

# Future Memory in Place

Ancient history meets contemporary life through multi-platform art project in Swansea 2011

"Whether you have been somewhere for days or generations, your memory and ties can be equally strong or fragile. If you have travelled 10 or 1000 miles your journey stories can be just as powerful. *Future Memory in Place* is about the shared experience of all of us, here, now and in the future."



# Tesserahospitalis

Visual art, migration and ancient history were united in a collaborative project with the help of over 3000 people in Swansea during 2011. We explored how people relate to the place where they live or have lived, and how memories and the experience of migration can be expressed in art. It presented alternative ways of understanding place - not simply as a territory - but as the sum of interactions and imagination.

The *Tesserahospitalis* sculpture is an ongoing part of this project, located at the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea. It is 6 metres long comprising three incised steel panels and hundreds of mobile pieces.

**This sculpture is based on the ancient *tesserahospitalis*:**

- Symbol of friendship and proof of identity lasting over long distances and generations
- Examples found by archaeologists from 2500 years ago in Carthage, or as the lion above from Rome. Inscribed on it in Etruscan is the name Araz Silqetenas Spurianas
- Characters use the object in the ancient play *Poenulus*, by Plautus
- Made of ivory, clay, metal and in many shapes - lion, ram, gecko...
- In two parts, each friend holding on to one until they were reunited months or decades later

The modern sculpture is an interpretation of the ancient *Tesserahospitalis* and what it represents. It is not static but mobile, as it is only one half of the whole. Each shape has been uniquely created by a pupil from one of the 9 Swansea schools that took part in the project *Future Memory in Place*:

- Cila ● Cwm Glas ● Cwmrhydyceirw ● Dylan Thomas ●
- Hendrefoilan ● Morryston ● Parkland ●
- Sea View and St. Helens ●

And other members of the Swansea community.

Each of them is the guardian of their *Tesserahospitalis* which links them to this monument and the moment of its creation. Where they will end up and what will be their stories only they will know - as they extend their ties to each other and the ancient port of Swansea into the future and across the globe.

<http://projects.beyondtext.ac.uk/deplacingfuturememory-fo/index.php>

Project organisers: Elena Isayev and Catrin Webster with the help of many volunteers and the following organisations



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