

## Statement: on my films

I think of my films as objects of a particular kind - time-based objects. Ideally a film should be an entity which can be apprehended as a whole, in a single act of attention, either at the end of the film itself, or subsequently, in memory.

It should have a feel, a palette, the sense of a time represented (many of my films give a sense of representing a single, though in reality composite, day) and a shape-over-time as filmmaking. My films attempt a balancing act between the sense of an event and the sense of an object, trying to achieve both at the same time. For the viewer, I hope they achieve a sense of attention to the world, where concentration is elicited gently, rather being grabbed or forced in the way it is in mainstream 'action' cinema.

My films are usually the result of my encounters with places, and the filming usually involves revisiting places with which I have been familiar for a long time. The places chosen for the films often have a particular historical nature, significance or resonance. As the film camera is both an instrument for seeing and potentially for the representation of an individual's vision, the sense of historical time present in the places chosen throws into relief the individual moments of attention visible in the filming – a pan which is like a glance, a focussing movement, or the appearance of a striking composition. The medium I use, 16mm film, is also important – each frame exposed by the camera involves a once-only, permanent altering of a piece of film material, which remains as a trace of the moment of filming. In this regard, film is closer to being a traditional art material than a digital image can ever be. I am committed to film as film, and I try to show my work on film whenever possible, while not excluding the possibility of digital exhibition on occasion.

The process of making a film involves both planning and the recollection and re-imagining of the place from a distance, when it is not present to me and takes on an imaginary quality. My relationship with these places also evolves with each visit, and with my reading and research around its history. I enjoy the process of representing (with a sense also of remaking) both the places themselves and my encounters with them, as films. Typically, the gathering of film material (which might result in forty minutes of footage for a ten-minute film) precedes an intense period of editing (on film) where the film evolves in terms of the order and length of sequences and shots. Places I have worked in recent years include the Cévennes mountains in France, the port of Littlehampton on the south coast of England, my garden at home in Sussex, and Mycenaean, Classical, Roman, Byzantine and contemporary sites in Messenia and in the Laconian Mani in Greece. My 'Greek' films draw on and also feed my obsession with the ancient world, and with the places where survivals from the ancient world are visible in, and part of, the present. I prefer small sites to the more spectacular ones, many of which have been separated off from the surrounding environment. Qualities of light and times of day are very important to me. Most of my older films have sound, but the more recent work (since c. 2008) has mostly been silent, with images relating only to other images.

'The hallmark of Nick Collins' films is their concise poetic and observational statement that offer a space for reflection on landscape, cinema, sound and image'. (A.L. Rees, Sequence, issue 2, 2012).

Nick Collins  
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