

DAD IN CONVERSATION with

Joanna Jones

Lives and works in Dover, Kent

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

Transmit is what art does was my immediate response and how and what a particular art piece is transmitting is what makes it interesting. But it is not as simple as that. Works of art lie between the intention of the artist and the perception of their public.

My paintings come alive through the activity of the one who is viewing them. The person looking is using the surface, which has come about through my intention and attention, in their own way. My state of being at the time of making the work will inform the work but equally the state of being of the one looking will inform what their experience is.

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

Each location has had a direct impact on the way I have installed my work. In Saint-Omer the obvious lack of paintings that once would have been present in the Jesuit Chapel led me to want to bring back something that had gone missing. At first I thought that I would have to find a way to do this through projection or film but hanging a painting free without stretchers, something I had often thought about, and the lightness that that enabled meant that attaching a real painting to the ancient walls was possible without any damage.

I had finished a new work ready for a basement room at Walmer Castle only to discover that I would not be allowed to attach it to the walls in any way at all. This has led me to show my piece in Walmer in the way that I paint my paintings - horizontal, enabling the work to be viewed from all four directions as the viewer walks around it. The basement of Walmer Castle can be damp, so I will

raise the painting just above the floor to allow air to flow beneath it.

These two heritage sites come with stories. I find myself entering into a story whether it is the missing painted works in the Jesuit Chapel or what a new resident of Walmer Castle might travel with to make their stay comfortable in an otherwise quite cold and damp castle. Both sites have led me to search for solutions. It is to do with solving problems, similar to the way I view painting. My paintings start from a place of not knowing, they build themselves through a process of adding, covering, destroying and facilitating. I choose the colours and know quite a lot about what one colour might do with the colour beneath or adjacent to it but even here I am nearly always surprised, nothing is ever the way I thought it might be. Like in life it is a process of letting go of expectation and allowing something to develop into itself. Developing the installation for these heritage sites has been a similar process.

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

Right from the beginning getting to know the other English artists on our first Ferry journey altogether to France was a pleasurable and reassuring experience. On that day we were also introduced to most of the French artists in Benoit Wazee's beautiful gallery in St Omer and enjoyed his hospitality and warm welcome before returning via a French supermarket to Dover.

But it was not until the set up days, vernissage and then the visits to the exhibition in France last year that I really began to know something of how the other artists were approaching their work.

This year in England, there seems much more of a sense of us all making an exhibition together.

For me a valuable part of Transmit/Transmettre are the opportunities it has given for the artists to spend time with each other and each others work and I am looking forward to developing this exchange over the next few months.