

PANIC! Bursaries
Mathew Wayne Parkin, *swamps* (2022)
Video Transcription

Timestamps are given.

Descriptions are written in standard text.

Audio & sounds are in square brackets.

Film overview:

SWAMPS explores public sex and its intersection with disability; the instructions from Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson's film SWAMP (1969); and how bats see and navigate. The screen is split into three sections, or 'swamps'. The vertical format of each section suggests mobile phone footage, a view which can constrict and obscure. Tension builds in the audio, where we hear drones with varying pitches and frequencies underneath speech taken from someone speaking about their experience of sex work.

CN: Please note that this work contains sexual acts and references

0:00

[A low-pitch frequency hums and fluctuates slightly, ticking and more synth sounds are bought in]

The screen is divided into vertical thirds, with different footage in each third, suggesting mobile phone footage.

The first (left section) shows a graveyard within a woodland. The middle section includes a blurry scene with tree branches partly-obscuring the view of a naked person with an erect penis, masturbating. The right section is an ambiguous close-up of a black furry creature, it slowly becomes clearer that it is a young bat, on a towel, eating a banana.

0:20

The right hand frame changes to infra-red footage of a bat's flight, descending to pick up a creature on the surface of some water, then exiting the frame.

The left section continues to follow a first-person perspective of someone moving through an overgrown graveyard, the undergrowth covered in vegetation.

The middle frame is ambiguous in positioning the frame within overgrown brambles. The camera pans to the floor to find litter and detritus, litter, tissues, condoms and their wrappers

0:48

The right section changes to a section of monochromatic analogue and silent footage of four people, smartly dressed and engaged in conversation. One woman holds a candle. A silhouette of a bat is seen on the wall. A woman's face looks agitated and then terrified at a looming person in a bat mask getting closer to her.

[rhythmic clicking over the drone]

0:53

A voice says 'Anything that sort of isn't well lit is, just kind of, hazardous to me. But this is where most of the sex takes place. So, it's kind of like, this area that is full of excitement and, er, full of expectation but also full of hazards for multiple reasons, for someone like me. And it made me realise how important audio signals are within that uhm, and so for instance, you know, I have to rely on there being a cough, because I cannot see past my hand in front of my face if that. I have to rely on a cough, or sometimes there is the squeak of a trainer, usually being rubbed together, or yeah, or by feet, obviously [laugh]. Eh although maybe other things too, who knows?...uhm'

[low pitch drone and high pitch drone continue]

2:01

The right section is replaced by a horizontal dotted line, an infra-red bat flies across this frame.

The voice continues 'Rustling of wrappers and stuff is another one that I've experienced. And I think because of the lack of vision in this situation, everything becomes, kind of, amplified of course. Erm, so the scent is another thing that is a big deal.'

[rhythmic faint clapping, or echo clicks begin.]

2:07

A close up of some human skin is shown, then changing to what looks like the inside of someone's throat or penis head, wet and covered in thin capillaries. The shot moves slowly around the area.

2:35

[Electrical buzzing, can be heard intermittently. This is combined with the constant whirring]

The infra-red flying bat footage changes to a scientific diagram and then to what looks like analogue footage of a theatrical scientific lab with smoke and machines. A person stands next to animals in cages. A scientist has something snatched away from her by another lab technician.

3:17

[high pitch drone starts over low pitched drone]

On the right hand screen, we briefly see a bat cradling some bananas.

3:50

(Right section) Analogue footage returns and a woman looks to be captured. A street scene of people walking is followed by a person in a mask and hood (possibly the same sinister creature from earlier) emerging from a vent/hide-out.

4:02

(Middle section) A contemporary park-scene shows mobile footage that follows a topless man in blue shorts. The shot suggests that it is filmed covertly, with the camera part-obscured with grass covering part of the lens. The camera continues stalking this topless individual strolling around the park unawares, the camera trained on his torso and bottom.

The voice says 'Lighting of a cigarette by just around the corner from one of the main Lesbian bars, er, here.... lighting of a cigarette, usually then followed, kind of, you... and the noise of the lighting of the cigarette. It was important, I remember, you know, this kind of like, lighter sound. Usually then followed, you were either going to follow that person or you were going to be followed, into the toilets of the bar'

5:14

[low and high drone continue with clicking noises]

5:26

[distorted vocal sounds]

(Right section) The creature is in a room alone, they remove their hood. They see themselves in a mirror.

[drone fades out, clicking and distorted oral sounds continue]

5:46

[drone sound fades back in, clicking continues]

(Middle section) frame goes black. (Right section) Infrared bat flying returns, followed a few seconds later with cutting to black.

(Left section) Only section remaining shows a pan of grass at low level, followed a few seconds later with cutting to black.

6:07 - 6:19

Screen is black

[sinister music continues]

6:20

Screen is black

[all sounds stop]

6:25

[End of film, credits follow]

SWAMPS 2022

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Sound by Lucy Johnson

Monologue Owain Harrison

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Stay safe and enjoy pleasure.