

South London Refugee Association presents

VIEWS FROM DISTANT SHORES

A multi media art exhibition by Fion Gunn, Michael Lisle-Taylor and Sarah Rubidge with Gareth Mitchell in collaboration with the participants of workshops held at SLRA Streatham, Balham & Wimbledon Drop in Centres



Michael Lisle-Taylor – Subduction Buoy



Fion Gunn – Age of Exploration # 2



Sarah Rubidge - Worlds Adrift

SOUTH LONDON REFUGEE ASSOCIATION – The Woodlawns Centre, London, SW16 2PJ

VIEWS FROM DISTANT SHORES will open with a press conference, artists' presentation and guided tour on **Friday 26 May** from **6.30-9pm** and will open to the public on **Saturday 27 May** from **11-6pm**. Both events will also feature a guided tour with the artists at **3pm**. Martin Wright, writer and commentator on sustainable futures, Domenico Sergi from the Horniman Museum and Harriet Neuberger from the Abraham's Tent Project will speak at the Friday evening event.

Visitors of all ages will be able to make their own boats and place them along a 'river' which will run through the exhibition and participate in other creative activities in the beautiful garden space.

The SLRA places great value on the transformative power of the arts and their role in supporting refugees and vulnerable communities generally. Describing how this exhibition raises awareness of the difficulties faced by displaced people, SLRA Director Celia Sands said: "Many of the people SLRA works with have been displaced by war and trauma and are striving to build secure, new lives for themselves and their families here in South London. Providing the practical support and advice that refugees need is vitally important but so too is ensuring opportunities to share experiences and to cherish memories of home."

The artists and volunteers will work throughout the month of May in the Drop in Centres, where everyone who attends is invited to make a boat which represents their experience or their aspirations.

Fion Gunn, who also curates the exhibition, commented "for years, Sarah Rubidge, Michael Lisle-Taylor and I have all been making artworks about journeys -across seas, oceans and rivers, across history and cultures. As artists we have been inspired by ideas of travelling into the unknown, the need to confront or to escape. The boats made by our workshop participants tell their own individual stories and these come together to create a story about all of us. Our work in this exhibition reflects on what it is to be displaced and the nature of our shared humanity".

The artists are part of a team collaborating with SLRA on a proposal for an ambitious art project next year which will involve other institutional partners where promoting inclusion, engagement and empowerment will be key.

For further information about the work of SLRA and RSVP for press conference contact celia@slr-a.org.uk

For further information about the art project & high res images contact fiongunn@live.co.uk

Notes for Editors below

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Martin Wright writes, edits, advises and speaks on environmental solutions and sustainable futures.

He tries to do so “in a way which inspires and excites people, rather than leaving them feeling preached at, guilt-tripped, baffled by jargon or just plain bored. Which is all too often the case.”

He works independently with The Guardian, Positive News, Ashden awards, Forum for the Future and Futerra.

Links: <https://twitter.com/MartinFutures>

Martin’s TED talk on ‘The New Environmentalism’ topped the bill at the 2014 TEDx in London. View the talk here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDo2mx5aBts&list=PLsRNoUx8w3rNXcBCmETUz-ulCayZayaSo>

Domenico Sergi is the Community Engagement Officer at the Horniman Museum, London and is committed to supporting refugees’ wellbeing and promoting intercultural dialogue, he will give an overview of the Museum’s strategies and an outline of its plans for 2018. <http://www.horniman.ac.uk/>

Harriet Nueberger is a member of the Abraham’s Tent Project team. The Project, launched by the South London Liberal Synagogue aims to turn part of the synagogue building into a home for refugees.

<http://www.southlondon.org/abrahams-tent-project/>

LINKS TO ARTISTS’ WEBSITES

High res images available on request

Fion Gunn www.fiongunn.org **Michael Lisle-Taylor** www.michaellisle-taylor.com

Sarah Rubidge www.sensedigital.co.uk **Gareth Mitchell** www.garethmitchell.info

BRIEF ARTISTS’ BIOGRAPHIES

Fion Gunn is the first Irish artist to have a public sculpture commission in China for the city of Zhangjiakou in 2012. In 2014 she received an award from Arts Council England for ‘The Dress My Mother Wore’ a collaborative art installation with Streatham Women’s Sewing Group CIC, the aim of the project was to bring art to new audiences and promote inclusion. Gunn has lived in Streatham since 2004.

She directed and was lead curator of the IRISH WAVE project 2009 –2016, a series of Irish/Chinese collaborative contemporary art exhibitions held in Beijing & Shanghai. The project was supported by Culture Ireland & Embassy of Ireland, Beijing, Arts Council Northern Ireland, British Council Northern Ireland, a number of local arts councils in Ireland and many partners in Beijing & Shanghai.

Gunn curated her 1st international exhibition in New York in Sept 2015 ‘Intimate Transgressions’ which subsequently toured to Beijing in October 2015 <http://www.intimatetransgressionsproject.com/> Her own work also features in the exhibition which as toured to Beijing, October 2015, Hangzhou, April 2016 and Taipei October 2016. Intimate Transgressions will open in Shanghai later this year and Gunn will participate in a major exhibition in October 2017 in Beijing with 3 other artists – Niamh Cunningham, Gulistan and Jin Mei .

Gunn has been granted access to the archives of the Museum Historycyzne Miasta Gdansk and is creating a series of work ‘Displaced’ informed by the post WW2 images of Gdansk. Her own practice encompasses painting, sculpture, mixed media and new media.

She was Guest Editor for the Spring edition of ArtZip magazine (bilingual English/Chinese quarterly contemporary arts magazine) <http://www.artzip.org/> Examples of her work can be viewed at www.fiongunn.org

She is represented by ZhongFang Culture & Art Diffusion Co Ltd, Beijing, Art W in USA and The Barbara Stanley Gallery in London.

CURRENT & FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS/PROJECTS :

July 2017	Lead Curator & participant in 'Intimate Transgressions' Sihang Warehouse, Shanghai
Ongoing	Vantage Points, collaborative project, London
October 2017	'Like an Iceberg', 4 artist show curated by Huang Du, Beijing
December 2017	Lead Curator & participant in 'Intimate Transgressions' Nanjing

Michael Lisle-Taylor was born in 1969 and brought up in Pembrokeshire, Wales. Following a 13 year military career in the Fleet Air Arm, he studied Sculpture at Chelsea College of Art & Royal College of Art graduating in 2006. His works are held in a number of high profile collections including the David Roberts Foundation, the Saatchi Collection and the Imperial War Museum. His work is currently featured in the Intimate Transgressions international touring exhibition: New York, Beijing, Hangzhou, Taipei.

Crafted with meticulous care his sculptures, explore the cultural threads, which underpin our history and contemporary condition often with a mordant wit. His exploration of military culture and values and their inherent psychological distortions challenges stereotypes and touches on the true nature of conflict and loss. An underlying theme running through his work is a profound connection with landscape, our human attachment to its narrative, its iconic and symbolic meaning in our lives.

Having acquired a high level of technical expertise in a wide range of materials and methodologies, Lisle-Taylor works as a consultant scenic artist/designer for high profile public events in London. His background as a naval engineer supervising aircraft movements & busy flight decks, using tractors, hoists & cranes, securing landing sites in busy public spaces, establishing and maintaining a safe perimeter has provided him with an exceptional skill set in terms of site management and dealing with H&S issues in the context of the general public.

An artist's residency in Iceland rekindled his ongoing passion for sailing and sewing combined when he made his own fabric boat for investigating the Icelandic coastline.

Lisle-Taylor's practice also includes delivering sculpture workshops in primary schools where his ability to engage with children and motivate them has resulted in the production of large scale artworks for local festivals in East London.

Sarah Rubidge is a choreographer and digital installation artist. Co-founder of the Bristol Community Dance Centre in the early 1980s, Rubidge later worked for several years as Head of Education education with some of Britain's top contemporary dance companies, at the same time developing her own choreographic work. She went on to become an artist-scholar in higher education, specialising in research into artistic practice through practice. She finished her career as Professor Emerita in Dance and has now re-invigorated her freelance career as an artist.

Rubidge works extensively in close collaboration with artists from other disciplines (composers, visual artists, digital artists and theatre practitioners) including those from the UK, Europe, Australia, Uganda, China, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand, and has worked with scientists of various persuasions, and other academics such as geographers. She has a particular interest in taking choreography out of the theatre and into new domains. Whilst the primary focus of her artistic work has lain in the dialogue between choreographic concepts and new technologies, her interest in the interplay between artistic practices and other modes of understanding the world has been a guiding factor in her practice.

As a result, her work has taken many forms, from dance, music-theatre and mixed media performance to digital installation, and has been presented nationally and internationally – from London to Los Angeles, Glasgow to Kampala, from Birmingham to Brisbane and Bangkok. Throughout her artistic investigations have emphasised an expansion of concepts of choreography and choreographic space and have led to installations in theatres, art

galleries (*Streamlines* 2014) and performative works which involve the participation of the general public in the creation of enactive choreographic environments, and with them a new sense of understanding the significance of place. She recently explored some of these ideas with Gretchen Schiller in the editorial and opening chapter of their book “Choreographic Dwellings: Practising Place”.

Gareth Mitchell who has collaborate with Sarah Rubidge on ‘Worlds Adrift’ is a sound artist, singer and musician who has released albums for labels such as Kranky and Staalplaat, performs at Knitting Factory, Nozart, EARational, and has co-developed theatrical productions, *speaksong*, Gulbenkian Theatre; *Miguel, I am Sofia*, Canal Cafe Theatre).

He has recently exhibited the sound installations *Symphony for Absent Wildlife*, La Nuit Blanche, Calgary; *Speculative Realism in Relation to Geometry*, Angus Hughes Gallery, London; *Voice for Change*, UAL Showroom, London) and completed an MA (Dist.) in Sound Art at the London College of Communication, University of Arts London. Over the last few years, he has provided composition and sound design for dance including *1898* and *Terra*, The Print Room, London, *Tenebre*, Düsseldorf Opera House and *SELphOBiA*, Emerge Festival. Most recently, he co-directed, composed music and designed sound for *Thought to Flesh*, a theatrical production about motor-neurone disease, performed at London’s Vault Festival.

This summer 72, an album of electronic music, will be released on USA based label Eye Contact.