

## [Experimental Poetics]

### TITLE:

Diving to *The Cinema Beneath the Lake*: a novel as immersive synthetic-magical exploration of the surrealist prose of Claude Cahun, Ithell Colquhoun and Leonora Carrington.

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This Practice-led PhD explores a range of meanings and functions of mimicry as they are taken up in the prose work of Claude Cahun, Ithell Colquhoun and Leonora Carrington. Significantly, it seeks to make connections between methods of mimicry which may function simultaneously as social power-mechanisms and as forms of embodied self-exploration leading to psychic-emotional transformation.

Its investigation takes the form of a contemporary surrealist novel composed by means of creative mimicry as evolutionary process; including the adoption of the surrealist principle of objective chance as a framework of constraint in both creative and critical spheres of the work. Beginning in automatism, the work is interspersed more frequently with other combinations of chance assemblage and reaches its final iteration through an increasingly magical manipulation of its materials.

In allowing the project to be determined by the exigencies of surrealist method, I give my own traumatic experiences permission to inform the work. The embodied nature of its understanding of the value-set of mimicry thus brings with it an opportunity to reflect on its importance not only as a creative strategy but as providing an initiatory function within the development of self-knowledge and recovery from psychic trauma.

Aspiring to reflect on mimicry as method within the work of these Surrealist women, with consideration of key texts such as *Disavowals* (Cahun), *I Saw Water* (Colquhoun) and *The Stone Door* (Carrington), this paper comprises a critical discussion alongside a selection of contextualised sequences from the novel itself.

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