

Emma Randall

Bittertweet Melancholy: Falconry, behind the glove

My love of birds of prey is unusually complex; I share a close bond with them, one of resilience. It feels natural then, for my PhD, that I am exploring people's encounters with birds of prey and the potential for personal well-being. I was fortunate enough to experience falconry for the first time last year; during the visit, what surprised me was my lack of fear. In the moment, I realised how individuals can be fascinated with falconry centres, handling wild animals is an obvious way to create everlasting connection with them. But my immediate joy and exhilaration was replaced by concern matched by an unsettling feeling, the reality of the situation gave way for the birds held in captivity. I find viewing birds from a distance isn't necessarily as exciting, but more life-affirming because they are free to go about their business in the wild without human interference. #flyingfree

