Degrees of legibility: written fiction as research methodology in the practice-led MPhil/PhD

This paper will explore the production of written fiction as research methodology in the context of the practice-led MPhil/PhD in Fine Art. It will do so via the discussion of ideas and questions raised by an art project of mine: a novel that takes the form of a study of an imaginary subgenre of late-twentieth century horror cinema.

My current research looks at the concept of genre, specifically in the context of an interdisciplinary artistic and theoretical approach that draws influence from cinema, literature and popular music as well as contemporary art. One of my aims is to establish whether or not it might be productive to consider contemporary art production in terms of the nuances of genre, rather than presuming that contemporary art’s arguably post-genre character is necessarily desirable.

Written as it is from the perspective of a person who has not yet completed their transfer from practice-led MPhil to practice-led PhD, my hope is that the paper will also speak more generally to the experience of negotiating the early stages of the practice-led PhD in Fine Art.