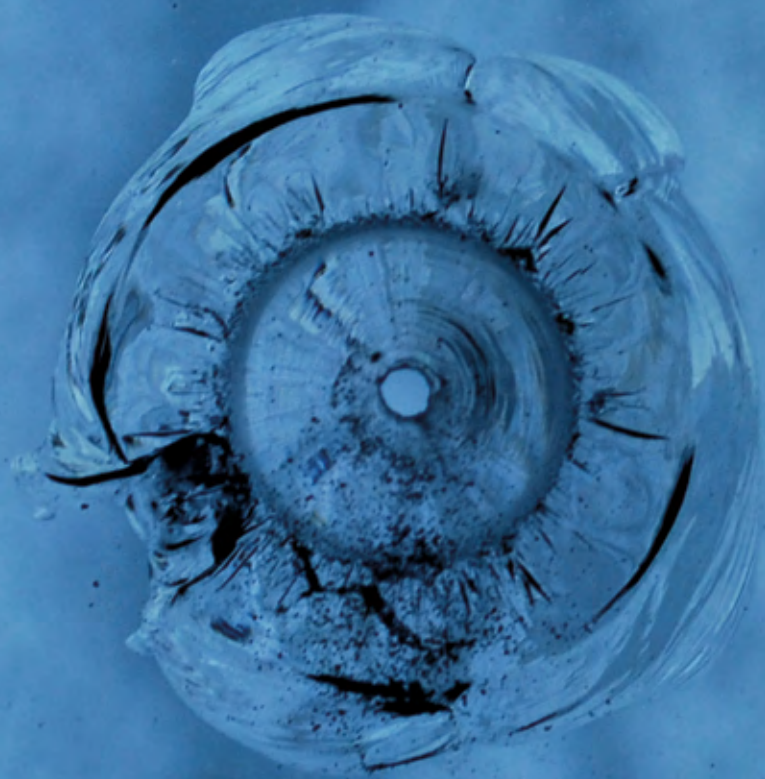
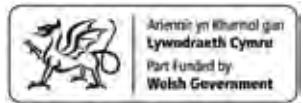
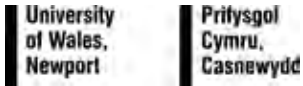


reFrame:

Art projects inspired by Pontypool





Free Press

reFrame: Art projects inspired by Pontypool

This publication was produced to accompany the exhibition ‘reFrame’ situated in various locations within Pontypool town centre. 14th March - 21st March 2013

Edited by: Matt Simmons, Peter Bobby & Matt White
Publication Design: Oliver Norcott
Publication Team: Kimmi Allsopp, Elizabeth Hewson, Louise Parker, Harry Rose, Paige Smith

Published by: University of Wales, Newport
Caerleon Campus
Lodge Road
Caerleon
Newport
South Wales
NP19 3QT

For their support and creativity in making this publication possible, we would like to thank the following:

Graham Middleton. Clare Baker. Cath Tarling. Mary Mahabir. Peter Sweeting. Matt Simmons. Alexia Mellor. Sean Edwards. Pontypool Museum. Torfaen County Borough Council. Sion Jones. Josephine Sowden. Maia Conran. Paul Cabuts. Matt White. Peter Bobby. Paul Cabuts. Magali Nougarede. Eileen Little. The Bread of Heaven Cafe. Premier Properties.

Harry Rose	6 - 7
Kimberley Sanders	8
Olivia Richardson	9
Stephanie Franklin	10 - 11
Oliver Norcott	12
Katie Lionheart	13
Jake Gardiner	14 - 15
Amy Hewett	16
Laura Goss	17
Elian Williams	20
Matthew Cooper	21
Alessandro Polledri	22
Louise Parker	23
Rosanna Blatchford	24 - 25
Alexandra Roberts	26 - 27
Lottie Morris	28
James Bristow	29
Natalie Hodson & Ashley Williams	30
Zoe Howard	31
Kirstie Adam	32
Jamie Love	33
Bethany Woolf	34
Suzanne Sadler	35
Roxanne Willson	36 - 37
Kimmi Allsopp	38
Jacon Sanders	38
Lauren Fowler	39
Sara Dove	40 - 41
Paige Smith	42
Zoe Goodall	43
Anni Kruus	44 - 45
Giuseppina Ardolino	46
Elizabeth Hewson	47

Framing Pontypool

Pontypool is one of the earliest recorded industrial towns in Wales, world-famous for its Japanware, and home of a legendary rugby team. It was a prosperous town, built around the iron, coal and steel industries with a market at its heart, but is now shunned by many in favour of newer towns and shopping malls. Pontypool is easy to miss. Drive along the infamous bypass or alight at Pontypool and New Inn railway station and you'd be hard-pushed to find the real Pontypool. Buses go through the heart of the town but they tend to take people away rather than bring them in.

In truth, the town is a gem among the South Wales towns with a wealth of glorious architecture and a stunning park that celebrates the history of a rich and diverse past. Look around at the buildings; they will tell you stories and paint pictures of a prosperous life once lived - if you allow them to. These buildings are worth celebrating, not just for their wonderful histories or innovative construction, but also for those people

who were part of the town, its culture and its success.

I would challenge anyone who holds the belief that Pontypool is boring to take a walk around the town and really look at what is there now. Look beyond the grubby and broken facades; look up above your head and see the original shop-fronts, the carved details and Victorian architecture. Visit the chapel in Crane Street and marvel at its etched glass ceiling. See the curved glass in the first floor bay window of what was the Crown Hotel but is now the Iceland store. And whilst you're looking upwards, think about the hotel's cellars beneath your feet, still in their original state with stone shelves lining the walls.

Take a walk up Crane Street and celebrate the alleyways from two hundred years ago hidden beneath your feet. Enter a shop and find the trapdoor that leads you down into an old Pontypool street, that previous generations would have known well. As you stand on the corner of George Street and despair at an abandoned shoe shop, know that it harbours a cellar lined with beautifully painted tiles in hues so bright they could be newly made even though they're over a hundred years old.

Many Pontypool icons were slowly lost in the last half of the twentieth century; Crane Street Station, The Settlement, Sandbrook and Dawe,

and Fowlers to name just a few. Some businesses closed when their buildings were demolished in the push for redevelopment. Others ceased trading as the population took their money to seemingly greener pastures. Streets were re-configured and railway tracks ripped up. Pontypool was re-designed; a planners dream or a residents' nightmare? Was this a nod towards progress or an ensuing mistake? Great swathes of the town were lost never to return. The roads that replaced the railways lured business away from the town. The cult of the supermarket moved in and the shops moved out. Established industries, if not already gone, were in the process of closing. All of these changes contributing to the perception of a town quietly in decline. However, Pontypool continues to fight its corner as a market town. The covered market, about to undergo a re-development, is a great place to shop for fresh produce or a lunchtime snack. Go to town on a Wednesday and witness one of the few street markets left in the area.

But Pontypool is more than just a town; it is its People too. There is a great sense of community among many who care deeply about the town and about each other. This is reflected in several facebook pages and websites that celebrate this wonderful townscape. People from all over the world discuss their experiences of living within the embrace of the Pontypool community, past and present. Their spirit and enthusiasm for the town is genuine and strong and comes very much from the heart.

This spirit and pride was most evident during Amgueddfa Pontypool Museum's recent Townscape Project. Local residents were asked to provide evidence such as photographs, artefacts and documents relating to their lives in the area. It is the history of where they or their ancestors lived, worked, went to school, worshipped and socialized. Hundreds of people took part in the project. Thousands of photos and documents were brought in to the museum to be scanned into a new digital archive, which will tell the very personal histories of Pontypool's townscape.

Pontypool is not dull. It is full of surprises, but you have to look for them. I encourage you to look at it with fresh eyes and a knowledge that combines history, imagination and optimism. So, next time you go for a drink in Wetherspoons think about the Victorian roller skating rink just a few yards away from you, situated under a beauty parlour.

Pontypool is waiting to be explored as Newport's photographic art students have done. I hope these intriguing projects will inspire you to look at Pontypool in a different way.

Mary Mahabir

Project Officer
Pontypool Townscape Community Project 2010 – 2012
Amgueddfa Pontypool Museum



Harry Rose

harryrosephoto@gmail.com

There is Nothing in the Desert

There is nothing in the desert deals with the process and documentation of time and lingering; having to wait for change to happen, if it ever comes at all. This state of liminality is nowhere more evident within Pontypool than within the American Gardens where nature has been left unmanaged to grow out of its original man made constraints and uniform aesthetics. Roots and vines now twist and lurch across the woodland floor as opposed to being kept back by the instruments and control of man that formed them. Subsequently we are presented with a landscape that bides it's time, a landscape in anticipation of change.



We are but Dust and Shadows

Desertion presents itself as an initial reading of We are but dust and shadows. Focussing on Pontypool market the work illuminates a principal conflict within the town's identity; that between a pride in the past, and a desire to move forward and evolve to survive. Once the central hub for trade in Pontypool, the market has since become a victim of today's economy. By focussing on dust, the project does not seek to portray the market as gone forever, but rather as a relic to be rediscovered, waiting for change to arrive. Original architecture reflecting the town's rich historical heritage can be seen alongside the introduction of newer features; a visual nod towards the anxiety so often experienced in towns on the cusp of regeneration. The desire to preserve versus the desire to grow.

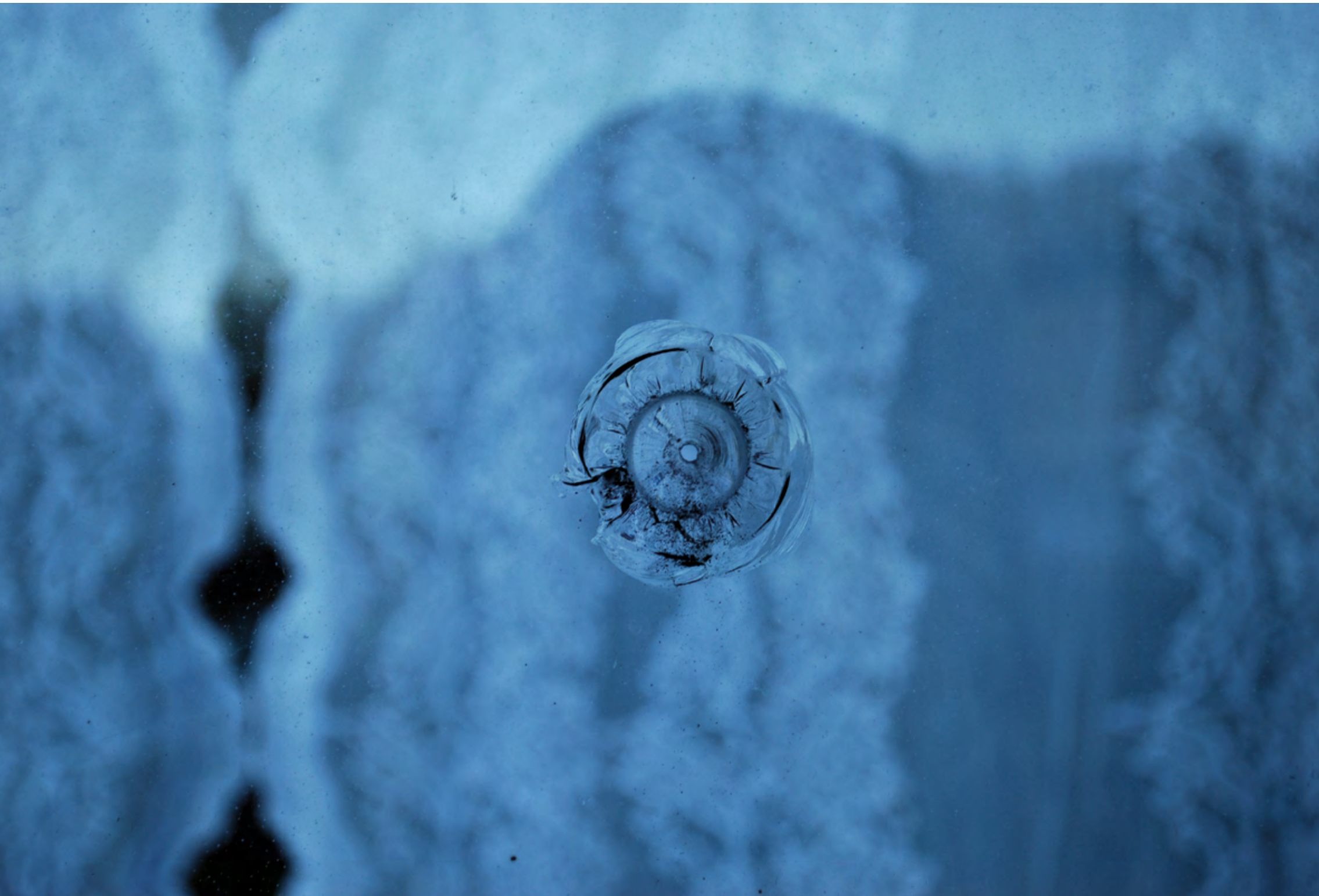


Personatus

The town of Pontypool consists of two communities; that of its industrial past and a new, regenerated community that is yet to arrive. The life of the once thriving market town has now passed, and the shopping district left with the empty units so commonly seen in today's economic landscape. It is on these empty units that Personatus is focussed. By installing archival images of Ponty-

pool into empty shop fronts, a physical juxtaposition between past and present is created. These interruptions in the everyday posses a temporal quality, created for the town yet easily removed. As such, a sense of hope remains for Pontypool; the current climate is temporary, and renewal will come with the passing of time.





Open as Usual

Open as Usual considers Pontypool as a town desperate to stay alive, fighting against neglect and the passing of time itself. Through the aestheticization of broken and damaged windows, the work seeks to highlight this pervasive tension within the town. Windows can be seen as portholes; the threshold between interior and exterior life. However, this threshold is a fragile one, and when damaged, the way in which we see the world is altered. Through a visual confrontation with that which we may normally overlook or consider unsightly, Open as Usual intends to subvert the way in which we relate to Pontypool.



Aurum & Ferrum

The axis which divides the world into two halves,
the one radiant and the other dark,
also cuts through the human body and divides
it between the empire of light and that of darkness.
Right and left extend beyond the limits of our body
to embrace the universe.

Hertz

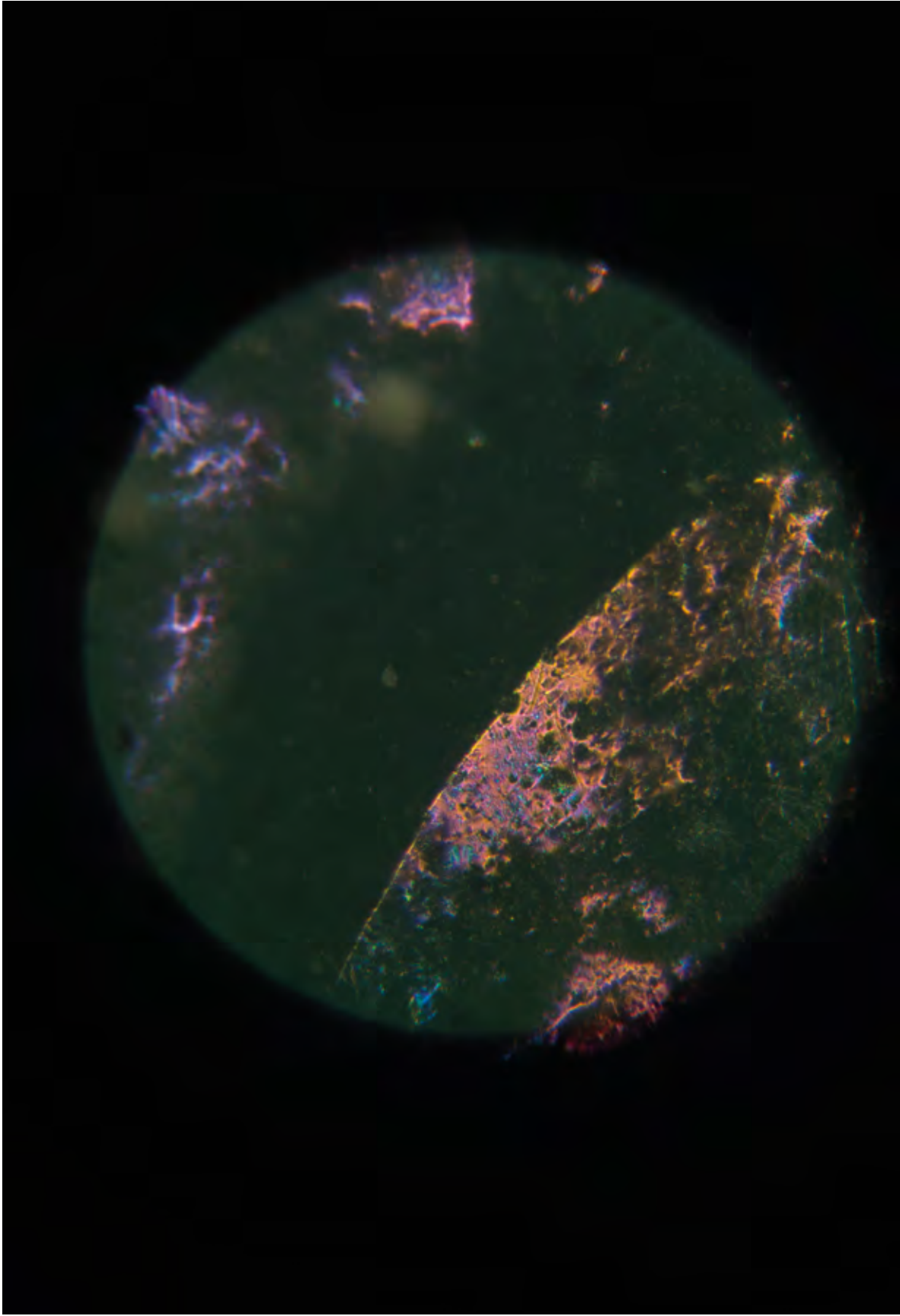


Minor

Minor explores the difficult relationship young people may have towards a past they did not experience; examining sites of educational interest, and their value to today's youth. Since the early 1800's, young men in mining communities would work as apprentices from the age of fifteen, usually following promotion from other areas of the mine. A Lack of social mobility meant schooling was a luxury that many could not afford, only becoming available to the working class around 1909.

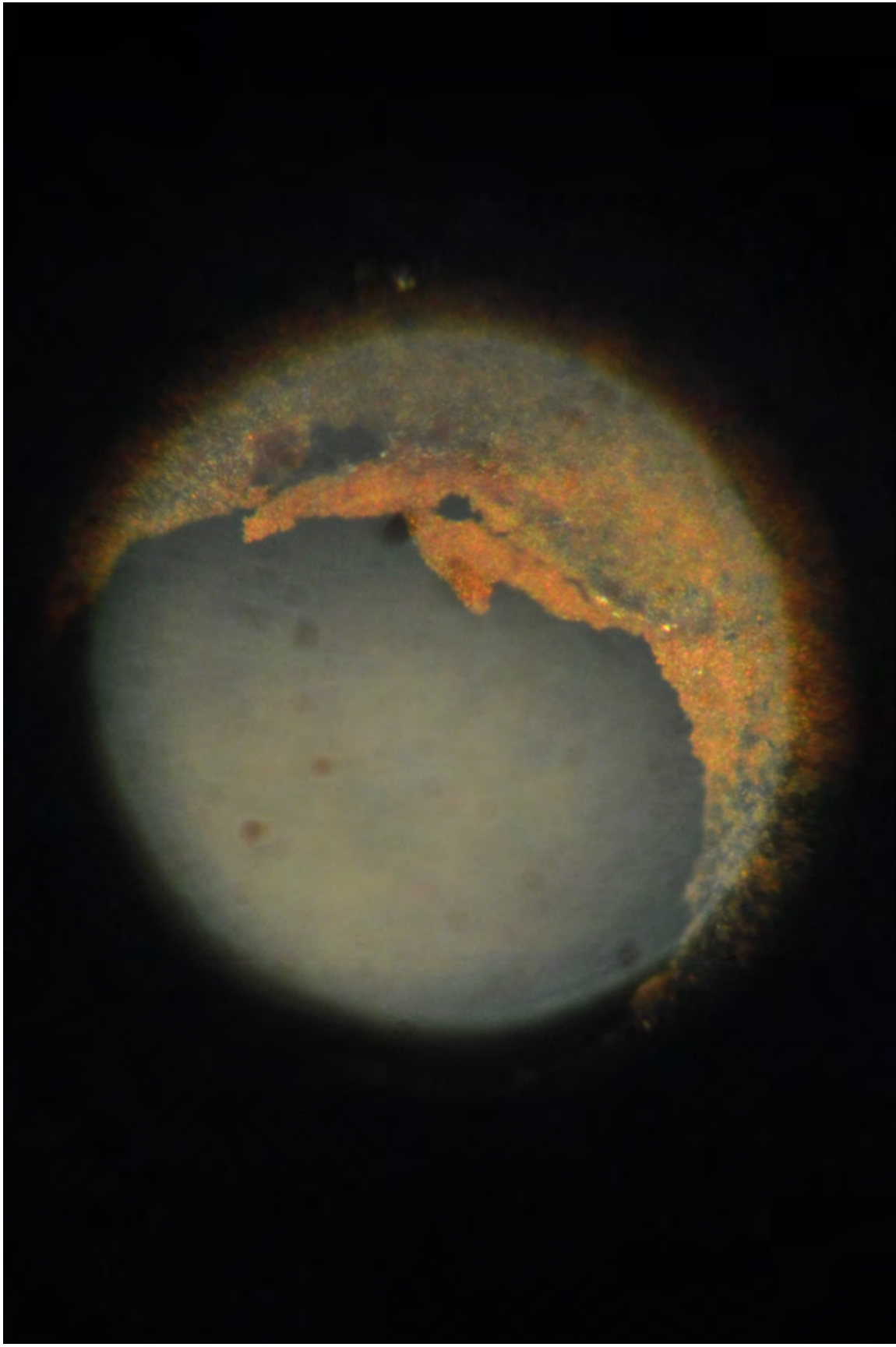
Today, education has become mandatory until the age of sixteen, and yet it is an uncomfortable truth that many of today's youth view the educational environment as an inconvenience. Focussing on Big Pit, a leading mining museum and educational body, Minor aims to highlight the disparity between then and now, and the inability to connect with a not so distant past.

Welsh Slag- Light in the Dark



Light in the dark presents slag from mines and furnaces within the Pontypool mining constituency, as a visual metaphor for the town itself. Pontypool and the surrounding area has been heavily affected by the once thriving mining industry which leaves its traces on the landscape in the form of artificial features, shaped by slag. To the naked eye, this waste product appears black, coarse and dull; detritus of no economic or aesthetic value. However when photographed microscopically, a new

visual landscape reveals itself. Fields of colour more akin to planets and nebulae emerge, creating a link between the grandest and most unassuming objects; the concept of universal sameness is brought to the fore. This notion of beauty in the inconspicuous can be extended to the town of Pontypool itself which upon closer inspection, belies its initial appearances.





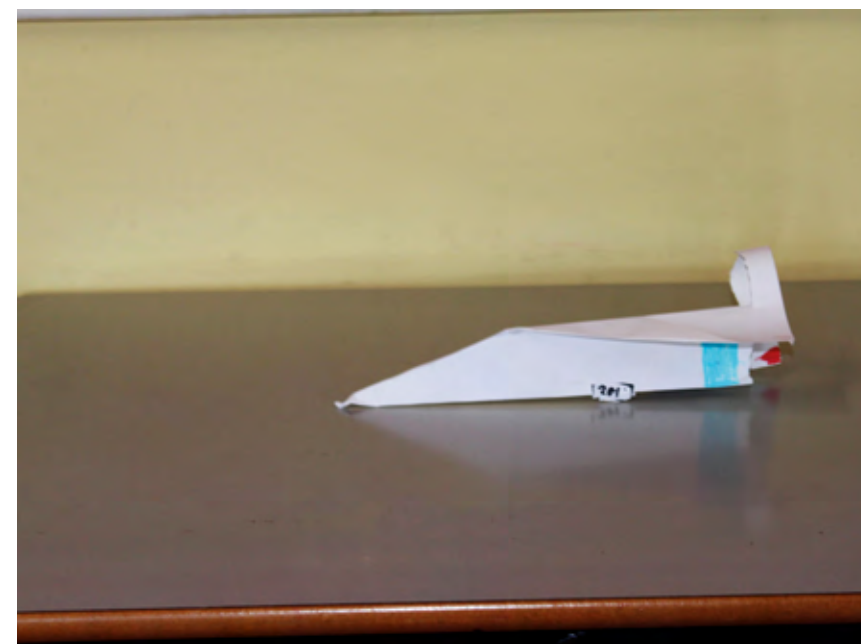
Pontypool - Change of the Folly

Taking the Folly as its subject, Pontypool, Change of the Folly focuses on the physical change of the building throughout its history. Using digital montage, archival images taken from a variety of media are assembled to create a portrait of the building through time. In a town whose landscape has changed dramatically over the years, the Folly has remained a constant; its rebuilding in 1994 demonstrating its importance to the

community even today. Through presenting these layers of history, Pontypool, Change of the Folly hopes to depict the Folly as a site cemented within the heart of the town throughout the ages.

Children's Pontypool

Due to their unique perception of the world around them, children can often present a unique viewpoint on a subject that is inevitably lost with maturity. It is out of this view, that Children's Pontypool was conceived. Can a child's outlook; the vantage point of the outsider, provide a more truthful representation on a subject than that of our own? Working with students from Penygarn Primary School, Children's Pontypool presents the visual response to such a question, confronting the viewer with a view of the town perhaps alien to their own. Having been asked to make or draw a subject that represented Pontypool, the children photographed their own work, giving them full control over the creative process. As a result, the viewer is invited to view Pontypool through a naive eye, which illuminates a new set of experiences and narratives within a town which to many seems all too familiar.



A Local Place?

On the cusp of regeneration, Pontypool presents two principal identities; that of its rich heritage as thriving market town, and that of today; in the grips of economic recession yet proud of its past, fighting to rebuild its collective sense of self. Indeed Pontypool presents a politically charged site for artistic intervention. But what is the role of art within this process, how can artists from outside of the community relate to these concerns, and ultimately, can art be of benefit to the community itself? The site specific has become a dominant leitmotif over the last quarter century and artists engaged with such practices have continually sought to provide these answers, re-evaluating their approach to dealing with the politics of the site.

It is useful here, to define what is meant by site-specific practices, in this case; work situating itself physically within or responding directly to a unique place. Place in contrast to space, can be viewed as a tangible location, defined by its difference relative to other localities. To quote Michel de Certeau, place “implies an indication of stability”. Space conversely, is abstract; a structure of processes that in turn define it. It is the concept of place, and the responsibility of art in its response to place, with which we are chiefly concerned. How then, can artists effectively and empathetically respond to a place

far removed from their own experience? How can they hope to connect with the identity of place while adhering to the financial and time based restrictions of the real world? In order to obtain answers, we should first ask whether or not a specific place is in fact so far removed from our own experience. In her 1991 essay ‘A Global Sense of Place’, Doreen Massey talks of “time-space compression”; the increasing globalisation of culture visible in the everyday. Hereby the following question is raised; do places retain individuality, or adopt an internationalized blanket identity, ceasing to be definable as unique relative to other locations?

Of course, the answer is that they do retain a sense of self. Places are complex cells, convergences of external influences that have over time established their uniqueness. In addition, an identity of place is forever evolving: we may think of a town, country or even continent in a certain way, but within each there sit side by side a multiplicity of identities, sometimes passively and sometimes violently but always within a state of continuously shifting balance. We have established that places do retain a sense of individuality, but could it be that this phenomenon of a globalised culture can work to the advantage of site specific practices? Our lived experiences, while our own, do not necessarily enjoy exclusivity to us. The invention of the printing press, camera and television combined with the pervasive nature of the world’s media means that many of our experiences are now identical to those of our neighbours, friends, and even individuals we have not and will never meet. As such, globalisation allows us to communicate through shared experience. This is no different between two people as it is between a person and a place, and it is these universal cultural experiences that allow us to

connect on some level with an entirely new locality. This sense of the global in the local is imperative for site specific art; connecting artist with place, but also place to the world thus allowing work to resonate within broader cultural frameworks. While recognition of the global within the local is crucial to the success of artworks concerned with place, it is equally vital that the local itself is not eschewed. For such artworks to be truly effective there must be an element of reciprocity towards community, for the relationship between community and place is symbiotic; without one, the other would cease to exist.

When responding to place, we must bear in mind its history; its context. What artists must be mindful of however are the origins of these histories. In her 1995 text ‘Notes from a Recent Arrival’, Lucy R. Lippard lays down a fundamental difference between two types of history. The first is a history from above; the official and institutionalized accounts found within museums, archives and classrooms. The second, to use Lippard’s terminology, comes from “ground level”; stories and memories passed down within the indigenous community. Both of these historical models present fertile ground for artistic inquiry; however it is within the former that we find the root of our anxiety. To make work solely in response to an institutionalised history runs the risk of devaluing lived experience, worse still it risks the alienation of the community itself. Recognition of history at ground level however, is to acknowledge place as a humanized site. Through speaking to the community, listening to its stories and responding, art can hope to become reciprocal in its nature; situating itself within and feeding back into the place of its conception. Thus far, what has been outlined can be narrowed down to two primary concerns within site specific practices; a desire to connect with a sense

of place and the community that forms it, and the equal need to remain relevant to wider global concerns. To tip the balance, is to risk alienation from either party. How then can art seek to traverse this boundary between the two? Crucial to this answer, is the realization that Places are products of their history, each unique yet traceable back to a universal network of stimuli that connects all things. As such, our concept of place is in actuality a concept of place at a particular point in time. Therefore then, the global and the local are in actual fact a product of one another. As such, art should not look to bridge a boundary between the two, as this implies a single channel or means of passage; instead art should seek to be a membrane, a porous space within which the multifarious relationships between place and outer world are free to be explored.

1. DE CERTEAU, M. 1980. L’Invention du quotidien. Vol. 1. Arts de faire, reprinted in Claire Doherty, ed. Situation, Documents of Contemporary Art. London & Cambridge, Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery & The MIT Press p.118
2. MASSEY, D. 1991. A Global Sense of Place, reprinted in Claire Doherty, ed. Situation, Documents of Contemporary Art. London & Cambridge, Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery & The MIT Press p.160
3. LIPPARD, L. 1995. Notes from a Recent Arrival, reprinted in Claire Doherty, ed. Situation, Documents of Contemporary Art. London & Cambridge, Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery & The MIT Press p.155

Matt Simmons

Artist, Writer, Lecturer and member of the Bristol Diving School

Draw

In response to Pontypool's current regeneration project, Draw considers the concept of construction as central to the town's present identity and explores the vital role of architecture within urban renewal initiatives. Combining drawing and the photographic image, the work references the concept art designs so often seen in civil architecture projects, depicting an idealised vision of a future that perhaps never arrives. Visually, Draw can be seen to present a duality in meaning; a town fading away, now removed from its prosperous past, or a town looking forward, planning and laying the foundations for its own future.

Matthew Cooper

Matthew.Cooper.Photo@hotmail.com

Elian Williams

eliansion@yahoo.co.uk



Heart and Soul / Calon Ac Enaid

Heart and Soul primarily sets out to highlight those areas of Pontypool which have remained largely unchanged over time, despite the fluctuations in their surrounding landscape. Using the techniques of Rephotography, images from the early 20th century are superimposed onto present day photographs taken from the same viewpoints. This visual union between past and present is evident in Pontypool's own

regeneration project whereby old buildings are restored to their former selves, thus demonstrating a sense of pride in the past as integral to the town's collective identity. Ultimately, these images convey a notion of the past's presence within the town today, inviting the viewer to consider the act of looking back in order to move forward.





Escape

Louise Parker

louiseemilyparker@hotmail.com

Cities and towns can often be places of great anxiety and psychological stress. Stemming from the artists own desire to break away from the centre of Pontypool, *Escape* presents the viewer with the untouched rural landscape which surrounds the town. *Escape*'s soundtrack is integral to its reading; juxtaposing the hectic sounds of the town centre against pastoral scenes and thus highlighting the porous boundary between the two in today's culture of continuous urban development. Ultimately, *Escape* urges us, the viewer, to seek out such places for ourselves, which are so often overlooked in today's fast paced and urban centred society.

Alessandro Polledri

alessandro_polledri@hotmail.co.uk

Seeing is Believing?

Historically, churches have always been the central focal points for communities, providing a space in which to gather and bond through shared beliefs. Today however, one could argue that this is not always the case. With many churches closed except for scheduled services, we could perceive a physical and psychological barrier between the church and the wider community. Through photographing and more importantly engaging with the churches of Pontypool, the work challenges this notion of a disparity between the church and community. This relationship is a two-way process, and we must actively instigate a connection with the church should we wish to access it, upon which we may find its teachings are still relevant and necessary to today's society. Rather than dismiss religion and the church based on presupposed judgements, we should instead focus in on those details which still hold relevance today.



A Stitch in Time

A Stitch in Time is concerned with notions surrounding regeneration, restoration and repair. Through physically sewing into photographs, the work endeavours to represent the restoration of buildings within Pontypool's Townscape Heritage initiative. Subsequently, an outlandish vision of the future is presented, similar to that of an artist's impression; a visual language familiar to such regeneration schemes. Sourced from Pontypool market, the material itself is

imbued with a connection to place. Recycled off cuts from clothing and curtains create new facades for the buildings, evoking a sense of patching or repair. Material and clothing can play an important role in defining our sense of self, and here this sense of unique identity is translated onto architecture, reinvigorating the way in which we experience the town.





A Community Family Project

Small towns can often instill a strong sense of community within their residents. Whether this be bonding over Church, Rugby or simply a love for the town itself, people are brought together and over time may come to build those close bonds more often associated with that of the family. It is out of this strong sense of community or bonding that this body of work is born. Individual portraits are assembled in order to create a whole, emulating the strong ties felt between the town's population and ultimately creating a family tree. The work therefore aims to give something back to Pontypool, a visual map allowing residents to situate themselves within the communal body.



Linear Substrata

Linear Substrata presents an exploration of the physical traces of history left behind beneath Pontypool. Urban development in times of economic growth means that town centres are often built over, erasing what went before. In the case of Pontypool however, much of this past architecture remains, with several basements, cellars and ostensibly some concealed streets lying beneath the current town. This hidden Pontypool, dating back to the early 1800s now lies defunct, with many of the town's inhabitants unaware of its existence. The aim of Linear Substrata is to illustrate to the people of Pontypool the hidden history they walk over in their daily lives. With the current regeneration of the town, Linear Substrata draws our attention to the temporal nature of any given period in history; reminding us of our own place in time and its inevitable passing yet to come.

Lottie Morris

lottie.morris@live.co.uk



Transplanted

Stemming from an interest in Biophilia, a theory which suggests that humans have an essential and biological need to be with nature, this body of work situates itself within Pontypool Park, and more precisely the Italian and American gardens. While initially interested in the atmosphere of the park in contrast to the town, the project became quickly concerned with a more personal connection to place, be it physical or psychological. Exploring the man made nature of the gardens, the concepts of dislocation and construction began to take shape. Influenced by Land Art and installation practices, the work performs within the site, representing the artificiality of the park yet connecting with it on a physical level, thus creating an absurd situation which may or may not be encountered by an unsuspecting audience.



Pontypool - Poetry and the Folly Tower

The Folly is a site of great importance in the collective identity of Pontypool, a symbol of the town; it remains close to the hearts of the community despite its purely decorative origins. It is out of an interest in this almost romantic connection between place and community that this project developed. This unfaltering connection between the Folly and the people of Pontypool through the ages is evident in the lines of two poems; the first written by W.H.Greene in 1864, and the second by My-

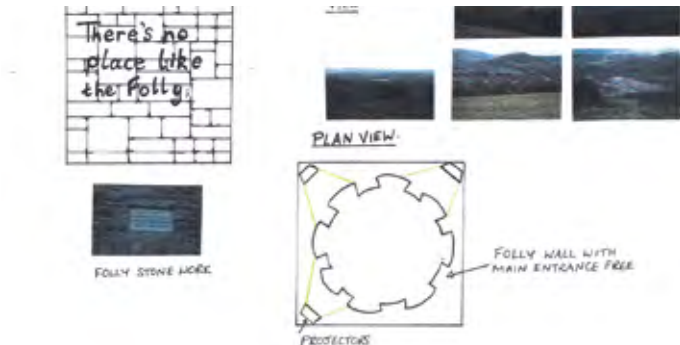
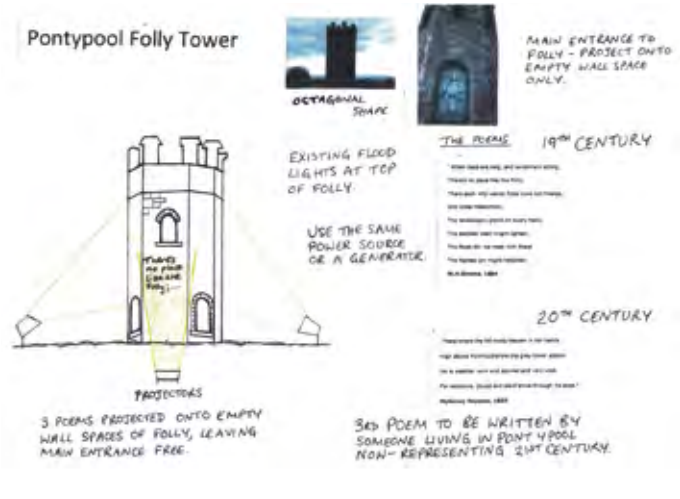
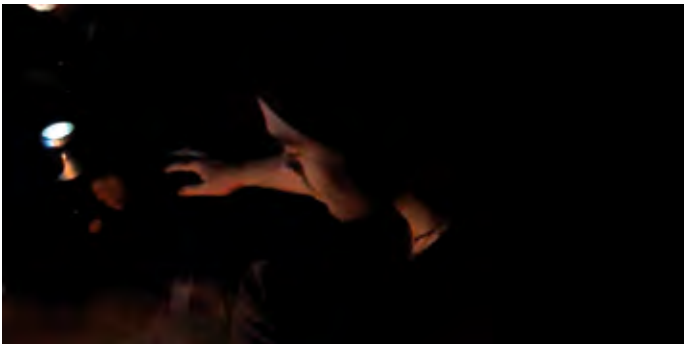
fanwy Haycock in 1937. "There each who wends finds none but friends" highlights the importance of the folly as a social landmark within the town. By projecting these words onto the structure, the work begins a process of reciprocity; a giving back to the people of Pontypool through a ceremony that connects past and present within a site that traverses such points in time.



Room 26

Stemming from an interest in local legend, Room 26 poses questions around belief; blurring boundaries between reality and fiction and interrogating the medium of documentary film. The work follows a film crew and three protagonists through purportedly haunted buildings within Pontypool. Throughout the work, the viewer is led to believe that it is the beliefs of these protagonists that are brought into question; can environment affect our predisposition to a certain way of thinking? However, as the film begins to reveal its methods of production,

depicting the artifice of the medium itself, it becomes clear that our own beliefs towards the realities of film and media are equally unstable. Room 26 aims to relate to an audience familiar with the legends it deals with, engaging them with their local environment. It is through being drawn in to the work that we are left to ultimately question our views on reality.



When the days are long, and the sunshine's strong
There's no place like the Folly;
There each who wends finds none but friends,
And loses melancholy.
The landscapes grand on every hand,
The saddest heart might lighten;
The faces fair we meet with there
The highest joy might heighten.

As we climb we chant a rhyme;
Oh, brothers isn't it jolly
The way we laugh, the way we chaff,
When going to the Folly!

The breezes soft that float aloft
Fall on the cheek like kisses;
The music sweet stirs each one's feet
To join the dance's blisses.
The hand-linked ring might make a king
Its simple pleasures covet,
Its rugby lips his gleam eclipse
Right dearly do we love it.

And coming back the moonlit track
Oh, brothers isn't it jolly,
The way we laugh, the way we chaff,
Returning from the Folly.

W.H.Greene, 1864.



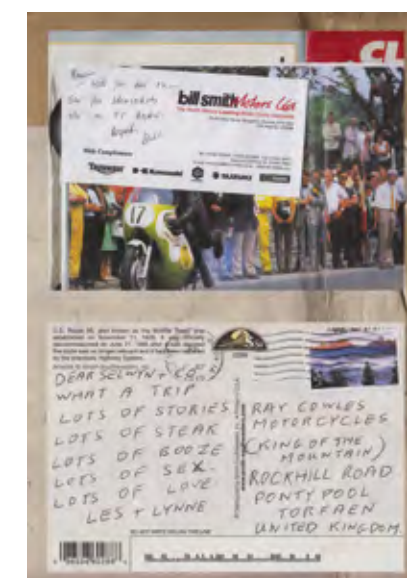
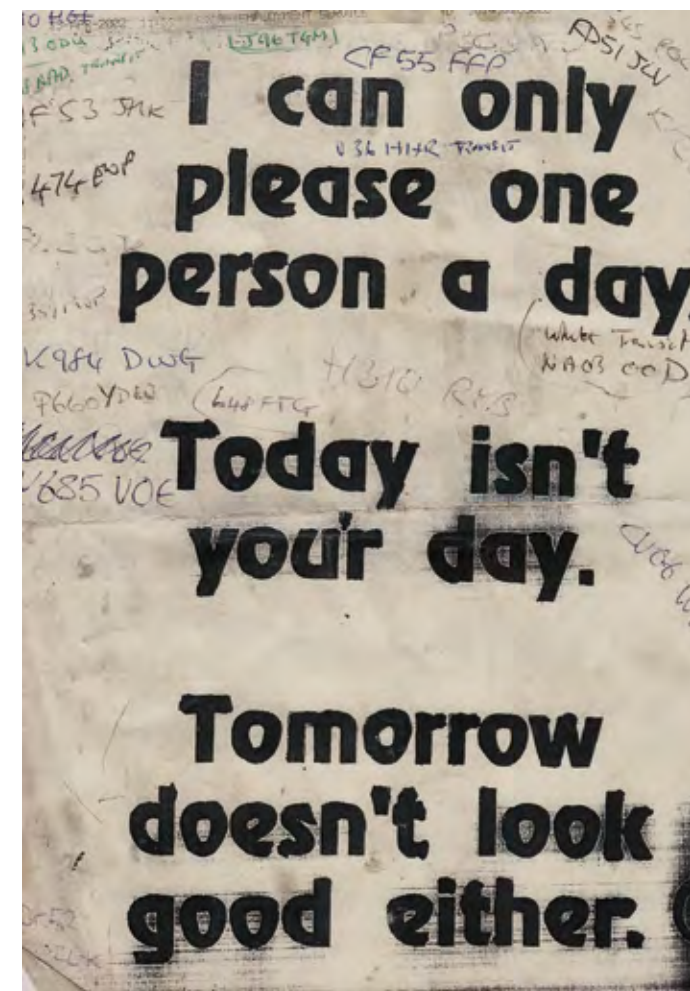
Belonging

Arising from an interest in Pontypool's American Gardens, *Belonging* reflects on issues surrounding disconnection and detachment from our environment. The plants having been imported from the USA, the gardens have created a foreign entity within the town; they have always been non-native, in possession of two nationalities. This is an area with which the artist feels a particular empathy, themselves born into dual citizenship and subject to feelings of being out of place. In recent times, the native species within the gardens have become choked by the overwhelming growth of their non native counterparts, threatening the stability of the site. Through photographing the gardens and situating the images within the landscape to degrade, *Belonging* depicts both the desire to preserve, and the natural fading away of the environment.



Ray Cowles Motorcycles

Ray Cowles Motorcycles builds up a sense of place through the residue of human activity that occurs within it. By focussing on these traces, the project hopes to shed light on the histories of a building within the Pontypool community and the individuals who inhabit it. Articles from racing magazines and newspapers are situated next to collected ephemera taken from the shop itself; all captured through the detailed lens of the scanner, imbuing these images with a sense of "closeness" that the camera's lens cannot perhaps achieve. As such, an archive of imagery, stories and seemingly insignificant and unconnected detail is built up and subsequently edited. It is in this process of editing and the devices of the archive that narratives are interwoven, new links forged and a portrait of place created.



Distorted Beauty

Some have stated that Pontypool's biggest asset is its close knit community; to the outsider however, the architecture within the town is perhaps the first thing to be noticed. Too often in today's society, we neglect to take note of our everyday surroundings, a failing most prevalent within the areas in which we live. Focussing on reflections, distorted beauty forces us to alter the way in which we see the world around us, urging us to take note of Pontypool's architecture by skewing our perspective on the town. Figures appear spectral within these images, an allusion to the temporal and fleeting existence of humanity in contrast to its unchanging structures and habitats. It is the hope of the artist that by transforming the way in which we experience Pontypool, its residents will come to appreciate the beauty of the architecture around them.



The Problem with Pontypool



One definition of the word Bypass is "A means of circumvention", an alternative passage created to avoid an obstacle. The Bypass within Pontypool treats the town itself as such an obstacle to be avoided, and as such the once thriving market town has lost a large proportion of its passing trade. The Problem with Pontypool considers the Bypass to be the fundamental adversary towards Pontypool's regeneration; its existence represents a metaphorical erasure of the town, obscuring it from view and imposing a physical barrier between the town and the outside world. Is regeneration possible under such conditions, and can Pontypool and its community hope to redefine a sense of identity and place?



Clocca

Markets have been an integral part of Britain's cultural makeup for hundreds of years. Recently however, economic downturn threatens the existence of these local businesses; a fact to which Pontypool is not exempt. Emerging from a childhood pleasure in visiting the marketplace and uncovering what it had to offer, Clocca aims to capture the essence of Pontypool's indoor market before its imminent regeneration. Specifically, the work focuses on a jeweller and clockmaker, Ghraham Grisbrook and his working environment, honing in on the history of his trade and position within the market community. Documenting the workspace and décor the viewer is persistently reminded of the process of time itself, suggesting a livelihood and way of life that is on the cusp of change.

Roxanne Willson would like to thank Graham Grisbrook. Market Jewellers, Pontypool.





Beauty

In a town where much of the community considers its surroundings run down and degraded, it could be argued that the role of the artist is to challenge such perceptions, altering the way in which a place is perceived. Such is the aim of *Secrets: Beauty* is in the eye of the beholder, a project that looks to emphasize the aesthetic beauty in the everyday. Taking subjects typically dismissed as tarnished or unpleasing to the eye, the work inverts our perspective, compelling us to see a certain splendour within these scenes, animating them and the town with a new aesthetic that finds beauty within the most improbable of subjects.



The Other Hanbury Son

David Evans was a jeweller, watchmaker and optician working within Pontypool in the 1930's. Through careful research and discussion with a friend and work colleague of Mr. Evans' wife, an archive of photographs, advertisements and personal effects has been assembled and curated. Time and optics play a dual role here; on the one hand, evoking a livelihood and trade, and on the other, concepts of memory so often referred to philosophically via optical imagery. Appropriately, viewers are encouraged to navigate their own way through the compiled evidence, fabricating their own timelines and sequences of events resulting in numerous readings and interpretations.

Bypass

In 1792, the Monmouthshire and the Brecknock & Abergavenny canals joined, forming a junction at Pontymoile. This thirty five mile canal transported coal and iron from Brecon to the Newport docklands, passing through Pontypool as it went. With the introduction of railways, the waterways declined and in 1853 the canal between Pontymoile and Pontnewydd was converted into railway tracks. These changes in transportation ultimately led to the construction of the A472, a road that cuts through Pontypool, bypassing it entirely. Bypass is primarily concerned with these evolutions in transportation and their effect upon the communities they serve, or in the case of Pontypool, circumvent. Within the video, audio and visuals are reversed; sounds of the road are twinned with footage of the canal and vice versa. Consequently, this juxtaposition reminds us of the changing role of transportation routes, one existing to serve the town, and another to navigate around it.





Rephotography

Bearing Pontypool's current regeneration in mind, Rephotography sets out to situate the past within the present. The process of Rephotography from which the work takes its title, is the technique of reshooting photographs after a significant period of time, allowing for direct comparison. In order to truly replicate a photograph, all variables must be the same as in the original image, a feat which is arguably impossible. As such, Rephotography takes the form of a video work, within

which the artist attempts to align an image with reality. This performs two functions: Firstly, past and present cohabit the frame, confronting us with the void between then and now. Secondly, the absurd gesture, the searching for the perfect alignment, raises questions about regeneration and the arguable contradiction of looking to the past in order to move forward.

Eras

The buildings once owned by Pontypool's famous Hanbury family, the bringers of great industrial growth to the town, have now been handed back to the community. Eras adopts these sites as its primary focal point, examining the shifting functions these buildings have served within Pontypool's history. Through the digital montage of archival and present day imagery, the past and present are aligned within a single image. Bearing in mind Pontypool's heritage as a prosperous town with a once flourishing tourism industry, these images take on the form of postcards; a tactile object or keepsake for the community that simultaneously evokes the past, the present day and perhaps a hope for what could be again.



Illuminate

Illuminate is grounded in a curiosity in Pontypool Park, in particular, those areas not often seen by a large proportion of the public. For many years, the park remained closed to the town's community, and has only been opened relatively recently. Keeping this in mind, the work focuses on innocuous sites within the park such as the Nant-y-Gollen Ponds that have been partly forgotten; seeking to bring them back into the forefront of the public mind. By photographing these sites at night, the project invites us to shift our ways of seeing, transforming our view of the park by experiencing it anew.



Arabesque

The human body is the instrument which connects our inner life with the exterior world around us. Through movement we experience our environment and become part of it; we change it, as it changes us. In Arabesque, the artist's body imposes itself upon the landscape, like a foreign object that does not belong; an intruder or a guest whose visit - even if extending over several hours - is nothing but a fleeting moment for the local flora. This landscape though, the American Gardens, is something of an intruder in itself. Californian redwood trees, monkey puzzles and evergreen azaleas have found their unlikely home in the middle of the Welsh valleys where ash trees and oaks are the more common species. The once carefully constructed garden is now an overgrown thicket, which, in Arabesque appears as a magical place, a theatre for action and threshold between internal and external experience.

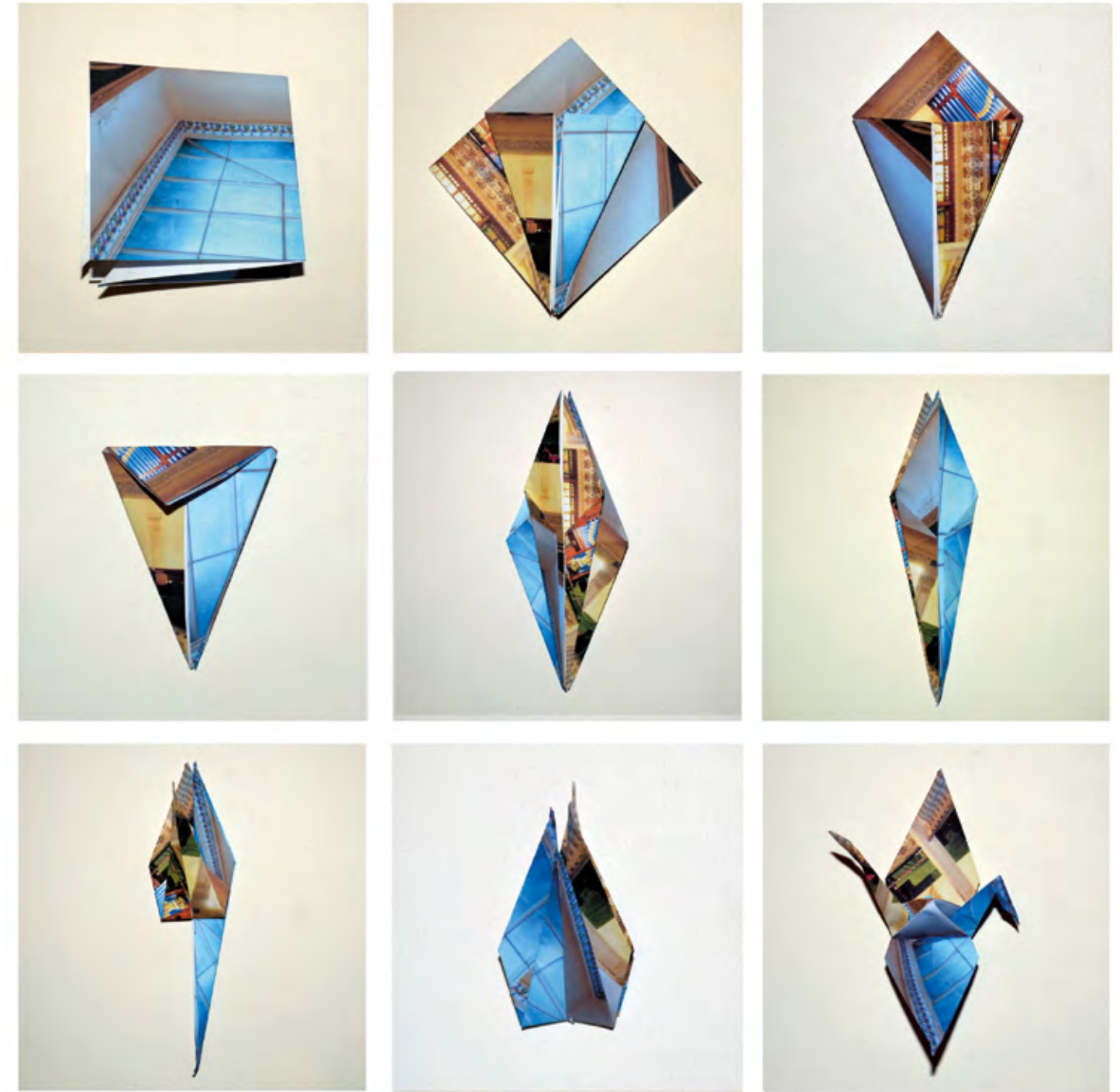


Pilkington's Suspended

The Pilkington glass factory was founded in 1938 to aid Pontypool's struggling economy following the First World War; providing much needed employment for many of the town's population. The factory now demolished, and the nation in the grips of recession, Pontypool along with many towns finds itself in a similarly desperate economic condition. Payslips belonging to the factory workers are encased in glass in order to call attention to the fragility and instability of our current economic climate. By focussing on an official document, the work questions notions of

identity, both of the workers themselves, but also Pontypool as a whole, whose own economic downturn threatens the regeneration of an identity many long to see restored.

Giuseppina would like to thank Lizzie Davison. Glass Maker, Nailsea.



Tsuru

Greek and Roman myth depict the Crane as representing a love of joy and a celebration of life, whilst in Asia it stands for happiness and eternal youth; a symbol of good fortune and longevity due to its fabled life span of one thousand years. Folding images of the town into origami cranes, Tsuru offers tokens of luck and good fortune to the community by allowing residents to create their own. Documenting the changes in the papers form, the work provides a visual allegory for the continual shifts occurring within the town's history, and above all, offering hope for its imminent regeneration.



To create your own origami crane: www.tsuruejh.tumblr.com

**Interested in studying
photography at University?**

**Diddordeb mewn astudio
ffotograffiaeth yn y Brifysgol?**

**Find out more, chat to lecturers and
take a look around our campuses.**

**Contact us to book your place/
Cysylltwch â ni i archebu eich lle:**

E: uic@newport.ac.uk

T: 01633 432432

www.newport.ac.uk

**University
of Wales,
Newport**

**Prifysgol
Cymru,
Casnewydd**

Open Day
Saturday
20 April

