

SOME TEXT
FOR THAT WHICH IS
BEYOND TEXT

ASK NOT OF ART
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
BUT
WHERE DOES IT TAKE ME?

DE-PLACING FUTURE MEMORY

23 SEPT - 17 OCTOBER 2009

PUBLIC OPENING
WITH
MUSIC PERFORMANCE

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 6 - 7 PM

FOLLOWING: 8.30PM - 10.00PM

PRESENTATION BY PROJECT DIRECTOR, ELENA ISAYEV
FOR CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE IN TOWN
PHOENIX ARTS CENTRE, BRADNINCH PLACE, GANDY
STREET, EXETER EX4 3LS

What is the strength of the bond between memory & place?

- _ Place does not exist without memory
- _ We are affected unexpectedly, by landscapes, monuments and objects

How can that bond be broken or weakened?

- _ Stories cluster in places
- _ Refugees are placeless with collective memory

What are the effects of such a break?

- _ Overwriting through art, building and music
- _ Traces cannot be erased, we carry them with us

When is it desirable?

- _ Power is to control the memory of a place
- _ To live in the completeness of the moment not its memory or ruins

These questions are addressed through a collaboration of academics, visual artists, architects, musicians and other members of our community. The aim of this project is to provide a space to bring together ideas about identity, presence, homeland and mobility, whether theoretical or concerning current urgent events, which crucially depend on our understanding of the nature and quality of the bond between memory and place.

Monuments and places are seen as containers of infused memory, but the extent to which they mould, enhance or weaken bonds of attachment and belonging have not been fully investigated. The project seeks to comprehend the permeability of the bond between memory and place, and the sense of attachment that arises from it. It is interested in the role or agency of the physical world, and the extent to which lessons from the exploration of materiality, in accessing the underside of history, can expose the impact of subliminal pasts, beyond what may be articulated through text.

The future memory embodied in an object, monument or place, anticipates a specific audience or participant response, and gains power from that expectation. For example, the strength of the experience which a war monument can elicit, is drawn from both: an anticipated shared understanding of memories of war from the past; and the sense that the monument will effect a similar reaction from later viewers, hence projecting memory into the future.

The power of an art work is in part derived from the same expectation, which allows its embodiment of the multi-sensory experience to shift our perception of that same world on which it draws for inspiration.

Project Websites: Beyond Text AHRC: <http://projects.beyondtext.ac.uk/deplacingfuturememory/index.php>

University site: <http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/futurememory/>

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Artists and Art Works

Should you wish to purchase any of the art work - please contact Elena Isayev e.isayev@exeter.ac.uk

- **Shauna McMullan**, artist Glasgow, UK
IN BLACK AND WHITE,
Rafah, page 19, *The Guardian*, 19.01.09
IN BLACK AND WHITE
Gaza, page 2 & 3, *The Guardian*, 07.01.09
- **Catrin Webster**, artist Wales - London, UK
A Drawing in Time: Devil's Bridge, June 2009 (2009) ink on postcard
Found Image - From Postcard of Devil's Bridge c. 1900 (2009) water colour on paper
A Drawing in Time: Aberystwyth June 2009 (2009) ink on postcard
A Drawing in Time, time frame - 2 hrs 10 min Aberystwyth 2009 (2009) ink and pencil on paper
Found images Postcard: Llyn Peris front and back (2009) acrylic on canvas
Found images Postcard: Betws-y-coed front and back (2009) acrylic on canvas
- **Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hillal**, artists-architects, Bethlehem, Palestine
Book of Returns (2009) (Copy 2/3) Lead and printed paper
De-Colonizing Architecture (2009) video presentation

- **Hanaa Malallah**, artist, London - Baghdad, Iraq
Vivid Ruins (2008-2009)
layers of burned canvas+strings+(mirror)+ burned clothes

Cabinet 1

The Name of the Flower (2008)
Art book with 100 pages, mixed media on canvas and paper
Stalemate chess (2009) mixed media with archaeology survey collection

On Glass Wall

For Shaker Hassain AL said (2009) mixed media on wood

Cabinet 2

- **Hanaa Malallah and Linda Hurcombe**, Archaeologist, Exeter, UK
with **Martin Bell's Collection of bullets and casings (2009)**
Red swastika
Untitled
Untitled
Nest
Limb swastika
 - **Rashad Salim** artist, London - Baghdad, Iraq
Series: *Allegory* (2009)
Series: *Ain-Ohm-Epsilon* (2009) ink on paper scrolls and Piano (see below)
 - **Rashad Salim and Marion Wood**, Music Director, Exeter, UK
The Piano Project (2009) Piano
- ### **Wall Pieces with Organic Material**
- **Hanaa Malallah and Linda Hurcombe** with **Martin Bell's Collection of bullets and casings (2009)**
Encasing (Bomb Canister)
Bulletin (Rubber bullet)
Catch (Bullets)
 - **Shauna McMullan and Catrin Webster**
Re-constructing Cartographies (2009) 16 Prints
 - **Larry Shenfield**, academic, diplomat, student, hotelier, linguist, America - Italy - UK
Florence Baptistery 1945 (courtesy of Peter Wiseman)

Music Composition (on 5 October)

- **Jonathan Lee** composer, Bristol, UK. *Remember Me* (2009)

The following are some notes which accompany the art works, especially those made collaboratively within the project. They try to preserve the memory of the making in the style of their telling.

Catrin Webster

Intimate Distance: A Drawing in Time

Paintings and Drawings

Postcards create a different dynamic from conventional landscape painting and photography. Although the photographic image on the card is a 'window' view of a place; which we see via the lens of the camera and with all the conventions that that implies, a used postcard is not a static image, it has been animated by the sender. The sender selects a postcard to represent their experience of a place and though they cards are multiples they become individualized and unique by the addition of a text. The cards represent a generic visual construct of a particular place, which becomes a unique document of personal experience.

I started to look for old postcards of landscape in local markets and bookshops. I then rode by motorbike to the places depicted making a physical journey through the landscape. I experimented with the tension between the moment captured by a camera and the present moment, recorded via the progress of a pen drawn across the surface of the photographic image as it traced the journey of my gaze across the scene in the actual location represented in the photograph over a specified time. I then re- posted the cards from the places recorded in the postmark back to the original destination - London, Swansea, etc. Through this process I was re-present in the place where the photographer had taken the image and where the sender had posted the card and both I and the cards were making physical journeys across the landscape.

In my studio I sought a way to explore presence in place, which had been recorded by the photographic images of the postcards, via the postmarks and in the handwriting of the sender. Painting is a very particular but also multi-faceted activity; whatever the image created the presence of the maker is embodied in the paint, which can be simultaneously descriptive and expressive, representational and abstract. Initially I made a series of small-scale paintings of both photograph and handwriting on the postcards. I later experimented with large scale more physical paintings using watercolour, which seemed most appropriate due to watercolour's historical context in relation to landscape.

Finally, after completing the paintings, I visited the places depicted in the postcards and studied the three dimensional space via drawing - my presence in that particular place at a particular time. In so doing I found myself physically inhabiting the paintings I had made from studying the cards; which is the reverse process to the one I normally follow where I initially visit the place and study it through drawing then create a painting from the experience in my studio.

In the early 20th century up to 7 million postcards were sent in the UK over the period of a year with six posts a day. It was possible to post something in the morning so it would arrive in the evening. Today many of us use mobile phones in a similar way sending text messages, pictures and even films to each other. The second part of this work explored the relationship between the digital images of mobile phone films and painting. The exhibition was a collaboration between myself and fourteen friends from across the UK who I asked to send me films of moments from dawn and dusk on the winter solstice.

Shauna McMullan

Her research interests are the investigation, exploration, reflection and interrogation of place, distance and time, through various media including sculpture, installation, photography, drawing and video. Most recently it is about mapping in its many different dimensions.

Hanaa Malallah Ruins Technique

... Efforts to give form not only to the damage suffered by the city in which she lived but also to the collateral disfigurement of its aesthetic tradition, her works are themselves in her words, 'ruins,' 'piles of forms'... In the 1990s, when Iraq was sealed by sanctions and its artists isolated in surreal conditions of material privation and dictatorial censorship, Iraqi artists reengaged the textual arts of the Abbasids and the sculptural arts of the Assyrians and Babylonians in a fresh dialogue of forms. A new medium appeared in this dialogue, in the form of a book called a *daftar*, Arabic for 'notebook' - the kind of text open to an ongoing documentation of contingencies. *The Name of the Flower* is a *daftar*... the piece is a ruin of an old Arabic manuscript on plants, a manuscript that has been cut up and reassembled into pages, not according to the logic of the text but according to the shape of its fragments...

Excerpt taken from: Saleem Al-Bahloly, *Sophisticated Ways in the Destruction of an Ancient City*: curatorial note, *Qui Parle*, 17.2 (2009) 103-4.

Linda Hurcombe and Hanaa Malallah

Hanaa Malallah and Linda Hurcombe met at the first workshop. Linda was struck by Hanaa's use of archaeological references and her 'ruins technique' whilst Hanaa was interested in Linda's experimental archaeological research with plant materials, so the two agreed to collaborate on some artwork for the second workshop. Each brought some ideas to the collaboration and over the course of a few days produced the artwork on show. This was greatly aided by the kind loan of the objects collected by Martin Bell from his years as a foreign correspondent. Elena Isayev facilitated much of this work by helping gather materials of all kinds.

PIECES DESCRIBED INDIVIDUALLY GOING FROM LIFT ROUND IN CLOCKWISE DIRECTION

Organic Wall Hangings

- *Encasing* Linda Hurcombe and Hanaa Malallah

Material: Grenade case from Bosnia loaned by Martin Bell; soft field rush (*Juncus effusus*) from Exeter University campus.

The strong lines of the protective plastic casing suggested basketry. The plant chosen grows in wet places and can be used for cordage or basketry, and when dipped in tallow or wax, makes 'rush-lights'.

- *Bulletin* Linda Hurcombe and Hanaa Malallah

Material: Rubber bullet from Northern Ireland loaned by Martin Bell; *Typha* species from Laver pond, Exeter University Campus.

Linda grew up listening to news items on the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland and had heard of rubber bullets as part of the reporting. However, seeing one for the first time, I was disturbed by its size and hardness, it was almost as large as the head of a *Typha* plant. These plants grow in water or wet places and can provide food from several parts of the plant, as well as being useful for making matting and cordage.

The plant was cut on the day that the art work was created and it will whither and change over the life of the exhibition.

- *Catch* Linda Hurcombe

Material: spent bullets from Kotha Kas, Pabbi Hills, Pakistan, collected by Linda Hurcombe and Robin Dennell; nettle (*Urtica dioica*) fibres from Exeter University campus.

During fieldwork collecting fossils from eroding slopes with geological deposits dating from one to two million years old, every day presented discoveries and risks. Eventually the catch was that there were too many bullets to allow the fieldwork to continue. We separately picked up bullets from the area and have kept them as a reminder of stunning fieldwork but with a modern catch. The bullets are suspended by and within nettles, prepared with flint tools using methods suggested by Linda's current research on Neolithic tools. Nettle fibres can be used for cordage and cloth but the fibres are strong when wet and also make excellent nets and fishing lines.

Cabinet 1

- *The Name of the Flower* (2008) Hanaa Malallah
Art book with 100 pages, mixed media on canvas and paper
- *Stalemate chess* Hanaa Malallah

Materials: metal casings, bullets, toy soldiers and coins loaned from a local metal detecting collection in the Department of Archaeology; chessboard cut from a cloth headscarf.

Hanaa used the metal detecting collection which Linda showed her, to create this chess set.

Cabinet 2

- *Red swastika* Hanaa Malallah

Materials: Paper casing of anti-riot CS gas from the 1968 riots at the Democratic Convention, Chicago, loaned by Martin Bell; Red and green cacti pieces from outside Laver building, Exeter University Campus.

Hanaa was struck by the vibrant red of the band around the casing and the plant. The swastika is an ancient Mesopotamian symbol of the sun. (Nazis appropriated this ancient symbol and also reversed the direction of the arms.)

- *Untitled* Hanaa Malallah

Materials: Metal casing from anti-riot CS gas, 1968 Democratic Convention, Chicago, loaned by Martin Bell; roll of charred cloth.

The piece uses Hanaa's 'ruins technique'.

- *Untitled* Hanaa Malallah

Materials: metal casing from 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict, Golan Heights, paper shot casing from Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, 1972, loaned by Martin Bell; gold covered Islamic block stamp; roll of charred cloth; animal bone fragments from the archaeology department teaching collection.

Hanaa wanted to use the grouping of objects to express more than any individual element.

- *Nest* Linda Hurcombe and Hanaa Malallah

Materials: Casings from Vietnam 1972 and bullet (unknown) loaned by Martin Bell; basket made by Linda from *Juncus effusus*; water retted unspun flax fibres; kestrel skull loaned by Alan Outram; picture wire.

Looking at baskets made as part of a Leverhulme project (Linda) suggested a nest with bullet 'eggs' and the presence of a bird.

- *Limb swastika* Hanaa Malallah

Materials: fragments from the metal detecting collection in the department of archaeology teaching collection; red cactus pieces from outside Laver building, Exeter University Campus.

Many of the metal finds in the teaching collection are fragmentary. The reassembly of these pieces echoes both a cross and a swastika theme.

Jonathan Lee

Remember Me

Music composition. Duration c.15 min. For Brass quintet, 2 female vocals and percussion (1 player, Djembe)

The piece explores the idea of de-placing future memory in a number of musical and philosophical ways, through reference to national remembrance, religious remembrance with future reference, and compositional devices. The flavour of the piece is celebratory without being fanfare and announcing without being regal.

It will be possible to listen to the piece through the Project website
<http://projects.beyondtext.ac.uk/deplacingfuturememory/index.php>

Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hillal

De-Colonizing Architecture

...Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hillal and Eyal Weizman founded an architectural collective in Bethlehem...

The project in which we are currently involved could be seen as an attempt to subvert the way control and security devices work. It's about the reutilization and re-inhabitation of Israeli colonial architecture from the moment its connection with the political-military regime that keeps it alive ceases to exist. The idea is to establish a counter-laboratory of decolonization. We still insist on the use of this old-fashion term decolonization, aware of its problematic history, in order to designate a form of action that is part of a process that operates on many scales and keeps distance from the existing "solution oriented politics" of the "peace industry". Decolonization allows us to designate a process aimed at the deactivation of control and security devices. Do you think that this notion of decolonization, in the sense we have articulated it, could be thought as a form of 'profanation'?"

Excerpt from the *Book of Profanation* 2009 in the same series as the *Book of Returns*

Decolonizing Architecture is a master plan that explores the problems and potentiality associated with the reuse of Israeli colonial architecture after the ending of Israeli occupation and settlers evacuations

www.decolonizing.ps, www.statelessnation.org.

Rashad Salim with Marion Wood

on the *Piano Project*

This project aims to de-place the obsolete by literal deconstruction of cultural constraint; not to supplant with new confined preparedness but re-place with open potential. Liberated of mechanical interface and clean the defunct piano is in effect recycled into a new space/object, a "sound cabinet" reclaiming analogue instrumental memory and function. I stress this is only towards pianos deemed defunct and not an attitude to be taken towards pianos in general! The event of "liberating" (moving, removal of obstructive parts and cleaning) the piano creates incident sounds that are raw outcomes of the process. Documenting these sounds and either/or sampling and feeding them back is interesting with regard to memory and the conference theme. But it is the liberated piano, the sound cabinet as a space/object and instrument of engagement that I find especially appealing. The manner and means of engaging is unlimited and open to all at whatever age, background and musical proficiency. It is this aspect with the deep memory of civilisation the piano defines that I wish to present at Exeter and further explore with time. Un-liberated, a defunct piano remains at least furniture conducive to conversation, memory and with a little intervention (burnished pedals, found images, books, etc) can allude to specific issues such as was presented at Edinburgh Reel Iraq Festival. <http://living.scotsman.com/art-reviews/Visual-arts-review-Creativity-vs.5433278.jp>.

During the Workshop in September participants, and students, especially Music Scholars with the enthusiasm of Marion Wood, the director of music for the University, did indeed have a musical conversation with the art piece, and you are encouraged to do the same.

Larry Shenfield

A postcard from Florence

Larry Shenfield's passion for art and history was fuelled when he was a young man serving in Italy during the war, it was then that he sent this post card home. He had been chief translator to the Head of Allied Control during World War II, a writer on the Herald Tribune magazine, and his country's Vice Consul to Italy. Many decades later, having been a linguist, diplomat and hotelier he continued his journey of knowledge which at age 87 culminated in a PhD and the publication of his book in 2008: *How Much of the Florence Baptistery is a Surviving Roman Building?: A re-evaluation of the archaeological, architectural and artistic evidence*. Within it he undertakes a re-evaluation of the archaeological, architectural and artistic evidence for the building, and concludes that there is - as seems intrinsically likely - a Roman core to its structure. The memory within.