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Tree People

Explorations of the use of music and sound in documentary film have formed a major part of my research for several years. The focus has generally been to produce films that rejected the presentation of ‘facts’ and ‘events’ to, as Lindsay Anderson puts it, ‘get beyond pure naturalism into poetry’, in order to search out ‘larger implications than the surface realities may suggest’. John Corner’s idea of ‘connecting knowing to feeling and hearing to viewing’ has been crucial and the work carried out thus far has worked on the premise that it is documentary film *sound* that has the greatest power to allow these ‘feelings to become condensed upon objects, bodies and places, [something] *central to the documentary as an aesthetic project*’.

This has resulted in a body of work that has drawn on strategies to produce audio-visual presentations quite far removed from mainstream documentary production. The research inherent in my latest project, *Tree People* (2014), a 45 minute film about a local tree planting group in the Colne Valley, West Yorkshire, seeks to utilize some of these same methods and to retain the impressionistic approach whilst at the same time consciously attempting to engage a wider audience with more familiar documentary techniques such as a greater emphasis on storytelling. The most aesthetically driven aspect will be in the creative manipulation of diegetic and other sound sources (sometimes using software tools like MAX and Jitter) whilst the music composed for the film (for piano and brass band) will occupy a middle ground between this and the image editing, which will be treated in a more conventional way. Thus the process of *de-familiarisation* will be mitigated by the *familiar*.

My presentation will concentrate on a five-minute section of the film to elucidate the concerns and practices alluded to above.