Abstract of the essay *From Neolithic to Neoliberal*

The essay will one of c.20 essays by academics and arts and media practitioners from a number of institutions. These will include prominent figures such as Agnieszka Piotrowska (documentary film maker and academic at University of Bedfordshire), Thomas Elsaesser (film critic and Professor Emeritus at Amsterdam University), and Catherine Grant (Professor of Digital Media and Screen Studies at Birbeck University).

Book: *Creative Practice in the Age of Neoliberal Despair*

Editor: Agnieszka Piotrowska

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The book draws on essays by contributors to the conference *Creative Practice in the Age of Neoliberal Despair,* University of Bedfordshire, 9 -12 May 2018.

The essay looks at two short video pieces by Tony Clancy, *The Plate Spinner* (2016) and *Stone Ghosts* (2017). The essay discusses ideas by Christian Metz on how photographs convey meaning, and some examples of photographers such as Michael Wolf (in his *Tokyo Compression* and *Toy Stories* series) whose work can be seen as comments on life in the neoliberal era. The discussion then moves on to my short piece, *The Plate Spinner* and how it uses video to create a fictionalised evocation of a life distracted by urgency. I discuss the influences of Diderot and Eisenstein that this piece draws on. Moving on to Stone Ghosts, the essay discusses the piece in relation to the work of Brecht and Shklovsky and the use of sound, moving image and stills to connect the audience to the materiality of rock and a society where it had a functional and material primacy. The contrast between the lithic and our increasingly virtual world is discussed.

Essay length: c 5000 words