

Holy Hiatus

performing ritual, community and place

2 day Symposium and Workshop

Illustrated talks, performative lectures and workshops exploring ritual in relation to: space, performance, power, music, magic and folklore led by specialists in the creative arts, humanities and social sciences.

25/26 September 2010

Small World Theatre, Cardigan, west Wales

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Holy Hiatus refers to the crossing of the boundary between inner and outer consciousness and the conference will explore the vital role that ritual plays in social interaction, stressing the importance of liminal or *in-between* spaces where personal and social identities may be creatively transformed. The programme will include speakers from the visual and performing arts, sociology, cultural geography, religious studies, ritual studies and anthropology.

The event will explore the practice and lived experience of ritual activity in different aspects of cultural life and will combine illustrated talks with performative lectures and workshop opportunities as well as screenings of related films.

Key themes:

Ritual and Space
Ritual, Performance and Power
Ritual, Music and Community
Ritual, magic, folklore and animals

www.holyhiatus.co.uk

Programme at a Glance

Saturday 25th September

Session 1: Ritual and Space

- 10 am Introduction Ruth Jones *Research Fellow UWE, Bristol*
10.15 am Ronald Grimes *Professor and Chair of Ritual Studies, Radboud University, Netherlands.*
11.15 am Barry Stephenson *Waterloo, Ontario*

Session 2: Ritual and Performance

- 1 pm Jonathan Wooding *Lecturer Religious Studies, University of Lampeter*
1.40 pm Bobby Alexander *Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Texas at Dallas*
2.20 pm Rowan O'Neill *University of Aberystwyth*
3.30 pm Workshop with Ronald Grimes or panel discussion

Sunday 26th September

Session 1: Ritual, animals, folklore, magic

- 10 am Iain Biggs and Ruth Jones *UWE, Bristol*
10.50 am Simon Whitehead film *Louphole*
11.30 am Hayden Lorimer *University of Glasgow*
12.15 pm Sean Vicary film *RETOLLED*
12.25 pm Samantha Hurn film *Riding the Trod*

Session 2: Ritual, Music and Community

- 2 pm Ceri Rhys Matthews *folk musician, Wales*
2.45 pm Lou Laurens *sonic artist, and co-founder of the collective GWRANDO*
3.30 pm Yvonne Buchheim *artist and Lecturer Drawing and Applied Art, UWE, Bristol*

Prices:

Symposium: 2 days £50/£30 I day £30/£20



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



University of the
West of England

Holy Hiatus

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Symposium Programme Day 1: Saturday 25th September

9.30 Registration, tea and coffee

10.00 am Introduction – Dr. Ruth Jones (University of West England)

Ruth Jones will introduce the conference. Jones has been engaged with a five-year practice-led AHRC funded research fellowship at UWE exploring ritual, community, liminality and place in public and time-based arts, drawing on an interdisciplinary field of research in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

10.15 am Session 1: Ritual and Space - Chair Dr Ruth Jones

10.15 – 11.15 - Professor Ronald Grimes (Wilfred Laurier University, Ontario and Radboud University, Netherlands)

Ronald Grimes is Professor of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada and Chair of Ritual Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Grimes initiated the Ritual Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion and founded the *Journal of Ritual Studies*. His recent publications include *Rite Out of Place: Ritual Media and the Arts* (2006) and *Deeply into the Bone: Re-inventing Rites of Passage* (2002). Grimes will present an illustrated talk titled “Ritualizing Places, Great and Small, Here and There: The Magic of Mapping”.

11.15 am - 12.15 pm Dr. Barry Stephenson (Ontario, Canada)

Barry Stephenson is based in Waterloo, Ontario. He holds a PhD in Religious Studies from the University of Calgary, and teaches and conducts research in ritual studies, sacred space, and religion and the arts. A new book and DVD, *Performing the Reformation: Public Ritual in the City of Luther, a study of contemporary festivals and pilgrimage in Wittenberg*, Germany, was recently published with Oxford University Press. Stephenson will talk about the deconsecration and abandonment of a rural Ontario Church. In “They Say Its Just a Building...” Stephenson will explore how moments of change in the uses of sacred places offers valuable insight into the dynamic interactions of religion and culture. The paper will explore the relationships between ritual, memory, and place. After his talk, Stephenson will introduce and screen some footage from his research on Lutheran festivals in Wittenberg.

12.15 – 1.00 pm Lunch

Session 2: Ritual, performance and power. Chair Dr. Victoria Walters (UWE)

Chair: Victoria Walters is Research Associate with the PLaCE research centre, UWE Bristol and has just completed a PhD in Visual Culture at the University of Ulster on the work of artist Joseph Beuys. She is currently co-editing a book on Beuys' legacy and working towards publication of her thesis.

1.00 pm – 1.40 pm Dr Jonathan Wooding (University of Lampeter)

Jonathan Wooding is Senior Lecturer in Religious History and Director of the Centre for the Study of Religion in Celtic Societies at The University of Lampeter. His teaching and research centre on the medieval church and society in Celtic Britain and Ireland, with an emphasis on settlement, pilgrimage, and the literature concerning the travels of saints. He has published work on St David, on Bardsey Island, and a guide to churches and chapels of Wales. Wooding co-hosts an annual conference on 'secular monasticism' and communities for alternative living. Wooding will speak on 'Performing the Desert: Life Between Worlds in Celtic Holy Spaces'

1.40 pm – 2.20 pm Dr Bobby Alexander (The University of Texas, Dallas)

Bobby Alexander is Associate Professor of Sociology in the School of Economic, Political, and Policy Science at The University of Texas at Dallas. Public ritual remains an interest since his early work on ritual, religion, and theatre, which includes *Victor Turner Revisited: Ritual as Social Change*. Alexander will apply concepts in the study of ritual and religious studies as well as in sociology to explore ritual liminality and its "holy" aspects in both playful and serious ways. He will engage the audience to raise questions about the contribution of physical and sensory aspects of ritual performance as well as the experience of human community to both liminality and the experience of the holy.

2.20 pm – 3.00 pm Rowan O'Neill (University of Aberystwyth)

Rowan O'Neill is a performance artist from Felinwynt. Her work is informed by her academic background in theology and religious studies and the contrast between British urban society and her Welsh agricultural upbringing. Her chief interest lies in the role of performance as a channel for transfigurative experience. The use of irony, traditional song and commonplace objects are key aspects of the work's presentation. Rowan is currently undertaking a practice led PhD researching the archive of Clifford McLucas, former artistic director of the performance company *Brith Gof*. O'Neill will discuss her recent project *Hwyl Fawr Frank Lloyd Wright* - and ask whether it was public art or civic ritual? She will talk about the project's conception as a site specific performance work on Cardigan quayside and its actual manifestation as a civic event taking place in the town hall as part of the town's 900th anniversary celebrations and the impact this late change may have had on the resultant performance.

3.00 pm Coffee/Tea

After the tea break, delegates can choose between the following options:

3.30 – 5.00 pm Panel discussion

Chaired by Dr Victoria Walters with Bobby Alexander, Rowan O'Neill and Jonathan Wooding following on from talks exploring the themes of ritual, performance, public space, liminality and holy play.

5 pm Screening of *Made in Malarrak*

Directed by Paul SC Tacon and Adrian Strong, Queensland, Australia

Ronald Lamilami is a senior maung language traditional owner of part of Arnhem Land's Wellington Range, Northern Territory, Australia. In May 2009 he and his sons took a group of visitors on an archaeological expedition as part of a new sustainable tourist venture. This video documents Ronald leading the group to one of his family's most important rock art sites, Malarrak. Ronald introduces us to his country, rock art and other heritage sites and discusses their significance.

3.30 – 5.30 pm Ritualizing in Lab Space

Workshop with **Ron Grimes**

Limited to 20 places

This is a two-hour, largely non-verbal introduction to principles developed at the Ritual Studies Lab, which ran for twenty-five years in Canada and then for a brief time in the Netherlands. In a Ritual Studies Lab workshop, we don't invent rituals. Rather, we experiment with ritual elements such as spaces, objects, and actions, teasing out their possibilities and imagining how official ceremonies and liturgies might look if they were incubated rather than bureaucratically planned. This particular lab session will focus on the ways attentive actions, spatial settings, and tangible objects interact.

Evening - Conference dinner 7 pm Venue TBC

Symposium Programme Day 2: Sunday 26th September

9.30 Registration, Tea and Coffee

Session 1: Ritual, magic, folklore, human-animal relations. Chair Dr Iain Biggs (University of West England)

10.00 am Dr. Iain Biggs and Dr. Ruth Jones (The University of West England)

Iain Biggs is the Director of the PLaCe Research Centre UWE, Bristol. His practice marries a fine art background with a range of place-based interests. He produces books that offer a version of “deep mapping” through creative interactions with ethnography, micro-histories, cultural geography and, increasingly, with environmental concerns. Biggs will present a performative collaborative lecture with Ruth Jones based on their mutual interest in human-animal relationships, the Trickster and border identities.

Recent work by **Ruth Jones** focuses on relationships between humans, animals and the land in Pembrokeshire. Drawing on mythological crossings between humans and other animals, Ruth’s video installations, collaborations and public art projects look towards greater fluidity between self, others and the environment. The collaborative presentation takes as a starting point **Transformations**, with the Manchester Museum in 2003 in which Jones worked with young people to make animal masks.

10.50 Simon Whitehead

Movement artist **Simon Whitehead** is based in rural West Wales. In his work he attempts to inculcate himself within places and communities through performance, where he explores ideas of mobility, transience and ecology. Originally trained as a geographer and dancer, his works are place-sensitive and involve a process of ritual reconstruction through the body, live performance, dance, sound and film.

In Whitehead’s absence, **Ruth Jones** will introduce *Louphole*, a documentary film of an event that took place on 4 March 2010. After gathering outside Oriel Davies Gallery, Newtown at 7pm, the audience were led through Newtown, where they encountered a new musical commission for Newtown Silver Band, written by composer Barnaby Oliver. This took the form of a lupine march to accompany the participants to Bryn Bank above the town for the first ‘Public Howl’ in Wales.

11.15 Tea / coffee

11.30 – 12.15 am Dr. Hayden Lorimer (University of Glasgow)

Hayden Lorimer's research takes its shape from landscapes, and the lives and memories of humans and animals. Previously, he has written of red deer, reindeer, crossbills and snow buntings, and of the kinds of people who have tried keep their close company. Such works of creative non-fiction are designed to find a meeting point between the recognised exercises of geography and of biography. At Holy Hiatus, we will reflect on narratives of seals as creatures inhabiting the liminal and littoral edges of life. Hayden lectures in cultural geography at the University of Glasgow.

12.15 Sean Vicary

Sean Vicary is a moving image artist based in west Wales. His work is primarily concerned with ideas of 'landscape' (internal and external) and our increasingly politicised interaction with the 'natural' world. He uses found objects and fragments of detritus to explore this relationship, manipulating these elements in a virtual space to create animated assemblages. These act as triggers for the viewer, sometimes suggestive of a wider narrative or the hidden processes at play behind the visible. Vicary will introduce the short animation film *RETOLLED* (2010). Developed in response to a large supermarket development in Cardigan, *RETOLLED* draws upon the imagery of the Mari Llwyd and other Welsh folk ritual in an attempt to manifest the 'spirit' of the land. As trees are felled and the landscape altered, the reverberations are felt deep in the earth, disturbing creatures that are now only remembered in folk memory.

12.25 Dr Samantha Hurn (University of Lampeter)

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 will introduce and present the film *Riding the Trod* a document of a 25 mile ride on horseback from Strata Florida to Abbey Cwmhir along the medieval track way 'The Monks' Trod' on Friday 18th June 2010. *Riding the Trod* aims to recreate past journeys in a bid to better understand the archaeology of the Trod and the relationships between humans, animals and this enigmatic landscape.

1 – 2pm Lunch

Session 2: Ritual, music and community. Chair: Sean Vicary

2 pm Ceri Rhys Matthews

Flute player, piper and guitarist, **Ceri Rhys Matthews** is internationally regarded as one of Wales finest and most innovative folk musicians, who has also contributed a number of papers on welsh folk traditions at international conferences. Matthews will use music and storytelling techniques to explore the 'liminal' in welsh folklore.

2.45 pm Lou Laurens

Co-founder of the Welsh sonic arts collective GWRANDO (listen), **Lou Laurens** considers listening practices in relation to performance art; and how we encounter archives through listening. These investigations are constructed around case studies based on research and practice developed through the art project *Capeli Dyffryn Teifi*, which began with a site-specific participatory performance within a deconsecrated Welsh chapel. The themes of the project include experiences, memories and archives of place, song, community and belief. Music performance, and performances of silence, figure in *Capeli Dyffryn Teifi* as both social and personal ritual; Laurens will explore how we might transform our experience and understanding of these rituals by considering them both as forms of listening practice. She will also discuss *Untitled*, an ongoing project created with artist Maura Hazelden for **Holy Hiatus** 2008.

3.30 pm Yvonne Buchheim (The University of West England)

Yvonne Buchheim has been working on the *Song Archive Project* since 2003. As part of this, she created a public event *Sound Water Beat* in Cardigan Swimming Pool for *Holy Hiatus* in 2008. The *Song Archive Project* is a body of works that examine contemporary song culture in a visual art context in response to a song collection from 1773 by Johann G. Herder, suggesting that the cultural identity of a people is reflected through their song tradition. Buchheim will talk about how *Sound Water Beat* evolved into an underwater sound installation *Earworms* in 2009 and how both of these projects have contributed to the *Song Archive Project*.

4.15 close