The series of pictures are from *Sea Horizon* by G. F Millar, taken from a fixed point overlooking the Severn Estuary over a six month circa 1970. (40 images in all).

He grew up on the shores of the estuary and was soon to leave home.

The camera orientation and settings are unchanged.

‘all that changes is time and the artist’s relationship to place’.
‘the horizon holding the edge of the known world’

(Sea Horizon: Garry Fabian Millar)

Sometimes the far shore can be seen – often not.

Memory as a fluid space and horizon.

**How landscapes enter us.** Working towards an auto-ethnographic account.

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Dark matter is reckoned to hold things together. Without it, the mathematics of the cosmos don’t work.

Galaxies should spin themselves to oblivion, but they don’t. Something we can’t see keeps them bounded.

DM *cannot be directly observed and is of unknown composition*. It does not emit or reflect enough electromagnetic radiation to be detected directly.

The theory is that dark matter dominates the dynamics of cosmology. Bright matter is – not quite a residue – but a thin, incomplete ‘membrane’. A bit like consciousness and reflexivity riding on the dark substances of affect.
I grew up on a farm on the other side of the estuary.
It was there where the pictures were taken.
So was I.

Just about here >

This is it. The ‘gaze’ of Millar’s photographs would come in from the lower left. Cardiff looms just of the top of the screen.

My father has dementia now. His present in terms of short-term memory shrinks day by day. He can still remember the names of all the fields. I can remember some.
Unheedable aspects of memory, emotion and affect hold us together as practicing selves minute by minute, day by day.

This is to the extent that people with severe memory dysfunction, or other disruptions to these structural processes of becoming, struggle to hold themselves together.

This dark matter of the self is a blindingly complex interplay of ‘nature nurture’, body and environment.

The view looking the other way; from our house down to the distant shore, across the farm
It is all gone now! The white house is our old house. The tree in the middle if this picture can be seen in the previous one.
Ours, and other farms were forcibly acquired by Cardiff City Council. New roads (as above) and new houses slowly crowded around.

This lost space is etched into me. I know because I go there in my dreams often.

It lives in the memory of others too; in the many photographs, I and others, took (many exist only as negatives still); in maps.
The cow shed in winter. An incredibly rich ecologies of spaces we moved around in. Photographs spring them back into a kind of life.

Our farm adjoined the coast in one place. I often gazed out into the ever changing orchestration of light and space. It too entered me.
The then new Severn Bridge became a shaper of new family geographies. A pivot in the wide space in the estuary and in our lives. (I dream of this too).

A child is born with billions more synapses in the brain than adults have. As we live and grow, experience and environment sculpts which synapses and neural paths develop and which wither and die through lack of use.

The present enters us so deeply – perhaps especially when we are child – the moment of the moment is huge – even if we normally don’t feel it to be so. Its residues take root in us and grow and blend and become much of what we are.

*We are beings of spatial remains.*
We carry interactive archives of past life spaces - all that geography – within us.

We all do very differently.

(There are many ways of losing one’s home – much more terrible than we experienced) (The Lemon Tree: Sandy Tolan).

The dark matter, all this coalesced within us, is a universe in itself, other to all others but also interacting with other beings and other things we continue to encounter.

I loved you; I miss you

I remember you

But not well enough
“The past beats inside me like a second heart”

(The Sea: John Banville)

“The blue of distance” (Solnit, 2006)

The grain of film, and the blue, and the grain, of distance, are strangely expressive of memory.

Are not dreams inherently spatial and embodied? Glimpses into the affects of dark matter in us all.
How can geography deal with this?
Is it important?
Do we have to make sensible narratives of these non-linear, beyond horizons of memory and sense perception, dark presences?
The geographical turn to art, performativity, affect, and interest in writing is one way.
So much art and literature (but not all of course) confronts and explores the past within us (and within landscapes).
Confronts the affects of self-place.

The turn to artistic practice has been in recognition of, and in pursuit of, those aspects of life which are ‘other’ to the stable, reflexive, rational, language based modes of being which have been the traditional ground of social science interest and method. There is an interest in:

- Emotion
- Affect
- Performance
- The specificities of (emplaced) becoming
- Hybridity (relational materiality)
- Process

Non-representation (Nigel Thrift)

An interest in the richness, exuberance and poignancy of life which always exceeds attempts of capture.
Rings of Saturn and Austerlitz: W G Sebald

In the Dark Room: Brian Dillon

A Berlin Childhood: by Walter Benjamin

Explorations of self, and memory, and history – always in spaces, (rooms, home, cities, coasts, railway stations, hospitals, other peoples houses, offices, factories, fields, and on and on and on)

Life

Embodied
Relational
Emotive
Affective
Memorial
Performativa
Spatial

all folded into complex, flowing, rhythmic, being-in-the-environment.
Dwelling

As Ingold (1995:75) put it when setting out Heidegger’s foundational work on dwelling “I dwell, you dwell” is identical to “I am, you are”. In Heidegger’s words - ‘to be a human means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell.’ (145).

The world looks different this way and to see it and sense it requires a more active study of engagement with the world. [ ] The basic building blocks of this anthropology are unmediated perceptual knowledge, practical experience and knowledge of the world, the technologies that link humans and non-humans, the aesthetic and sensual composition of experience and the cultural choices that are made in reference to these. (Franklin, 2002, 71-72, emphasis added).

Wylie (2003) suggests that Ingold’s approach ‘offers a potentially fruitful means of reconfiguring cultural geographies of landscape within the ambit of embodied practice and performativity’ (146) but that, amongst other things, it needs to take more account of fleeting and mobile experiences, as well stressing known, habitual landscapes.

Dwelling, as a form of phenomenological ontology should [ ] be the milieu for material cultures and ways of being that are productive of multiple spatialities and temporalities, longstanding and momentarily, rural and urban, fixed and mobile, coherent and imaginary. In particular, it must enable the register of the transient and the fleeting as well as the enduring. (Wylie, 2003 145)
These pictures capture the transient and fleeting, but held within a deep, dwelt, yearned relationship with space and place. The transient and the fleeting form the fabric of enduring space. It forms the richness which seeps into us moment by moment and which become dark matter of the self.

The far shore becomes for a moment, visible, and glows
So what??

Be concerned with the moment entering the body.

Be concerned with how one moment turns into the next.

Happily or sadly
Peacefully or violently
Lovingly or with hatred
Love or with anger

Value the moment, the fleeting present
Take it more seriously (alongside past and future)

Value the presents of others (my children) and how their dark matter is amassing – moment by moment.

Take note and care of space.
Please note: few changes have been made to these slides after the presentation.

In the light of the discussions on the day I would like to say:

This is very much about the affective, hard to represent processes of life and life in place, landscape and environment.

I feel these are fundamental to understandings of the above and how they are, and might be written.

Art and literature has done this better than much ‘academic’ study because that, in a way, is their business. Geography can learn from this (as well as teach its own strengths).

This is not to deny the cultures and politics and aesthetics of landscape. They are always there too. The two ‘sides’ are always folded together.