

DAD IN CONVERSATION with

Johanne Huysmann

Lives and works in Lille

“How have you interpreted/responded to the project title transmettre/transmit?”

To transmit is to create a passage.

Stories and legends are bridges between generations and territories.

For me, it is by reawakening the collective imagination that we continue and feed into this heritage.

In answer to the need to maintain this bridge, I have chosen to create images which go beyond reality, which enlarge the visual space, which allow reverie.

In addition to your references to Transmettre/Transmit, how has the project's location in heritage sites impacted conceptually on your practice?

Because I am exhibiting in a heritage site, I decided to work in a way that allowed me to really immerse myself in the materiality of the site, its resonance, the atmosphere emanating from it. I made up my mind to present the images in a site specific way, not in the way one would normally fix work by simply hanging it on a nail, but in response to this place, i.e. on the floor, in the basement by placing the photograph level with the ground and pouring sand around it that is the same colour as the ambient light, the walls and the cement, thus creating a formal link between floor/image/wall.

For this particular installation, I wanted the image to merge with the roundness of the wall so that the integration of work and site would be gentle and harmonious and would really become part of the building, as if it had always been there. In the installation on the ground floor, the principle of it becoming

part of the fabric of the building is the same: the image is embedded in the window such that it becomes an opening to a landscape different from the one normally seen but which shares in the mystery concealed within a castle.

What does showing with other artists and in two places at two different times mean to you?

Our work comes out of a reflection and an emotion which we build alone in the studio

Having several artists working on the same project lets us discover, exchange ideas and share our work, which opens us up to other horizons and other approaches to artistic expression.

Meeting English artists is, once we've had time to find out about each other, proof once again that art has no borders, as it is easy to see that we share the same aspirations, even if there is sometimes a language barrier.

Exhibiting in both St Omer and Dover and in different sites has enabled us to test our ability to adapt and take a fresh look at how we present our work, especially since we had to meet exhibition deadlines as far apart as November 2007 and April 2008; something which allowed us to deepen our contacts with the other artists and their world, which gave us time to think and to better understand how our work relates to each other's work.