

PROJECT PROPOSAL

(Draft 3.1)

WORKING TITLE

ENSHRINEMENT: A Dialectic Between the Sacred and the Profane Essence
of Material Separation

Spes Contra Spem

AIMS

I change but I cannot die. [Shelley, 'The Cloud' 76]

- To unfold and merge creation myths and evolutionary ideas into layered, mythopoietic narratives addressing existential concerns in the recently defined Anthropocene;
 - engendering a sense of our part in a story that lies beyond our own time;
 - seen through a window onto another world that reflects tensions in the narratives as a way of asserting dynamic relationships.

OBJECTIVES

- To research and develop means for encoding and implementing information carrying the aims embodied in the narrative,
- employing a variety of digital and non-digital strategies to create different modes of engagement,
- layering respective modalities catalysing interdependent inferences by means of reciprocating with the viewer,

- using sculpture based on ceramic material, sound, words, and moving and still images.
- also incorporating the idea of evolutionary space formulated in the Research.

CONTEXT

Contemporary and Modern

Artists dealing with the deep past using a variety of modalities, particularly sound, sculpture, virtual reality and words, including: Marguerite Hameau, Mohshin Allayaii, Mimmo Paladino. Andrew Lord – ceramic sculptures that have correspondence with my work.

Poetry: Ted Hughes and Rebecca Elson - cosmological and existential

Sound: Wolfgang Gil creating invisible form in which geometry is delineated with sound.

Science Fiction: Philip K. Dick - political, social and philosophical explorations in monopolistic societies; Walter M. Miller Jr. - *A Canticle for Liebowitz* - the cyclical nature of history and religion vs secularism.

Studio – shared with Janet Waring Rago in continual conversation and reciprocal interrogation. A chapel in rural Lincolnshire: removed from the artificiality of the city amidst a man-made countryside; a paradox reflected in my work which questions the place of humans in nature whilst being part of nature and ours effect on it.

MA Peer group

Theoretical

Evolutionary theories - Richard Dawkins, Stephen J Gould, Darwin, Pinker, Wilson and others.

Spes Contra Spem - the enigmatic Latin phrase from Romans 4.18, in the KJV, "who against hope believed in hope". This phrase has many meanings and has been paraphrased in a variety of ways, variations of which can be found in the Bible.

Evolutionary Space - A term coined in the Research Statement which describes art practice as continually adapting to an ever-changing ecosystem.

Process Philosophy – everything is continually changing.

John Dewey - *Art in Experience*. Art and its meaning, contextually residing in how it is perceived and experienced rather than in the artwork itself.

Martin Heidegger - *The Origin of the Work of Art* - describing the artist's relationship with their work, the nature of that work, and its relationship with the world.

Kraft von Maltzhan - 'Nature as Landscape', a brief history of knowledge and our changing relationship with nature.

Roberto Mangabeira – human agency and the dynamics between the individual, state and nature.

Gareth Jones - *The Object of Sculpture*, traces the history of the reciprocal relationship between sound, music, sculpture, and architecture.

Wolfgang Gil - *sonic plasticity*. Using sound and its physical geometry in space

On Art - Richard L. Anderson "culturally significant meaning skilfully encoded in an affective sensual medium"; David Bayles and Ted Orlando, art changes the artist and the world.

Historical

Magic and myth - Religious and secular texts: Graves, *The White Goddess*; Fraser, *The Golden*

Bough, Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*; Aristotle, Plato and pre-Socratics, etc.

Natural History and art - Ernst Haeckel, Leopold and Rudolph Blaschka, Rodin.

Florence - formative period of ten years immersed in the Classical, Humanist and Renaissance culture, and Romanticism, engendering a strong sense of the materiality of art both in content and experience.

Biology graduate of Manchester University. Life processes, structure, connectedness.

Linnean Society: Fellow of – oldest extant natural history society in the world.

Religious and sacred iconography

Themes

Separation (or awakening) of the human self from nature. Influential texts include those of Martin Buber, Robert Graves, Richard Dawkins, and Kraft von Maltzhan, amongst others. The emergence of life and traversals of complexity; the emergence of the “I”, labels and language.

Metamorphosis of substance and idea and continuity in a world of constant and cyclical change.

Language as a vehicle for communication and mis-communication.

Struggle - Life, contingency and inevitability.

The Anthropocene – The Gardener and Eden

Creation myth and religion: explicator of mysteries? Principle sources include amongst others: *Ovid's Metamorphoses*; *The Bible*; texts on evolution including Darwin's, *On the Evolution of Species*.

METHODOLOGY

My practice is driven by the feeling of flux being the natural state of things and that I am connected to the most distant time by an unbroken thread of contingent events: the indissoluble strength of the past and the vulnerability of a fragile future existence. I give this shape, expressed at the point of giving material form and meaning, synthesising rational and poetic thought. I aim to make this corporeal through ceramic material. The alchemical process it undergoes links me with the past through its brittle archaeology and beyond that as a fossil of its living, malleable self. This enables me to create a space in which layered with sound, intersecting meanings can come into existence, catalysed and unfolded as a multitude of inferences occupying the same space. A space shared with words, all three modes delivering resonances at differing rates and on various levels. Modularity of thought and making come together using strategies of engagement that offer me an adaptive flexibility for working in what I identified in the research statement as *evolutionary space*.

Research

- Techniques and methods
- hermeneutics of sacred texts,
- modern and contemporary scientific evolutionary theory,
- philosophy and history of science,
- world creation myths,
- poetry,
- historical and contemporary art practices,
- archaeology and anthropology.

Research methods

- practice based,
- text based,
- conversations with peers, staff and audience,
- collaborations,
- analysis and reviews of works and exhibitions,
- reflective critical writing.

Mediums

- ceramics
- images
- sound
- painting and drawing

Techniques (principle)

- modelling
- carving
- digital
- voice
- video
- text
- projection (shadows)
- drawing
- virtual reality
- embedding sound in sculpture mixed media display fabrication

Documentation

- blog journal containing
- sound recordings

OUTCOMES

An installation which gives a sense of being a space containing sacred and profane associations with the following possible works:

- A pair of ceramic sculptures with embedded, audience responsive sound
- Horizontal, suspended, ceramic sculpture with low frequency responsive sound.
- Wall or stand mounted sculpture with embedded responsive sound.
- Silent sculpture, free standing
- Recorded spoken narratives
- Video and VR display for images and words
- Smaller contextualising works
- Handling pieces

WORK PLAN

October – January 2019

Period of orientation: identify and develop the area of study and work for the MA period; Project Proposal, exploratory drawings, maquettes, develop critical and reflective writing in blog journal, build on video editing and digital sound software, explore theoretical, contextual and poetry texts. Experiment, research, develop, filter and select.

January – April 2019

Continue with the above, filter ideas, theory and techniques. Start developing an artist statement in the context of the proposal for the eventual final show. Build on Low Residency experience.

May - September

Test first prototypes; develop work further; research digital sound techniques for real-time interactions. Research Statement, develop Project Proposal, curate work for Unit 1 Assessment.

October – November

Complete Unit 1 – crystallise ideas for the final show

November

start Unit 2 – A period of intense developing and making in the context of previous research and experimentation to deliver project proposal. Throughout this period work on text and drawings for sound narratives.

December

Finished sculpture pair and half way through large horizontal sculpture. If time allows also explore an idea for puppets.

January 2020

Complete large horizontal sculpture and begin wall mounted work and free-standing silent work.

February

Continue work on sculptures and other work; Low residency period; begin to plan and make display and curatorial elements.

March

Complete works and begin silent sculpture and begin to finish works and curatorial elements.

April

Continue with silent sculpture and complete other work.

May

By end of May all work should be completed and show planning well underway, also procure materials for packing and transport of work

June - July

Pack work, curate and prepare for final show, review project proposal and prepare for unit 2 assessment. Delivery of work, installation, final show and de-install.

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- of the self (psychology, neurology)
- of society (anthropology)
- of language and communication (Semiotics, religion and politics)
- in biology (Arber, Aristotle, Koestler, etc)
- in myths (Classics)
- of myths (Graves, Hughes)
- of sound and sculpture (Jones)
- of form (thumb pots)

Other Key Texts: To Be Referenced

- Purusha Sukta - • Shatapatha Brahmana
- Upanishads
- Pre-Socratics
- Aristotle - Poetics, Physics
- Plato
- Virgil
- Lucretius
- Herodotus
- Milton - Paradise Lost
- Berkley
- Darwin - The Origin of the Species
- Frazer - The Golden Bough
- Freud - Totem and Taboo

- Gould - It's a Wonderful Life
- Aquinas
- Da Vinci - Note Books
- Spinoza
- Mircea
- Dawkins
- Buber - I and Thou - Man and Man
- Benjamin
- Darwin
- Dawkins
- e. o. Wilson

