

Common Salt *evidencing the history of forgetting*

a performance around a table
a cine-poem

by artists Sheila Ghelani and Sue Palmer

Images & additional audience feedback from B-Side work-in-progress sharing at Outpost, Portland, Dorset, July 6th 2017:

'The overall effect was of connection' - Giles Brown

'The table - filling up. The experience was lovely' - William Sherdan

'I really enjoyed following the journey of your research... engaging, immersive, exploratory,' - Elizabeth Selby,

'Multi-sensory. Original. Guilt. Hope'

'Wonderful performance talk by Sue Palmer and Sheila Ghelani tonight at Outpost. What a treat - so interesting - a compelling and engaging way to present their research and a visual delight too - a performance around a table.' - Molly Scarborough, b-side

"Sheila & Sue's work chimes well with b-side...researching and creating events for audiences that draw upon local expertise and creative interpretation. We've found this to be particularly successful in drawing in new audiences to our programme whilst creating new interdisciplinary partnerships." - Sally Watkins, Artistic Director of b-side



Extracts of a blogpost written by Cathy Turner of *Wrights & Sites* after seeing the work in progress:

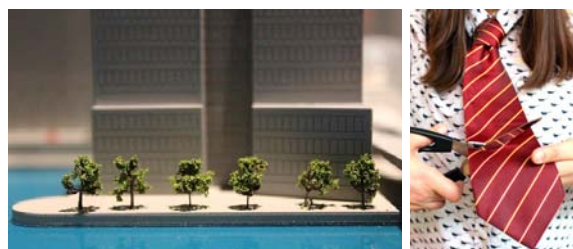
Performance in the shape of a hedge

...In their performance, Common Salt, Sue Palmer and Ghelani make the connections, so many connections, as intricate as the hedge itself: a thicket and a thorny one. This is performance in the shape of a hedge, branching, meshing... Visually it is a collector's table, a war room, a private museum. Aurally, it counterpoints a Shruti box and a swanee whistle...

Common Salt - Why now?

There is a current and keen public interest in hidden history, in colonial empire. As we cut our ties with Europe, we are re-examining our place, our relations - a reckoning that exposes the interconnectedness between history and global power, artefact and trade, race and memory.

"The East India Company remains the most powerful corporation the world has ever seen, a precursor to today's transnational corporations. But ... little marks its rise and fall, its innovations and its crimes. A selective memory reigns"
Jane Trowell, 'Loot, Reckoning with the East India Company', PLATFORM 2002



'They had this thing where they cut your tie when you put through your first trade.' - Paul Hawtin, Hedge Fund Manager

'... the unexpected history of an extraordinary hedge and the patterns which underlie commerce and culture that irrevocably bind us to a (colonial) past which is still shaping our future. Sue Palmer and Sheila Ghelani are brilliantly engaging ... and left me pondering the powerful connections between word and image as a kind of poetic conundrum for days afterwards...' - Lucy Cash, filmmaker and cine-poem collaborator after seeing an early sharing of the research material.

What is a cine-poem and why?:



A cine-poem is a short poetic moving-image work - quick to watch but something that the viewer wants to return to multiple times and think about. The strength of a cine-poem is that it can be displayed in multiple formats (gallery installation, film screening, mobile phone), in multiple locations (arts festivals, museums, libraries, online) and also be used as a learning tool in workshops or by individuals, museums, educational institutions and libraries. It therefore has the power to reach a wide and diverse audience. Both Sheila and I have extensive experience in working in this form, as detailed below.

A Common Salt cine-poem will enable the projects' stories and research to exist long beyond the live performance is over - a permanent legacy. There is also concrete evidence of the suitability and demand for a version of the work in this form - both Frome museum and b-side have already invited us to share our cine-poem, where it will be installed throughout b-side festival for 2 weeks, reaching up to 2000 visitors) and in Frome Heritage Museum (4 weeks, 5000 visitors). We have also received audience feedback which indicates demand:

'Watching Sheila Ghelani and Sue Palmer's Common Salt material in an initial performance version, I was struck by its filmic attributes. I felt very strongly that these exquisite and important materials would lend themselves to a filmed treatment of some kind - a visual treatment that would enable its elegant, compelling details and layers to breathe deeply and to realise their potential as a film essay.'

Feedback following the B-Side sharing from David Williams, Associate Director, Lone Twin

Common Salt *evidencing the history of forgetting*

The images above are from moving image works Sheila and I have made. These can be viewed very easily on Sheila's website (sheilaghelani.co.uk) in the Rambles with Nature, Ramble 1 section and through Sue's [YouTube channel](#).

For Sheila's *Rambles with Nature Ramble 1* Sheila made four short cine-poems which have since been displayed in multiple formats as follows:

As an installation at Siobhan Davies Studios, London (6 weeks) **1800 visitors**

Warwick Arts Centre (2 days) **100 visitors**

Cambridge Junction (2 days) **100 visitors**

Forest Fringe, Edinburgh (3 weeks) **750 visitors**

as a gallery work as part of a Black Artists and Modernism display at Chelsea College of Art (10 days) **500 visitors**

as part of a screening at Somerset House, London as part of Walking Women. **50 visitors**

The poems are also available on Sheila's website and are free to download onto mobile phones. **600 visitors**

Sue's short moving image works have been seen and displayed at:

44AD Gallery Bath (3 weeks)

Biophilia Film Channel at Dorset County Hospital produced by Dorset AONB (over one year)

Tintinhull Manor National Trust House and Garden (10 days) **350+ visitors**

Bodies in Land Film Festival, Abercych, West Wales (3 days) **100 visitors**

OSR Projects, Somerset (15 days) **250+ visitors**

All Sue's moving image works are viewable online (**between 200 and 700 views for each short**).

Artist practice and biographies:

Sheila Ghelani and Sue Palmer both work individually as artists whose work spans performance, audio and moving image. Each artist's practice centres on using research to make artistic work with detail and resonance, for public places, made for the passer by or the guest; making new work with and for the public is the meeting point between artist and context.

Sheila and Sue first collaborated as part of Sheila's *Rambles with Nature* project, developing an experimental collaboration bringing their strengths and interests together through language and object, music and lyric, politic and social geography, wit and wryness.

Each brings an incisive intelligence, an ambitious and inquisitive approach to making work, with a wealth of experience in working collaboratively with institutions, places and people. Both artists are skilled and crafty at using charismatic live performance and visual media to present intimate, implicating and gently unfolding connective experiences for audiences, with exquisitely produced visual materials.

Sheila Ghelani has made art work in major public cultural institutions here in the UK and internationally, including installation, performance and digital media art works at Tate Liverpool, Fierce Festival in Birmingham, Wellcome Collection and Southbank Centre in London. She has shown work abroad in Switzerland, Belgium and Australia. *Rambles with Nature* (2013-2015) funded by ACE, created work exhibited through moving image, live performance and publication.

"We commissioned Slow Story Slideshow for 'On Light', a festival exploring our relationship with light at Wellcome Collection, the work produced was a real highlight for us and our audience. Sheila researched objects in our library to create an experience that was meditative, intriguing and enriching for our visitors. It was a delight to work with her on the project." Rosie Stanbury, Events Manager Wellcome Collection

Sue Palmer has worked for over 30 years using contemporary arts practice to engage people and public space in the UK and internationally. Recent commissions include 'The 100 Year Old Band' in Germany and Finland alongside work for Battersea Arts Centre, B-side festival and many non arts organisations including Somerset Wildlife Trust, National Trust and Forestry Commission. Sue has worked in a diversity of contexts using live and digital art forms across the UK, in West Africa, Russia and Georgia.



"I genuinely loved your work ... You responded to the many forms of 'reading' a historic place and this gave your work vertical as well as horizontal dimensions in time. It was remarkable how large the experience of twenty minutes could be." Howard Hull, Director, John Ruskin Museum, Brantwood, Coniston.

Short CV: Sue Palmer - Artist and project manager

Frome, Somerset, UK

www.biggerhouse.co.uk/sue - online CV

www.inquillines.com - an online collection of art and environment research and projects - 2011 ongoing

www.the100yearoldband.com

www.youtube.com/user/suepalmervideowork

Live Artist: Live art, social practice projects, place responsive performance (since 2000)

The 100 Year Old Band: working in collaboration with artists Joff Winterhart and Simon Roberts creating a pan-generational multi-ability band of people aged from 10-90, brought together through street encounter and call out. *Commissioned by Gob Squad Berlin (2014), You & Your Work Bristol (2012), ANTI Finland (2011)*

The One Day Old Band for Cambridge - 2014 *Commissioned by Cambridge Junction.*

Walk and Talk in Fortuneswell - 2013. In collaboration with Joff Winterhart. *Commissioned by b-side - 2013*

26 and 7 Bones - a cross-discipline project as part of South West Cultural Olympiad - 2012
Commissioned by Earth Festival, ACE funded (in collaboration with Sally Watkins)

Try this on, become something other with me *Commissioned by Brewhouse Theatre Taunton - 2011*

The No 1 Bus a PVA MediaLab and b-side arts commission (in collaboration with Joff Winterhart) - 2010

Eat Dartington *commissioned as part of 'Shaking Hands with Ghosts' with Maritea Daehlin - 2010*

It Is For The Tiger *Arts Council England funded new live work for national touring - 2005-09*

psi: mid space *Arts Council England funded new collaborative performance touring work - 2003-04*

Mnemosyne Dreams - SS Great Britain, Bristol University Drama Dept & PARIP - 2004

Hair Raising *a Year of the Artist project, Arts Council Funded, in GJ's Hair Salon, Shepton Mallet - 2001*

The Price of Clouds solo site-specific residency and public guided tour at Brantwood, Coniston - 2001

Lecturing, Dramaturgical support:

Associate Lecturer in Theatre and Performance at the internationally renowned **Dartington College of Arts** Devon UK, teaching across the undergraduate contemporary performance programme in live art, site work and contextual arts practice, organising guest artists and 1st year course coordination (2001-2010).

- Dramaturgical support and response to artists including Jo Bannon, Lucy Cash, Jo Hellier, Ira Brand.

Project Management, Consultancy, Research and Community Engagement Commissions:

Artist Researcher with Arts Development Company and Dorset Libraries, researching arts and cultural development, social enterprise opportunities and future provision for Dorset Libraries, *January - March 2017*

Community Projects Manager for the **South West London Environment Network: Apr 2014 - Jan 2017 (PT)** including **Project Manager - Springtimes Art, Environment and Education Programme: A4A funded.**

Project manager - Urban Heat in Hounslow: Joseph Rowntree Foundation & Policy Studies Institute, Westminster University & SWLEN - 2016

Project Manager - The Eel Pie Island Music Project: Heritage Lottery Funded (Aurora Metro) - a 9 month management of large-scale budget, 28 volunteers, delivery of all strands across media - 2013

Artist Consultant: Dorset AONB 5 year Management Plan: Dorset AONB and Dorset Loves Arts: Researched and assisted writing of a new 'Culture Chapter' for their 5 year Management Plan - 2013

Artist Consultant: 'The Market Stall for Meadows and Grasslands' Somerset Wildlife Trust and Plantlife UK: (in collaboration with artist Simon Lee Dicker) - 2012

Artist Consultant: 'Routes to the River Tone': *Somerset Wildlife Trust: public engagement and design recommendations (in collaboration with SLD) – 2012*

Artist: Around Here & Out There (This Garden): *Somerset Art Works: (in collaboration with artist Simon Lee Dicker) - 2010-11*

Artist Consultant: Routes River Rail, a Connectivity Study: *Taunton Deane Borough Council - 2010*

Educational, participatory arts projects commissioned by producers and providers includes:

'4 x a garden': Wells Cathedral School, Somerset Wells - 2015

'The Archivists' education programme for Battersea Arts Centre & Our Good Neighbour - 2014

Outside In - PVA / Bridport Arts Centre, Dorset - 2010

Biggerhouse: making new work in video and sound. Training others in production. Projects included Glastonbury Net Radio - one of the UK's first internet radio stations streaming new audio work (1999 - 2007)

Selected moving image works and digital art participatory commissions:

Flowers, where is the garden, *Somerset Commissioned by Somerset Art Works* - new moving image, print work, and participatory project - 2013.

Mottisfont Abbey residency *commissioned by A Place for Art, National Trust* making new moving image works with staff at Mottisfont for exhibition in the gallery and house - 2012

Transience: a place-responsive online digital interactive artwork *commissioned by Somerset Artworks & Forestry Commission* working over a year with people and landscape, in the Blackdown Hills - 2008-09

Reach Devon: Soundings *commissioned by Aune Head Arts, Reach Devon* as lead artist for intergenerational project making new sound and moving image works about mental health and dementia - 2009

Moving image exhibited:

44AD Gallery Bath (2015), Maynard 'Bodies in Land' Film Festival West Wales (2013), Art in Hospitals Dorset (2014 ongoing), Tintinhull Manor Somerset (2013), Mottisfont Abbey Hampshire (2012), OSR Projects Somerset (2012), Cultivate Taunton (2012), Ham House in Richmond (2012), Brewhouse Taunton (2011) Hestercombe Gardens Somerset (2011), Bridport Arts Centre Dorset (2010).

Professional Artist and Research Development:

- **Artist with 'Prospectus'** - a pilot project to create an alternative form of art school for the dispersed art community of Somerset, produced by Somerset Art Works, *January - June 2017*
- Co-producer and host of weekend workshop and talk by artist Florian Roithmayer in Frome - October 2017
- Convener of **Art Club Frome**, Somerset - May 2017 ongoing
- **Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travel Fellowship 2016**

Publications:

- **Research report:** Parks and People: Innovative participation in public urban green space: Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship 2017
- Contributing writer to **Rambles with Nature - a pocket book** by Sheila Ghelani, 2015
- **The No 1 Bus Drawing Book** drawings by Joff Winterhart, text by Sue Palmer, published by LabCulture Ltd, Dorset 2011 as limited edition of 40 (ISBN 9788-0-9560187-1-7)
- Guest writer for **The Ashden Directory**, environment and the performing arts site, with 3 articles for the Flowers On Stage (2010) and for Ashdenizen blog (2011), and in **Landing Stages** (2015)
- "psi: mid space": **The Liquid Reader**, The Planetary Collegium, Plymouth University (2005)

Practice featured in publications:

- The 100 Year Old Band at ANTI: **Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts: Vol 17 (1)**
- Fiona Wilkie's Mapping The Terrain: Site-Specific Performance in Britain: **New Theatre Quarterly 70 (8:2)**
- Bob Butler's **365 - Year of The Artist in the South West** Bridport: Agre Books 2001

Research and Memberships:

- RANE (Research in Art, Nature and Environment) Research Fellow, 2017 ongoing
- Associate member of PLaCE UK & member of Performing Mobilities Network (London colloquium).
- Membership of Artist Network, Artworks, Critical Spaces, and Somerset Art Works.

Education:

MA in Cultural Performance 1999-2001 - Bristol University / Welfare State International