

Citation City

This new live a/v performance is inspired by
The Arcades Project by Walter Benjamin
Citation City collages, edits and recombines
300+ major feature films either filmed or set in London.
Creating a story within a story,
of the film world, living it's life,
through extraordinary times of change...

Citation City is a time-travelling voyage through one city, assembled from hundreds of movie clips and inspired by the wanderings of Walter Benjamin.

A patchwork of over 300 features either filmed or set in London, Citation City combines multiple narratives to create the story of one city in a period of enormous change. Pieced together by audiovisual artist Vicki Bennett (aka People Like Us), this beguiling, labyrinthine work takes its cue from Benjamin's Arcades Project, which was an ambitious attempt to map out Paris in fragments, which was cut short by the author's death in 1940.

Citation City sources, collages and edits using 300 preexisting feature films where content is either filmed or set in London - to see what happens when these multiple narratives are combined... what will the story tell us that one story alone could never tell?

This pdf is intended as a companion to the audiovisual work, giving examples of the process one might undertake to create new work when sourcing from a large media database. This particular example relates to moving image and musical composition, but the methods can translate to other platforms that use composition, directing, editing, creative narratives and story telling.

peoplelikeus.org/citationcity



Supported using public funding by
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Regardless of which medium we may work with, we have to find a way to gather our thoughts together onto one concentrated palette where they are all available to use. Whether writing, composing or editing, there comes a stage where memory may no longer serve us alone. This is the case with a lot of my large-scale collage a/v projects. Below here are some examples of how I process this information.

The first thing is to choose a subject or idea that you want to explore. In the case of Citation City it is finding threads within and relationship between feature films shot or set in London. At the beginning I needed to search for source material. At first, I relied on memory alone, and that of friends - this helped start the list. A Google search brought up articles and forums on film, which then lead to specialist movie sites. The wonderful thing about the internet is whatever the search, someone has already been looking before you, and the main job is to find the 5% of content out there that is thorough and well informed, AND to try and keep your mind intact in the process (this is the internet after all). I found two sites that exhaustively research and locate where scenes in movies are shot and some even show you what they look like now: reelstreets.com and movie-locations.com

LONDON A-B LONDON C-D LONDON E-G LONDON H-L LONDON M-N LONDON O-Q LONDON R-S LONDON T-Z SOUTH EAST A-D SOUTH EAST E-L SOUTH EAST M-Q SOUTH EAST R-Z SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS NORTH SCOTLAND WALES IRELAND ITALY FRANCE SPAIN N. AMERICA CARIBBEAN REST OF THE WORLD UNIDENTIFIED			
Film/ Movie locations in LONDON A-B			
Titles highlighted in red below, link to more information and all the stills and 'now' shots we have for the film. Titles in green are awaiting uploading. Titles in black (well, dark grey actually) are our "wants" list. Have you got a copy of any of them? Will you swap, sell or give it to us for our continued research into film locations?			
FILM / MOVIE TITLE	DATE	STAR(S)	FILM / MOVIE LOCATION
Account Rendered	1957	Griffith Jones, Ursula Howells, Honor Blackman	London, Middlesex
Admirable Crichton, The	1957	Kenneth More, Sally Ann Howes, Diane Cilento, Cecil Parker, Martita Hunt, Jack Watling, Peter Graves	Bermuda, London, England
Adventures of a Plumber's Mate	1978	Christopher Neil, Arthur Mullard, Anna Quayle, Stephen Lewis, Nina West	Maida Vale, Wormwood Scrubbs and White City London
Adventures of a Private Eye	1977	Christopher Neil, Suzy Kendall, Harry H Corbett, Diana Dors, Fred Emney, Liz Frazer, Irene Handl, Ian Lavender, Jon Pertwee, Adrienne Posta, William Rushton	North London and West Byfleet, Essex.
Adventures of a Taxi Driver	1976	Barry Evans	London
Against The Wind	1947	Robert Beatty, Simone Signoret, Jack Warner, Gordon Jackson, Paul Dupuis, Gisele Preville, John Slater	London, Belgium
Alf Garnett Saga, The	1972	Warren Mitchell, Dandy Nichols, Paul Angelis, Adrienne Posta, John Le Mesurier, Roy Kinnear, Joan Sims, Kenny Lynch,	Hemel Hempstead, London

reelstreets.com

If you are stuck for an idea, that's not a problem... ideas sometimes limit you to your old ways anyway. Being "process led", means you decide along the way in a sort of "collaboration" with what you find on your journey, it's rather like going for a walk. Instead of having an "idea" you think of exploring something that inspires you, and start finding more information about it on forums or a search engine, in an archive or library. Using a thesaurus is perfect for finding new relationships between subjects. This process led method can open you up to new ways of creating that are far more playful and experimental rather than worrying from the start that you won't have a masterpiece. Having an idea isn't something supernatural and spectacular, it's just the result of making interesting connections, and in turn you should not worry about originality since it is only through these connections that we get the idea in the first place.

The wonder of working with collage in any medium material is generally available to you, and that juxtaposition of material can spark new ideas, much the same way as a conversation can. When editing and collaging you are in a way "collaborating" with this selected material in the sense that it already contains it's own history and "life", and it then goes on to have multiple contexts once you combine material.

The next stage is to seek out source material to edit. For CC I spent 4 months viewing 100s of fictional feature-length movies, choosing what was interesting along the way, throwing to one side what was not. With movie files you can open them in QuickTime 7 and trim movie selections within, and crop and save just that snippet. Then you name them one by one, put them in a folder, and move on. I watched 3 movies a day and kept going until I felt that my Google/forum results had brought me a fairly large comprehensive list of the subject I was examining. Bear in mind that when dealing with a large subject you may find the list is endless, that the more you look the more you find - you might just stop when you think you have enough. At this stage, for each movie snippet I typed descriptions into a text document.

Name	Date Modified
James Bond Live Another Day (2002) [1080p]	12 August 2014 13:09
James Bond The World Is Not Enough (1999) [1080p]	Yesterday, 15:16
Kaleidoscope 1966.DVDrip.XviD-LIBK [NO-RAR] - [www.torrentday.com]	3 December 2014 13:09
Limelight (1952) Charles Chaplin BDRip 720p HighCode-PHD	10 July 2014 22:09
London (1994) dir. Patrick Keiller nar. by Paul Scofield	2 January 2015 17:14
DS_Store	10 July 2014 22:09
London (Patrick Keiller)_1.mov	30 September 2014 19:52
London (Patrick Keiller)_2.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_3.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_4.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_5.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_6.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_7.mov	30 September 2014 19:22
London (Patrick Keiller)_8.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_9.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_10-walterbenjamin.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_11.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_12.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_13.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_14.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_15.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_16.mov	30 September 2014 19:57
London (Patrick Keiller)_17.mov	30 September 2014 20:14
London (Patrick Keiller)_18.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
London (Patrick Keiller)_19.mov	30 September 2014 20:37
Screen shot 2014-10-07 at 11:09:08	7 October 2014 11:09
Screen shot 2014-10-07 at 11:21:17	7 October 2014 11:21
Screen shot 2014-10-07 at 13:39:27	7 October 2014 13:39
Screen shot London Keiller 1	22 July 2014 13:01
Screen shot London Keiller 2	22 July 2014 13:06
Screen shot London Keiller 3	22 July 2014 13:08
Screen shot London Keiller 4	22 July 2014 13:10
Screen shot London Keiller 5	22 July 2014 13:12
Screen shot London Keiller 6	22 July 2014 14:02
Screen shot London Keiller 7	22 July 2014 14:07
Man In The Attic Presented by MoviePowder_converted	10 July 2014 22:27
Mars Attacks (1996) [1080p]	12 August 2014 15:10
Mary Poppins.1964.1080p.BluRay.x264.anoXmous	7 December 2014 10:22
Match Point (2005) BRRip 720p x264 AAC [VX] [P2PDL]	10 July 2014 22:27
Meteor 1979.DVDrip.x264-NoRBT	10 July 2014 22:26
Midnight Lace (1960) [1080p]	16 October 2014 12:47
Morgan A Suitable Case for Treatment (1966) Eng	22 July 2014 17:48
Mr Benn - The Complete Series (DVD rip)	7 October 2014 20:35
Night and the City.1950.1080p.BluRay.X264-AMIABLE [PublicHD]	13 October 2014 11:19
Night_Boat_Dublin	10 July 2014 22:25
Around the World in Eighty Days 1956 DVDrip Xvid S10UHE	19 June 2014 11
Assignment K (1968).converted	23 April 2014 1
Attack on the Iron Coast (Lloyd Bridges) (1968) DVDrip Oldies	30 April 2014 2
Attack the Block (2011)	30 April 2014 2
Battle of Britain (1969) 825mb 720p BRRip ZeRo	6 July 2014 12
Bedazzled - 1967 - Peter Cook Dudley Moore	6 May 2014 21
Bedknobs and Broomsticks 1971 720p	1 July 2014 17
Billion Dollar Brain (1967) Ken Russell	31 March 2014
Billy Liar 1963 720p Blu-ray X264-mfcorrea	4 July 2014 21
Bliss of Mrs. Blossom_converted	1 July 2014 18
Blow Up-Antonioni-1966-x264_OPTIMIZED	Yesterday, 13:1
Blue Ice - (1992) [DVDrip XviD-MP3], converted	30 April 2014 1
Brannigan (1975) John Wayne Eng [SP.FR subs	7 July 2014 18
Breaking Glass 1980 (Hazel O'Connor)_converted	11 March 2014
Bronco Bullfrog.1969.1080p.BluRay.x264-TITANS	17 March 2014
Bunny Lake Is Missing.1965.DVDrip.x264-NoRBT	17 March 2014
Buster - 1986 - Phil Collins & Julie Walters - DvdRip	Today, 19:52
Callan (1974)	13 June 2014 11
Captain Scarlet disc 1	24 April 2014 1
Casino Royale 1967 1080p BDRip H264 AAC - KINGDOM	1 July 2014 18
Castaway	8 April 2014 16
Children of Men (2006) [1080p]	2 July 2014 11
Children of the Damned_converted	7 July 2014 22
Citation-City-filmst1 v7.doc	30 April 2014 1
Cliff Richard - Summer Holiday (1963 PAL DVD)[En Subs(SingAlong)]	18 June 2014 11
Cliff Richard - The Young Ones (1961 PAL DVD)[En Subs(SingAlong)]	1 May 2014 12
Closed Circuit	4 July 2014 16
Creep 2004 720p HDTV x264 AAC-KINGDOM	15 April 2014 1
Daleks Invasion.Earth.2150.A.D.1966.1080p.BluRay.x264-SONDO [PublicHD]	29 April 2014 1
Danger Mouse.S01.S40p.DVDrip.DivX.MP3	17 June 2014 11
Danger.Mouse.S02.S40p.DVDrip.DivX.MP3	17 June 2014 11
Danger.Mouse.S06.S40p.DVDrip.DivX.MP3	17 June 2014 11
Danger.Mouse.S10.S40p.DVDrip.DivX.MP3	1 July 2014 18
darling	11 June 2014 11
Das Phantom von Soho (1964)	27 November 21
Day of the Triffids - 2009	30 April 2014 1
Defence Of The Realm.1985-INTERNAL.DVDrip.XviD-MULTIPLY[arbg]	18 June 2014 2
Donnan Gray DVDrip Xvid-MerryChristmas [www.torrentfwe.com]	9 April 2014 15
Dr Jekyll And Sister Hyde.1971 [DVDrip.XviD-miguel] [Ekipa ToT]	4 June 2014 18
Dr Who Dalek Invasion Of Earth 1964	2 July 2014 12
Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)	2 July 2014 12
Dracula AD 1972 DvdRip FimPrates [Subs Fin Sive Eng Mutr]	31 March 2014
Duffer (1971)	12 June 2014 1
Eye of the Needle.1981.HDTV.720p.H264	4 June 2014 14
F For Fake	9 April 2014 13
Fahrenheit 451 (1966)	18 June 2014 11
Francisco Four 1-2 Duology 2005 2007 BluRay 720p x264 aac multibus Jbr	2 July 2014 15
Fires Were Started 1943 720p BluRay X264 DD 5.1 - KESH	22 April 2014 1
Flood	9 April 2014 20
Flushed Away(2006)DvDrip.AC3[Eng]-aXxo	22 April 2014 1
Frenzy (1972)	2 July 2014 15
From Hell (2001)	8 April 2014 18
Georgy Girl	5 June 2014 17
Get Carter	Today, 19:01
Gideon of Scotland Yard	

Darling (1965).4.mov: man drops fish in matchbox over **albert** bridge,
 Das Phantom von Soho 1.mov: **docker** walks in fog in darkened alley, suspicious of being followed, man follows in fog, footsteps
 Das Phantom von Soho 2.mov: police cars and bells **arrive**, towards camera in dark, abstract of flashing lights close up
 The Day of the Triffids - edit 1.mov: man watches **bbc** breaking news showing view from top of London Eye and fire in sky phenomenon, time-lapse of people crossing millennium bridge towards **st Paul's**, time-lapse of big ben (9.10pm), time-lapse London Eye, palm house Kew, city of London and aerial sun phenomenon, blindfolded man, global **tv** sun phenomenon, palm house, **kew**, solar light blast blinds everyone, **tv** station sees the flare worldwide, all goes to static on screens, "12.03, that was the time when the world went dark", everyone goes blind, plane starts crashing towards London city, London at dawn, lots of smoke and clouds, empty streets deserted, movie phone no signal, Big Ben roof knocked off, Westminster bridge, time-lapse tower bridge, tower bridge and **triffids**,
 The Day of the Triffids - edit 2.mov: aerial of Thames in smoke and ruin, bridges, **triffids** walking through fog and wooded area, parliament, destroyed big ben, smoke, fire,
 Defence.of.the.Realm.2.mov: man walks down street with parliament in the background,
 Defence.of.the.Realm.3.mov: pan of text in newspaper close up
 Defence.of.the.Realm.4.mov: **library** darkened room, scouring more newspapers, coughs and tears page out of paper
 Defence.of.the.Realm.6.mov: reel to reel tape recording of phone call, man in bath listens to radio while in bath - repeats of "getting a copy out is another" on Dictaphone,
 Defence.of.the.Realm.7.mov: record switchers itself off and flat blows up, printing press printing papers on mass, telex printer prints news of nuclear accident, multiple newspaper covers from around the world
 Dorian.Gray.mov: man pursued by gunman runs down the steps into the underground Farringdon in rain, down circular windy steps, pursued down corridor and onto the railway track, gunman gets hit by train, pan of train blur passing
 Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde 1.mov: man follows prostitute down foggy alley, policeman in foggy alley, girl gets murdered, poster about man in dark cloak, woman gets' eyes taken out, policeman blows whistle, mans lets walk in fog
 Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde 2.mov: laboratory, bubbling glass containers, **mr jekyll** does **experiments**.
 Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde 3.mov: **jekyll** checks his watch and takes notes and takes potion, **jekyll** stumbles around, sits in front of mirror grimacing, turns into a woman

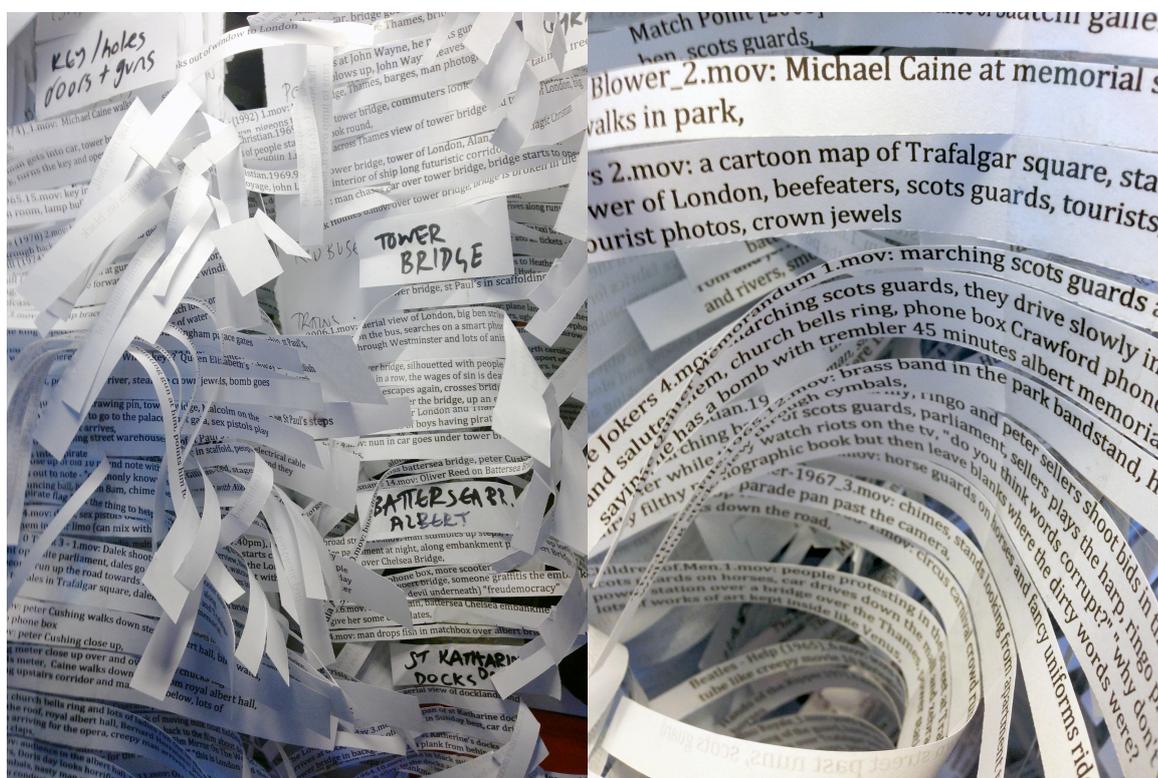
Albert Hall & Memorial
 Apocalypse, Floods, Natural Disaster, Plague, Alien Invasion
 Big Ben, Parliament, Time
 Broadcasting, Morse Code, Radio, BBC, Newspapers & Propaganda
 Big Brother, Brainwashing, Hypnosis, Insanity
 Ceremony, Tradition, Ritual, Magic
 Horror, The Occult / Unknown, Satanism, Vampirism
 Imprisonment & Evacuation
 Photography, Voyeurism, Fashion, Art Gallery & Museum
 Pollution, Fog, Smog, Smoke, Heavy industry, Docklands, Noise, Wasteland, Rubbish
 Power Stations (Battersea & Lots Road), Illumination, Power Cut / Surge, Rooftops & Chimneys
 Public Houses, Drinking, Prostitution, Crime & Gangsters, Poverty, Jack the Ripper, East End, St Paul's
 River Thames, Bridges, Thames Embankment
 Royalty, Grenadier Guards, Tower of London, The Mall
 Shadows & Silhouettes, Mirrors, Being Pursued
 Spying, Conspiracy & Intrigue, Detectives & Secret Agents, MI5/6, (New) Scotland Yard
 Supermarkets, Arcades & Malls, Mass Production & Duplication, Consumerism
 Surveillance, Tapping, Recording Technology & Storage (Domestic & Governmental)
 Tourist Icons: Telephone Boxes, Letter boxes, Routemaster Buses
 Trafalgar Square, Public Space, Pigeons, Nelson's Column
 Travel, Heathrow (London) Airport, Immigration
 Underground, Subterrain
 War, Cold, 1st & 2nd, Terrorism, Murder

The more you look the more you see - an even bigger picture, one that is made of small stories, yet there are lots of stories that not only stand alone, but overlap with one another. These threads go way beyond the subject that you may have initially chosen (in this case London), and start to telling the story, even defining what an actual "story" may be. Compare Citation City's (above) to Walter Benjamin's list of convolutes in The Arcades Project (below) in relation to 19th Century Paris. There are remarkable similarities.

A Arcades, <i>Magasins de Nouveautés</i> , Sales Clerks 31	W Fourier 620
B Fashion 62	X Marx 651
C Ancient Paris, Catacombs, Demolitions, Decline of Paris 82	Y Photography 671
D Boredom, Eternal Return 101	Z The Doll, The Automaton 693
E Haussmannization, Barricade Fighting 120	a Social Movement 698
F Iron Construction 150	b Daumier 740
G Exhibitions, Advertising, Grandville 171	c
H The Collector 203	d Literary History, Hugo 744
I The Interior, The Trace 212	e
J Baudelaire 228	f
K Dream City and Dream House, Dreams of the Future, Anthropological Nihilism, Jung 388	g The Stock Exchange, Economic History 779
L Dream House, Museum, Spa 405	h
M The Flâneur 416	i Reproduction Technology, Lithography 786
N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress 456	k The Commune 788
O Prostitution, Gambling 489	l The Seine, The Oldest Paris 796
P The Streets of Paris 516	m Idleness 800
Q Panorama 527	n
R Mirrors 537	o
S Painting, Jugendstil, Novelty 543	p Anthropological Materialism, History of Sects 807
T Modes of Lighting 562	q
U Saint-Simon, Railroads 571	r Ecole Polytechnique 818
V Conspiracies, <i>Compagnonnage</i> 603	s
	t
	u
	v
	w

So we now have a list of subjects, and footage to go with it. At this point I start thinking about the soundtrack that might go with this footage, if I am making a performance that is musical. Otherwise I import the different folders of subjects into the video editing timeline now.

The problem with working with audio and moving image in the context of using preexisting material is it's already been put together! So you are dealing with something 100% made images and 100% made music/audio. It is already composed/edited so although it is indeed a palette, this palette is limited. It is not "stock footage". So as soon as you start trying to transform and juxtapose the material to make new relationships (and this IS what we are trying to do here!) you find that you are in collaboration with what already happened - working with something that to one extent already exists, and your job is to now make it into something extra too. However, this is what makes it interesting, that we are dealing with things already familiar to the audience, so there is the bonus of the journey that material has been on up to this stage. Plus we have magic on our side - it is amazing how these snippets of image and sound really do want to speak to one another. The actors really do want to meet on the screen together in the way they might not have in real life. The singers want to sing together. You will find that with collage you get amazing synchronicities of timing and key, and since we are already working with colliding narratives we just need to bring these things together on the video and audio software timelines.



Now we have our subjects/convolutes we want to represent them musically. If we are making a soundtrack we can collect samples in the same way as film, choosing music or songs that have something in common by lyric, rhythm, mood or association/context. You can find musical content by word search (either in your own music collection or online) - by song title and lyric. By placing unrelated music side by side the context can change, the stories within may collide and compliment, contrast with or highlight the story in the moving image. If you are sourcing movie soundtracks for your audio be sure to use it transformatively, rather than because you don't have a better idea. Remember... if you are accumulating large lists of material remember that inevitably you are going to throw away 95% of it. This is the case with creating most work. Much like the main lesson of a music improviser being when to shut up rather than when to play, you have to get rid of what is irrelevant, and this is something you work out over time.

How you go about it from this point can vary enormously. Editing is something that you can learn both in a class or online tutorial so I will leave you here. If you treat editing sound and moving image together hand in hand, step-by-step, you can eventually walk the journey. Do not cop out by making the film then finding some music to throw on top or vice versa. Be thoughtful about your soundtrack. Be transformative, try to be engaging, lend another perspective, and remember that this is as much about experimentation as outputting a final product. -- Vicki Bennett (February 2015)