

Cover photograph: healing

# Research Project Proposal

poppies are red

(...to fight and not to heed the wounds)

a visual narrative of genetic connection and bodily repair expressed in abstract impressionistic form  
family reconnected

Prepared for: Falmouth Flexible MA Photography

Prepared by: Michael Turner, Student

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## SUMMARY

### Objective

My project aims to present the beauty of the bodily healing process in abstract impressionistic form for living descendants. It connects them with a major world event past. This serves to reconnect a family who are a Scottish diaspora, and serves an educational purpose. The theme of genetic connection is drawn upon in a way that translates to the wider public.

“photographic images, ...now provide most of the knowledge people have about the look of the past and the reach of the present” SONTAG, 1979: 4. This sentiment provides a reference point against which I measure my photographic project. What began as visual illustrations within the Commemorative Historical genre, saw abstractionist practice re-surface. I now create a view on the world through DNA and bodily connection and healing. Related individuals, including the author, from the present, bridge across time to connect with world events and specific others over 100 years ago. The biology of mitochondria reaches across all life to the elements of cells that developed long before complex life began and this is leveraged in making maternal line connections to the past.

Brothers, my great grand uncle's, on my father's side, were wounded over many many battles until finally killed, fighting for Britain in a Highland Regiment.



figure 1: honours



figure 2: propaganda

I intend evolve and refine visual art of bodily repair processes, to create many bridges for family individuals across a century.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mitochondrial DNA and X chromosome, connection exists for some relations. I assess this makes them direct physical manifestations of people past. The biology is summarised and depicted in a later section.

My photographic project shifted given that as a male descendant and if I am injured and repair, I have no mitochondrial nor X nor Y-chromosome connection with the Cosh family. But my father has direct connection and my sisters have in some probability.

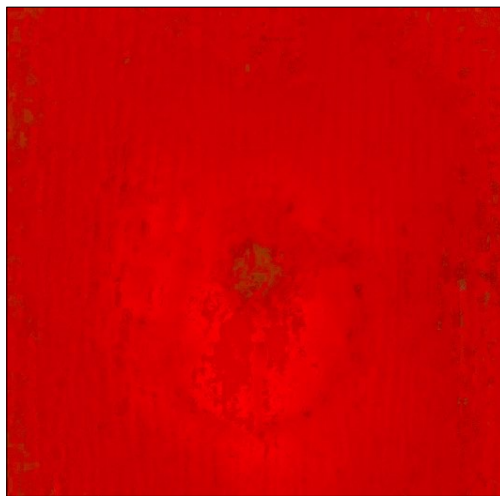


figure 3: healing (from cover)

In my maternal line, I now arrive at male descendants in the King's Own Scottish Borderers, to whom I have a direct mitochondrial relation. They fought, were injured or wounded, healed and returned to the fight. Their personal stories emerge in newspaper reports.

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figure 4: execution

When Ruskin College Oxford commissioned *Shot at Dawn*, Mathews, 2014, this was planned to mark the beginning of a 100 year commemoration starting in 2014. The theme may be taken as cowardice. All have been officially pardoned.

The narrative for my project began in the 20th century, and follows an ancestral timeline with a theme of unselfish acts or bravery. Descendants injury and repair represents an unorthodox yet powerful physical connection with the past. The work is seen to re-establish a strong cultural identity.

It is important to also contextualise. It is through story, that I present something for the mind, something for the emotions.

Place and artefacts need to feature in the project, mainly as straight, close-up photographs. They will draw in audience.

Photographs will use concepts of imaginings to represent thoughts of home. These delicately balance with the abstract impressionism. Location work drives motivation and supports narrative and thus consumption.

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Story content will demand pictures of family at home in the main, for minor injury and bruising to be captured to then be translated into the abstract. Already a colour theme has emerged that supports the title, "poppies are red"

Revisits will be made to Scotland for the imagery of imaginings of home - a soldier perspective from the trench.

There will be a visit to Liverpool as a port of arrival and onward transit to the place of war.

There will be an exploratory visit to France and Flanders locations for matching mapped troop positions including the taking of Hill 50 in order to register the actual places of actions on the ground in preparation for a further longer visit.

Assessment will be made as to the need for and feasibility (cost mainly) of returning on multiple visits to France and Flanders to build stock images for the project.

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## ETHICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

As injury is present as a theme, it must be stressed that such injuries are day-to-day occurrences and in no way deliberate in their creation. The involvement of subjects would be entirely voluntary.

This is a personal family story being shared. In no way is any attempt made to argue creationism or otherwise.



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### **Rachel Howard: Repetition is Truth – Via Dolorosa**

21 FEB 2018 – 28 MAY 2018

figure 5: repetition

There is a visual comparison from my earlier abstractions, to the paintings of Rachel Howard but beyond this her work focuses on repetition. Howard expresses an ongoing timeline doubting humanity will ever learn.

My story timeline is different in nature to the work of Matthews in *Shot at Dawn* and again in comparison to Howard with the ongoing repetition theme. My project validity persists only through mitochondria after generational memory is lost.

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## Ian Walker

SURREALISM DOCUMENTARY VARIOUS ARTISTS VISUAL CULTURE PHOTOWORKS UNCOLLECTED CONTACT

### ABOUT

This is the website of Ian Walker, photographic historian, photographer, critic, curator and previously Professor of Photography at Newport in South Wales.

It is not the website of Ian Walker the goalkeeper, Ian Walker the yachtsman, Ian Walker the American playwright nor Ian Walker the Scottish singer. (There are many others, including several photographers, all worthy possessors of the same name.)

This website brings together many of the texts that this Ian Walker has written and the photographs he has taken over the past forty years. There are also reviews, clippings, installation photos, video extracts and links to other websites.

As well as an archive of published or exhibited material, this website will also host new work, both written and photographic. These additions will be posted here on a regular basis.

Ian Walker now lives mainly in London where his practice is based at Spitalfields Studios: [www.spitalfieldsstudios.com](http://www.spitalfieldsstudios.com).

He is a member of AICA (the International Association of Art Critics) and can also be contacted via the AICA website at [www.aicauk.org](http://www.aicauk.org).

[Curriculum Vitae](#)



figure 6: respected critic

I refer to the writings and projects of Ian Walker art critic in regards to surrealism. Walker explains concepts of layering and how not all surrealism is good or even surreal in a true sense. This will temper my work when seeking authenticity.

Other general theories no doubt apply around camera framing and transportation in time.

The link below, is for a BBC commissioned documentary. It is very futuristic, yet presents current progress in cell analysis. The role of mitochondria covered is relevant background to this project.

[www.dailymotion.com/video/x4fjy56](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4fjy56)

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## SKILLS REQUIRED

All of this work is within my current skill set and practice. Additional bolstering of self-taught abstract techniques through years of experimentation will now be formalised by study of art theory, beginning with a visual communications course starting in September at Falmouth University.

I have to evolve my abstracts to the next level. An additional level of subtleness is obtained by investing time in each image whilst applying controls on image selection and quality.

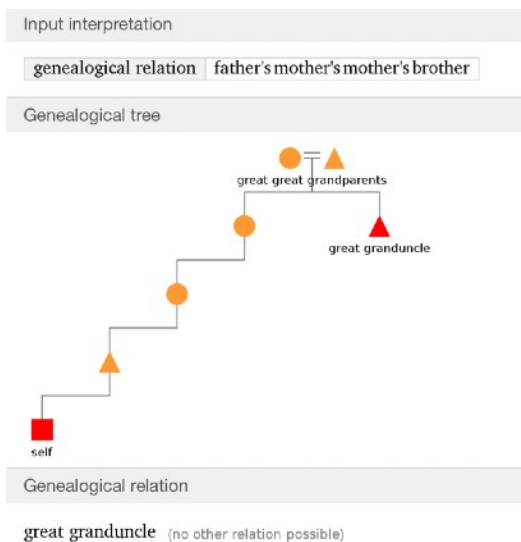
I will revisit colour theory and colour grading to drive consistency in editing the body of work.

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# MITOCHONDRIAL DIRECT RELATIONSHIP

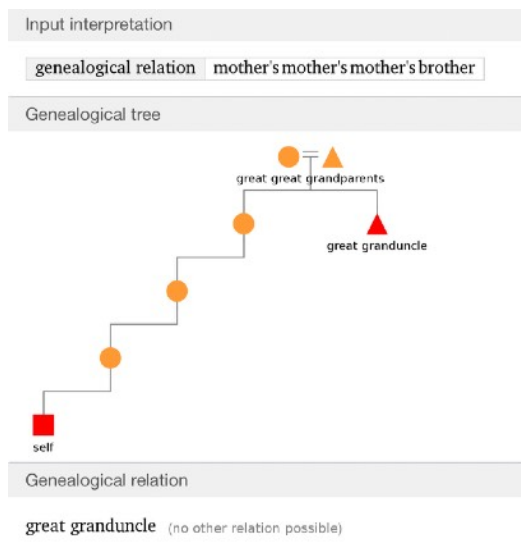
From self to great grand uncle, the direct mitochondrial connection to self as a male descendant, is through the maternal line. This is the case in the right hand diagram. Orange circles are for female. This relation does not exist for self as male in the left-hand diagram. There it is my own father who is the living descendant connected by mitochondria, and my sisters who retain a 1/16 probability of shared X chromosome. For my sisters X chromosome is selected 50:50 by chance from mother or father at each generation. This switches the narrative for my work between Black Watch (Highland Regiment) and King's Own Scottish Borderers. The latter is the new new element.



Relationship properties

	great granduncle
difference in generations	3
generations to common ancestor	4
blood relationship fraction	$\frac{1}{32} = 3.125\%$
degree of kinship	5
canon degree	4
collateral degree	1
probability for shared X chromosome (self is male)	0
probability for shared X chromosome (self is female)	$\frac{1}{16}$
probability for shared Y chromosome	0
probability for shared mitochondrial DNA	0

figure 7: male zero mitochondrial relation



Relationship properties

	great granduncle
difference in generations	3
generations to common ancestor	4
blood relationship fraction	$\frac{1}{32} = 3.125\%$
degree of kinship	5
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collateral degree	1
probability for shared X chromosome	$\frac{1}{16}$
probability for shared Y chromosome	0
probability for shared mitochondrial DNA	1

figure 8: male full mitochondrial relation

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## INTENDED AUDIENCE

Clearly the intended audience is immediate family, and as the direct genetic path extends to those who migrated to Buffalo New York state at the beginning of the 20th century, there is the possibility of reaching out to them. Tentative interest has been expressed in the written narrative by the Black Watch (Highland Regiment) Association Museum for educational purposes.

Finally, there may be interest from the general public if the connection to genetics is embraced in a manner that conveys to them how they may apply this themselves to make their own lives more connected with past events.

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# PROGRAMME, PROGRESS TO DATE AND BUDGET

This is the pre-existing Falmouth Flexible MA Project Plan, I have created and have now amended for this proposal by the addition of location shoot and other visit dates.

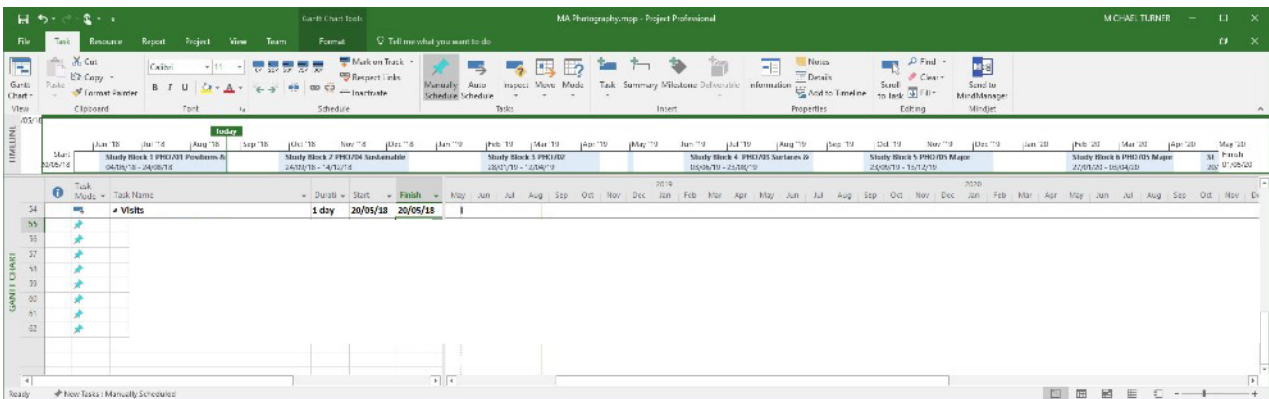


figure 9: project schedule

## Progress to Date

The major progress comes only recently from connecting DNA analysis with a pre-existing research narrative already of publishable standard. DNA analysis does drive this narrative onto the maternal line.

Photographic visits have been made to a land war exhibition, Duxford, and to the Castle Museum of the Black Watch Association, Perth. Photographs have recently been made of a series of minor injuries then first attempts made at abstraction. This is becoming quite progressive I feel.

A 2017 shoot in Scotland is out of scope, not being within the course term dates. For now I have budgeted to re-photograph. Family audience reaction indicates the importance of it to them so far. This may change.

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## Budget

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost

Self funding at present.

figure 10: rolled up costs

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

figure 1: honours, author

figure 2: propaganda, author

figure 3 and cover: healing, author

figure 4: execution, Chloe Dewe Mathews, Shot at Dawn website 2018

figure 5: repetition, Rachel Howard, Newport Street Gallery website 2018

figure 6: respected critic, Ian Walker, Ian Walkers website, 2018

figure 7: male zero mitochondrial relation, wolfram alpha website 2018

figure 8: figure 8: male full mitochondrial relation, wolfram alpha website 2018

figure 9: project schedule, author

figure 10: rolled up costs, author

BBC commissioned documentary, Our Secret Universe: The Secret Life of The Cell, website

CAMPBELL Neil A et al Biology, Eight Edition, Pearson International 2008

SONTAG Susan, On Photography, Penguin Books, 1979

WALKER Ian, In Conversation with Ian Walker, Week 10 Falmouth Flexible on Canvas, 2018

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## RISK ANALYSIS

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