative, qualitative approach that opens new ways of exploring and analysing amusement arcade place experience. This utilises a creative combination of fieldwork, mixed creative methods (photography, soundwalking and recording, fieldnotes and site-writing, and litter picking) and a newly established theoretical framework on sensation, affect and atmosphere (Steadman and Coffin, 2023; Howes, 2022; Edensor, 2017; Böhme 2017, 1993, Pink, 2015).
- 2) Presents new empirical findings on the contemporary place experience, sensations, affects and atmospheres of British seaside amusement arcades for visitors, based on theoretical analysis and reflection on the primary data consisting of original place-based photography, soundwalking and recording, fieldnotes and site-writing, and litter picking, gathered over a

six year period during part time PhD study. Fieldtrips to selected British seaside amusement arcades around the British coast are undertaken, with returned visits to Blackpool as the project's central location at different times of day and during different seasons, building an extensive collection of first-hand, experiential data for analysis.

- 3) Observes and analyses how British seaside amusement arcades are experienced in their contemporary contexts, through theoretical analysis of fieldtrip data based on the key themes of illumination, surface and sound.
 - Illumination including multiple forms of illumination, animation, colour, glow and interactions with other materialities that generate reflection, glitter, sparkle, and popular and folk references in the British seaside amusement arcade are observed and analysed. This research is the first in-depth study of the experience of illumination in contemporary British seaside amusement arcades, and contributes to broad discourses on light, illumination and atmosphere (Pink and Sumartojo, 2018; Böhme, 2017; Degen et al., 2017; Edensor, 2017; Ebbensgaard, 2015), and light, illumination and place experience at British seaside resorts (Edensor and Millington, 2013; Hargen, 2008).
 - The material and sensory culture and distinctive surfaces of amusement arcade carpets, inscriptions, litter picks, colours, coins, sweet things and soft toy prizes are observed and analysed. Close attention is paid to material, sensory and spatial qualities, dwelling on processes, practices, cultural significations and atmospheric affordances. This research builds on existing ideas on surface as an experiential layer that sits at the intersection of the material and immaterial world (Lavin, 2011, Ingold, 2005), contributing to broader discourses on environmental and architectural surface affects (Edensor, 2023b; Connor, 2011; Lavin, 2011, Ingold, 2005) to demonstrate arcade surfaces as significant in the design and experience of surface at contemporary British seaside resorts (Burns and Jarratt, 2022; Jarratt and Steele, 2019; Edensor and Millington, 2018).
 - The project observes and analyses the range of sound types and combinations found in the British seaside amusement arcade, including human, mechanical, computerised, musical and accidental sounds. The projects considers multiple and layered forms of frequency, rhythm, music, narration, quotation, imitation, suspension, sudden impact and unwanted electrical sounds that have gathered over time in the amusement arcade. These findings contribute to understandings of the sounds of the contemporary British seaside (Clarkson, 2023; Merrick, 2019; Ware, 2016), and broad discourse on sound and

place (LaBelle, 2019; Schafer, 1993), and sound's affective affordances (Street, 2020; Blesser and Salter, 2007; Gallagher et al., 2017; Shilon, 2019).

- 4) Challenges negative perceptions that situate British seaside amusement arcades as sites of low commercial culture and contribute to discourse on seaside amusement arcades as places of cultural significance in relation to everyday life, by revealing their experiential affordances and cultural significance. This contributes to discourse on British seaside amusement arcades in contemporary culture (Light and Chapman, 2022, Merrick, 2019; Chapman and Light, 2016, 2011; Light, 2019; Ware, 2016; Chapman, 2013; Elborough, 2010), Edensor and Millington, 2018, Bunting, 2023; Edensor and Millington, 2018, 2015, 2013; Williams, 2012) and broader research on practicing place in relation to everyday life (Edensor, 2023a; Edensor et al., 2020; Speight, 2019).

Project structure

This is a PhD by thesis that utilises creative methods of inquiry. The thesis structure reflects the project's creative and critical response to British seaside amusement arcades and is intended to be evocative as well as analytical of these places. Site-writing developed from fieldnotes are presented as experiential written excerpts within the thesis, expanding in the Intermission. Over 100 primary research photographs from British seaside amusement arcades and their surroundings are positioned at key points within the thesis. Links to soundwalk recordings to listen to in conjunction with the Sound chapter expand beyond the thesis document. This thesis fuses together theory, fieldwork, and emotive findings, with the PhD structured to move between evocative site-writing excerpts, primary photos, soundwalk recordings, and analytical writing-up.

Reviews of literature are situated throughout the study, beginning in the Introduction with the project's overarching theoretical framework on place, sensation, affect and atmosphere. The Methodology chapter sits after the Introduction, placing an emphasis on the originality and significance of my artist-ethnography approach with a supporting review of methodological literature. The Setting the Scene chapter focuses on the historical and cultural contexts of amusement arcades in British culture. There are then thematic reviews of literature in the Light and Sound chapters and Intermission, that give way to the project's empirical findings. The Intermission deliberately feels different, designed to be a creative meantime, an in-between, expanding site-

writing developed from fieldnotes in an exploration of surface at the British seaside amusement arcade. All of the chapters are briefly summarised here.

The Methodology chapter presents the new artist-ethnography terminology, identity and methodology that I have developed for this project. The Methodology chapter stipulates mixed methods comprising fieldwork, participant observation via walking, fieldnotes and site-writing, photography, soundwalk recording and litter picking, that work to elucidate the theoretical concepts of place, sensation, affect and atmosphere set out below to creatively and critically examine the place experience of British seaside amusement arcades. Methods are discussed in relation to the project's key themes of light, surface and sound. The chapter foregrounds the project as an ongoing interaction between primary and secondary research material and demonstrates how theory and fieldwork work together to co-produce the project's empirical findings. I explain my positionality and expand on the openings, challenges and limitations of the research. The ethical and sustainability contexts of the research can be found at the end of the methodology chapter.

The Setting the Scene chapter presents a typology of contemporary British amusement arcade types and review of literature on the development of the British seaside amusement arcade as part of the British holiday. The chapter identifies British seaside amusement arcades as a certain kind of amusement arcade within contemporary contexts, showing the significance of the seaside amusement arcade as part of the British seaside resort holiday and in relation to everyday life for visitors, and highlighting the gap in knowledge about contemporary British seaside amusement arcade experience. The British amusement arcade is plotted through the pre-modern, modern and industrial, postmodern and 21st century history. Selected archival images are included as I explore the visual, material and spatial qualities of the amusement arcade as well as its historical and cultural development.

The Light chapter starts with a review of literature that focuses on ideas about light in contemporary culture and everyday place. The chapter then examines the relationality and contexts of British seaside resort lightscapes and specifically Blackpool, before presenting new empirical findings on the distinctive effects of light that manifest in the seaside amusement arcade, and on seaside arcade light's impacts and affects. The chapter includes a number of primary photographs from fieldtrips undertaken for this project that work with site-writing excerpts developed from research fieldnotes and broader discussion to develop an analysis of light's contribution to the amusement arcade experience.

The Intermission is a creative experiment on the miscellaneous things that make up, linger in, move through and contribute to the amusement arcade's unique experience, drawing on theoretical ideas of surface, material culture and everyday life. The Intermission begins with ideas about surface and develops through expanded site-writing, focusing on carpets, inscriptions, litter picks, sweet things, colours, coins and soft toy prizes. Close attention is paid to material, sensory and spatial qualities, stimulating contemplation about processes, practices, cultural significations, affective and atmospheric affordances. The Intermission presents new empirical findings on the distinctive surfaces found in seaside amusement arcades and their surroundings by deploying photography and site-writing.

The Sound chapter starts with a review of literature that focuses on ideas about sound in contemporary culture and everyday place, conceptualising ideas about sound study, place-based sound recording, auditory atmospheres and affects. The chapter then examines amusement arcade relationality within the contexts of the broader soundscape of contemporary British seaside resorts, before presenting new empirical findings on the distinctive effects of sound in the seaside amusement arcade and their impacts and affects.

The PhD conclusion reflects on the research process, then states the project's major research contributions and possible avenues for future research. The list of figures and list of references for the project follow. Appendix A is a fieldtrip log of selected seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades visited for the project. Appendix B is sample research fieldnotes from the project. The Introduction now sets out the theoretical framework that will sustain the project's investigation into the experience of British seaside amusement arcades, followed by the key challenges and limitations of the research and a summary of the project's contributions to knowledge, ending with a note on the project title.

Theoretical framework

Place

To support the project's aims to reveal the unique place experience of British seaside amusement arcades in relation to seaside resorts and everyday life, place is suggested to be powerful, full of possibilities, deeply personal as well as social and interconnected with other places. Cresswell (2015)

discusses place as a ubiquitous English-speaking word that we use daily, embedded with common-sense whilst also being unfixed and hard to define. Agnew (1987) outlines three key aspects of place as location (referring to the geographical), locale (the material setting for social situations' (Cresswell, 2015: 23)), and sense of place (to describe the reflective and emotional attachments people form with place). Speight (2019:7) suggests that 'each of us interact with places as part of our everyday lives' foregrounding place as influentially characterful. Place has an 'ontological lure as a site in which to locate ourselves' (Edensor et al., 2020:3) and can be a way to learn more about ourselves and each other. Recent research on place includes works on listening to the sounds of libraries as quiet yet sounding places (Mansell, 2016), smell maps of hospital corridors and Glasgow subways (Maclean, 2012-ongoing), photos of working men's club notice board inscription that reveal disappearing communities (Lee and Wilson, 2019), auto-fictional writing (and now a film) on returning to live in the childhood place of Orkney for recovery (Liptrot, 2015; Fingscheidt, 2024), and prose on the potential for place-based re-enchantment through the diverse landscapes of the British Isles (Evans and Robson, 2010). Place research can uncover, celebrate or challenge cultural practices of place rather than imply any explicit conditions. Place research can be a way to question dominant narratives and make a space for new and more inclusive considerations on culture, demonstrating place as complex, interesting and nuanced and contributing to a 'non-exclusionary openness to all forms of knowing' (Dear et al., 2011:22).

Whilst concepts of 'the here and there' continue to underpin place research (Edensor et al., 2020), recent shifts towards globalised culture have impacted definitions of place, as some places are seen to lose 'their identity and specificity to a uniform global space' (Edensor et al., 2020:1). An increasing awareness of digital, virtual and mobile kinds of places contribute to changing ideas on what place is and can be. Places can hold multiple identities and meanings, going beyond the geographically material. New approaches to localisms, regionalisms and nationalisms gain momentum as we navigate different and interconnected versions of ourselves in everyday life set against a global backdrop, through a range of online and 'in the flesh places' (Campbell, 2016). Place-making and place management are subjects on the agendas of architects, councils, policy makers and private funders in the design of place in contemporary society (Courage and McKeown, 2019). Place can be controlled, managed, planned, patrolled and permitted (Lake, 2020; Lefebvre, 1988). Place can also be a resistant force, a way to carve out autonomous approaches and ways of being within a breadth of systems, structures and environments (Kern, 2020; De Certeau, 1980).

I am interested in the multi-temporality of certain places (Edensor et al., 2020) and the power of place to help us form and maintain connections. Place can locate us in the present through attentiveness to our surroundings, stimulating awareness, appreciation, cooperation and sensitivity. Place can also be an access point to the past, a conduit to memory and a way to maintain identity and a sense of belonging, as well as stimulus for imagining and ambitions for the future. I consider place as an ephemeral container of experience, with the qualities and affordances of a place influencing moods, feelings and actions. Perhaps most pertinently to this project, ideas of non-representational theory (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010; Thrift, 2008) on place as perceived, represented and practiced, and place as 'conditioned by human as well as non-human agencies; and as an affectively and sensorially inhabited environment' (Edensor et al., 2020:2) are significant in place experience research. Place is something that is co-produced through human and non (or more-than) human elements with agential qualities, with places operating beyond human intention to do and mean more than they are designed to. Place is therefore continually emergent as life 'takes place' through movements, intensities and encounters (Lorimer, 2005). Place is open (Massey, 2005) and unfixed; it is as much about not knowing and discovery (Rosenbloom, 2023) as it is about affinity and confirmation. For this project, British seaside amusement arcades are explored as multi-dimensional places, rich in sensory affordances and affective potentiality in their contemporary contexts.

De Certeau (1980:117) suggests 'place' as 'a practised space' which comes into being through quotidian acts and activities, suggesting that through performing rituals, repeating bodily actions and habits, we not only become part of the locations that we inhabit but we continually contribute to recreating them. Crouch and Cooper (2019) proposes that further to everyday life space, holiday spaces that are visited by many in limited, moderated, and regulated timeframes, are also practiced. Amusement arcades are explored and analysed as places that are co-produced by human and more-than-human elements (Sumartojo and Pink, 2019), foregrounded as both gathered (Casey, 1996) and thrown together (Massey, 2005), fluctuating through overlapping, sometimes harmonious and other times dissonant multi-sensory conditions and affective affordances. In the arcade space, a constantly shifting, unique convergence that is boundless and impossible to capture in its entirety unfolds. Visitor and environment, body and material are entangled and moving (Ingold, 2008) in the amusement arcade. Seaside amusement arcades are considered as 'open spaces' (Massey, 2005), they are contingent and active, 'the product of interrelations' and 'always under construction' (Massey, 2005:9). Rather than seek to contain or shrink complex amusement arcade spaces into tangible, manageable forms, this empirically grounded project makes suggestions through text,

image and sound on some of the key ways in which seaside arcades function experientially beyond their blatant consumer functions. Treated as simultaneously homogenous and heterogenous sites through their relationality, regionality and global influences, particular British seaside amusement arcades are identified and explored within broader seaside amusement arcade culture. I pay attention to the relations between my everyday inland urban place experience living in a city (Manchester) and seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades as visiting places, moving within, sensing and engaging with sites through first-hand experience and proposing the influences of seaside space on everyday space and visa-versa. Felski proposes that 'everyday life is the most self-evident, yet the most puzzling of ideas (Felski, 2000:77), with openings and limitations in relation to place experience and academic research. The project seeks to challenge dominant urban sidelining of 'other' geographical spaces through a networked approach to place. The name 'seaside' derived from Seaside House; a historic summer resort built in the UK in the 1870s as part of factory holiday system. 'Seaside' reflects the urban-coastal interrelations of designated work and leisure space in the 19th and 20th centuries and the hierarchical ordering of spaces under modernity. 'Seaside' (and 'countryside') can be associated to a persistent metro-centric point of view; the seaside is often positioned as traditional or less progressive and therefore less influential than its urban-cosmopolitan-city associates (Shields, 1991; Burdsey, 2011). These theoretical ideas on place establish the context of the project's new place research, working with theory on sensation, affect and atmosphere to sustain the project's empirical place experience findings on contemporary British seaside amusement arcades.

Sensation and affect

In my approach to place research, I situate myself as an observer and active participant in place. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Simmel investigated 'the experience of a fragmented everyday world and the trivial objects it contains in analogous ways' through a sensory approach to the environment (Highmore, 2002:34). Simmel suggested that that our reasons for getting involved 'in interactions at all depends on the fact that we have a sensory effect upon one another' (Simmel quoted in Degan, 2012:239). We are led by our senses in everyday life and our perceptions and actions are informed by them. Sensory research in academia has developed significantly since the 1990s, in the fields of anthropology (Sumartojo and Pink, 2019; Pink, 2015; Downey, 2007) and human geography (Edensor, 2005; Feld and Brenneis, 1996; Howes, 1991) with approaches to bodily modes of understanding and knowing continuing to gain momentum. The senses are defined as cultured by Classen (1993) with embodied approaches to knowledge that foreground the body 'as a

source of knowledge and subsequently of agency' (Pink, 2015:26) opening through sensory research processes. In art practice, relations between art and ethnography that focus on the body and the senses (Maclean, 2012; Grimshaw and Ravetz, 2004) bring to the fore the personally and socially experienced as political, environmental and cultural. Human geographers with interests in the experience of place utilise sensory methods (Edensor and Millington, 2015, Gallagher et al., 2017; Rodaway, 1994) to explore how 'different modalities of sensory experience figure in the way people experience their environments' (Pink, 2015:14). Sensory research contributes to overturning the privilege of the visual, foregrounding how the researcher's own body is 'emplaced' within the material and sensory research settings (Steadman and Coffin, 2023:188; Pink, 2015).

Paying attention to the senses can cultivate reflexive learning that acknowledges the shifting, eventfulness of place and the nuances of personal and social experience. Observing qualities of the material world including sound, colour (Howes, 2022), light and dark (Edensor, 2017) that are contingent with human perceptual apparatus requires a sensory approach to knowledge creation. The senses forge out connections between the material and immaterial world, the body and mind, with the senses informing memories (Sutton, 2001) 'moving in or through a given place, the body imports its own emplaced past into its present experience' (Casey, 1987:194), imaginings (Crapanzano, 2004) and everyday interactions (Simmel, 1997/1907), with sensory stimulation marking out the distinctive affordances of a place. Sensory learning (Pink, 2015; Howes, 2003; Classen, 1993) is fundamental to how I get to know, capture and represent places in my research. I work with bodily immersion in a place and sense of place (Feld and Brenneis, 1996), sensing, feeling and understanding place from the inside out, putting emphasis on sensation as a way to uncover new knowledge about place and my own bodily involvement in the research process.

Sensation is inextricably entwined with affect. Parsons (2009) references Altieri's theory of affective states in her study on remembering the seaside resort of Scarborough, exploring how 'immediate modes of sensual responsiveness to the world [are] characterised by an accompanying imaginative dimension' (Altieri, 2003:2). Affect is to do with openness and potential (Massumi, 2015) and escapes any fixed boundaries. According to Wylie 'affect denotes the shifting mood, tenor, colour or intensity of a place or situation' (Wylie, 2005:236), with affect emerging at the intersection of the material and immaterial environment. We have an uncompromising capacity to affect and be affected. Lavin (2011) proposes affect as internalised perception, suggesting that 'we no longer need to equate detachment and distance with intellection and abstraction nor feeling with crude sentimentality, and so we can return to experience with new theoretical vigour' (Lavin, 2011:21-22). Therefore, affect

research is full of potential for expanded understandings of people and place that go beyond outmoded and exclusive structures of knowledge.

Researching through sensory and affective inquiry opens lines of investigation into the diverse ways in which human beings sense, make sense of, are affected by and action affected responses through seaside amusement arcades. Sensory and affective research challenges historical structures of knowledge, making room for more nuanced and inclusive understandings of culture and place practice. This project embraces the emotive and experiential as fundamental to such understandings. The research recognises the perceptual as cultural and political when attending to the sensory and affective; it aligns to burgeoning commitments to equity, accessibility and respect for different identities in academic research. Sensation and affect are foregrounded as site-based experience-techniques; they are utilised as ways of identifying and sharing the sociality of sensation and the cultural mediation of sense experience and affective expression. The project reviews seaside amusement arcades within the sensory and affective experiences of broader seaside resorts and everyday life, in a new contextual reading of these unique places. Thinking sensorially and affectively brings new and inclusive readings of these places to the fore.

Atmosphere

Atmospheres are 'intimately connected to sensory experience' (Steadman and Coffin, 2023:189). Böhme proposes that atmospheres have to be sensed (Böhme, 2017) and Edensor that 'atmosphere folds together affect, emotion and sensation in space' (Edensor, 2015:83). According to literature on atmospheres, an atmosphere can be considered the 'affective mood' that spatial arrangements can evoke in the sensual bodies of their users (Reckwitz, 2012:254). An atmosphere 'applies to humans, to spaces, to nature' (Böhme, 2017:14) and emerges from the coalescing of practices, materials and bodies (Shaw, 2014). Sumartojo et al. situate atmospheres as 'enduringly present, continually changing and inevitably part of the everyday and more extraordinary events and experiences of our lives' (Sumartojo and Pink, 2019:15). Atmospheres ebb and flow, open and close; they are experientially distinctive, incorporating affective moods in sensual bodies (Reckwitz, 2012:254). More-than-representational theories propose atmosphere is close to assemblage (Shaw, 2014); with an assemblage being distributed via a multiplicity of integral human and non-human (McFarlane, 2011) or more-than human relations. Latour suggests that rather than merely acting as a backdrop for human action, non-humans can 'authorise, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid and so on' (Latour, 2004:226), bringing non-humans or more than

humans, their dynamic force and influence, to the fore. Barad highlights agential relations to the non-human, arguing that agency is a form of 'enactment', a process of cause and effect (Barad, 2007). Barad's agency is about doing or being, it unfolds through human and non-human relations and can be used in a reconfiguration of spatial and cultural understandings. Atmospheres are agential, arising from human and more-than-human assemblages in often unanticipated ways. Whilst this project does not move fully into a new-materialist framework, it draws on Barad's ideas on agency here in reference to the possibilities of ongoing 'reconfigurings of the world' (Barad, 2003:818) to help contextualise the need for new and inclusive felt approaches to space, place and culture. In doing so, thinking *with* things (Wakkary, 2021) opens new understandings of place and future possibility for the design and experience of places.

Atmospheric study goes beyond rational explanation (Böhme, 2017) to describe the 'spatial quality of feeling' (Böhme, 1993:118) and to reveal 'spatially discharged affective qualities' (Anderson, 2009:79). Atmospheric study is concerned with the 'relationship between environmental qualities and human states' (Böhme, 2017:14). Steadman and Coffin (2023) describes atmospheres as messy. Atmospheres are essentially indeterminate and diffuse (Böhme, 2017), they expand through the sense of a place and 'its associated feelings' (Böhme, 2017:14). Atmospheres can be probed through sensory and affective techniques although never captured in their entirety as they are always emerging. In the British seaside amusement arcade, affective intensities emanate at the intersections of machine, body, and space in the amusement arcade; these elements entangle to create atmosphere (Sumartojo and Pink, 2019). Seaside amusement arcade atmospheres arise from their distinctive spatial arrangements and sensory conditions, emanating at the intersection of the material and immaterial world. A distinctive seaside amusement arcade atmosphere is activated at the sensuous intersection of human and more-than-human elements, via the physical and the emotional, the actual and the fanciful. Arcade atmospheres are a reoccurring point of discussion and development throughout the project. Atmospheres are ever present and always emerging, making them slippery things to grasp. Yet, endeavours to think and feel atmospherically can open new understandings of places. Researching atmospherically is about the right to participate in something, a work of art, in nature (Böhme, 2017) or in a place. Edensor proposes that tourism 'is concerned with seeking a temporary shift in emotional, affective and sensory alterity' (Edensor, 2023a:51) and that tourist destinations that are, in part designed through the familiar and predictable, can also be unpredictable and emergent. I am interested in this cross-section of mundanity and strangeness, familiarity and extraordinariness in seaside amusement arcades that are situated within the practice of seaside tourism. Researching the sensory and affective qualities and atmosphere of seaside

amusement arcades is a way to create new knowledge on these enduring sites, with potential to bring to the fore previously invisible power structures and resistant forces, as power does not appear but 'impacts the unconscious' (Böhme, 2017:29).

Project challenges and limitations

The project recognises the inescapable impacts of culture and prior experience on sensory, affective and atmospheric experience and experiential research. Place is always polyvocal and experienced in a multitude of ways, with 'a person's gendered, social and racial position yielding different experiences' (Mitchell, 2023: online) in response to places and events. Our experiences of places are bound together culturally whilst also being distinctive and deeply personal. Challenges can arise through autoethnographic research approaches like this one (see the Methodology chapter) when the research sits at the intersection of personal and shared place experience and experiential findings are applied to others. Blesser and Salter highlight that 'even within a given culture, listeners are not homogenous in how they chose to use their sense of hearing' (Blesser and Salter, 2007:7); this could be said of all sensory interpretations. When considering the place experiences and atmospheres of British seaside amusement arcades, these are tricky to pin-down as they are constantly emerging and entangled with nuanced and complex personal and social experience. Pink and Morgan (2013) highlight the impact of 'doing the research' on experience; this inescapably influences the intensities of the research encounter as I draw out particular focuses. I work to distinguish between sensation, perception and meaning, whilst foregrounding the value of creative approaches to research. Drawing on Marchand's (2010) idea on 'transmission' in scholarly activity on the different ways that knowledge can be comparable and relevant to others, I analyse, and present findings based on speculative knowledge transmission, working towards uncovering well-considered and valuable interpretations of seaside arcade experience that are relatable to others. I recognise myself as a temporal part of the sensory, affective and material environment (Stoller, 1997; Downey, 2007) I am investigating. Reflexivity and balancing intellectual and methodological rigour, emotion and creativity are important considerations in my artist-ethnography practice and in the development of this PhD project. Bradley (2020) writes that 'a critical approach to ethnography allows reflections on what insights ethnographic research might offer and what might also be missed' (Bradley, 2020:233). Considering my positionality is integral to the process, as is ongoing reflection (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2024, Schön, 1991). What an artist-ethnographic practice might lose in terms of 'reproducibility and generalising ability, it gains in depth and verifiability' (Daynes and

Williams, 2018:10). This qualitative research therefore 'moves beyond probability and plausibility to possibility' (Sullivan, 2010:96).

Summary of contributions to knowledge.

The project develops an original artist-ethnography methodology through exchanges of mixed-methods fieldwork and a newly comprised theoretical framework on place experience, sensation, affect and atmosphere. Data collection and analysis goes well beyond existing empirical research on British seaside amusement arcades from socio-historical (Meades, 2022; Fisher, 1995) and tourism (Chapman and Light, 2022, 2016; Pratt, 2013) perspectives. New empirical findings on the contemporary place experience, sensations, affects and atmospheres of British seaside amusement arcades for visitors are revealed through the themes of illumination, surface and sound. This expands existing research on broader illumination at the British seaside resort to situate amusement arcades as significant to British seaside resort lightscapes (Ball, 2019; Edensor and Millington, 2015), on environmental and architectural surface affects (Edensor, 2023b; Connor, 2011; Lavin, 2011), and on the study on sound at the British seaside resort that features seaside amusement arcades (Clarkson, 2023; Merrick, 2019; Ware, 2016). The research contributes to understandings of the distinctive design and experience of contemporary British seaside resorts (Burns and Jarratt, 2022; Jarratt and Steele, 2019; Edensor and Millington, 2018), bringing British seaside amusement arcades to the fore and acknowledging the unique place experience they offer within contemporary culture. The project evidences British seaside amusement arcades as places that do and mean more than they are commercially designed for and that stimulate nuanced experiences for visitors that go beyond blatant consumer means, demonstrating British seaside amusement arcades as complex, eclectic, distinctive assemblages that stimulate nuanced experiences for visitors that goes beyond blatant consumer means. British seaside amusement arcades are shown to be sites of alternative sensory experiences that go beyond most everyday spaces and activate imagining, remembering and belonging via sensory participation.

A note on the project title

The project's name nods to Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* (Benjamin, 2003), an unfinished posthumously published project by the German philosopher and cultural critic from 1937 to his death in 1940. *The Arcades Project* explored the arcades that connected boulevards in Paris at this time and were made up of shops, cafes, artist studios and other amenities (Cunningham, 2019).

Benjamin worked with a Baudelarian observation of place, observing Parisian arcades as 'microcosms' of what he took as the predominant way of life in Paris (Cunningham, 2019) and as a way to understand a rapidly changing society and collective consciousness under capitalism that came about through new, modern modes of collective labour and emerging technology. The Paris Benjamin describes 'teems with bodies, images, signs, stimulants, movement...a wealth of material goods and intensification of sensation' (Highmore, 2002: 61). The (Amusement) Arcades Project engages with a different-yet-connected kind of arcade decades later. Developed during modernity, the British seaside amusement arcade thrived as a pleasurable, commercial place. For this project, the seaside amusement arcade is explored as a felt and active assemblage (DeLanda, 2016; Bennett, 2010; Deleuze, 1987) that expands beyond commercial means and is sensorially, affectively and atmospherically significant in its contemporary contexts.

Methodology



Figure 1: Reflection of my trainers in amusement arcade window (2020). Author's own.

Acknowledging. Connecting. Intending.

Methodological overview

The (Amusement) Arcades Project applies and develops a mixed methods approach to rethinking British seaside amusement arcades as sites of emblematic sensory and affective experience for visitors. This unfolds through an innovative artist-ethnography terminology, identity and methodology developed via a newly comprised theoretical framework on place, sensation, affect and atmosphere, with focuses on light, surface and sound. The project weaves together sourcing, making, taking, analysing and reflecting, to reach original observations and well-informed considerations. The project is developed through an ongoing interaction between primary and secondary research material. Methods and theory combine to creatively and critically examine place experience in new and expansive ways, evidencing the underexplored relationships between the environmental qualities and bodily dispositions and affordances (Böhme, 2017) of these persistent sites. In this chapter, I present a critical contextualisation of the project's methodology, clarifying my

personal definition of and approach to artist-ethnography and how this translates into the research and project aims. I then set out the specifics of the research undertaken, providing an overview of the project's key methods, which are: participant observation via fieldwork and returned visits, walking, fieldnotes and site-writing, photography, soundwalk recording and litter picking. Image archive research and writing up as part of the research process are also discussed, as well as my positionality. The openings and limitations of the research are established, with challenges foreseen and navigations of these suggested. The ethics and sustainability considerations of the research are stipulated at the end of this chapter.

Artist-ethnography: an approach to place experience research

In my research practice, I am drawn to the sensory, the spatial, the material, the immaterial, the ethereal, the felt, the personal, the cultural and the atmospheric qualities of places that an artist-ethnography practice can uncover and communicate. The layered histories, experiences and meanings of certain places intrigues me. I work with creative and critical investigations of place, utilising embodied (Downey, 2007; Ingold, 2005, 1997) and emplaced (Pink, 2009; Coleman and Collins, 2006) approaches to place experience. I consistently emphasise the importance of being in a place in my research practice (Pink, 2015) to gain sensory, mobile and mediated insights. As a research process, this stimulates informed, speculative, imaginative and systematic modes of research that expand representational understandings of place experience.

In its contemporary contexts, I define my artist-ethnography approach as an original, versatile and interdisciplinary methodology where new, creative and critical approaches to place and culture can be explored and important life questions raised. Art and ethnography developed in tangent during the 20th century (Ferro and Poveda, 2019; Kelly, 2012). Art foregrounds expression and communication of creative and self-referential ideas through materials and media. Ethnography is a research approach and strand of anthropology that explores cultural phenomena from the viewpoint of the subject of study.

The Baudelairean mobilised gaze of the late 19th century Parisian Flâneur as artistic walker and empathetic observer of industrial city life (Daynes and Williams, 2018; Baudelaire, 1906) gave way to the mid-20th century creative interpersonal explorations of Debord and The Situationists (McKenzie, 2011), both archetypal and influential modes in art theory and practice that foreground walking and creative connections between person and place. The Surrealists utilised ethnography as a mode of

social investigation to defamiliarise cultural tropes, practices and environments (MacClancy, 1995). Site-specific art from the early 1970s explored relationships between space, place and the body of the viewer, with place-orientated inquiries enabling artists to develop new, experimental modes of ethnography (Shaw, 2013). Performance art and socially engaged art practices that advanced during the 20th century are frequently process-based methods that engage artists with participants and places (Madison, 2020), with emergent productive links between theory and method, art and politics (Schneider, 2013). During the 1990s and 2000s, artist interests in the everyday and fieldwork developed art further beyond the studio and gallery (Johnstone, 2008; Highmore, 2002). At this time, visual culture gained momentum as an area of study combining anthropology, art history, cultural studies and critical theory (Mirzoeff, 2012) and visual ethnography developed as a method to express the social relations of people through visual approaches (Pink, 2021; Ali, 2018; Grimshaw and Ravetz, 2004). Whilst visual ethnography tended to focus on lens-based media to expand on text-based work, recent developments include the use of go-pros, drones and wearable cameras (Pink, 2021) with visual ethnography sometimes extended to include drawing, painting, collage and other image making processes. More recently, sensory ethnography has emerged as a mode of ethnography with 'the researcher self-consciously and reflectively attending to the senses through the research process' (Pink, 2015:7). Sensory ethnography is 'flexible, unfolds over time and is associated with a range of techniques' recognising that 'multiple senses interact to shape embodied experience' (Steadman and Coffin, 2023:188). The 'artist as ethnographer' was articulated by Hal Foster in the mid-1990s (Foster, 1996), influencing the artist-ethnography hybrid term I am using for this project. Foster referenced Benjamin's earlier ideas on the author as a producer and the need for artists to challenge the conventions of artistic production (Benjamin, 1934), with Foster claiming ethnography as an expanded mode of artistic production. Ethnography is a participatory, experiential investigation into the entanglements of people, stuff, sensations and affects (Ingold, 2008; Casey, 1996); it is a way to uncover cultural insights and inform the development of places (Pink, 2015). Concerns on 'how their own sensory embodied experiences might assist them in learning about other people's worlds' (Pink, 2015:25-26) and developing reflexive approaches are integral to ethnographic knowledge creation. Ethnographers have historically looked to artists for expanded ways of seeing, sensing and feeling that are driven by artistic forces (Foster, 1996). Ethnography can be contextual (Foster, 1996), aligning to artistic concerns on critical thinking and foregrounding process approaches of practical and theoretical exchange.

In my practice, I work with walking, lens-based media, fieldnotes and site-writing, soundwalk recording and object collecting and making. Recently, I have begun to work with clay in another site-

based project running alongside The (Amusement) Arcades Project, therefore, a broader artist-ethnography terminology better fits my practice to encompass the range of materials and media I work with. In contemporary interdisciplinary research, approaches to art and ethnography build through a network of practices. There are multiple recent cultural turns to acknowledge that inform the development of a breadth of contemporary interdisciplinary art and ethnography practices; these include the geographical turn (Cook et al., 2000), the sensory turn (Howes, 2003), the spatial turn (Warf and Arias, 2009), the affective turn (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010; Clough and Halley, 2007), the ethnographic turn in contemporary art (Rutten et al., 2013), the autoethnographic turn (Adams et al., 2015; Hannigan, 2014), and the atmospheric turn (Vlogger and Pfister, 2019). These turns all mediate between the spatial and the body in some way, collectively advocating the value of personal experience within the research process and giving significance to encounter and our unfolding relationships with others (other places, people, materials, practices, components and assemblages). Hewitt and Jordan (2019) propose that 'contemporary art likes anthropology because it engages with similar modes of assembly; process, content and context' and that 'like art, anthropology brings with it an internal critique, one of social responsibility' (Hewitt and Jordan, 2019:93). Art and ethnography are inescapably entwined with shifting social and political ideas and infrastructures. My research develops an ethnographic-theoretical dialogue (Pink and Morgan, 2013) that contributes to nuanced site-based insights. My research is underpinned by the endeavour to create 'knowledge and understanding that is individually and culturally transformative' (Sullivan, 2010:96), bringing to the fore new understandings on the expanse of British seaside amusement arcade experience for this project. Both art and ethnography are concerned with learning, educating, social participation and expressive practices (Ferro and Poveda, 2019). I would argue that artist-ethnography is about much more than merely getting access to people and places, it is a way to develop inclusive and meaningful interpretations of our social world through creative and critical engagement within it.

I am curious as to how particular places are entwined with unique sensual qualities and affective, atmospheric affordances for those that frequent them. Recent approaches to the Flâneur as a methodology pay attention to the emergent and the fleeting, the subtle and ignored, endorsing thinking dialectically about culture, and conceptualising ethnography as partial, subjective and self-reflective (Soukop, 2013). The Flâneur is considered as an active, participatory position rather than merely a passive observer (Daynes and Williams, 2018), with flânuerial practitioners contributing to the moods, feelings, materiality and activity of the places they explore. I am interested in the Flâneur's contemporary art and ethnography methodological possibility for critically analysing the relation of self to space (Rizk and Birioukov, 2017). Reflections on the Flâneur's legacy are relevant to

my artist-ethnography practice, as a lone woman researcher drawing on my own experiences of place to develop new understandings. The project takes a qualitative, autoethnographic research approach, exploring the relations of personal experiences with cultural, social, and political contexts to develop knowledge on the exchanges between the self and others. Autoethnography involves interpreting and analysing the researcher's lived experiences, sustained by the belief that personal experiences are influenced by cultural and political norms, expectations and improvisations. Heider uses 'auto-ethnography' to describe the practice of cultural members giving an account of the culture (Heider, 1975). My research approach uses personal experiences to describe and interpret wider cultural and social practices. I speak for myself and give value to my own experiences. I utilise personal perceptions on the experiences of overlooked, persistent places, in this instance, British seaside amusement arcades. When working with returned visits, walking, fieldnotes and site-writing, photography, soundwalk recording and litter picking, research skills of place observation and attunement are applied. The field research is emplaced and embodied as I am open to and absorb from the places around me (Stoller, 1997), incorporating sensory engagement with environments, through attentive listening, looking, moving, touching, smelling etc. Attunement is a method of speculative thinking that brings lived value to the fore; it is about paying attention to one's lived experiences and perceptions, and emphasising difference and novelty in a contested, entangled world (Forbes after Deleuze, 2022). Artist-ethnography is for me a way to develop skills in observation, attunement and embodied approaches to learning, utilising the descriptive (as self-affirmative), the analytical, the interpretive, and the occasional confessional. The (Amusement) Arcades Project's artist-ethnography methodology enables an enhanced sense of visibility, aurality and spatiality, between proximity and distance, and between my own interiority and externalised random subjectivities (Blesser and Salter, 2007). Learning to pay attention to my surroundings and explore them with care is one way to transform and improve personal and social understandings and environments.

Artist-ethnography depends on participating, observing, embodying and reflecting on the experience of a place and the possibility of apprehending the world through the senses (Edensor, 2013). It is an active and reflexive autoethnographic process that mediates between the similarities and continuities of personal and shared experience, with shared cultural practices of places navigated through the research encounter. Artist-ethnography adopts a phenomenological approach to participation that builds on Ingold's (2008) definition of ethnography as a kind of active observation and interaction, a participatory, experiential investigation into the entanglements of people and places (Ingold, 2008) that enables the conceptualisation of multisensory experience

(Ingold, 2000). I draw on Pink's re-thinking of participant observation via a 'particular attention to the multisensory and emplaced aspects of other people's (and the researcher's own) experience', with learning and knowing as 'embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic' (Pink 2015:95). I consider myself part of the social, sensory and material environment and an agent of production in the place-event (Pink, 2015:97), aiming to get closer to how other people experience, imagine and remember. I am entangled in the sensory experiences and atmospheric qualities of the places I interact with through being there and taking part. It is through lived experience and my experiencing, knowing and emplaced body that I gain understandings of the relationships between people and places, as a way to 'produce academic knowledge' (Pink, 2015:97).

An example of an artist who creatively embraces ethnography in their work and continues to inspire my research approach is Deller. Deller is a UK born and based multi-media artist with interests in 20th century British history and culture. *Joy in People* was the first retrospective exhibition of Deller's work at The Hayward in 2012 (Deller, 1990-2006) bringing together a number of his works including *Valerie's Snack Bar* (a functioning recreation of a working-class British caff interior as an interactive art installation). In *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* (Deller, 1990-2006) Deller borrowed part the title of a book that examined the legacy of modernisation and modernism (Berman, 1982) taking a personal look at the impact of the Industrial Revolution on British Culture (Deller, 1990-2006). *Folk Archive: Contemporary Popular Art in the UK* (2005) saw Deller working in collaboration with artist Alan Kane to document, gather and publish a book on the breadth of contemporary British folk customs, 'bringing together drawing, painting, film, performance, costume, decoration, political opinion and humour, and some astonishing objects' (Deller and Kane, 2005). Deller's work can be experienced as celebratory of the variety of people, places, activities and life experiences in British culture including the often marginalised or overlooked ('bored teenagers, villagers and the homeless' (Deller, 1990-2006: online). Deller pays attention to the detail of people and place, looking at what we wear and make (often in a DIY sense), and how we decorate and behave in certain places. Deller is interested in 'creative practices and artefacts from outside the traditional art world' (Deller, 1990-2006: online) with ethnographic research, visual culture and art beyond the gallery central to his practice. Deller sits somewhere in-between the fanatical, the enthusiast, the researcher, the artist and the ethnographer, highlighting parts British culture we often dismiss or take for granted. He works with text, image and object, building collections, making recreations and forging out collaborations with people and places, inspiring me to pay attention to and develop new readings of enduring places rooted and/or enduring in working class culture.

Author positionality

This chapter now considers and reflects on my own history, culture, positionality and temperament as the project's solo researcher, to inform and sustain the project's openings and limitations and to regulate meaning making. My positionality in relation to this project and British seaside amusement arcades is informed by my ongoing relationship to and fascination with the British seaside and British seaside resorts. My research on the history and culture of British seaside resorts and seaside resort amusement arcades began during my MA study and has continued since, providing the foundations for this project. Growing up in Northampton, in the Midlands in the 1980s and 1990s, I went on lots of family British seaside holidays. In 1992, my Nan won a regional Glamorous Gran competition. The prize was a weeklong caravan holiday at Blackpool Butlins (she took my dad, sister, brother and me with her). My Nan's participation in the Glamorous Gran national finale at The Metropole Hotel in Blackpool was the condition of the prize holiday and was the holiday's Saturday night climax, with Nans and Grans from around the country sauntering down a catwalk to be interviewed by a tanned Daniel Winton kind of male presenter in front of an audience. My Nan prepped for the event by wearing her hair in rollers under a shower cap all day, to protect her hairstyle from the wet and windy weather. I winced with embarrassment at this as we walked down Blackpool's Golden Mile (who is this wacky person in a shower cap and lowcut leopard print vest who keeps trying to hold my hand?!), something I now think about differently as I recognise her as the bold, tenacious and dynamic force that she was. This holiday was my first time in Blackpool. We revisited Blackpool as a family another time, when I was nine or ten, staying in one of the terraced Bed and Breakfasts off the main seafront and visiting the Blackpool Pleasure Beach. I stood on tip toes to reach the required height for a ride on the Pepsi Max Big One. It was so scary no-one even screamed as we dropped from the highest point. A fleeting, panoramic view out to sea accompanied by a strange, shocked silence.



Figure 2: Photo from The Pepsi Max Big One ride with my dad, Blackpool Pleasure Beach circa 1994. Author's own.

Blackpool is still infused with these memories, through photos and recollections that resurface when I return there. Great Yarmouth, Scarborough, Lyme Regis, Skegness, and Hunstanton were other childhood holiday destinations that brought with them a seafront familiar. These holidays would always include a visit (or multiple visits) to amusement arcades. Amusement arcades were places to escape bad weather or relentless sunshine and while away a few hours with arcade meandering and games play. I recall arcades from the 1990s as loud, vibrant places, with a sci-fi, apocalyptic feel, pulsating with 1990s dance music beats and low but colourful lighting. Family orientated and intergenerational spaces, seaside amusement arcades were spaces to temporarily set myself adrift from my family, gaining a little autonomy yet still being in a safe distance from my dad. Whilst studying for my undergraduate degree at Falmouth College of Arts, my friends and I would go on day trips and visit amusement arcades in Newquay. We festivalled at Dead Beat and Bang Face – dance music festivals that were put on in old Butlins and Pontins seaside resort holiday complexes, their amusement arcades still intact and in use for festival goers, next door to dance halls for waltzes, discos, then raves. Recently, I am endeavouring to walk the British coast, piece by piece. This is bringing opportunity to visit seaside amusement arcades along the way. Visiting the British seaside is

embedded with special time memory and experience for me, as it is for many. British seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades are places that many people ritualistically and routinely return to, providing variations in time, space, and atmosphere that contrast and compliment everyday living in inland towns and cities. The varied associations with and experiences of seaside amusement arcades throughout my life sustain my access to and connection with them now.

As a long-term visitor of seaside amusement arcades, I stick to games of play or low-cost prizes (penny pushers, crane machines, basketball and skittles games, I'm still into whac-a-mole), only playing knowledge games with others as my general knowledge is rubbish. Over the years, I can recall two friends, at different times, showing me how to play a fruit machine, but the information didn't stick and beyond their sensory familiarity, how to play them is still a mystery to me. Similarly with video games, my experience of actually playing them is limited to the early home PC games of *Digger* (1983) and a home console version of Mario Kart called *Mario Kart 64* (1996). I did play a car racing car video game in a seaside amusement arcade once as a child and gained a place on the games machine scoreboard, much to the surprise of my onlooking family who observed my reckless driving during play. These past experiences inform how I continue to engage with seaside amusement arcades; rather than focusing on the intricacies of arcade games I am interested in the spatial qualities of amusement arcades and seaside amusement arcades as curious assemblages.

In my educational and professional experiences pre-PhD and academia, I come from a visual art background with an art degree and experiences of materials handling, making, creating, conceptual thinking, as well as drawing, painting, photography, collage and other approaches to image-making. I have experience of working in exhibitions and archives at museums, galleries and other organisations; this has involved lots of object handling and exhibition installing. Studying for an MA in Visual Culture introduced me to ideas and theories on visual and material culture, anthropology, everyday life and critical theory, a self-affirming time where my interests in creativity and artistry beyond the gallery really started to gain momentum and the interdisciplinary potential of visual culture, art, ethnography and human geography took hold. The creative and hands on experiences I've gathered most definitely inform how I engage with my surroundings. I continue to work towards appreciating the creativity and possibility of mundane encounters and eclectic, enduring places.

I am currently living and working in Manchester. My use of the terms 'the everyday' or 'everyday life' within this project reference my inland urban life and the seaside resort and seaside arcades as places I visit. This maps to the practice of seaside resorts as visiting, tourist places for many in British

culture, with seaside resorts and arcades considered as temporal sites of escape from work and everyday life for holiday and day trippers. The everyday can seem to be everyday yet nowhere, without clear boundaries and therefore difficult to identity (Felski, 2000:78). Although difficult to solidify, paying attention to the details of everyday life can be a way to explore the relations between the domestic, work, travel and recreational spaces that we inhabit, connecting public and private realms, routine and extraordinary moments, the familiar and the peculiar. For this project, the methods of close observation and attunement that are rooted in practices of the everyday (Highmore, 2008, 2002; De Certeau 1980; Perec, 1974) are applied to seaside resorts and arcades, foregrounding these sites as mundane, habitual, ordinary yet also magical, creative and elusive. The place experience of seaside amusement arcades as visiting places for this project are therefore differentiated from how an amusement arcade worker or person who lives close by to an amusement arcade might experience them. Notions of the everyday are autoethnographic and subjectively proposed in relation to the experiences of others. As part of a conversation with myself in relation to my positionality, I turn to Loveless's reflexive questions

Why am I interested in what I am interested in? Where am I coming from in relation to this interest? What world view am I inhabiting with my research and/or practice? What do I not know here? To what am I not attending? What is drawing me forward?

(Loveless, 2019:70)

I know that my interests in seaside amusement arcades come from a personal history and enquiry located within recent British cultural practices of the seaside, taking into account my British citizenship and ongoing experience of being part of British culture. My relationship to seaside arcades is rooted in my ongoing enthusiasm for the broader visual and material culture of British seaside resorts with working class histories. Connections have formed over a numbers of years prior to the research commencing and are sustained by attending to these enduring places, both carefully and critically, during the project.

Depending on where you are coming from, researching Blackpool from a visitor perspective has potential to be problematically voyeuristic, exploitative, reductive or touristic. As Urry claims, 'tourist' research can 'take possession of objects and environments, often at a distance' (Urry, 2002:147), it can unintentionally highlight privilege in relation to sights by drawing out cultural themes and views through the 'visual consumption of place' (Urry, 2002:147). Historically and persistent in the contemporary, this could be seen as a colonial style occupation of and access to space, a 'sampling'

of 'other' spaces and the world, from a comfortable and protected position. These are ethical concerns to carefully consider in any site-based, ethnographic research. For this project, there are integral aims to make the unknown known and show the fascinating and multi-layered experiences of amusement arcades that go beyond the commerciality of these spaces. As I endeavour to locate myself authentically in this research, the complexities of places like Blackpool that are infused with working class histories and cultures are acknowledged and treated with respect. The project aims to bring to network British seaside and inland urban locations, drawing out and celebrating underexplored qualities and affordances of seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades for visitors. Ideas on the everyday are approached reflexively through the artist-ethnography approach as I recognise the openings and limitations of my everyday in relation to the everyday of others. I would class myself as a towny at heart; I grew up in a town and this carries a certain identity and status in wider British culture. From a teacher and researcher perspective, feeling towny brings with it access to a breadth of people and places. I am able to engage with a range of sites that I relate to, whilst also recognising the political and social issues that impact seaside towns like Blackpool and my positionality. Utilising a sensory, embodied approach, the project goes beyond the cultural structures of the merely tourist-consumed visuality of a place, endeavouring to fill a gap in knowledge, through research undertaken over a number of years, that has cultural and creative significance and is important for understanding our relational history and heritage.

Accumulating. Gleaning. Getting-together.

Mixed methods

The project draws on mixed methods of participation and participant observation that pertain to art and ethnography through site-specific fieldwork. Fieldwork and returned visits, walking, fieldnotes and site-writing, photography, soundwalk recording and litter picking are combined to indicate and consider the arcade experience. These mixed participant observation methods allow for in-depth primary researcher engagement with seaside amusement arcades and the seaside resorts that surround them, foregrounding these places as multi-sensory zones. My approach to participant observation is phenomenological (Käufner, 2021) and mediates conceptual, multisensorial experience. Building on my skills and experience in the field of visual culture, I have used photography, visual engagement and analysis of amusement arcades and seaside resorts as a 'way in' that draws on this expertise. This project is a testing ground for soundwalk recording, fieldnotes and litter picking as

methods for enriching multi-sensorial insights into amusement arcades and their surroundings. The project expands on dominant visual modes of understanding (Ingold, 2000; Grasseni, 2007) to give a platform for other sensory modes of experience and understanding, with the visual thought about in relation to the other senses.

Fieldwork and returned visits

British seaside amusement arcades are places people can go to and return from, as part of a seaside resort day trip or holiday, with connections to them (singularly or collectively) forged over time. Returned and extensive solo research visits to seaside amusement arcade sites are planned for the project, mapping to returning visitor practices of them. Blackpool is revisited for the project, with other British seaside resort amusement arcades explored to contextualise Blackpool as the central site. Undertaking site-specific fieldwork is a way to directly collect data about people, culture and place in art (Gander, 2016; Chesney, 2022; Jurack, 2022-2023) and geography (Phillips and Johns, 2012). Fieldwork allows for creative, critical immersion in and responses to a particular site or series of sites; it is well suited to those looking to make discoveries as opposed to merely prove predetermined theories, through site-based experience. Pink and Morgan (2013) stress the importance of returned visits in ethnography for building rapport with a place, highlighting the differences between short term, potentially tourist-style research and longer periods of ethnographic research for in-depth immersion and emotionally and affectively complex discovery. Returned site visits to amusement arcades in Blackpool allows for experiential observations to unfold over time (at different times of day, week and season) and for extensive bodily site-based connections to come into being. Field trips are time-bound periods of ethnographic research that work in conjunction with offsite analysis and writing up. The research is grounded in experience, perception and subjective explanation through embodied and reflexive approaches to site research (Stoller, 1997). There is ongoing endeavour to acknowledge the shifting power relations and political agendas that inform my relationship with amusement arcades, how I interact with and learn from these sites through reflection. Seaside amusement arcades are, therefore, considered as always emerging. New introspective limitations and expansions have impacted my experience and interpretation during the completion of the project; these conditions will continue to evolve over time, with ethnographic 'knowing' made via the 'qualities and temporalities of things and persons that come together as part of a process' (Pink, 2009:354). Please see Appendix A for the project's seaside amusement arcade fieldtrip log (pp. 196-197). The seaside amusement arcades are listed here, grouped in alphabetical order under the name of the seaside resort in which they are located:

Blackpool

Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Lucky Star Family Amusements, Harts Amusements.

Eastbourne

Eastbourne Pier Amusements, Lion's Arcade, Family Amusements.

Fleetwood

Harbour Lights Amusements.

Hastings

Flamingo Amusements, Playland Amusements, Coastal Amusements.

Margate

The Showboat, The Flamingo, Down the Coast, Tivoli Amusements, Dreamland Arcade.

Morecambe

Johnny's Entertainments, Treasure Island, Coopers Amusements, Pleasureland.

Newquay

Jackpot, Playland, Slots Amusements, Stardust Amusements, Quicksilver Coast, Carousel Amusements.

Penzance

Grand Casino.

Scarborough

Coney Island, Silver Dollar, Taylor Made Fun, Olympia Leisure, Gillys.

Seahouses

Seahouses Amusements.

Southport

Silcock's Funland, Silcock's Funtime, Silcock's Amusements.

South Shields

F Newsome and Son, Quasar Amusements, The Dune Amusements, Ocean Beach.

St. Ives

Harbour Amusements.

Whitby

Fun City, Pleasureland, Funland.

Walking

Walking is a research method for embodied ways of knowing (Pink et al., 2010) and is a methodological concern in fieldwork. Walking as research method has an 'ambition to pay attention to experiences of tactile, feet-first, engagement with the world' (Ingold, 2008:14); it facilitates close-up engagement with the research environment and the material, textural and formal qualities of a place. Walking is an experiential modality of movement and a creative, critical, sustainable contributor to participant observation and embodied inquiry. In a critique of Wordsworth's poetry, Vergunst suggests 'the actions of the walking body and rhythms of walking as the source of creativity and 'eventness', the happening is *in the walk*' (Vergunst, 2008:73). Psychogeography emerged out of the aforementioned Situationists in the mid-nineteenth century, championing creative approaches to walking and feeling in the city to uncover the impacts of our environment on our behaviours (Coverley, 2006). LaBelle (2019) describes walking as a pulsational drive, a metered gate, experienced 'along the lines of a vibratory instant found in that moment of the foot hitting the ground and the wind brushing against the skin' (LaBelle, 2019:136). Ingold proposes that walking is a movement of 'pensive observation, of thinking as you watch and watching as you think – as it is a way of getting around' (Ingold, 2008:14-15). He suggests that 'the movement of walking itself is a way of knowing' (Ingold, 2008:14), and that 'everything takes place when walking – doing and thinking' (Ingold, 2008:13). Andrews writes that 'the rhythms of our walking and of our thinking are one' (Andrews, 2020:9); the body is vulnerable and unguarded when walking, it is open and fundamentally rhythmically responsive to its location. Wylie proposes that through walking 'self and world overlap in a ductile and incessant enfolding and unfolding' (Wylie, 2005:240) via an emerging encounter with the unique affordances of a place. Walking allows for me to be amidst and amongst British seaside amusement arcade sites and their seaside surroundings whilst being open to a range of shifting sensations. I am attentive to intermingling thoughts, feelings, bodily actions and moods whilst walking, with walking embedded in my artist-ethnography practice and place experience enquiry.

There is a rich history of walking implicated in art and ethnography. Evans (2012) foregrounds walking as an artistic practice and medium, through explorations of contemporary artists working with different modes of walking including marches, processions and drifting, as well as footsteps and lines as traces of walking. Lee and Ingold (2006) suggest walking as a methodological concern in ethnographic research in their 'Fieldwork on Foot' essay. Edensor's (2013) nightwalking autoethnographies demonstrate that paying attention to sensory experience can show how elements

of the environment are constituted culturally and experientially. Pujol (2018) reflects on his artistic experiences as a performance artist, educator and monk, advocating walking as creative form of cultural activism. De Certeau's research on walking as an everyday practice (De Certeau, 1980) continues to be a reference for academic discussion on walking and walking in the city in particular (Gray, 2000; Edensor, 2008; Boon and Levine, 2018), informing 'the work of artists in a variety of ways' (Pink et al., 2010: online). De Certeau proposes walking as an autonomous mode within urban spaces of politics and culture and a way to resist the controls of commerce and remake the city, from below. Pink et al. (2010) highlight 'discussions on ethnographic practice, with the connections between fieldwork and walking' proposing that 'We cannot but learn and come to know in new ways as we walk, making walking an ideal means of learning as an ethnographer' (Pink et al., 2010:3). Places are made through 'people's embodied and multisensorial participation in their environments' (Pink, 2015:112), with walking as multisensory (Ingold and Lee-Vergunst, 2008). Walking is considered a sensory encounter and sensory ethnographic practice (Pink, 2015). Whilst walking in art and ethnography still tends to gravitate towards the urban (Jacobs, 1961; De Certeau, 1980; Lefebvre, 1992; Elkin, 2017) and the rural including the rural coastal (Andrews, 2020; Collier, 2015; Pretty, 2014) this project contributes to lesser trodden walking research paths at seaside resorts (Bacon et al., 2023, Edensor and Millington, 2013).

Blackpool and other seaside resorts are designed for pedestrians, they are places to move in and through. Everyday urban walking (from A to B walking, to-work routes, perfunctory local park laps or dog walks around the block) and seaside holiday walking (sea air and views strolling, promenade parading, discovery and familiar encounter modes of walking) are similar yet distinguishable in contemporary experience. Walking as a seaside resort visitor incorporates the improvised and pulsational (pause points, treats, amusements). The act of 'going for a walk' rather than merely walking has a non-work or off duty status; it is for the purposes of recreational exercise and wellbeing and expands through the act of walking on holiday. The experience of walking for visitors at a seaside resort can be pleasurable, captivating, relaxing and restorative. Seaside resorts like Blackpool are, in lots of ways, infrastructures that encourage walking and more specifically, linear modes of walking – up and down piers, seafronts and beaches, guided by the water's edge. An activity gentle enough to allow for simultaneous imagining, reflecting and remembering, walking connects us to recollections of the past as well as real-time surroundings, stimulating affective experience. 'Walking conjures up other times and places that disrupt any linear flow' (Edensor, 2008:92). Visitors to seaside resorts often return to them, tracing past movements and walking the same paths and forging connections to places over time. Within the seaside resort, amusement

arcades solicit going off-piste and walking in disordered ways; their eclectic interiors energise combinational walking, lingering and wandering via labyrinthine layouts, machines and diverse encounters. Unless you are playing an arcade game with a seat like a car racing simulation game or in one of the cafés that some arcades offer, there are limited places to sit down, with continuous movement and exploration within the space encouraged.

Walking can be a site for 'radical placement and displacement of self, fixing and unfixing identity' (LaBelle, 2019:98) within urban, seaside or rural structures, expansive in its site-based bodily immersion, with space for imagining and remembering to unfold and urges to direct where I walk and other actions I take. Sensory absorption and affective action arise through walking in-situ at seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades and unfold in the days after a site visit. Edensor suggests that place-based affordances 'are created out of the physical and material as well as the social and subjective experience of walking' (Edensor, 2008:89), and that when walking 'different encounters with objects and materiality, peculiar sensations and ineffable impressions may be experienced' (Edensor, 2008:123). Walking enables creative and speculative forms of knowledge on seaside amusement arcade experience to come into being, converting narrative to knowledge (Ingold, 2008). Walking is a method well suited to the project's multisensory, affective and experiential enquiry, locating me in place, step by step.

Fieldnotes and site-writing

Fieldnotes are developed during fieldtrips to seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades and are integral to the project's ethnographic fieldwork and overarching creative, critical inquiry. Hand written and held in notebooks, the project's primary fieldnotes incorporate written observations, lists, mind-maps, ideas, drawings and diagrams. Fieldnotes are jotted down in amusement arcades, on benches on nearby seafronts and piers, sometimes in seaside resort cafes if it's raining, and on train rides home. I also use Instagram, as a platform for situating primary photos with fieldnotes (immediate observation and thoughts) whilst on fieldtrips. Fieldnotes are used to document, discover, reflect on and make sense of seaside amusement arcades and their surroundings; they are a creative thinking process, a 'reconstruction' of experience (Daynes and Williams, 2018:8) and a memory-aid. A form of ethnographic, anthropological writing, fieldnotes are, in themselves, interpretations (Geertz, 1973:317). They are used to decipher complex amusement arcade sites, draw out points of interest, describe sensory experience and write-through affective responses. Sample research fieldnotes from the project can be found in Appendix B. Fieldnotes form a key part

of the project's in-situ research, developed offsite into site-writing excerpts (signposted *in italics*) and the project's writing up; this brings together the immediate and experiential with the reflective and theoretically informed. Site-writing is adopted as a method for reflecting on site visits through fieldnotes, developing fieldnote ideas and observations into written passages that expand beyond the chapter's more formal academic writing. The project's approach to site-writing is informed by Jane Rendell's ideas on situatedness and site-specificity in critical writing (Rendell, 2010). Rendell proposes site-writing as a critical, spatial practice that is creatively responsive to site, emphasising how writing can engage materially with sites of inquiry by focusing on the spatial qualities of places as well as those remembered, dreamed and imagined (Rendell, 2010). I am influenced by the skilful thick description and sensitive observations of others of everyday and other places, notably Perec (1974), Lefebvre (1988) and Highmore (2008, 2002). These cultural theorists and writers all, in their own ways, encourage a fairer society via a questioning of everyday life that pans outwards from the micro to the macro as a form of resistance to cultural and political controls. Experiential, bio-poetical writing of walking and place including work by Parsons (2009), Shepherd (1977) and Woolf (1931) have also influenced my approach to the project's site-writing developed from fieldnotes. I utilise my 'position' in its manifold senses: my physical position, emotional position, ideological and political position' (Myhill, 2022:14) within the writing. Fieldnotes that are 'later developed capturing anticipations, memories, emotions and experiences' are signposted as a method in sensory ethnography (Steadman and Coffin, 2023:191). Anthropologist Stewart develops writing on the affective animations of ordinary life, attending to everyday places, objects and situations (Stewart, 2017, 2007). Stewart's approach to affective and sensory writing draws on the personal as a way to consider the cultural and the political. The project's fieldnotes, site-writing and writing up acknowledge the material, sensorial, historical, locative and atmospheric qualities and affordances of amusement arcades, through the descriptive, evocative, recollective, imaginative, and pensive. The project foregrounds creative, critical modes of writing as a research methodology (Ingridsdotter and Kallenberg, 2018), developing new empirical writing in situ and offsite.

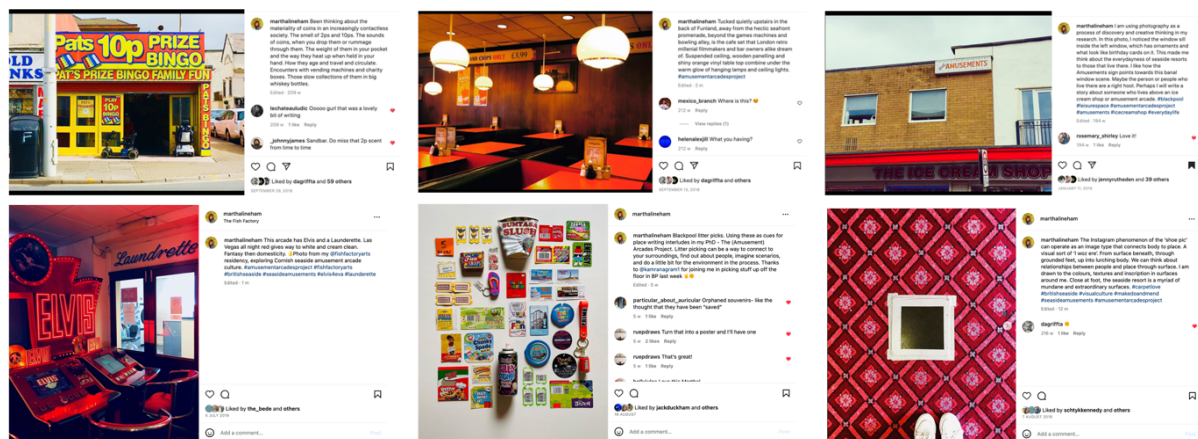


Figure 3: Sample Instagram photo and fieldnote posts from fieldtrips. Author's own.

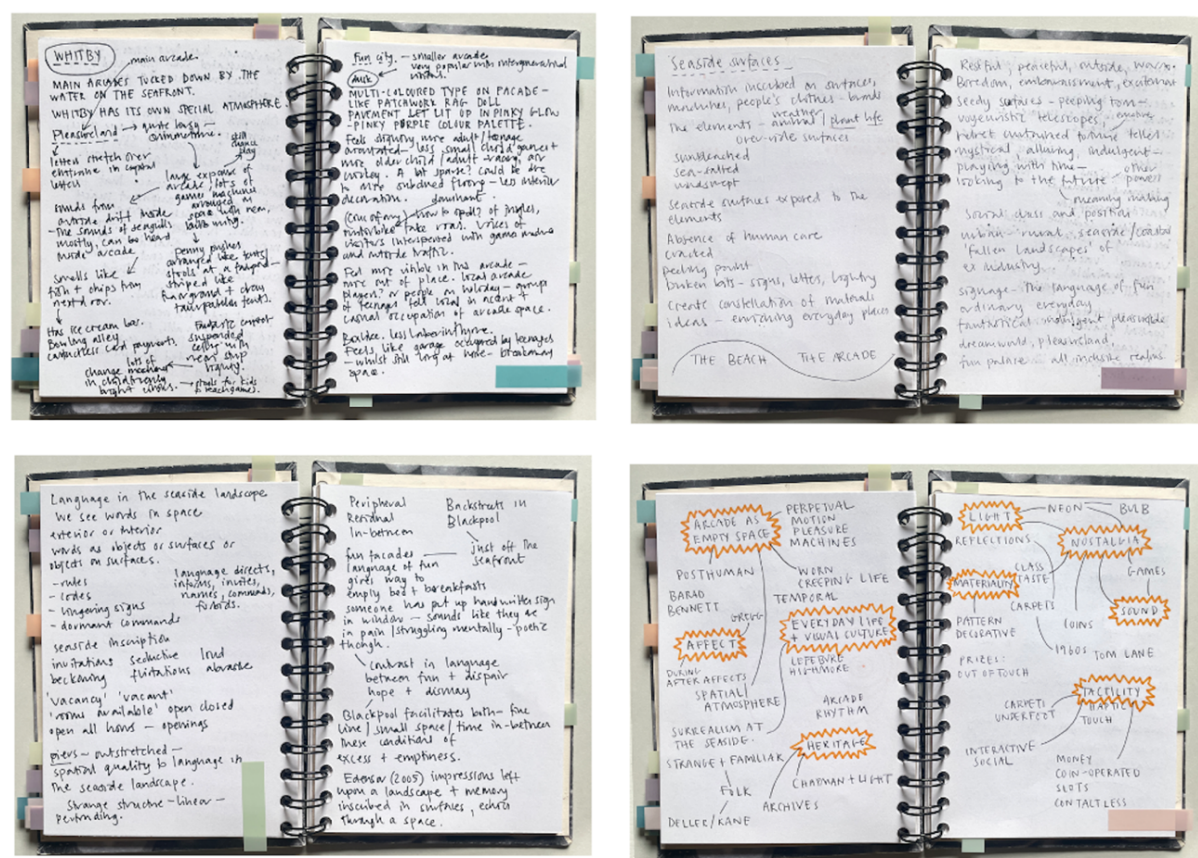


Figure 4: Sample fieldnote notebook pages from the project. Author's own.

Photography

Photography of amusement arcades and their surrounding environments has been utilised on fieldtrips as a creative process of discovery and documentation. Photography is a key method for the project, with primary photos informing aspects of the research in unexpected ways. Photography

initiates the artist-ethnography research process. Drawing on Collier and Collier's photography-as-can-opener reference (Collier and Collier, 1986) photography has helped me to establish rapport with and maintain connection to seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades, informing the project's unfolding amusement arcade analysis in situ and offsite. Photography acts as a direct response and memory-aid akin to fieldnotes. Ethnographer, Lyon (2013) describes what she calls 'strategies of looking' (Lyon, 2013:25). For Lyon, this involves 'incidental attention' which is 'casual, not trying too hard to see everything but to absorb the sensory feel and activity of a space and taking photos as part of that process' (Lyon, 2013:26). I associate with this in my approach to photography, entering a photographic flow state when walking and conducting place-based fieldwork. When on a fieldtrip, I move amongst seaside amusement arcades and their surrounding resorts, attuning to them and taking photos of points of interest that are stimulated by my presence and experience. Looking is deliberate and open; I do not go to amusement arcades with structured ideas of what to photographically extract from them, instead, I notice what is going on and respond to this through photography. Photography is a way to pay attention to points of encountered interest. For this project, photography is largely intimate, dwelling on amusement arcade details and using the camera as a tool for close looking and inspection. I extract fragments with purpose from seaside amusement arcades, photographically framing them and finding meaning through consideration of them in relation to other project findings and the project's theoretical underpinning.

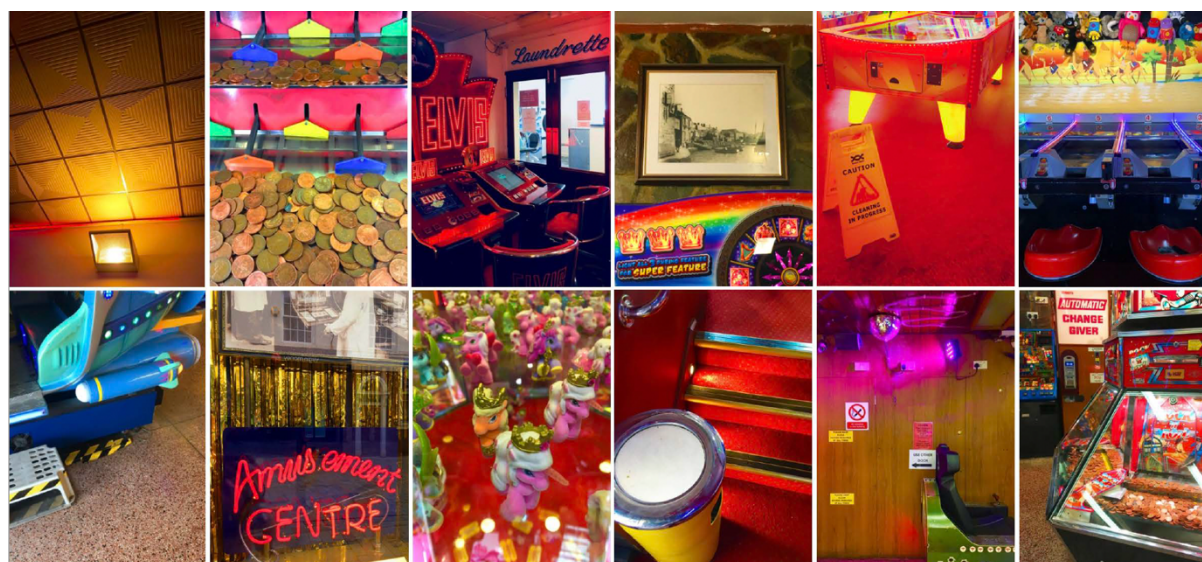


Figure 5: Sample fieldtrip photos, revealing and exploring the theme of light in amusement arcades. From amusement arcades in Newquay, Penzance, Blackpool, St. Ives and Southport. Author's own.

Photography takes place across the project's fieldwork trips and acts as points of reference and recollection in between site visits. There is an ongoing process of photo-taking, photo-editing

(colour and cropping), photo-organising and photo-analysis. I am inspired by contemporary seaside resort photographers who work with seaside resort observation in their photography. 'Resort 1' (Fox, 2009-2011) is a photography series that focuses on family orientated seaside resort sites and includes one photograph of a boldly coloured British seaside amusement arcade interior. Seaside fanatic and photographer Ball photographs contemporary seaside resorts, with a penchant for amusement arcade facades at dusk (Ball, 2019). Parr's photography of New Brighton from the 1980s continues to influence aspiring photographers with its heavily saturated, colourful imagery and candid perspective on the British seaside resort holiday (Parr, 1986). All three photographers pay attention to the eclectic and distinctive architectural and material qualities of British seaside resorts. With a long history as part of visual anthropology, ethnography and fieldwork (Pink, 2021; Edwards, 2011) the camera is used as a tool for capturing and recording moments of cultural intrigue and difference. Photography helps me make sense of the seaside amusement arcade's complex environment, by framing and capturing a succession of interesting details and encounters for consideration. Working with digital photography, I use my DSLR camera or I-phone camera, depending on the circumstances and spatial allowances. Photography for this project has been plentiful and essential in unravelling not only the visuality, spatiality and materiality of arcades but as a way to consider how these qualities are entangled with the sonic, haptic, flavoursome and olfactory. Photography is an essential component to the project's Light chapter, where the camera's sensitive capabilities for conveying illumination, coloured light, surface reflection and gloom are key to the chapter's content and analysis. Photography is also drawn on extensively in the project's Intermission where interesting arcade surfaces and material things are foregrounded for their contribution to the place experience of amusement arcades. Photos have been taken inside amusement arcades and of their surrounding seaside resort locations, contextualising the arcade's qualities within a broader framework of seaside resort design, artistry and infrastructure. Photos are outward looking; I take photos of arcade carpet shoe pics along the way and occasionally appear in reflections within a photo. These photos locate me in the arcade space and emplace me, as the solo rein, within the research. I choose to stay close to the games machines and pay attention to arcade interiors, rather than focusing on people in the arcade. Photography works in conjunction with the project's field notes and soundwalk recordings to capture both human and more-than-human components in the arcade. Photography is discreet and sporadic; it blends in with the tourist practice of photo-taking at the seaside and when on holiday; this has allowed for me to research in an unobtrusive way, gaining a photographic closeness to amusement arcade sites.

Photography prescribes to representation (Wright, 1999:9) and aligns to the autoethnographic, perceptive and experience driven methodology of the project. Pink proposes that ‘the meanings of photographs are contingent and subjective’ (Pink, 2013:75); looking back at fieldtrip photography after the event/fieldtrip is a key part of the project’s reflective, analytical process on place experience. It is important that I take photos myself rather than work with someone else as a photographer, as the photos are entwined with my own experiences, observations and fluctuating subjectivities.

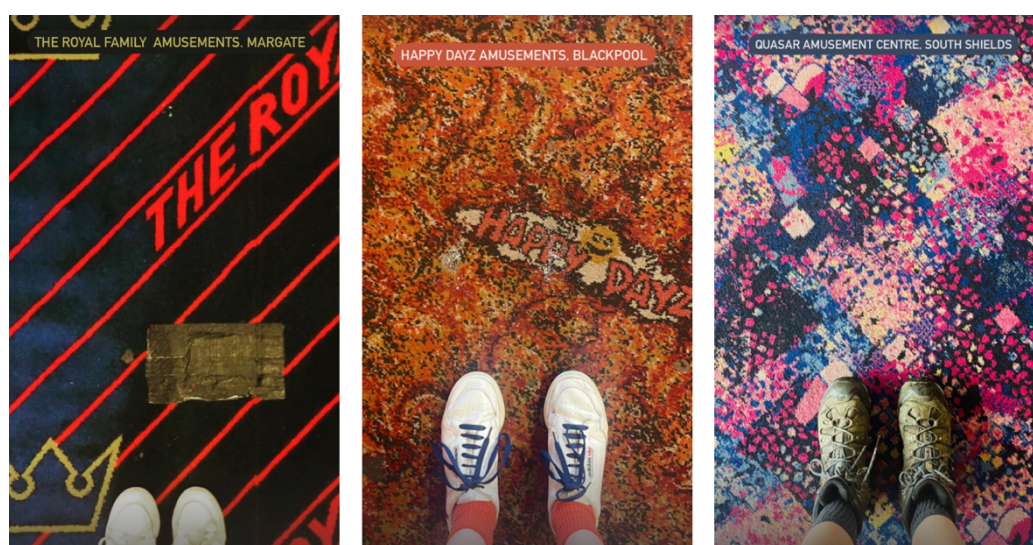


Figure 6: Sample amusement arcade carpet shoe-pics posted on Instagram. Author’s own.

Photos are situated and considered alongside writing through an essayistic practice of writing and photography. As Lee (2019) articulates ‘the essay is, etymologically, a trial, test or experiment; it offers the scope to explore and wander critically’ (Lee, 2019:14), with the textual accommodating multiple perspectives and the photographic or visual bringing the intriguing to the fore. This project negotiates connections between photography, soundwalk recordings, found objects and writing. In communicating my research, photos flow from researcher to audience, they are an immediate ‘way in’ that evidence the distinctive qualities of seaside amusement arcades, working with text to develop critical understandings. Photography is a key method that is contemplative, subjective and exploratory, offering new insights into arcade place experience in combination with other methods.

Soundwalk recording

Soundwalk recording brings together gathered audio documentation from seaside resort amusement arcades for this project, with links to a map of Blackpool soundwalks and the project’s

broader archive of soundwalks located in the Sound chapter. For the sound data collection, I have used binaural headphones and a pocket sound recorder or I-phone voice memos; these tools allow for me to discreetly walk amongst, linger in and move through amusement arcades, recording sound from an intimate perspective whilst simultaneously being immersed in the arcade's other sensory qualities. Soundwalk recording can be used to contend with complex and layered soundscapes. The binaural sound recording technique has been championed by Cardiff and Miller (1991) for how it brings a closeness to sound. Binaural sound recording can be a bridge between the visual, physical world and the artist's body (Cardiff quoted by (Egoyan 2002:5)) whilst also capturing voluminous and expansive surrounding sounds, creating deep, felt connections to place. For this project, soundwalk recording is foregrounded as a strand of artist-ethnography research that creates conceptions of space-time and elevates places within the aural imagination. Soundwalk recording stimulates place experience recollection for analysis in conjunction with fieldnotes and photos. An analysis of the sonic qualities of amusement arcades is constructed via two listening positions 'in situ' and 'via the recording'.

This approach of moving through, walking, and lingering, in the arcade space captures the multiplicity of sounds in the arcade space and is implicit to how visitors move within and experience them sonically. Street (2020:15) highlights that 'listening to a recording out of context of the place itself is different to listening in situ'. Sound-recording in the field enables isolation of acoustic environments for consideration and closely observed replay. Collecting sound recordings and fieldnotes (in-action), transcription of soundwalks through time-based writing (via the recording) and contemplative playback (on-action) (Schön, 1991), the investigation develops an experiential and reflective listening practice. Immediate impressions of arcade soundscapes in fieldnote form are an essential part of the mix, with insightful and evocative textual interpretations enriching sound recordings. Field recordings and fieldnotes are jumping-off points to the underlying questions of how sonic environments interact with our ideas of ourselves and our lived environments. Fieldnotes, transcription and writing up expand the project's sound research from the immediate and surrounding to the actioned, imagined, and affective. These connected yet distinctive listening approaches condition perception in 'likewise different ways' (Chion, 1994:139), foregrounding immersion and selection, immediacy and recollection. Listening back to a soundwalk recording brings an opportunity to live it again 'through the time it took to happen in the first place' (Street, 2020:11); it sets field recordings into time-based memory. This process draws out sound for analysis as well as situating sound amongst other site-based sensory conditions. Sound experience can stretch further than our visual peripheries, founding expansive horizons (Street, 2020) or taking place

in up-close, very near spaces that our vision cannot reach. In our visually orientated contemporary western society, we collectively have less appreciation for the emotional importance of hearing (Blessner and Salter, 2007). Drawing on Berger's influential theory that signifies 'seeing' as culturally informed (Berger, 1972), listening is also informed by culture, expanding beyond the dominant 'visual' to reveal other, often overlooked aspects of culture and life. Sight alone, can be perceived to go with spatial practices of division, compartmentalisation and surveillance, whereas sound operates through fluidity, inclusivity and diffusion. Sound comes into your unconscious more directly than visual information (Chion, 1994) and is highly pertinent to sensory, affective experience; it connects a researcher to an environment and has proven particularly useful in foregrounding hidden or marginalised aspects of places and culture. Sound recording enhances the project's image-based and textual research; it extends beyond written words and disseminates 'in between' the framings of photography.

Sound recording or field recording in the landscape has seen expansive contributions from artists and ethnographers endeavouring to classify sound, noise, and everyday acoustics, and experimenting with ways to communicate findings in innovative ways. Sound perception is a hidden skill, often 'overshadowed by the visual perception of space' (Blessner and Salter, 2007:309-16). There is an expansive discourse on the study of field recording. Feld (2013) proposes that artmaking is something that should be and could be more central to anthropological thinking and that field recording in art-anthropological practice is an important way of making that connection. Feld highlights his audible traces within a recording (Feld, 2013), advocating listening back to sound recordings as a way to regain a sense of bodily presence (Feld, 2013). Ford (2013) proposes that field recording is about listening and being present, which opens up ways of 'understanding the physical world, the materiality of place, the surfaces that surround you, the textures, and dimensions' (Ford, 2013:87). Drever (2002) champions field recording as an 'open air' rather than 'armchair' research practice that takes a 'holistic approach to the environment and its people' (Drever, 2002:24), with sound research enhancing understandings of the world around us and the impacts and effects of sound on our everyday perceptual habits (Drever, 2002).

More recently, soundscape researchers have become concerned with the effects of sounds on listeners (Augoyard and Torgue, 1995). Listening can create 'distinctive senses of proximity and distance, intimacy and spatial arrangement' (Revill, 2018:264). Epstein (2020) highlights how sound effects the whole body and mind, proposing the distinctive power of auditory imagination. By listening to and recording spaces as I move through them, sound walking captures sound for written

description and analysis. Listening weaves together the intensity and ephemerality of space (LaBelle, 2019). Gallagher et al. (2017) advocates that 'walkers encounter prosaic sounds and strange sounds, sounds that prompt active listening and imagination, and others that merge into a background fuzz' (Gallagher et al., 2017:624). Sound recording is about proximity and incorporation; it emerges from and is perpetually centred in place, contributing to the production of unique, site-specific auditory atmospheres and unique listener experiences. When undertaking soundwalk recording in the field for this project in amusement arcades, I am struck by the experience of deep listening, the heightened connection it brings to my surroundings, and the exhilarating and exhausting awareness and aural depth that sound recording and listening bring. I am invested in sound recording as a highly sensual and subjective form of gathering data based on observation, listening, and engaging (Rennie, 2014). I am also invested in the potential openings of attentive listening as a method for inclusive knowledge creation. This project works towards listening as a process rather than a 'momentary snapshot' (Revill, 2018:264) and listening as a time-based event in which amusement arcade spaces unfold.

Sound is bound up with visceral, embodied forces that skulk just beneath conscious knowing; these forces affect us and can swerve us towards movement and thought. Sonic impressions unconsciously guide our behaviour (Augoyard and Torgue, 1995), with sound as 'both spatial and temporal, evoking a sense of time, distance, direction or movement' (Gallagher et al., 2017:621). This is prevalent through the randomness of instinctive movement and thought of visitors within amusement arcade spaces. Soundwalk recording facilitates embodied and reflexive responses to seaside amusement arcade sound that further develop the project's artist-ethnography approach, as I continue to 'write' some human experience and represent these unique sites through sound. Sound research can assist with nuanced and inclusive understandings of who we are, helping to identify and store our cultural and intellectual legacy (Blessner and Salter, 2007) and reveal the production of identity and difference in society (Gallagher and Prior, 2013). This aligns to this project's ambitions to establish the seaside amusement arcade's sensory affordances and affective potentialities, with sound interconnecting experiences of British seaside resorts and seaside resort amusement arcade to everyday life. The sound research for this project develops the project's reflexive approach to sensorially engaging with and creating new readings of seaside amusement arcade sites. Methodologically, there is an inclusion angle in relation to sound – it accentuates different voices, acoustics, and experiences. Older and younger people come to the fore in sound recordings and in a soundscape, as well as other bodies that might be less visible or bodies who might not be acknowledged so well in a visual sense being given a more equal platform through sound study.

Sound can also reveal various matter and more-than-human elements that go visually unnoticed and is utilised as a way to reveal 'hidden or marginal aspects of a place... adding supplementary information and an additional sensory dimension' (Gallagher and Prior, 2013:2-3). LaBelle (2019) proposes that auditory knowledge is based on 'empathy and divergence, allowing for careful understanding and deep involvement in the present while connecting to the dynamic of mediation, displacement and virtuality' LaBelle (2019: xvii). Listening exchanges between me, the as solo researcher, and the environment enable the project's new interpretative analysis of amusement arcades as affective sites that expand beyond their consumer means.

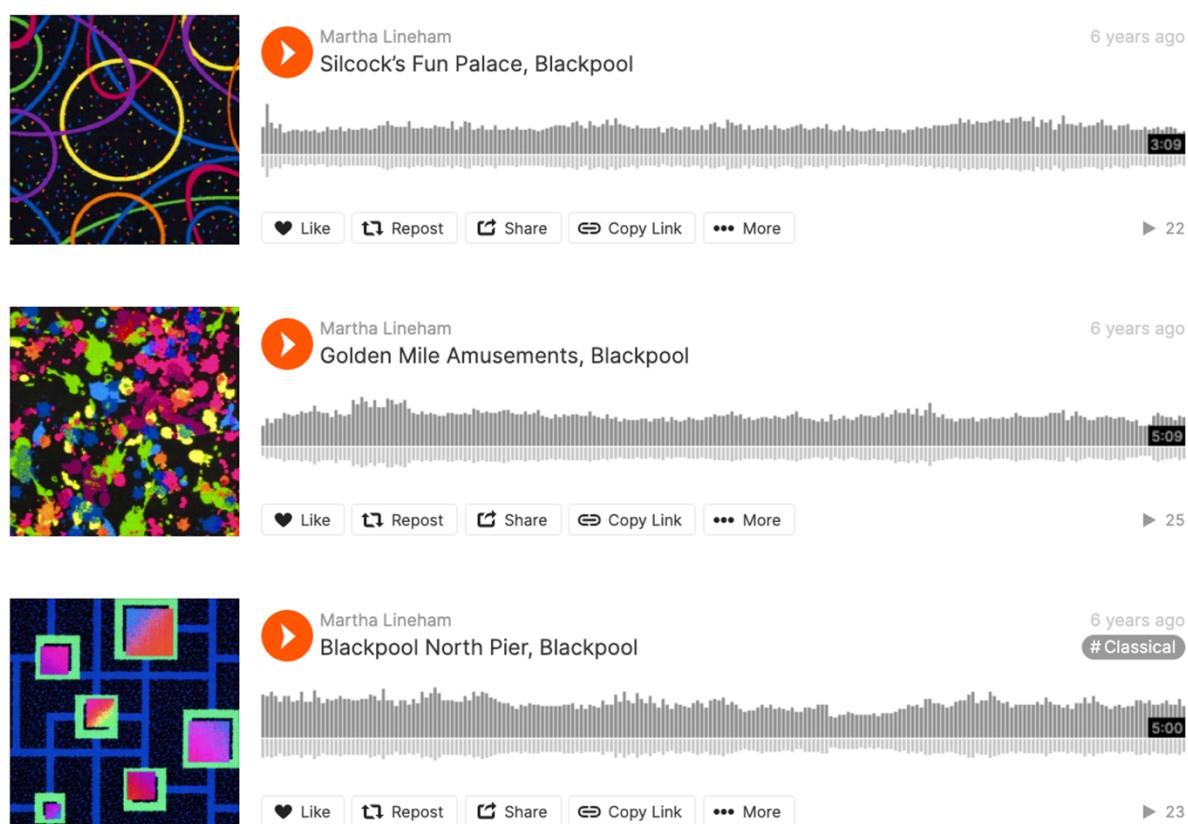


Figure 7: Sample image of amusement arcade soundwalks on Soundcloud. Author's own.

Litter picking

Seaside resort and seaside amusement arcade litter-picking has been undertaken, in moderation, gleaning site-specific fragmented matter to ignite insights into seaside amusement arcade experience. Things tend to gather, accumulate and cluster at the shoreline (washed up by the sea, seaside resort vintage and junk shop culture, bins full of stuff including stag and hen do remnants and ice-cream wrappers, straying bits of litter). For this project, litter picking of selected material from public places, mainly the pavement and wooden boardwalks of Blackpool's promenade and

piers, and amusement arcade floors, is way to gather and consider the sensory and material qualities of British seaside resorts in an unobtrusive and environmentally friendly way, bringing to the fore taste, smell and touch as well as the visual, material, sonic and spatial. Litter picking is a way of tracing human experiences, practices and behaviours. The project permits chance encounters with found matter as a way to reflect on seaside culture and experience. Litter picking is practiced as a process of creative, investigative collecting by artist and ethnographers, expanding as a creative method at the seaside. Dempsey's project *Cluster Collections* consists of found objects, collage and writing and is based on the north west coast of England (Dempsey, no date). Smith's *Sea Amulets* installation is made from found beach detritus and painted clay (Smith, 2021-23). Bennett (2010) proposes that litter, amongst other everyday matter, reveals the ways we see ourselves, others and our world. Connor proposes that everyday innate things including buttons, sweets and keys have magical powers, doing and meaning more than they are designed to (Connor, 2011). Bennett and Connor both foreground matter as having agency, with everything alive, interconnected and in process. The succession of low-cost consumer experiences that seaside resorts cater for, and the litter affiliated to these experiences in resorts like Blackpool reveals how these places are practiced by visitors. The project's litter picks gather in the Intermission.



Figure 8: Sample litter pick photos. Author's own.

Here and there: writing up

The project oscillates between fieldwork (in-situ) and working at home or in the library on the project (offsite), developing through 'a constant back and forth between thought and practice, between

reflexivity and instant reaction, between distance and intimacy' (Daynes and Williams, 2018:12). Offsite, I 'revisit' and explore fieldwork fieldnotes, photos, soundwalk recordings and litter picks, organising and thinking through them, considering the findings conceptually and developing written responses that negotiate 'theory and practice as equal and imbricated components of the ethnographic research' (Daynes and Williams, 2018:10). Analysis of primary fieldnotes, photos, soundwalk recordings and litter picks is based on the project's overarching place experience framework and chapter specific theoretical discourses. Whether I am conducting site-specific fieldwork or off-site 'writing up', seaside amusement arcades are a constant, bolstering the seashore with their strange and familiar colourful electrification or after hours dark and cavernous factory floor emptiness. When looking/listening/feeling back to seaside amusement arcade experience offsite, fieldwork findings are enmeshed with the present 'real' environment, connecting visited and everyday research spaces. This exchange between place-based in-situ participant observation and offsite analysis and reflection maps to the project's autoethnographic approach of data collection and analysis; the process is a reflective, creative practice of in-action and on-action (Schön, 1991). Writing up moves between the experiential, theoretical, recollective, imaginative, and critical. The project's writing in-situ and offsite writing approach of fieldnotes, site-writing and writing up brings to attention the temporality and 'occasionality' of seaside amusement arcade experience that is commonplace for many; they are often experienced in moderation as part of a day excursion or holiday. Place experience cannot be fully actualised through language and writing, only probed at in partiality. Rather than seek to merely reflect or capture the atmosphere or sense of arcade place, my approach endeavours to generate a new one through writing some human experiences to represent a collection of sites. I create place by choosing to amplify and represent my own place experience.

Image archive research

In the earlier stages of this project, image archive research exploring the visual culture of British amusement arcades, in travelling fairs and urban settings as well as at the seaside, has been undertaken in conjunction with historical text-based research on the subject. This is situated within the Setting the Scene chapter. Archives explored are The University of Sheffield Library, National Fairground and Circus Archive (no date), The Mass Observation Archive (no date) and The North West Film Archive (no date), with photo images from The National Museum and Fairground Archive licensed for the open access publication of the project and included in the Setting the Scene chapter. The history of amusement arcades is complex. The image archive research undertaken for this project forms an integral part of developing understandings of them as longstanding sites with

shifting circumstances, forms and identities in British culture. The image archive research focuses on photography, contextualising contemporary seaside amusement arcade experience within a wider discourse of amusement arcade history and culture. Image archive research has revealed them as part of fairs and seaside resorts, but with limitations on documentation of seaside amusement arcades in particular, as sites of interest. The project goes beyond this to put British seaside amusement arcades at the centre of attention. Photo research for this project, both primary (fieldwork) and secondary (image archive), are important close observation techniques that explore the physical, material and atmospheric affordances of amusement arcades. Image archive research helps to mediate the project's new understandings. As with all research methods for this project, image archive research is a process of discovery, open to the foregrounding of 'material and conceptual aspects of the archive' (Orlow, 2004:79). I engage with archive content creatively and open-mindedly, working with material selection and analysis to uncover the history and culture of sites. I enjoy being led by my own curiosity and imagination as to where the image research goes and dwells, allowing analysis of findings to be 'directed by associations, which often produce the most amazing constellations' (Orlow, 2004:80). The project's image archive research captures perceptions (Peirson, 2023) of ongoing British seaside amusement arcade sites, evidencing their eclectic 20th century design and how aspects of this persist in the seaside amusement arcade's contemporary contexts. Fabian (2008) proposes that 'there is something intensely personal about experiencing presence through a document of past events' (Fabian, 2008:113). Image archive research in my artist-ethnography practice strengthens meaningful connections with sites, connecting historical and contemporary amusement arcade information with my own experiences of them. There is a delight in making archival discoveries; this gives way to the responsibility of interpreting, framing and representing fragments of the past within one's own self-selected contexts. I am constantly creating links between the past and the present in my artist-ethnography practice and consider archives as springboards to creative and informed understandings of places.

Beyond engagement with existing and established archives, I consider the (Amusement) Arcades Project an investigation that generates its own archive of original material. The project presents the making, documenting and collecting of an experiential record of contemporary seaside amusement arcades, through text, photo, sound and object. The project's research findings can be used as a starting point for people who engage with it to stimulate their own recollections, imaginings and experiences. The project is a document and an experiment in artist-ethnography research that attempts to conjure nearness to and expanded contemplation of British seaside amusement arcades.

Summing up. Ready to go.

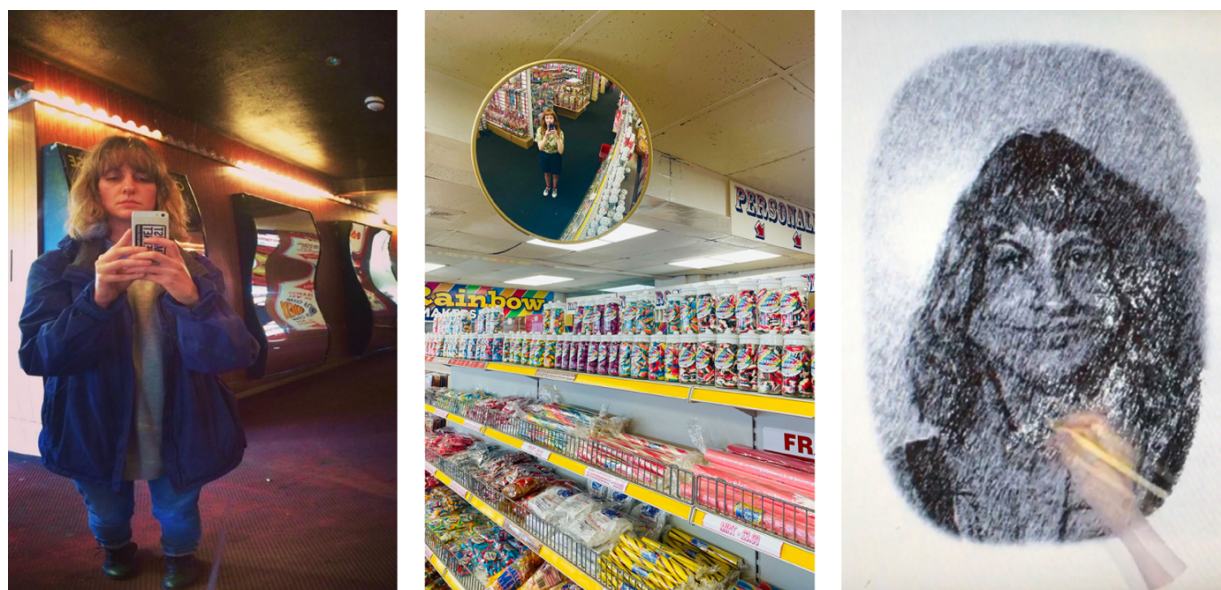


Figure 9-11: Photos of Author in amusement arcade hall of mirrors in Silcock's Funland in Southport, Rock City Superstore in Blackpool and impression of artist from amusement arcade artist's portrait booth in Blackpool arcade. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

The project's artist-ethnography methodology observes British seaside amusement arcades through a new mixed methods approach, asking questions about the experience of these places through direct interaction with and reflection on them. The project's artist-ethnography methodology disrupts received ideas on British seaside amusement arcades and extends critical understandings of seaside resort and seaside arcade experience, through an originally termed artist-ethnography research practice that develops new knowledge. The mixed methods approach takes into consideration the multitude of sensory and affective affordances that seaside amusement arcades create. Different media compliment each other in developing documentation and understanding on amusement arcade experience. The project is a creative experiment in working across different modes of writing (field-notes, site-writing and writing up), photography, sound recording and litter picking; words, images, sounds and matter are combined to reveal the amusement arcade's unique sensory qualities and affective affordances. The project research takes place over a number of years and the findings are informed by artistic academic 'training and intellectual development that have opened up for me through engaging with ethnographic research' (Lähdesmäki, 2020:235), through reading, theory and practice. Data analysis reflects participation, observation and critical reflection through a self-sustained ethnographic-theoretical dialogue (Pink and Morgan, 2013). Through fieldwork and analysis, 'explanations are revealed, connections are made, and new forms of understanding emerge' (Sullivan, 2010:95).

The project's methodological approach is open to change and the possibilities of thinking and feeling things differently, foregrounding artist-ethnography as an active rather than passive approach to place. It is my approach to try and document my experiences and ideas as a process evolving over time, in order to assess the potential for new understandings of place, based on the subjectivities and openings of the research.

How to do artist-ethnography: a quick guide

- Gather your kit (notebook, pen, camera, binaural headphones, sound recorder, spare batteries, bag for collecting found things, any other materials (clay, drawing pencils, watercolours etc.) and apparatus (tripod, camera lenses) as intended.
- Wear comfortable shoes and pack a rain mac.
- Begin to take notice of your surroundings, through your body, before you leave home.
- Walk or use public transport, wherever possible, to reach your location.
- Observe attentively and participate carefully, using all of the senses.
- Pay attention to the habitual, the mundane, the everyday, the dull, the intimidating, the boring.
- Notice the unnoticed.
- Examine the taken for granted.
- Question the overlooked.
- Consider everything interesting, open and alive.
- Stay close, go slow and describe thickly.
- Make connections.
- Trace things back to their origins.
- Speculate stories.
- Be respectful to others and responsive to the world around you whilst conducting your open-ended investigation.
- Document your findings in range of ways appropriate to the encounter, that could include –
 - Making notes (words, mind-maps, lists, drawings, diagrams, colour swatches, other)
 - Taking photos (get up close, pan out, find interesting angles and viewpoints)
 - Recording sounds (soundwalks using binaural recorders recommended)
 - Collecting stuff (litter, detritus, found objects, material residue, other).
- Return to the site, at different times of day, season, year.
- Refer back to your fieldtrip findings to stimulate thinking, creating, making and writing offsite.
- Reflect on your positionality and subjectivity within the research often: where are you coming from? What do you not know?
- Trust yourself, your interpretations are valuable.

Figure 12: How to do artist-ethnography: a quick guide. Author's own.

Epilogue: notes on ethics and sustainability

This PhD project has been subject to a full ethical review via Manchester Metropolitan University's Ethics Checklist process for Doctorate research, receiving unconditional approval in September 2018. Manchester Metropolitan University's Ethics Checklist reviews risks and hazards, project data, publication and dissemination, insurance and indemnity and any additional information in relation to the ethical integrity of the research. The review ensures risks are minimised, practice is monitored, prevents research misconduct, and assures equality, consent, respect, responsibility and resilience within the research process. I work as a lone researcher throughout and am the author and owner of this research.

Ethics here does not mean an individual set of fixed principles (as in consumer ethics or personal ethics) but instead a capacity to be attuned to the situation, to be immersed in it, and to create something emergent out of the existing conditions... This is the ethics of encounter.

Bergman and Montgomery (2017:202)

Beyond Manchester Metropolitan University's Ethics Checklist, the ethical approach for this research aligns to the project's focus on the sensory and affective experience and place atmospheres of British seaside amusement arcades through fieldwork and writing up. How we affect each other and how I, as the researcher, respond to the shifting attributes of places investigated for this project requires ongoing ethical consideration, responsibility and sensitivity. I identify pre-determined conditions of amusement arcades for fieldwork exploration (locations, places that are open to the public to move in, through and out of during their opening hours) as well as their emergent affordances (people, situations, varying material assemblages, the weather) developing a reflexive and respectful approach to these places through the research encounter. The project's ethical framework is 'part of an open-ended, unfolding experiment... in which we figure things out along the way' (Bergman and Montgomery, 2017:239), with considerations of other people at its core. This unfolds through an ethical approach to observation and participation during fieldwork, as well as when writing up the project thesis and representing others.

The research requires multi-tasking when onsite, observing, participating, with mixed-methods of fieldnotes, photography soundwalking and recording, and litter picking working *with* rather than against each other. I retain a spatial awareness and am conscious of not obstructing or endangering

the health and safety of other people when undertaking the research, intermingling with people and places through an unobtrusive, mobile research practice. The research maintains the privacy and anonymity of other people observed in the study, and is undertaken without the intent to harass or intimidate. When undertaking fieldwork photography, my focus is on the interiors of amusement arcades, their visual, material and spatial qualities in relation to my own experiences. I respect the privacy of others and when taking and selecting photos for inclusion in the thesis I work towards photography that excludes identifiable people. I adhere to restrictions on photography in adult gaming areas of amusement arcades, where photography is restricted due to gambling legislation. Instead, these areas of amusement arcades are explored and contemplated through fieldnotes that do not focus on the intricacies of games play. Seaside resorts are embedded with the social practice of photo-taking, suited to the use of photography for this project, with photography unobtrusive. Rather than treating photography 'as a 'record' or 'capture' of the world, photographs become materials that I can move forward with as a researcher, with 'research materials taking on new meanings as we work with them' (Sumartojo, 2023:241). The ethics of soundwalking depends on the specific location where a soundwalk takes place. For example, Drever reflects on a group soundwalk in London, learning through the research encounter that 'bringing our soundwalking group to listen to the Quakers was obtrusive and unwelcome and verging on the unethical' (Drever 2020:4), as the soundwalk interrupted the Quaker's meaning of silence. Other shared places such as markets and parks could be deemed as more appropriate for soundwalking activities. Drever highlights the researcher's emergent ethical stance on how to self-permit a soundwalk that covers multiple sub-locations, demonstrating the need for an emergent sensitivity to the qualities, politics and atmospheres of different places to determine the appropriateness of where soundwalking can be self-permitted. The seaside amusement arcade locations for this research are dynamic sounding places of eclectic human and more-than-human acoustics. Amusement arcades invite people to participate in them, with the binaural sound recording equipment used unobtrusive to the ambience of an arcade. Observation of human participants via soundwalking and sound collection raises questions of consent; this depends on the recognisability of humans within a soundwalk recording (be that fieldnotes or audio recordings for replay). Thresholds for permitting this vary between researchers and disciplines, with some attitudes proposing soundwalking giving way to overhearing that could verge on eavesdropping (Drever, 2020:2). Westerkamp endorses 'sustainable soundwalking' as an ethical way of cultivating a personal listening practice, practicing sound recording self-reflexively with 'sonic writing' part of the process. Westerkamp defines sonic writing as describing soundscapes in intensive detail, inviting the reader into the sonic world. This project uses a combinational approach to soundwalking via the 'naked ear', fieldnotes and binaural recordings via

a lone researcher technique. Listening is non-evasive and carried out across multiple sites over an extensive period of time. My approach to litter picking as a research method is non-evasive and occurs in daylight in public places. I do not pick up any unidentifiable items or animal faeces, I do not confront people who are littering, and I do not pick up litter from private and/or domestic places. For this research, litter has been gathered from the busy pedestrian areas of Blackpool seafront and piers only. When analysing data collected during fieldwork, the study takes into consideration the potential bias of my representation as I become engrossed in the study and work as an autoethnographic researcher. I engage in self-reflection to identify and explore the intersections between the self and social life via an ongoing process.

The project uses walking as a sustainable method for exploring seaside resort sites. I travel to and from seaside sites via public transport to lower environmental impacts of research-based travel. When in-situ, I work intensively with fieldnotes, photography, soundwalk recording and litter-picking to maximise the data collection per visit, making the most of the allocated time and required travel. Fieldnotes, photography, soundwalk recording and litter-picking are activities with low-environmental intervention and impact. Walking, close looking, deep listening and litter picking have all heralded as processes that aid mental wellbeing; they have proven to be effective in contributing to my own good mental health and are creative-critical methods I teach in my lecturing practice to art students. As with any recording, there are underlying environmental issues to consider, here phone photo and sound storage and the impacts of archival phone space on the environment. As an ethnographic researcher, I work towards effective data storage, deleting unused photography and soundwalk recordings, and monitoring my data storage space. Following a fieldtrip, I work offsite to organise data and delete any false starts or limp data from my phone. This research is ethically and sustainably grounded, and I remain open to further developing my ethical and sustainable research approach going forward.

Setting the Scene

This chapter situates the British seaside amusement arcade within its historical and contemporary contexts. Firstly, a typology of different kinds of amusement arcade in contemporary British culture identifies British seaside amusement arcades as a certain type for exploration, helping to establish the perimeters of the project's research. Secondly, a selection of historical, archival images demonstrates some of the amusement arcade's visual, material and spatial qualities. Thirdly, a review of literature on the development of the British seaside amusement arcade as part of the British holiday is presented, demonstrating their rich history yet the lack of research on the unique experience of these places for visitors.

Typology of contemporary British amusement arcades

Retro video games arcades

Description: Relatively recent type of arcade. Computer arcade games machines from (now retro) 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, sometimes early home consoles also included. Drinks (alcohol, soft) and snacks. Dark and neon spaces. Often adult orientated, with day or evening pay passes with access to all of the games rather than pay per coin operated machine.

Games include: PacMan, Street Fighter, Defender, Star Wars, Space Trooper, Donkey Kong, Atari Super Pong, Galaxian.

Examples:

Arcade Club, Bury (2014) / Leeds (2019) / Blackpool (2021)

Four Quarters, Peckham (2014) / Hackney (2017) / Bristol (2020) / Elephant Park (2021)

NQ64, Birmingham / Bristol / Cardiff / Edinburgh / Glasgow / Liverpool / Manchester Northern Quarter / Manchester Peter Street / Newcastle / London Shoreditch / London Soho.

Retrodome, Barnsley.

Theme park amusement arcades

Description: Amusement arcades located within British theme parks, many of which opened in the 1980s and 1990s. Often now with I-card top-up. Sometimes thematic interiors and facades align to theme park theme / themes e.g. jungle arcade, haunted house, ancient stones arcade. Mix of games machines with child and family focus.

Games include: Crane machines, penny pushers, pinball machines, driving games, basketball game, 2p roll downs, Batman Whacker.

Examples:

The Edge Interactive Games Arcade, Alton Towers

Amity Arcade, The Dome, Thorpe Park

HB Games, Drayton Manor Resort

LEGO Games Zone, Legoland

Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Blackpool

Adventure Point Arcade, Chessington World of Adventures

Interactive Arcade and VR, Lightwater Valley Family Adventure Park.

Old time penny slot machine arcades

Description: Victorian-style, old fashioned, pre-computer, mechanical, wooden. Sometimes framed as museums or appearing as rooms within museums. Ornate old machines with penny slots.

Games include: What the Butler Saw, One-armed Bandit, Laughing Sailor, Laughing Policeman, Laughing Gardener, Copper Mine, Jungle Shoot, Zig Zag, Doctor Doom, Barnacle Bill, flick ball machines, fortune teller, Sky Jump, Head Ball, The Marathon Cycle Race.

Examples:

Williamson's Old Penny Arcade: Great, Yarmouth

Woodbank Garden Centre's Old Penny Arcade, Bingley

The Vintage Penny Machine Arcade, Rye Heritage Centre

Arreton Barns Penny Arcade, Isle of Wight

Museum of Penny Slot Machines, Brighton

Temple's Traditional Penny Arcade (for hire), Nottinghamshire

Old Penny Lane: Museum of Victorian Arcades, York

Penny Arcade: The Brickwork Museum, Swanwick.

Family entertainment centres

Description: Family entertainment centre (FEC) amusement arcades as part of larger leisure complex. Sometimes found in cinemas foyers or shopping centres. Other experiences available alongside amusement arcades, these often include soft play, ten-pin bowling, mini-golf, table tennis, beer pong, pool tables, cinema, shopping, themed dining, karaoke. Cashless experiences (load a card with tokens or card payments available). Also children's entertainment centres (CECs).

Games include: Air hockey, basketball hoops, classic carnival games like Down the Clown, Hologate VR, crane machines, driving games, Whac-a-Mole, Super Shot, arcade video games, electro-mechanical games, redemption games.

Examples:

Level X, Middleborough / Glasgow

NAMCO Funscape arcade at The Trafford Centre, Manchester / Metrocentre, Gateshead

NAMCO Wonderpark at Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield / Soho, London

Funstation at Meadowhall, Sheffield

Sega Prize Zone, Barnsley / Hull / Macclesfield / Cardiff / Merthyr / Newport / Ipswich / Swansea / St Helens / Warrington / Norwich / Barnsley

Tenpin Manchester Printworks, Manchester.

Travelling fairground amusement arcades

Description: Located within some travelling fairgrounds, usually traditional or steam, situated amongst fairground rides such as the big wheel, carousel and games stalls including hoopla and hook-a-duck. These amusement arcades are temporary indoor spaces and part of travelling fairs that frequent parks, recreation grounds and delegated car parks in British culture.

Games include:

Vintage penny in the slot machines, games stalls, What the Butler Saw, One-armed Bandit, Laughing Sailor, Laughing Policeman, Laughing Gardener, Copper Mine, Jungle Shoot, Zig Zag, Doctor Doom, Barnacle Bill, flick ball machines, fortune teller, Sky Jump, Head Ball, The Marathon Cycle Race.

Examples:

Appleton's Funfair

Billy Davis Funfair

Carter's Steam Fair Super Deluxe Arcade

Goose Fair

Harry Jones Fun Fair

Hull Fair

George Irvin's Winter Funfair

Shufflebottom Fair.

Adult orientated arcades

Description: Referred to as adult gaming centres. 18+ minimum age games. Cash arcades. Cash prizes. Permit gambling. Located in towns and cities (seaside and inland). More found in deprived areas. Some adult arcades have online versions under the same brand.

Games include: High and low stake fruit machines, casino machines, bingo machines, general knowledge with cash prizes, Wheel of Fortune, racing simulators, slots, jackpots, reel games.

Examples:

Ladbrokes Casino, UK wide

Admiral Slots, Manchester / Sale / Stockport

Admiral Casino, UK wide

Games Nation, National inc. Brixton / Chatham / Chelmsford

Merkur Slots, Glasgow / Edinburgh / London / Bristol

Reel Games, Newcastle

Royal Amusements, Oldham / Halifax / Bradford / Wakefield / Leeds / Castleford.

Motorway service station amusement arcades

Description: Often similar to Highstreet adult orientated arcades but found in motorway service stations, near to the toilets, food and drink shops, coffee shops, fast food places like Burger King and MacDonalds. 18+ minimum age games. Some standalone or sparse child friendly crane pusher or other games machine in close proximity. Leisure break for drivers, long haul lorry drivers, people on car, campervan, motorbike journeys.

Games include: Driving games, high and low stake fruit machines, casino machines, bingo machines, general knowledge with cash prizes, Wheel of Fortune, racing simulators, crane machines.

Examples:

Quicksilver

Game Zone

Welcome Break Gaming

Lucky Coin

Spin Spin Spin

Namco.

Seaside amusement arcades

Description: Longstanding family orientated arcades located within British seaside resorts. Found plentifully on seafronts, promenades, piers, side streets connected to main seafront/tourist areas of seaside towns (seaside town shopping precincts, away from the seafront are more likely to have adult orientated arcades which are differentiated as above). Eclectic mix of games – mechanical and computerised, in spaces that have evolved over time (20th and 21st century). Sometimes have adult only gaming zones or adult machines within them, but mostly family orientated spaces. Largely still coin operated, with card tap to coin change machines.

Games include: Cranes machines, video games machines, fortune tellers, penny pushers, sometimes mini fairground rides (tea cups), VanGogh's drawing booth, driving games, pinball machines, basketball games, 2p roll downs, whac-a-mole, karaoke machines.

Examples:

Funland, Blackpool

The Showboat, Margate

Flamingo Amusements, Hastings

Olympia Leisure, Scarborough

Carousel Amusements, Sheringham

Playland, Newquay

Palace Fun Centre, Rhyl

Pleasureland, Whitby.

Archive photos of historical British amusement arcades



Figures 13-20: Archive photo images of various British amusement arcades 1961-1985.
Courtesy of The University of Sheffield Library, National Fairground and Circus Archive.

From top left:

13. Kilvington, G. (1961) *John Hobson's amusement arcade photographed at Grantham Mid-Lent Fair, 21 March 1961. Digitisation and record funded by the Pilgrim Trust.*
14. Leeson, Jack (1962) *Photograph of R. Wilson's automatic amusement arcade, taken at Birmingham Tulip Festival Fair, 28 April 1962 angled view. Arcade is built off a box truck.*
15. Chadwick (1963) *Walter Chadwick's amusement arcade stall photographed at Seaforth, Christmas 1963.*
16. First Leisure (1968) *Mint amusement arcade built between parks at Rhyl Amusement Park, following fire December 1968.*
17. Chase, B. (1977 or 1978) *Brother and sister John Green and Vicky Remblance moving 'one armed bandit' amusement slot machine inside Alfred Green's (John's father) fairground games arcade at Kings Lynn Mart.* a
18. Chadwick (1981) *Walter Chadwick's 'Golden Nugget' amusement arcade.*
19. Stephens, Jack (1983) *Nail's amusement arcade stall photographed at Tewkesbury Mop Fair, at night 1983.*
20. Stephens, Jack (1985) *Deakin's amusement arcade photographed at Tewkesbury Mop Fair, at night 1985.*

This series of archive photo images show some of the amusement arcade's key visual, material and spatial qualities, and design features. Firstly, the historical origins of amusement arcades as part of travelling fairs that circulated between towns and cities during the 20th century is evidenced, with amusement arcades situated within fairgrounds and temporarily occupying streets, parks and car parks (image number 17 shows the set up/take down of an amusement arcade as a historically travelling, moveable entity). Fairground amusement arcades are shown as special occasion spaces for people to enter and exit, go to and return from, popping up amongst the drab-appearing built urban environment in these images. Secondly, the fairground amusement arcade is shown as made from industrial and hard-wearing materials including sheet steel, scaffolding pole frames, tarpaulin, wood panels and aluminium flooring, through industrial construction that developed under modernity. Functional, hardwearing materials are used to create protective, waterproof, easy to assemble and unassemble amusement arcade structures. I am particularly drawn to image number 14 of Wilson's automatic amusement arcade, with geometric metal sheet side panels that resemble a DIY rocket or spaceship. Thirdly, fairground amusement arcade structures are shown as consistently box like with low ceilings, decorative facades and interiors that include painted imagery and inscription, showing the importance of surface and surface design in the amusement arcade's appearance. Fourthly, the significance of lighting in the amusement arcade's design is apparent, with earlier modes of stringed bulb lighting later accompanied by colourful LED lighting and florescent strip lights. From the warm hues of 1960s and 1970s arcades to the futuristic lit colour palettes of 1980s arcades, lighting interacts with machines, mirrors and bodies in compact arcade spaces.

Amusement arcade light is also shown to contrast with the darkness that surrounded fairgrounds at night time. Image number 16 is of Mint Arcade in Rhyl, portraying how the material structures of the fairground arcade continued as amusement arcades began to settle in permanent locations at the British seaside. Rhyl's Mint Arcade looks similar to the amusement arcades found in the fairground images in shape, form, lighting and inscriptions. Amusement arcades are shown as popular with visitors, appearing busy with intergenerational audiences.

Holidaying at the British seaside: The seaside resort and seaside amusement arcade's development

Filled with a machine mix selected to attract and retain families, they contain banks of coin-pusher machines, ticket-dispensing machines, cranes and grabbers, videogames, punching machine, kiddie rides, fruit machines, and perhaps a candy-floss machine or café.

(Meades on seaside amusement arcades, 2022:12)

To begin to situate The (Amusement) Arcades Project within the field of research, a review of literature on British seaside resort amusement arcades within the broader contexts of British seaside resorts lays the foundations for understanding the development of these places. This chapter gathers references on British seaside resort amusement arcades, from the pre-modern to the contemporary, identifying the seaside arcade's historical development and synthesising how visitor interactions and practices of them have evolved over time. Through understandings of the seaside amusement arcade's complex history and fluctuating popularity, an inquiry is built and the gap for new experiential considerations on the contemporary British seaside amusement arcade is shown, setting the scene for the project's new research.

The amusement arcade's pre-modern history

British seaside amusement arcades have compelling relationships to the contemporary seaside resorts that surround them and to everyday life experience for visitors. Seaside amusement arcades are places where the pre-modern, modern, postmodern and contemporary intersect. Time vortexes to the pre-modern, seaside amusement arcades are conduits to the carnivalesque, rooted in fairgrounds and initially appearing in travelling fairs and shows as games stalls and penny arcades (Chapman and Light, 2011). Many amusement arcades went on to find homes in permanent locations, as some travelling fairs people opted to settle and local entrepreneurs recognised the money-making potential of arcades. In the UK, these early, permanent amusement arcades sites

were often situated within broader sites of recreation and leisure that emerged during the 19th century.

The seaside amusement arcade as a product of modernity and industrial society

British seaside resorts were, at first, reserved for the upper classes who visited the coast for the health benefits of the sea air and water. British seaside resorts largely developed during the industrial revolution, utilising industrial materials of steel, iron and concrete and ambitious architectural processes to build strong and ornate promenades and piers. Following the introduction of holidays for the masses in the late 19th century and enhanced by the Holidays with Pay Act in 1938, British seaside resorts became spaces for the working and middle classes to escape industrial towns and cities for their designated and synchronized two-week long summer holiday, enabling the masses to take over and enjoy places previously reserved for the wealthy. Consequently, seaside resorts morphed to cater for the multitude of visitors arriving from industrial places by charabanc or train. The compression of time and space brought about through the train effectively fused places like Manchester, Salford and Bolton with Blackpool, Morecambe and Southport. Visitors came to the seaside as part of the factory holiday societal system of modernity, bringing with them the pursuit for respite and recreation. Healing and pleasure were key pursuits in Victorian culture that continued into the 20th century, with the opportunity to take the sea air extended to the masses through train travel from smoggy industrial towns and cities. Seaside resort visitors embraced pleasure seeking within a system of organised, controlled time and space developed through the industrial revolution. In addition to the optimism for sunshine and beach time for factory workers on their two-week summer holidays, seaside resorts brought opportunity for time away from work to spend with family and friends and was infused with the possibility of meeting with like-minded, pleasure-seeking strangers. A plethora of familiar and chance encounters, actions and thrills in an alternate location, seaside resorts became places of fun, amusement, entertainment and adventure (Bunting, 2023; Williams, 2012). Seaside resorts emulated the system of mass production and consumption and were based on successions of free or low-cost consumer experiences; a view through a seaside telescope, a stick of rock or an ice-cream, a paddle in the sea, a face in the hole photo, the purchase of a mass-produced souvenir, a go on a fairground ride, a sit down on a bench with a view, and so on. Amongst this multitude of encounters, a visit to an amusement arcade became a familiar indulgence. As industrial coin currency developed, 'Britain developed an appetite for coin-operated amusements during the late 19th century' (Meades, 2022:8), with coin-operated amusement arcades at the seaside popular places to visit. Many leisure institutions of modernity permitted escape and indulgence in a

surveilled, consumer space (Gale, 2006), contingent of the monitored work of the factory floor. This resulted in a structure of feeling (Williams, 1981) associated with modernity and capitalism at seaside resorts via the repetitive mechanical games, security (arcade attendant) presence, consumer play-to-win aspects of the arcade and the arcade as a contained and managed leisure space.

Burdsey (2011) highlights travelling communities settling as fortune tellers, tarot readers and amusement arcade owners in north west seaside resorts (Blackpool, Southport), capitalising on the holiday trade and tourists seeking out alternate experiences; this contributed to societal marginalising notions of 'otherness' at the seaside. Burdsey also proposes the seaside as a liminal space in its geographical location, design, and experiential qualities, making all visitors to the seaside strangers. In Blackpool, many visitors notoriously sought out less salubrious pleasures as well as restorative activity through drunkenness, peep shows, freakery, and kiss me quick hats. Such activity contributed to the seaside gaining abutting, unruly status in relation to the supposed serious, working city and the idyllic, virtuous countryside. In Shield's study of Brighton, he describes British seaside resorts as places of pleasure, liminality and the carnivalesque that exist within a broader framework of 'the spatialisation of British culture' (Shields, 1991:73). Seaside resorts developed to facilitate and profit from this culture of distraction, hedonism, release and escape for visitors, through the different, the fantastical, and the extraordinary, as well as the restful and healing. Bunting describes Blackpool's historical, social significance as a 'release from the discipline of the mills and the tyranny of Victorian respectability' (Bunting, 2023:274). Shields (1991) proposes the British seaside as a recreational space that functions as "a free zone, 'betwixt and between' social codes" (Shields, 1991:108). Shields draws attention to the relationship between urban working space, domestic space and the seaside as a shared temporal recreational space that, through its longstanding culture of spectacle and indulgence continues as a fun-time, capricious place to visit for many. Burdsey (2011) suggests that the seaside is a space that permits hedonistic pleasure and raucous behaviour, with seaside resorts places of transgression of social order and obscured social boundaries. As a culture of debauchery and hedonism developed at the seaside, some seaside resorts gained reputations as dangerous places, with out of the ordinary infrastructures and practices of 'letting off steam' giving way to antisocial behaviour, lawlessness, and crime. Greene's (1938) novel *Brighton Rock* depicts violent gang culture in Brighton in the 1930s, set in Brighton's pubs, cafes, fairgrounds, and under its piers, portraying a different kind of moral standing and social conduct at British seaside resorts.

Walton (2000) has contributed significantly to research on the history of British seaside resorts. Walton could be described as a seaside traditionalist who writes passionately about Victorian seaside infrastructure and celebrates piers, cast iron fronted promenades and ornate shelter-seating. Walton captures the contrast between historical seafront facades and the emergent mid to late 20th century proliferation of joke shops, fish-and-chip shops, cheap-snack-bars and amusement-arcades at the seaside. Unenthusiastic about British seaside amusement arcades, Walton describes them as 'tacky' in his research on the north east coastal town of Whitby, suggesting that Whitby would be charming without its amusement-arcade atmosphere (Walton, 2000). Walton saw the introduction of more and more amusement arcades into seaside resorts during the latter half of the 20th century, experiencing the impact of them first-hand and a voice for those who disapproved of them. Another British seaside historian and writer Allan (2021) explores the history of fog horns in a book on the disappearing music of the British seaside. Allan writes about the history of fog horn installation around the British coast, reporting the sounds of them as initially disruptive for seaside residents, whilst being important for the safety of ever-expanding sea fishing industries and international shipping of goods that proliferated under modernity. Allan pays attention to the emotional resonances, fascination and mystery surrounding the sounds of fog horns at the seaside as they gradually disappear in more recent times. Walton and Allan both highlight ongoing societal tensions on new infrastructures and technologies at the seaside, with responses towards the newly implemented often changing with the passing of time.

The late 20th century, postmodern seaside amusement arcade

Gale (2006) identifies the impactful shift from modernism to postmodernism in the late twentieth century on production, technology, and culture; this was reflected in people's changing tastes and expectations for recreational and leisure pursuits. Barker suggests the murkier side of modernism as beset by 'change, doubt, risk, uncertainty and fragmentation' (Barker 2000:134), characteristics that were incorporated into numerous modern amusement arcade games machines, underpinning the modern amusement arcade's design and associated to some of the underlying conditions of modernity that advanced during postmodernity. In the US, Venturi et al. (1972) proposed increasing kinds of postmodern architecture as 'decorated sheds', as advertising and commercial iconography became dominant ideas in North American architectural design in the mid 20th century. Venturi et al. studied the montage of surface effects that utilised neon lighting in Las Vegas, where this kind of image and text-based architecture rapidly emerged. Under American influence, the British seaside resort and other places in the UK adopted a similar architectural aesthetic that further expanded

commercial design in the environment. Seaside resort entertainment venues competed for visitor attention with big and illuminated signs, the names of theatres, fairs, museums, fortune tellers and amusement arcades imprinting on the seaside landscape. Often simple box-like architectural forms or reconversions of buildings built for other purposes, amusement arcade façades increasingly used a montage of surface effects, text and imagery, many of them enduring as decorated sheds in the contemporary. Changes to gambling legislation influenced the seaside amusement arcade's development in the second half of the 20th century. The 1960s Betting and Gaming Act saw a rise in popularity in games of chance (what the industry refer to as 'AWP' – amusements with prizes), including crane machines with soft toy prizes, penny pushers, prize sweets and trinkets, and prize counters with anything from blow up electric guitars to kettles and microwaves increasingly appearing in amusement arcades. The decimalisation of 1971 rendered many coins slot machines in amusement arcades redundant. In the latter 1970s and early 1980s, developments in computing brought the introduction of video games machines to the UK. The video games machine craze in the UK was big although not as big as in the US and Japan, largely due to import costs for the games machines that were manufactured overseas. Early video games machines generated significant new interest and excitement around the seaside resort amusement arcades that showcased them. Arcade video games machines preceded home games consoles, portable gaming devices and mobile phone gaming, making seaside amusement arcades *the* place to go and be at the forefront of the newest technology at this time. Video games machines were responsible for attracting younger, tech-hungry visitors to seaside amusement arcades, when many seaside resorts were otherwise in decline. Seaside amusement arcade owners often created zones dedicated to video games machines, alongside older games, table football, pinball machines and fruit machines. Arcade windows were covered up and low lighting introduced to allow for the early computer screens of video games units to be visible to players. Many seaside amusement arcades gained reputations as places of teenage abundance. Depending on your age, this image of a teenage-filled amusement arcade, 'a dark cavern of neon lights, phosphorescent screens, and cramped rows of video games' (Meades, 2022:1) may sound familiar. TV shows and film in the 1990s portrayed the youthful occupation of amusement arcades, representing them as lively, autonomous spaces for lone or groups of young people. In the UK, Dennis Potter's period TV series *Lipstick on your Collar* (Potter, 1993) features a youthfully boisterous amusement arcade. In the US, *Big* (1988) features a fairground amusement arcade with an antique coin-operated fortune-teller machine called Zoltar that makes a young boy's wishes come true, a machine that still features in many UK and US arcades. The lesser-known *Arcade* (1993) is a film based on a virtual reality game that begins taking over the minds of teenagers. *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) has a scene in an amusement arcade that uses

arcade shooting machine sounds to heighten the film's narrative tension. *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* was released as an arcade video game at the same time as the film. In the news and in academic research, attention to amusement arcades was largely negative during the late 1980s and 1990s. Research by several contributors in the social sciences field articulated concern (Fisher 1999, 1995, 1993, 1992, 1991; Griffiths, 1993a, 1993b, 1991, 1990, 1989; Huxley and Carrol, 1992), with British seaside resorts marked for their high levels of gaming and gambling in young people due to the concentrated number of amusement arcades in many of these locations. Griffiths (1990) presented a breakdown of arcade games machines from this era in detail and argued for changes to gambling legislation in the UK. Concerns over problem gaming in young people led to amendments to the 1968 Gaming Act in 1990 that restricted arcade games machine licensing.

The period of popular video games machines in seaside amusement arcades preceding the rise of the home console was much shorter lived in the UK than in the US and Japan. Chapman and Light (2016) explain how the increase in home-based video gaming consoles contributed to the decline in popularity of amusement arcades with young people. As video games consoles were increasingly available to buy and offered players repeated games play of the latest games at home, single play coin operated video games machines quickly dated. Reputable seaside amusement arcades that had gained reputations as dark dank teenage places in the 1990s were challenged by the introduction of FECs (Family Entertainment Centres) and CECs (Children's Entertainment Centres). FECs and CECs were often branded by national and international corporations (KCC, 2024; SegaWorld, 2024), developing as part of urban commercial venues (Intu Trafford Centre's Namco Funscape) as well as located at the seaside (Fantasy Island in Scarborough, 2023). FECs and CECs include multiple leisure facilities in one complex and tend to be largescale indoor arenas, with amusement arcades, tenpin bowling, soft play areas, dodgems, ball pits, inflatables, laser tag, kart racing, theme restaurants, snack bars, fast food, roller skating, mini golf, tube mazes and simulation games. FECs tend to feel glossier than many longstanding seaside amusement arcades, with bright lighting, block coloured wipe down surfaces and an increased security presence, facilitating fun-time experiences for all the family away from the problematic and seedy reputations of grotty, teenage seaside amusement arcades. The opening of Americanised theme parks in the UK with thematic and curated settings also challenged British seaside amusement arcade popularity at the end of the 20th century. Alton Towers opened in 1980 (Alton Towers, 2024), Thorpe Park in 1989 (Thorpe Park, 2024) and Legoland in 1996 (Legoland, 2024); all had amusement arcades within a wider complex of entertainment offerings and ambitious, unusual rides beyond those found at the common seaside or travelling fairground. Longstanding theme parks improved their rides and décor to compete with the emergence of newer,

slicker theme parks; Blackpool Pleasure Beach opened its Pepsi Max Big One rollercoaster in 1994 – marketed as the rollercoaster with the highest drop in the world at this time. Alongside FECs, CECs and new and improved theme parks, large scale swimming pools with water slides, flumes, plastic palm tree lidos and wave machines became popular destinations in the late 20th century in the UK; including the opening of Waterworld in 1989 (Waterworld Leisure Resort, 2024) and Center Parcs in 1987 (Center Parcs, 2024) that offered swimming pools with outdoor rapids and freeze plunge pools. Such leisure spaces proliferated at the height of postmodernity and facilitated a national desire for ‘simulation of exotic, historical and mythical places’ (Gale, 2006:103) in convenient locations. Seaside amusement arcades responded and competed, with varying success, to these burgeoning new leisure spaces. Characterful, diverse fibre glass figures, theatrical scenery constructed from painted murals and props, and thematic zones in amusement arcade interiors became more commonplace, telling the stories of pirates, smugglers, explorers, and gangsters spatially within the amusement arcade, beyond the games machine narratives.

Changes in holiday practices brought about by cheap flights, package holidays abroad and increased car ownership enabling holidays to more diverse UK rural sites contributed to the deterioration of many British seaside resorts as tourist destinations in the late 20th century. Seaside resorts lacked investment and upkeep; this was reflected in seaside amusement arcades, with many starting to look a bit shabby and worn out. Despite attempts to upgrade and revamp themselves, many seaside amusement arcades could not compete with the design and technology of other, newer leisure spaces both in the UK and abroad. Alongside emerging holiday practices, the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s saw economic deprivation and high levels of unemployment for many communities in the UK, with the industrial north’s working landscape of mines, mills and industry in dramatic decline by the end of the 20th century. Many seaside resorts struggled to retain visitor numbers during this period, with many gaining reputations as ‘ghost towns’ (Moss, 2010: online; Crane, 2020: online). Bracewell writes of Morecambe’s ‘faded grandeur abutting seafront dereliction, accompanied by the atonal electronics of nagging unused arcade games’ (Bracewell, 2009:35). The disillusioned and the vulnerable congregated in many seaside towns in shared, run-down housing that was cheaper than city accommodation. Margate became a place for the unemployed and the mentally ill following Thatcher’s mass closing of residential units in the 1980s. Seaside resorts are often places where asylum seekers end up, occupying disused bed and breakfasts and boarding houses that once catered for the seaside holiday masses. Pawlikowski’s film *Last Resort* (Pawlikowski, 2000) tells the story of a refugee woman and her son, hopeless and trapped in a rundown, fictional resort (shot in Margate), capturing the mood of many British seaside resorts at the time of the turn of

the 21st century as places of unfulfilled hopes for a better life. Under a different set of circumstances in more recent times, *Down from London* (Archer, 2019) shows Margate as a place of unfulfilled hopes and dreams for a disillusioned young London couple that distract themselves from their troubled relationship through a succession of frivolous and empty seaside encounters. Other seaside resorts became and continue to be places for people to retire rather than holiday, popular with the elderly world war and post-world war generations escaping inland towns and cities to live out their days by the seaside. Seaside resorts began to gain reputations as sedentary places out of season, as portrayed in Broad's music video for The Smiths *Everyday is Like Sunday* set in Southend-on-Sea (Broad, 1988). The impacts of unemployment, dependency on a fragmented and declining tourist industry, social deprivation, an aging population, and a lack of attention from successive governments and the policy-makers (Ahmed, 2000) all contributed to the neglect and downturn of seaside resorts at the end of the 20th century. Further tightening of gambling legislation (the 1996 Deregulation Order leading to areas in arcades being off limits to under 18s, and the 2005 Gambling Act that changed the law on gambling to cover online and new generation gaming machines) aimed to tackle the rising gambling and debt culture that was problematic during these post-industrial economically desolate times for many towns and communities. This impacted the popularity of amusement arcades with those looking to play for money (fruit machines, large cash prize machines) and with those that held them responsible for gambling addiction. Places, like Blackpool, gained reputations for being faded, desolate and troubled, places with drunken people as the dominant visitor-base, the retired, unemployed and impoverished as residents. In the novel *Pleasure Beach*, the Blackpool-born Author, Palmer, tells a queer love story based on three young women living in Blackpool in 1999 (Palmer, 2023). The novel is drenched in debauchery and delirium. There is an ongoing heightened culture of alcohol and drug use in Blackpool and at many other seaside resorts, with high levels of addiction and mental health issues amongst Blackpool residents; this includes local people and people with substance abuse issues moving to Blackpool to live in cheap and/or assisted shared accommodation. Blackpool has been referred to as 'England's drug death capital' (Drury, 2020: online) due to heroin and crack cocaine use, with the highest rates of drug-misuse deaths in men (the third highest for women) in the UK. Walking through Blackpool's backstreets these struggles are still apparent, bed and breakfasts now as shared boarding houses, shabby curtains, blinds drawn all day and windows covered up with newspaper, rubbish and disrepair. Towards the end of the 20th century, many British seaside resorts were struggling socially and economically, with many tired and forgotten seaside amusement arcades reflecting this mood and these circumstances.

The early 21st century seaside amusement arcade

Shifts in holiday culture continued into the early 21st century (Chapman and Light, 2011), with those that could afford to holiday increasing their holiday frequency (more breaks), duration (shorter breaks) and expanding holiday locations (city breaks, increasing access to culturally diverse locations and interests in the natural environment and heritage (Thornton et al., 1997)). British seaside resorts as long holiday destinations (4 nights' stay plus) decreased in popularity, with younger generations opting for daytrips to the seaside (if at all) and longer holidays further from home. Somehow, seaside amusement arcades endured. Amusement arcades benefitted from being able to occupy empty, well-situated premises in seaside resorts at a time when seaside resort tourism was flailing, with buildings in prime tourist locations becoming available as other local businesses went bust. Some seaside amusement arcades resituated, rebranded or redesigned themselves, whilst many others held steadfast. Brighton's original pier head theatre was removed and replaced with a prefabricated 'Pleasuredome', clad in plastic, presenting an amusement arcade amongst other attractions. Gray wrote that Brighton Pier's 2004 rebrand led to the pier becoming a strange English replication of Disneyland that was crowded with amusement arcades (Gray, 2009). Gray warned of the brash rejuvenation of seaside resorts around this time as insensitive to seaside resort history in their bid for contemporary appeal. Banksy's Dismaland (Banksy, 2015) in Weston-super-Mare reflected on British seaside resort tourist culture. An experimental and interactive art installation that adopted the model of a seaside theme park, Dismaland mimicked the Disney influenced seaside resort aesthetic and run-down culture, drawing attention to the place of seaside resorts and amusements within a broader, disillusioned society.

The success or decline of seaside resorts varied greatly from place to place. The 2006 UK Government 'Holidays at Home' campaign encouraged people to support the UK economy and opt for a holiday in the UK instead of going abroad. In 2007, Historic England published reports on Margate, Weymouth, Ramsgate and Blackpool, describing the architectural development and conservation challenges of these distinctive settlements and their ongoing social and economic struggles (Historic England, 2007). In response, a masterplan envisaging regeneration of several areas of Blackpool was proposed, including a renewed tram system that offers 'Heritage Tram Tours' (Blackpool Heritage, 2023) and additional coastal defences. Since around 2010, there has been a revival in some seaside resorts as desirable, affordable places to live, popular with city-dwellers looking to start a family or escape the intensity of everyday city life. Many seaside resorts that are commutable distance from London enjoyed and continue to enjoy a renaissance in popularity, as

'Down from Londoners' (Lewis, 2013) – an aspiring class of city workers seeking more home floor space for their pounds move out of London to places such as Margate, Hastings and Whitstable. This has brought an increase in coffee shops, craft ale sellers and boutique shops that cater for these new seaside town residents and for tourists visiting these regenerated places. Margate's Dreamland theme park was restored under the design of Wayne Hemingway, adopting a 'vintage theming design' (Burns and Jarratt, 2022) and Instagramable ice-cream coloured aesthetic. Dreamland includes an amusement arcade with a range of carefully curated arcade games machines on a contemporary copper coin dashed concrete floor. A novelty amusement arcade of quirky home-made machines and simulators thrives in Suffolk (Hunkins, 2001) amidst longstanding and enduring seaside amusement arcades, bringing a DIY kind of arcade to seaside visitors. Beyond these creative amusement arcades, some longstanding seaside amusement arcades persisted whilst others struggled and shut down (O'Hara, 2006). The seaside amusement arcade has a social history of changing popularity that swings between the savoured and the unwanted.

At the 2019 SEA CHANGE conference, the focus was the challenges of climate change and its impacts on the future of global coastal heritage. The conference took place in Blackpool's Winter Gardens; with images of Blackpool's three piers and information on their 'World Monuments to Watch in 2018' status splashed across the conference promotional material. A paper by Dr Light from Bournemouth University (Light, 2019) centred on British seaside heritage, focusing on seaside resorts of working-class fun and entertainment architecture that are vulnerable to climate change's coastal effects, yet are consistently underacknowledged and under-protected by national heritage agendas. Light's paper was a call to action for reassessing British heritage policy, urging policy makers to include a wider range of seaside fun and entertainment architecture in their agendas, signposting selected arcade facades as an example of this. This brought to attention the ongoing societal value placed on different kinds of working-class fun and entertainment in British culture, and how working-class spaces entwined with the commercialisation of culture are continually considered reductively or dismissed altogether. Chapman and Light argued that seaside heritage initiatives didn't include amusement arcades in their plans despite them being important parts of seaside resort culture (Chapman and Light, 2011).

The value of the British seaside continues to be entwined with mass-societal ideas on health, education, and restoration, as well as indulgence, escapism, and hedonism, all emerging as considerations and practices through industrialisation, time at work and time 'off' for the masses. Working-class histories and heritage are still often overshadowed by the histories and heritage the

aristocratic and upper classes in British culture. The Mass Observation social research organisation worked expansively to gather material about the everyday lives of the masses in Britain in the mid 20th century, with attention paid to seaside resort holiday culture and practice (Mass Observation Archive: no date). This was followed by the founding of The Social History Movement in the second half of the 20th century that opened a range of intellectual enquiries on British culture including black history, women's history, rural history, and urban history (Griffin, 2015). In more recent years, heritage charities and organisations, including The National Trust and English Heritage, came under scrutiny for their under-representation of working-class histories (McGinty, 2010), raising questions as to 'whose' nation is being upheld and preserved. In response to this criticism, Historic England launched a grant series entitled Everyday Heritage Grants – Celebrating Working Class Histories (Historic England, 2022). English Heritage are working to expand their blue plaque series to commemorate more working-class people's lives and contributions (English Heritage, 2022). Variations between commercial and non-commercial kinds of fun and entertainment impact hierarchies of leisure and recreation, with the complex histories and heritage of some places including seaside amusement arcades often overlooked or written out. There is also a rich yet under recognised legacy of intangible heritage at contemporary seaside resorts, with visitor practices and behaviours of sites of fun and entertainment passed down from previous generations; amusement arcades are a key part of this. Commonplace in seaside towns that catered to tourists are hotels, piers, fairgrounds, winter gardens and amusement arcades amongst other architectures of pleasure, with idiosyncratic sites 'rarely evaluated as heritage' (Light and Chapman, 2022: online). An ongoing 'frequently-made distinction between art and entertainment with the assumption that entertainment is trivial and insignificant' (Light and Chapman, 2022: online) persists as part of the problem.

Some other culturally iconic sites of fun and entertainment rooted in British working-class culture are doing well; Blackpool Tower Ballroom opened in 1894, still popular today via the prime-time Saturday night telly show *Strictly Come Dancing*, as well as a venue for other discos and concerts, and ongoing trips up the tower to take in the expansive views. The Grand Pier at Weston-super-Mare was renovated and reopened in the summer of 2020 following extensive fire damage in 2008. The restored seaside Saltdean Lido in West Sussex reopened in 2024 following a 14 year restoration project restoring the resort's art-deco pool, café, library, ballroom, exercise study and workplace (Sherratt, 2024). Other large, iconic seaside sites are in need of extensive and expensive repair, including Blackpool's Winter Gardens. There is a current culture of seaside communities, seaside enthused philanthropists and local activists taking on the restoration, maintenance and programming

of small, vulnerable recreational places as passion projects, amidst a politics of funding cuts. These include Electric Palace Cinema in Hastings, Lynton Cinema in Devon and The Palace Cinema in Kent.

Over the past decade, a new variant of the seaside amusement arcade has appeared, featuring mechanical machines working on pre-decimal currency. Old time penny slot machine arcades hark back to a time before the video games era that redefined the image of the seaside amusement arcade for some time. Old time penny slot machine arcades frequently describe themselves as museums or heritage centres, offering an experience based on a nostalgic affection for traditional types of seaside holiday (Chapman and Light, 2011). Retro video games arcades are another example of a new kind of contemporary arcade that capitalises on nostalgic experience, attracting visitors who, perhaps, played video arcade games as children or young adults, or appreciate the analogue aesthetic and haptic experience of older video games machines. Vintage video games-specific arcades have been opening in the UK and enjoying popularity: Arcade Club Bury (2014) and Arcade Club Blackpool (2022) (amongst other Arcade Club branches) focus explicitly on video games machines, charging an entrance fee that gains you access to play all games rather than coin-operated games play. Whether it's vintage old time penny slot machine arcades, retro video games arcades or the eclectic games found in longstanding seaside amusement arcades, amusement arcades can be powerful conduits to past technologies and bygone eras. Finneran (2017) asserts nostalgia as a key part of the seaside experience, suggesting that the seaside is 'a postmodern phenomenon of a recreated authentically historic seaside town, albeit with rough edges' (Finneran, 2017: online). Seaside resort nostalgia is infused with broader dissatisfaction with present political and environmental circumstances. Jarratt and Gammon (2016) suggest seaside nostalgia as a fundamental reason for seaside resort visitors. Seaside resorts are viewed as spaces that are, on some level, portals to the past, experienced through inter-generational audiences in the contemporary. In another article, Jarratt reinstates the seaside as a space 'associated to nostalgia, wellness and spirituality' (Jarratt and Gammon, 2016:147-148) reflecting on earlier Victorian ideals of the seaside's potential for positive health effects over the seaside's dystopic representation as a space of immorality and hedonism (Shields, 1991).

The contemporary British seaside amusement arcade

The contemporary landscape of British seaside resorts continues to evolve as holiday practices and desirable living destinations change, recycle, diminish and emerge. In 2020-2021, the interruption of the Covid pandemic to holidaying abroad was felt by many, further exacerbating the disturbance to

rituals and routines for people at this time beyond the everyday. The Covid pandemic had an impact on seaside resorts and seaside resort economy, at first, desolating tourist dependent resorts from visitors during a crucial summer season, then seeing periods of plentiful visitors as UK holidays opened up while travelling abroad remained prohibited and problematic. Articles on the best seaside amusement arcades ran to coincide with the resurgence of Covid travel ban induced British seaside holidays (Cross Country Trains, 2023). Reports on increasing electric bills threatening amusement arcade closures (Middleton, 2023) were also published at this time, as the cost of living rose sharply during Covid economic recovery. Since the Covid pandemic, Blackpool has been described as 'having a renaissance' and 'becoming a precious heritage destination' (Martin, 2023: online), whilst also being situated within a landscape of melancholic, crumbling British seaside resorts (Bunting, 2023) and a town of ongoing social deprivation (BBC, 2019). Despite local deprivation and changing consumer cultures, Blackpool persists as the most popular seaside resort in the UK, continuing to cater for millions of visitors each year. In 2019, Blackpool's visitor economy was 1.58bn (Drury, 2020). Blackpool reported its highest ever number of visitor numbers in 2023 (Blackpool Council, 2023), showing seaside resorts as places of ongoing contrasting popularity and experience for visitors and residents. Seaside resorts suggested as part of a UK seaside revival (Cooke, 2024; Hinsliff, 2021; Kennell, 2010) include Eastbourne, Cleethorpes, Folkstone and Skegness. With interests in seascideness on the rise since Covid forced people into holidaying at home and re-engaging with seaside resorts amongst other UK tourist sites, there has been an increase in attention on seaside resort heritage and a growing interest in recognising the heritage value of seaside resorts that were, for a long time, dismissed as tacky (Tapper, 2023). Yet heritage architecture of pleasure, fun and entertainment that developed at the seaside during modernity is still reported as an area of English heritage that is neglected in recent heritage agendas (Light and Chapman, 2022).

Seaside amusement arcades continue with varying levels of popularity in the contemporary, folding in newer games machines amongst older ones. Karaoke machines with new and old pop song selections and dancing competition games that utilise Wii Fit sensor technologies gained popularity in amusement arcades with the Saturday night The X-Factor and Strictly Come Dancing crowd from around 2004. A continuation of branded games releases from big companies are added to the seaside arcade (Universal Pictures, Disney, Pixar), including games machine spin-offs from films (Jurassic Park (1993), Pirates of the Caribbean (2003), Frozen (2013), alongside games machine spin-offs from TV shows including Noel Edmund's Deal or No Deal (released in 2007), Coronation Street (2002) and Who Wants to Be a Millionaire (1999). Contemporary British seaside amusement arcades have a mix of machines that include games solely for play (video games with potential score board

status, whac-a-mole, basketball hoop shoot, shooting range games, karaoke and dance games), knowledge quiz games (the aforementioned Deal or No Deal and Who Wants to Be A Millionaire), experiential games (fortune telling machines, 'What the Butler Saw', artist studio portrait booths), along with many low-cash play and prize games (notoriously the penny pushers with 2p/5p/50p pay outs, some £5-20 rewards), crane machines (with soft toy prizes, sometimes watches and other desirable gadgets), games including bingo with token prize counters (sweets, toys, electrical appliances) and adult orientated machines with higher cash prizes. I sometimes think about amusement arcades in relation to the pub; both longstanding establishments found plentifully in British culture, amusement arcades and pubs are both deeply rooted in our social, recreational history, steeped in narratives of indulgence and debauchery. There is a danger of addiction in frequenting either site too often (pub problem drinking, adult arcade gambling, pub fruit machines mixing the two). In between the extremities of addiction and abstinence, in moderation, amusement arcades and pubs can be experienced as characterful melting pots of the salubrious along with more tender and nourishing activity (conversing, thinking, reacting, engaging, moving, playing, sharing, enjoying a warm, immersive space with others). Largely alcohol-free zones, contemporary British seaside amusement arcades attract intergenerational and multi-cultural visitors, popular and part of a seaside holiday succession of fun, entertaining interactions for many. The in-built coin-operation of machines keeps prices down as inflation continues to rise; a family of four might spend £10 in coins over an hour, engaging in shared game experiences and varied sensory encounters and actions (mechanical leavers and buttons, vintage video games controls, mini sports – golf, basketball, football, air hockey). A round of tickets to the theatre or entry to a theme park for a family far exceeds this. Many seaside amusement arcades have worked to resituate themselves as places that cater for all the family and places to stay for extended periods of time, with cafes and snack bars. Like FECs, larger seaside amusement arcades often have toilets, indoor smaller fairground rides for small children (teacups, mini rollercoasters), bowling alleys and bingo hall areas. On the outside, seaside amusement arcades retain bold facades that are significant to seaside resort visual culture (Chapman, 2013). The layered historical collections of different games machines inside British seaside amusement arcades are, in part, what continue to make them so unique: they have become museums of gaming history through their eclectic games' domains, evolving over time and thus creating a unique assemblage that layers the old and the new within a concentrated space. Beyond the games machines, amusement arcades present curious interior design assemblages, with variations in materiality and sensory qualities. Despite their rich material and sensory culture beyond their consumer means, the individual's experience of contemporary seaside amusement arcades remains underexplored. The project will now present new place-based findings on amusement arcade light,

surface and sound, revisiting and expanding on some of the arcade features and qualities foregrounded in this chapter, and introducing primary data and further ideas for consideration.



Figures 21-22: St. Ives Harbour Amusements Arcade Interior with hazard signs, glitter ball and green and pink light. Fieldtrip photos (2020). Author's own.

Light

It's a September evening. The air is warm and salted. Intermittent cloud cools the descending sun. Arriving at Blackpool North train station, I walk down Talbot Road towards the seafront. Past the familiar Sainsbury's orange glow, the illuminated signs of restaurants and bed and breakfasts, the neon names of back street adult arcades, and dimly lit pub windows. I emerge onto Blackpool's promenade at The Golden Mile stretch. Looking to my left, the Illuminations are on. Glowing at dusk, a network of connected shimmers strung out into the distance. To my right, the tail end of the Illuminations; an assemblage of older, folk creations scattered towards and beyond the Imperial Hotel, intercepting the familiar modernist patterning of street and traffic lighting. Blackpool's illuminated landscape has evolved over time into a unique convergence that incorporates the functional and the fantastical. Directly across the Promenade is the oldest of Blackpool's three piers, The North Pier. Its roof design resembles something between a curved glass Victorian pavilion, and a traditional Romany wagon. Its name 'The North Pier' dances cheerily above the main entrance in a typeface that conjoins wild west folklore with traditional fairground signage; the tops of the capital letters pinned upwards like old fashioned tarpaulin tents. The sign is painted in vibrant turquoise, yellow, blue and pinky red that are deepening in tone as the sun sinks. Circus swirls of lightbulbs, some lit, some dead, surround the pier's painted name in a lustrous, punctured border. A small number of establishments populate the North Pier's entrance building – a bar, a fish and chip shop, a gift shop, and an amusement arcade. The amusement arcade has multiple open doors and small children's coin-operated rides spilling out onto the street at the front and the pier at back. The arcade interior mirrors Blackpool's broader lightscape, combining enticing, artistic light to capture and disorientate, with directional, instructional light forms to guide. Diverse illumination, animation, colour, glow, interaction with other materials (reflection, sparkle) and popular cultural references are some of the key ways in which light and dark work together to contribute to the arcade's unique atmosphere, blending the imaginary and the real, the extraordinary and the banal. I meander and linger amongst the strange and familiar commodities. An enormous plastic ice-cream glows in pastel colours. A spaceship flashes then jerks into motion. I remember seaside arcades from the 1990s, Great Yarmouth, Lyme Regis, Hunstanton, Scarborough, Blackpool, and feel some of that childhood longing for teenage abandon that their loudness still conjures. Out of the back entrance of the arcade, onto the pier, strings of light bulbs and Victorian streetlamps reconfigured from gas to electric warm the wooden walkway. The evening has grown gloomy since I went inside the arcade and the sea soaks up the darkness and expands around me, deep and mysterious. I imagine the murky lurky underbelly of the pier beneath the gappy wooden slats of the boardwalk. Along and

over, the fairground of the Central Pier motions and yelps. At night time, Blackpool possesses a high contrast between colourful, electric light and the thick, expansive darkness of the sea. The big wheel rotates slowly and reflects into the water.

(Site-writing developed from research fieldnotes).



Figures 23, 24, 25: Arcade spaceship ride with internal and external lights and hazard tape at St. Ives Harbour Amusements. Games machine with neon highlighted zones at Blackpool's Central Pier. Blackpool's The North Pier amusement arcade interior with illuminated and oversized plastic ice-cream. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Introduction

Daylight, darkness and illumination are invariably suffused with cultural values and myriad practices that solicit divergent sensory, affective, and emotional responses.

(Edensor, 2017:213)

This chapter pays attention to the experience of light in contemporary British seaside amusement arcades, uncovering and considering seaside amusement arcade light as a sensory and affective force. Diverse and shifting illumination, animation, colour, glow, popular and folk culture references and interaction with other materials (reflection, glitter, sparkle) are some of the key ways that light creates distinctive points of contact and exchange in the arcade and contributes to the seaside arcade's atmosphere, blending the real and the imaginary, the vernacular and the fantastical. According to Edensor (2017), light and dark anchor us in place and condition how we feel, practice, and design our environment. Through a focus on light, this chapter continues to move beyond reductive understandings of amusement arcades as merely spaces of deviance and gambling, to reveal how banal spaces of consumption in contemporary society are underexplored

sites that provide immersive multisensory and affective experience for visitors. This chapter considers the amusement arcade's relationship to broader contexts of everyday light and dark, the lightscape of seaside resorts and Blackpool as a visitor destination, and seaside amusement arcades' distinctive light infused atmospheres, through writing and photography and ongoing exchanges of fieldwork and theory.

Broader ideas about light in contemporary culture and the everyday

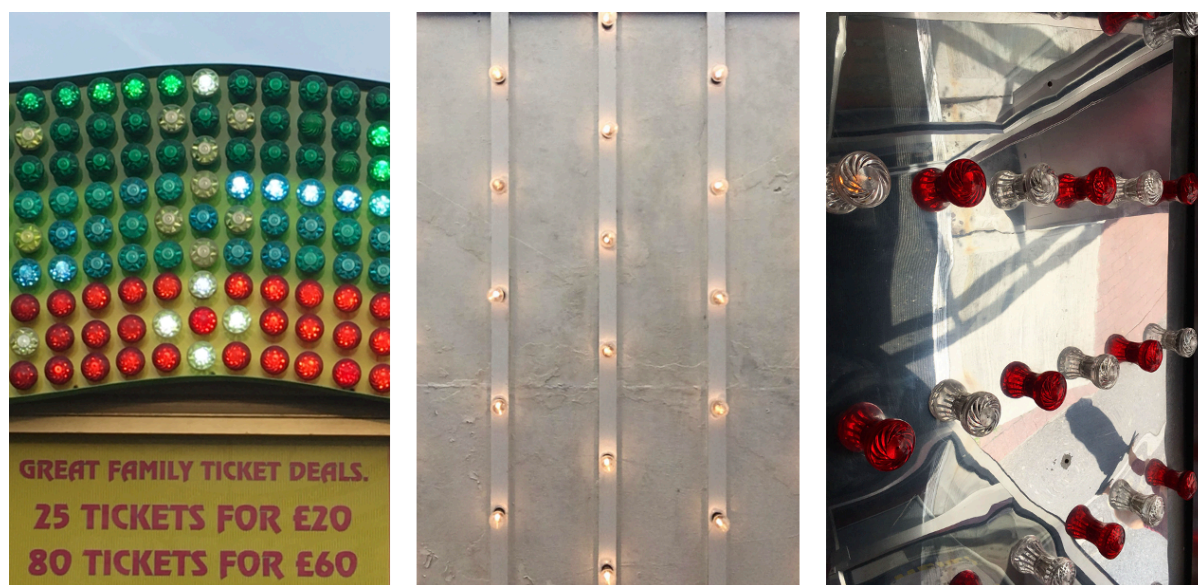
In contemporary British society, illumination is strategically curated and distributed by architects, designers, councils, commercial entities, and private investors. Cochrane (2004) suggests that light's diverse qualities and associated purposes include texture, accent, spatial transition, visual cues, and perceptions of security, moods, cerebral temperature, and drama. Light and shadow add layers of shifting visual depth and intrigue to our daily surroundings. In urban space, multiple *lumières* attached to vehicles, white headlamps, red brake lights, constantly shimmer and change after dark, fragmenting through rain-dashed windows. Street, traffic, petrol station and domestic lighting persist in the naturally dark hours, tinting the urban night sky orange with their collective brightness. Smart phone and laptop screen lighting continue to flash and glow through compulsive night time checks, disturbing sleep-wake rhythms through a lit, constant stream of information. Architects increasingly design buildings that incorporate illuminated, computer-generated images in our surrounding urban environments (Degen et al., 2017). Our bodies are caught up in complex, everyday systems and practices of light and dark.

Light suggests when to go and when to stop, when to get up and when to go to sleep, when to work and when to rest, when to be alert and when to relax. Infrastructures of light and dark act as forms of control, coding the acceptable and the illicit, the protected and the unassured. An ever-proliferating LED white light illuminates domestic streets, back gardens, shopping precincts and car parks, embedded with cultural notions of safety and security and the promise to deter anti-social or dangerous behaviour (Park and Garcia, 2020). Light thus takes on directive, culturally loaded forms, contributing to established codes of conduct and behaviour (Edensor, 2017). Speed and Light (2019) draw attention to the colour-coded light of urban space: red light is associated with the sex industry, blue light is used in supermarket toilets to deter the use of intravenous drugs by making veins difficult to see, and more recently, some residents' associations have started using pink light in places where youths loiter, making acne appear more prominent. Cronin (2010) further highlights advertising's enchanting urban effects, its mediations of place between the material and the

immaterial. Glowing billboards, buildings, bus stops and train platforms increasingly overlay urban surfaces with the text and imagery of commerce. Sainsbury's LED backlit orange glow, Asda's green glare, or Natwest's purple luminance illustrate how corporate brands have not only become illuminated, but also imprint themselves on the urban landscape after dark through colour-coded lighting.

Historically, new sources of urban light have elicited ambivalent responses, 'hailed as beacons of progress and modernity' (Bach and Degenring, 2015:2) by some and met with distain by others. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the transformation of previously gloomy urban spaces through the introduction of gas then electric illumination was awe-inspiring for many, at first. This radical development of electric illumination contributed to 'spatial defamiliarization, uncertainty and fascination, constitutive aspects of urban modern experience' (Edensor, 2017:55), bringing crowds of people out after dark onto the streets seeking entertainment, spectacle and amusement. As the novelty of electric light wore off, this kind of illumination became an 'institutionalised part of everyday life' (Edensor, 2017:53), commonplace to urban dwellers. Attitudes towards light and dark were infused with moral ideals of light as good and safe, and darkness as bad and dangerous. In urban places, cultural fears of criminality and threat under the cover of darkness proliferated in relation to burgeoning electric light, with increased menace of violent gangs, robbers and murderers during nocturnal hours. Darkness is strategically limited in towns and cities, with an ever-increasing application of electric illumination informed by lasting moral fears about darkness and discourses of modernist social and economic nocturnal activity (Edensor, 2017). In recent global developments, visions of future cities offer promises of exciting, convivial places after dark (Dunn, 2020), championing night time economy and constant illumination as desirable qualities of urban design. Infrastructures of light and dark are largely predictable and consistent, shaping societal movements, behaviours and practices in urban spaces. As the culture of high street shopping is replaced with online buying alternatives (Amazon etc.), inner towns and cities rethink their centres as places for experiential economy. This includes an increasing use of illuminated still and moving digital advertising imagery bringing 'powerful visceral place atmospheres' (Degen et al., 2017:23) to these shifting spaces and new modes of light infused commerce in contemporary culture. Interruptions to everyday light and dark systems in British culture are largely foreseen and planned. Beyond everyday street, domestic and commercial light, club night venues utilise a range of flashing, interchangeable light forms (strobe lights, laser lights, moving spot lights) that combine with music and dancing to invigorate designated dark, late night spaces. There is the celebratory, excessive lighting of annual festive occasions including high street and home Christmas lights displays and Diwali festival lanterns

and tealight diyas. Fireworks on Bonfire Night, Eid and New Year's Eve continue alongside increasingly popular urban light festivals commissioned by councils, funding bodies and private investors (Light Up the North, Bristol Light Festival, Durham's Lumiere, to name but a few). Travelling fairgrounds periodically light up local parks and recreation grounds, passing through places with colourful night time luminosities. Such events can temporally invigorate pockets of prosaic, standardised lightscares in town and cities. At the British seaside, resorts like Blackpool, Great Yarmouth, Margate and Scarborough partly reflect broader application and experience of light and dark in modern life; these places are based on familiar, defining transitions from day to night (Straw, 2015) and the ongoing characteristics of contemporary British urban environments in the daytime and night time. Beyond this, there are heightened and alternative arrangements of light based on infrastructures and practices of leisure and tourism that encompass the playful and the nostalgic. This includes fairground and amusement arcades that use plentiful and colourful light to mark themselves out against within the landscape and entice visitors through light.



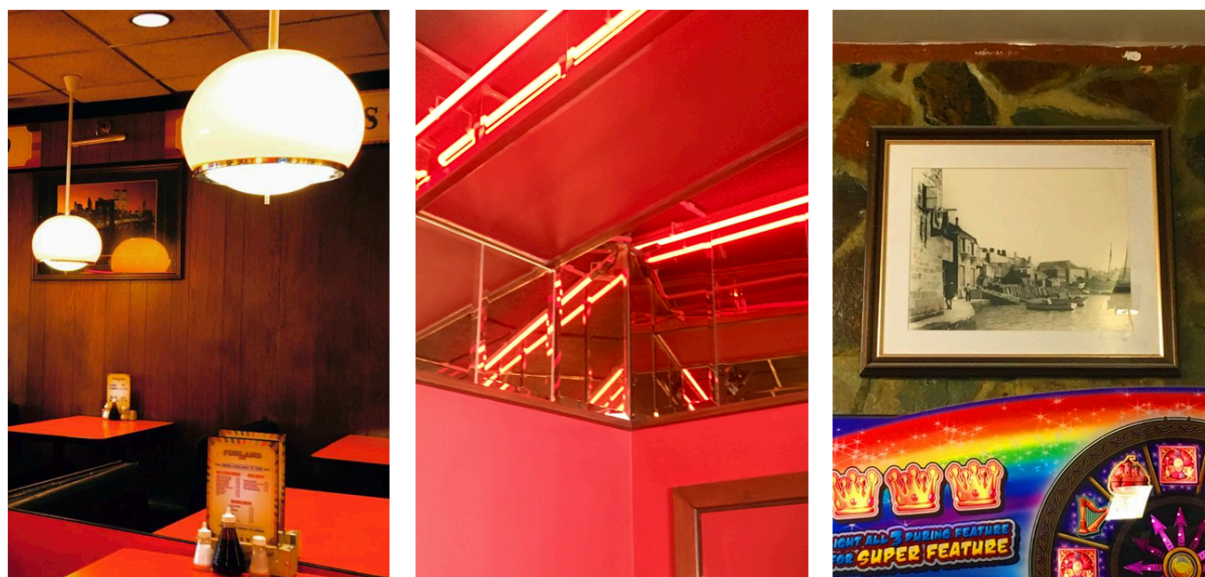
Figures 26, 27, 28: Blackpool pier fairground ticket booth with coloured lightbulbs. Newquay amusement arcade entryway cantilevered roofs with bulb lights and coloured bulb lights on mirrored backing. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

In an age of sleek, back-lit compact smart phones that instantaneously connect us to everything and anything, and an ever whiter, brighter and arguably blander LED lit urban nightscape infused with more and more glaring digital advertising imagery, a nostalgia for forms of lighting from earlier times is prevalent. Nostalgic forms of light are popular in the UK, networking seaside resorts and inland urban spaces through a desire for old light as part of contemporary life experience. Contemporary light forms that utilise technologies to look historical are part of a culture of retro and vintage light, with antique and antique-style lighting commodities used to reenchant everyday and holiday spaces.

Examples of this are 19th century style coach lamps beside domestic and hotel front doorways, and the vast reproduction of Anglepoise desk lamps, first invented in 1931 by George Cawardine, now a staple feature in retro mid-century style homes and Air BnBs. Dissatisfaction with the cold aesthetic and flatness of contemporary white LED light are challenged by LED vintage filament bulbs that give off a warm, low watt golden glow and neon and neon-style signs that diffuse subtle, enchanting colours into surrounding space. According to Edensor, 'light nostalgia is part of a broader social response to speed of change and to aspects of contemporary culture regarded as impersonal and placeless' (Edensor, 2017:75). Light nostalgia is infused with sentiments about what is being lost rather than gained through cultural and technological advances. Reactions of dislike as well as enthusiasm for new forms of light and lighting technologies has been ongoing since the times of gas and electrification. For example, Schlör (1998) described the Parisian scepticism of the return of gas and electric illumination in the city after the blackouts of WW1. Similarly, there was a nostalgic return to candles during the period of early electric lighting, with gaslighting periodically and whimsically longed for as an intimate and lingering light form (the 'ghost in the mist' (Brox, 2010:89)).

Nostalgia is often viewed as a regressive and indulgent kind of pensive sadness. It is a powerful, political tool that is repeatedly adopted by conservative agendas as part of a stubborn refusal to face new tech and social change. Yet beyond critiques of nostalgia that approach it as largely problematic and backward looking, and therefore un-progressive, nostalgia can also be seen as a reaction to the functional and futuristic obsessions of modernity. Nostalgic resurgences in lighting design are often entwined with environmental or political societal concerns. Nostalgia can be used to disrupt societal hierarchies of style and status and critique the promise of commerce-infused new tech (Edensor, 2019). Nostalgia can be deployed to animate a nuanced premise that has layered meanings and empower a different kind of progress through reflection (Edensor, 2017:79), making sense of the present and informing future environments and societies by drawing on the past. It is an emotional state that allows for ambivalences as well as a tolerance for the existence of different human realities, encouraging a slowing down and finding of beauty in mundane surroundings or in the uniqueness of a place. Nostalgic forms of lighting in contemporary culture highlight different 'values, identities, and meanings that circulate around illumination' (Edensor, 2017:79). Nostalgic light can be an important part of self-identity; it can connect us to other people and places, helping us foster a sense of belonging. Even through hard times, people do not always want to be cured of their past. Visits to experience dated technology in supposedly outmoded destinations forms part of the culture of light nostalgia, with seaside resorts offering comforting and enchanting lighting experiences to inlanders seeking rest and respite. Steeped in history and heritage, many seaside destinations are caught up in

the recurrent practice of British seaside resort nostalgia (Jarratt and Steele, 2019). Resorts like Blackpool present plentiful nostalgic forms of lighting, offering strings of warm gas style lightbulbs along piers and promenades, and colourful fairground and arcade cabochon lights and neon aplenty. Blackpool and other seaside resorts are caught up in a nostalgic culture of light with an array of old fashioned, persistent light forms collaged with new retro modes of lighting that nod to the British seaside's past popularity (Bould et al., 2016), augmented by contemporary cutting-edge forms of illumination. Through their contrasting aesthetics, seaside resort light can also reconfirm the flatness, stagnation and boringness of contemporary popular urban lighting design, through an array of colours, overlays, impacts and affects that expand beyond the advertisements and commodities of the inland urban landscape.



Figures 29, 30, 31: Funland amusement arcade café in Blackpool with 1960s wooden panelling, suspended ceiling lights and orange vinyl table tops. Olympia Leisure in Scarborough interior corner with red neon, red paint and mirrors. Harbour Amusements in St. Ives interior with stone cladding, framed old photograph of St. Ives harbour and colourful, illuminated games machine. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Relationality and contexts within broader lightscape of seaside resorts and specifically Blackpool

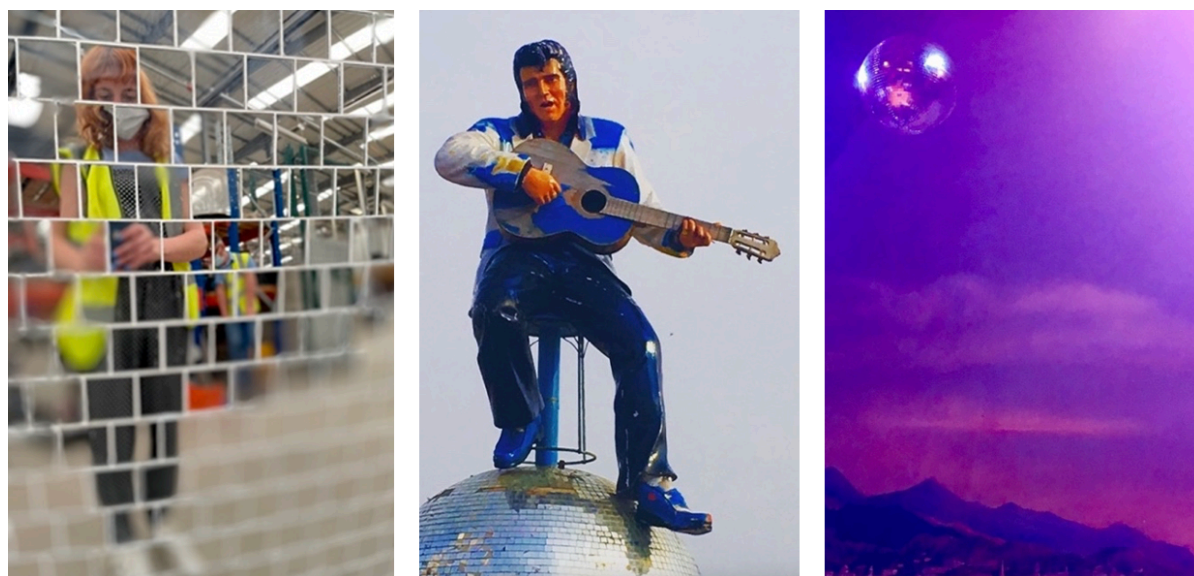
Light infused seaside resort temporality and sense of place

As emphasised in the introduction, the seaside resort has historically been visited by tourists as a place to escape the burdens of everyday life through activities, behaviours, and spaces that foreground fun, restoration and relaxation. The seaside resort as a visitor destination becomes a temporal 'in-between' of time and space (Shields, 1990), facilitating occasions of discontinuity within the social structures of everyday life. This is, in part, signified through an expansion of light and dark,

with seaside resort light and dark differentiating and connecting these places to the everyday. Heavily dependent on tourism, Blackpool utilises alternative and artificial light (amongst other strategies) expansively and creatively to attract and retain tourists and extend tourist trade into the night time. Normal sleep-wake rhythms are often disrupted on holidays, easing early morning routines and extending nocturnal activities. This brings forth opportunities to create impact using alternative and artificial forms of light. Cushioning hopes for holiday sunshine and inviting visitors out at night time, Blackpool and other popular British seaside resorts have developed forms of light that enrich seaside resort space, whatever the weather. Codings of light elicit diverse visitor practices through a heightened, colourful lightscape.

The development of seaside resort access during the 19th and 20th centuries positioned them as getaway places of respite and pleasure in the collective experience and memory of the working and middle-classes. Longing and yearning for special experiences beside the seaside (in the UK or abroad) continues to be deeply entrenched in British culture, with return visits (annually or more, where possible) still a desirable prospect for many. Jarratt and Steele (2019) propose that seaside nostalgia is evoked by narratives, images, and objects. This takes hold through site-based interactions as well as take away fragments (photos, souvenirs), sitting at the intersection of the past, present, and future. Visitors can return to specific seaside resort locations or move between seaside resorts with similar-but-different infrastructures and designs, powerfully evoking seaside nostalgia through immediate sensory interactions and ritualistic, temporal practices, with a nostalgia for light part of this process. Developed through practices and designs of the carnivalesque, seaside resort fairgrounds and amusement arcades follow a 'ludic aesthetic that arose during the early expansion of electric lighting (Edensor, 2017:70), with fairground lighting and imagery heralded as a 'garish over-abundance' that connotated pleasure, fantasy and release from work for visitors (Feigal, 2009). Contemporary seaside resorts tend to be places of longstanding infrastructure, with pops of the new amidst the enduring often nodding to seaside cultures past in their design. There are ample stringed and often coloured lightbulbs, an outdated mode of lighting that is being revived as a desirable lighting type in urban bars and eateries and that is persistent at the seaside. The outline of Blackpool tower glows in coloured LEDs all year round, a streamlined vision of modernity. In recent years, neon has seen a revival in popularity, now favoured for its clean lines and glowing, retro colours that enchant 'with a nostalgic aura' (Edensor, 2017:75). Neon primarily emerged in the 1930s and 1940s and was once seen as vibrant and streamlined but then relegated to run down urban areas of seediness and squalor when replaced in the mid 20th century by florescent tubed backlit signs with plastic fronts. The technicolour effects of neon tube lighting overlaid painterly signs and

advertisements to illuminate them after dark, thus making neon a popular light form during the heightening of capitalism in post-war culture. Through its cutting-edge, sleek technicolour effects that transformed the visual culture of commerce, neon signs were symbolic of power, efficiency and vitality (DeLyser and Greensteing, 2021). Neon has a rich history in 20th century American and Japanese urban landscape and film. From the iconic, dystopian downtown futuristic metropolis neon night time of *Bladerunner* to the neon-soaked soft romance scene of *In the Mood for Love*, neon is imprinted on British culture through film, with associations to the far away and the longed for. There are now neon museums in Philadelphia, Warsaw and Las Vegas. At the British seaside, neon endures along the seafront and in amusement arcades, outlining buildings, signs, rooms, images and text, adding mystery and magic through reductive and altered forms that transition from day to night. Neon is associated with particular, sometimes illicit desires and pleasures (sex shops, strip clubs, peep shows, pubs and clubs) and is entwined with the saucy indulgence of many British seaside resorts.



Figures 32, 33, 34: Blackpool's Giant Glitter Ball being cleaned up at Blackpool Lightworks with reflection of Author during Lightworks' site visit. Elvis on a Glitter Ball on Blackpool's Central Pier. Blackpool Tower's main stage featuring a glitterball. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

A repeatedly occurring nostalgic object that plays with natural and artificial light found in various places, sizes and scenarios in seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades, is the glitter ball. Originally called a mirror ball and traceable back to 1897, glitter balls are inextricably culturally linked to the 1970s disco era. Glitter balls are essentially spheres of glass, polystyrene or plastic with many small, mirrored squares attached to and covering their surface. Sometimes fixed in position and other times with motorised rotation, glitter balls reflect fragmented, colourful and alluring light patterns. Blackpool Mirror Ball, installed on the promenade at North Shore, is reputed as the world's

biggest mirror ball and is 6 meters in diameter. Blackpool Mirror Ball and the Central Pier's Elvis-topped glitter ball are reminiscent of the fragmented, glistening surface of the nearby sea, interplaying with sunlight, moonlight and electric light from along the promenade at night time. Inside Blackpool Tower, a glitter ball combines with lighting systems to add colourful, moving patterned overlays to its famous ballroom and the dancers and spectators that frequent it. Glitter balls are nostalgic objects that connect us to recent history and contribute to the visually tantalising and retro collage of lighting experiences in Blackpool and many other British seaside resorts. The concept of 'glitter' as a dazzling medium that combines light and fractured surface is one that has historically been associated with the commodification of working-class culture (Holliday and Potts, 2012) and is entwined with the history and identity of Blackpool as a predominantly working-class tourist resort. Glitter is attached to ideas of and ambitions for wealth, through the historical value and status of precious glistening stones, shiny metals and the power and good fortune they continue to represent. Transcending class boundaries, glitter has a ubiquitous visual effect; it has an illusionary impact on our vision, challenging our capacity to capture and define what we see through its expansive, ever-shifting fragmentation of light. This momentary visual disorientation is an opportunity to surrender to glitter's dazzling, enchanting and subtly spectacular effects. From sequinned tops to hen do tiaras, Blackpool has seen plenty of glitter over the years, through working-class special time glitz and glamour. Glitter balls continue to be associated to dancing, good times, flamboyance and glamour at the seaside, adding shifting spectrums of coloured light to outdoor spaces, pubs, clubs and ballrooms, fairground rides and arcade interiors around the coast. Blackpool's multiple glitter balls contribute to the resort's use of light reflection and movement, playing with visitors' visual perceptions. Glitter balls are an example of how special light forms can mesmerically reconfigure spaces and bind people together under shared spectra of subtle, shifting lighting. They create moments of optical illusion, patterning and connecting bodies and surfaces. The glitter ball is an example of the seaside resort's ongoing reproduction of popular light-infused motifs, contributing to sensational light in Blackpool, amongst other places, that connects visitors to each other and the location through a nostalgic design. Via a montage of glitter balls, colourful neon and bulb lighting, combined with more contemporary LED backlit signs with fantastical typography and imagery, lasers and fibre optics, Blackpool's night time illumination challenges urban white LED light and 'normative, unvarying blandscapes' (Edensor, 2017:80). Seaside resorts like Blackpool could be described, on the one hand, as chaotic jumble of light forms with different technologies and styles. On the other hand, Blackpool's collective seafront illumination is imbued with vernacular artistry and craft, with a sumptuous typography and a tableau of imagery from popular culture and modernity that creates a distinctive kind of place experience.

Blackpool's unique tourist amusement lightscape

Blackpool boasts three piers and The Blackpool Tower, all demonstrations of ambitious human-made, illuminated structures designed for recreational activity that placed Blackpool at the forefront of modern seaside resorts. The commercialisation of culture manifests in the form of Blackpool's seaside resort establishments and tourist attractions along the promenade: a mix of familiar high street chains, tourist attractions and local landmarks specific to Blackpool (The Tower Ballroom, The Wave Project, Pat's Bingo, Leonora Petulengro Clairvoyant, Madame Tussauds). Rows of shops, bars, and eateries, pay amusements and activities, while multiple lambent fairgrounds (The Central Pier, The South Pier, Blackpool Pleasure Beach) all beckon tourist trade through a heightened dazzling melange of lighting in bright colours that interchange and imprint their presence on the landscape before and after dark. Between and beyond standardised commercial, residential, and street lighting, a walk along Blackpool seafront reveals a spritely, stimulating use of light in the daytime and night time. Blackpool expands the familiar modern lightscape of the urban with common sense notions of special time marked out for the weekend and vacationing. A change of place and pace are signified through Blackpool's celebratory light and amusement culture, inviting visitors to slow down or speed up. Illumination is used to heighten special time experience.

The Blackpool Illuminations site-specific annual light festival staged in Autumn and Winter fortifies the promenade with additional artificial illumination (Hargen, 2008). When first shown in 1897, Blackpool Illuminations were described as artificial sunshine and consisted of eight arc lamps which bathed the nicknamed Golden Mile stretch in golden light. The event preceded Thomas Edison's patent of the lightbulb by 12 months, putting Blackpool at the forefront of industry and technology at this time, through a grand spectacle of light for holiday makers that attracted thousands of visitors in the late 19th century. Throughout the 20th century, the Blackpool Illuminations continued to develop as a festival of light, described by Edensor and Millington (2015:57) as 'an extravaganza of light that extends the traditional holiday season by eight or nine weeks from the end of August.' Incorporating characters and motives from popular culture and folklore, with connections and yet distinctions from homogenised high street Christmas Lights displays and the increasingly popular urban light festivals, the Blackpool Illuminations retain a uniqueness in contemporary culture for the spectacle they offer. Beyond the external illuminations display along the seafront, an indoor part of the festival called Illuminasia, held in Blackpool's Winter Gardens, uses the ancient art of lantern making, bringing world monuments together through lantern-sculptural forms in one space. Research on Blackpool Illuminations showed visitors liked the lights for their evoking of a sense of

nostalgia (Edensor and Millington, 2013). Visitors are grounded and connected to the place and themselves through repeated visits, ongoing memories, and collective and convivial experience. There is a keenness for traditional themes and styles, with local designs attuning to desires for charm and comfort. As well as conjuring up a vanishing past, Blackpool's illuminations demonstrate an appreciation of everyday cultural forms of elsewhere, with the global entwined with the local and national.

Since 2016, Blackpool's Lightpool Festival has acted as a counterpoint to the Illuminations, focusing on art-orientated lighting via commissioned art installations, lasers, and live performances. Lightpool Festival is part of the Light Up the North network of light festivals across the north of England in which several towns and cities seek to support emerging artists and attract an expanded visitor audience. When I visited Blackpool's Lightworks in 2021 (Blackpool's longstanding Illuminations making and repair depot who also now facilitate the making of some of the illuminated artworks for Blackpool's Lightpool), a member of the depot staff said that long-time visitors of the Blackpool Illuminations had responded to Lightpool with mixed reviews; whilst some appreciate the festival others felt excluded by or disengaged with these new modes of light artworks, favouring the traditional Illuminations' festive approach to light. Blackpool's Lightpool contrasts the popular and folk cultural references of the Illuminations and Blackpool's overarching identity and style that align with a certain kind of working-class heritage. Class-based notions of artfulness, status and taste are entwined with newly commissioned and longstanding artistic light forms in Blackpool. Different agendas and funding bodies contribute to the resort's abundance of light, through multiple and stylistically somewhat chaotic lumieres that layer and blend with each other. Blackpool's festive light further entwines with the illuminated facades of various leisure and entertainment venues, including pubs, restaurants, and amusement arcades.

Blackpool's lit offerings persist throughout the day and into the night. Fairgrounds and amusement arcades turn their lights on when opening for business in the morning. This crescendos as the sun sets through an increase in electric illumination set against the darkening backdrop of the sea and sky, with the Illuminations and Lightpool Festival artworks adding to this medley of light at certain times of year. After nightfall, Blackpool's promenade is significantly darker than common inland highstreets, with pops of colour set against the blackness of the sky and the sea's nocturnal far-reaching gloom. There is noticeably less bright white LED lighting along the promenade than in inland city centres. This allows for extensive colourfully lit facades, amusements and festive lights to diffuse less bright but arguably alluring hues into their surroundings, with people's faces along the

seafront tinted and shadowy. Coloured light reflects from wet tarmac on rainy days and in ephemeral tassels from the pier onto the sea beneath. Blackpool's Illuminations persist at the forefront of these lighting display. On closer inspection, the contribution of amusement arcade light to Blackpool is apparent, at street level through arcade facades and their pervading glows into surrounding space. The expanse of the Irish Sea as a deep, dark backdrop to Blackpool's promenade is ever present, underpinning a range of dark spaces that include nightclubs, ghost trains and the candle lit back rooms of Blackpool's fortune tellers.



Figures 35, 36, 37: Blackpool Central Pier Amusements entryway at night time. Fieldtrip photos (2020). Author's own.

Distinctive effects of light in the British seaside amusement arcade

With the flashing lights of the arcade games and fruit machines glinting like precious jewels, the delights, and treasures to be found in this mysterious enclave are deemed analogous to those found in the Arabian caves and grottos of the fairy tale.

(Burdsey, 2011:544)

Around the shoreline, seafronts glow with the entrances of amusement arcades, like jewel-stacked cartoon treasure chests. Amusement arcade facades and glimpses of their cavernous interiors contribute to a lively relationship of light and dark at street level, intermingling with other forms of artificial and natural light. Amusement arcade facades (Funland, Coral Island, Happy Dayz, Golden Mile Amusements, Silcock's Fun Palace, Carousel Amusements, Lucky Star Arcade, North/Central/South Pier Arcades) nod to the playful and mythical, the far away and the dreamed of, contributing significantly to Blackpool's convivial culture of illumination. Amusement arcades are

woven into the sparkly fabric of Blackpool's attire, adorning seafront and piers. Central Pier Amusement Arcade is an example of a lit seaside amusement arcade façade. A large semi-3D yellow 'AMUSEMENTS' sign sits above the main entrance in a swashbuckling typography that imitates marks traditionally made by a pirate's sword. This is surrounded by a white lightbulb (some lit, some gone) and red neon border. Central Pier Amusement Arcade's entrance resembles retail establishments of the humble British high street (the PVC front door types are reminiscent of those of the common newsagents, a lit cashpoint is secured in the outer wall of the arcade). Underneath and closer to the multiple doorway entrances is a smaller neon 'AMUSEMENTS OPEN' red sign, with several standardised rectangular outdoor white lights. Inside the arcade, through glass doorways patterned with light reflections, we glimpse the arcades expanded use of lighting; an illuminated claw machine games unit stuffed with pastel pink soft toys, and a racing game in bright green, with banal suspended ceiling gridded light panels over the head of a life size fibreglass Elvis. The external lighting of amusement arcades and entertainment venues persist all year round, bolstering Blackpool's promenade with collective electrified, colourful and playful light. Amusement arcades follow their own annual cycle (Chapman and Light, 2016); they tend to remain open all year round. Frequented not just for playing games, Blackpool's arcades are places to warm up and get a cup of tea on wetter days or in colder months or to cool down in the hot days of summer. Whether busy or sparsely frequented by visitors, in the height of summer or during quieter months, the persistently colourful, warming and playful exterior and interior lights of seaside amusement arcades contribute significantly to the festive, convivial ambience of British seaside resorts. Their amalgamation with multiple fairgrounds and annual festive illumination creates a particularly immersive and extraordinary lightscape. Amusement arcades are illuminated spaces in which crowds move through and linger inside, with people wandering from and between arcades on seafronts and promenades, enjoying and participating in its divergence of lighting experiences. Interior seaside amusement arcade spaces are not challenged by the wet and wind of the coastal weather. This permits broader kinds of electrified lighting technologies that facilitate extensive visual and haptic encounters between visitors and machines. Animated flashes. Humming neon. Colourful lightbulb hues. Fluorescent plastic machine buttons and prizes. Dazzling, rotating halogens. Computer screen glares. Lambent and colourful cartoon LED screens. Illuminated surfaces including screens, buttons, leavers, floors, seats, pods that invite touch are activated and sustained through light. Standardised lit signs for toilets, arcade cafes and exits offer some reassurance of normativity within a collage of the uncoordinated and unusual. Amusement arcades are permanently lit, blurring the boundaries of day and night. They are reminiscent of the postmodern condition of collapsed time in late capitalism, with labyrinthine layouts, multiple entrances and exits, limited numbers of windows and restricted

natural daylight, with an absence of clocks. They are persistent through the seasons and at different times of day, as individual night time realms or as part of the expanded seaside resort lightscape. An extended use of bold, flashing, and colourful light in seaside amusement arcades goes beyond the LED white light infrastructures of Britain's inland towns and cities. This is entwined with the 'kiss me quick' immediacy of British seaside resort culture.

Edensor (2017) suggests that light and dark are enmeshed with popular significations. Rooted in popular and folk culture and vernacular and mass-production/global commerce artistry (Edensor and Millington, 2013), Blackpool's amusement arcades have developed alongside the Illuminations, stores, fairgrounds, and other resort amusements, to include significations from popular and commercial culture. Fortified with illuminated recurring themes of history, heritage, and fantasy, Blackpool has an 'inside/outside' continual incorporation of popular cultural motifs and images that expand in amusement arcades through a broad range of light technologies. In Blackpool and beyond, seaside amusement arcades are awash with spotlighted fibre glass and painted characters; pirates, sea creatures, mermaids and castaways that nod to their seaside location, along with zombies, 1920s American gangsters, and other eccentrics. LED backlit screens depict character brands and fantasy worlds (Sponge Bob Square Pants, Jurassic Park, Coronation Street, Elvis, Dolphin Star, Disney's Aladdin). Video games machines continuously loop starter screen footage in between plays, featuring the mythical gaming characters of Donkey Kong and The Mario Brothers. Swivel spotlights highlight cartoon murals on arcade walls (scenes from The Flintstones and Ali Baba). There are brightly lit prize counters with boxed up figurines (Buzz Light Year, Batman), inflatable sea creatures (Finding Nemo), and oversized and miniature soft toys (Winnie the Pooh, Barney, Crazy Toy, Hello Kitty). There are also throngs of unidentifiable imaginary creatures manufactured in coloured fabric, stuffing and plastic, under bright lights behind the clear Perspex screens in the cranes machines, amidst Power Rangers toys and fluorescent sweets (Haribo Starmix, Maoam 'JoyStixx' and 'PinBalls'). Together these subjects weave obscure, theatrical scenes; a celebration of the absurd, the strange, the culturally diverse, the socially popular and peripheral. The British seaside is criticised for having a 'colonial hangover' (Burdsey, 2011:546). Whilst this is sensible, another view could be that there is a subversion of the power structures that proliferate through the monumental and civic in the city, with resorts like Blackpool spotlighting often ignored and forgotten histories and cultures as well as more familiar fantasy tropes, making connections with other times and places. Artificial forms of light in the amusement arcade deploy symbolic meaning, referencing and amplifying the popular culture to which they draw attention. Visitors find themselves up-close to back-lit representations and flashing simulations of fictional and non-fictional characters

and idols. Arcades bring to the fore historical myths and narratives that are forgotten or disregarded entirely in the city, effectively fusing cultures, styles, and narratives. People and places from current and past cultures assemble, with stories of futuristic science fiction rubbing up against replications of ancient historical sites. This is conducive to a nostalgic affect for visitors, as they recall and remember their own lives and experiences through a collective, cultural nostalgia for times past, identifying the media representations and popular cultural figures from the eras about which they are most nostalgic. These narratives combine with outmoded forms of light that are less unified and efficient than current popular LED lighting persist, reinvigorating visitors with experiences, technologies and connections to the past. Grids of interchangeable bulb lights, popular in fairgrounds, can be found in the amusement arcade, along with multiple neon signs and machines highlighted with neon edges. Another form of light that persists within arcades are the early computer screens of video games machines from the 1980s and 1990s; these convex glass screens use bulky cathode ray tubes, with bold, blocky coloured graphics. Such video games machines are furnished with a phosphor coating that emanates traces of after-glow affects within video gaming imagery and soft, green-tinged glows into surrounding space in immediate proximity to screens within the arcade. Lighting is used to represent and amplify selected characters and narratives from popular and folk culture in the amusement arcade, as well as deploying popular cultural forms of illumination technology.



Figures 38, 39, 40: Multi-coloured Crazy Toy Claw Machine games reflecting onto metal ceiling at arcade, Winna under the sea illustrated arcade game with LED backlit plastic colourful imagery. Elvis Arcade game glowing in red. Author's own.

Blackpool's unique arcades have developed over time, with new games machines integrated amongst older models within the arcade space. The glitter and glamour of working-class culture found in glitter balls, twinkly lights and reflective surfaces entwines with a bountiful use of red and

gold in many amusement arcades. In British culture, combinations of red and gold suggest warmth and comfort; the luxurious (velvet, noble metal) and the affluent (Victorian royal). This kind of deluxe design was first initiated by an arcade owner in Blackpool in the 1960s,

The typical early 1960s British arcade had something of a temporary gaff-shop feel to it, with concrete floors and plain walls. One sanddancer, the Blackpool-based Tom Lane, changed this by investing in the furnishings and fabric of the arcade as well as its machine mix. Lane revolutionized the British arcade with the design of Lane's Amusements, on Blackpool's Golden Mile. Doing away with the varnished wood floor, Lane installed plush carpets, velvet wall hangings, and other decorations. Lane's style choices became the talk of the British industry, and arcade owners made a point of visiting his arcade to see the design.

(Meades, 2022:68)

Recognisable as a description for many contemporary seaside arcades (albeit the plush carpets are often worn and faded now), arcade interiors are infused with aspiration and luxury for many visitors. Historically, working-class seaside resorts presented time and space beyond the humdrum routines of factory or mill work, offering holiday enjoyment and recreational spending, practices usually reserved for upper classes. The factory line has given way to the office hub in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, where administrative and / or screen-based work and duties are often situated amongst monochrome surfaces and formulaic white modes of functional lighting. Longstanding amusement arcades, along with many old theatres and cinemas, persist as leisure spaces that imbue luxury in red and gold, a lingering, performative materiality and colour palette of royalty and wealth.



Figures 41, 42, 43: Suspended panelled ceiling with red neon edge and spot light in Newquay's Carousel Amusements. Southport Amusement Centre window with red neon sign over foil curtain, spot lights on red and gold arcade carpet. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Amusement arcades, in red and gold. Regal. Royal. Luxurious. Old.

Womb warm. Windsor Castle room. Big and bold.

Red neon signs and strip lights soften edges and welcome you in.

Low watt halogen bulbs warm walkways, seats and suspended ceilings.

Gold tinsel curtains dangle, adding working men's club glam and glitz.

Reflections of red and gold mingle in polished screens of machine Perspex.

Worn carpets in classy crimson with tiny gold flecks,

reminiscent of ageing towny royal theatres.

Furr coat, no knickers. Gin and tonic in your whiskers.

Chrome reflects red and gold, glowing in coppery pink and brassy hues.

Glowing flowing metallics. Surfaces melt and mush.

'Elvis' is studded in red LEDs. Plastic buttons cheekily blush.

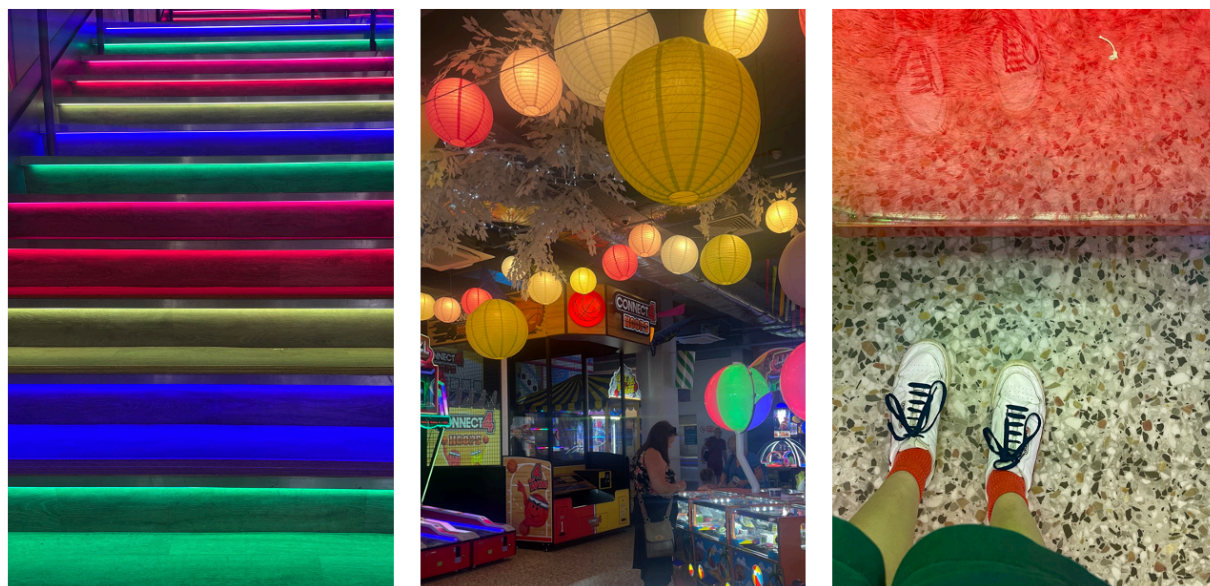
High stools flushed in scarlet velvet flatten under your old tush.

(Site-writing developed from research fieldnotes).

Seaside amusement arcades have periodically been at the forefront of technology, with the introduction of mechanical games in the early 20th century, and video games machines first appearing in arcades in the late 1970s/early 1980s. The video games era led to arcade windows being covered up and the introduction of lower lighting to allow for video games screens to be sufficiently seen, with a cavernous, dimly lit image of amusement arcades becoming dominant in the late 20th century. At this time, arcades were often portrayed by the media and considered by some as immoral, seedy places of teenage abundance. In a critique of the dangers of seaside amusement arcades to youth culture and society in the mid 1990s, Fisher wrote that 'once inside [an amusement arcade], the visitor is in a time capsule devoid of any reference to the natural world. Daylight is replaced by neon strips or spotlights' (Fisher, 1995:83). Fisher goes on to describe a 'subjective sense of chaos as the visual and aural scene is ever changing in a kaleidoscopic fashion' (ibid). This begins to describe some of the arcade's light and dark characteristics that are still prevalent in Blackpool's arcades today, although not to the same extent as when the primary audience demand and focus was video games machines.

Seaside amusement arcades become time vortexes to the past; they assemble the old with the new and are sustained by their use of gloom combined with intensified, layered pops of illuminated, shifting colour. There is a heightened inter-sensuality of visual and aural culture. I am particularly interested in Fisher's reference to the 'ever changing' (Fisher, 1995:85). Light continuously stimulate involvement through interchangeable spectrums of vivid colour, creating ongoing movement and intrigue. A transient use of collaged light interplays with sound, bringing arcade visitors an experience of expansion and variation, within a located time and space. There is an ongoing perpetual dialogue between machines and visitors, as these spatial components continuously sync and clash, flirt and quibble. Whether busy with crowds or sparse with only loitering arcade attendants and the occasional visitor, arcade light continues to pulsate, vibrantly oscillating and constantly nudging (Bennett, 2010). It could be argued that bodies are transformed and 'become' playful and convivial through the amusement arcade's unique lighting in an affectively charged space (Waitt and Stanes, 2015). A museumsque Blackpool arcade interior has emerged that juxtaposes a range of technologies, from the mechanical to the computerised. Unlike some amusement arcades designed knowingly (Margate's Dreamland vintage themed arcade designed by Wayne Hemmingway, Sega Megaworld's sleek contactless payment video games arcade), or newly refurbished amusement arcades that maintain their games machines but incorporate other design features and ideas (Blackpool Amusements, an amusement arcade that opened in 2023 with a terrazzo floor, colourfully lit stair case and paper lantern decorated ceiling), the gradual, eclectic development of many

amusement arcades in Blackpool and at the British seaside evidence periods of both popularity and decline.



Figures 44, 45, 46: Blackpool Amusements lit staircase, paper lantern ceiling and terrazzo floor. Fieldtrip photos (2023). Author's own.

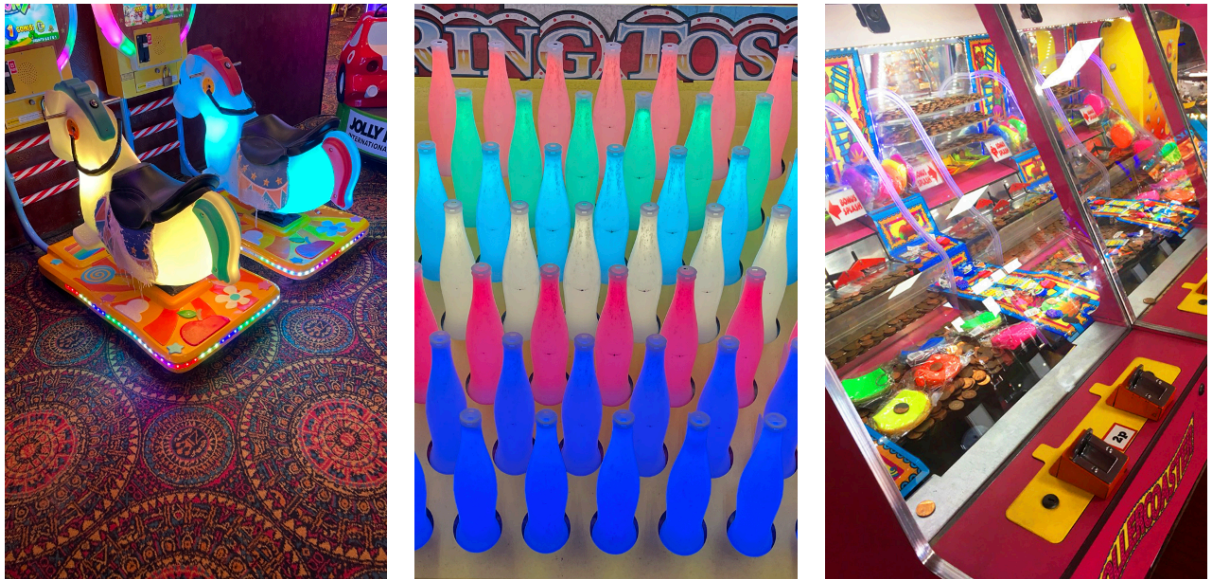
Parsons (2009) proposes that seaside resort site-specific remembering forms a key part of self-identity. For some, amusement arcade light mobilises a knowing appreciation of bygone phenomena that informs a resort visitor's identity and sensibility (Holliday and Potts, 2012). For others, arcade spaces are access points to a childlike sense of wonder, through their playful, illuminated evocation. Through a layered history and assemblage of lighting technologies, colours, and surfaces, seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcade facilitate nostalgically informed interactions, performatively entwining then and now. The arcade is intergenerational, with coloured light-infused visiting practices adapted and passed down through generations. Amusement arcades contribute to a broader seaside nostalgia; they are part of identity formation for many and continue to invigorate a social connectedness at the British seaside and in British culture. This can help visitors in sustaining and developing a sense of meaning. Seaside arcades facilitate imagining, remembering and whimsical bonding for visitors that enriches an out of the ordinary spatial sensitivity and abstracted sense of place.



Figures 47, 48, 49: Central Pier Amusements damaged ceiling with glitterball overlay. Blackpool Tower amusement arcade
Caution: Cleaning in Progress sign. Seaside amusement arcade suspended ceiling with neon edge lighting.
Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

The light emitted from the games machines is situated amidst often dated interiors that include patterned carpets underfoot that proliferate in mirrors and interact with UV lights (sea sanded, worn patches, gaffer tape plasters), suspended ceilings above (sometimes damp patches and missing tiles), panelled, strip and Czech cut glass ceiling lights (some bulbs flicker or may not be working). These commonalities of run-downness and glimpses of disrepair through crumbling interiors and neglected fixtures reflect the faded glamour of Blackpool as a resort. The wondrous is disciplined by the familiar direct language, colours and patterns of our health and safety conscious culture in amusement arcades. Yellow and black hazard tape, gaffer tape, and wet floor cleaning signs caution us to be careful and watch our step whilst having fun and letting go. In contrast to ornate, characterful illuminated typography and imagery, warning signs cut through the space with their sans serif fonts. The seaside amusement arcade tends to have a clunky, electric visual appearance that includes wires, cables, light-switches, neon tube clips, screwed panels, vents and grills, plug sockets, gaffer tape, electrical tape and generators. This forms a functional yet somewhat unpleasant electric aesthetic that bolsters the arcade's lighting yet sits uncomfortably with its magical agenda; somehow, these arcades are both extravagant and apathetic. Postmodern dystopic assemblages, Blackpool's arcades are atmospherically chaotic and tumultuous. They are a bit scruffy and dishevelled in their contemporary state; they evoke a slightly grungelike mood. Contemporary seaside amusement arcades cater for a tech nostalgia; long-standing amusement arcades have more recently become associated with a particular cultural narrative that embraces a broad array of historical computers and machines for pleasure, evidencing a visitor desire for old and analogue machines in a time of sleek, similar smart phone screens. The wide-ranging proximity of arcade

game technology found in Blackpool arcades locates an atmosphere that is original, amorphous, and speculative. Sumartojo and Pink situate atmospheres as 'enduringly present, continually changing and inevitably part of the everyday and more extraordinary events and experiences of our lives' (Sumartojo and Pink, 2019:15). Inside the persistent and undervalued seaside amusement arcade is a distinctive atmospheric space that embodies much of the hopes, endeavours, and fabrications of society.



Figures 50, 51, 52: Assorted Blackpool amusement arcade games. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Throughout Blackpool's amusement arcades, edges are blurred as light combines with other materialities. Light's appearances (flickering, dullness, radiance, iridescence) depends on 'the material on which it shines and on the surface's character' (Böhme, 2017:155). Different types of light interact with moving forms, colourful and reflective surfaces. Sequined soft toy prizes, glitter rubber ducks and golden crowned prizes shine and interact with spotlights. UV bulbs interplay with patterned carpets. Mechanical games components studded with lightbulbs blur in peripheral vision. There is a heavy use of mirrors, that interact with light, metal, glass and coloured plastics to create distortion, illusion and depth in the arcade space. Seaside amusement arcade glitter contributes to a suspension of normative vision and routines, foregrounding being dazzled, getting lost and intermingling with light and each other. Object and subject mingle and repeat. Cash and prizes multiply. Visitors warp and bend in reflections. The distinctive distribution of animated light, intense and fluorescent colours and glows, reflection, sparkle and flashes in the arcade, is notably more acute in seaside amusement arcades than in other places. Pink and Sumartojo (2018) explore how

light escapes material boundaries, pervading into surrounding space, reflecting off surfaces, mingling with other kinds of light, sounds and smells to create atmospheres.



Figures 53, 54, 55: Margate's Dreamland arcade aluminium five bar tread plate with colourful arcade machine reflection (popular at the fairground, this hardwearing textured metal surface is also found inside many amusement arcades). Blackpool arcade window display of sequined dog prizes on a towel with side mirrors. Seaside amusement arcade carpet under UV light. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Light extends beyond its physical dimensions, permeating outwards and interacting in surrounding space. Beyond the visual, where electric light and surrounding surfaces come close, subtle scents diffuse; the metallic smell of warmed coppers, balmy sugar, frazzling synthetic cuddly toy hair, warmed grubby carpet and hot plastic. Qualities of light often go unnoticed when we are caught up in the recurrences of everyday life. It can be difficult to identify the culture and impact of light and dark on our lives as they are experienced so unreflexively. By suspending our everyday visual habits with light mediums in darkened spaces, the amusement arcade interrupts and extends beyond our normative environment. Modern life is re-enanted through light and dark that suspend feelings related to familiar realms (Edensor, 2014). Interior amusement arcade light brings chances to practice and apprehend place in ways not frequently experienced. Our senses are defamiliarised and our usual perceptual capabilities are played with.



Figures 56, 57, 58: Coin cup and prize glitter rubber ducks over illuminated penny pusher machine at amusement arcade in Hastings. Seaside arcade My Little Pony prizes with metallic gold crowns under spotlights on reflective Perspex. Glitter rubber ducks in crane grabber games machine at amusement arcade in Hastings. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Impacts and affects: otherness to normative world, atmosphere and immersion

Lighting effects in the amusement arcade blur the boundaries between the representational and the non-representational through a myriad of highlights, glows, sparkles, flares, lingering traces, and unexpected reflections, combined with gloomy backdrops, imagery plunging into darkness, and heightened transferences between the radiant and the obsolete. This generates an otherness to the normative world that creates affective moods, actions and behaviours. Ebbensgaard (2015) refers to illumination as a performative light that should be acknowledged for its immanence. Light can be unruly, indiscreet and surprising. The arcade has an impending unease, a so close yet so far synchronicity. The arcade is a space that through its luminous qualities temporally connects subjects and material objects (Ingold, 2005). Light feeds into the arcade's seductive ambivalence; its familiar incompleteness forms a key part of the amusement arcade atmosphere and facilitates unforeseen affective dimensions and possibilities. Ebbensgaard (2015) asserts that 'light is not only practised – it affects us' (Ebbensgaard, 2015:116). Thrift (2004) suggests that affect is entwined with the encounters and environments in which experiences occur, extending beyond mere feelings, transforming every meeting of bodies (human or other) through transfers and entanglements of power that create atmospheres (Duff, 2010). Beyond the intentions of amusement arcade owners and games machine designers, amusement arcades are a particular kind of co-produced affective assemblage. Chalip (2018) suggests that atmospheres can be defined as the feeling that there is something more going on than the environment or event itself; we are entangled in and part of the environment. The unique eclecticism of light in Blackpool's contemporary seaside arcades evokes

moods for visitors; this may include invigorating combinations of intrigue, wonder, delight, cheerfulness, comfort, boredom, and tension. More than just experiential concerns, amusement arcade affects exceed mood; they have ongoing action-potential. There is a stark contrast in walking through the incandescent interiors of a pier's amusement arcade and exiting the interior space out onto the pier boardwalk at night time. Glare and luminescence are replaced with dark waters that extend around piers. A distance has crept up between you and the twinkling lights of the land's edge. On exiting an arcade, shifts in light and dark experience can foreground, for instance, a lingering intrigue into one's surroundings, a reinvigorated calmness and appreciation of the rhythms and textures of the natural and surrounding world. Amusement arcades flow in and out of the broader lightscape of resorts, through continuation of miscellaneous subjects congregating in oddball gangs, presented through an extensive and colourful application of light. Arcade visitor experience and behaviour is shaped by rhythmic and frequent exchanges between overlapping light forms. Visitors move amongst, temporarily co-exist with, and activate a multitude of light encounters within a compressed time and space. Affective intensities arise at the intersections of machine, body, and space; these aspects entangle to create atmosphere (Sumartojo and Pink, 2019) in the arcade. A constantly emerging atmosphere is modified and somewhat controlled using colourful lighting technologies.

Enmeshed within the spatial and located in experience, Sumartojo et al. (2019) suggest that atmospheres 'are not only a part of how we perceive and make sense of our experiential worlds, they are also crucial in how we understand and find meaning in them' (Sumartojo et al., 2019: online). By paying close empirical attention to the emergence of atmospheres, their development and continuity, and how they impress upon us, we can open a richer analysis of place. Blackpool's affective, festive illumination creates enticing atmospheres, infused with practised visitor responses, within designated time and space (Edensor, 2012). The Golden Mile's unique electric infrastructure of light and dark is 'accompanied by affective, emotional and subsequently communicative responses that further mix in with the unfolding atmosphere' (Sumartojo et al., 2019: online). This is brought about by opportunities to experience diverse indoor and outdoor modes of light and dark within a concentrated geographical location, with amusement arcade illumination pivotal to this experience. Whilst seaside amusement arcades persist as part of a capitalist culture of paid leisure experience, they also function as temporal spaces that contain potent affective dimensions. Arcades are uniquely lit spaces that provide intermittent opportunities to resist everyday behavioural patterns and structures, through light-infused precipitated immersion and feeling. Light forges interactions with bodies and the material world that surrounds them in Blackpool's amusement arcades. Edensor

and Millington (2018) draw attention to Blackpool's reproduction and re-enactment through ritualistic holiday practices that are heavily dependent on the extraordinary uses of light and dark. There is an impression of coming together in a community to enjoy Blackpool's lit spectacular. Edensor suggests that Blackpool's atmosphere is co-produced by visitors as part of a festive and playful social practice (Edensor, 2012). Visitors are bound by sparkling surface impressions set against the dark sky and sea. Thresholds between the illusionary and the tangible melt as visitors gaze above at the looming large scale street illuminations and are invited to 'be amongst' and participate in experiences of light inside amusement arcades.



Figures 59, 60, 61: Blackpool amusement arcade illuminated crane machine glowing in green and yellow, pink and blue. Author's reflection in Funland games machine in Blackpool. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Lighting the way, chapter conclusion

The profusion of amusement arcade lighting is, in part, based on a culture of light designed for legibility that delineates buildings and architectural features, signposts, highlights and marks out byways and advertising sites and products. These formal structures of light contribute to the proliferation of commercial culture in recent history, in different spaces, at all times of the day, inescapable in everyday culture and the urban, built environment. Beyond these familiar lighting structures, Blackpool's amusement arcades exist between the everyday and the outlandish through their luminosity, at street level situated between shops and other entertainment premises, intermingling with Blackpool's surrounding Illuminations in the Autumn. Inside the arcades, light for legibility and direction competes for visitor attention; arcades present a mix of lighting types, colours, shapes and forms that have developed into unique assemblages over time. In some ways,

arcades define themselves through excessive illumination. The amusement arcade is a unique medley of textures, colours, accents and sensory conditions that evoke moods and actions for visitors. Whilst the mooted qualities of glitzy and garish arcade lighting can stir mixed responses from the middle classes, sometimes through a 'knowing' appreciation or rejection of such excessive and dated interiors, arcade lighting can also connect people to their own working-class history and the working-class histories of others. Seaside arcade lighting experience is infused with nostalgia, which in this instance can arguably be a place-based form of recollection and temporal mode of longing away from the everyday. Blackpool is a destination that was previously a site at which cutting edge lighting elements of modernity were experienced (including the Illuminations), this has largely been replaced by nostalgia (Edensor and Millington, 2013). Blackpool's Lightpool brings back something of this avant-garde artistry to the resort through contemporary technological innovation. Blackpool's amusement arcades once provided encounter with futuristic modernity, now strange collections of light and machines from history that persist amongst new lighting innovation. Assertions that champion supposedly tasteful lighting expressed by middle-class cultural intermediaries' foreground how lighting is entangled with the complexities of class identity, status and assumption, and highlight some of the reasons why arcades (and therefore their lighting) has been neglected. Yet such taste-making strategies are inevitably challenged by emergent light and tech nostalgia as well as changing tastes generated by light art, consumer products and modes of design as our relationships to light evolve with culture.

Experientially, the excess of lighting generates affects, transforming space and atmosphere in ways that transcend the functional use of light for legibility. Colourful, transient light from individual sources mix to create an every-changing spectrum, blending into an arcade palette of bright, vivid, iridescent colour. Designed to command attention through their lighting fixtures and features, interior light and surface merge to create a distinctive affect. Light accumulates into a lustrous whole that visitors are betwixt and between, participating in an immersive environment of movement generated through light that plays with visitor's focused and peripheral vision in arcade space. The commodities blend to create a backdrop for wandering aimlessly, lingering and imagining. Blackpool's unique approach to, and manifestation of, light and dark has the power to connect and scatter, to reveal and hide. Light and dark both familiarise and defamiliarise our senses, confirming and mystifying our perceptions of our surroundings. Blackpool's amusement arcades contribute to the resort's ephemeral atmosphere; they infuse a series of exaggerated, playful light and dark zones into the broader seaside resort's sensory culture, transforming the landscape, interacting with the

sea, and creating a network of illuminated sites that make impressions on visitors (Edensor and Millington, 2013).

Blackpool's illuminated atmosphere expands into its seafront amusement arcades. Amusement arcade light combines with enticing, alternate surfaces, contributing to an immersive, intergenerational atmosphere for visitors, and a temporary breakdown of social rules through a heightened application and experience of light. Seaside amusement arcades challenge urban uses of light and dark and their behavioural impacts. They enable formations of emotional attunement within the body, activating a realisation of intensities (heightened moments) that are co-produced and contribute to a convivial amusement arcade atmosphere, stimulating movement and interaction. Ingold (2011) suggests that light is 'a phenomenon of experience' (Ingold, 2011:258) and integral to our perception and sense of ourselves spatially. Luminosity and affiliated darkened space within Blackpool and its amusement arcade facades and interiors contribute to a transformed sense of self and space. The myriad of lighting encounters generated through Blackpool's seaside amusement arcades encourage unique kinds of feeling and behaviour, through a rich multisensory experience of human and more-than-human elements (Latour, 2004) in a dynamic, specific space. Although felt distinctively by different people, light contributes to collective kinds of behaviour in visitors to Blackpool, generating a revised pace, flow and feeling from normative realms. Blackpool's amusement arcades create heightened sensations within them and when returning to the outside world, with their atmosphere extending into surrounding space and time. Returning amusement arcade visitors can access affective states of imagining, remembering and a sense of belonging.

Consequently, this chapter further moves beyond the reductive understandings of amusement arcades as spaces primarily constituting sites of deviance and gambling, contributing to emerging discourse on place experience. This chapter foregrounds the distinctive illuminated qualities and assemblages of seaside amusement arcades. Beyond Blackpool and the seaside, this research expands methods and approaches to uncovering the underexplored sensory and atmospheric affordances of persistent consumer spaces in contemporary culture, heralding lighting design and practices of light at the core of this. The chapter reveals how light and dark in banal, often outmoded spaces of consumption can provide a rich, immersive, multisensory experience, create unique atmospheres for visitors and sensory variation from the everyday.

Intermission

Our day-to-day, spiritual, emotional, sexual, social, cultural and political lives are conducted in relation to objects and thoroughly mediated by them in whatever forms they take, qualities they possess and complex practices they help enable.

(Candlin and Guins, 2009:2)

Introduction

To continue to document and develop new understandings on the place experience of British seaside resort amusement arcades, this investigation will now turn to and dwell on a collection of new place-based observations on surface. The Intermission sits in between the project's core Light and Sound chapters, like a betwixt surface, with the intention of creating an intervening space, a creative meantime. The Intermission is an experiment in grasping at the micro and miscellaneous that make up, linger in, move through and surround British seaside resort amusement arcades, revealing how some of these overlooked yet persistent surfaces give way to the immaterial and experiential qualities of these places. Close attention is paid to the material, sensory and spatial, segueing to contemplation on processes, practices, cultural significations and arising affective and atmospheric affordances. Blackpool endures as the central focus during the Intermission, observed amongst other seaside resorts and seaside resort amusement arcades. The Intermission presents new empirical findings on seaside amusement arcades and their surroundings in photography and site-writing developed from research fieldnotes (see Appendix B research fieldnotes) on surfaces, inscriptions, colours, carpets, litter picks, sweet things, coins and soft toy prizes. The Intermission gives voice to the persistent, the knackered, the outdated, the disposable, the used and the discarded, exploring how surfaces work together to create an intriguing convergence at the seaside resort and seaside amusement arcade. Highmore proposes that 'in this everyday material world, different temporalities exist side by side: the latest version alongside last year's model' in an 'incessant accumulation of debris' (Highmore, 2002:61), referring back to Benjamin's preoccupation with 'trash' from modernity and the accumulation and sensations of the material things from different times that crowd our lives.

In the north west where the economy has so often stalled and reversed, palimpsests of what was before still remain, since the drivers to effect complete change are rarely powerful enough to sustain their intended projects. Multiple temporalities are present simultaneously, and the practice of reading the surfaces before me offers a way of attending and imagining.

(Lee, 2019:23)

In her photographer-researcher practice, Lee attends to 'ordinary floors, pavements, walls and ceilings' hovering 'close with the camera' and proposing 'a different duration, that of slow looking, reveals different perspective' (Lee, 2019:19). Lee encourages us to dwell on surface and to see surface observation as a mode of creative discovery, asking what surface textures, inscriptions and accumulations can tell us about society. In their collaborative work, Lee and Shirley explore the everyday practices of litter and consider its effects in the exhibition *Everywhere: A Littered Life* (Lee and Shirley, 2020-21). The exhibition presents work by eight different artists, attuning to the everywhere and everyday-ness of litter, waste, trash, material residue and leftovers to reveal their social, environmental and political contexts and impacts. Lee and Shirley foreground attuning to litter as an imaginative and collaborative mode of attention (Lee and Shirley, 2019). Sensory and material culture are layered and complex at British seaside resorts and in contemporary seaside amusement arcades, as old and new machines, architectures, infrastructures, interior designs, material manifestations of popular and folk culture references, prizes and litter, bodies and practices assemble.

The Intermission continues to show seaside amusement arcades as lively assemblages of the human and more-than-human through a series of exchanges with interesting and disobedient matter. Lavin suggests that surface creates experience that is 'multiple, ever shifting, and therefore intensified in its impact' (Lavin, 2011:30), as surface itself is multiple and always shifting. The Intermission explores how material things operate *with* as opposed to *for* humankind at the seaside amusement arcade, 'exerting influence on moods, dispositions and decisions' (Bennett, 2010: xvii) and contributing to seaside arcade atmosphere. Bennett's ideas on vibrant materiality (Bennett, 2010) and Connor's on magical things (Connor, 2011) sustain the Intermission; I explore the actant power of material things or 'stuff' (Bennett, 2010) at the seaside amusement arcade. The Intermission shows encountered seaside resort and seaside arcade matter as doing and meaning more than it is supposed to (Connor, 2011), with seaside amusement arcades going beyond their commercial intentions experientially. Edensor proposes 'the matter and materials that fantasy realms and tourist spaces are constructed from evidence the sensuous work that was involved in their manufacture and use' and

that this can bring 'a sudden awareness of the ways in which we are affectively and sensually alienated from the world' (Edensor, 2007:226). Attuning to the materiality of the seaside amusement arcade as a proposed fantastical place of fun and entertainment can bring awareness on the labour and global infrastructures behind the seaside arcade's mirage of surface effects, situating amusement arcade experience within broader contexts.

The style of writing for the *Intermission* is that of site-writing developed from research fieldnotes and is defined as such in the Methodology chapter (pp. 31-33). Site-writing as a mode of experiential writing that responds to sites, places and encounters folds in my position with the things I discover. The style of writing is autoethnographic, tending to my own experiences of seaside amusement arcades to uncover new understandings of the sensory culture and individuals' experience of them. Site-writing developed from research fieldnotes is used to set the scene in the introduction and imaginatively locate the reader in place in the chapters, deliberately feeling and flowing differently to the academic writing up of the project. The *Intermission* makes a space to bring together and expand the project's site-writing offering, with endeavour to heighten the reader's immersion in the author's direct experiences of and reflections on seaside amusement arcades and their surroundings. The *Intermission* is knowingly fragmented, endeavouring to echo the bitty encounter and sequential small discoveries made in seaside amusement arcades and at seaside resorts. The *Intermission's* site-writing sometimes describes and elaborates on the *Intermission's* photos, continuing with the thickly descriptive, recollective, imaginative, poetic and pensive, through photographic and textual exchanges, the known and the speculative. The *Intermission* contributes to discourse on the distinctiveness of place experience at the contemporary British seaside resort through a focus on surface, visual and material culture and seaside design (Burns and Jarratt, 2022; Jarratt and Steele, 2019; Edensor and Millington, 2015), demonstrating how seaside resort and seaside arcade surfaces make convivial and melancholic impressions on visitors. The *Intermission* continues with the project's artist-ethnography approach, sensorially investigating and paying attention to material qualities of place identified through fieldwork, to reveal new understandings on the place experience of contemporary seaside amusement arcades.



Figure 59: Ship painting print and light switch in decorative brass frames on feather textured vinyl wallpaper at The Olde Ship Inn, Seahouses. Fieldtrip photo (2023). Author's own.

At the Surface

Everyday and seaside resort surface

In everyday life

we co-exist with a range of surfaces that shape our experiences.

Surface material types of

stone

wood

glass

plastic

metal

mineral

natural fibres

and manmade composites combine,
 harmonious and unsettled, complimentary and clashing,
 competing with each other, the elements and media.

Pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial production methods of
 mining
 extracting
 growing
 casting
 weaving
 and engraving
 prepare and fix surfaces into place (Lee and Wilson, 2019),
 before
 sanding
 painting
 polishing
 laminating
 embossing
 smoothing
 softening
 starching
 and adorning begin.

Surface in the environment interacts with the weather

tarmac heats up
 metal rusts
 printing inks fade
 plastic scratches
 wallpaper peels
 condensation forms
 cracked concrete sprouts
 mould creeps in damp bathrooms
 moss grows over stone
 spreading, splitting, absorbing, corroding.

and the body

phone screens get sticky fingered
 shoe soles scuff and overwrite vinyl floors
 sun cream at the skin's surface prevents burn
 sinks splatter with toothpaste and gunk with soap
 accumulating, morphing, deteriorating, transforming.

Surface can

invigorate places
 possess a material splendour (Böhme, 2017)
 add deliberate and unforeseen tones, tints, contours, colours, patterns and textures
 reflect and absorb light and sound
 mediate between design ambition and everyday provision
 add formal qualities
 create visible and invisible thresholds and zones
 segue entrances and exits
 separate and connect spaces
 hold the marks and signs of societal power and control (advertisements, warning signs)
 and intimacy and resistance (graffiti, desire paths).

Surface can

be fragile and permeable
 add transient representation to environments
 contribute to space that is active and 'always under construction' (Massey, 2005:9)
 take up space between fixity and ephemerality, function and fantasy, sensibility and magic
 be superficial
 embed the mystery of appearances
 seem shallow, apparent and obvious, on closer inspection, be layered and inconclusive
 be open to speculations as to what lies beneath the surface.

Surface can

be experiential, hovering at the intersection of the material and immaterial world (Lavin, 2011: 26)
 orientate, move and direct bodies (Böhme, 2017)

activate moods, feelings and other actions

be integral to co-producing spatial experience through marking and impressions

contribute to felt space and place atmospheres (Böhme, 2017).

Surface is

sensory

actant

affective

mobile

improvisational

overt

subtle

a meeting point

an in-between (like this Intermission).

The industrial history of the UK's north west landscape manifests in surface

from abandoned, overgrown railway lines

to rusty scraps of industrial machinery

the rural landscape of the north west

is scattered with the markings and relics of modernity.

In the cities of Manchester, Leeds and Salford

disused factories and warehouses from the mass-production era

are converted into apartments and workspaces

with new windows

or left to ruin, with plant life

sneaking through the masonry

telling of the building's fate

at the surface.

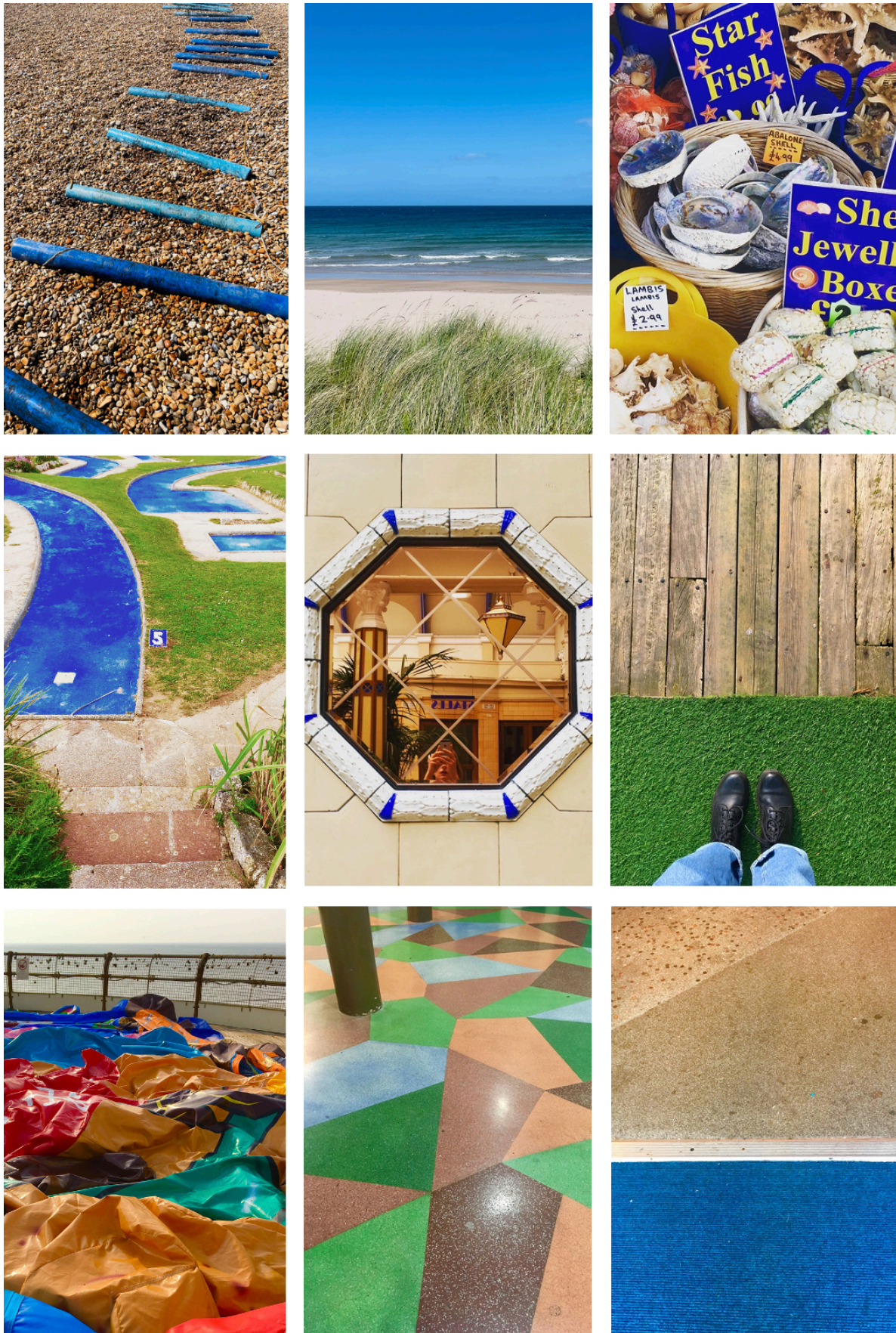


Figure 60-68: Photos of British seaside resort surfaces. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Down at the seashore

where land's surface area gives way to the expanse of sea
 gathering at the edges
 smooth, mucky, cylindrical plastic fishing boat rollers in shades of blue nestle into wet pebbles
 earthy pebbles shift and graze against each other when walked over
 bottomless crunch.

Scratchy, windswept beachgrass
 soft sand creeps into shoes and socks
 immersive surface, sinking into the landscape
 an opening.

Jewellery boxes decorated with tiny shells
 buried treasure
 hand held grottos
 takeaway tat.

Blue painted concrete shapes
 industrially fixed into place within the patchy grass
 alive with creatures
 mini not so crazy golf now
 worn out and weathered.

Art deco nautical ceramic tiles
 hard diamond grids and suspended lamps
 clean lines and copper tinted reflections
 with Victorian gap year worldly tropical palm tree.

Artificial grass cuttings overlays wooden slats
 on the pier amongst the fairground
 feels sweaty smothery and sounds awkward squeaky
 giving childhood arm burn at the end of the helter-skelter.

A deflated, sprawling bouncy castle, like a messy fish shop counter

*or jellyfish washed up on a beach
 quiet now in the absence of the generator hum and pinging ice-creamed children
 stretched out and foot sticky in the sun
 warm blubber rubber
 gently huffing and puffing on its way down.*

*Shiny, buffed beachy coloured terrazzo at Blackpool's Winter Gardens
 special occasion shoes since 1878 have walked here before me
 holiday celebratory, underfoot
 let's dance!*

*Carpet gives way to a copper dashed concrete floor at Margate's Dreamland Arcade
 letting me know
 that it knows
 with a nod to the concrete of Margate's iconic brutalist Arlington House tower block
 and a wink to the coin stashers and penny pushers of its longstanding seaside arcade neighbours.*

In Blackpool

*surface tells the story of the resort's working-class holiday resort history
 Blackpool's older, persistent offerings
 (amusement arcade and fortune teller facades, the Illuminations, bed and breakfast signs)
 rub up against newer surfaces (Blackpool's comedy carpet, the giant glitterball).
 Along the Golden Mile, surface is colourful and chaotic
 a medley of the instructional and the fantastical, the mundane and the pleasing.*

*Edensor describes the 'ghosts of a place' (2005:829)
 where impressions are made and left as memories on the landscape
 articulated through the surface of a space
 ordering and disordering spaces through language, typography and texture.*

*Blackpool's surfaces are sea soaked and salted, sand scratched
 sun bleached, scrubbed and overwritten
 peeling paint Tuscan font fortune teller signs*

*barely bed and breakfast san serifs in sun faded yellows
faded seafront store awning, colourful lichen
rusting railings, cracked concrete tetrapods
evidencing depravation, regeneration and gentrification
telling of the town's progression, regression and improvisation.*

*Lack of investment in many contemporary seaside buildings and facades
adds intriguing, delightful, melancholic surface dimensions
seaside surface encompasses the lively and jolly
with the dilapidated, patched up and worn out
deluxe detail
former grandeur.*

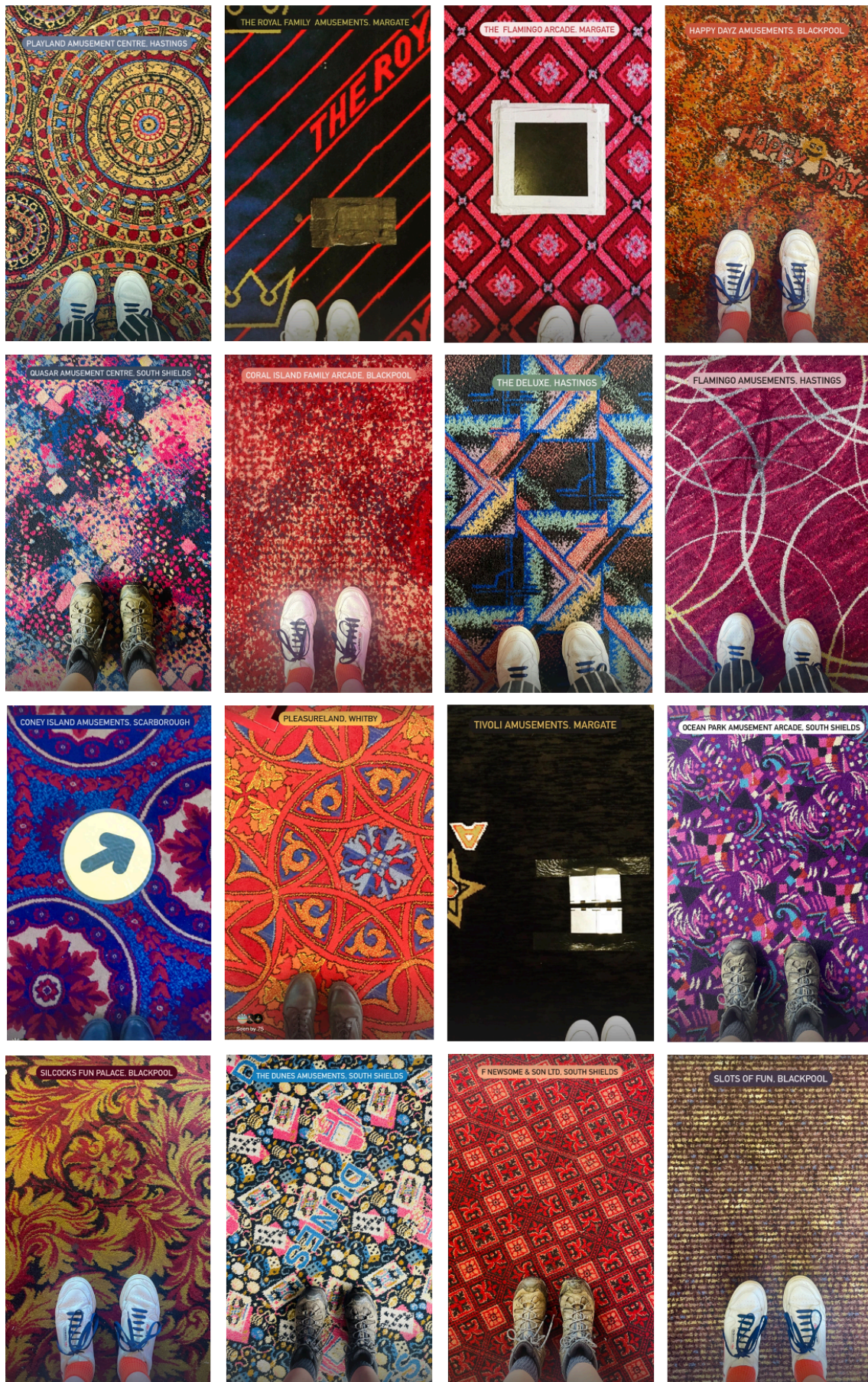


Figure 69-84: Amusement arcade carpet shoe-pics posted on Instagram. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Seaside amusement arcade carpets

*The Instagram phenomenon of the 'shoe pic', often used for selfie shoe fashion,
also operates as an image type that connects body to place*

*From surface beneath us
through grounded feet
up into lurching body
a photographic inscription of 'I woz ere'.*

From manufacture to magic

*To make and install a carpet –
select fibres
form and weave yarns
dye and print designs
construct backings
finish with protective coatings
measure and cut
pad and prep the surface area
lay, stretch and secure.*

*A magic carpet is a common trope in fantasy fiction
typically used as a form of transportation
quickly and instantly carrying users to their desired destination.
First woven into stories in Persian and Arabic Folklore
during the Islamic Golden Age.*

*Located along Blackpool's Golden Mile
And found in British seaside resorts galore
carpets invigorate amusement arcades since
in a variety of colours and patterns.*

*Swirls and stripes and diamond grids add labyrinthine qualities
elaborating and distorting in mirrors*

*the fantasy and fuss of the carnival and fairground woven into them
signifying entering a leisure zone.*

*The vivacious designs of arcade carpets reminiscent of their late 19th century production
freshly laid in the 1960s and 70s
now sand-worn and cola stained
fraying and tired
gaffer tape plastered
smelling a bit musty
carpets insulate, soften, muffle, decorate, orientate, age and fade.*

*Similar to the patterned carpets of old pubs (and my glamorous nan's living room)
these carpets are
ornate, familiar, comforting and nostalgic
muffling footsteps and voices
padding and softening memories.*

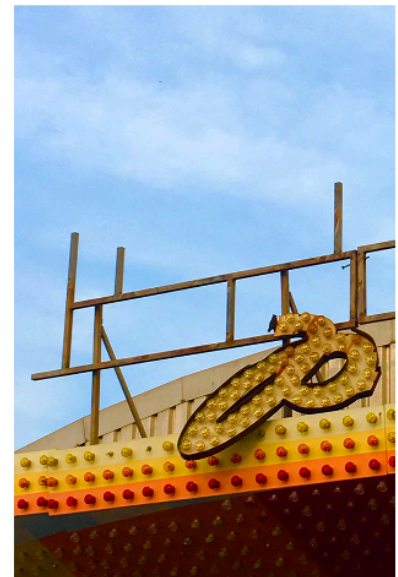
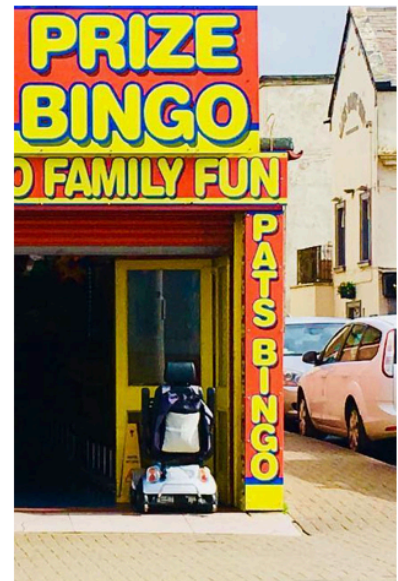


Figure 85-93: Photos of Seaside Resort Inscriptions. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Inscriptions

Red and green race time amusement arcade machine with numbered seats
 perks (slang for non-penetrative sex acts at my secondary school) arcade sign (Irish entry)
 perky, peachy bum pink and curvy blue on blue
 seeing stars
 Pat's Prize Bingo Family Fun. Pats Prize Bingo. Pats Bingo. Play 10p Bingo
 sans serif caps
 in bright, primary colours
 Golden Mile amusements façade
 more bright yellow and red
 adorning a promenade corner
 with Las Vegas *stars* and swagger
 Formula 1 in stick-of-rock multicolours
 its ride cars stand still, out of season, under hardwearing blue tarpaulin coats
 underneath *more stars*
 and a weathered high top tent roof
 NOTICE: CHILDREN MUST NOT BE TAKEN OFF
 WHILST THE RIDE IS IN ACTION (menacing)
 Blackpool pier fairground sign with Fallen ds and broken lights
 handwritten Blue Raspberry and Sherbet Lemon Fluorescent flash *stars*
 over clear plastic containers of colourful slush
 snow cones cart with
 polyester Hawaiian beach parasol
 in lolly apple green, milk and strawberry
 £3 rainbow gradients
 in front of hot parked cars
 and seafront hotels
 Amusement arcade funhouse multicoloured pool ball and *starred* sign
 ONCE ROUND ONLY
 ONCE YOU COME OUT YOUR TIME IS UP (deep)
 Thank You.

Arcades, piers, and fairgrounds utilise familiar visual tropes which have evolved since the 19th Century. Inscribed, painted, or fabricated letterforms play an important role in constructing the recognised 'image' and our experience of the seaside.

(Burns and Jarratt, 2022:3)

There is an exaggerated culture of 'typographical detritus' (Wilson, 2019:23)

in certain places, including

British seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades.

Typographic messages at the seaside are 'often in the form of neon signage, advertising, wayfinding, and design for leisure' (Burns and Jarratt, 2022:2).

Typography expands the meaning of language

manifesting in surface inscriptions

formalising instructions, requests, warnings and

implicating fun, pleasure and frivolity.

The bold, symbolic and typographic signs of

Jock Kinnear and Margaret Calvert continue to order the built modern environment at the seaside

alongside florescent flash cards, colourful bubble letters

and the dazzling signs of fun, entertainment and amusement venues.

Facsimiles of fun time fonts duplicate

telling the story of Blackpool's history

from English type foundries of the early 1800s to Roman serifs, antique type faces and fat faces

in bright and bold colours.

Amusement arcades signs in

various, colourful typographies

inscribe seafronts and piers with wondrous words:

Ocean Beach. Lucky Star. Carousel. Funland. The Showboat. The Flamingo. Happy Dayz. Stardust.

Surface inscription is chaotic and disordered at the seaside amusement arcade

a medley of the everyday instructional and the fantastical

mixing forms of typographic communication and indulgent imagery.

*Messages are stacked up through signage
with competing narratives and agendas
inviting, seducing and warning us
facilitating shared codes of movement, order and belonging
with overlays of cues for fun and extravagance.*

*Together
arcade surfaces form a visual culture that
permits alternate and expansive encounter,
experience and behaviour.*



Figure 94: Blackpool Litter picks from a day spent litter picking day on 10 August 2023. Author's own.

Blackpool Litter Picks

On a sunny day on 10 August 2023

Found on the pavements, boardwalks, carpets and sands of The Golden Mile in Blackpool, there was

one Spy Mission pistol with light and sound
one mini Swizzels Love Hearts wrapper
one Kandelicious Sweetheart Pops strawberry flavour candy rock tag
one empty Fun Snaps box
one Gummi Zone Pizza sweet packet
ten and a half arcade tokens
one 5-piece Beach Bucket Set tag
one Marbel Chunky Spade Beach Set tag
one Hot Wheels Race Slime with Hot Wheels Mini Car lid
one Pirate Seas Cutlass & Eyepatch tag
one Sumtasa Slush cup
one Baseball Cap Scotland tag
one arcade Air Hockey puck
one Super Mario toy tag
one Palgrave Summer Fun & Games Castle Bucket Set tag
one handwritten '5 WIN' laminated orange paper label
two Palgrave beach goods tags
one Alvin and The Chipmunks plush toy tag
one Mr Candy Lanyards tag
one Iron Bru flavour stick of rock label
one Fizzy Cola flavour stick of rock label
two Blackpool Rock labels
one Kandelicious Rock Dummy with Lanyard tag
one Prime blue raspberry energy drink keyring
one Energy Drink tag
three two pence pieces
one Blackpool Council Bonny St Car Park ticket with Coral Island advert
one Blackpool Pleasure Beach entry and ride pass

one Disney Stitch soft toy tag
two Mini Fan with neck strap tag
one pink Pencil Sharpener
one Jelly Fruit Blast tag
one mini flipflop keyring
one empty can of Silly String.

On Litter

Small pieces of rubbish that are
left behind in a public place
waste, matter, residue, remains, traces
mass-produced labels, tags, bags, wrappers and tickets
in paper, card, plastic, metal and printing inks
colourful fragments
gone by invitations
evidencing the activities, hopes, purchases, desires and endeavours
of seaside resort visitors.

Litter is agential (Bennett, 2010)
dropped, chucked, flung
wind-blown from full bins
then mobile, travelling and transforming
fluttering, circulating, sticking, burying
creasing, sogging, folding, mushing
persistent and evolving
scattered amongst
manifesting in crevices and corners
adorning other surfaces
gathering at the land's edges
stubborn and wayward.

In your face

Sweet things

sweets add pops of colour and texture to *The Golden Mile*
 displayed under amusement arcade glass and clear acrylic screens
 spread out over coins and stacked up in prize counters
 bought or won; their wrappers discarded once their contents is gone.

Special techniques honed for consuming each kind of sweet
 handling them, rummaging through them
 tearing and twisting them open
 winding them around sugary fingers and tongues
 worked with keen mouths: rock sucks, lolly licks, hard sweet crunch and gulp.

Transformative and magical
 violet and toffee scented
 glooping, stretching, oozing centres
 swallowed, ingested, dissolved, embodied, incorporated
 from sugar into glucose and fructose
 inflaming gums and guts
 Love Heart forever, dream girls, love bugs
 raising heart rates
 working their way into an amusement arcade frenzy
 creating accelerated and lulled moments
 kiss me quick.

Slush Cup

*Florescent shades of slush
forever churning in Perspex tanks
luminating piers, seafronts, and arcades.*

*Crushes ice, sugar syrup
in pineapple, red cherry, purple sour plum,
tangy apple, blue raspberry, and pink bubble gum.*

*Rotating propellers agitate the situation
keeping the water from block frozen
mixing ice and flavouring with kiddy hedonism.*

*Dolloping, slopping, running into cups,
colouring young tongues and lips
suck the ice clear, get off your tits.*

*Left behind in the city
an unpleasant, persistent seaside reality
brazen and sickly
stirring a quiet, snobby uncomfortability.*

*Package it up in a TV commercial past
alongside pop tarts
a multicoloured imagined blast
of a Blackpool holiday class.*

Colours

Paying attention to colour can help us foster new modes of cultural and emotional attunement (Edensor, 2023b).

Colours naturally appear in

plastics

textiles

metal

brick

concrete

fibreglass

and are added to materials

dyed

painted

glazed

tinted

creating glossy

metallic

iridescent

fluorescent and

luminous colour effects.

Colour 'seeps, spills, bleeds and stains' (Batchelor, 2000:59).

Whether from the original building materials

decorative top coats

or emergent layers

architectural surfaces are loaded with colours.

Colourful surfaces in the environment are

a 'sensual embrace' (Batchelor, 2000:79)

and an 'aesthetic force' (Edensor, 2023b:428).

At the British seaside

*licks of pastel and brightly coloured paint are often used to
brighten buildings, benches, concrete zones, iron railings and moods
seafront stores selling miscellaneous seaside ephemera
lay out vividly pigmented beach wears
shiny block colour and marbled plastic buckets and spaces
bright, inflatable lilos, dinghies, and beach balls
fluorescent American-beachy tee-shirts and flipflops
postcards with saturated colour photography
neon sticks of rock.*

*There is prevalence of colourfully striped surfaces at the seaside
deckchairs
awning
windbreaks
beach huts
Punch and Judy booths
gift shop paper bags.*

*The fixity of amusement arcade building materials (plaster, concrete, brick, glass)
and games machines (metal, chrome, wood, plastic)
underpin the amusement arcade
with an industrial, material weightiness
overlaid with transient colours, movements and actions.*

*Blackpool packs a particularly punchy colour palette
overlaying familiar urban surfaces
with a melange of bright, pastel and multi-colours
stimulating and marking out this location
as a dynamic and fun destination.*

*Blackpool's amusement arcade carpets, games machines, signs, soft toys and other prizes
contribute to the resort's material and spatial vitality
working with the fairgrounds to create rotating colours
generating attractions, seductions, tensions and repulsions.*

*Blackpool's colourful vernacular is sometimes dismissed as 'tacky and tasteless' (Edensor, 2023b:4)
the vivid colour of amusement arcades infantile, vulgar or primitive even, to certain tastes.
Batchelor (2000) proposes a chromophobic western culture
afraid of the passions and freedoms of colour.*

*Blackpool's amusement arcades encourage us to sense, feel, interpret and practice colour differently
challenging the blandness, segregations and limitations on vivid colour in urban spaces
disrupting everyday normative habits and practices
in favour of the joyful impacts of colour on a place (Edensor, 2023b)
elevating playfulness and delight.*

*At the surface
amusement arcade colours contribute
to a culture of bold and plentiful colour at the seaside
activating codes of behaviour
from the restful to the convivial
and invigorating seaside place.*

*Colour creates sensory and emotive impressions
generating powerful associations
with particular places (Edensor, 2023b).
Bright colours at the seaside amusement arcade generate emotions and affects
connecting people to seaside places, and each other, over time.*

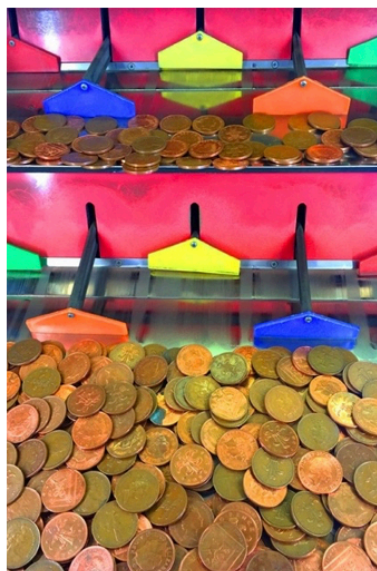


Figure 95-103: Photos of Seaside Amusement Arcade coins culture. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

Coins

*The materiality and sensuality of coins become more apparent in an increasingly contactless society
dulled royal mint patterner and grubby royal texture
the earthy copper colour and metallic tasting smell of 1 and 2ps
mined nickel, steel and silver.*

*The sounds of coins, when you drop them or rummage through them.
The weight of coins in your pocket and the way they heat up when held in your hand.*

*Coins are representative of industrial currency
manufactured and distributed
circulating and ageing.*

*Weighing down purses
pick them up for good luck
encounters with vending machines and charity boxes
those slow coin collections in big whiskey bottles.*

*The seaside amusement arcade has frequent interludes
of old monetary bumps and grinds
the victorious sound of coins converting from pounds to coppers
cascading victoriously into change machine chrome trays.*

*Coins escape from pockets in seaside arcades
transforming from notes and contactless payments via change machines
eagerly scooped up and assembled
into plastic and paper arcade coin cups with colourful, collaged designs.*

*Briefly caressed before clinking into slots
activating movement, light, sound, colour, play
subsequent invitations to touch buttons, leavers, joysticks.
As their economic value drops their old games machine value remains.
Nostalgic and analogous coin actions.*

*Abandoned by players
the mechanical waves of coins resting on
the relentlessly oscillating penny pusher platforms occasionally
ever so slowly
nudge some of themselves over the edge.*

*Clattering, scratching and mounting into dirty, tantalising heaps and mounds.
Periodically emptied and collected from machines, by the bucket, by Arcade Attendants.*

Behind the glass

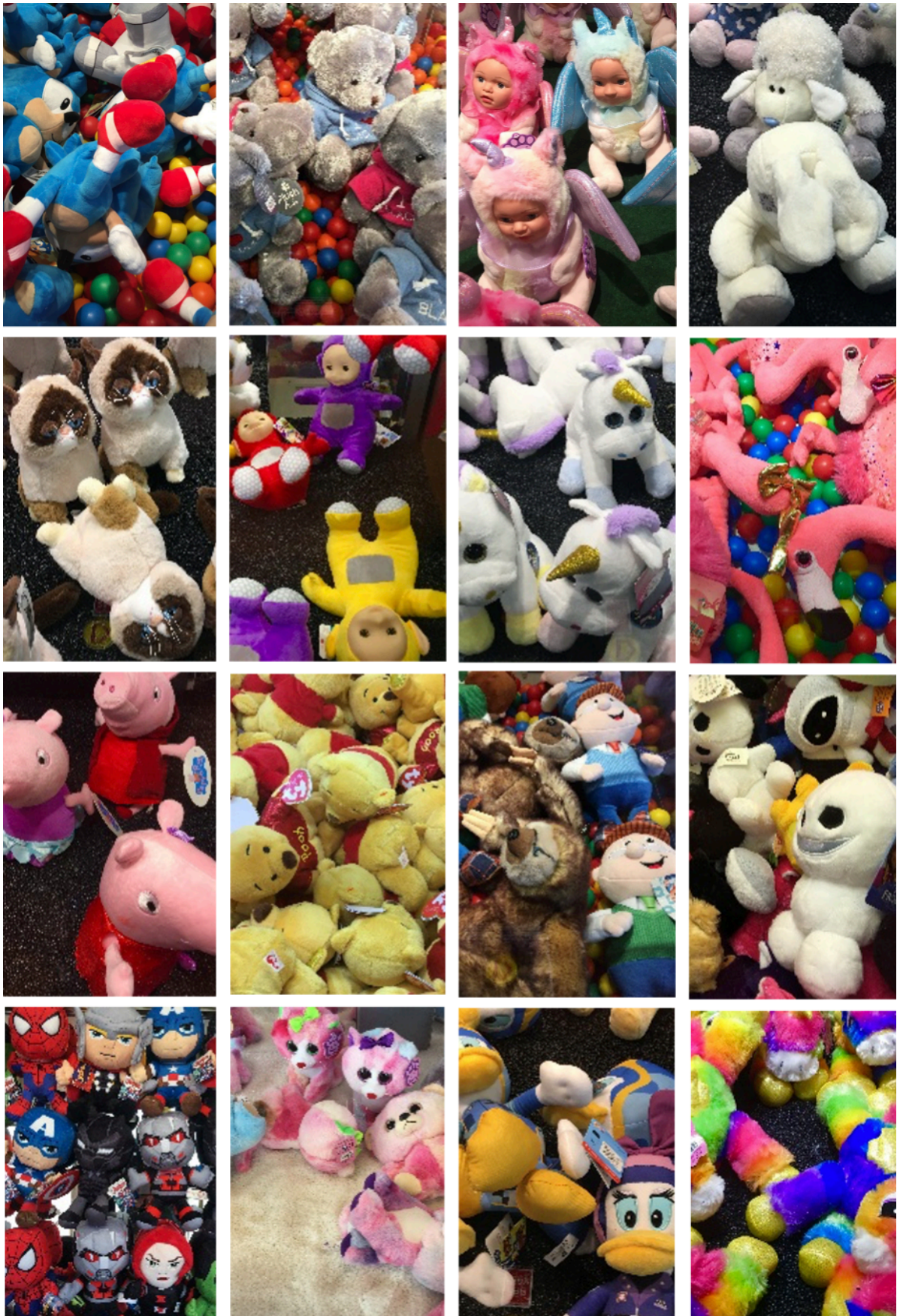


Figure 104-119: Photos of Seaside Arcade Soft Toy Prizes from various Blackpool amusement arcades. Fieldtrip photos (2017-2023). Author's own.

I won a prize

I didn't win a prize

I didn't win a prize.

*Miscellaneous soft toy prizes
with scent-chipped bellies
made in China and Taiwan
manmade fibres
factory massed
bulk shipped.*

*Sonic the Hedgehog
Pepper Pig
Tellytubbies
Winnie the Pooh
Tetley's Tea Gaffer
Power Rangers and Donald Duck.*

*Pop icon replicas
winged doll babies
sheep
flamingos
kittens
unicorns and teddy bears.*

*Lingering fluffy, felty fabrics
stuffed, stitched up and locked up
strewn about from all the grabbing
magically coming to life after hours
midnight parties and orgies
playing musical statues.*

Sound

Opening Up

At 8.36am on an August Saturday morning, beach-sanded, ageing and patterned amusement arcade carpets in the seaside resorts of Bognor, Blackpool, Lyme Regis, Weston-super-Mare, Scarborough and Skegness are simultaneously vacuumed by cleaning staff.

Stray coins are retrieved from underneath games and change machines.

Spray polish hisses onto glass panels and chrome edges, and buffed lavishly, with soft yellow dusting cloths.

Laminate arcade toilets and café floors are slopping bucket mopped.

An Arcade Attendant stands on a ladder to reposition a wonky suspended ceiling tile.

The polystyrene tile drags and squeaks on its way back into its supporting metal grid.

At the same time, a bin in the style of a smugglers' barrel is emptied of its ice-cream wrappers and chip paper cones, a fresh bin bag flapped open then secured around its metal rim.

Around 9.30am, multiple crane grabbers are restocked with a few extra small soft toys from China and Taiwan.

Topped up and propped up, their fluffy fabric shuffles over pools of balls and pastel coloured loose fill polystyrene ready for another day's pensive silence.

Clinking keyrings and mini plastic figurines are laden over enclosed two pennies.

An interior neon amusement arcade toilets sign in Southport's Silcock's Funland is turned on and begins its lowly daily hum.

Fingers flick multiple switches.

Amusement arcade lights and jingles begin, electrically and sonically scoring the coastline.

At 9.45am, a coin-operated boat ride with Iggle the Piggie from In the Night Garden jerks into motion at an amusement arcade entrance, rocking and automated-lullaby-singing to an eager morning child.

By 11am, seaside amusement arcades from Penzance to Arbroath pulse and vibrate.

Sticky ice-creamed old coins are stuffed into shiny metallic slots activating kinetic sounds, scratchily cascading into chrome trays.

(Site-writing developed from research fieldnotes).

Introduction

Solely through sound, an entire environment, complete with memories and emotions, comes alive.

(Blessner and Salter, 2007:15)

Through an exploration of the sonic landscape of British seaside amusement arcades, this chapter reveals new insights about place experience. Acknowledging that ‘sound is involved in the construction and mediation of urban, rural, public and private environments’ (Gallagher and Prior, 2013:1) and adopting Schafer’s term ‘soundscape’ to describe a sound environment (Schafer, 1993), the chapter considers the significant soundscapes of contemporary British seaside amusement arcades and reveals their important contribution to the experience of contemporary seaside resorts for visitors.

The chapter begins with a review of ideas in art and literature on sound study, site-based sound recording, auditory atmospheres and affects. I will look at three key themes: firstly, conceptualising sound study in contemporary culture and the everyday. Secondly, the relationality and contexts within broader soundscape of seaside place, culture and resorts. And thirdly, Blackpool’s historic, eclectic and nostalgic soundscape. The chapter then evidences the project’s findings, starting with discussing the distinctive effects of sound in the amusement arcade. An analysis of the amusement arcade’s impacts and affects is then presented, focusing on the sonically distorted spatial dimensions of the seaside amusement arcade, seaside amusement arcade sound and movement, seaside amusement arcade sound and nostalgia and the loudness and sonic after affects of seaside amusement arcades. An online archive of original seaside resort amusement arcade soundwalk recordings and a series of location-based soundwalk case studies are included in this chapter. There are links to a sound map of the nine key soundwalks in Blackpool, the project’s online archive of broader seaside arcade soundwalks and a soundwalk log at the beginning of this chapter; these should be observed together with the textual elements of the chapter. Thirty-eight (and counting) new solo-researcher soundwalk recordings of different British seaside amusement arcades from 10 British seaside resorts are presented and considered (nine of these soundwalk recordings are from Blackpool amusement arcades). Spanning multiple British seaside resort amusement arcades and seaside resorts, the chapter forges extensive, embodied connections to selected sites and cross-site analysis. Particular attention is paid to three of Blackpool’s amusement arcades in this chapter, namely Coral Island Family Amusements, Funland Amusements and Happy Dayz Amusement

Centre. The original soundwalk recordings are accompanied with new creative, critical writing via soundwalk transcription. The chapter is interspersed with site-writing developed from site-based research fieldnotes (see Appendix B) that attend to sound.

By paying attention to the sounds of seaside amusement arcades, their components and assemblages, undulations, reverberations, deliberate and unsought sounds, this chapter seeks to establish new ways to engage with questions of seaside experience, developing original sound-based documentation and analysis. The chapter focuses on the importance of hearing, listening and perceiving sound in everyday life (Paterson, 2009) and in visited places, supporting ideas on listening as a way to understand the world we live in and shape the possibility of different, more inclusive futures (Back, 2007). British seaside amusement arcades are shown as homogenous places, as well as having special regional and site-specific sounding circumstances. Sound is recorded, explored, and communicated, attending to the acoustics of seaside holiday and daytrip routines, sensations, feelings, urges and movements. Sound is shown as a conduit to movement at the seaside amusement arcade and a call to action. The project continues to push beyond reductive understandings of British seaside amusement arcades as abject commercial spaces, affirming them as uniquely sounding as well as visual spaces, infused with affective audio and multi-sensory experience and as meaningful sites of fun, imagining and belonging in contemporary culture.

Sound map of Blackpool Amusement Arcade Soundwalks

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=16p_S7QBfHQBZcFS3ri6ecPXsyKNdDnk&usp=sharing

Archive (ongoing) of British Seaside Amusement Soundwalks

<https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham>

Seaside Amusement Arcades Soundwalk Log

Date	Seaside Resort Location	Amusement Arcade	Web Link
2018	Blackpool	North Pier Amusements	https://on.soundcloud.com/JqSib
2018	Blackpool	Coral Island	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/coral-island-blackpool
2018	Blackpool	Golden Mile	https://on.soundcloud.com/dDgd5
2018	Blackpool	Funland	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/funland-blackpool
2018	Blackpool	Happy Dayz	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/happy-dayz-2018
2018	Blackpool	Central Pier Amusements	https://on.soundcloud.com/z1dnz
2018	Blackpool	Silcock's Fun Palace	https://on.soundcloud.com/pgfLB
2019	Newquay	Carousel Amusements	https://on.soundcloud.com/dBozN
2019	Newquay	Quicksilver Coast	https://on.soundcloud.com/maJ9p
2019	Newquay	Stardust Amusements	https://on.soundcloud.com/FPvWN
2019	Newquay	Slots Amusements	https://on.soundcloud.com/QdhmV
2019	Newquay	Playland	https://on.soundcloud.com/NFfwT
2019	Newquay	Jackpot	https://on.soundcloud.com/RdzvL
2019	St. Ives	Harbour Amusements	https://on.soundcloud.com/wCp1m
2019	Penzance	Grand Casino	https://on.soundcloud.com/Com8h
2019	Margate	Dreamland	https://on.soundcloud.com/VgGCV
2019	Margate	Tivoli Amusements	https://on.soundcloud.com/qPwH7
2019	Margate	Down The Coast	https://on.soundcloud.com/4Te9t
2019	Margate	The Flamingo	https://on.soundcloud.com/aBZ1j
2019	Margate	The Showboat	https://on.soundcloud.com/3nt4P
2020	Whitby	Funland	https://on.soundcloud.com/oTKEC
2020	Whitby	Pleasureland	https://on.soundcloud.com/cFGT4
2020	Whitby	Fun City	https://on.soundcloud.com/oTKEC
2020	Whitby	Gillys	https://on.soundcloud.com/517Mx
2020	Scarborough	Olympia Leisure	https://on.soundcloud.com/ZkzEf
2020	Scarborough	Taylor Made Fun	https://on.soundcloud.com/DCMGw
2020	Scarborough	Silver Dollar	https://on.soundcloud.com/yuhbM
2020	Scarborough	Coney Island	https://on.soundcloud.com/RRvcm
2020	Scarborough	Henry Funtime	https://on.soundcloud.com/LVgje
2023	South Shields	The Dunes Amusements	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/the-dune-amusements-south-shields
2023	South Shields	Quasar South Shields	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/quasar-amusements-south-shields
2023	South Shields	Oasis Amusements	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/quasar-amusements-south-shields
2023	South Shields	F Newsome & Son Ltd Amusements	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/f-newsome-son-ltd-south-shields
2023	Hastings	Playland	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/playland-amusements-hastings
2023	Hastings	Flamingo's Amusements	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/flamingo-amusements-hastings
2023	Eastbourne	Eastbourne Pier Amusements	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/eastbourne-pier-amusements-eastbourne
2023	Eastbourne	Lion's Arcade	https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/lions-arcade-eastbourne

Figure 120: Seaside amusement arcades soundwalk log.

Conceptualising sound study in contemporary culture and the everyday

Sound reveals 'the affective, material, and embodied characteristics of a place, with the affective aspect of sound coming precisely from the relations, exchanges and movements between bodies and environments.

(Gallagher et al., 2017:621).

The approach to researching seaside amusement arcades for this project foregrounds sound as embodied, with the culture, politics and practices of sound in everyday life informing our experiences of different places. As with light, the impacts and affects of sound can often go unnoticed in everyday life. Perec (1974) identifies what he terms the sonic 'infraordinary' - the mundane sounds surrounding us in the everyday, that are sonically familiar and compelling in producing and connecting us to a place. Physical environments like a residential street, park or university campus are sonically complex, made up of multiple surfaces, objects and geometries that form their aural architecture. Blesser and Salter (2007) describes the machine clunks and clacks, whooshing passing vehicles (cars, trains, planes), weather, nature and animal sounds that make up the soundscape of a street (Blesser and Salter, 2007). LaBelle (2019) explores the rhythms and vibrations of streets and neighbourhoods, and the exchanges between people and environments, proposing that sound weaves together the intensity and ephemerality of space. We live amidst a continuing circling of ambient and abrasive sounds that affect our everyday bodies, our circulatory and nervous systems (Epstein, 2020), with noise and quietude shaping our behaviours and sense of ourselves in incessant ways. Epstein (2020:275-276) writes that 'everyday ambience is not silent'. Sound, whether raucous or hushed, is ever-present. Even quiet places are sounding. Libraries creak and shuffle with the turning of book pages (Mansell and Stawarska-Beavan, 2019), fidgets, coughs and the sounds of outside traffic. Sleep-soaked nighttime neighbourhoods are sonically alive with deep breathing, someone stirring, streetlight buzzes, drunk people tottering home late and the night bus. Morgue fridges and strip lights hum. We are all sound makers, contributing to our sonic environment, through our bodies, the use of objects, technologies and spaces, active and entangled in our sonic surroundings. Epstein (2020) suggests that 'The reception of soundwaves is not limited to the ears: it is tactile as well as auditory' (Epstein, 2020:92). Audio experience is intermixed with other sensory stimuli, working with the visual, haptic, tasting and olfactory to generate place-based experience and atmosphere. The body is itself like an echo chamber (Luc Nancy and Mandell, 2007) responding to sound via inner vibrations as well as outer attentiveness. We are constantly

surrounded by and contributing to an amalgamation of sounds, embodying distortion, and frequencies, absorbing wanted and unwanted sounds.

In sonic urbanism research, the understanding of built environments, located entanglements of environmental noise, and the politics and atmospheres of urban sounds are brought to the fore (Peterson, 2021). This includes the regularity of environmental urban contexts, policing and controlling of sound through the institutions of the state, with shifting tolerances and sonic openings, such as firework night, Sunday church bells, complaints about loud live music and neighbourhood conflicts over noise, roadworks, and construction. Noise can be strategic and distributed to disintegrate and reconfigure space (LaBelle, 2019), or marginalised (Mansell, 2016) for political effect. Blesser and Salter (2007:363) propose that 'acoustic spaces and their social functions evolve together, mutually influencing each other'. Sound can soften thresholds through emerging introductions and lingering aftermaths, creating invisible boundaries on approaches and departures, as well as deconstructing segregated areas. Chion (2015) foregrounds how culture and cultural institutions privilege some sounds above others, highlighting distinctions between how noise and sound guide the ways we hear and value certain sounds. How we perceive and respond to supposed ambient and abrasive sounds is personal and political, infused with our personal history and identity. Our listener experiences of sound in a particular environment can bind us to or distance us from those around us, we accept and reject different sounds; this process is lively and loaded with ourselves; it can connect us through points of interest and audio-influenced behaviours. Sound can create auditory togetherness or auditory isolation, forging out acoustic territories and stimulating auditory affects. Street (2020) considers how sonic environments interact with ideas of self, memory, our sense of creativity and how sound recording maps to this enquiry. The sound of place is entwined with our perceptions, experiences, and memories. Sound effectively connects present time to recollected and imagined experience; it has transportive qualities and forges connections. According to Shilon (2019:50), 'sound can pervade an entire space to create moods and affects' proposing that the 'affective relations between sound and sensing bodies and the feelings, emotions, actions or inactions they bring about continuously shape urban environment'. The sonics of certain places have the power to inform how we respond to stimulus and encounter within an environment, actioning our thoughts and feelings, and informing our interactions with other human and the more-than-human aspects of a place. Sound is cultured, immersive, inescapable, temporal, vulnerable, expansive, pervasive, and layered.

Sound research is fostered for enhancing understanding of the world around us and the impacts and affects of perceptual habits (Drever, 2002). Soundwalk recording and analysis have been developed as part of the project's Art-Ethnography methodology, as a way to help uncover the place experience of seaside amusement arcades and their surroundings. López suggests that sound recording in the field is a creative way of interacting with reality (Solomos, 2019); it is adopted here as an artistic method for documenting and communicating sonic findings. The chapter embraces a progression from focusing on light, surface and sight to investigate sound and voice, opening an expanded sensory dialogue with arcades that foregrounds the multiple qualities and affordances that audio inspection can bring out. As stipulated in the project's Methodology chapter, sound recording is a way of capturing and preserving voluminous and expansive sensory and spatial qualities of seaside amusement arcades. Street proposes that 'a sound recording is different to a snapshot/photo... it moves through time... there may be human voices or an event... but the first thing that speaks is the place itself, through acoustics, the hard and soft surfaces, the dry exterior or liquid of a space' (Street, 2020:11). Blesser and Salter (2007:13) asserts that investigating the affective aspects of lived spaces and aural architecture through sound recording in the field is a method 'that is relevant to real experience in real life', as opposed to merely 'exploring sensation or perception in a laboratory context'. This chapter considers the impacts and affects of amusement arcade sonic qualities, exploring the materiality, spatiality, volume, size, height and depth in these spaces and the fusing of human and more-than human sounds that create unique soundscapes. Sound ebbs and flows around us (Street, 2020) with aural experiences of sound assemblages often fleeting and therefore somewhat challenging to contend with in research. Soundwalk recording is a lively, dynamic and open-ended process; it accepts the shifting circumstances and atmospheres of a place that include 'the sudden, the gradual, the dynamic detail that duration reveals' (Lane and Carlyle, 2013:12). Our sonic environments navigate our actions and endorse our existence. Considerations of the physical and perceptive structures of sound phenomena as space, time and environment affirm unforeseen details about people and place (Augoyard and Torgue, 2005).

Listening to our environments can be a way of questioning and situating everyday lived experience, as well as navigating environmental and political structures and confictions (LaBelle, 2019). Sound is deeply personal, culturally informed and a powerfully social force in everyday life; it impacts both individuals and communities. Sound can illuminate understandings of contemporary society (LaBelle, 2019), opening new ways of engaging with culture. Gallagher et al. (2017) proposes sound as a productive and performative force that creates spaces, a vital attribute of landscape and an underexplored medium for knowledge. Thinking and researching sonically can contribute to the

shaping of the quality of our everyday and holiday environments and experiences. For this chapter, amusement arcade soundscapes are shown as environments of distinctive and atmospheric sound, with emphasis on the way they are perceived and understood by an individual and in accordance with social conventions. The impacts and affects of amusement arcade sound and their contribution to place experience at the seaside are developed from reflection and playback of the project's fieldwork sound recordings and research fieldnotes.

Relationality and contexts within the broader soundscape of seaside place, culture and resorts

The sounds of seaside day trip and holiday time and space are situated within a network of everyday and special occasion holiday or day trip aural experience. British seaside amusement arcade sounds unfold within the surrounding sounds of seaside resorts and broader sounds of the British coast. British seaside resorts are distinctively sounding spaces, where proverbial land, sea and animal sounds gather to create soundscapes that expand beyond the sonic everyday sounds for visitors. Integral to the soundscape of any seaside resort, the omnipresent, temperamental sea rumbles, suspends and repeats, its laps and booms conjuring vibrating soundwaves that 'strike skin and bone, and the watery substance of individual cells with equal force' (Epstein, 2020:92). In Blackpool, the Irish Sea is sonically continuous and composite, interchanging from gentle lapping to ferocious shore slapping waves. When close to the water's edge, visitors to the seaside embody the rhythms and vibrations (Luc Nancy and Mandell, 2007) of the seashore's constant moving and sonorous push and pull. As a subject for sound recording, the sea attracts ongoing and widespread artistic interest, with advancing technological approaches capturing sea-sounds dominating field recording at the seaside. Winderen (2017) tackled and presented the complexities of contemporary sea sounds through an embodied approach in her work *The Art of Listening: Under Water*. This site-specific sound installation was located in Collins Park Rotunda on Miami Beach for Art Basel Miami, investigating the interrelations and impacts of human noise on oceanic environments, through underwater sound recordings arranged into a composition. Watson (2016) mapped the sounds of the sea in his Teesside soundwalk encouraging participants to listen to the location's post-industrial seaside environment: the sounds of seals, migrating birds and tidal rhythms of the North Sea. These artworks manifest the atmospheric qualities of sea sound and sound's capabilities to immerse us and connect us to a place. In between ever-present seagull cries and the rolling edges of the sea, each resort presents an assemblage of interesting acoustics.

At seaside resorts like Blackpool, Margate and Scarborough, everyday built environment sounds (domestic, traffic, industry, commerce) are overlaid with the rhythmic and dynamic sounds (LaBelle, 2019) of seasonal seaside tourism, expanding beyond everyday urban soundscapes through sonic textures emerging from seaside resort leisure, recreational activity, and amusement and entertainment venues. Seaside resort soundscapes are shaped over time, and informed by geopolitics, culture, and technology. The amusement arcade is underpinned with the sounds of modernity and industry, through subtle and abrasive electrical and mechanical sounds that locate these sites within seaside modernity. In Blackpool, these sounds include the sounds of trams, rollercoaster ascending clicks and descending whooshes, the Blackpool tower lift motor that persists amongst newer sounds arising from more recent tech and cultural advances like smart phone sounds, electric cars, contemporary music and verbal commentary, generating a soundscape made up of diverse sounding elements. The sounds of British seaside resorts are an area of interest amongst some current artists, geographers, historians. The British Library and The National Trust's *Sound of our Shores* archive (2015) collected and shared the public's favourite seaside sounds, with the natural sounds of the sea's breaking water at the land's edge and birds along the shore evidenced as most popular amongst the contributions. Three key recent seaside sound recording projects are now briefly discussed, to contextualise this project's new amusement arcade artist-ethnography sound findings. Clarkson (2023) collects the sounds of seaside resorts (Blackpool, Margate, Hastings, Seahouses) as sonic material in his album on faded yet persistent seaside resorts; the album samples the sound of a seaside ghost train, an ascending rollercoaster, fairground screams, seagulls, pennies falling into metal change trays in penny arcades, electric neon fuzz and rain. These sounds are rhythmically looped and layered into an atmospheric, sometimes menacing and sometimes melancholic soundtrack of the contemporary British seaside. Clarkson shows the mechanical, human and natural world assemblages that are sonically recognisable as seaside resorts. Martyn Ware (former musician of the band Human League) locates Blackpool's plentiful amusement sounds as distinctive to the British seaside experience in *Sea Inside Us All* (2016), a soundscape collating hundreds of clips contributed by the public that explore the diversity of the British seaside through sound. In collaboration with The British Library and The National Trust's *Sound of our Shores* (2016) *Sea Inside Us All* implies a familiar assemblage of repetitive seaside sounds, mixing the sounds of fishing and shipping, the rural coastline, seaside resort leisure activities and folk traditions. Breaking waves, fog horns, ships bells, children's chatter, a guide on pirate-themed walk, rain on sea water, ghost trains, amusement arcade games machine plays and fairground screams, are collated into a hypnotic piece that blends the natural and the cultural, the banal and the extraordinary. Ware's soundscape preserves some of the intricate sounds of the contemporary British seaside,

highlighting several unexpected elements of seaside sound that people are fond of. In the short audio artwork *Hidden Sounds of Coastal Arcades* (Merrick, 2019), Merrick draws attention to the sounds of Walton Pier, of the seaside resort Walton on the Naze on the Essex coast. Through a series of binaural recordings, Walton Pier is observed as an illusionary space that facilitates the act of play, popular in British seaside culture. The audio artwork begins inside the bustling amusement arcade. The sound work then moves out onto and through the pier's fairground, infused with fragments of conversations and the excitable shrieks of pier goers, before finally settling on the sound of water from beneath and around the end of the pier. Merrick is interested in how the arcade environment is a place where you lose track of time, using 'realism' as a compositional technique that reduces a two- or three-hour pier visit to a short sound piece. Merrick's attentive recordings are noted for "eloquently including even the strange close 'fizzing' sounds of the electromagnetic fields produced by the machines: thus, at several points the audience finds itself actually listening to light" (Street, 2020:36). These artworks collectively foreground the distinctiveness of seaside resort sounds and advocate their creative and cultural value. The sounds of British seaside amusement arcades feature within Clarkson's, Ware's and Merrick's sound works, through various recording and editing approaches, and often betwixt and between other seaside resort sounds. These works lay the foundations for documenting British seaside amusement arcade sound more extensively for this project. By recording a larger number of amusement arcades from various British seaside resort locations and regions via a consistent binaural recording method, this project builds an original archive of arcade sounds that sonically preserves these places and enables in-depth place observation and experiential, empirical analysis.

Blackpool's historic, eclectic and nostalgic soundscape

Blackpool's soundscape has developed over time into a unique convergence of sounds. Blackpool's landmark history as a seaside resort reached by communal train or charabanc as part of the annual two-week factory holiday system persistently defines its contemporary sonic formation; with the sounds of tourist trams whirring and hissing to periodical halts intercepting the heavy flow of walkers along the wide pedestrian-orientated promenade. The tourist-focused area of Blackpool's seafront is designed for the pedestrian. A sounding infrastructure of alternate walkways underfoot (tarmac and concrete slabbed paths, the wooden boardwalk of the piers, woven textile amusement arcade carpets, concrete sand-dusted steps down to the beach, sand, and shallow sea for paddling) facilitate leisurely walking and wandering, discovery and participation. On foot, a plethora of gradually encroaching sounds are overlaid with sudden sounds, encouraging visitors to go off course

and to succumb to impulses and urges. The seafront and piers sonically promote engagement with free and low-cost activities; visitors are encouraged to participate in a range of amusing experiences in quick succession. These kinds of activities are typical of many working and middle-class seaside resorts. Visitors activate a collage of overlapping sounds that arise from seaside resort activities and practices. These sounds are infused with the industrial, touristic, everyday and natural world sounds of the seaside. In Blackpool, a vibrant assemblage of seafront sounds surround and contextualise amusement arcades along the seafront. Some of these sounds are gathered here:

Walking and Listening along the Golden Mile.

Power Ballads persistently soundtrack The North Pier's views via its Tannoy speaker system

Cinderella carriages along the south promenade; horse hoof clip clop

the regular clinks, swooshings and screams of The Big One rollercoaster

a bench with a view: huddled joyful conversation, voices drifting from the beach

a pint: clinking glasses in a seafront pub garden, drunken cackles

"smiiiiile" (for the photo)

a bag of chips: ketchup spurt, rustling paper

cellophane unwrapping a stick of rock, slush straw neon flavour suck

a fairground ride: whirling yelping, humming petrol generator

an amusement arcade entrance: coin operated ride, 1990s dance chart music

man with a microphone – 'hook a duck' 'hoopla' 'you playing today?'

Lengthy family ice-cream van orders are placed

buckets and spades slapping sand into crumbly shapes

a donkey ride: donkey huffs underneath a quiet, tense child

on windy days, booming water on steel stilts echoing under the pier

thin layers of dry sand skimming over wet compact sand

a fortune told: a quiet, soft velvet waiting chair, the jangle of a beaded curtain

hushed whispers of respect for the memorial plaques at the end of The Central Pier

trams hiss to a halt

Mum with buggy sings.

(Site-writing developed from research fieldnotes).

Blackpool, as a contemporary seaside resort and visitor destination has developed a unique and eclectic acoustic environment; its soundscape is a social product that has evolved over time. Seaside resorts tend to operate within the same urban system of modern, everyday sonic culture, the sounds of people, traffic, commerce, architecture, built and open spaces. Beyond this, a unique assemblage of tourist-orientated sound that has developed over time distinguishes towns like Blackpool from other places. Blackpool's seven-mile beach, adjoining promenade and three piers, is an acoustic site of multiple sonorities, blending natural and man-made elements. There is an expansive, dynamic use of sound to direct, disorientate and engage visitors, through a sonorous coastal cocktail of the vernacular and the sensational. Blackpool seafront overlays ordinary sound infrastructures with fun, celebratory, restorative, and fantastical auditory conditions. These generate sonic rhythms and vibrations (LaBelle, 2019) that infuse seafronts and promenades with a different kind of energy that shape the behaviours (Epstein, 2020) of holiday makers in accustomed and boisterous ways. The sounds of seaside resorts direct visitor responses (Shilon, 2019) and shape visitor interactions with each other and the environment. Seafronts are spangled by the 'off duty' sounds of holiday makers and day trippers which include looser bodily movement (sunbathing, sea splashing, wandering, alcohol-infused), laughter and sometimes singing, playfulness, loudness and shouting, aligning to the audio-cultural work and leisure place-based practices that structured seaside resorts under modernity. Seaside resorts tend to be places that people visit with family, friends or lovers; this conjures a more intimate kind of audio conversation and interaction that stands apart from the formalities of the work place, based on the closeness, joyfulness or strain of these intimate relationships. The ongoing, voluminous sounds of fun and entertainment offerings compete in their loudness with vocal visitors, free from the constraints of the serious work place and formal urban. A mixture of amusing and entertaining sounds evoke exhilaration, reverie, calm, heightened arousal, harmonious and magical connection. The environment is sustained through overlapping, playful sounds that colour and distort, stimulate and soothe. Amongst this medley of sounds, amusement arcades are sonically integral to the landscape, periodically emerging and disappearing into Blackpool's soundscape as one walks along the promenade. Blackpool's piers blend boisterous sounding fairground and amusement arcades, brought together through throbbing dance and pop music, fairground and arcade comperes, mechanical clinks and whirs, and excitable flung and fanciful visitors on busy days. The unwanted hum of fairground generators and arcade amps charge the destination with a frisky, persistent energy. In Blackpool, the visitor's body is amongst a range of sounding seaside materials and textures that sonically weave in and out of each other, generating moods and actions. Together, the sounds of the human and more-than-human in Blackpool generate a palpable and exhausting intensity.

Seaside resorts are places that, for some visitors, are infused with nostalgia for a bygone era of mass vacations, vintage technologies and/or personal connections to good times past experiences (Jarratt and Gammon, 2016) of a particular seaside resort or type of resort. Longstanding seaside traditions and amusements deliver sounds that stimulate collective and individual memories. A holiday or daytrip to the seaside presents opportunity for escaping, reflecting, imagining, and remembering; this is shaped and facilitated through the alternate and familiar soundscape of the seaside resort. Seaside resort sound experiences and interpretations reveal underexplored societal subtleties and implications; they are sonically profound places of personal and social history and identity. LaBelle (2019) asserts that 'sound is *promiscuous*; it exists as a 'network that teaches us how to belong, how to find our place, as well as how not to belong, to drift' (LaBelle, 2019: xvii). Sound induced memories and auditory imaginings can interject conscious thought (Street, 2020) and action at unexpected moments; we bring ourselves back from these interruptions to the responsibilities and mundanities of everyday life. At the seaside, where opportunity for moments of spatial and free thought extend beyond the constraints of everyday life for visitors, sound induced remembering and imagining do well. Blackpool's soundscape is infused with strange and familiar sounds for returning visitors, with the sounds of music, games machines and play from seaside amusement arcades significant to this process of place-based connection, recollection and self-reflection. The sounds of an amusement arcade can act as a conduit for visitors to recall and reconnect with seaside place, people, and themselves. Sound experience produces effects that persist long after it (the sound) has stopped (Luc Nancy and Mandell, 2007), with seaside arcade soundscapes resonating with visitors when they return to everyday life when the incessant jingles of amusement arcades cease and 'a renewed appreciation for quietude' and self-selected soundtracks listened to at home or on the move emerges. Seaside resorts and their plentiful arcades co-exist with the 'infraordinary' (Perec, 1974) of everyday urban environments for many resort visitors, with the sounds of passing vehicles recognised by Blesser and Salter (2007) continuing along the seafront, the machine clunks and clacks expanding through amusement arcades, fairgrounds and other mechanical entertainment offerings (coin operated pier telescopes, automated small children's rides dotted about the place on piers and outside shops) as well as the sounds of people in built up popular areas and the sounds of commerce. The everyday structures of noise and quietude that shape our behaviours are disrupted through a persistent medley of fun and entertainment sonics in resorts like Blackpool that encourage other kinds of behaviour, at worst debauchery and 'misbehaviour', at best a temporal kind of communal freedom. Seaside resort soundscapes work in relation to the politics and atmospheres of other spaces (Peterson, 2021), their excessive tourist orientated sounds permitted by designers, local

councils and governments as part of a wider system of work and leisure space, and urban and coastal funding.

Distinctive effects of sound in the British seaside amusement arcade

Situated along the seafront, down the piers and scattered through the backstreets, Blackpool's family orientated amusement arcades electronically pulse during their opening hours. Before entering a seaside amusement arcade, a crossfade of outside-seaside-world and inside-arcade sounds blur together on the approach. Blackpool's amusement arcades are open-fronted buildings, with familiar sounding traffic, passing people's conversations, music from seafront stores and vendors merging with arcade interior sounds. Arcades are entwined with and significant to the soundscape of Blackpool seafront, working in collaboration with each other, to create moments of combined arcade acoustics in between and beyond arcade sites. Inside Blackpool's individual amusement arcades their distinctive acoustics unfold, with varying intensity. Sounds from a variety of sources interact with diverse spatial elements and surfaces, sonic effects, music, and strange mechanical and computerized noises from the past and present gather. Suspended between the oscillatory resonances of human and machine, a unique and eclectic soundscape emerges.

This chapter now presents new observations on seaside amusement sound gathered from site visits, beginning with a series of amusement arcade sound study profiles based on three of Blackpool's longstanding amusement arcades - Coral Island, Happy Dayz Amusement Centre, and Funland Amusements. Please endeavour to imagine these arcade profiles as 'setting the scene' notes in a story or play. A link to an online affiliated arcade soundwalk recording for each arcade is situated within each profile (listening to these recordings is encouraged whilst reading the relevant textual elements of the chapter). Please also refer to the Sound map of Blackpool Amusement Arcade Soundwalks and Archive (ongoing) of British Seaside Amusement Soundwalks (pp. 141) for extended amusement arcade soundwalk recordings. A time-based written transcription for the soundwalk recording through each amusement arcade (a typed, written description made whilst listening to the soundwalk recording, restricted to the duration of listening to the recording one time, with the exception of a typo check afterwards), and a thick descriptive commentary that further explores each arcade's soundscape via the arcade's sound types are included. Please see Appendix B for detailed fieldnote mind-maps that correspond to the three arcade sound studies (pp. 213-214). The arcades' collective sonic findings are then considered in relation to broader seaside amusement arcade sounds from the project's Archive of British Seaside Amusement Arcade Soundwalks and fieldnotes

from other seaside resort fieldwork. The focus in this section of the chapter is to closely observe and describe the amusement arcade's sonic effects, before progressing to demonstrating their impacts and affects.

Amusement arcades present a range of sound types, from the human, mechanical, computerised to the musical. Arcade sounds include alive human voices. Arcade visitors are sonically evidenced through talking, laughter, shouting and other vocal noises including screaming and whooping. There are adult and child voices distinguishable through pitch and regional accents. Arcade workers are vocally present, notably the race callers with reverb microphone effects working on arcade games like the Donkey Derby or Camel Race and the beach bingo callers (Kelly's eye, Duck's on the Pond), as well as the voices of Arcade Attendants and Security Guards. There are other alive, human body sounds, beyond voices. Human bodies become sonically present via interactions with materials and surfaces inside an arcade; the sounds of hands slapping buttons and knobs, finger and thumb rummaging through and inserting metal coins into slots and scooping up coins from change machine trays, or high-fiving, backslapping or clapping in support of someone playing a game. There are close-up sounds of my own alive body as the Researcher, unwanted yet sometimes subtly present in a soundwalk recording (my hands moving the sound recorder around, my rustling anorak). Beyond the sound-recorded, I experience internal sound effects (swallowing sounds, gurgling tummy) that are actant and contribute to my feeling, pace and direction. I imagine the intimate mouthy slurps of slush drinks and crisp crunches of other visitors. Then there are pre-recorded human sounds, largely arising from games machines. Pre-recorded human voices in global accents repeatedly encourage games play, instructing and commiserating. Some arcades have pre-recorded spoken advertisements (similar to those that might be heard on local radio) that advertise an arcade's special features like bingo, cafes, refreshments available, periodically playing via the arcade's overarching speaker system. There are other human bodily pre-recorded sounds appearing from machines; footsteps, thumping sounds, clapping sounds emerging. Beyond human sounds, more-than-human arcade matter generate sonic effects. The comedic pre-recorded sound effects of shooting sounds, alarm bells, horse hoof clops, dogs barking. There are the immediate, lively sound effects of the arcade's space and materiality shape and reflect the soundscape – chrome and glass surface echoes, carpet and suspended ceiling muffles, the arcade's electrical under sounds that include speaker fuzz, and neon crackle. Musical recordings, including music from popular TV show, cartoon and film theme tunes, and other musical jingles are ever present, and chart, pop, dance music from overarching arcade playlists and speaker systems sound. Miscellaneous outside-arcade sounds that drift and blur with inside-arcade sounds at entrance and exit points. These include the sounds of passing traffic,

people walking along the seafront and chatting, seagulls, the sea, wind and rain. These sound types can loosely be categorised as alive human (voices, other bodily), pre-recorded human (voices, other bodily), lively more-than-human, pre-recorded more-than-human, musical, and outside miscellaneous sounds (that emerge in between the arcade interior and outside world). Different combinations of these sound types combine in a fluctuating constant inside the amusement arcade.

Coral Island. Soundwalk link: <https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/coral-island-blackpool>



Figure 121: Coral Island arcade carpet shoe pic, Blackpool. Observation fieldtrip photo (2021).
Authors own.

Coral Island Family Arcade:

Soundwalk transcription

Change falling into tray

Circus or traditional fairground music

pop music

seaside organ music

sounds of change cascading from change machines

sounds of change providing less frequent pay-outs

machine says 'Anything goes when the whistle blows'

ghostly spooky machine laughs

children's voices and adult's voices

laughing

'Oh Vicky- winner!'

more laughing

screaming

sounds like people running through the space and shouting

someone shouts 'go on Vicky!'

honking horns

1980s and 1990s fairground anthems drifting in and out

Cascading change

'Winner'

Distance yelping

'Mummy?'

Scene: Gigantic pirate's treasure cave

Colour scheme: Dark orange and warm coral pink

Vintage: American noughties

Symbol: Skull and bones

One liner: Blackpool's big daddy arcade

Voice: Action hero

Mood: Hyped, celebratory, loud communal laugh, wide-eyed exhaustion

Décor: Cavernous with fibreglass mock rock décor and nods to old ships (crow's nest) and treasure islands (fake palm trees).

Sounds like: Plentiful cascading change, large Camel Derby game's Elvis style compere (microphone reverb and swagger), sounds of crowds (lots of voices, indistinguishable dialogue), traditional circus theme-tune on entrance

Special features: The Pirate Flyer (inside monorail ride), dine within the main arcade arena, lose your friends and family.

Muffled laughter and conversation

Automated honky tonk piano jingle

Laughing

Young child yelling

Jingling sound

Sound of tokens

Cash cascading into chrome trays

Plonking plastic tokens (lighter material cascading sound)

Bloop bloop

'Waaahhooooo!' Human voice

Low plodding melody

Shooting sounds

Piaow piaow

Descending and ascending automated piano jingle

Video game jingle

whistle sound

Star Wars theme tune

jungle book soundtrack

Romany gypsy accordion folk music

lower pitched shooting sounds

'Please call the attendant!' (Automated voice)

'Please call the attendant!' (Automated voice)

Can Can song

Animal growling sound

Change cascading

Automated creepy laugh
Electric guitar game
'Playing in front of a sell-out crowd'

vocal sounds of an arcade worker on a microphone
saying, 'ready steady and go!'

Coral Island is one of Blackpool's largest seafront amusement arcades, consistently popular with visitors flocking plentifully throughout the seasons. The sounds of the outside world are swiftly replaced with the plenteous sonics of this grand arcade's interior. The soundwalk recording presented here is from a midsummer fieldtrip, busy with crowds that generate dynamic, alive human sonics within the space. Coral Island's large interior houses a comprehensive and expansive collection of games machines that quickly surround and stretch out around arcade visitors as they enter and move through the space, with pre-recorded human voices and sound effects emanating from instructional, playful machines and medleys of musical jingles. Coral Island has multiple zones with staggered areas connected through ramped walkways. The arcade is carpeted throughout, softening footsteps and muffling the edges of sounds. Distinctive to this arcade is its ceiling. The ceiling is a suspended grid of polystyrene, common in amusement arcades, yet is positioned considerably higher than most creating an expansively cavernous interior. The standout monorail Pirate Flyer ride makes use of the vertical space and contributes to the arcade's expanded spatial acoustics, as riders circulate and sonically intersperse the upper peripheries of the arcade space. Walking through Coral Island, visitors are entwined with up-close sounds, as well as sounds from the higher and wider arcade chamber that mount and congregate above and around.

Coral Island is sonically evidenced as the busiest of the three arcades in its soundwalk recording, with plentiful human and more-than human elements. There are bountiful alive human voices, excitable, intergenerational, and in different regional accents, with ascending conversations, shouts, screams, whoops, laughter. Pre-recorded human voices are ample, with pre-recorded laughter (a creepy kind), verbal encouragement ("anything goes"), and congratulations ("winner!") in an array of enthusiastic, mostly male tones. Voices loop in fragmented and non-sensical conversations in Coral Island; with the amusement arcade sonically awash with plentiful alive and pre-recorded human elements. Musical sounds overlay, including traditional fairground themes, Can Can music, dance music beats, Star Wars soundtracks, joyful piano riffs and ascending synths jingles, fusing the Coral island's soundscape with a populous musical score. Ice-hockey pucks and automated gun fire surface amongst the dominate and consistent sounds of coins. The busyness of the arcade is heard through constant monetary bumps and grinds as visitors surplus their visits to the arcade with spending money. Coins cascade with varying force and at difference paces, there is the sound of coins being inserted into slots and gathered up from change trays.

Coral Island is evidenced as the most sonically lively and vibrant of the three arcades. The high ceiling, staggered floor area zones and overhead Pirate Flyer generate a multi-layered and audio-spatially layered soundscape. The arcade's high ceiling and high visitor numbers generates an amusement arcade acoustic that is reminiscent of a busy, family swimming pool. When observing others whilst recording this soundwalk, I notice visitors walking through the space, along the winding walkways, slowed by the crowds, often wide-eyed and affected by the scene. Coral Island is a place to wander absentmindedly, cushioned by others, as well as to play games. The huge size of the arcade and its large number of games machines and visitors leads to a sonic layering with less distinctive, particular sounds and more of a rounded holistic sonic excess. Coral Island is a fusion of plentiful sounding momentary interactions that form a floaty, enchanting whole.

Funland. Soundwalk <https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/funland-blackpool>



Figure 122: Funland Arcade, Blackpool: Upstairs Bell-Fruit Machine. Observation fieldtrip photo (2021). Authors own.

Scene: Old-fashioned greasy spoon glamour

Colour scheme: Chocolate brown and neon pink

Vintage: 1970s

Symbol: Retro Bell Fruity cherries

Voice: Curious and spritely teenage amusement arcade attendant

One liner: I feel like I'm going to dream tonight

Mood: Motel liquor, secret rendezvous, vintage thrill

Décor: 1970s dark wood panelling throughout.

Backlit plastic panelled mock-stained-glass border downstairs. Hidden away empty upstairs café with shiny orange vinyl table tops and low-hanging bubble lights and mini-bowling alley.

Sounds like: Automated fairground organ. Jurassic Park theme tune for grand Hollywood exit.

Special features: Imaginary cocktail from the closed bar.

Funland Amusements:

Soundwalk Transcription

Traffic

Background games machine jingle

Woman with Scottish accent in concerned voice talking to someone (possibly male, younger)

Background male automated voice

Oom-pa-pa organ song (automated/recorded)

Dance music beats

Humming generator sound

Automated childish voice: 'What are you waiting for? What are you waiting for? Insert coins! Insert coins! And make your best work!'

Hello Kitty voice?

Dance music kick drums

Automated childlike voice

Automated 'Goodluck!'

Humming generator sounds

Coins jingling in a pocket

Humming generator sound

Knocking sound

Electric guitar twangs

'Please insert coins'

Dance music beats

Fan sound

Automated traditional seaside organ

Automated xylophone melody

Humming generator sound

Sound of something winding on (clicking)

'Sweets for my sweets, sugar for my honey, your sweet, sweet kiss thrills me so. Sweets for my sweets, sugar for my honey, I'll never ever let you go.'

Humming generator louder than before

Footsteps (fake, loud)

Jurassic Park theme tune

Dance music

Child goes whaaaaaaaaa

Automated traditional seaside organ

Automated glockenspiel melody, twinkly and intermittent

Funland amusement arcade is another of the large amusement arcades on Blackpool's seafront, near to the Central Pier. Funland spreads out across two floors, with an adjoining front escalator and back

stairwell. Dark wood panelling from the 1960s or 1970s insulates and decorates the interior walls of Funland and like Coral Island and Happy Dayz, Funland has a carpeted interior. The carpet combines with the wood panelling to materially quieten and gently muffle sounds at the arcade's interior edges. Funland is steadily frequented by several visitors, although sonically, it is noticeably less crowded than Coral Island, with alive human voices, adult and child, shown but sparse within the soundwalk recording. A medley of pre-recorded musical jingles including a folk-style accordion and tuba melody and the Jurassic Park theme tune (I linger fondly beside this, momentarily feeling it's epic Hollywood grandeur) are clear and consistent, with a dominant 1990s dance music beat pulsating through a large segment of the soundwalk recording. A rocking guitar sounds from a games machine, twanging and sensual. Musical sounds are overlaid with pre-recorded games machine voices. Amongst the pre-recorded voices, many of which are childlike, some rather desperate sounding voices invite visitors to "insert coins" ("What are you waiting for?") and "insert coins now". With less visitors and games machine participants than Coral Island, these automated in-between play sonic nags are much more apparent. There are the sounds of pre-recorded footsteps and intense bursts laughter and banging sounds emanating from alive human machine thumps or pre-recorded thumps (sometimes whether sounds are human or pre-recorded is indeterminate). Occasional and distant coins cascade. The familiar games machines downstairs give way to a strange and largely deserted upstairs area, where a mini bowling alley and a soft play area attracting a few visitors are next to an (always) closed, old-fashioned bar and café. Funland is shown as a space of mostly pre-recorded sounds that continue amongst occasional visitors. The sound recording is dominated in several parts by the unwanted sounds of a generator that overlays more melodic and delicate arcade sounds with an electrical airy and distorted hum. This in turn gives way to more automated melodies as I move away from the generator and through the space, although it persists in the background. The generator brings to the fore the electrical underbelly of the arcade, its high voltage and electrical currents that keep the Funland in motion and sound when visitors are elsewhere.

Happy Dayz. Soundwalk link: <https://soundcloud.com/marthalineham/happy-dayz-2018>

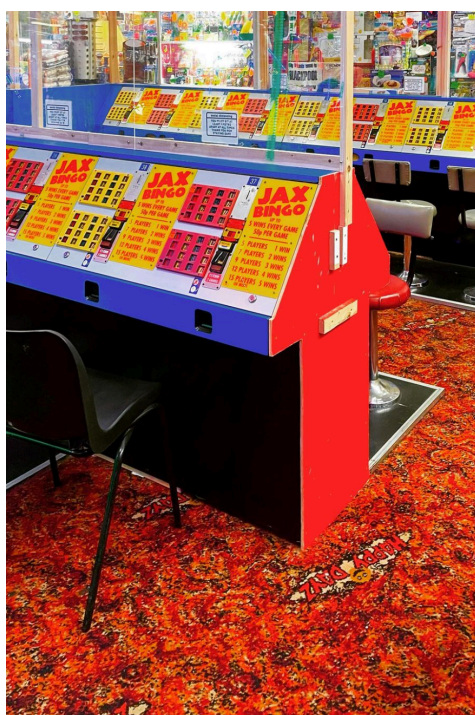


Figure 123: Happy Dayz Jax Bingo and prize counter. Observation fieldtrip photo (2021). Authors own.

Happy Dayz Amusements Centre:

Soundwalk Transcription

Ice Hockey Puck

'Welcome to the world famous, Madame Tussauds, Blackpool!'

Coldplay(?) song

Pulsating beat

Cascading descending digital sound

'Stacker' (version of Tetris?)

Pop song

Bam be du de dum theme-tune

Change rustling

Automated folk accordion

'Stack up the blocks as high as you can'

Stacker theme-tune (rocking out)

Change cascading

Cascading descending digital sound

Muffled voices

Passing conversations (words undetectable)

'Fuck him should've banged him out' (fighting talk – human)

Plodding games melody

Crooner (Frank Sinatra or similar)

Woman singing

Scene: Elderly persons' bingo rave-off

Colour Scheme: Sunshine yellow, diamante silver and eccy off-white

Vintage: 1990s

Symbol: Rave smiley face

One liner: Tea, Nescafe, or Slush – only 50 pence!

Voice: Local radio presenter

Mood: Grubby, cartoon come-down, comfy seat

Décor: Massive shop window style prize counter, diamante and appliances stacked prize counter

Sounds like: Bingo caller, glitter, and sand in the carpet soft scratch.

Special features: Most beautiful faded old block colour penny pusher in the North West. Win all your domestic electrical appliances.

Automated folk accordion

Stacker theme-tune (rocking out)

'Stack up the blocks as high as you can'

Change cascading

Descending jingle

"Hello there and welcome to happy days

amusement centre, home to Jax multi-win prize

bingo, and CJ's café bistro – our very own café

serving full meals and snacks. Also available – Mr

Whippy ice cream for only £1.25 in 24 magical of

soft scoop ice cream from only £1.60 or why not

choose from four exciting flavours of ice-cold slush

for only 50 pence. Yes, slush for only 50 pence.

Check out our ice cream milkshakes with 24

fabulous flavours to choose from. Everything on our

menu is available to eat in or takeaway. So don't

hesitate! Come on in! And enjoy service with a

smile form the team at CJ's café Bistro. So, step

inside for a world of family fun at Happy Dayz

Amusement Centre. And hey! Don't forget! Tea,

Nescafe and Slush – only 50 pence – Monday to

Friday."

Oley Oley Oley Oley

Sea sound

Further along the seafront and tucked in slightly, connecting the main promenade to a side street, Happy Dayz is located next door to Blackpool's Madame Tussauds, opposite the Central Pier. The loud sounding pre-recorded "welcome" of Madame Tussauds regularly seeps into the front entrance of Happy Dayz. Inside Happy Dayz, distinguishing feature of Happy Dayz is its background radio playing chart music from the past (sounds like Coldplay) that locates the amusement arcade in the late 19th / early 20th century. Faint mechanical slicking sounds underlay descending jingles, with the pre-recorded American vocal voice and theme tune for the game "Stacker" shouting above the arcade's sonic surface. The regional accent of the Bingo Caller from Jax Bingo periodically comes to the fore of the Happy Dayz soundscape. A pre-recorded, also regional (possibly the same person as the Bingo Caller?!) voice advertising the arcade's café and refreshments selection intersperses the familiar games machines jingles and sound effects. Beyond the bingo area, this amusement arcade is quiet, with a few visitors passing through. In contrast to this arcade's miscellaneous diamante and white appliances prize counter, the arcade itself feels deep and dark inside once away from the front windows, even on a summer's day, with fewer visitors and spoken and bodily exchanges. If Coral Island is a large, cavernous interior, Happy Dayz feels more like a rabbit warren; the has a low suspended ceiling and is much more cramped and enclosed. The darkness and quietness of Happy Dayz connect to its 1990s Ecstasy pill logo; the 1990s aesthetic combine to create a 'come down' feel. Perhaps an arcade that was once popular during the hyped arcade video games era in the early 1990s, yet now stands a little awkwardly and worn down.

Blackpool's amusement arcades are revealed through this research as sonically complex (Perec, 1974) and similar sounding, with points of the particular. The case studies show the characteristic, heterogenous qualities of each amusement arcade, foregrounding how each amusement arcade can be heard and felt differently, whilst also recognising how amusement arcade soundscapes relate to each other and work together to seaside resort place experience. Amusement arcades are networked to other amusement arcades by the popular seaside amusement arcade games machine sounds that can be found in them and the commonplace sounds that human and more-than-human elements in arcades generate and the undercurrent of unwanted sounds (LaBelle, 2019) that these electrical and mechanical places generate. All of the arcade soundwalk recordings capture sounds in low and high registers; children screaming or low-pitched generator hum, pre-recorded enthusiastic high-pitched children's TV presenter voice or an exaggerated deep, spooky voice. There is an assortment of sonic rhythms, paces, pitches, textures, gradations, and contours, that collectively render amusement arcade spaces complex and emergent. Each arcade soundscape assigns an 'identifiable personality to the aural architecture' (Blessner and Salter, 2007:2) combining with the

visual, material and spatial qualities of the arcade to assume its own character. Variations in size, height and volume impact the sonic depth of an arcade's soundscape, with consistencies in the use of carpets and polystyrene suspended ceilings sandwiching the arcade's centrally located sounds. Whilst visitor numbers vary and there are variations in the spatial dimensions and games machines to human sound ratios, the analogous, antiquated auditory conditions of these Blackpool's amusement arcades prevails. The aural and spatial elements of each arcade are caught up in a constant flow of synching and juxtaposing, sometimes aligning and reinforcing each other and other times producing a conflicting response (Blessner and Salter, 2007). Whether empty or busy with visitors, the amusement arcade is in conversation with itself (Bennett, 2010), agreeing, flirting, and arguing.

Reflections on listening to broader archive of soundwalk recordings and reading over research fieldnotes on amusement arcade sound

Listening back to the project's arcade soundwalk recording archive is an insightful and durational process. The idiosyncratic sounds of historical and newer games machines spilling over each other is commonplace in the seaside arcades that feature in the archive, with machine interactions (Arcade Attendant machine turn on times and visitor play) subtly shaping the human and machine sounding rhythms and undulations. The collective arcade soundwalk recordings emanate an eclectic, dynamic soundscape that sonically preserves arcade gaming history (the sounds of penny pushers, King of Hammer, Pac Man, Space Invaders, Guitar Hero), television and film pop culture (theme tunes from Jurassic Park, Coronation Street, Batman). The sounds of 'real' police sirens from the outside world contend with the automated sirens of high-speed American video game police car chases. Automated accordions of Romany folk music nod to the Romany traveller heritage of the region and north west coast. Elvis performs with Disney stars in bristling sing-offs. Dance music beats (trance, breakbeat, disco) meddle with cowboy songs, Kate Perry and Coldplay intersects traditional seaside organ recordings. International and regional accents assemble. The Child-friendly nursery rhymes 'Old Macdonald Had a Farm' and 'Nelly the Elephant' rebelliously grow into 'The Rhythm of the Night' by Corona and 'What Is Love' by Haddaway. The infamous fortune telling machine that featured in the blockbuster film Big (Marshall: 1988) calls out 'Your fortune is mine for the telling, and yours for the hearing. Come, let Zoltar tell you more!'. Air hockey pucks, gun fire and ascending jingles frequently punctuate arcades. Ghost train pre-recorded footsteps, fake and ominous, creep up on invisible stone steps. The ghostings of video 'game overs' create sonic suspension. The quietude of soft, fluffy toys trapped behind Perspex screens construct pockets of silence. Sounds are activated through the insertion of coins, and subsequent touching of buttons, leavers. Coin insertions

control the higher registers of the arcades musical score, rewarding players for their monetary interactions. These amusement arcades have frequent interludes of old monetary bumps and grinds. Body movements activate sensors, triggering sounds. Interior arcade surfaces influence the reception of sounds through reflection and absorption (Gallagher et al., 2017), with arcade carpets and suspended ceilings of polystyrene tiles muffling the edges of sounds in some arcades, with higher ceilings creating a more cavernous acoustic in others. The materiality of the amusement arcade generates a particular array of sounds, a mix of the intentional and the accidental. The sound of coppers falling into chrome trays, intensely metallic, victoriously cascading. Softer, muffled footsteps on carpets, contrast to hard pavement and tarmac outside, softer, like beach sand. Just beneath the deliberate, needy sonic beckoning of the games' machines, unwanted whirs, metal clinks and clicks linger. Neon crackles, speaker fuzz, amplifier distortion and generators hums. Sonically excessive, amusement arcades combine human and more-than-human elements within distinctively sounding collages. The persistence of longstanding popular culture references from the recent past locates the sounds of amusement arcades between the past and present, with their speculative and sci-fi sounds opening well-rehearsed imaginings of the future. Each amusement arcade is an enduring auditory confabulation, pervaded with folk mythology and fantasy, mediated through popular culture and commerce.

This section of the chapter presents close audio attunement to seaside amusement arcades, evidencing their layered ordinary and fantastical sonic encounters and interactions. There is a continuously changing mix of human sounds, mechanical sounds, digital sounds and musical sounds as you move around the arcade that creates multiple points of interesting overlaid sonics and sonic impacts and effects. The seaside amusement arcade is demonstrated as a site of sonic complexity and excess; it has an 'otherness' to the normative world, created and sustained through a multiplicity and layering of human, musical, pre-recorded, mechanical, computerised and material audio elements in a compressed space and time.

British seaside amusement arcade sound impacts and affects

The landscape has ceased to be a backdrop for something else to happen in front of: instead, everything that happens is part of the landscape. There is no longer a sharp distinction between foreground and background.

Brian Eno (1982: online)

I will now consider how the British seaside amusement arcades sonic qualities and specificities shape their experiential impacts and affects, presenting findings on the sonically distorted spatial dimensions of the seaside amusement arcade, seaside amusement arcade sound and movement, seaside amusement arcade sound and nostalgia, and the loudness and sonic after affects of seaside amusement arcades. This part of the chapter goes beyond the descriptions of sounds and sound effects laid out in the previous section to further foreground amusement arcade sound in relation to place experience, drawing on more-than-representational ideas on sound (Street, 2020; Doughty et al., 2019; Gallagher et al., 2017; Blesser and Salter, 2007). As with other findings for this project, the seaside amusement arcade sound impacts and affects are considered through the signification of personal experience, mapped 'inwards' as well as 'outwards', with the possibility of shared experience with other arcade visitors proposed.

In everyday life, we are open to absorbing a multiplicity of sonic information at any one time (Bregman, 1990). Amusement arcades compound and intensify sonic multiplicity for visitors through a vigorous sonic excess, generating a range of audio-responsive affects. The incessant assemblage of amusement arcade sound generates 'subtle arousal, [and] moods that correspond to strong feelings, emotions' (Blesser and Salter, 2007:13) that compliment and differ from everyday environments. The sudden boom of an automated voice combines with a flash of light to cause feelings of surprise and invigorated movement. At the same time, the persistent sonic resonances found in the arcade's ageing, humming generators absorb into the patterned arcade carpet, evoking a muffled, heady human feeling, whilst a spritely pop song plays and invites visitors to cheerfully hum along. Visitors are caught up in a series of sonic exchanges between representational and more-than-representational audio elements, with eclectic real and imagined conditions blurring to create a unique arcade mood and sense of place. Beyond the commercial means of arcades to engage consumers through sonic stimuli, the arcade's excessive soundscape arouses a medley of feelings and can be experienced as desensitising (or an oscillation between stimulated and desensitised emotive states). Seaside amusement arcade soundscapes waver between a kind of mania and exhaustion, pleasure and melancholy, a simultaneous party and hangover. Arcades can stimulate feelings of curiosity, wonder, eagerness, hope, invigoration through their vibrant sounds. Their soundscapes can also be experienced as overwhelming. Being sonically bombarded by intrusive sounds can lead to 'zoning' out, being distracted, dreamy, present-yet-absent, sombre. The mixed, interchangeable audio of arcades generates a range of emotional reactions, with arcade feeling focusing diverse arcade behaviours.

Sonically distorted spatial dimensions in the seaside amusement arcade

The soundscape of Blackpool's amusement arcades warps their spatial dimensions. Their exterior and interior foundations are often box-like and non-descript with overlaid decorative signage and imagery that draws on historical and mythical narratives, aligning to the Venturi et al's (1972) ideas on Las Vegas-based 'decorated sheds' mentioned in the project Introduction. Winding games machine layouts contribute to excessive, layered soundscapes, alluding to volume and expanse and adding interest and detail. This impacts visitors by strategically encourage them to get lost amidst the decorative, playful commodities and spend extended periods of time in arcades. Loud, layered sound in combination with other sensory effects (transitional colourful illumination, embellished surfaces, disproportionate comedy sized games controls, giant plush animals, and miniature scenes) work together to create a swelling and shrinking effect. There is a sense of space permeating and closing in between people and surfaces, creating roomy depth or moments of intense, inescapable confrontation. The arcade soundscape is labyrinthine and mosaic, with multiple sonic portals to other events, places and times. A musical backdrop pulsates and underpins human chatter and sounding interactions. LaBelle (2019:168) writes of shopping malls as spaces of consumer fantasy, noting the use of sound via extensive intercoms and speakers to amplify background music and 'effectively contour the atmospheric shape of the mall.' Similar to the use of music in other semi-public spaces such as shopping malls and supermarkets, an arcade's musical backdrop is partly intended to create a sense of security and relief (LaBelle, 2019) that elicits belonging and promotes lingering in a monitored consumption space.

Seaside amusement arcade sound and movement

Amusement arcades function as spaces of consumer fantasy, contoured through a similar pre-recorded musical sound system. Musical backdrops and games machine jingles encourage arcade visitors to 'let go' of self-consciousness and engage with presented commodities. In amusement arcades, music creates a binding sensorial underlay between human and games machine communications and interactions. Dance and upbeat pop music are often played in arcades and form a mental conduit to dancing, associating arcades to good time experience. When we hear music, our heartbeats are played with, our bodies agree and synch up (foot taps, rhythmic walks, head bobs, wiggling hips) or disapprove and seek dissonance (tensing of limbs, insubordinate paces, embarrassed gestures). In amusement arcades, musical backdrops spur energised body movement and engagement. Popular cultural sounds are repackaged and re-presented; they form strange

assembles of familiar music from the charts and television that repeat and shift through chaotic, coincidental harmonisations. These collages of popular cultural sounds can put visitors at ease with an aural familiar, stimulating intrigue through their eccentric accumulations. Popular cultural sound assemblages also have potential to 'grate on' visitors and stimulate an energised response through irritation, with a plethora of knobs and buttons available to smack, bang, wallop, fire. The arcade continually sonically generates moments of connection and juxtaposition, elevation and aggravation, tension, and release. Auditory otherness and escape are created and sustained through eclectic and conflicting sounds that keep these temporary autonomous zones going through pulsing vibrations and persistent rhythms (LaBelle, 2019).

Gallagher suggests that sound's capacity 'to move bodies is of central importance to us in expanding listening beyond human perception and cognition' (Gallagher et al. 2017:625). In between the excessive sounds of the arcade, visitors participate in timely interactions and anticipated physical movements, sustained through loops of feedback between 'space, infrastructure, matter, and bodies' (Gallagher et al., 2017:625). There is a particular acoustical synergy in the arcade that aids 'points of contact and connection as well as breakage and interruption' (LaBelle, 2019:169), with visitors caught up the arcade's distinctive and endlessly shifting symphony. The amusement arcade generates a succession of sensorially-informed emotional and physical activations through its distinctive soundscape; it is a participatory space that engages visitors through an array of acoustics, sonically guiding conscious and unconscious behaviour and movement (Augoyard and Torgue, 2005). Visitors activate the arcade soundscape and co-produce the arcade's distinctive sounding atmosphere through interaction and movement. Haptic interactions with games machines that trigger sounds feed into the arcade's soundscape. Games machines have the power to increase or decrease the speed of body movement, as visitors attempt to sync their bodies up to machine rhythms. Being in an arcade can invigorate a purposeful, focused walk or daydreamy, relaxed wandering. Bodies huddle (playing and observing) to share the experience of a sensorially-favoured game or disperse for moments of alone time under the safety of the arcade's familiar and shared soundscape. Amusement arcade soundscapes give way to a 'relational dynamic between body and surrounding, self and object' (LaBelle, 2019:169). The immersion and distraction of amusement arcade soundscape is a powerful personal and social force, generating auditory drama and togetherness.

Seaside amusement arcade sound and nostalgia

The sound culture and meaning of amusement arcades has shifted as culture has evolved. The amusement arcade embeds some of the sonic conditions of the factory that links to seaside resort holidaying history; the arcade is rooted in the vibrations and repetitions of mechanical modernity, chunkily automatic and human operated. Like a factory, amusement arcades are open-plan spaces, with bodies and machines interacting and sonically swelling together in a communal area. In a largely post-industrial society, British seaside amusement arcades can possess a sonically melancholic essence, connecting visitors to the analogue sounds and rhythms of work and leisure from a bygone era. As employment opportunities in British society continue to evolve, the factory floor that the amusement arcade somewhat sonically mimics is experienced differently; the arcade becomes an interactive museum to past sensualities, technologies, and actions, it can be experienced as a nostalgic connection to the modern past. The sounds of a seaside amusement arcade are located in memory, identity and belonging. Epstein (2020) suggests that 'We are able to remember sounds as well as visual images, tactile and kinaesthetic sensations, odours, and tastes' (Epstein, 2020:90-91). The plentiful and ongoing audio presence of amusement arcades as part of seaside resort experience attaches visitors to past societal and personal experiences of seaside resorts. Place-based sonic experience of seaside arcades can remind and connect visitors to family and friends, alive and passed. Their soundscapes can stimulate feelings of reflection and longing. Returned visits to seaside arcades can help determine visitor identity. Seaside amusement arcade soundscapes are situated outside of everyday life for resort visitors, aligning to time allocated for rest and recuperation that is expansive and distinct from commonplace sonic trajectories and burdens. As our minds and bodies open up on a visit to a seaside resort, thoughts and feelings are given opportunity to stretch beyond the mundane and habitual. We can find comfort and longing for the past in the amusement arcade's retro sonic contours and rhythmic relationships, with opportunity to remember and imagine as part of arcade special time experience. The sounds of seaside amusement arcades are nostalgic, conduits to the past that facilitate recollection and imagining in the present. This is not exclusive to the seaside amusement arcade, with newer retro arcades in towns and cities creating layered soundscapes through their collections of games machines. Arguably, seaside amusement arcade soundscapes have evolved more authentically over a longer period of time. Amusement arcades become familiar places that trigger memories and hold affection or conjure up bad feelings for those who have known them all their lives and relate them to past holiday or day trip experience.

In contemporary times, the sounds of the arcade can ease our everyday hunched downward-looking laptop and phone screen bodies, prescribing an alternative set of gestures and repeated movement to dominant desk sitting and desk working. The arcade's soundscape brings people together in a shared space, resisting the isolation of home or remote working and excessive internet using in isolation that contemporary culture permits. Simultaneously a noisy factory and Saturday night dancefloor, the seaside amusement arcade's sonic environment is entwined with industrial working-class work and leisure history; it is demanding, potent, feverish, and participatory. When visiting seaside amusement arcades as a lone researcher, their magnetic soundscape engrosses me and instantly makes me feel included. Sound explicitly 'brings bodies together' (LaBelle, 2019:24) and in the arcade, sound deepens the sense of the 'present and the distant, the real and the meditated' (LaBelle, 2019:25). Beyond longstanding seaside amusement arcades, there is a contemporary appropriation of retro-arcade sound nostalgia in places like Bury Arcade Club (see project Introduction for discussion on retro arcades). The sounds of an amusement arcade pull visitors towards a certain place, time, and energised feeling.

Seaside amusement arcade loudness and sonic after affects

Although not necessarily involving disturbance, arcade noise tends to be sonically loud and disorderly, sounding characteristics that can relate to industrial, working-class life (loud work and leisure environments including mills, factories, pubs, and dancehalls, crowded living conditions, neighbourhoods, and holiday destinations, lively interaction). Building on the 'all that glitters' section in the previous chapter on illumination and darkness, the arcade's sonic loudness expands the concept of glitter and working-classness through its acoustic affects; musical noise can foreground a glittering multi-sensory escape and disguise, generating feelings of comfort and unease and invisibly cultivating boundaries and defining who accesses these spaces (Chion, 2015). Arcades as noisy leisure spaces link to night clubs and festivals in contemporary society; their heightened volume feels teenage in noisy rebellion and defiance. As family orientated spaces, seaside amusement arcades exist as loud sites for an intergenerational audience, bringing a teenage rebellious loudness to young children or returning these feelings to older visitors. Experiencing loud musical sounds collectively in a shared leisure space (here an amusement arcade) can advocate temporal exemption from the mundanity of everyday life routines and places. Arcade noise is a communicational link, creating 'spaces for intensities of diversity, strangeness, and the unfamiliar' (LaBelle, 2019: xxiii). Through sonic noisiness, arcade sound brings with it an 'expressiveness of freedom' (LaBelle, 2019: xxiii). The arcade's acoustics open bodies up through sudden sonorities, perpetual rhythms, and

lingering resonances. Human and automated voices of playful encouragement and consolidation (screeching, yelping, whooping, cheering, booing, laughing) bring a convivial, inter-personal sonic layer. Under the cover of noise, arcade visitors can behave differently and with exaggeration through verbal and physical exchanges, liberated to express themselves in heightened ways. Whether visiting an arcade alone or in company, arcade noise creates private moments of autonomy and acts of secret performance within a shared space for visitors.

Amusement arcade interior spaces allude to expanse through their visual, sonic and spatial arrangements yet physically and intensely enclose bodies, contrasting the vast spaciousness of the outside promenade and seaside outside of them. In the immediate moments of leaving a seaside amusement arcade, one can find a renewed appreciation of the reduced sonic frequencies of the outside world. On exiting the arcade, visitors can experience an affective relief of relative quiescence experienced on returning to the less intense soundscape of the immediate outside world. I experience a new appreciation for the subtle sounds of the weather, nature and materiality of the seaside, leaning into the sounds of the mundane and vernacular. The sounds of the sea are reinstated when leaving a seaside amusement arcade, an ongoing liquid flowing form (Street, 2020) around a fabricated arcade sonic experience. The arcade's chaotic, layered soundscape contrasts with a more peaceful sonic aftermath, it can give way to feelings of calmness and a subdued sensual expansion as sonic, visual, and spatial conditions 'open and ease up'. For others, the surrounding seaside environment may feel more unpredictable and aggressive, away from the arcade's sonic constant and enclosed, protected environment. The British seaside amusement arcade has lingering after affects, as sound produces affects that persist long after 'it' [sound] has stopped (Luc Nancy and Mandell, 2007). Journeying back to everyday locations, arcade jingles swiftly fade for visitors, yet the restorative affordances of seaside arcades go on through sonic memory and the after-effects of seaside arcade sonic otherness and escapism. Amusement arcades contribute to alternate, stimulating soundscapes of the British seaside and modes of sonic restoration at the seaside and in the everyday through significant after affects that stimulate connection and a renewed appreciation of quietude.

At the end of the day.

By 4pm, daytime tipsy karaoke renditions of Madonna's 'Like a Prayer' spill out from Blackpool's amusement arcade Karaoke booths.

Rubber duck prizes squeak in little sticky hands

Strong man hammer plays sync into one determined, topless thud

Afternoon footsteps slowly, daydreamingly tread and soften on carpets, out of the sun and rain.

A bingo caller enigmatically warbles historic lingo into a microphone

A bottle of reinvigorating pop hisses open

A child's sugared heartbeat accelerates

Smart phones vibrate in pockets, nagging and beckoning back to the outside world

Leaving the arcade, crumpled anoraks and puffer jackets are pulled on to warm bodies from the evening chill.

By 10pm, arcade front doors are concurrently locked and games machines are switched off and stop sounding, one by one.

After hours,

the familiar, tumultuous arcade soundscape ceases for the day.

I draw parallels to experienced end-of-nights in night clubs,

when the music and flashing lighting stops,

body cease to dance and move amongst each other,

and bright white overhead lights go on.

A strategically jarring moment,

this shift in sound and light reveals the limitations of a room/space,

an underwhelming end to the wondrous escape of a

temporally disorientating alternate sensory experience.

At the end of the day,

quiet and darkness descends on the arcade.

Only café fridge hums now and wind whistles through weathered door cracks.

When this happens, things revert.

The arcade's tenacious reverberating bubble bursts,

it stops sonically spilling out into its surrounds

and instead, outside sounds creep into and linger inside the arcade space.

Seagulls and passing traffic.

Late night spattered conversations and exchanges

drifting from the beach and pier.

Resting awhile,

the arcade resigns to listening to the night time whispering sea.

(Site-writing developed from research fieldnotes).

Sounding out, chapter conclusion

[Sound] affords an audible understanding for self and surrounding as they flow together, defining a positive channel for environmental sensitivity.

(LaBelle, 2019:169)

The eclectic sonics of seaside amusement arcades that include the sounds of matter, machines, surfaces, bodies and practices form a complex sonic environment. This creates a distinctive, affective and atmospheric experience for visitors. The amusement arcade is shown as an acoustic site that has an 'otherness' to the normative world, sustained through layered sonorities in a compressed space and time. Multiple forms of frequency, rhythm, music, narration, quotation, imitation, suspension and sudden impact and unwanted electrical sounds combine in the amusement arcade and distort the spatial qualities of the arcade space. The amusement arcade brings together aural, spatial, visual, haptic and olfactory conditions that align and reinforce each other, or, on other occasions produce conflicting responses. Seaside amusement arcade sounds create a sonically excessive multiplicity, a blurring of human and more-than-human qualities, old and new technologies, folk and popular cultural references. Sound is proliferated in the arcade through audio-spatial and multi-sensory intensity, amplification, and expansion. Once set in motion, the amusement arcade assumes a unique identity.

During their extensive opening hours, British seaside amusement arcade soundscapes are sonically persistent, active, and participatory. The arcade's sonic environment flows between its sensory elements, permitting varied and unusual opportunities for contact and exchange via spatial and embodied experience. Seaside amusement arcades generate offbeat immersion and escapism, stimulating imagining and remembering for visitors within a timed-based, intergenerational arena.

Arcade sound creates a locative sense of place and emplacement, inviting and abandoning visitors, signifying a range of cultural excitements and disappointments. Aligning to Blesser's suggestion that 'sound can induce exhilaration, contemplative tranquillity, heightened arousal, harmonious and/or mystical connection' (Blesser and Salter, 2007:5), arcade sound can be a call to action, movement, thought and feeling, a sonic break from everyday life, a connection to the past and a place that generates offbeat immersion and imagining. Whether experienced as irritating or ambient, exciting or melancholy, or combinations of these states, visitors access a range of emotive and physical shifts and movements within a sonically complex site. Sound scaffolds the inconspicuous, the ethereal and the emotional resonances and atmospheric ambiances in the seaside amusement arcade. The amusement arcade soundscape is identified as a compelling force; it is an influential mode of communication, a conduit for identity formation, and a call to action. The chapter shows how amusement arcade sounds are influential on how we know, feel, move and think on holiday or a day excursion. Beyond designer means, seaside amusement arcade sounds action unforeseen thoughts and feelings (Shilon, 2019) for visitors and inform behaviours and interactions onsite and when returning to everyday life places.

This chapter demonstrates sound-based fieldwork as a form of methodological doings (Hawkins, 2011) and shows amusement arcades as lively, integrated and temporal places that are always emerging. In between the sonority of arcade games machines, interior features, visitors and workers, a distinctive atmosphere is co-produced. Sound is an integral component to the arcade atmosphere; it generates heightened arousal and points of tension and release. The seaside arcade is an acoustic space that is 'dynamic, unfixed, always in flux' (LaBelle, 2019). Sound is a constant and lively exchange, an essential dynamism in the co-production of atmosphere. This chapter further advances understandings of British seaside amusement arcades as eclectic, excessive, unique and impactful sites. Amusement arcade sound is a meaningful ingredient in the place experience of contemporary Blackpool and other seaside resorts. Seaside arcades are shown as sonically distinctive and active sites, their moods and textures infusing contemporary seaside resort soundscapes and shaping visitor practices and behaviours (Epstein, 2020). Sound is shown as a powerful force at the British seaside amusement arcade, governing our sense of place and our sense of ourselves. Seaside amusement arcades are strange familiar spaces that are collectively performed by visitors, they continue to be recalled and re-enacted. This chapter argues for recognition of seaside amusement arcades as sites that people draw audio-sensory and affective stimulation and connection from. How we contribute to seaside amusement arcade sounding environments locates us, as individuals and society, in place and culture.

Conclusion

The (Amusement) Arcades Project reveals and reframes the British seaside amusement arcade as a unique place that contributes significantly to place experience at British seaside resorts and in relation to everyday life. The project goes well beyond existing research on seaside amusement arcades that examines these places from tourist (Chapman and Light, 2016, 2011; Elborough, 2010), problem gaming and gambling (Griffiths and Fisher, 1995) and socio-historical perspectives (Meades, 2022; Walton, 2000), to demonstrate the sensory effects and individual experience of these enduring sites. The project distinguishes between the different kinds of amusement arcades in contemporary culture (pp. 57-63) and brings to the fore longstanding, family orientated British seaside amusement arcades as interesting, eclectic places that have evolved over time into unique sensory and affective realms with distinctive atmospheres.

In the Introduction, the project sets out to observe and analyse how British seaside amusement arcades are experienced and to establish their under-recognised affordances by asking how they distinctively contribute to contemporary British seaside resort culture and everyday life. The establishment of a theoretical framework on place experience, sensation, affect and atmosphere with attention paid to the emergent themes of light, surface and sound underpin the development of a new reading of British seaside amusement arcades. The project intended to develop mixed methods that pertain to interdisciplinary study in the fields of art and ethnography, drawing on ideas from visual and material culture and human geography, through an innovative, qualitative artist-ethnography research approach that would enable an original analysis of amusement arcade place experience.

Through a process of observation, participation, attunement and reflection, each amusement arcade visit brought interesting sensations, materials and qualities that connected and distinguished them from other seaside arcades, developing both my analysis and appreciation of these unique and enduring places. The discovery of a longstanding softly glowing neon or bold sans serif arcade sign, a particularly florid arcade carpet, a momentary medley of a folk melody and pop tv culture theme tune, a joyfully colourful and clunky old arcade games machine controller, or the earthy weight of fragrantly metallic copper coins tugging you downwards and poised for play located me within each seaside arcade I encountered. The varying components and assemblages of seaside arcades have

been robustly yet only partially probed at during this 7 year part-time PhD project, with many more seaside arcades for me to explore post-PhD.

My positionality in relation to British seaside resorts and amusement arcades has continued to evolve during the project, as I mediate between enthusiast and academic, amateur and expert, my working class background and academic surrounds, sustained by my lifelong connection to selected British seaside resorts, responding to them and learning as I go. Connections to these places have been formed over a numbers of years, prior to the research commencing and then strengthened via the research process. The project's qualitative, autoethnographic research approach has been a way to situate my personal experiences of seaside arcades during the time of study within broader cultural, social, and political contexts. The contributions to knowledge are based on an informed, speculative exchange between myself and other people and places. Fieldwork has been emplaced and embodied as I have worked to be open to and absorb from the places I visit (Stoller, 1997) through lived experience. The research has been sustained by the belief that personal experiences are influenced by cultural and political norms, expectations and improvisations.

Challenges arose at the intersection of experience, research documentation and analysis, confirming the need for a mixed-methods approach to fieldwork and place experience. It took considerable time for me to develop vocabularies of light, surface and sound through fieldnotes and writing up; this included long-winded searches to try and find the name of a particular form of something (eg. cabochon lightbulbs or aluminium tread plates) and plenty of time spent in the thesaurus endeavouring to find nuanced descriptors for sensory qualities in the seaside arcade (eg. lustrous, flickering, dullness, radiance, iridescence, overwritten, crunchy, worn down, sonorous, boisterous, low-pitched etc.). This reflects the complexities of articulating experience, the sensory and the felt, that go beyond words. Capturing the intricacies of shifting, multiple light forms in seaside arcades was trickier than anticipated; some photos alluded to the intriguing visual culture of illumination in seaside arcades more successfully than others. Once I understood the technicalities of the binaural sound recording technique, this method felt effective for capturing the layered sounds of amusement arcades and for listening back to whilst writing up the Sound chapter offsite as an aid to audio memoir.

By undertaking substantive, mixed-methods fieldwork in-situ and developing this through offsite analysis, new empirical findings on the contemporary place experience of British seaside amusement arcades have been uncovered. This research is important for developing more

nuanced and inclusive understandings of place, at the seaside, in commercial spaces and in relation to everyday life, bringing neglected yet enduring sites in British culture to the fore. I have been exploring a range of ways for disseminating the research through artistic, academic and wider public opportunities. These include conferences in the fields of art and geography (Lineham, 2019b, 2019c, 2018a, 2017), art exhibitions (Lineham, 2021, 2019a, 2018-2019), artist talks (Lineham, 2020, 2018b) and publication (Lineham, 2023a, 2018c).

Contribution 1: The development of a new artist-ethnography research methodology

The project develops a newly termed artist-ethnography research methodology that pertains to art and ethnography by developing an innovative mix of methods (pp. 23-56). The project methodology develops walking, site-writing and fieldnotes, photography, soundwalk recording and litter picking as reflective modes of artist-ethnography place research. The artist-ethnography methodology utilises first-hand experience, sensory modes of participant observation (Pink, 2015; Ingold, 2008; Casey, 1996) and embodied and emplaced attunement (Pink, 2009; Downey, 2007; Coleman and Collins, 2006; Ingold, 1997) as approaches. Through ideas and techniques that pertain to the visual (Pink, 2021; Mirzoeff, 2012; Grasseni, 2007), material (Connor, 2011; Bennett, 2010; Highmore, 2002), sonic (Street, 2020; Gallagher et al., 2017; Ebbensgaard, 2015; Augoyard and Torgue, 1995) and spatial (Edensor et al., 2020; Edensor, 2017, 2012; Ingold 2008, 2000; Massey, 2005) this creative, critical and combinational approach opens new ways of exploring and understanding the experience of seaside arcade and resort place and culture. The methodology aligns to Pink's emphasis on 'the importance of being in a place to gain sensory, embodied, mobile and mediated insights' (Pink, 2015) and has been situated in relation to the history and development of art and ethnography as an interdisciplinary practice (Ferro and Poveda, 2019; Kelly, 2012; Foster, 1996). The artist-ethnography methodology is defined, informed and sustained by recent sensory, affective and atmospheric theory (Steadman and Coffin, 2023; Howes, 2022; Edensor, 2017; Böhme 2017, 1993; Pink, 2015). This methodological approach builds an enhanced autoethnographic sense of visibility, aurality and spatiality. Drawing on personal experiences of place via the project's artist-ethnography methodology has proven an effective way to describe, engage with and interpret the cultural and social practices, meanings and understandings of British seaside amusement arcades, promoting a recognition of a wider array of qualities and affordances for visitors that arise from engagement with these distinctive places.

The artist-ethnography methodology contributes to a growing body of work by artists, ethnographers, geographers and cultural theorists who utilise combinations of artistic and ethnographic methods in their practice to uncover new and inclusive understandings of place experience (Ferro and Poveda, 2019; Speight, 2019; Daynes and Williams, 2018; Edensor, 2017; Edensor and Millington, 2015; Pink, 2015; see pp. 24-28 in the methodology chapter). The approach offers a new way to navigate the complexities of place and bring more nuanced and inclusive understandings of place experience to the fore. As foregrounded early on, 'I create place by choosing to amplify and represent my own place experience' (pp. 49), drawing on first-hand experience to develop reflexive understanding, exploring the relations between my own interiority and external stimuli (Blessner and Salter, 2007). The project gives value to the complex sensations and affects of British seaside amusement arcades and reveals them to be more than merely passive consumer places in British culture. The project goes beyond dominant visual modes of understanding detailing other sensory modes of experience and knowledge (Sumartjojo et al., 2019, Ingold, 2014, Classen, 1993), with the visual considered in relation to the other senses, discovering and combining image, text, sound and material things.

The artist-ethnography methodology effectively contemplates and communicates the underexplored experiences of certain places; it is a flexible methodology that can be referred to, adopted and developed by other researchers in future creative, critical place experience investigations. The approach is synthesised in the Methodology chapter's 'how to do artist-ethnography: a quick guide' (pp. 53) and is currently communicated on my website and social media, with potential for further distribution via post-doctoral presentation and publication. I have started to work with my artist-ethnography methodology in research projects running in parallel to my PhD that explore the place experience of ancient and modern stone circles (Lineham, 2024c, 2024d) and the place experience and atmosphere of the contemporary British art school (Lineham, 2024b, 2023b). These parallel projects continue with visiting sites and collecting autoethnographic fieldnotes and site-writing, photography, sound recording, litter picking and introducing clay pressing as an additional process in the stone circle research to dwell on surface, texture and stillness. Both of these projects utilise a theoretical framework on place, sensation, affect and atmosphere. Whilst ancient and modern stone circle sites and art schools are sensorially, materially and spatially very different places to seaside amusement arcades, the artist-ethnography methodology is proving effective in revealing the sensory qualities, affective affordances and emergent atmospheres of these diverse, felt places.

Beyond artistic and academic fields, the project's artist-ethnography methodology has potential to be used as part of inclusive research approaches to place design, place-making and heritage agendas, to stimulate thoughtful refurbishment and regeneration of seaside resorts and other enduring environments. I presented my research at The Institute of Placemaking (Lineham, 2018b) and have a published chapter on this research in a book that explores designing, experiencing and researching atmospheres in consumption spaces (Lineham, 2023a). The artist-ethnography methodological approach can bring to the fore the emergent sensory qualities, affective affordances and emergent atmospheres of places, uncovering and celebrating the complex histories and heritage of sites in contemporary culture.

Contribution 2: The compilation of new empirical primary data on the place experience of British seaside amusement arcades

The primary data consists of original place-based fieldnotes, site-writing, photography, soundwalk recordings and litter picking. The project's central seaside resort location of Blackpool has been visited for data collection at different times of the day and year over a succession of years (2017-2023), through returned visits to gain cross-seasonal insights into amusement arcade place experience. These fieldtrips have been supplemented by fieldtrips to other British seaside resorts during the project's six-year data collection period. The project's artist-ethnography methodology has allowed for in-depth lone researcher engagement with seaside amusement arcades and the seaside resorts that surround them, revealing them as distinctive, multi-sensory zones.

The Light chapter presents primary data that documents and explores British seaside amusement arcade light as significant to the resort experience. This primary data consists of original research fieldnotes (pp. 208-213), site-writing excerpts developed from research fieldnotes and writing up that includes thick description of arcade light (pp. 92-102). Primary photos of seaside resort and amusement arcade light from Blackpool and other seaside resort fieldtrips are scattered throughout the chapter (pp. 79-105). The data collection pays wholly original, in-depth attention to amusement arcade light, foregrounding the eclectic variations of lighting forms, light's interaction with other materialities, and light's impacts and affects (pp. 103-130).

The Intermission presents primary data that documents and explores how surface offers a significant contribution to the British seaside amusement arcade experience. This primary data consists of original fieldnotes that document and consider seaside amusement arcade surface (pp. 208-213),

plentiful site-writing developed from research fieldnotes and thematically grouped collections of primary photos from Blackpool and other seaside resort fieldtrips (pp. 108-138) on the Intermission's subsequent themes. New photos and writing on surfaces, carpets, inscriptions, litter picks, colours, sweet things, coins and soft toy prizes bring to the fore the layered historical and plentiful surfaces, material processes, encounters and effects in relation to the seaside amusement arcade experience.

The Sound chapter presents primary data that documents and demonstrates sound as a significant contributor to the British seaside amusement arcade experience. This primary data consists of original fieldnotes that document and consider sound (pp. 208-214), site-writing developed from research fieldnotes (pp. 139, 149, 170-171), a soundwalk recording online archive (an open access source that presents over two and a half hours of seaside arcade soundwalk recording from over thirty-six different British seaside amusement arcades, pp. 141) and map of key soundwalks in Blackpool (pp. 141). The soundwalk recordings pay attention to sound in an in-depth way that has not been done before in academic research, showing and preserving the distinctive, layered historical and technological soundscapes of contemporary seaside amusement arcades.

The primary data documents an extensive number of amusement arcades in their contemporary contexts, building an ambitious collection of new research fieldnotes, site-writing, photography (over 100 new photos), soundwalk recording (38 soundwalk recordings) and photographed litter picks. Data collection has been extensive and rigorous, taking place over a number of years and fieldtrips through carefully selected and honed methods, leading to a substantive body of place-based data. A dialogue between in-situ experience and offsite writing up has been established and developed for the project. The primary data has enabled a thorough analysis of the complex and nuanced experience of British seaside amusement arcades through the core themes of light, surface and sound (see Contribution 3). The project's primary data expands the space for British seaside amusement arcades to be further explored in academic research, contributing to interdisciplinary study of contemporary amusement arcades in art and ethnography (Merrick, 2019; Ball, 2019; Edensor and Millington, 2015; Ware, 2016). The primary data also acts as an artefact that preserves the history and heritage of seaside amusement arcades in their contemporary contexts, with an eye to their current and future cultural and historical significance as they disappear or are reinvented. The primary data, therefore, contributes to the broader documentation of seaside resort history and heritage of sites of fun and entertainment at the seaside (Seaside Heritage Network, online: no date; Historic England, online: no date; The British Library and The National Trust, 2015) and is currently

openly accessible via my website (Lineham, 2024a) as well as through ongoing artistic, academic and wider public dissemination.

Contribution 3: Original theoretical analysis of illumination as integral to the place experience of the seaside amusement arcade

The project builds an original written analysis of the site-based data on the place experience of British seaside amusement arcades. This argues for the uniqueness of seaside amusement arcade experience for visitors, contributing to place research that foregrounds creative, critical modes of experiential research to stimulate new understandings and knowledge creation. Contributions to art and ethnography on the place experience of British seaside amusement arcades through light, surface and sound have been developed.

The Light chapter (pp. 79-105) evidences the diverse kinds of illumination found at seaside arcades through photography, site-writing developed from research fieldnotes and theoretically informed writing up, foregrounding seaside arcades as eclectic, museumsque spaces with different forms of illuminations that have evolved over time into a unique convergence. This is supported by extensive primary fieldnotes from fieldtrips to British seaside amusement arcades (pp. 208-213). Multiple forms of illumination, animation, colour, glow and interactions with other materialities that generate reflection, glitter, sparkle, and popular and folk references are shown through arcade light. The Light chapter demonstrates amusement arcades as permanently lit spaces during their opening hours that combine standardised forms of lighting within 'a collage of the uncoordinated and unusual' (pp. 93). 'Different types of light interact with moving forms, colourful and reflective surfaces' (pp. 101), contributing to a 'suspension of normative vision and routines' (pp. 101) for visitors. The amusement arcade lightscape includes 'lingering traces, unexpected reflections, combined with gloomy backdrops, imagery plunging into darkness, and heightened transferences between the radiant and the obsolete' (pp. 103). Light renders amusement arcades 'unruly, indiscreet and surprising' (pp. 103), with arcade illumination a performative force (Ebbensgard, 2014) that goes beyond artificial modes of illumination and dark in everyday inland urban space. Formal and playful structures of excessive illumination and highly diverse light forms combine with other materials and bodies in the seaside amusement arcade space, familiarising and defamiliarising arcade visitor senses, confirming and mystifying perceptual surroundings and generating atmosphere and immersion. The amusement arcade is revealed as having an otherness to the normative world through light, which 'creates affective moods, actions and behaviours' (pp. 103) for visitors. The experience of excessive light

within seaside amusement arcades 'generates affects, transforming space and atmosphere in ways that transcend the functional use of light for legibility' (pp. 106).

Seaside amusement arcade light contributes to an expansive, playful use of lighting at British seaside resorts. In Blackpool in particular, amusement arcade light contributes the Golden Mile's distinctive lightscape, intermingling with light from other tourist orientated establishments, amusements, fairgrounds, the Blackpool Illuminations and Lightpool festival in the Autumn months, contrasting the darkness of the outstretching Irish Sea. Blackpool's amusement arcades work with these other lit offerings to co-create a distinctive lightscape and invigorating place experience for visitors. Seaside arcades present a mix of lighting types, colours, shapes and forms that have developed into unique assemblages over time. Discourses on light and place experience are emergent in academic research (Edensor, 2017; Sumartojo et al., 2019), with ample space for more engagement with light as a powerful atmospheric force and affective agent in place experience, the everyday and the holiday.

The project investigates light informed modes of nostalgia at British seaside amusement arcades, contributing to discourse on light nostalgia in general, and specifically at the contemporary British seaside (Edensor, 2017; Jarrett and Steele, 2019; Bould et al., 2016; Edensor and Millington, 2018; Parsons, 2009). The Light chapter shows amusement arcades as significant to broader British seaside nostalgia through their combinational use of outdated and retro forms of light. At different times in history, amusement arcades have been at the forefront of technology and lighting, the arcade video games machine era is an example of an early form of illuminated digital moving imagery pervading the environment beyond the domestic television or cinema. Combinations of old lighting technologies including video screens, neon signs and colourful bulb lighting in the amusement arcade stimulate joyful and melancholic yearning, identify formation and sense of belonging. Amusement arcade light contributes to invigorating 'a social connectedness at the British seaside and in British culture' (pp. 99) which helps visitors with developing and sustaining meaning in their lives. The project engages with complex ideas and considerations on nostalgia in contemporary culture, foregrounding its positive place-based effects at the British seaside. There continues to be more research about light in inland urban and city spaces (Park and Garcia, 2020; Edensor, 2017; Cochrane, 2004) than on light at the seaside. These findings contribute to broad discourses on light and atmosphere (Pink and Sumartojo, 2018; Böhme, 2017; Degen et al., 2017; Edensor, 2017; Ebbensgaard, 2015) with contributions that bring to the fore the impacts and effects of light and place experience at British seaside resorts (Edensor and Millington, 2013; Hargen, 2008) and seaside

amusement arcades. British seaside amusement arcades are shown as dynamic and affective sites through light, sites of remembering, belonging, imagining and discovery for visitors.

The book chapter I've recently had published develops some of these ideas about atmosphere, focusing on light and dark at Blackpool's seaside amusement arcade (Lineham, 2023a). This sits in the edited book amongst chapters from the fields of art, geography, place management and consumer research, evidencing the research's interdisciplinary positioning and future potential for publication post doctorate.

Contribution 4: Original theoretical analysis of surface as integral to the place experience of the seaside amusement arcade

The Intermission (pp. 108-138) presents new, expanded site-writing developed from research fieldnotes and thematic collections of photos that work together to reveal the contribution of surface to the experience of the contemporary British seaside resort and seaside amusement arcade. Informed by Böhme's ideas on surface's possession of material splendour (Böhme, 2017), the Intermission pays close attention to 'the material, sensory and spatial' qualities of surface 'segueing to contemplation on processes, practices, cultural significations and arising affective and atmospheric affordances' (pp. 109). The Intermission examines seaside resort and seaside amusement arcades through ideas on surface followed by thematic investigations on arcade carpets, inscriptions, litter picks, colours, coins, sweet things and soft toy prizes. Seaside resort and seaside amusement arcade surface is shown as collaboratively colourful, characterful, inscribed, worn and weathered, creating a lively visual and material culture at seaside resorts that makes convivial and melancholic impressions on visitors. Amusement arcade carpets are shown to invigorate arcade interiors since the 1960s in a variety of colours and patterns, swirls, stripes and diamond grids that distort in mirrors and add labyrinthine qualities to the arcade from underfoot. Now 'sand-worn and cola stained' (pp. 121), amusement arcade carpets become a familiar and nostalgic part of the seaside amusement arcade experience. Surface inscriptions are shown as 'chaotic and disordered at the seaside amusement arcade...a medley of the everyday instructional and the fantastical' (pp. 124), mixing forms of typographic communication and imagery, with multiple cues that invite, indulge and warn the arcade visitor. Inscriptions contribute to 'shared codes of movement, order and belonging' (pp. 125) in the amusement arcade. Sweets and sweet wrappers add pops of colour to seaside resorts and seaside amusement arcades as prizes, sellable items and litter. When digested, sweets and other sugary seaside offerings work 'their way into an amusement arcade frenzy' (pp. 129),

significant in embodied experience and the co-production of arcade atmosphere, creating accelerated and lulled moments. The nostalgic, analogous affordances of coins at the amusement arcade are suggested in the Intermission, with coins 'activating movement, light, sound, colour, play' (pp. 135). Colourful amusement arcade surfaces activate convivial codes of behaviour, 'connecting people to seaside places, and each other' (pp. 133) and invigorating arcades and their seaside surroundings. Coins are discussed for their persistence and contribution to the amusement arcade beyond visitor interactions, relentlessly oscillating on platforms and occasionally, ever so slowly, 'nudge some of themselves over the edge' (pp. 136) is an insight into the amusement arcade as a lively, constant place.

The Intermission develops Lavin's ideas on surface as an experiential layer that sits at the intersection of the material and immaterial world (Lavin, 2011), presenting an original analysis on the experiential affordances of surface at the seaside resort and seaside amusement arcade. The kinds of surface found in and around the seaside amusement arcade are foregrounded as doing and meaning more than they are supposed to, going beyond any design intentions to contribute to the place experience of contemporary seaside amusement arcades in unforeseen ways. Amusement arcade carpets, inscriptions, litter, sweets, colours, coins and soft toy prizes are shown as magical, playful and transformative, 'generating attractions, seductions, tensions and repulsions' (pp. 133) and contributing to the material and spatial vitality of seaside amusement arcades and seaside resorts. This research contributes to discourses on environmental and architectural surface affects (Edensor, 2023b; Connor, 2011; Lavin, 2011) and on the distinctive design and experience of contemporary British seaside resorts (Burns and Jarratt, 2022; Jarratt and Steele, 2019; Edensor and Millington, 2018).

Contribution 5: Original theoretical analysis of sound as integral to the place experience of the seaside amusement arcade

The Sound chapter (pp. 139-171) evidences the distinctive sound effects from within the seaside amusement arcade via an extensive series of arcade soundwalks, three sonic case studies of arcades from Blackpool that include arcade soundwalk weblinks and transcription, creative profiles and analysis of their homogenous and heterogenous sonic impacts and affects, site-writing developed from research fieldnotes and theoretically informed writing up. The Sound chapter evidences the range of sound types, from the human, mechanical and computerised to the musical and accidental in the contemporary British seaside amusement arcade. Monetary bumps, grinds and cascades,

popular and folk references, alive and automated sounds are captured and explored. Sound is shown as eclectic, layered and excessive within seaside amusement arcades, occurring through multiple and layered forms of frequency, rhythm, music, narration, quotation, imitation, suspension, sudden impact and unwanted electrical sounds that have gathered over time, through extensive data collection and analysis that goes beyond anything previously undertaken in academic research. Blackpool's amusement arcades are revealed as sonically complex (Perec, 1974), similar sounding, with moments of the particular. The extensive soundwalk archive demonstrates how each arcade soundscape assigns an 'identifiable personality to the aural architecture' (Blessner and Salter, 2007:2), combining with 'the visual, material and spatial qualities of the arcade to assume its own character' (pp. 161-162). Seaside amusement arcades are foregrounded as having 'otherness' to the normative world, created and sustained through a multiplicity and layering of human, musical, pre-recorded, mechanical, computerised and material audio elements in a compressed space and time. There is a 'continuously changing mix of human sounds, mechanical sounds, digital sounds and musical sounds as you move around the arcade that creates multiple points of interesting overlaid sonics and sonic impacts and effects' (pp. 163) that creates a constantly emerging soundscape. Sound works with other materialities and sensory qualities to co-create each seaside amusement arcade's sonic identity. The layered and eclectic sounds in seaside amusement arcades are proposed as a spatially distortive element that reconfigure the amusement arcade space and a 'conduit to movement' (pp. 141). Amusement arcades are shown as significant within the seaside resort sensory landscape and along the seafront in Blackpool, creating moments of combined amusement arcade acoustics in between and beyond arcade sites. The Sound chapter's research on the sound effects of the British seaside amusement arcade contributes to art and ethnographic research on the sounds of the contemporary British seaside (Clarkson, 2023; Merrick, 2019; Ware, 2016) by significantly expanding the documentation and explanation of contemporary British seaside amusement arcade sounds and soundscapes.

During their extensive opening hours 'British seaside amusement arcade soundscapes are sonically persistent, active, and participatory' (pp. 171). The seaside amusement arcade is shown as operating sensorially, affectively and atmospherically beyond the intentions of amusement arcade owners and games machine designers through sound, becoming a particular kind of co-produced, affective assemblage. The Sound chapter evidences the seaside amusement arcade as a sonically constant and lively exchange, with absorption of the recalled and far reaching attained through a multi-layered, embodied experience. Lingering media representations of amusement arcades as youthful deviant spaces from the video games era (Fisher 1999, 1995, 1992, 1991; Griffiths 1993a, 1993b,

1991, 1990) are challenged through this sound study, with amusement arcades shown to stimulate a range of feelings, thoughts, movements and after affects including 'a renewed appreciation for quietude' (pp. 151) and the sounds of everyday environments. This contributes to wider research on sound and place (LaBelle, 2019; Schafer, 1993) and sounds affective affordances (Street, 2020; Blesser and Salter, 2007; Gallagher et al., 2017; Shilon, 2019). Each amusement arcade soundscape sonically blurs human and more-than human elements. Amusement arcades are shown as having sonic agency (Harman, 2018; Bennett, 2010), expanding beyond their commercial means by doing and meaning much more than they are designed to do (Böhme: 2017, Connor, 2011, Barad: 2003). Whether empty or busy with visitors, the amusement arcade is in conversation with itself (Bennett, 2010) 'agreeing, flirting, and arguing' (pp. 162). The arcade is demonstrated as an acoustic space that is 'dynamic, unfixed, always in flux' (LaBelle, 2019).

The project investigates sound-informed modes of nostalgia at British seaside amusement arcades, showing amusement arcades as temporal and as places that facilitate collapsed time-space within a designated zone. Popular and folk culture references from the recent past locate the sounds of amusement arcades in an in-between time and space and as sonic conduits to the past. The chapter's findings on the nostalgic impacts and affects of seaside amusement arcade sound contribute significantly to research on seaside resort nostalgia (Jarrett and Steele, 2019; Jarratt and Gammon, 2016; Edensor and Millington, 2018; Parsons, 2009) through original discussion on the medley of mechanical, computerised, popular and folk sounds that repeat and locate the seaside arcade at a sonic threshold between the past and the present. Seaside amusement arcade sound is revealed as 'a call to action, movement, thought and feeling, a sonic break from everyday life, a connection to the past and a place that generates offbeat immersion and imagining' (pp. 172).

The Sound chapter situates the amusement arcades in relation to other supposedly noisy working-class sites of work and leisure, foregrounding seaside amusement arcade sound experience as a 'multi-sensory escape and disguise' (pp. 168) for visitors. Through powerful affect affects, visitors can 'experience an affective relief of relative quiescence experienced on returning to the less intense soundscape of the immediate outside world' (pp. 169). These new findings locate seaside amusement arcade sound experience in relation to the sounds of everyday life (Shilon, 2019; Street, 2020; Blesser and Salter, 2007).

The projects in progress amusement arcade soundwalk archive was exhibited at the seaside themed A-N Artist Network Conference in 2021 (Lineham, 2021), presenting these new insights on the

sounds of seaside amusement arcades to an international audience. The amusement arcade soundwalk archive is an open access source via Soundcloud (Lineham, 2019-ongoing). I will continue to add new seaside amusement arcade soundwalks to this depository going forward.

Contribution 6: Challenging negative perceptions that situate British seaside amusement arcades as sites of low commercial culture and contributing to discourse on seaside amusement arcades as places of cultural significance.

British seaside amusement arcades are shown as operating beyond ideas on them as abject spaces that are unworthy of serious consideration by some social conservative and leftist thinking. British seaside amusement arcades are foregrounded as places that do and mean more than they are commercially designed for, stimulating nuanced experiences for visitors that goes beyond blatant consumer means. The project reveals British seaside amusement arcades as complex, eclectic, distinctive assemblages of the human and more-than-human with multiple, dynamic points of contact and exchange. This research shows amusement arcades as sites that blend the past, present and future. Seaside arcades are shown to be sites of alternative sensory experiences that go beyond most everyday spaces and activate imagining, remembering and belonging via sensory participation. British seaside amusement arcades are suggested to expand beyond their physicality, permeating into other spaces through arcade experience-infused thoughts, actions, anticipations and lingering after affects. This contributes to discourse on British seaside amusement arcades in contemporary culture (Light and Chapman, 2022, Merrick, 2019; Chapman and Light, 2016, 2011; Light, 2019; Ware, 2016; Chapman, 2013; Elborough, 2010), the nuances of British seaside resort experience (Bunting, 2023; Edensor and Millington, 2018, 2015, 2013; Williams, 2012) and broader research on practicing place in relation to different places and everyday life (Edensor, 2023a; Edensor et al., 2020; Speight, 2019).

Looking forward

The (Amusement) Arcades Project will be ongoing beyond PhD completion, as I continue to undertake and archive seaside amusement arcade soundwalks from other locations, further develop photography techniques and processes that respond to the complexities of light in amusement arcades and continue working towards a creative, critical writing practice that draws on the experiential and theoretical. My research interests in British seaside arcades is ongoing; the more seaside arcades I visit, the more I wonder about and plot other site visits post-PhD completion.

Beyond the aforementioned publication (Lineham, 2023a, 2018c), exhibition (Lineham 2024c, 2021, 2019a, 2018-19), talks and conference papers (Lineham, 2024b, 2023b, 2020, 2019a, 2018a, 2018b, 2017) that either directly relate to this research or are developing through parallel projects using the same artist-ethnography methodology, I intend to develop journal articles and/or book chapters on seaside amusement arcade sound and surface, with further ideas on seaside arcade light and nostalgia to explore. I am keen to co-publish on this research and exhibit visual, sound, material findings in a more ambitious exhibition format than I have done to date.

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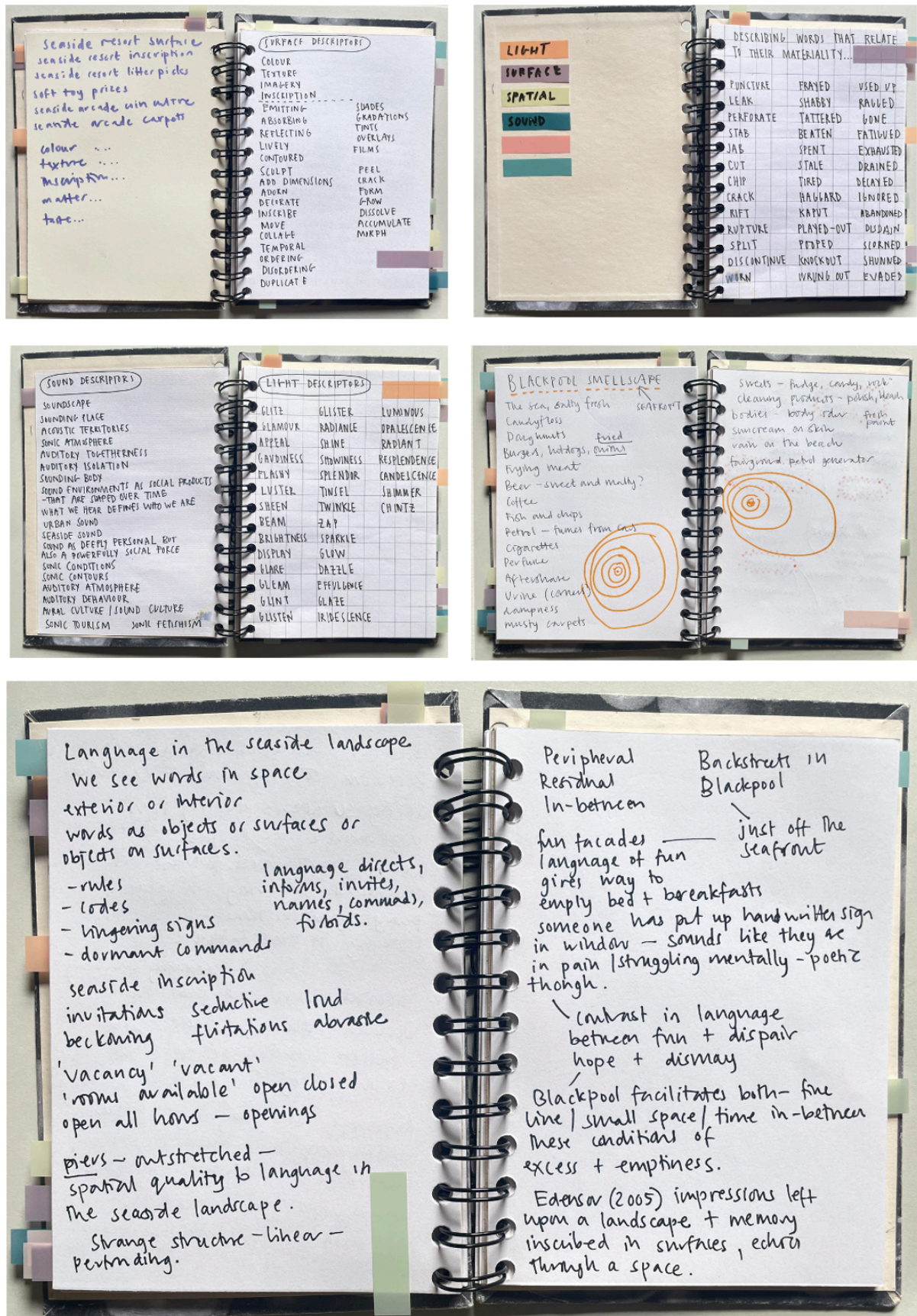
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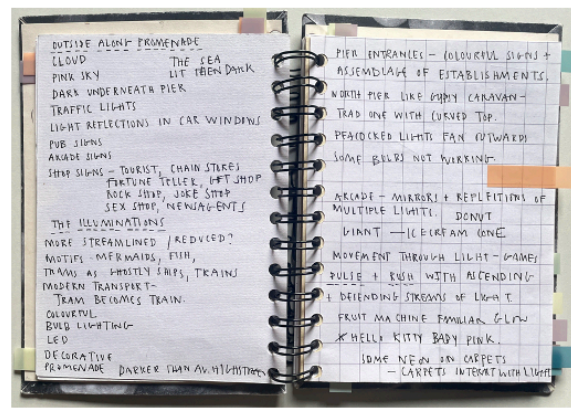
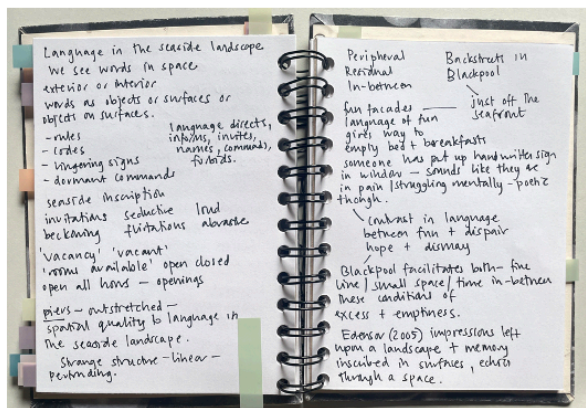
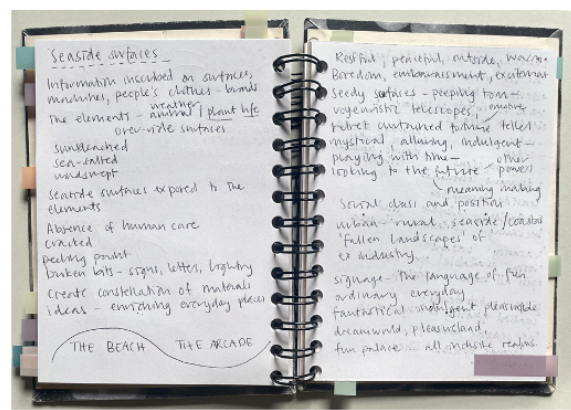
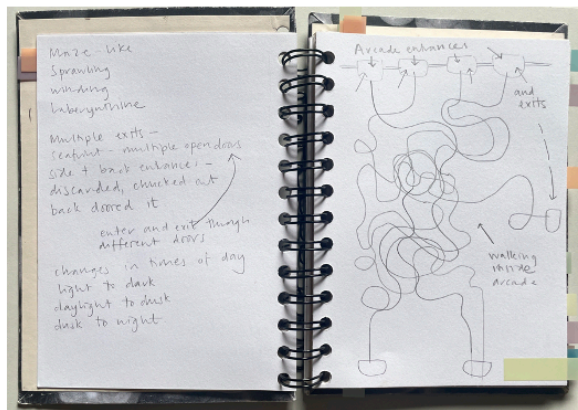
Appendix A: Fieldtrip log

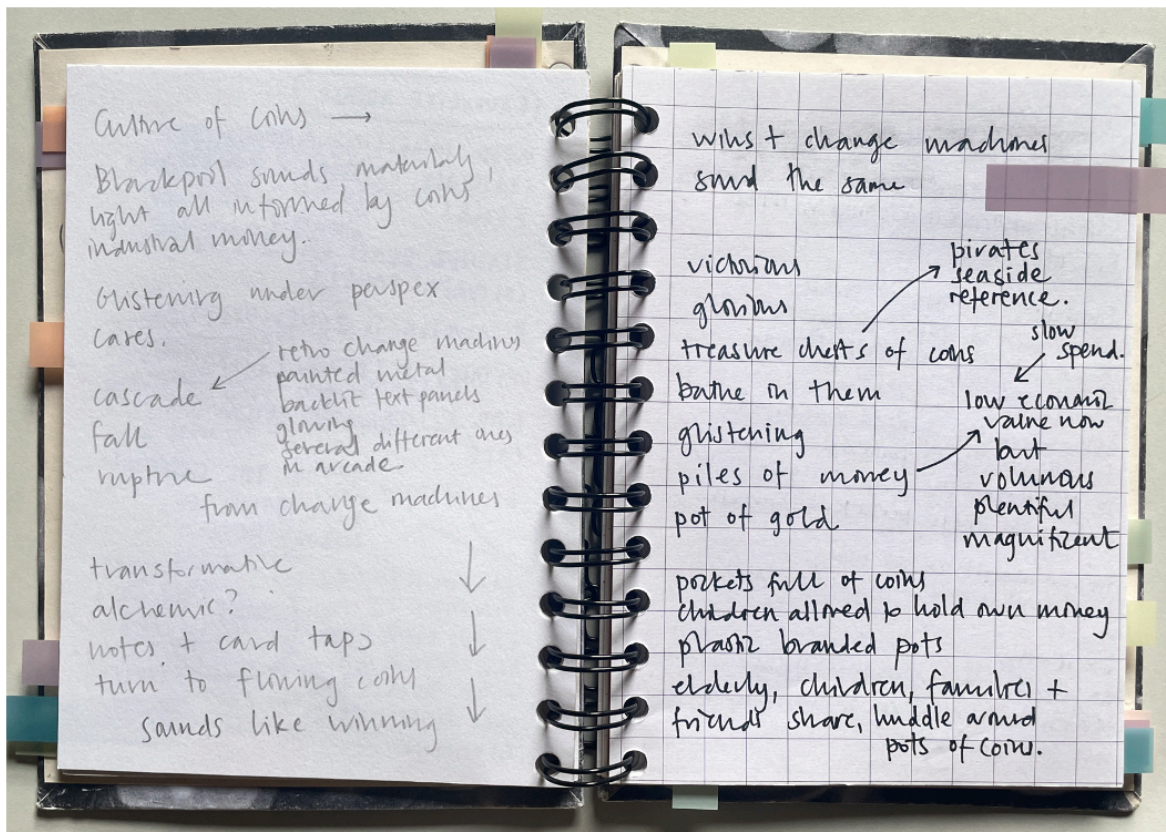
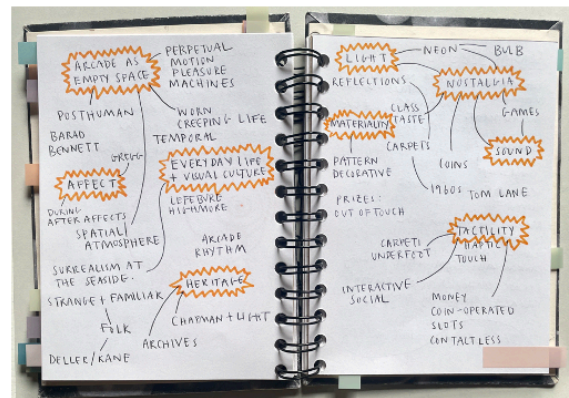
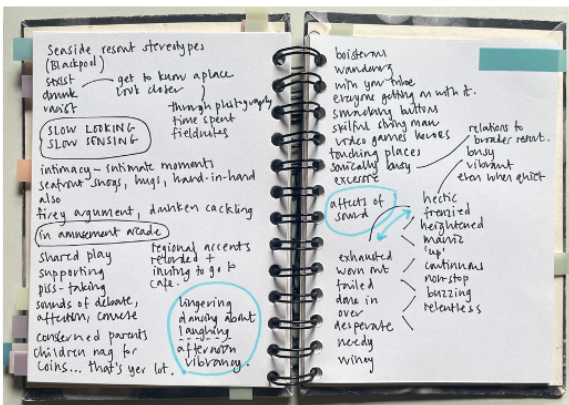
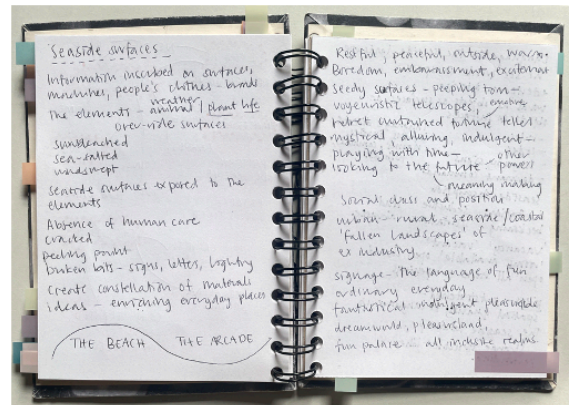
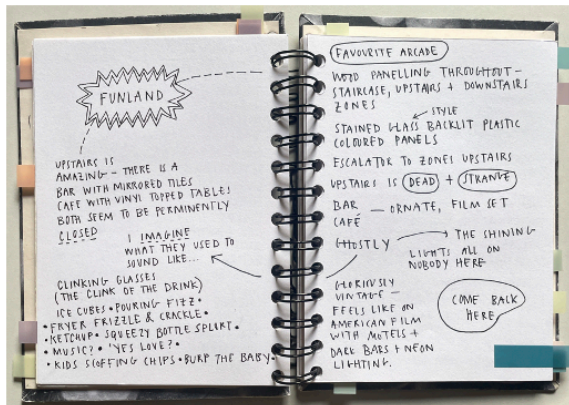
Fieldtrip date	Seaside resort	Amusement arcades visited
7 October 2017	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Lucky Star Family Amusements, Harts Amusements.
2 January 2018	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Lucky Star Family Amusements, Harts Amusements.
4 January 2018	Southport	Silcock's Funland, Silcock's Funtime, Silcock's Amusements.
1 April 2018	Morecambe	Johnny's Entertainments, Treasure Island, Coopers Amusements, Pleasureland.
15 July 2018	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Golden Mile Amusements, Happy Dayz.
25 August 2018	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Central Pier Amusements, Lucky Star Family Amusements, Harts Amusements.
26 August 2018	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Central Pier Amusements, Lucky Star Family Amusements, Harts Amusements.
1 September 2018	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Central Pier Amusements, Lucky Star Family Amusements, Harts Amusements.
2 July 2019	Newquay	Jackpot, Playland, Slots Amusements, Stardust Amusements, Quicksilver Coast, Carousel Amusements.
3 July 2019	St. Ives	Harbour Amusements.

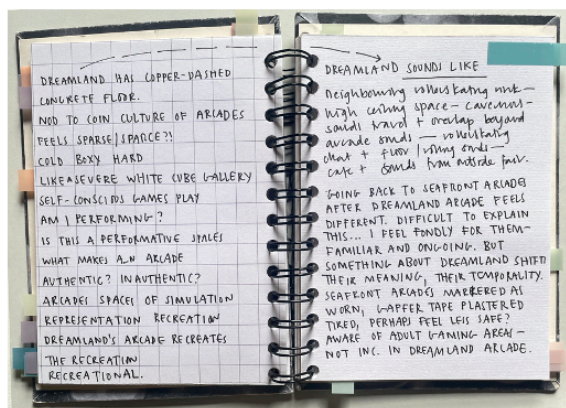
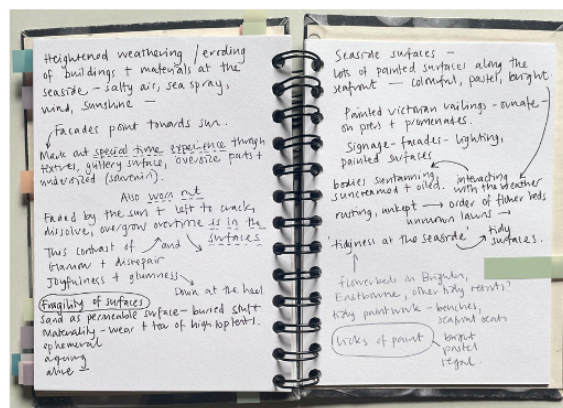
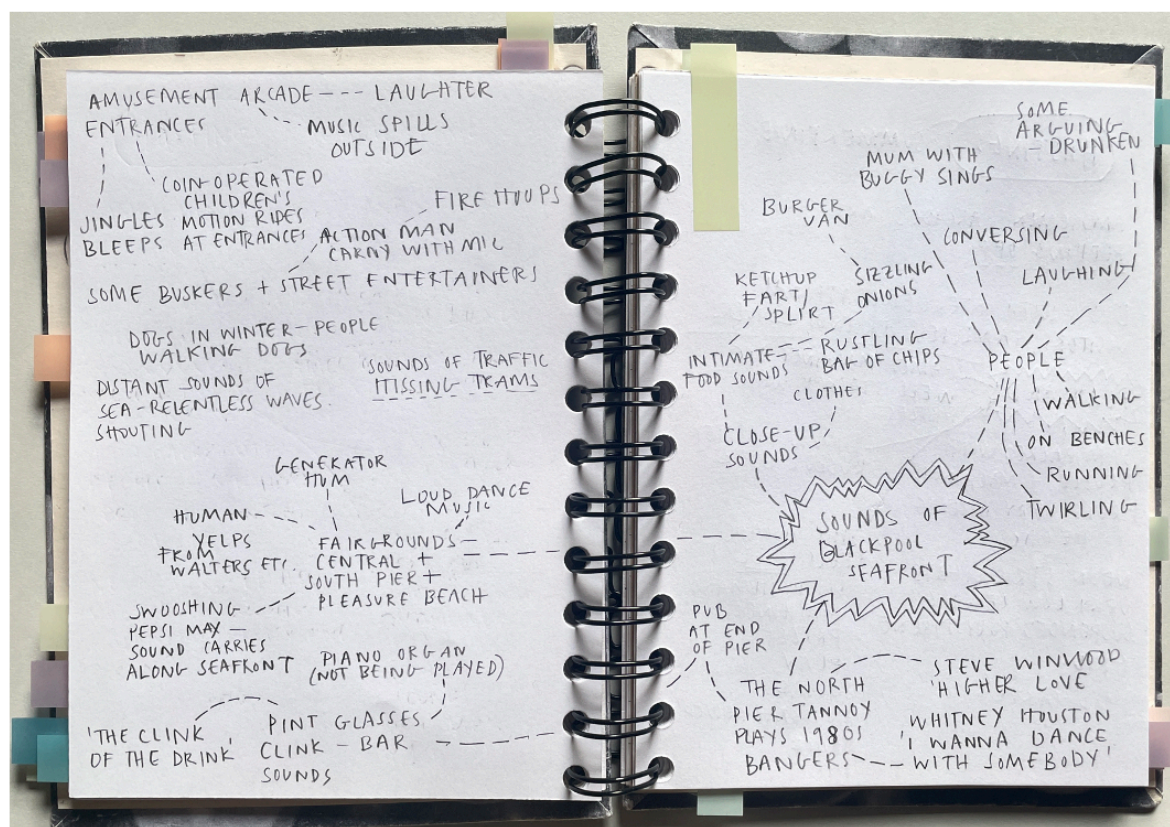
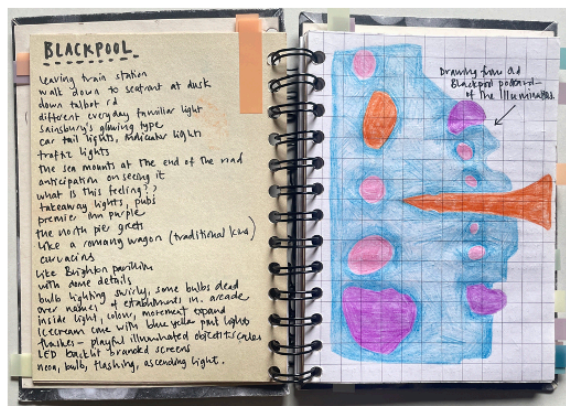
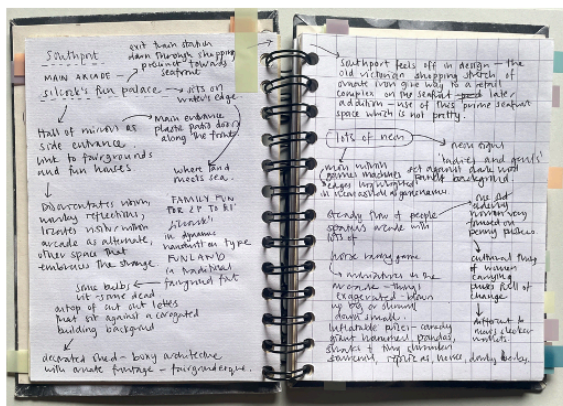
5 July 2019	Penzance	Grand Casino.
4 – 6 September 2019	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Central Pier Amusements.
6 – 7 September 2019	Margate	The Showboat, The Flamingo, Down the Coast, Tivoli Amusements, Dreamland Arcade.
6 August 2020	Whitby	Fun City, Pleasureland, Funland.
8 August 2020	Scarborough	Coney Island, Silver Dollar, Taylor Made Fun, Olympia Leisure, Gillys.
4 – 6 September 2019	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Central Pier Amusements.
19 – 25 July 2021	Blackpool	Coral Island, Funland, Silcock's Fun Palace, Golden Mile Amusements, Blackpool North Pier Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Happy Dayz, Central Pier Amusements, Lucky Star Family Amusements.
24 July 2021	Fleetwood	Harbour Lights Amusements
30 June 2023	South Shields	F Newsome and Son, Quasar Amusements, The Dune Amusements, Ocean Beach.
5 July 2023	Seahouses	Seahouses Amusements.
25 July 2023	Hastings	Flamingo Amusements, Playland Amusements, Coastal Amusements.
26 July 2023	Eastbourne	Eastbourne Pier Amusements, Lion's Arcade, Family Amusements.
11 August 2023	Blackpool	Blackpool Amusements, Blackpool Central Pier Amusements, Coral Island, Funland, Golden Mile Amusements, Happy Dayz.

Appendix B: Sample research fieldnotes



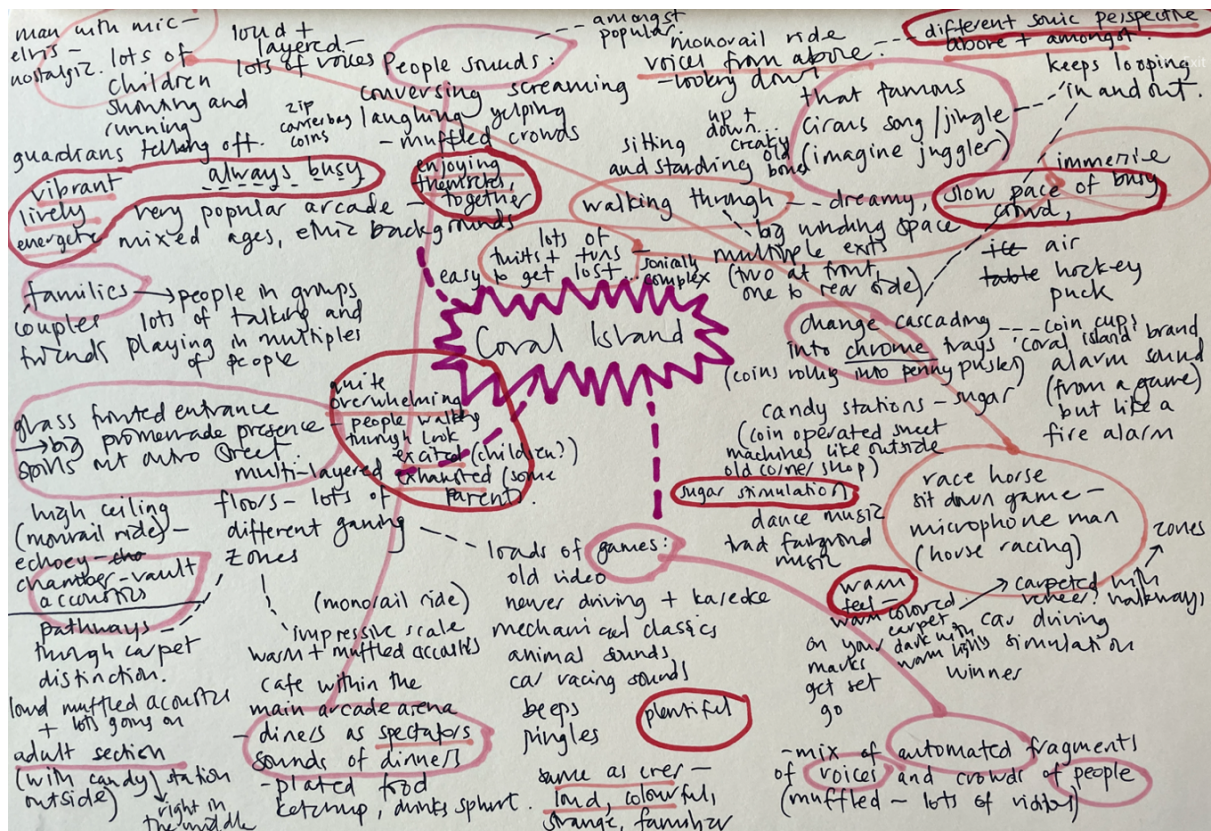


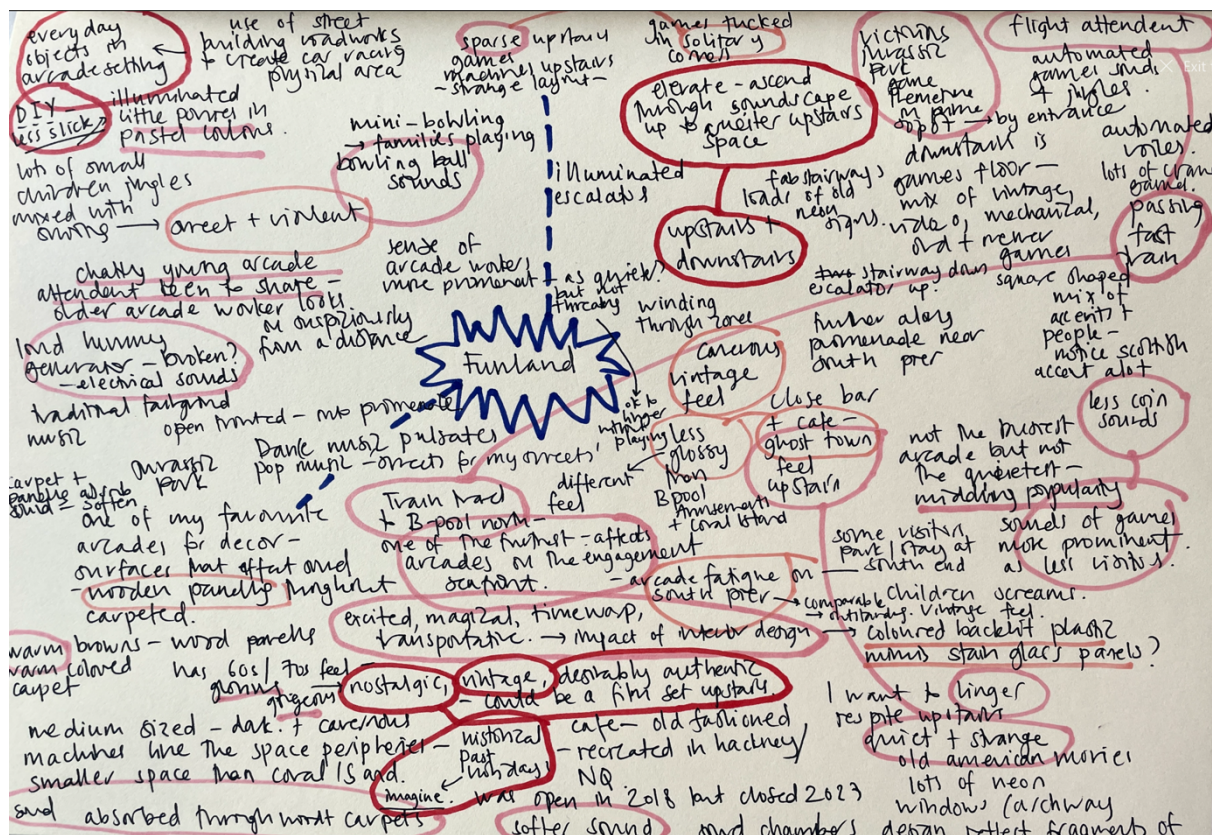






Sound chapter case study arcades research fieldnotes: Coral Island, Happy Dayz, Funland.





Instagram posts as in-situ research fieldnotes of photo and text. Author's own.



marthalineham Been thinking about the mundanity of coins in an increasingly contactless society. The smell of 2ps and 10ps. The sounds of coins, when you drop them or rummage through them. The weight of them in your pocket and the way they heat up when held in your hand. How they age and travel and circulate. Encounters with vending machines and charity boxes. Those slow collections of them in big whiskey bottles.

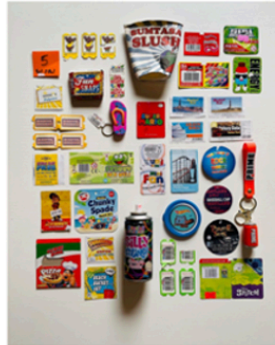


marthalineham Tucked quietly upstairs in the back of Funtan, away from the hectic seafront promenade, beyond the games machines and bowling alley, is the cafe set that London retro cultural filmmakers and bar owners will dream of. Suspended ceiling, wooden paneling and shiny orange vinyl table top combine under the warm glow of hanging lamps and ceiling lights. #amusementarcadesproject



marthalineham
The Fish Factory

marthalineham This arcade has Elvis and a Laundrette. Las Vegas all night red gives way to white and cream clean. Fantasy then domesticity. Photo from my @fishfactorys residency, exploring Cornish seaside amusement arcade culture. #amusementarcadesproject #fishfactorys #britishseaside #seasideamusements #elvisavea #laundrette



marthalineham

marthalineham Blackpool litter picks. Using these as cues for place writing interludes in my PhD - The (Amusement) Arcades Project. Litter picking can be a way to connect to your surroundings, find out about people, imagine scenarios, and do a little bit for the environment in the process. Thanks to @blanckmag for joining me in picking stuff up off the floor in BP last week. 🍷



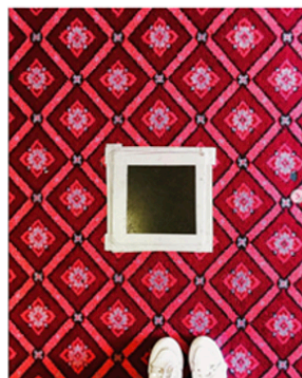
marthalineham
Blackpool

marthalineham I am using photography as a process of discovery and creative thinking in my research. In this photo, I noticed the window sill inside the left window, which has ornaments and what look like birthday cards on it. This made me think about the everydayness of seaside resorts to those that live there. I like how the Amusements sign points towards this banal window scene. Maybe the person or people who live there are a right hoot. Perhaps I will write a story about someone who lives above an ice cream shop or amusement arcade. #blackpool #leisurespace #amusementarcadesproject #amusements #icecreamshop #everydaylife



marthalineham

marthalineham Amusement arcade carpets and dusty old boots from the North East coast. Featuring Pleasureland, Fun City, Silver Dollar, Coney Island, Funtan, Gillys, Olympe and Henry Funtan. Gaffer and hazard tape directional signs create finery one way system for covid social distancing. Sanitiser and vaccination info taken in entry. Once inside no-one watching and usual movement and play continues. #amusementarcadesproject #amusementarcade #britishseaside #visualculture #carpetlove #northeastcoast #seasidesurfaces



marthalineham

marthalineham The Instagram phenomenon of the 'shoe pic' can operate as an image type that connects body to place. A visual sort of 'I was here'. From surface beneath, through grounded feet, up into lurching body. We can think about relationships between people and place through surface. I am drawn to the colour, textures and inscription in surfaces around me. Close at foot, the seaside resort is a myriad of mundane and extraordinary surfaces. #carpetlove #britishseaside #visualculture #shoedandand #seasidesurfaces #amusementarcadesproject



marthallineham
Blackpool

marthallineham Into the mystic. Romany Gypsies contribute to the cultural heritage and contemporary landscape of Blackpool. The Petulengros have been predicting the future of holidaymakers here for over 40 years. #blackpool #lightresearch #illumination #romanygypsies #fortuneteller #coastalheritage #britishseaside #clairvoyance



marthallineham
Blackpool

marthallineham Jax Bingo at Happy Days. Bingo caller with regional accent and microphone reverbs and bingo lingo. Two little ducks. Knock at the door. In a state. Doctor's orders. Logo eleven. Well stacked prize counter glistening with toys, souvenirs, gag gifts, domestic appliances. Lingering use of hazard tape from Covid in persistent directional arrows. #seaside #blackpool #bingo #amusementarcadesproject #lightresearch #illumination #romanygypsies #fortuneteller #coastalheritage #britishseaside #clairvoyance



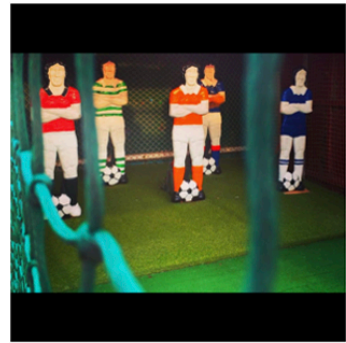
marthallineham
Blackpool

marthallineham #seaside #blackpool #amusementarcadesproject #lightresearch #illumination #romanygypsies #fortuneteller #coastalheritage #britishseaside #clairvoyance



marthallineham

marthallineham Stag (carefully) inside for the ultimate ride! #amusementarcadesproject #amusementarcades #lightresearch #illumination #romanygypsies #fortuneteller #coastalheritage #britishseaside #clairvoyance



marthallineham

marthallineham All the footballers stand still. Football game on Blackpool South Pier. One from the archive. Astro turf. Figures reminiscent of table football figures. #blackpool #seaside #amusementarcadesproject #lightresearch #illumination #romanygypsies #fortuneteller #coastalheritage #britishseaside #clairvoyance



marthallineham
Merga, Kent

marthallineham Neon #dreamland #illumination #neon #lightresearch #amusementarcadesproject #lightresearch #illumination #romanygypsies #fortuneteller #coastalheritage #britishseaside #clairvoyance



marthallineham
St Ives, Cornwall

marthallineham #horbour Amusements for beautiful old games and change machines and wood paneling - a contrast in interiors to the white huffed steeliness of late St Ives. #blackpool #seaside #amusementarcadesproject #lightresearch #illumination #romanygypsies #fortuneteller #coastalheritage #britishseaside #clairvoyance

End page.