

Alison B. Allen (Leicester based artist)
Queen of Bradgate Residency Artist
Concrete Archive, 2015

Emulsion, Chicken Wire and Voile

Recently I did a series of drawings of the rubble of the New Walk Centre. It was a much hated landmark however I heard stories of people, former employees, unable to bring themselves to see the destruction: as if it had kept safe their previous experiences and now they were gone.

On seeing this space at the Queen of Bradgate I realised this could further develop this idea and perhaps look at the possibility that the building has its own memories as well as storing the occupant's. In my research I found that memory is not a pristine recall of events but in fact a reconstruction effected by other experiences, now also memories, layered on top. Then there is the space's own response to these events and separate events that happen just to itself.

My starting point was spending a week making sketches of marks such as: water damage, peeling wallpaper, cracks in the floors boards in over 200 hundred sketches. Then I used my knife to make a simplified drawing of some of these studies and folding the paper into these marks to create 3 dimensional forms, which lead to the hanging sculpture. I also made collages directly from the sketches and this became the wall painting and I chose a seventies pallet as I felt this was when this space was last loved. For me these marks represent 'scars' of either human occupants or direct incidents (such as a flood) in the space itself. Parts of the sculpture are opaque but in other sections the light floods through as the memory fades and becomes indistinct. The wall painting is also not solid; there are unsure brush strokes and faded paint trying to anchor itself on the body of the space but not quite succeeding. The two pieces at first approach do not connect representing the duality of the human occupier and the space itself. However as you move around the work the wall painting extends and adds to the sculpture and the disparate experiences layer on top of and influence each other.

Commissions accepted.

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