

that which took hold of the reader – again a reason for creating this uniformed and clean binding. With a handmade book I believed there was potential for the craft-like nature of it to detract from it being read as described above.

I spent much time testing various paper supplies and samples until I managed to find a paper supplier who understood the aesthetic I was trying to develop. Speaking with them I expressed that I wanted a particular finish to the paper I would use – wanting to have the print on the page rest with a certain powdered matt finish. I also wanted the paper itself to have a certain sheen to it, with both the feel of a soft finish and the way in which the light would interact with the page – albeit subtly – would engage the reader and influence the experience felt when reading the book.

Framing the artist's book, for the purpose of this review of practice, I have framed it as being part of a sculptural extension, as opposed to locating it within the theorisation and literature discussing Artists Books as medium. As part of my body of work the form of the artist's book was means to absorb this performance of myself as artist, channelling an experience through surface and in turn creating a space for the viewer to take on such transfer. The writing within it was an example of one of the ways in which writing had a performed and sculptural role within my practice, as framed earlier.

The book was another way in which I could present a sense of self, and further situate self as part of this dialogue between creative act and a recognition of the narratives involved in both a family and wider collective history.

Zadar 2014

In early 2014 I was approached to be part of a group show in Zadar, Croatia. Coincidentally, it was around the same time the year before which I had been asked to be involved in the group exhibition in Donegal. The curators, Katarzyna Kosmala and Josip Zanki were planning the project, titled “Back to Heritage: Follies and ruins: between incompleteness and the imagination”, for early September, taking place within the 8th century building of St. Donatus Church. The preserved structure, long since disused for religious service, now functions as an arts venue within the old town area of Zadar, within ancient walled surrounds. Kosmala and Zanki described the premise of the show as addressing “processes of representing and reinterpreting cultural heritage, reflect upon contemporary uses of archaeological remains and probe into follies of human memory in the context of Scotland and Croatia, drawing on the legacy of different influences” (Kosmala, 2014).

I decided that I wanted to use this opportunity to develop on aspects exhibited in the Donegal show, reworking the material featured at that point. Both in terms of shifts in realisations made and in physical relocations, I intended to take the original narratives concerned and seek to ‘take stock’ through creative process as the research period was reaching conclusion.

In proposal, I sent the following outline to Kosmala and Zanki, noting reference to the original work:

This sculptural installation marks the completion of a journey of exploration and investigation, a series of encounters with the past, with memory, place and above all migration undertaken by the artist. In making this journey Rachael has also undergone a process of coming to terms with her own identity as an artist while reconnecting with her family’s story - in particular that of her grandmother Agnes McBride who, like so many before and after her, left her home - on the Rosguill Peninsula - as a fifteen year old girl to cross the Irish Sea and forge a new life as an independent woman, before eventually marrying another Irish exile (Leitrim) to start the Scottish branch of the Flynn family. This work for Folie: Between Incompleteness and the Imagination will be made up of three parts involving installation, an artist’s book, and both live and recorded performances.

In June 2013, Rachael walked from her grandmother’s family home in Donegal down to the shore, where the old local school had been located. This performance was a gesture made by Rachael to represent a recurring dream, which her grandmother had each night in the years following her departure from Ireland. Dreaming of home she would visit these places, travelling along familiar roads and landscapes - part of an ancestral legacy, tracing a knowledge of place imprinted on the generations which had lived for so long amongst these shorelined edges. These nightly visions formed a ritual of going back and remembering for Agnes.

Now, a year later, she will take a journey of the same length as that of Agnes’ dream – just over one kilometre, walking from one water edge to the other on the peninsula of Old Zadar Town. As she is walking she will listen to a recording of the audio taken from the documentation of the journey last year. As she is listening to these sounds from that landscape a recording of the same will play within the installation space. The relocation of places, and the memories of them, will echo in this new site. On her return to the gallery space on the opening evening she will project the journey she has just made. This will connect to the screening of the original journey made in Donegal, which Rachael projected into the installation space the evening before, once

the building had been closed and was empty. A recording of that will play on the screen in the space in the following run of the show, alongside this prior walk through Donegal.

The work would involve response to site, though prior to my arrival I developed certain aspects, which would travel over to the space with me, ready for show. Detailed above there were three particular aspects to the work - A video work projection, an artist's book, with prints of each page hanging within the space, and a live performance on the opening night of the exhibition, retracing the original 'nocturnal walk' of Agnes', through the landscape of the town where this new work was situated⁶⁹. Documenting this performance on video I would return to the gallery space and screen the work within the installation, following this by creating a video work to be played following this evening during the run of the show, amalgamating both previous and new walk, finding union as they were played concurrently.

Whilst this opening night performance would produce result in this video work, I was also conscious that thorough engaging in the act the implications of the gesture would lead to further narratives for me to explore following my return. Again, there were several layers and aspects, which would result from the engagement of creating the work that would extend on further than the duration of the three-week exhibition.

The installation of the work involved complications, which I was coming to expect as part of such process. During this I was increasingly aware that the handling and endurance of such was in many ways part of the disciplines method, with both physical and mental stretches to try and form a work responding to site. Such experience was further affected by a particularly bad experience taking allergic reaction to a spread of Tiger Mosquito bites, which seemed to escalate my emotional tolerance for such an engagement.

On the evening of the opening I made preparations for the performance retracing Agnes' steps within this new context. I had fitted myself with a camera to document and, after brief introduction to the audience, I departed from the venue.

⁶⁹ I did consider taking a votive candle and lighting it at the water's edge as part of this work. I decided however that the notion of lighting another candle would break the sense of repose which had resulted from the Film City work. Furthermore, there had not been a candle lit as part of the original walk in Donegal.



At 5:30pm artist Rachael Flynn departed from her installation space to walk the route of her grandmother's dream around the Old Town. She will walk from one water edge to the other at the opposite side.

At 7pm she will project a filmed recording of this journey within the installation space.

Figure 112 Instructions displayed within space

I had previously made an internal sense of a map in my head to follow, based upon walking the same distance as that covered when engaging in such in Donegal. There was both transpose back to this experience, whilst I was bringing such to this new landscape. There was a parallel felt between this work and that which was experimented with during the 91 High Street work in Paisley. Time and place were being bridged by my remembering of past and experiencing of present within the same act. The sound of the water as I walked around the coast-line heightened such connection. I was also struck by the notion of yet again making work in devotion to this family history, which had so powerfully affected me. I could only hope that this would impart through the video filming my movement. Whether or not this was readable in the footage is hard to quantify, with the significance of the gesture yet again adding a sense of such narrative to the reading of the work as part of the installation.

I had a few days following the opening night to spend in Zadar. As mix of both tiredness from the installation of the work, along with the effect still of the insect bites, I felt as if still in suspension and amidst the performance. Reflecting upon this, I feel that a large reason for this was that in being within this location, I was still inhabiting the performance of Agnes and the memories attached, within this shift of landscape. I continued to occupy those emotions felt, initiated through both the installation of the work and through performing her walk. I was also

perhaps conscious that this work signaled, in terms of the PhD, the journey as having been unfolded in completion.



Figure 113 View of space (on approach to work)



Figure 114 View of space (front view)



Figure 115 View of space (video work playing)



Figure 116 View of space (prints and display chest)



Figure 117 View of space (prints and display chest detail – book and handling gloves)



Figure 118 View of space (prints and display chest)



Figure 119 View of space (print detail)

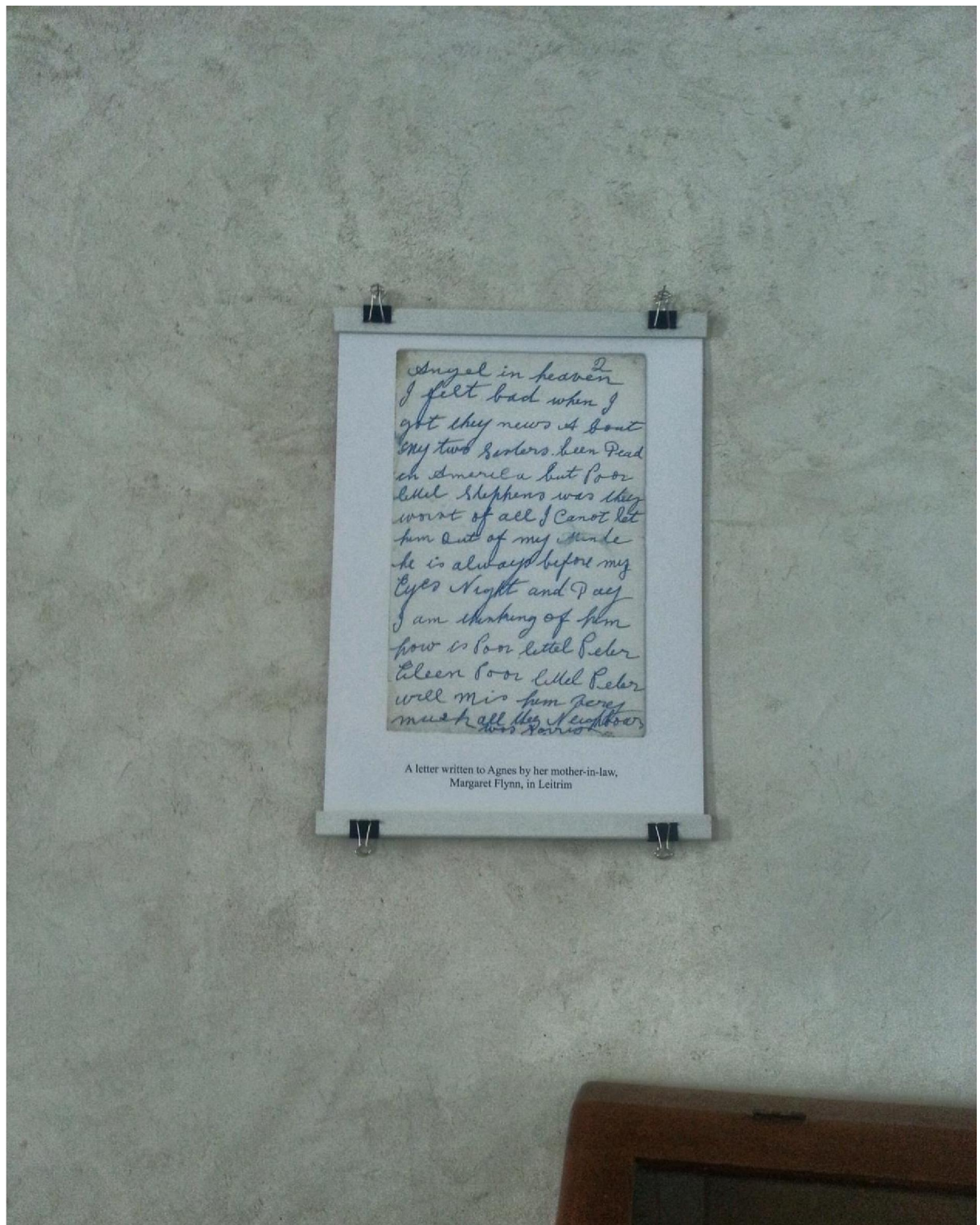


Figure 120 View of space (print detail)



Figure 121 View of space (artist book in chest detail)



Figure 122 Zadar performance video still



Figure 123 Zadar performance video still

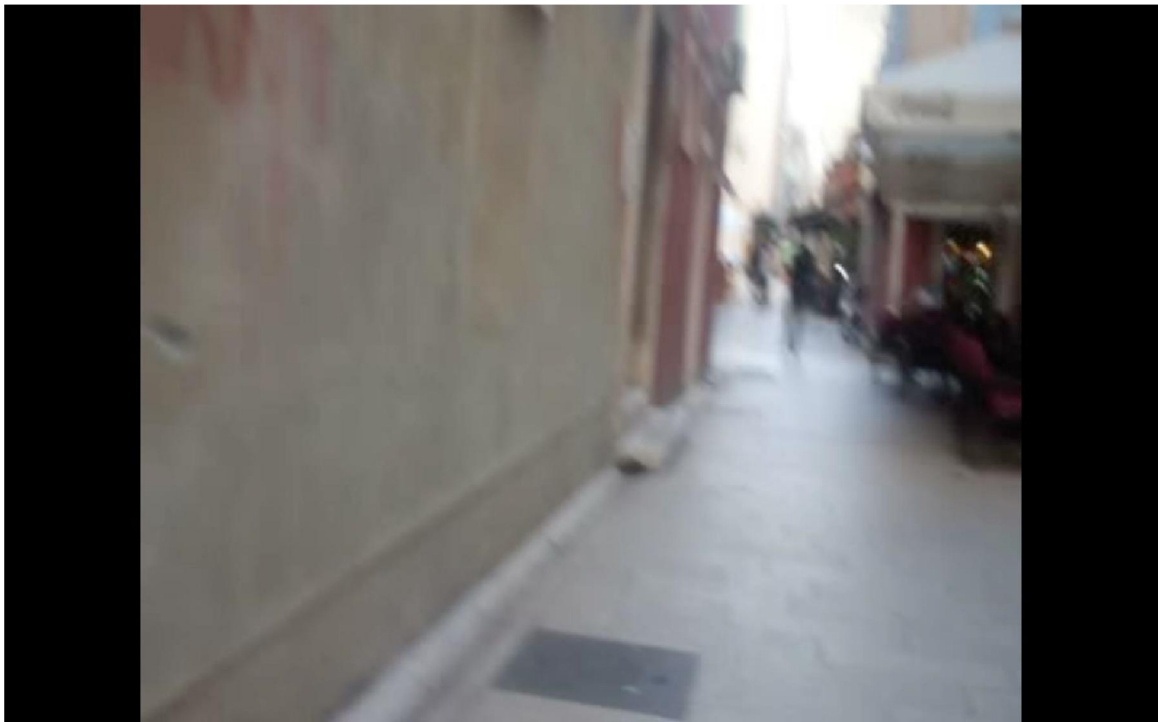


Figure 124 Zadar performance video still



Figure 125 Zadar performance video still



Figure 126 Zadar performance video still



Figure 127 Zadar performance video still



Figure 128 Zadar performance video still



Figure 129 Tra Na Rosann & Zadar dual performance



Figure 130 Tra Na Rosann & Zadar dual performance

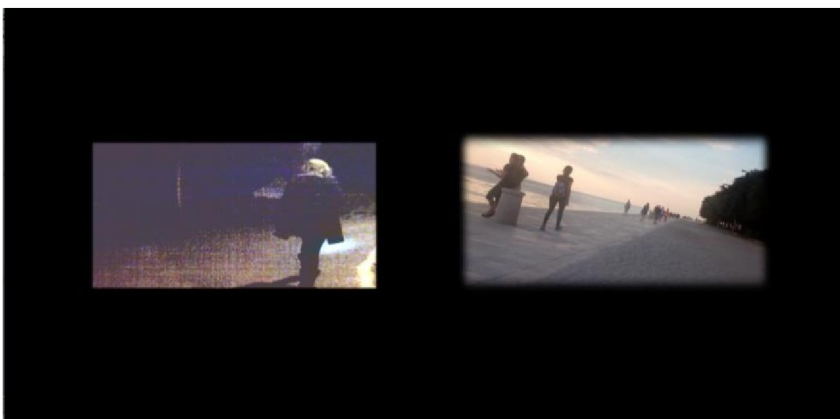


Figure 131 Tra Na Rosann & Zadar dual performance

