

Material Conjectures
presents Abandoned
Temporary Crisis
Facility
Dr Dale Holmes

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Project Description

As part of an ongoing investigation into how art is staged, presented and reflected upon in contemporary western neoliberal culture, this project involved researching the role of architecture, urban planning, marketing materials and temporary construction materials, to develop a critical position in relation to globalised capital. It resulted in five large pavilion-scale sculptural interventions within gallery spaces as the sites of curated art works by commissioned artists. Six symposia and two publications also formed part of the overall project.

Project Duration:

2014 –2018

Funder:

Funding through QR from University of Huddersfield and from the collaborating galleries and project spaces.

Research Partners, consultants, collaborators:

The project was carried out in collaboration with freelance curator Dr Kirsten Cooke, and galleries and project spaces including: Matthew Poole/Kynastonmcshine; David Craworth and Naomi Siderfin/Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall; Sonce Alexander Gallery/ Anne Harlzak; Chris Cawkwell/Art Lacuna.

Research Aims & Objectives

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The research aimed to investigate the relationship between contemporary neoliberal politics, new developments in realist philosophical discourse and contemporary art practice. It explored exhibition making as a critical visual practice to investigate contemporary political and cultural conditions, and utilised provisional materials commonly found in crisis-responsive architecture to make temporary architectural interventions that stage commissioned artworks. This was based around the following key questions:

- How might spatial and architectural interventions be used to critique the western logics of liberal freedoms, in particular of movement and interpretation?
- What strategies can be employed to investigate contemporary concerns with the mutability of an artworks content?
- How does site specificity in art practice facilitate asymmetrical experiences of space, material and concept?
- What is the value of audience orientation/ experience/ participation found in recent art practice and research?

Research Context

This project is driven by the conjecture that art practice is an indispensable tool for investigating contemporary political and cultural conditions and extends Holmes' ongoing investigation into how art is staged, presented and reflected upon in contemporary western neoliberal culture. In addition, the project develops further an ongoing interest in the problematics of artistic research and how it might be staged and represented beyond the academic framework, particularly in a social context, using a materially driven spatial practice methodology.

The project is informed by and goes beyond recent developments in art practice (Thomas Hirschhorn, Iain Kiaer, Phylida Barlow amongst others) and architectural concerns with sustainability and crisis architectures (Frank O Gehry's *Santa Monica House*, 1978; Robert Venturi's major book works *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 1966, *Learning from Las Vegas*; and edited books including *Beyond Shelter*, 2011). Other important research contexts include crisis architectures both fictional and real, government produced field manuals for NGO's and military interventions into crisis situations, and related film and cinema sources such as *The Hunger Games* (Francis Lawrence, Gary Ross, 2013–2015) and *The Walking Dead* (Frank Darabont 2010–ongoing).

The work develops material responses to, as well as ideas that challenge and interrogate the contemporary state of neo-liberal urban planning, government policy, mass migrations, globalised economies. Key texts for the project include Henri Lefevre's 'the right to the city' and the development of this by David Harvey <https://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>, Mark Fisher's concept of 'Capitalist Realism' <http://www.zero-books.net/books/capitalist-realism> and Keller Easterlings work in 'Extrastatecraft' <https://www.versobooks.com/books/2163-extrastatecraft>.

Research Methods & Process

The project began through growing conversations and correspondence with a selected group of artists and academics whom I identified as working within the specific context of the investigation. Discussions with human geographers and urbanists informed the development of the material structures in their physical and spatial realisations. Decisions around the placement/staging of the research materials upon and inside the structures were taken in conversation with the artists and with curators. The method for building the temporary architecture/exhibition structure was drawn from methods previously explored by myself in previous artworks and developed in entirely new ways through a direct engagement with the idiosyncrasies of the site/gallery space in question. Structural sheet materials (OSB, Plywood, plastic sheeting, temporary barrier materials, corrugated PVC and Bitumin) were used, large scale prints on silk were attached to wooden structures that were made using studwork intersecting with the existing gallery spaces to create new spatial experiences for the gallery audiences. All the materials were unchanged, retaining their industrially produced dimensions.

The research was carried out over a period of four years and in collaboration with a number of galleries and project spaces. This included a period working closely with Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall that spanned four years and included a six month long residency, the development of two new large scale artworks and two exhibitions in 2015, and 2016, each with symposiums and subsidiary events. Working in this way forefronts the practice-as-research by framing the investigative artwork/exhibitions through talks programmes aimed at academics and artists and made up of invited participants whose research is located in the field. This process facilitated the development of important networks, the sharing of ideas and the development of further research questions.

The project developed a large and robust network through working collaboratively, as a commissioner and as a host for a large number of internationally renowned artists, curators, and galleries including: Kirsten Cooke, Maxa Zoller, Amanda Beech, Dr Jaspar Joseph-Lester, Dr Rachel Garfield, Dr Jonathon Darling, Anne Tallentire, Thomas Yeomans, Sinead Bligh, Mikko Canini, Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall, Art Lacuna and Kynastonmcshine.

Research Outcomes & Dissemination

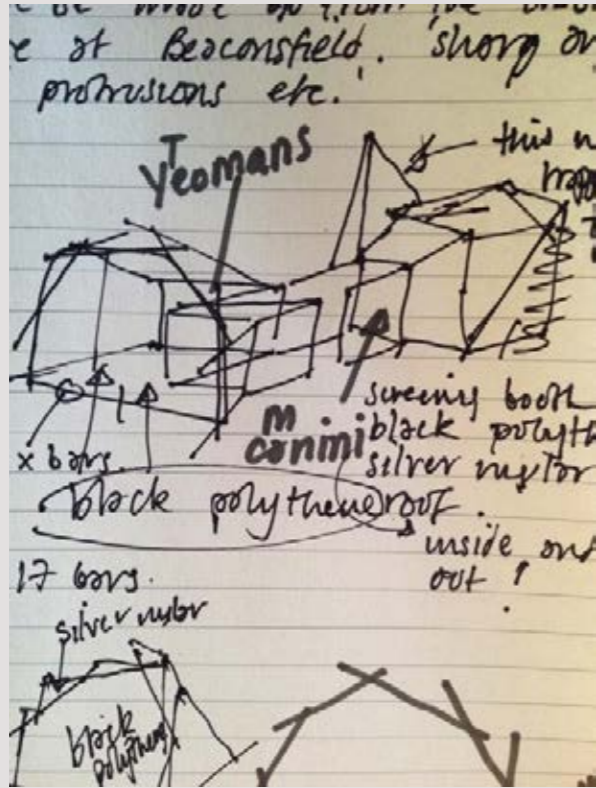
Following earlier work at Kynastonmcshine, the project was developed through collaboration with Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall as part of their mentoring programme funded by Arts Council England.

This support led to the first substantial outcome of the research, **Material Conjectures presents Kwartz Kapital KonstructionKollider** at Beaconsfield, 29th October - 6th December 2014. This featured commissioned sound work from Sinead Bligh, and new video work by Mikko Canini and Thomas Yeomans.
<http://beaconsfield.ltd.uk/projects/kwartz-kapital-konstruktion-kollider/?splash>

In mid 2015 Material Conjectures was invited to take up a residency at Beaconsfield Gallery, Vauxhall to realise an ambitious program of events including a focused research period, a large scale temporary architecture and a number of symposia in collaboration with the Sorbonne, Paris. The residency **Provisional Conditions** took place July–September 2016, culminating in the exhibition **Material Conjectures Presents Abandoned Temporary Crisis Facility with Gary Woodley** was held from 5th October to 27th November 2016.

Chronic Epoch (Black Dog Publishing, 2015)
ISBN: 1908966572, 9781908966575

The material and conceptual processes involved in the realization of *Asymmetrical Cinema* formed the basis of continued research that led to the development of a large scale pavilion structure into the arch space at the gallery. The final output of this research project was **Material Conjectures present Diagonal Diagram** of Dispersed Documents, staged at the gallery and project space ArtLacuna in Battersea, London, 13– 28 October 2017. This was the most successful in terms of the research aims and objectives, consolidating all the research findings successfully into a new art work and exhibition, public display, and series of talks. The exhibition included contributions from academics and artists from a range of disciplinary fields including Jonathan Darling, Rachel Garfield, Jaspar Joseph-Lester, Pil & Galia Kollektiv, Graham Lister, Maggie Roberts/Orphan Drift, Anne Tallentire, BAW and Bruce Gilbert.

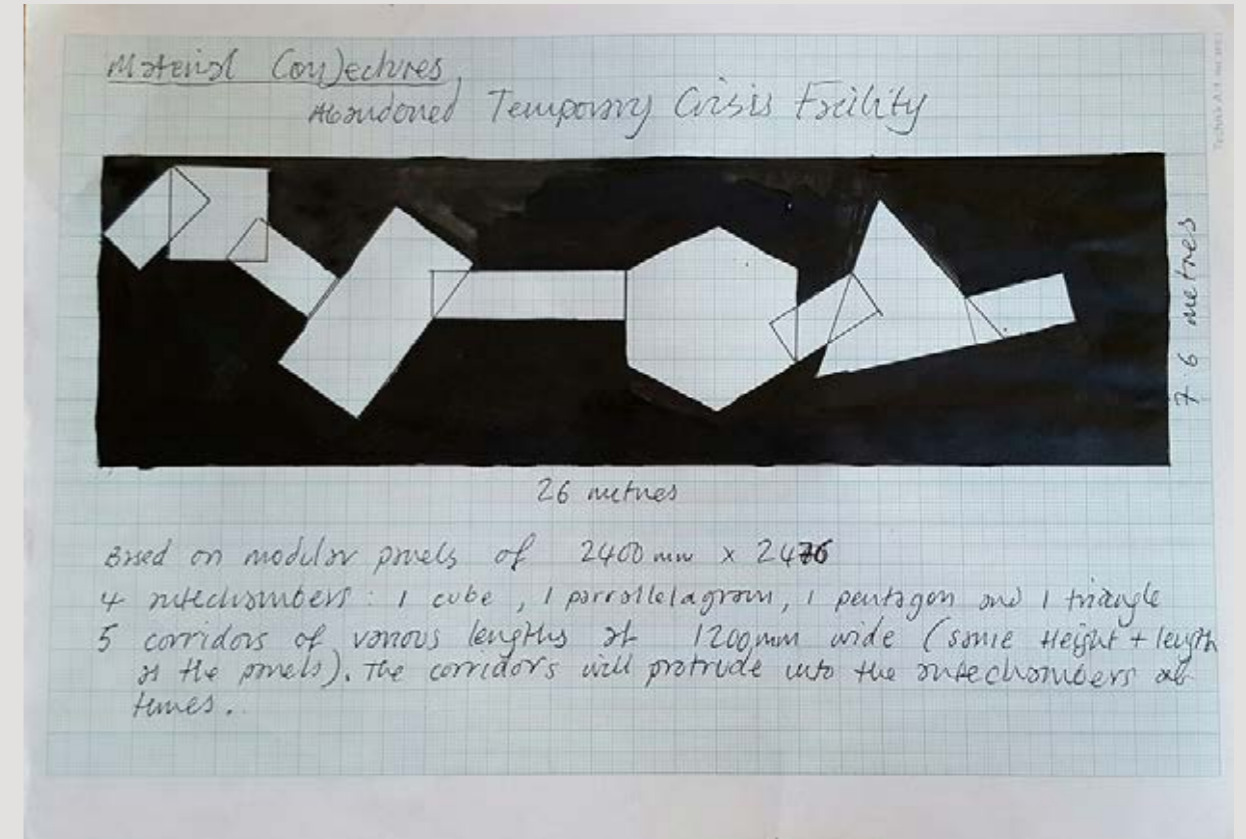
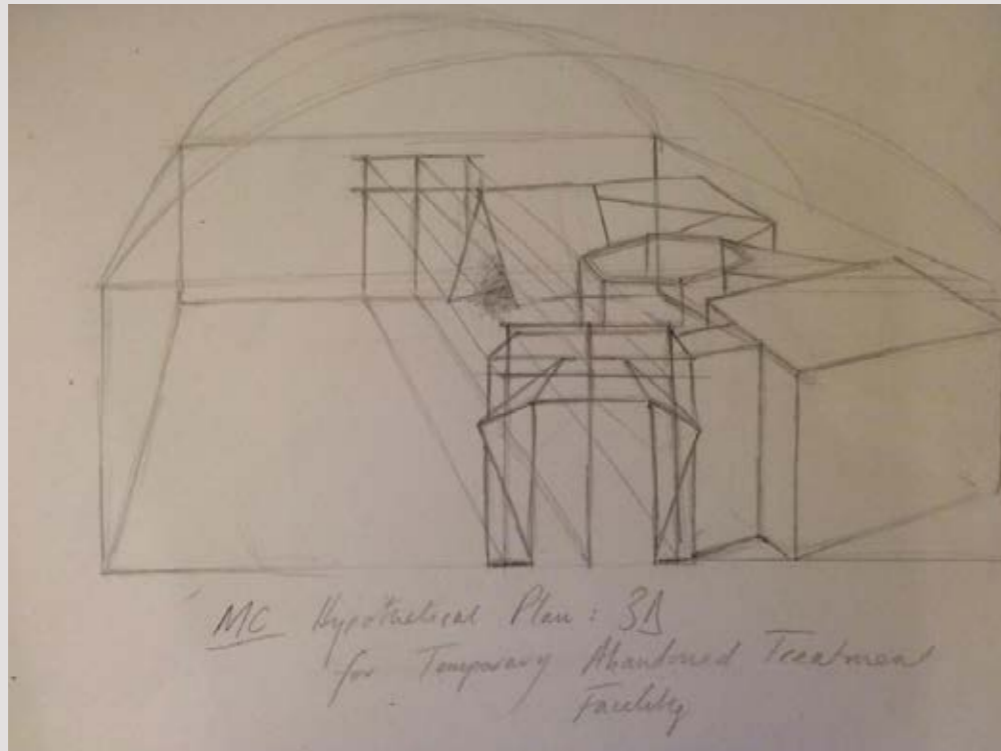


Holmes, D. concept drawing for KKKK (2014)

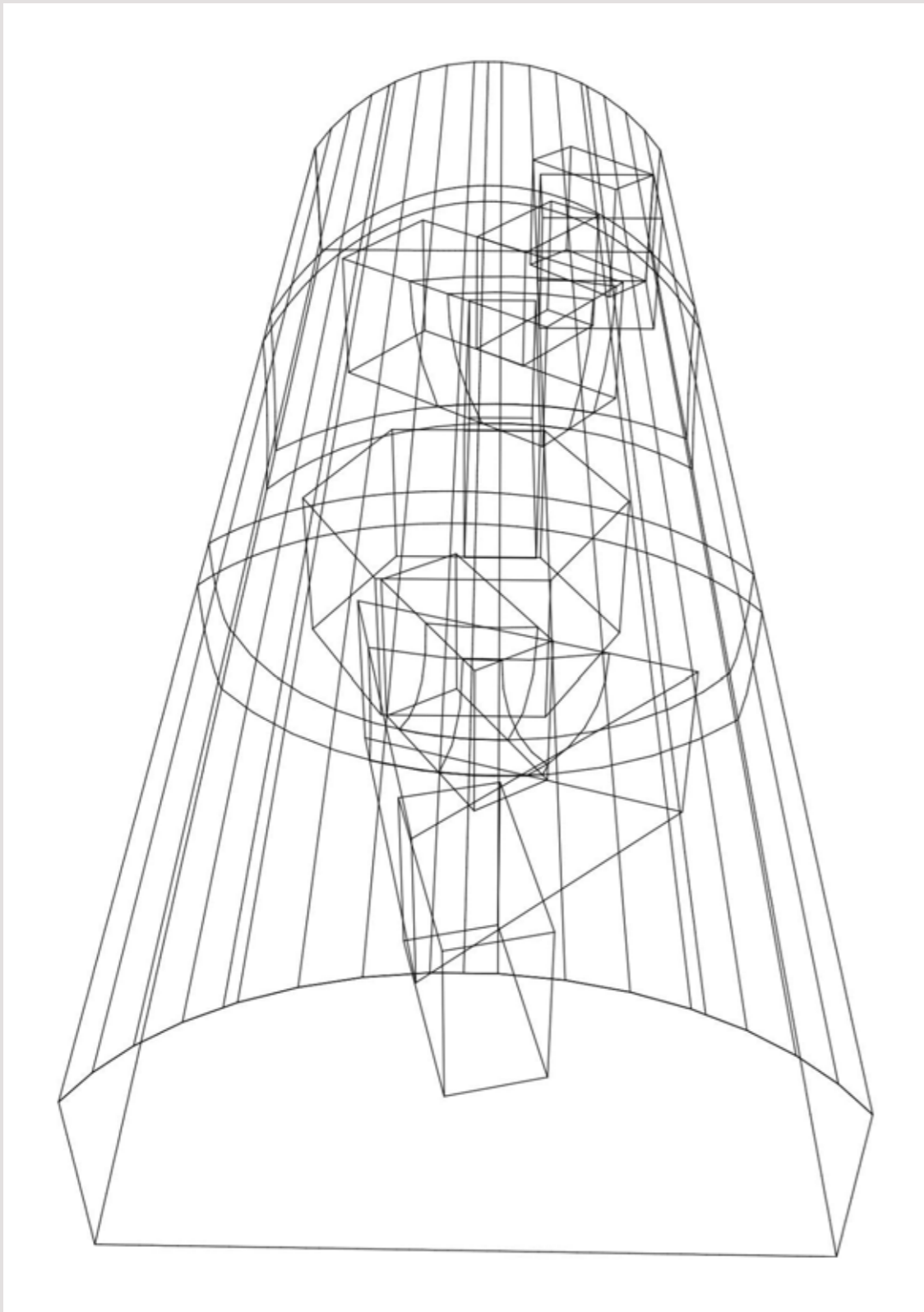


Images from the development of Abandoned Temporary Crisis Facility

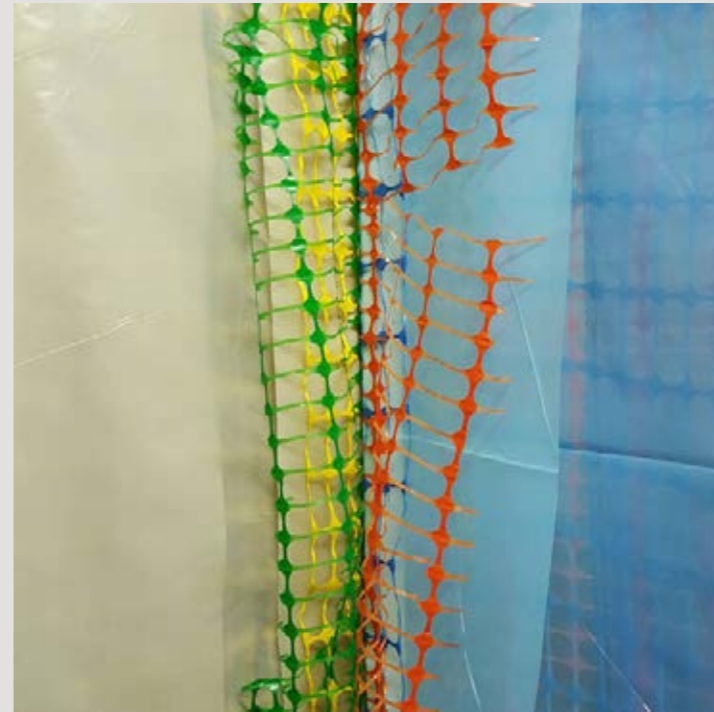
Concept drawings for Material Conjectures



To scale plan of the structure in the space by Dale Holmes for Material Conjectures



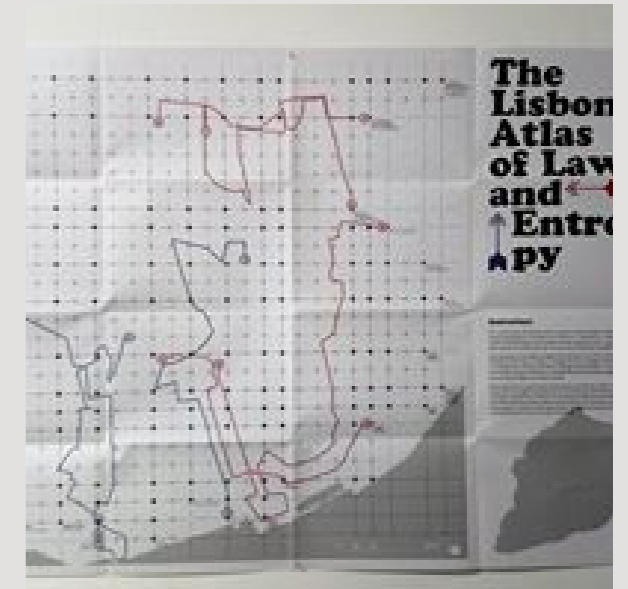
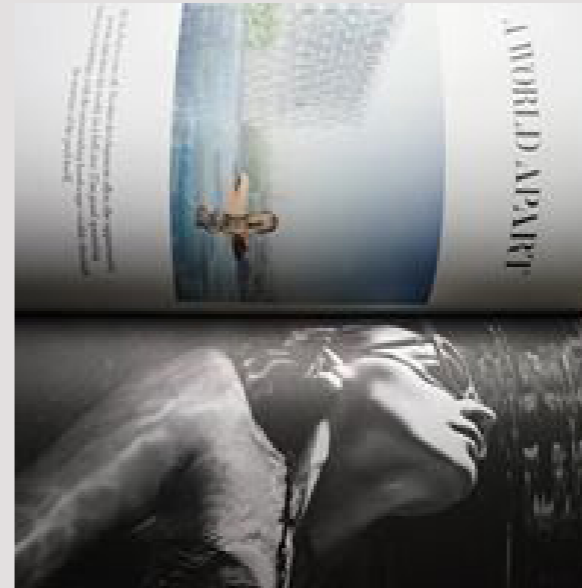
CAD drawing by Gary Woodley, building upon drawings for the structure by Material Conjectures showing the proposed structure and the intervention



Abandoned Temporary Crisis Facility in situ at Beaconsfield Gallery, Vauxhall



Installation shot



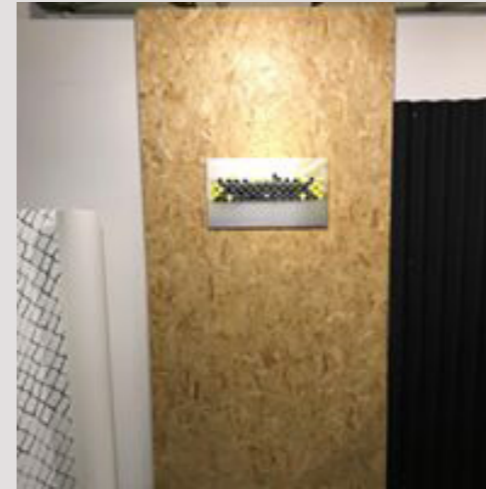
Top: Structure and details left: Jaspar Joseph-Lester Right: Graham Lister



Jaspar Joseph-Lester



Rachel Garfield



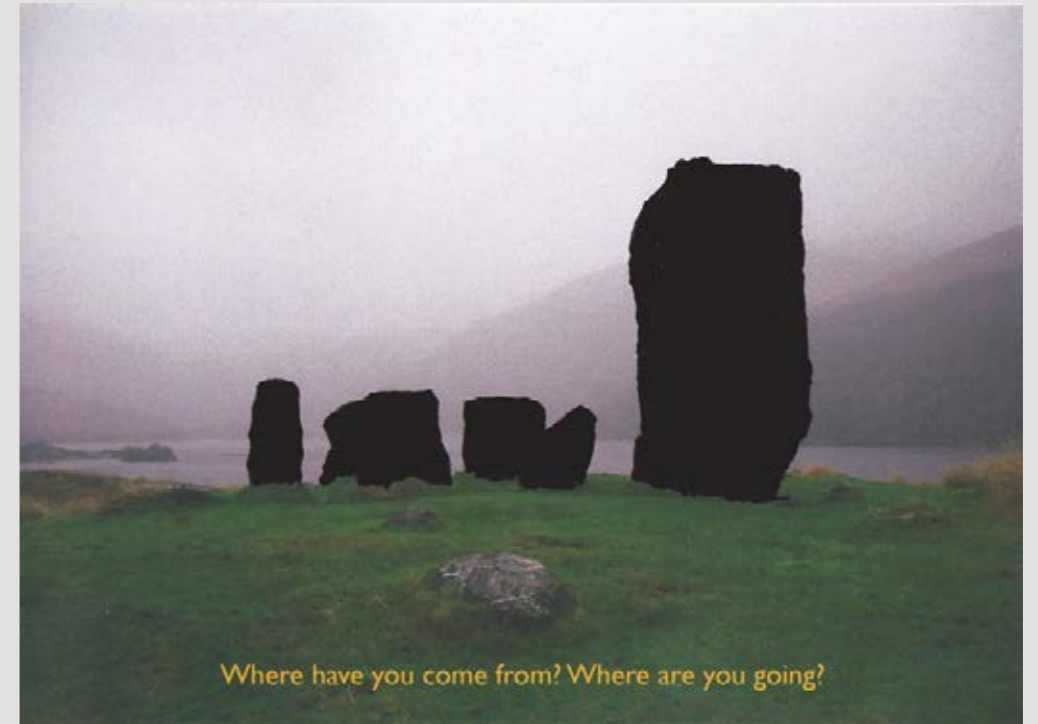
Top: Anne Tallentire
Bottom left: Dale Holmes
Bottom right: Structure



Assorted install shots



Anne Tallentire



BAW and Bruce Gilbert



Material Conjectures present

Diagonal Diagram of Dispersed Documents

Private View: 7pm – 9pm Thursday 12th October 2017

Closing Event: 7.30pm – 9.30pm Saturday 28th October 2017

ArtLacuna is open 12:00 – 17:00 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays
from 13/10/17 – 28/10/17

**Jonathan Darling | Rachel Garfield | Jaspar Joseph-Lester |
Pil & Galia KollecAv | Graham Lister | Maggie Roberts / Orphan
DriY | Anne TallenAre | BAW and Bruce Gilbert |**



Dispersed lives: the fragmentation of asylum support in Britain

The ongoing refugee crisis across Europe has dominated political and public debate over the last year. Whilst Europe has been discussing responsibilities for refugees at an international scale, the UK has faced its own questions over responsibility for asylum seekers at local levels. From the quality of housing provided, to the divisive use of red doors and wristbands to identify asylum seekers and their properties, a range of problems have been publicly highlighted within the UK's approach to housing asylum seekers.

Since 2000, the UK has run a policy of 'dispersal' through which asylum seekers are relocated across the country to temporary accommodation whilst awaiting decisions on their claims to refugee status. For the last three years, I've been researching this process. This research explores in detail the UK's provision of asylum accommodation since it was privatised in March 2012.

Privatisation in this sector was intended to both cut costs and to simplify the task of managing dispersal. Yet, the reality has been that the contracts provided do not offer space for rising asylum applications, and the removal of local authorities from this process has led to a less cohesive system of support.

Output Type:

Original artistic works, creative body of enquiry,
solo exhibition, contribution to collaborative group
exhibitions, chapter in edited book