

Featuring three Site-Specific Exhibitions in Bath



from the University of Bath Creative Arts Programme



Work by Anthony Key, Zahid Dar & Gill Goddard and Deborah Jones

BATH

World Heritage Site

Twinned with



Alkmaar



Braunschweig



Aix-en-Provence



Kaposvar



Vicinities

The Collision of the Global, the Intimate and Identity

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The Collision of the Global, the Intimate and Identity

Introduction and Jones,

Dar and Goddard essays:

Daniel Hinchcliffe

Key essay:

Eddie Chambers

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Daniel Hinchcliffe

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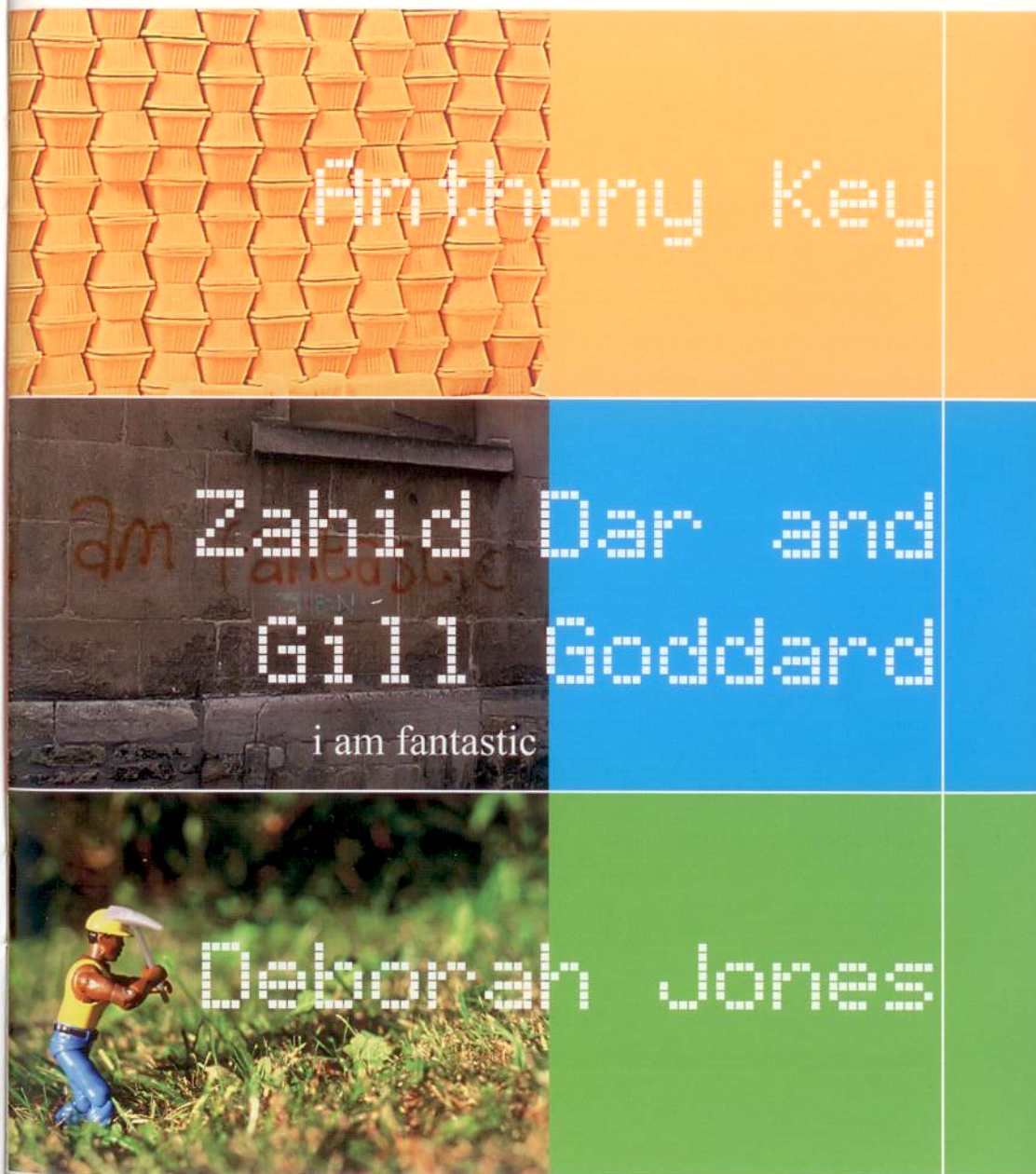
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Introduction

This catalogue documents and reflects on three site-specific exhibitions featured in the Creative Arts programme for autumn 2002 at the University of Bath ⁽¹⁾. As can often be the case with site-specific work, the projects grew in a relatively organic way, without the artists or curators knowing exactly what the final product would be. As the artists responded to site and their work developed, we realised that a number of overlapping and complementary concerns were emerging across the work, and this led to coining the word 'vicinities'. Producing a shared catalogue seemed the most appropriate way to record the work. Unlike much traditional gallery-based work - where the art exists to be recorded for a catalogue in advance - it was necessary for this publication to be produced after the event. So, while an excellent catalogue of Anthony Key's previous work ⁽²⁾ was produced for his Walcot Chapel exhibition, his work for that exhibition is included here in the context of all four artists' work. Anthony Key, Zahid Dar and Gill Goddard all shared an interest in Bath, from the perspective of under-represented cultural and global positions. In a different way, Deborah Jones also wanted to uncover 'parallel domains' and 'invisible territories'.

'Place' was the starting point for all three exhibitions. These were not just 'site-specific' projects; they were also 'place-specific', going beyond the physical characteristics of a space and responding to it as a 'lived place'. 'Sites are like frameworks. Places are what fill them out.'⁽³⁾ Key began with Walcot Chapel in the City of Bath. Dar and Goddard's interest was also in the City in addition to the University, while Jones' focus was the University of



Bath campus. These overlapping vicinities went beyond the local. Key, Dar and Goddard share an interest - based on personal experience - in the role that travel and migration can play in constructing identity. In this sense, they responded to Bath in a global context. Key's attention to personal space is about culture and economics; the tin foil take-away carton - a familiar object brought back to the privacy of the customer's domestic space - also represents the isolation of an immigrant community. Meanwhile, Dar and Goddard employ the postcard as a device which is often very public, in that it is designed to be sent without an envelope. But their often lyrical work conveys the sense in which it may also carry very personal messages of great importance to the sender and receiver. The relation between identity and place is also a prominent theme in Jones' body of work. She considers personal memories of place, which have a different kind of intimacy about them.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with Eddie Chambers, who curated and organised the Key exhibition in collaboration with the University of Bath and with additional support from the Henry Moore Foundation. I am also grateful to him for contributing an enlightening and enjoyable essay on Key's exhibition.

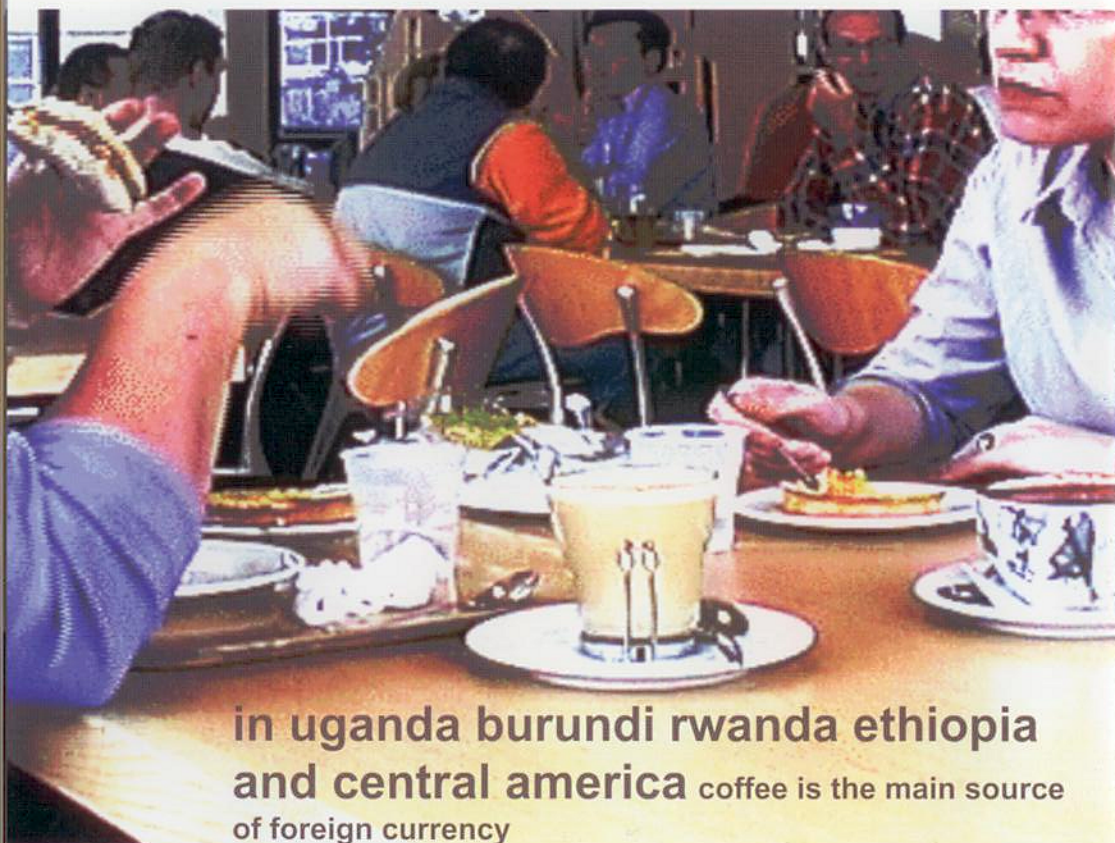
In addition we would like to thank all the artists for their hard work and good humour on three ambitious projects. Owen Bryant (digital artist and designer) must be thanked too. Without his technical skills and patience, Goddard and Dar's website, and the CD-ROM accompanying this publication would not have been possible. **Daniel Hinchcliffe**, December 2002



Zahid Dar and Gill Goddard both have social and emotional links to India, and initial ideas for a residency at the University of Bath came out of their shared interest in exploring the relationship between journeying and identity through reflecting on their respective returns to India. The University, with its many international students and links, and the City of Bath, as a global tourist destination, seemed an ideal environment in which to examine these issues.

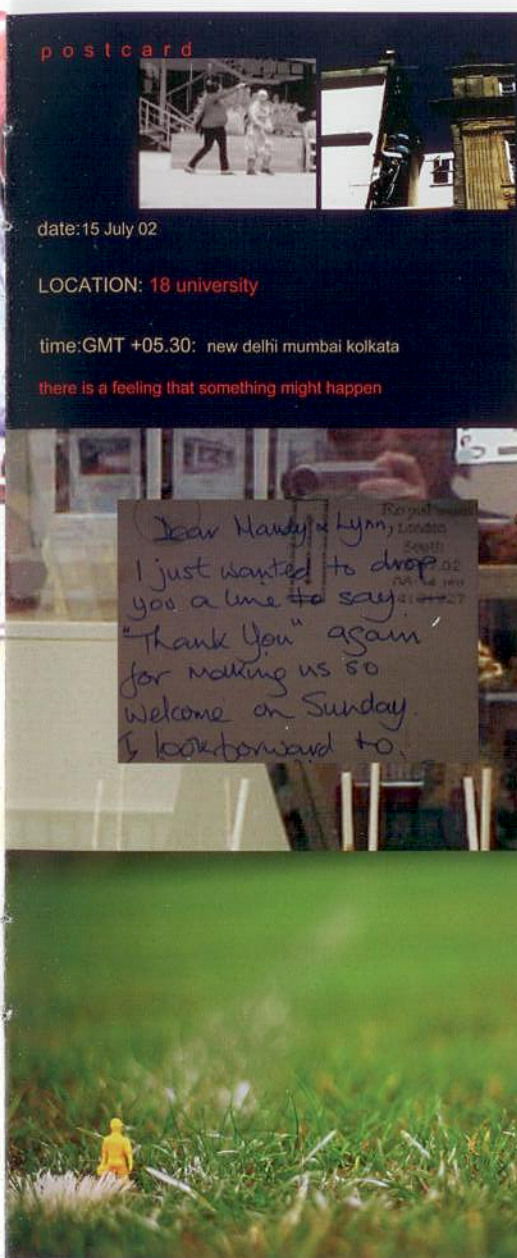
The artists interacted with students, staff, and members of the public through interviews and emails while employing digital imagery, video, still

photography and written text to make a record of encounters, anecdotes and spaces. Their re-presentation of this information - in the form of a web piece and a video work - is ironic, allegorical and humorous. The web piece was organised as a number of postcards - a method of communication which still flourishes despite digital technology. The piece was put on the University website and in the University Library. Text on their digital 'postcards' includes quotes from interviews with individuals encountered in the city of Bath and on campus, as well as randomly overheard snatches of conversation. Short texts are carefully selected, edited and combined with photographic images and clips of video footage to create an overall composition which is rich, multi-layered and engaging. Examples of the writings used with imagery touching on cultural identity and displacement include the juxtaposition of a nursery rhyme about eating chapatty with an image of a street sign for 'Anglo Terrace', through to a video clip of an Israeli tourist writing to her mother in Hebrew. Below - in English - are the words: "O Israel how can I love you?" The artists incorporate their own written text touching on the political, the amusing and the poetic. The process of using the web piece is in itself a journey for the viewer, who is required to 'navigate' her way through the work. The artists give a sense of local and global human activity happening in simultaneity, through references to times, dates and locations. Numbers on the postcards indicating the time in Dublin, Berlin, Easter Island or just 'local time' suggest how someone receiving a card might imagine when and where the sender wrote it. Other references, like 'main parade', '2W' or 'Eastwood', require very local knowledge of the University campus. On



occasions, the title of a given location - such as 'passing habitat' - has an ambiguity which carries meaning in itself.

The artists often chose to frame and include imagery about everyday details and scenes which are not normally the subject of traditionally composed pictures. At the same time, the images have an air of formal composition which is dynamic - including footage taken through the window of the bus shuttling between city and University and a close-up of the library's revolving doors. People who frequent the spaces depicted here may



not recognise their everyday surroundings in the artwork. This 'double-take' parallels Dar and Goddard's presentation of aspects of social, political or cultural existence in our everyday lives that we might prefer to ignore.

Other texts combined with local imagery refer to "the flattened landscape of consumer choice"; "queer relationships... outside the jurisdiction of straight society"; facts about the population of the Commonwealth; and the names of 'non-leading countries'. Through recounting narratives which are under-represented in a particular world view, Dar and Goddard highlight how the local and the global are meshed; they make the everyday extraordinary.

Daniel Hinchcliffe, December 2002

Footnotes

Introduction

- (1) 'Anthony Key: Walcot Chapel', Bath, September 24 - October 19 2002.

'Site-Specific Work by Zahid Dar and Gill Goddard', University of Bath, November 19 - December 15 2002.

'Intimate Landscapes: Site-Specific Work by Deborah Jones', University of Bath, November 19 - December 15 2002.
- (2) 'Anthony Key' (Bristol: Eddie Chambers, 2002).
- (3) Jeff Kelley quoted by David Harding in 'The Context is Half the Work', Issues in Architecture Art and Design, 1993, vol. 3 no.1, pp6-13.
- (2) Eddie Chambers, Introduction, 'Anthony Key', published to coincide with 'Anthony Key: Walcot Chapel', Bath, September 24 - October 19 2002. Publication unpaginated.
- (3) Sarah Champion, quoted in 'Exchange and Art' - a discussion about "the relationship between art and the [Chinese] take-away", City Life [What's on in Manchester], 17 February - 4 March 1999.
- (4) Anthony Key, quoted in the exhibition press release.
- (5) Amber Cowan, in 'Amber Cowan's best shows nationwide', Play [The Times], 12-18 October 2002

Anthony Key

- (1) 'Empire and I', curated by Alana Jelinek, was at Pitsanger Manor and Gallery, Ealing, London, January 22 - March 13 1999. The exhibition existed to "respond to the impact of colonial thought and history on contemporary ideas of 'race' and nation".

Jones, Dar and Goddard

Jones, Dar and Goddard quotes in this catalogue are taken from the exhibition press releases.



THRESHOLD

The Edward Wilmot Blyden Project

with support from
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with support from
Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects

