

Media Atmospheres International Symposium, Jönköping University, Sweden

Proposal

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Title:

Atmospheres of Hope and Degradation: Colour in Andrea Arnold's *Fish Tank* (2009).

This paper is a part of a wider study into the role of colour in film as force for the creation of cinematic atmosphere. Atmosphere here is best understood in relation to the idea of ecology. I start with colour as sensual phenomenon and with the idea of ecology as a confluence of multiple processes configured as a complex arrangement to create an atmosphere that relates to place. Approaching this film by Andrea Arnold via an ecological orientation allows for an engagement that can trace some of the social, subjective, and cinematic pathways that meander through this work. The three primary colours of blue, yellow, red, work within the film to create what we might call, via Timothy Morton, an ambient ecology. This analysis of *Fish Tank* works through his declaration in *Ecology Without Nature*, that 'ambient poetics is a rendering' and that 'rendering is technically what visual- and sonic-effects artists do to a film to generate a more or less consistent sense of atmosphere or world.' What we have, then, is an ecology of the local rather than the universal: 'a climate' rather than the more commonly asserted 'the climate'. There is a particularity at play in *Fish Tank* that connects the social housing estate with the wider estuary landscape of the river Thames. In this way, atmosphere through colour grounds authenticity and becoming.