

Symposium / Symposiwm

Holy Hiatus

Ritual and Community in Public Art

Defod a Chymuned mewn Celfyddyd Gyhoeddus

Saturday 24th May, 9.30 am – 5.30 pm, Small World Theatre, Cardigan
Dydd Sadwrn 24 Mai, 9.30 yb – 5.30 yp, Theatr Byd Bychan, Aberteifi

Holy Hiatus is a series of temporary public art projects and events curated by Ruth Jones and taking place in Cardigan between 21st - 31st May 2008. The project focuses on social ritual and identity, community and public places. *Holy Hiatus* refers to the crossing of the threshold between outer and inner consciousness and the artworks and events will explore the vital role that ritual plays in social interaction, stressing the importance of 'liminal' or in-between spaces and experiences, where personal and social identities may be creatively transformed.

Cyfres o brosiectau a digwyddiadau celfyddyd gyhoeddus dros dro yw Holy Hiatus, wedi'u curadu gan Ruth Jones, sy'n cael eu cynnal yn Aberteifi rhwng 21 a 31 Mai 2008. Mae'r prosiect yn canolbwyntio ar ddefod a hunaniaeth gymdeithasol, cymuned a manau cyhoeddus. Mae Holy Hiatus yn cyfeirio at groesi'r trothwy rhwng ymwybyddiaeth allanol a mewnol a bydd y gweithiau celf a'r digwyddiadau yn archwilio'r rôl hanfodol sydd gan ddefod mewn rhyngweithio cymdeithasol, gan bwysleisio pwysigrwydd y 'trothwyol' neu'r manau a'r profiadau sydd rhwng dau le, lle gellir trawsnewid hunaniaethau personol a cymdeithasol yn greadigol.

The symposium will address, among others, the following questions:

- Under what circumstances are ritual performances/events creative of new personal or social identities and of understandings of place?
- How can arts practitioners engage with communities through ritual?
- How might liminal (in-between) identities be explored through public art that engages with ritual (eg human / animal relationships or identities that cross physical or psychological borders)
- How do memory and place influence the performance and reception of ritual?
- How are temporary site-specific art projects that engage with ritual received by audiences / participants?
- How might projects that engage with community and place contribute to the cultural life of Cardigan in the short and longer term?

Bydd y symposiwm yn ymdrin â'r cwestiynau canlynol:

- *O dan ba amgylchiadau mae perfformiadau/digwyddiadau defodol yn creu hunaniaethau personol neu gymdeithasol newydd a dealltwriaethau o le?*
 - *Sut gall ymarferwyr celf greu cyswllt â chymunedau drwy ddefod?*
- *Sut gallai hunaniaethau trothwyol (yn y canol) gael eu harchwilio drwy gelf gyhoeddus sy'n cysylltu â defod (e.e. perthnasau dynol / anifail neu hunaniaethau sy'n croesi ffiniau corfforol neu seicolegol)*
 - *Sut mae cof a lle yn dylanwadu ar berfformio a derbyn defod?*
- *Sut mae prosiectau celf lleoliad-benodol sy'n gysylltiedig â defod yn cael eu derbyn gan gynulleidfaoedd / cyfranogwyr?*
 - *Sut gallai prosiectau sy'n cysylltu â chymuned a lle gyfrannu at fywyd diwylliannol Aberteifi yn y tymor byr a'r tymor hirach?*

Programme / Rhaglen

Chair / Cadeirydd: **Heike Roms**

(Performance Studies, Prifysgol Aberystwyth University)

- 9:30 Arrival – tea and coffee / Cyrraedd - te a coffi
- 10:00 Introduction / Cyflwyniad – **Ruth Jones**
- 10:30 **Bobby C. Alexander**
(Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Texas, Dallas)
- 11.30 tea and coffee / te a coffi
- 11.45 **Anna Lucas** (illustrated talk / sgwrs â darluniau)
followed by discussion with / i'w dilyn gan drafodaeth gyda
Sam Hurn
(Lecturer in Anthropology, University of Wales Lampeter Prifysgol Cymru Llanbedr Pont Steffan)
- 1:00 Lunch / Cinio
- 2:00 **Iain Biggs**
(Reader in Fine Art, University of West England and convenor of LAND2)
- 2:20 **Hamish Fyfe**
(Chair of Arts in the Community, University of Glamorgan Prifysgol Morgannwg)
- 2.50 **Iain Biggs and Hamish Fyfe**
Heike Roms chairs a discussion between Iain Biggs and Hamish Fyfe.
Heike Roms yn cadeirio trafodaeth rhwng Iain Biggs a Hamish Fyfe.
- 3.15 tea and coffee / te a coffi
- 3.30 **Cinzia Mutigli** (illustrated talk / sgwrs ddarluniadol)
(Project Manager / Rheolwr y Prosiect, Safle)
on recent Public Art projects in Wales
yn trafod prosiectau Celf Gyhoeddus diweddar yng Nghymru
- 4.15 “The Future of Public and Community Arts in Cardigan and Wales”
“Dyfodol y Celfyddydau Gyhoeddus a Chymunedol yn Aberteifi ac yng Nghymru”
Reuben Knutson chairs a discussion between Cinzia Mutigli and Hamish Fyfe.
Reuben Knutson yn cadeirio trafodaeth rhwng Cinzia Mutigli a Hamish Fyfe.
- 5:00 **Alastair MacLennan**
(University of Ulster)
Performance Lecture / Darlith â pherfformiad
- 5.30 Finish / Diwedd

Speakers Biographies

Ruth Jones

Dr Ruth Jones is an artist based in Pembrokeshire, South Wales. She has exhibited widely in the UK, the Republic of Ireland and internationally in Poland, USA, Spain and Quebec. In 2006 she was awarded an ARHC Fellowship in Creative and Performing Arts at the University of West England, Bristol to explore how 'liminal' or threshold experiences can be generated through public art, lens-based and installation mediums. Recent public art projects include *sleepers* 2006, in conjunction with Oriol Mwldan, Ceredigion and *Bordering*, 2006, an art-geography collaboration and public art project in Oswestry, Shropshire. Collaborative projects include *chimaerae verae*, a DVD box set produced with Iain Biggs.

Ruth was a co-director of Catalyst Arts, Northern Ireland's leading artist run space, between 1997-99. She also co-curated a major exhibition for The Ormeau Baths Gallery in 2003 called *And the One Doesn't Stir without the Other*. She is the co-editor of the publication for this project, which was published in 2005. *Holy Hiatus* is her most recent curated project exploring ritual and community in public art in Cardigan, and a publication to accompany the project will be printed by Parthian in 2009.

Heike Roms

Dr Heike Roms is Lecturer in Performance Studies at Aberystwyth University. She has published widely on contemporary performance practice, particularly on work emanating from Wales, for publications such as *Performance Research* (for which she is a consultant editor), *Inter*, *Frakcija*, *Live Art Magazine*, *New Welsh Review* and *Planet*. Her various writings on the construction and representation of landscape and site in Welsh performance has discussed the work of, among others, Simon Whitehead, Sioned Huws, Eddie Ladd, Marc Rees, Mike Pearson, Phil Babot and the Ointment collective. Heike is a steering group member of the AHRC funded network 'Living in a Material World: A cross-disciplinary location-based enquiry into the performativity of emptiness' and is co-organising a major AHRC –sponsored conference on Performance and Landscape to be held in June 2009 in Aberystwyth.

Heike is project director of 'What's Welsh for Performance? Beth yw 'Performance' yn Gymraeg?', a major research project dedicated to uncovering and archiving the history of performance art in Wales. (www.performance-wales.org)

Bobby C. Alexander

Dr Bobby C. Alexander conducts research and teaches in the area of sociology and sociology of religion at The University of Texas at Dallas, where he is Associate Professor of Sociology in the School of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences. Public ritual remains an interest since his early work on ritual, religion, and theatre. Currently he works on religious communities among new immigrants in U.S. society and the contribution of religion to change in gender roles for migrant women, as well as on asylum and the performance of credibility. Alexander took his Ph.D. in Religious Studies at Columbia University. He also holds a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology awarded by Union Theological Seminary. His research has been funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, CrossCurrents: Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, and the American Academy of Religion.

Anna Lucas

Anna Lucas is an artist based in London and makes work that develops observations of social networks and group dynamics in response to specific geographic and architectural locations. Primarily known for her film and video work, she is interested in the act of making and viewing film as a means for generating a simultaneous detachment from, and engagement with everyday life. Her films embrace and challenge cinematic convention to create contemplative work that operates between documentary and fiction. The work often develops through calculated chance and Lucas uses her camera to heighten her receptivity to the situations she finds herself in.

Her recent films collectively named *Here and Your Here*, shown at FACT, Liverpool are based on complex themes connected to plants and social networks in her local markets in Brixton, South London. Two new HDV single screen works track unusual plants *Kaff Mariam* and *Una de Gato* back to their origins in the rainforest of Peru, and the deserts around Jericho, Palestine and Sinai, Egypt. *Paloma Ceffyl*, a five screen video series investigates the pastoral, exploring the rural landscape as a site of conflict between opposing desires to control nature, or to live in harmony with it. She is currently working on a loose re-telling of the story of Pocahontas in Virginia USA and Essex, UK for Commissions East. For Holy Hiatus, Lucas has created a 16mm film of rural Welsh teenagers who train working animals. (exhibited in Pendre Art Gallery)

Sam Hurn

Dr Samantha Hurn is lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Wales, Lampeter. She specializes in Anthrozoology or the comparative study of human interactions with non-human animals in a wide range of cultural contexts. Her research interests include the different ways in which humans and non-human animals perceive and engage with their environments and each other, and the various forms of indirect, inter-species communication which occur during these interactions with particular reference to farming, hunting and outdoor leisure pursuits (e.g. horse riding). She is also concerned with investigating the ways in which animals are selectively bred in response to specific environmental conditions, or human aesthetic ideals and functional expectations of how an animal should 'perform'.

Her current research focuses on cross-cultural human relationships with 'charismatic mega fauna', notably big cats, wolves and primates. She is considering the ways in which practical engagements with these animals, who are frequently 'problematic' in the eyes of the humans who have to share the same environments, has informed local cultural understandings and resulted in complex mythological representations. These mythologies have implications in terms of conservation, and Dr. Hurn is interested in investigating local ideas about predatory or transgressive species with a view to assisting conservation efforts.

Iain Biggs

Dr Iain Biggs is Reader in Visual Art Practice in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of the West England, Bristol, and a Senior Fellow of the University of Lincoln. He co-convenes **LAND2** (<http://www.land2.uwe.ac.uk>), a national network of artists in Higher Education concerned with radical approaches to the complexities of representing place, memory and identity. Trained as a painter and printmaker, his practice focuses primarily on making, writing and publishing collaborative artist's books and related limited edition collaborative work. His edited books include (2007) *Cascade – creativity across science, art, dyslexia, education* (with Morag Kiziewicz), (2005) *LAN2D - beyond landscape?* (with Judith Tucker), and (1999) *Ken Kiff's Sequence*. He is a former editor of *Drawing Fire* and *The Journal of Visual Art Practice*, has contributed chapters to a number of books dealing with practice-led research, and published in a variety of international journals – including the *European Journal of Arts Education*, *The Blue Notebook*, *engage*, *Landscape Research*, and the *Journal of Visual Arts Practice*. He regularly writes catalogue essays on contemporary art. He is currently working on a long-term project - *Debatable Lands* - the first volume/CD of which was published in October 2007.

Hamish Fyfe

Professor Hamish Fyfe has worked as a teacher, actor, and researcher in a variety of contexts. He worked for twenty years in Belfast, Northern Ireland before taking up his post as Chair of Arts in the Community at the University of Glamorgan in September 2004. He is the Director of the MA in Arts in the Community, which is now being offered at the University of Glamorgan. His research interests currently fall into three broad areas;

- Creative community building through cross-sector collaboration with the arts
- What is creativity, how does it 'work' and how can it be fostered?
- Theatre, ritual and identity

During the academic year 2003-2004 he worked on a research project for the Welsh Assembly which is concerned with cross-sectoral arts activity throughout Wales. Recommendations from the report are forming an element of the developing cultural policy for Wales. In a recently published a book - 'She Danced and We Danced - Artists, Creativity and Education' Hamish examines the role of artists and other creative professionals in learning and community building.

Hamish is the co-director of the George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling and The University of Glamorgan's Centre for Border Studies

Cinzia Mutigli

Originally from Scotland Cinzia Mutigli has been in Cardiff for thirteen years. She graduated in Fine Art from Duncan of Jordanstone, Dundee and later, whilst at Winchester School of Art, she undertook a ten-month placement in Barcelona as part of her postgraduate degree. She has exhibited her work in Britain, Spain and America and was a founding member of 'Quincunx', an artist group which organised group shows and events. She worked at Cywaith Cymru / Artworks Wales for four years as Co-ordinator of the Artist-in-Residence Programme and then for the commissions team before being promoted to Project Manager for commissions in 2006. In 2007, Cywaith Cymru merged with CBAT the Arts and regeneration Agency to form Safle, an organization that integrates exceptional art interventions within urban and rural landscapes, communities, regeneration initiatives and architectural developments. Safle works extensively in Wales and has a UK wide and international reach and perspective.

Reuben Knutson

Reuben works with Axis, an online contemporary art resource, organising artists' discussion events, commissioning artists, writing and editing. He is also an artist himself, working in collaboration with a musician/composer to produce films for public commissions, live events, and education projects, which are usually in response to a particular place. Recently he co-produced a large-scale performance under a flyover in Bristol, and made a film with, and about, the Haematology Department at the Royal Gloucestershire Hospital.

Alastair MacLennan

Alastair MacLennan is based in Belfast and was a critical figure in the development of experimental performative practices during the 1970's and 1980's in Northern Ireland. He was a founding member of the international research group ARE (Art, Research, Exchange) and he joined the European performance art group Black Market International in 1989. He has exhibited widely in Europe, North and South America and Asia and represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale in 1997. The Ormeau Baths Gallery presented a major retrospective and publication *Knot Naught* in 2003. MacLennan's 'actuactions' open up a space where the gap between the performer and the viewer is reduced or even annulled by drawing the audience into a different state through meditative and ritual activity that can be profoundly moving. Alastair is Professor of Fine Art at the University of Ulster.