

Cultural Mapping Project: Temporary Installations fact sheet

Momentary Interruption

Artist

Kei Ito (textiles)

Temporary Installation: May/June 2000

Textile based sculptural forms located on New Walk Museum and Art Gallery portico columns, New Walk trees, Dover Street lighting columns, the City Gallery frontage, Leicester

Archived on www.leicester.gov.uk/publicart

For a Moment a Stage

Artist

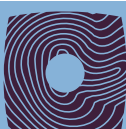
Melanie Manchot (photographer)

Temporary Installation: January/February 2001

Photo text based works located in City Centre bus shelter advertising sites, Leicester

Archived on www.leicester.gov.uk/publicart and

Melanie Manchot – Catalogue: ISBN 0-9544504-0-x



Public Art Leicester
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Biographies

Kei Ito takes a sculptural approach to textiles and fabrics creating innovative sculptural forms made of intricate patterns of cut and stitched fabrics. Internationally acclaimed, Kei Ito has worked with Issey Miyake and designed costumes for Dennis Potter's TV drama 'Cold Lazarus'.

Melanie Manchot has a specific interest in making the ordinary extraordinary. Internationally acclaimed she has work in the Saatchi Collection, European Museums and has completed a number of prestigious commissions in the USA.

Statements

Kei Ito

"The forms that I have created might suggest that the route is itself a stage, and that a journey within this passage are themselves a form of theatre ... Yet if this is a theatre it is a uniquely private one inside each of us located between a sense of the here and nowhere of place"

Melanie Manchot

"The work addresses the relationship between our public personas and the intimacy and privacy of individual desires. The bus shelter advertising spaces create a theatrical setting and the street becomes a stage on which people are invited to express their private desires – a fantastic persona!"

Project Brief

A collaborative project between two artists, invited to respond to and interpret the route and create a journey between two locations and venues: the City Gallery, Granby Street, New Walk, and New Walk Museum & Art Gallery simultaneously highlighting the architectural and natural environments and linking two exhibitions: Contemporary International Basket Making (a Crafts Council touring show) and The Dryad Collection, (Leicester crafts/basket collection) through a site-specific temporary installation.



Community Involvement

This unusual project comprising of two inter-related temporary installations explored a number of different 'approaches' to community involvement. In the case of **Kei Ito's Momentary Interruption (part 1)** artwork, engagement came through community interaction with the sited installation and also as participants in specially devised processional performance pieces.

In **Melanie Manchot's For a Moment a Stage (part 2) 10 portraits**, the community became part of the work as 'subjects' photographed by Melanie Manchot as they experienced Kei Ito's installation along the route, and then again as these images were 're-introduced' to the community when displayed as posters in advertising spaces located in 10 local bus shelters. Chosen for their reference to 'popular' visual culture and 'high visibility' these sites presented the work as ambiguous visual events.

Throughout the time the installations were sited, there were guided walk and talkabouts lead by the artists, gallery and public art staff; there was a specially designed family trail and also a linked exhibition about the artists' work and the Cultural Mapping programme in the Upstairs gallery at the City Gallery. Kei Ito devised several choreographed performance pieces and costumes; one for the launch event of the Cultural Mapping **Momentary Interruption** installation and linked exhibitions performed by the singers Vivien Ellis and Jeremy Avis; the second devised performance kick started the Leicester BBC Music Live (Summer 2000) community procession along New Walk and was led by a Japanese Bhutto dancer with students from the Institute of Classical Indian Dance Leicester. The students had previously participated in a Bhutto dance Master class which extended their own knowledge base and practice.

Barry Rose and students from Hereward College produced an interpretative documentary style video **In Conversation** of the artists talking about their work.

Purpose/Function

This multifaceted temporary public art project worked and functioned on a number of levels including, extending the boundaries and possibilities of crafts and arts practice achieved by taking specific practice, in this case photography and textiles, outside 'out of the gallery' context and into the public realm. Encouraging new and 'cross over' audiences and to increase accessibility and understanding of public art, the different venues, services and exhibitions. Facilitating and encouraging collaboration and multidisciplinary working between different practitioners, artists, venues and service providers. This collaborative working between different venues was further demonstrated through development of a time / image based project a projection piece by Melanie Manchot, projected onto the architectural façade of Phoenix Arts in 2003.

- Kei Ito's **Momentary Interruption (part 1)** temporary installation visually linked two exhibitions and cultural venues – Leicester New Walk Museum & Art Gallery and the City Gallery.
- The sited sculptural forms highlighted the 'space in between' the natural and architectural beauty of New Walk, and a connection between two different types of gallery spaces and exhibitions, the contemporary and traditional.
- Melanie Manchot's **For a Moment a Stage (part 2)** portraits are a photographic enquiry into the dreams and aspirations of the citizens of Leicester, resulting in publicly displayed portrait posters' in a different context from that of a gallery.



Site/Location

New Walk is 1.5km in length, a conservation/heritage site and promenade designed for walking. The key to its character is that it is a park rather than just a collection of buildings. Anyone walking along it is faced with stretches where they can see far ahead and others where a curve or slope holds back the view of the next part.

Trees bring seasonal changes and attract a variety of wildlife. Most of the architecture / houses on New Walk are in variations of the classical style.

New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, has a distinctive classical portico with 4 large imposing columns and a number of nationally acclaimed collections. Originally built in 1836 as a school for the non-conformists, designed by Joseph Hansom, also designer of the Hansom Cab and the Pork Pie Chapel in Belvoir Street, Leicester.

The City Gallery opened in 1989 on busy Granby Street which previously was the centre of commercial activity in the 19th Century; it is located approximately five minutes walk from New Walk Museum and Art Gallery and Leicester railway station.

Momentary Interruption (part 1) temporary installation transformed the City Gallery's slate façade which supported the artist's white textile sculptural forms, giving a contemporary feel within the context of mostly Victorian surroundings. The New Walk Museum & Art Gallery entrance classical and imposing columns were visually animated and softened through the textile installation. Red organic sculptural forms in various sizes and constructed from vinyl, were attached to and suspended from street lighting columns and the trees along the 'route' between the two venues creating a visual and stimulating journey.

For a Moment a Stage (part 2) Melanie Manchot's 10 photo text portraits were placed in advertising spaces in Adshel bus shelter sites located in the City Centre, Belgrave Gate, Haymarket, London Road – Train Station to Victoria Park Road; Welford Road/Marlborough St., and the High Street/Silver Street.



Special Features/Points of Interest

- Textile sculptures attached to the facades of the two venues the City Gallery, Leicester New Walk Museum & Art Gallery.
- Taking art outside of a gallery, Kei Ito's installations engage the passer by in what she has described as a 'private theatre'. A series of sculptural forms to animate the space between the ground and the immediate space above the people walking along the route. These forms intended to mark certain places along the route and act as thought forms or memory loops, causing the passers by to stop and ponder and become more aware of the space around them.
- For the New Walk Museum portico classical columns Kei Ito used 150 metres of polyester organza fabric, the appearance and properties of the fabric had been altered by a Japanese pleating technique called Shibori. The column installation pieces were entirely hand crafted.
- Melanie Manchot in her work **For a Moment a Stage** took portraits of passers by and visitors to the venues during Kei Ito's Installation. These portraits were translated into 'large-scale' poster portraits and 'exhibited' in bus shelter advertising spaces around the City centre and London Road to Victoria Park (which runs parallel to New Walk)
- Melanie Manchot's involves the public in a visual way. Through a series of images and texts, based upon conversations with local people, in so doing, she also 'culturally mapped' the narrative history of a community on the physical landscape.
- Melanie Manchot created a third part – a large scale architectural projection piece for the façade of Phoenix Arts which was launched with a publication at Phoenix Arts and linked exhibition opening at the City Gallery.



Possible Focus or Point of Engagement for Learning

- How many different shapes and colours did Kei Ito use in her work? Why do you think she used a limited colour palette?
- Which other artists use textiles to create installations and sculptures?
- This was an unusual project as the first work by Kei Ito was temporary and although the materials used still exist, in effect the work has already 'happened'. If it was re-staged do you think it would be a different artwork? If so give reasons why?
- In what other ways is this project different to other art works in the Cultural Mapping series?
- For the New Walk Museum portico classical columns Kei Ito used 150 metres of polyester organza fabric, the appearance and properties of the fabric had been altered by a Japanese pleating technique called Shibori how was this traditionally used and applied?
- Melanie Manchot's 'Poster Portraits' of ordinary Leicester people have been immortalised
- Which other artists and arts movements have used ordinary people as their subject matter and why? Do you think this is a good idea?
- What type of skills and attributes do you think the two artists needed to have, to do a project like this?
- Creative collaborations often take far longer to plan and deliver – why do you think this is so? What might the benefits be for the end viewers, artists and the project commissioners / managers?
- Design and develop a project of your own which takes two different artists, art forms / creative expressions outside of their traditional locations and contexts. Experiment with scale, mediums and 'function'. How would you choose: the artists, artform and locations? What criteria would you draw up to help you decide?

For More Information

www.leicester.gov.uk/publicart

Toolkit author Jasia McArdle with input from Steve Cooke. Images © Melanie Manchot 2005 for Public Art Leicester Cultural Mapping project.

