

## **ALISTAIR OLDHAM : WRECKED ON THE INTERTIDAL ZONE**

Over the summers of 2015-2016, I have been documenting a multi-layered investigative arts project called “Wrecked on the Intertidal Zone”. The project explores the changing ecology, society and industry of the Thames Estuary that feeds into London, and is funded by the Arts Council, the Wellcome Trust and Arts Catalyst.

In order to decide how best to represent the project, we rejected the idea of a conventional narrative film and instead set out to make a gallery of shorter films, that together could make a more effective representation of the disparate elements of the project, as well as reflecting the amorphous nature of the Thames Estuary itself.



The resulting gallery of short films shows some of the different activities of the project and explores the thinking behind it, such as digging a twelve ton forty foot cockle fishing boat out of the mud and turning it into an anti-monument (The Graveyard for Lost Species), foraging for food, catching brown shrimp, exploring Canvey Island and the Hadleigh Ray, writing an Epitaph of the Common Mud, running citizen science workshops, interviewing local author and historian Rachel Lichtenstein, as well as project collaborators YOHA and the Critical Art Ensemble.

In terms of research, the project explores how to best document a multi-layered investigative arts project, using Klynt software to build a non-linear narrative around all of the project’s different activities. The process of production has also opened up innovative approaches, such as exploring how to use GoPro cameras as technical objects in a post-human environment, as well as exploring the central themes of the environmental degradation of the Thames Estuary, the changing relationship of place and community, and the thinking behind the creation of an anti-monument.

The work has been developed with individual partners from Goldsmiths College, the RCA, St Mary’s London and particularly also with former UWE Filmmaking students, Jim Smith and Zander Mavor of Bracken Films. Completed in June 2017, films have already been shown or selected for screening at Arts Catalyst (Kings Cross, London), the Focal Gallery (Southend, Essex University), Ostrava Environmental Film Festival (Czech Republic), at the Corssroads of Art & Science conference (at the Hermitage in St Petersburg), and the Voices from the Waters film festival in Bangalore, India.