



LEILA HOUSTON

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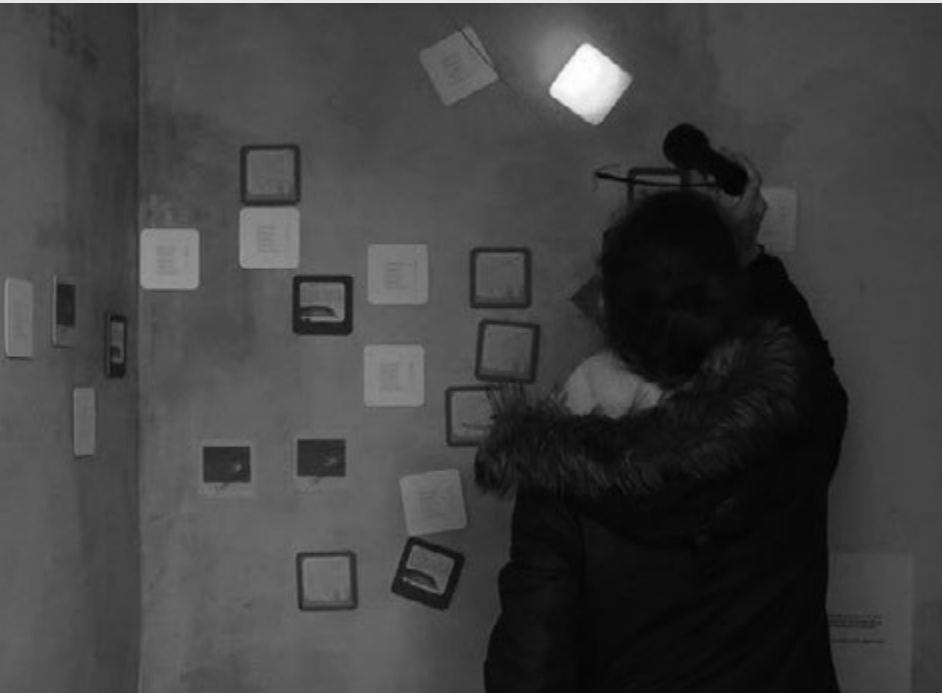
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BIO

Leila Houston (London, 1977) is a visual artist whose work investigates the social, political and historical aspects of a place and the impact we have on our environments.

Houston uses site-responsive installations to explore connections between the external atmosphere and the internal sensation within places, providing reflections on the the language of architecture and the associations we draw through memory and the senses. Working predominantly with video, sound and structure, much of her artwork cultivates immersive atmospheres for the spectator, often inviting them to take part or contribute to the work.

Image:
Points of Departure, 2015

GRANTS AND COMMISSIONS

Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant (2018)
Arts Council England

Research & Development Grant (2017)
Arts Council England

Microworld (2016)
Interact Digital Labs and Genetic Moo

Research & Development Grant (2015)
Arts Council England

Artist's Access to Art Colleges (2013)
AA2A

Individual Artist Fellowship (2000-03)
Digswell Arts Trust

Individual Artist Grant (1999)
Milton Keynes Arts Association

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

Year of Residence (2016)
Queen of Bradgate, Leicester

Artist of the Year Award (2014)
AA2A

Residue Residency (2012)
Surface Gallery, Nottingham

Sponsorship Prize (2009)
The Great Central Gallery

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2018

Straightening out the petals, Leicester

2017

Walker & Bromwich: An act of Participation, Leicester

The Crash, Q Park, London

Fit the Slit, Venice Lido, Venice

EMPIRE II, Venice/ Berlin/ Brussels/ Cumbria/ London

2014

From the 12th Floor, LCB Depot, Leicester

The Fine Art Society, Curve Theatre, Leicester

OPEN 26, New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester

The Image is the Servant II, Hansom Hall, Leicester

In Celebration of Chinese New Year, Q Park, London

2013

The Salon, The Salon (EC Arts), Leicester

Beauville Arts, Lot et Garonne, France

2012

Dual, The Cutting Room, Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham

MA & Other Postgraduates, Atkinson Gallery, Somerset

2005

Works of Art, Sun Street, Hertfordshire

Est.1957, Maynard Gallery, Welwyn Garden City

2002

Startle, The Beetroot Gallery, Derby

TEACHING, WORKSHOPS & EMPLOYMENT

Founder and Director
Summer Art Trail, Leicester 2014-16

Director and Founder
Silver Vine Arts, Leicester, 2014-present

Founder and Director
WTS Gallery, Leicester, 2015

Artist Tutor
Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester, 2012-present

Artist Tutor
Spinney Hill Primary School, Leicester, 2011

Talent House East Midlands Workshop
Ravenhurst School, Leicester, 2010

Art Workshop Leader
Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham, 2010

In-house Art Workshop Leader
Letchworth Arts Centre, Letchworth Garden City, 2009

Art Workshop Leader
Rhythms of the World Festival, Hertfordshire, 2008

Art Workshop Leader
North Herefordshire College, Stevenage, 2008

Arts Award Advisor
Letchworth Arts Centre, Letchworth Garden City, 2007

EDUCATION

Masters of Fine Art (Distinction)
De Montfort University
2012

Bachelor of Contemporary Art
Nottingham Trent
2003

Foundation Art and Design
University of Central England
1999

A LOCAL VOICE



[Click here to play film](#)

A Local Voice is in part a search for the genuineness of face-to-face interaction, a reestablishment of compassion and a step away from the strident individualism encouraged online.

Over two days, local and national people came together to take part in an installation and create a collaborative sculpture with Houston at Two Queens Gallery's Project Space. People were from all ages and backgrounds, and many had no art experience at all.

An expansive collaboration between Leila, the participants in A Local Voice and local musicians, the final work was exhibited as part of Summer Art Thread (part of City Festival) at LCB Depot and has further been exhibited as part of exhibition The Crash, London.

Images: A Local Voice, 2017
Documentation of participatory event



Funded by Arts Council England

CONVERSATION SERIES

Venice is one of the most visited and cherished cities in the world; its beauty, history and culture are celebrated globally.

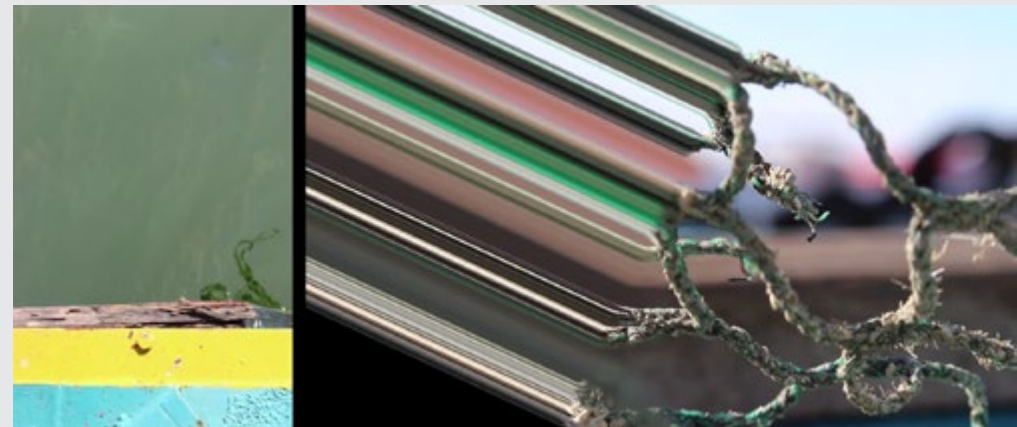
In Venice: Conversation Series III, Leila Houston broadens her consideration of the relationship between people, place and history in this multi-layered work; exploring how communities can be shaped, empowered, fragmented and distorted by the arrival of newcomers and its perspective of them.

Continuing on from her previous video installations, which examine place and the essence of it, Venice: Conversation Series III uses recorded discussions drawn from the heart of the Venetian community. Via interviews with friends and locals in the city, the piece draws parallels between the issues in Italy and Houston's home in the UK, with discussions centred around cuts to public funding and the impact of this on a society.

Alongside visuals capturing the fibres of Venice's environment, the work invites us to remember the truth of a setting that has been so embellished. Venice: Conversation Series III considers how beauty, creativity and authenticity of a place will survive when a place's economy threatens to become the place itself - rather than its foundation.

"Has it become a Disneyland? Do the visitors get what they should be getting from it?"

Image: Venice: Conversation Series III, 2017
Film still (3.01 mins)



[Click here to play film](#)

DIALOGS

Immersing her audience in carefully cultivated atmospheres, Leila Houston uses site-responsive installations to reflect on how we form ideas of society, history and culture. Utilising sensory experience and space, Houston's work spans from the political to the philosophical, providing unique perspectives on themes of community, vulnerability and people's connections with spaces.

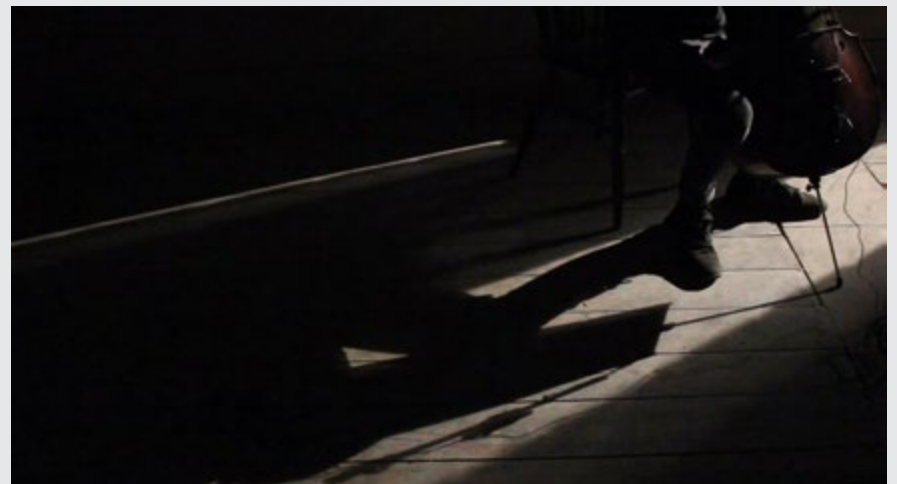
Dialogs invites its audience to examine the minutiae of their daily lives, showing the influence of the seemingly small, subtle and vulnerable.

Image 1:
Investigating the Centre, 2015

Image 2:
Points of Departure, 2015



Funded by Arts Council England



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INVESTIGATING THE CENTRE



A site-specific work, *Investigating the Centre* was presented at Summer Art Trail 2015 in a derelict room above The Queen of Bradgate pub.

Recordings of a pub discussion were played on four speakers surrounding a large pub table, inviting visitors to sit and listen in. Centred around cuts to public services, the discussion explored how pubs could offer a centre for communities, should community centres be forced to be closed.

This work draws on both the personal and the political; Leila's own first family home was a large community centre in London, which her parents ran for 11 years before it was eventually demolished.

Image 1:
Investigating the Centre, 2015

Image 2:
Investigating the Centre, 2015
Installation still: audio, empty photo frames,
video projection of "Wullie" Craigmillar Playscheme
film, table, x4 chairs



POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Points of Departure is a site-responsive installation exploring the relationship between community and space, focusing on how people leave traces in a place and collectively form its identity.

Points of Departure uses recordings of the visitors, conversations and artwork made during her residency at The Queen of Bradgate pub in Leicester to investigate how particular places that provide a centre for exchange and inquiry in a society that is becoming increasingly insular.

Image 1 & 2:

Points of Departure, 2015

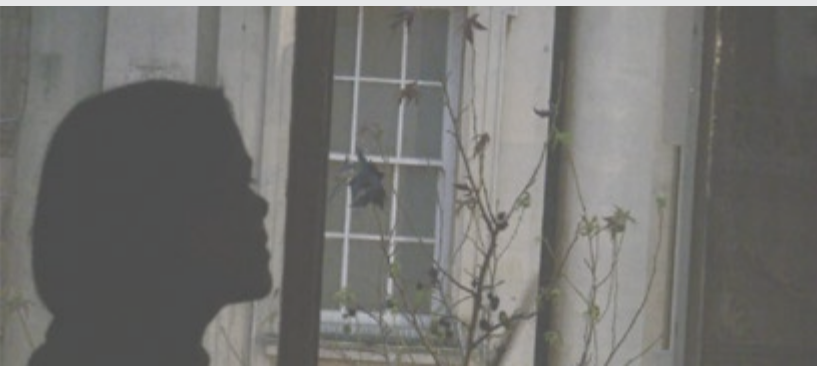
Installation still

Interactive maze in 4 sections (wood, vinyl flooring, paper diary entries):

Section 1 - Beer mats, velcro, UV pens, torch

Section 2 - Monitors, video, audio

Section 3 & 4 - x5 sound triggers (floor pads)



IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S THE WATER THROWER

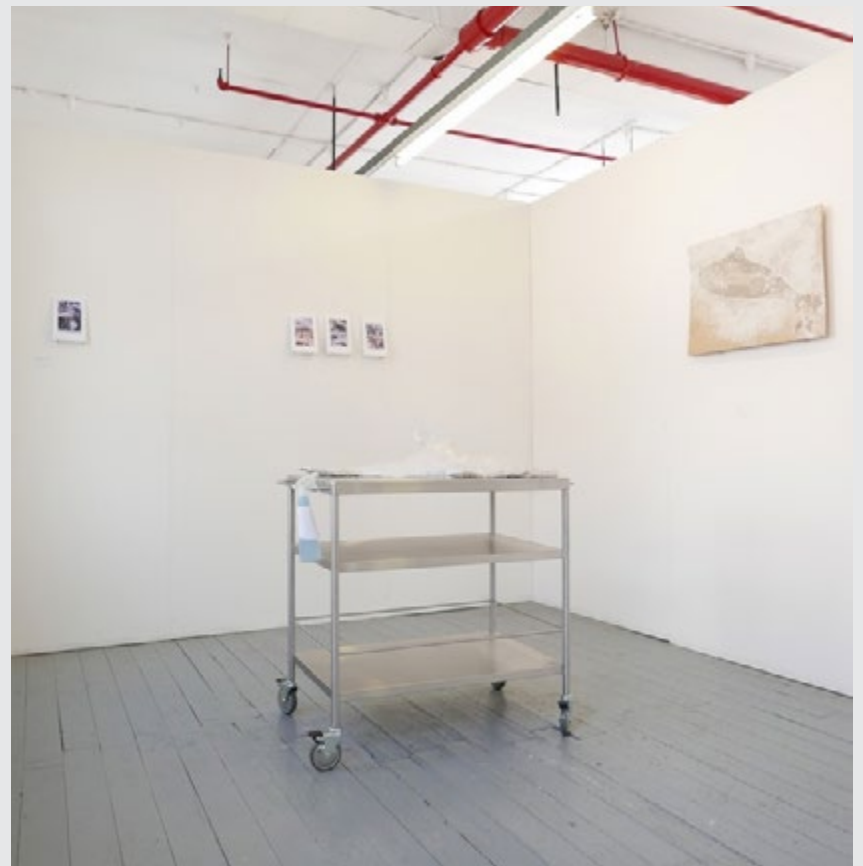


It's Not You, It's The Water Thrower examines our treatment of the vulnerable, the impact we have on one another and the permanent impact on our society as a result.

Over 10 days during Leicester's Summer Art Trail in 2016, the public were asked to assist in keeping a clay sculpture wet by spraying water onto it. On the final day impressions by the gallery staff and visitors were dried and set, forming the final piece.

Image 1:
It's not you, it's the water thrower, 2016

Image 2:
It's not you, it's the water thrower, 2016
Wet clay, photography, metal trolley and water
Photo credit Andrea Jaeger



THEY BELIEVED THE RIVER DID SING

Leila Houston looks at why we ascribe feelings to places in *The River Did Sing*, a video installation using sound and light to investigate how we draw meaning from our senses and associate them with our surroundings.

Shown as part of her Masters of Fine Art at De Montfort University (2011-12) the work itself creates layers and echoes, showing Leila's recurrent exploration of inside and outside space. Using sites in Leicester, the work presents an intense yet serene, circular, industrial, quietly haunting theme; whilst making the spectator and consider subjects of society and industry.

Image 1 & 2:
They believed the river did sing, 2014
Film still (5.22 mins)



[Click here to play film](#)



AM I LOSING YOU OR HAVE YOU LEFT ALREADY?



[Click here to play film](#)

A lake, insects, a thunderstorm and a damp apartment are explored, sometimes appearing as a panel painting, coming together in moving synchronicities.

Am I losing you or have you left already? is a video installation that encourages the viewer to go beyond the image presented, creating internal sensations with only close-ups and surround sound.

Image 1:
Am I losing you or have you left already?, 2013
Film still (17 mins)

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