

Modes of Remembrance: The Act and Art of Remembering is an exhibition of the work of Grace Adam, artist-in-residence at West End Anglican Parish Church, St Giles-in-the-Fields. Her residency has culminated in a series of sculptural interventions that form an investigation and response into St Giles' monuments and memorials, to the famous and the forgotten, their relationship with the space, and our relationship with them.

Grace's practice moves between drawing, painting and sculpture/installation, and she is particularly interested in our built environments; the spaces we build, both public and domestic. Crucially, the objects we select for our spaces describe our values: aesthetic, social and political, as does the 'second layer', the formal collecting and preserving of such objects. In this way, her research has sought to question whether monuments of public remembrance still function to help us map and locate ourselves against others.

St Giles-in-the-Fields, also commonly known as the Poets' Church, is part of the Diocese of London within the Church of England. Several buildings have stood on the site; the present structure designed by Henry Flitcroft in the Palladian style was built between 1731 and 1733. St Giles and Seven Dials have a rich and varied history. The church, as Peter Ackroyd puts it, is a place of 'entrance and exit' and is at the 'crossroads of time and eternity.'

Through Grace's residency and exhibition she has explored how objects communicate ideas about who is valued, how we value them, the language of memorialising and the changing tastes and conventions of remembrance. In her practice, she has responded to a range of domestic and secular settings. Through this particular work in an ecclesiastical environment, funded by Arts Council England and University of the Arts London (UAL), she has made interventions that enliven, inform and question; that awaken us to parts of our city that we no longer see clearly or perhaps even notice.

From a visual perspective, objects reflect the styles and tastes of those remembered, and of makers and viewers over several centuries. Grace has examined the intentions of the makers, the materials and aesthetics involved. This raises interesting questions about the politics of remembrance, of materials, and of shared and unshared histories. Collections of memorial objects are often in flux: formed and reformed. The artist asks the viewer to consider the altered status of these objects, and what that might mean.

Grace has made and installed nine works in St Giles that offer her temporary and contemporary response to some of the memorials in a space which has historical and enduring resonance architecturally, aesthetically and ecclesiastically.

Many thanks to the Rector and staff of St Giles-in-the-Fields, particularly Reverend Alan Carr; to Gillian Cargill for the exhibition photographs; Richy Lamb, Owned and Operated for the exhibition print design; Edwina Zormelo for making the covers and to Nicola Turner, NT Creative Arts.

For further information about Grace and her work, visit <a href="www.graceadam.com">www.graceadam.com</a> and follow <a href="graceAdam4">@GraceAdam4</a> on Twitter.

# **Grace Adam**

# Modes of Remembrance: The Act and Art of Remembering

20 September - 31 October, 2014

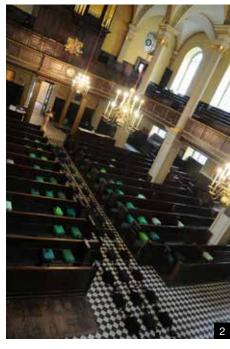
St Giles-in-the-Fields Church 60 St Giles High Street London WC2H 8LG











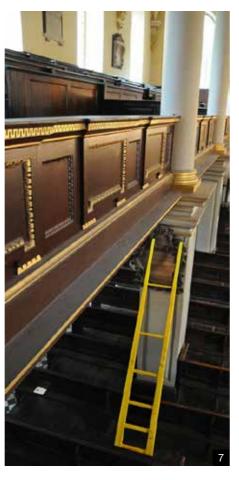
















# Modes of Remembrance: The Act and Art of Remembering

# 1. Philip Audinet, Engraver

Etched aluminium plate, ink, acrylic paint, pews

This work addresses the nature of remembering and forgetting. Forgetting is not all bad. Philip Audinet was a good printmaker, and made a good living. Forgotten.

Descended from a French family that came to England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Audinet was born in Soho, London, and served an apprenticeship with John Hall. He was employed on portraits for Harrison & Co.'s *Biographical Magazine* and other works.

Audinet died in London 18 December 1837, and was buried in St Giles-in-the-Fields.

### 2. One Hundred Hassocks

One hundred hassocks in coloured fabric covers, with ribbons

These hassocks are worn, and often have knee impressions in them from years of people communicating with their god, or just thinking. They are not well-used anymore. What does kneeling mean now? Initially Grace considered covering them with fabric that reflected various religious traditions *ie*, specific colours for mourning.

Instead of referring to any particular tradition, One Hundred Hassocks consists of twenty black hassocks and eighty in various greens. Black speaks to/reflects the void of grief, and the greens are about renewal.

## 3. A Wreath

Constructed of real roses, 3D printed roses and wire

This piece explores how we mourn publicly. We rely heavily on 'traditional' or stock objects and imagery. The rose appears in Ancient Greek, Islamic, Buddhist, Christian traditions, through to traditional Valentine gifts, and readily available wreaths. It's hard to find a culture that does not have a place for the rose. It is associated with love, secrecy and death.

The wreath, acting as a kind of visual shorthand for mourning is updated with generic facsimiles of roses drained of their colour. If you want something, it has been manufactured for you. Grief and the act of public remembrance can also be commodified.

# 4. Fifty

Fifty circular wooden discs, fifty metal tags, peg board

John Pearson, who died in 1707, bequeathed the sum of  $\pounds 50$  a year for 99 years, 'one half to be utilised for the apprenticeship of boys Sons of poor decay'd Housekeepers, and the other half to go to the 20 Women in the Almeshouses at ye end of Monmouth Street'.

# 5. Like Father, Like Son.

Four small oil paintings

Arthur Devis and his son, Arthur William Devis, were both painters. The church houses a touching stone dedicated to father, mother and only sister. The father in this dedication is the younger Devis who died in 1822.

'A Lady in Blue' and 'Eliza O'Neill as Belvidera' by father and son respectively reflect idealised females. Grace's sketch-copies of their paintings illustrate their profession and status, but seem more human, perhaps more probing than their society portraits.

# 6. Kind Words

Three screen prints

The text on the prints is imperfect, Messages and statements have lost their authoritative or assured status

The phrases and words to be found on the memorials in the church, illustrate the decisions people have made about what to say, how to say it, saying the right thing, knowing that this will form a lasting public statement. Some of the sentiments seem very contemporary; others are couched in stiff and formal terms, unfamiliar to a contemporary reader.

### 7. A Kind of Ladder

Ladder constructed of pine, and stained with acrylic paint

A ladder should be reliable. Unevenly sized and spaced, the rungs of this ladder ask us to reflect on our own unreliable, constantly re-formed memories. In many religious traditions, and creation myths from around the world a ladder of sorts spans worlds, states, heaven and earth.

## 8. Seven Dials Lives

Hawthorn roots, acrylic paint, wire, wool, thread

This work is constructed from several tough, dense hawthorn roots spliced together. Rather than one root, Grace has spliced together several to give the piece an awkwardness that reminds the viewer that all sorts of people's lives have passed through this area. Most lives don't run smoothly and the memorials in the church attest to changes of plan and unforeseen circumstances. Some people attended this place regularly, some were buried here. Some left this area for faraway destinations. Some lived and died peacefully - others not. It's a tangled affair. Seven Dials Lives is grey, black and white to reflect the dramatic monochrome colour scheme of St Giles' tiled floor.

### 9. John Flaxman's Hands

A swag of interlocking three-dimensional drawings of hands in wire

The swag refers to Flaxman's Wedgwood designs.

John Flaxman R.A., 6 July 1755—7 December 1826, was a British sculptor and draughtsman, and a leading figure in British and European Neoclassicism. Early in his career he worked as a modeller for Josiah Wedgwood's pottery. He was a prolific maker of funerary monuments, including a monument to Nelson in St Paul's Cathedral.

Placed under the memorial to the artist himself, Grace had chosen to focus on Flaxman's draftsmanship, which was central to his practice. A collection of his drawings, close by at The Flaxman Gallery, UCL, provided an insight into his use of line, and economic style as a way of working out ideas for commissions as well as recording those close to him.