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## **Folkestone perennial: the enduring *work* of art in the reconstitution of place**

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### **Abstract**

Ostensibly contemporary art biennials seek to engage with the places that host them, yet frequently they are viewed critically as elitist ‘art world’ events that are disconnected from their localities. The aim of this article is to establish how public art *works* in a given context, both as part of a format prescribed by the art event and in its potential to intersect with the intricate, contingent and varied constellation of the urban location in question. It addresses this central tension by examining the case of Folkestone, a town on the south Kent coast in the UK that once enjoyed a thriving identity as both seaside resort and gateway to Europe. From the 1960s onwards a gradual decline set in with the advent of mass global travel, culminating in the deathblow that was dealt by the nearby Eurotunnel’s inauguration towards century’s end, which signalled the end of the town’s ferry link to the continental mainland. A concerted attempt has been underway for a decade now to revitalise the town using the arts, creative industries and education as the drivers of regeneration. One of the main initiatives in this endeavour was the introduction in 2008 of the Folkestone Triennial, a three-month summer event in which high-profile international artists were commissioned to produce sited artworks for the town, turning it into a form of urban gallery. With successive Triennials occurring in 2011 and 2014, and several works from all three being retained as permanent acquisitions, this article takes stock of the impact of these artistic engagements with the town, showing how, as an ensemble, they interact with one another and asking whether they have the capacity to contribute to a reconstituted identity for Folkestone in an integrated and lasting way.

**Keywords**

Folkestone Triennial, regeneration, decline, urban identity, site-specific artworks, place, Folkestone, ruin

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...from film and the way it uses montage and sequence to structure looking, to the experience of walking in a maze...I am interested in that serendipitous imposition that...conditions the urban landscape. To use it like a system of signs you can decipher like hieroglyphs.

Christina Iglesias

I'm strolling in a westerly direction towards the farthest end of The Leas, Folkestone's lengthy cliff-top promenade from which it is possible, on a clear day, to make out the French coastline either side of Boulogne-sur-Mer. Sited at the end of it, so the Folkestone Triennial 2011 guide-map tells me, is Christina Iglesias's installation *Towards the Sound of Wilderness*, an 'architectural intervention on the ramparts of Martello 4'. It's quite early in the day, so not too many people are about: a pre-breakfast community of dog walkers and joggers in the main. As the promenade rises on a fair incline towards what I conclude must be the vicinity of the artwork, I twist round briefly to take in the

view of the town that is gradually being left behind. I will only fully register the significance retrospectively – that is, in approximately five minutes time – but for the briefest of moments I catch the eye of a youngish man in jogging mode, huffing and puffing up the promenade some way behind me.

Entering Iglesias's installation effectively involves disappearing into a cluster of small trees and shrubbery where a narrow path leads round to some steps and, as the brief description on my guide-map puts it, 'to a mirrored walk-in structure clad with resin foliage' (Figures 1 and 2). At the other end of this short, enclosed passageway

Fig.1 Approach to *Towards the Sound of Wilderness*, Christina Iglesias, Folkestone Triennial 2011.

Fig.2 *Towards the Sound of Wilderness*, Christina Iglesias, Folkestone Triennial 2011.

is a large open frame that looks out across a deep-cut, overgrown moat to a monumental assemblage of dense foliage. The explanation for this striking but curiously misshapen form – so I eventually find out – is that the plant life, which has been left to grow without human interference over many years, masks one of the defensive Martello lookout towers built along the Kent coast at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in anticipation of a Napoleonic invasion that never materialised, of course. Actually clad originally in a prominent coat of white plaster akin in its tone to the renowned cliffs of the southern coastline, but remaining wholly obscured by its vegetation and, therefore,

in a state of oblivion even to locals, the tower could be said to have been fated ‘from birth’ to be rendered obsolete – condemned to the thousand year sleep of a Briar Rose, while a dense thicket sprouts all around it.<sup>1</sup>

Alternatively, as Iglesias’s rediscovery (and framing) of the tower’s existence shows, it can be said to have become ‘involuntarily re-purposed’ as an architectural construct. Ironically echoing a defensive move customarily associated with military strategy in the antithetical camouflaging effect provided by its foliage, nature has taken over both tower and surrounding moat to create an unexpected paradise, ‘a microcosm of untamed flora and fauna, a secret fairy-tale wilderness’.<sup>2</sup> Continuing the fairy-tale analogy, then, Iglesias’s installation even invokes the promise of ‘princely rescue’, a re-awakening kiss of life that reveals the way in which a ‘new arcadia’ of natural riches – including a multitude of animal wildlife that has found its home amidst the greenery – has magically evolved around a relic of the past and under the noses of the townsfolk. Discover the right places to look and a hidden world may unveil itself unexpectedly. As the artist herself teases: ‘...who knows what could lie in wait for you in such an enchanted place’.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Schlieker reminds us of the role of ‘invented nature’ in this installation, a deliberately perverse form of re-naturing nature. The spectator not only encounters a passageway ‘encased in stainless steel [which] mirrors the vegetation around it, doubling it and thereby making itself disappear’,<sup>4</sup> but also the ‘fictional vegetation’ of the *bas relief* panels that adorn its inner walls. Thus, the wilderness is framed for us artificially as an uncanny surprise, drawing attention perhaps

to our unnatural relationship to the natural, to the constructed nature of nature as we frame and perceive it, and to our general indifference to its enduring *work*.

Be that as it may, I have barely had an opportunity to ponder the installation, natural or artificial, when my sweaty jogger-friend suddenly pops up behind me in the narrow *cul-de-sac* designed for one. As the *actual* motive for me to disappear into the bushes like that dawns on him and he twigs there is really ‘nothing doing’ here, he emits but an embarrassed ‘ha!’ and scuttles back down the path. Serendipity indeed; the surprisingly potent – if, ultimately, frustrated – effect of a casual and innocent backward glance followed by a sideways step through a ‘weathered threshold’.<sup>5</sup> Iglesias’s *Towards the Sound of Wilderness* is, after all, about looking out for or scenting the unexpected: the promise of enrichment, insight or adventure produced by straying marginally off the beaten track. And in that there is a template to be discovered for the act of experiencing the Folkestone Triennial as a whole, corresponding to a ‘serendipitous imposition that ... conditions the urban landscape’, as the artist puts it with regard to her piece *Guided Tour* (1999-2002), but also, as Jane Rendell adds, an instance – even if Folkestone itself is more urban municipality than city – of ‘the work fram[ing] the city and the city fram[ing] the work, both providing guides to one another’.<sup>6</sup>

### **A Folkestone fairy-tale?**

To provide a bit of gloss to this extended opening gambit, let me explain, first, that something is afoot in the South Kent coastal town of Folkestone. After a slow decline,

which took root in the latter half of the twentieth century, Folkestone has witnessed about a decade of gradual regenerative activity in recent times wherein the unashamed and concerted point of departure has been to focus on creativity and education as the instigators and carriers of both the transformation itself and its sustainability into the future. One feature of this drive has been the introduction of an international Triennial, the first of which took place in 2008. So, one of the article's main objectives is to establish whether or not the introduction of such a continuing event – there have been three in the meantime – has had a resonant and enduring effect on the town and, if so, how it has done this. Second, by way of framing this article methodologically, I should explain that the writing approach is premised upon notions of firsthand encounter and experience in the manner just witnessed. In *Art and Architecture* Jane Rendell introduces the useful method of 'critical spatial practice' in a bid to find a way of accounting in writing for the space of encounter produced, in the first instance, by the triangulation of subject (her), site and artwork. Referred to subsequently by Rendell as 'site-writing', such a method

allows us to describe work that transgresses the limits of art and architecture and engages with both the social and the aesthetic, the public and the private.

This term draws attention not only to the importance of the critical, but also to the spatial, indicating the interest in exploring the specifically spatial aspects of interdisciplinary processes or practices.<sup>7</sup>

The desire to which Rendell refers in her later book *Site-Writing* in explaining her method 'to invent a writing that is somehow "like" the artwork' can feasibly be applied simultaneously to the experience of and interaction with an urban environment.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the writer encountering and seeking to mediate the artwork in situ is implicated in a compositional complex (or site) that incorporates cognitive and affective factors in response, as well as performative ones in the act of communicating those responses (to a readership). Where urban writing has for so long been dominated by textual readings of urban space – as seen in the hackneyed trope of the 'city as text' – here is a move towards a form of situational, relational and performative writing that is premised on the multifarious inflections of bodies and actions in space, emerging thus as 'spatial' or 'complex' text as opposed to 'textual text'. Moreover, where artworks are so often subject to validation and explanation via theory, here is an attempt to permit the artworks themselves to speak in terms of their respective engagements with both place and interlocutor. In other words, as Gavin Butt suggests: 'to open up the meanings of experience to the processes of writing, and, by the same token, to open up the processes of writing to the vagaries of experience'.<sup>9</sup> Thus immersion in the sited artwork generates its own form of 'theory' or 'criticality', a thinking *through* or *with* the artwork. As someone whose specialism is rooted in the conventions of performance and visual art, my purpose is to assert such a methodology as a potential tool for cultural geography.



But first some contextual background to Folkestone. Until the advent of an era of package holidays and cheap flights abroad in the 1960s, the town had thrived, in one incarnation at least, as a seaside holiday resort for the reasonably well-to-do. This was reflected, for example, in the existence of a vibrant, large-scale amusement park in the Marine Parade area on its western seafront, with a funicular powered solely by gravity and water conjoining it with the popular Leas cliff-top promenade above;<sup>10</sup> a coastal park and pebbled beach, with requisite bathing amenities stretching the length of the western undercliff; and an extensive pier reaching out into the sea.

Facilitating the development of Folkestone as popular resort and, indeed, rapidly growing residential location – which created, in turn, the demand for the installation of these late-nineteenth century leisure features – was the earlier arrival of the railways. This had witnessed, during the course of that century, the construction of the line from London to nearby Dover and, by century's end, the beginnings of cross-channel ferry traffic to the European continent. The present-day harbour arm, a crooked central pier that was built effectively to create Folkestone's inner and outer harbour areas, had been acquired by the South Eastern Railway Company in 1842. Having bequeathed the town with what remains to this day the highest brick-arched railway viaduct in the world – set well back from the sea and looming large over the centre of the town – the company proceeded to situate a two-platform railway station directly on the harbour pier at which passengers from London could step off their trains and straight on to ferries to Europe (and vice versa). Indeed, for a time trains such as the Orient Express – on its way

to Istanbul via Paris and Venice – were able to trundle directly on to the ferries and continue their untrammelled journeys. Surprisingly the Orient Express only gave up stopping at the, by then, rather dilapidated harbour station in 2008 – the year of the first Folkestone Triennial – but channel ferries had long since given up landing and departing. The demise of cross-channel operations, including hovercraft traffic, followed as a combined consequence of the Euro Tunnel’s inauguration – whose construction had at least provided much local employment while it lasted in the 1980s and 1990s – and the fact of the far larger port of Dover a few miles east being able to operate a 24-hour ferry service, since, unlike Folkestone, its harbour was not tidal.

By the advent of the millennium Folkestone had evidently lost a clear sense of its purpose and identity as a place to live, let alone visit. Many of the buildings in the central area surrounding Payers Park, above all on the main arteries of Tontine Street, which leads down to the harbour front, and the cobbled Old High Street, were dilapidated and boarded up. Local unemployment was high, with key industries, services and businesses in the town having gone to the wall. Educational achievement was statistically of the lowest standard in the country, which pointed to bleak post-school prospects for young people regardless of whether or not they chose to remain in the town. A seemingly unstoppable downward spiral of Folkestone’s general fortunes was the gloomy order of the day, applying as much in relative terms to the more affluent western side of town – where its imposing, once-grand hotels on the cliff tops struggled

to attract guests, and a chill breeze of abandonment and ruin ghosted around the area's stuccoed buildings – as to the disaffected, predominantly working-class east.

Cue the fairy-tale prince, one Sir Roger De Haan, an archetypal 'local boy made good' entrepreneur with a conscience, who had made his vast cash pile by capitalising among other things on the idea of offering package holidays and global tours abroad, specifically tailored to the over-50s, as the owner of the renowned Saga empire. Not without some irony, then, the misfortunes of Folkestone could be attributed in part precisely to de Haan's enterprise. So, even a fairy-tale prince has his flaws and contradictions, but these are easily erased perhaps if he displays a sense of ethical and social responsibility that resolves him to 'give something back' to the community, as the oh-so-humble rhetoric of those who belatedly discover their consciences almost always seems to phrase it.<sup>11</sup> To de Haan's redeeming and, as the case may turn out to be, *enduring* credit, his brand of pride in and duty towards the town of his upbringing is of the sort that views donating millions not merely as an advancement of the lolly by an arms-length patron. Thus, as cultural benefactor, he has been centrally involved in determining how his investment is applied, resolving to establish the aptly-named Creative Foundation, with an active board of trustees whose declared strategy is essentially to galvanise the town by devising and implementing an array of key sustainable initiatives based strictly on the arts, creative industries and education. This includes setting up and commissioning the building of brand new educational establishments. So, for example, a well-resourced state secondary school, The

Folkestone Academy, with a special focus on arts, media and European culture, and designed by architect Norman Foster's practice, has been up and running successfully for a few years already.

A further aim of the Foundation is to develop a creative quarter in the central area around Payers Park mentioned previously. Again, this has already witnessed the opening of a multi-purpose arts centre, the Quarterhouse on Tontine Street, with a full programme of events running throughout the year (from films to touring theatre to literature festivals). More telling perhaps, in terms of widespread, low-key, slow-burn revitalisation, is the policy of buying up derelict properties in the quarter, of which there are many, restoring them and re-letting them at reasonable, affordable rates exclusively to artists as studios or to creative enterprises or initiatives. So far there have been some ninety of these developments and the effect since the first Triennial in 2008 is palpable, based on an impression acquired simply – albeit unscientifically, because it hardly seems necessary in the circumstances – by taking a casual stroll around the streets in question. Not only has there been an explosion of activity and vitality directly associated with these properties but an attendant effect has also occurred with, for instance, cafés, bars and restaurants seizing the opportunity to tap into the increased presence and circulation of people. So, a spiral gradually yet visibly reversed from downward to upward.

Nevertheless, a strong note of caution is appropriate, based on the fact, first, of it still being 'early days' and, second, of the situation bearing tell-tale signs of being a familiar story of gentrification and of a business-stoking, Richard-Florida-style 'creative economy' tactic in which art and creativity is arguably exploited to entice and generate economic rather than socio-cultural 'capital'. In *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) and *Cities and the Creative Class* (2004) Florida promoted his basic theory that attracting and nurturing a prevalence of so-called 'knowledge workers' (otherwise known as 'creatives') would have the inevitable effect of generating prosperous cities of capital wealth, profit and ceaseless growth (as seen, for instance, in rising house values and the expansion of the hi-tech industry). Thus, hobnobbing with the arts would contribute to urban development, city branding and tourism. The danger clearly lurks, then, of bringing about displacements of locals and the desecration of a place's intrinsic sense of itself, as well as subjecting the town to the limited-shelf-life prosperity of economic boom and bust that eventually leaves a depressed vacuum all over again. So the jury is still out on that score perhaps, but there is equally enough indication that it will *not* occur in Folkestone. The objectives of the Creative Foundation are based on engaging in a genuine experiment to integrate educational initiatives and creative practices in general, and visual art in particular, in such a way that they will have a positive and enduring impact on the town on their own terms, rather than as adjuncts to or instruments of another agenda.

### **Folkestone triangular**

And so to the Triennial itself, which is, of course, another, if not *the* major project initiative of the Creative Foundation in the last decade. Over three successive Triennials, beginning in 2008, art has been key in attempting to foster a sense of *movement* in a stagnant place that appeared to have lost sight of why it existed. Arguably, by virtue of the Triennials themselves coming to pass as major undertakings against unlikely odds, a palpable willingness has been generated among an ever-growing number of citizens to begin to put creative ideas into practice themselves – to be flexible, imaginative and open to change in conceiving of the future of the town. In art-specific terms, the simple fact of the Triennial’s introduction has provoked the launch of an independent local fringe movement of events – prompted, to some extent, as is often the case, by a sense of opposition to that which was perceived by some locals to be the *imposition* of at least the first two Triennials of 2008 and 2011 – and, as such, neatly bears out this claim.

With each successive Triennial a different curatorial emphasis has been introduced, which is naturally reflected in the respective titles they have been given. Thus, 2008’s commenced with ‘Tales of Time and Space’ and, as its curator Andrea Schlieker puts it, looked to draw out ‘the unique story of a town sidelined and in decline for years’, to which end twenty-two high-profile British and international artists were commissioned in the first instance to be ‘inspired by the specifics of the place they encountered’.<sup>12</sup> At the same time the intention of the curatorial approach was evidently also to reach beyond the specificity of Folkestone, not only by finding common thematic cause around notions of time and space – artworks ‘resonating with many universal issues’ –

but also by presenting ‘an ambitious exhibition of newly created works for the public realm, which furthers the debate about place-making and makes explicit the dramatic changes in public art over the last twenty years’.<sup>13</sup> A key principle that appeared to be cemented from the start, then – misplaced in the opinion of some – sought to resist an exclusively local introspection and instead position both Folkestone as place and the artworks of its Triennial within a broader conceptual complex. Thus, the town’s circumstances were not merely its own business and ‘of its own making’ but related also to questions and situations arising and affected by ‘elsewhere’; and, similarly, the site-responsive works by visiting artists were not merely about the town but also engaged with timely questions about the shifting aesthetics of contemporary public art-making.

Also curated by Schlieker, the second Triennial in 2011, ‘A Million Miles from Home’, logically extended the concept of an outward perspective: of looking ‘elsewhere’ (in order to locate oneself) and of finding oneself in unknown, uncertain territory, as its title clearly indicates. In some cases this involved importing tales of other countries – Egypt, Israel, Algeria, Kosovo, Brazil and so on – but it also invoked mythical places of the imagination, liminal places of exile, or the challenging ‘other worldly wilderness’ of Iglesias’s Martello Tower paradise with which we began. Representing a concerted attempt to deal with profoundly pertinent contemporary and global problematics relating to the changing geo-political state of the world – incorporating migration and exile, displacement and difference, the redrawing of national borders and boundaries, as well as to redefinitions of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ – this Triennial had obvious

ambitions to show how art could open up unseen, unsuspected, through-the-looking-glass worlds that might appear tangential, 'far away' or even fantastical, but were actually related immediately to the life of the town. As such it drew attention to the town's own precarious position as a form of threshold town, both in terms of its spatial location on the cliff-edge of Britain's Europe-facing coastline – not a million miles from Calais<sup>14</sup> – and in the current uncertainty of its temporal in betweenness as a place that had once thrived but was now in many respects 'all at sea' and in need of redefinition and repair.

Entitled 'Lookout' the third Folkestone Triennial occupied the deliberately ambivalent ground of being rooted and place-bound on the one hand, yet looking outwards or elsewhere for stimulus – or, indeed, being vigilant towards approaching dangers – on the other. As its new curator, Lewis Biggs, puts it: 'We all constantly recalibrate our position (social, physical, intellectual, emotional) through our perspective on the world. From the known we gaze out over the unknown. We gain that perspective, that understanding, through triangulation, the knowledge of two fixed points determining the position of a third'.<sup>15</sup> For Biggs the composition of such a triangulation implies that the commissioned artworks 'necessarily start with a "position" given to them', first, 'by the historic and geographic context of their placement' and, second, by 'the aesthetic conditions of the materiality of their surroundings'. The third co-ordinate is provided by the artist who 'adds his or her proposition'.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the artist-as-lookout can bring awareness of a spatio-temporal horizon that refers as much to other places 'over there'



as to the imminent future, to that which is heading towards us. Moreover, the lookout is, as Biggs concludes, 'integral to Folkestone's history as a port', so the place itself is uniquely 'exposed and sensitive to the global weather of economics, politics and migration. Art placed here can easily access this global weather, a weather that affects humanity as a whole'.<sup>17</sup>

Pursuing the idea of triangulation one might see in the third Triennial a form of synthesis that emerges logically from the spatio-temporal dynamic – tales of home-and-away, past-and-present – proposed by the themes of Schlieker's two previous Triennials. In this sense, to invoke Biggs's terms of reference, the 'positions' established by previous Triennials at certain moments in Folkestone's evolving re-constitution of itself serve not only as a curatorial opportunity for the third Triennial to move things on – quite feasibly in critical contradistinction to the narratives and imaginaries conjured by what has taken place before – but also as a barometer of the extent to which circumstances in the town itself have shifted in the meantime. The fact of the latter calls, in turn, for a new kind of artistic response.

At the same time, the trope of triangulation can be applied in two further ways that are related and that go beyond Biggs's delineation, which privileges both artist and curator. First, given that several of the artworks from previous Triennials have evolved into permanent sitings (sixteen remain from 2008 and 2011), triangulation can also refer to a form of incidental conversation between works conceived under three different

thematic signs. And, second, by acknowledging that the perambulating viewer – plotting a route between sited artworks, or perhaps, as town resident, living immanently with certain ones – implicitly performs a form of self-directed curation across time and space. The plausibility of such a role validates itself inasmuch as the onus is on this interlocutor to forge imaginative, intellectual, physical and emotional links not only between works of different Triennials but also between artworks and place, the latter being, ultimately, what all the sited works have in common. Thus, an important triangulation arises in the conceptual and embodied navigation between artwork, place and interlocutor, leading to the formation of a kind of urban cartography, or poetics of place, that may be merely personal – carried, as it were, in the being of the individual concerned – or that may find public expression in some way. (Returning, again, to the initial example of Iglesias’s installation: I have borne that in-situ encounter with the artwork with me for three years merely as a personal experience before contemplating writing about it.) So, I am interested here in the way very varied, sited artworks can be made to resonate in the context of Folkestone as a place that is looking to recharge its batteries, as well as in how those works can be induced effectively to strike up conversations – which may prove agonistic, in fact – or enact cross-pollinations among themselves, serving to form a kind of cross-town choreography or implicit composition that collectively produces a narrative of place. This is one key way in which I see the integrated and enduring *work* (as in labour) of art occurring – which is also contingent, of course, on the *viewer’s* work – and it can be a conversation that takes place across time as well. That is, not only in the sense of Folkestone’s past being conjured and brought to bear – and of course,

faded grandeur, deprivation and dilapidation are frequently stimulating circumstances for artists to work within – but also inasmuch as artworks first sited in the 2008 Triennial can be made to engage with interventions sited since then in 2011 and 2014.

### **Folkestone songlines**

As I have indicated the methodology I have been outlining was, in a sense, already set in train with the instance of Iglesias's installation at the far end of The Leas. But to pursue the idea further I wish now to perform just one small chain of conceivable linkages that relate to Folkestone six years after the inaugural Triennial, above all with the notion of a dynamic urban *complex* in mind: a multi-layered field of operation that calls for a form of embodied navigation and orientation. Appropriately enough this is prefaced by a large-scale Triennial 'metro map' of artworks, produced in 2011 as a one-off artwork in its own right – with postcard versions of it supplied as well – which also incorporated among its network of 'stops' pieces held over from 2008. In fact, it was created on the initiative of local university art students, not as a formal part of the official Triennial commissions, and was posted on temporary boards that happened to be screening a site on Tontine Street where there was a house-size gap in the otherwise seamless row of buildings (Figure 3).<sup>18</sup> The somewhat cryptic nature of the relationship of this intervention to the official event proposes different ways of reading the map: was it merely looking to perform a useful function as a guide or was there a critique of the Triennial embedded in its form? Most usefully that ambiguity paves the way for various random, yet valid, speculations that may take us beyond the limitations of that which

may have been intended. In other words, what does the map *do*, how does it perform in context?

Fig.3 Triennial metro map, Tontine Street, 2011.

There is, of course, no actual metro in the town, so the map could be seen in itself to be celebrating the aspiration for the art of the Triennial to be nudging Folkestone towards daring to 'think big', as if it were a city (with a metro). On the other hand a critical stance can be detected precisely in the possibility that such big thinking is fanciful and out of tune with the needs of the town: an indication of the degree to which metropolitan concepts are being imposed in a way that is farcically misplaced and will doubtless run to sand before long. So, as with the sheer impracticality of contemplating the actual construction or existence of an underground train service in the town, given both its size and challenging topology, why, by figurative association, would Folkestone as a place even entertain the notion of accepting the implementation of a trendy urban phenomenon such as a triennial? The siting of the map on the provisional boards of a voided site in itself suggests an inevitable transiency: a passing fad, even a sticking plaster. Conversely, if the idea of a triennial seems as grandiloquent as the introduction of a metro service, one might point to the prevalence in Folkestone of the related phenomenon that was the railways and the way its presence – certainly the product of thinking big – positively shaped the town at one time with those against-all-odds Victorian engineering feats of the viaduct and the train track descending down a steep

incline to the harbour station to feed cross-channel ferries. Ironically, of course, it is the arrival of another form of train service, the one facilitated by the Eurotunnel, that underscores the extent of the decline of that industry for the town: the loading and unloading point for vehicles is 'Folkestone', but only in name, since the station is more like a motorway services, connected only to the M20 so as to provide the quickest access to and from metropolitan London, but by-passing Folkestone itself entirely.

A similar ambiguity arises when one considers what the map is for – that is, how to use it (perhaps more pertinently in its portable postcard form). In fact, it turns out to be pretty useless as a navigation device. In other words, despite stating that the metro map 'encourages people to find their own way between sites' it would be impossible to set off in the streets of Folkestone to locate the artworks using this map because it bears no cartographic relation to the actual place, only to the spatial positioning of the artworks to one another. Like Harry Beck's familiar London Underground map design of the 1930s (since adapted several times over, of course), the Triennial map is an abstraction. But where Beck's Tube map presupposes points of reference in the real world (stations), which, more importantly, are connected by a transport mechanism (trains) that takes responsibility for moving you between stops, here there is no way of telling how you might cover the distance between the sited artworks or even where they are located to begin with.

Paradoxically, then, for all its simulation of the Tube map form it is actually an invitation to get places under your own steam: to get out there and *walk*. Not only that, in keeping with the paradox it is an invitation deliberately to get yourself lost, as the map itself declares. Thus, in the best spirit of the Situationists it represents a *détournement* (or critical hijacking) of the idea of a map: a map that is, in fact, an anti-map or non-map and therefore 'gloriously pointless'. Except that you may take inspiration from its spaghetti-like structural form, which invokes an irregular network of 'songlines' or 'paths taken': a template that holds the promise of the emergence of some form of inscription or iteration of the contours and locales of the urban landscape.<sup>19</sup> This suggests, first, that there are indeed connections to be made between works, and not only the obvious ones where artists such as Tracy Emin and Richard Wentworth have sited a series of related works across town and have therefore been allocated a whole 'line' to themselves by the metro map. Second, those connections can take place in any number of varying ways. So, it is implied, it is actually the artworks that provide the means of navigation, not the map; losing yourself in the urban townscape – which, as Walter Benjamin famously implied, 'calls for a quite different schooling' – is how you will gradually get to know the place.<sup>20</sup> And, moreover, the walking that you do as you 'perform lostness', calls for a form of sharpened observation or mobile note-taking (in the sense of 'taking note'): an active realisation of associations as well as disjunctions.<sup>21</sup>

## **Writing Folkestone**

A conceptual cue, which sets the ball rolling for the modest excursion that follows, is provided by an artwork that was presented at the first Folkestone Triennial in 2008 by the Italian artist Patrick Tuttofuoco. This picked up on the somewhat startling fact that the town was once the destination of the glamorous Trans-European Orient Express train from Istanbul. Tuttofuoco's *Folkestone Express* exists in two parts. First, a large-scale installation sited slightly beyond the station on the harbour arm mole, facing inland on the eastern side, which is made up of the letters that form the town's name; and, second, a 90-minute 'road movie' in which the artist and his camera crew criss-cross Europe – like the Orient Express, though not necessarily following its exact route – seeking the letters that will eventually constitute the installation in the form of moulded steel.<sup>22</sup> Each letter comes about as the consequence of an adventure on the road in various cities. For example, the neon tubes discovered on a visit to the Tesler Museum in Bucharest lead to the formation of the letter 'L'. And so a resonant sense emerges of collecting contemporary urban tales of European time and space and carrying them like hard-won trophies to Folkestone, symbolically offering the town the opportunity to form its identity as a place that has the potential, figuratively and literally, to 'look to' Europe.

Tuttofuoco spells out the letters that make up 'Folkestone', pinning a tale (of travel) to each one, and reflects this citation back to the town, so that every time its citizens look out across the outer harbour to sea – and, by implication, to the Europe that lies beyond – the name of the place in which they dwell is reiterated for them against this vast

natural backdrop. Thus, a form of hieroglyph that seeks to connect name to place has been etched literally into the material fabric of the townscape, not merely to identify the location, as a road sign might, but to tie it to certain anecdotal mnemonics. Even if you have not seen the accompanying film of *Folkestone Express*, which recounts the detail of the various European tales of acquisition, the siting of the installation as event and as continuing intervention begin to generate their own form of ‘town mythology’ as the object of discussion and conjecture. This is confirmed, in fact, by what appears to be a neat ‘sleight of hand’ inasmuch as the piece, which is one of those that has been adopted by the Creative Foundation as a permanent work, has since dropped the ‘*Express*’ part of its title, leaving only the name of the town. This would suggest that the artwork has deliberately evolved since 2008 – along with the town – with focus now being placed on the capacities of the physical installation to resonate independently, as an enduring fixture, rather than in necessary conjunction with the adventures presented in the film. 2008 was also the year that the last Orient Express passed through Folkestone, so dropping ‘Express’ from the title symbolically captures that disappearance of a perennial feature of the town.

A few metres back along the harbour arm from Tuttofuoco’s projection, along the walls of the two platforms of the ruinous, abandoned station, there is another form of inscription that appears to address the relationship between the ‘hereness’ and ‘elsewhereness’ of Folkestone as a spatio-temporal threshold town. Entitled *Is Why the Place* and commissioned for the 2014 Triennial, Tim Etchells’ words form the statement



'Coming And Going Is Why the Place Is There At All', which appears twice in large, neon lights running in opposite directions on respective arrivals and departures platforms (Figure 4). Materially it adopts Tesler's invention as reflected in Tuttufuoco's 'L', but in truth it is reminiscent more of metropolitan street-level advertising, even of a 'seedy Soho'. Best viewed at night, the installation poses a ghostly, melancholic paradox (Figure 5). On the one hand it appears to state the obvious, but on the other it points to a challenging question: how can a place where people only ever arrive in order to leave again be entitled to be called a place at all? The flippant answer is: it can be if that place is a train station. But, in an age of 'super-modernity' this would seem to direct us merely towards the kind of place that Marc Augé has famously identified as, in fact, a *non-place*: nodal points of public mobility through which people tend to pass or, at most, dwell in order to move on.<sup>23</sup>

Fig.4 *Is Why the Place*, Tim Etchells, Folkestone Triennial 2014.

Fig.5 *Is Why the Place*, Tim Etchells, Folkestone Triennial 2014.

At a more poignant level it is perhaps less the arrested coming and going of *people* that Etchells has in mind – albeit that the necessity of sustaining this form of movement is neatly implied by the analogy with the continuing ebb and flow of the tides, upon which the town's life depends – than the coming and going of *places in time*. In other words, the cyclical rise and fall of a place is a significant aspect of that which ultimately defines

its identity; ruination and decay are not only an inevitable part of that process but also have their own allure inasmuch as they are suggestive of some sort of liberating transformation being 'in train', however slow it may be. Writing in his book *Certain Fragments* (1999), which primarily documents his thinking and practice as writer and director of the renowned performance group Forced Entertainment, Etchells elaborates – in a manner that foreshadows the more recent exploits of urban place hackers like Bradley Garrett<sup>24</sup> – on the way his company was always inspired in the devising of work by inhabiting spaces between destruction and construction:

We always loved the incomplete – from the building site to the demolition site, from the building that was used once and is no longer to the building that will be used. [...] The fascination of ruined places, of incomplete places. It seems unethical to admit – the strange charge of buildings left to run down – but they always were the best places to play – stinking of previous use, ready for transgression.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, as Tim Edensor has shown, states of ruination are always ambivalent.<sup>26</sup> Suspended as they are between pasts and futures, they potentially acquire a dynamic which marks a point of transition or *departure* – a leaving behind *and* a leaving for – that is marked by loss – a form of entropy – and uncertainty about what the future will hold, but also by desire and opportunity: the beautiful promise of a *destination*. As Hanru proposes, 'the real meaning of beauty is in ruination...'.<sup>27</sup>

The harbour station emerges, then, not only as the place that once hosted, and was *dependent* on, the coming and going of people and trains but also as the place that now finds itself poised at a kind of ‘terminus of going’, an endpoint presaging the transition to a new era of ‘coming’. In this it epitomises the fate of the town as a whole. As the piece’s title, *Is Why the Place*, covertly implies by actually being but a symbolic fragment of the installation inscription – its ‘centrepiece’ perhaps – the clue as to the fate of Folkestone is bound up and embedded in the future of the disused, dilapidated harbour station which is a synecdoche for the town: the station *is* the town. And, if *Is Why the Place* sounds like it may be a tentative question as well as a partial form of explanation, this is because the future is as yet rather uncertain.

At the tip of the harbour arm, well beyond the derelict platforms of the station and Tuttofuoco’s inscription, stands a small white lighthouse whose modesty is emphasised by its resemblance to a pawn chess-piece. Completed in 1903 it still boasts functioning equipment, but for the 2014 Triennial it was allocated a new, temporary role as a retroactive ‘installation from the grave’ by Ian Hamilton Finlay, who died in 2006. Epitomising, as both location and object, the Triennial’s ‘Lookout’ theme, and continuing here the modality of artists *writing* Folkestone, a citation from the artist and poet – at the same time the title of the installation – was selected by the Triennial’s curator and inscribed on the side of the lighthouse: ‘Weather is a Third to Place and Time’ it says. As such it neatly encapsulate Biggs’s notion of triangulation outlined earlier; here the third

co-ordinate of the weather is the new 'proposition' that is added by the artist to the 'fixed points' of place and time.<sup>28</sup>

By the time I got to visit the Triennial in late October it had become impossible for safety reasons to walk out to the lighthouse along the crumbling, wind-and-sea battered pier – which was also undergoing repair – and so one was invited to peer at the installation through a telescope half way along the mole (Figure 6). As far as the lighthouse was concerned the performative effect of this was at once to bring it closer (optically) *and* to distance you since it was a substitute for not being able to get there yourself. More importantly, with the additional effects of the wind whistling immanently in your ears, being made to look through a telescope somehow brought into focus the significance of the proposal that the weather merited being thought of as a 'third factor', enhancing as it did the sense of your exposure to and dependency on *weather* – an unpredictable and powerful natural force coming at the town from afar, from 'over the horizon'. The impromptu situation seemed to be performative, then, of precisely that which Finlay's message was trying to convey: that the continuously unexpected vicissitudes of the weather – and by extension, of course, *climate* – make, whether subtle or extreme, benign or hostile in their inflection, a telling difference to the experience of time and place.

Fig.6 *Weather is the Third of Place and Time*, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Folkestone Triennial 2014.

Fig.7 Folkestone harbour pier, 2014.

As if to underscore the point, as I head back down the pier I watch – and then time my darting run accordingly – as a turbulent sea sends waves crashing against the western side of the harbour arm, periodically throwing up showers of spray (Figure 7). Even more spectacular, though, is the rushing sound as vast banks of pebbles on the abandoned beach behind are flushed back and forth by the surging waves. It puts me in mind of an artwork by Mark Wallinger from the 2008 Triennial which also makes resonant use of writing but in the form of hand-painted numerals (Figure 8). Like Tuttofuoco's piece, its title, *Folk Stones*, plays on the town's name and in a way that makes one ponder its actual etymology.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, it is also based, in its own way, on a form of 'travel to Europe'. Here it is more like a *sortie*, though, because Wallinger's installation is in effect a memorial to First World War troops, which is figuratively invoked by the mass of pebbles making up Folkestone's beaches at the foot of its western cliffs.

Fig. 8 *Folk Stones*, Mark Wallinger, Folkestone Triennial 2008.

Fig. 9 *Folk Stones*, Mark Wallinger, Follestone Triennial 2008.

Laid out in a neat flat quadrant that is sited formally as part of a well-kept lawn area (with a bandstand nearby) on the cliff top promenade of The Leas – from which the French coastline can be spied – each of its embedded stones carries a white numeral (Figure 9). This refers symbolically to one of the 19,240 British soldiers who, having arrived at Folkestone’s harbour station, made their way across the channel, only to be killed on the first day of action at the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916. So, a ghostly kind of ‘going’ (to echo Etchells) – or an exit (to echo the French *sortie*) – that had no coming back. As I wander carefully around the edges of the installation I ask myself whether I would dare to walk on its tactile cobbled surface. No sign suggests you cannot. The site is completely open and unguarded at all times – no sign even of the customary British enthusiasm for CCTV surveillance – and the piece certainly looks durable enough materially speaking. Instead, the installation’s overwhelming story casts its own, invisible protective cloak, an ethical force holding back the instincts of my body. And so, via a thwarted physical sensation, the piece potentially works to induce in me the desire to examine the basis of my own reverence – what it all means to me. In truth, then, it feels as if it would be more like walking on as yet unbroken eggshells, an inevitable form of desecration and sacrilege. The actual rawness and vulnerability of the cultural memory conjured physically by *Folk Stones* turns out to be poignantly related, as a physical experience, to witnessing firsthand the very visceral sensation of vast volumes of pebbles being churned up by crashing waves on the beach below and serves, thus, to underscore the industrial scale of ritualised human wastage invoked by Wallinger’s piece.

As my final example of 'writing Folkestone' I'm picking up now on the metro map's Piccadilly-blue Wentworth line whose ten stops meander their way from the centre of the town westwards in an exemplarily spaghetti-like manner. In a piece entitled *Racinated* Richard Wentworth sited ten navy-blue plaques around Folkestone in 2008, each one supplying succinct information on the origins and history of a tree-type he had found growing in the immediate vicinity of the sign. Invariably these tree-types have been imported from various parts of the globe and successfully integrated into the UK at some point in its colonial history (Figures 10 and 11). So the analogy with both the postcolonial legacy and, more recently, the European fate of migrant people is clear enough. If Wallinger's work marked a melancholic 'going with no return', Wentworth's arguably celebrates its antithesis: a 'coming' or arrival and, importantly, a successful and lasting integration. Again, then, it is a form of writing that invokes Folkestone as gateway or threshold.

Fig.10 *Racinated* plaque, Richard Wentworth, Folkestone Triennial 2008.

Fig.11 *Racinated* plaque, Richard Wentworth, Folkestone Triennial 2008.

Interestingly the term 'racinated' itself does not appear in my English dictionary (Collins) except in the form of *deracination*, which means to uproot or remove from a natural environment. So, the title evidently points to the possibility of a 'natural re-rooting' in

new surroundings. And this is a process that implies both the uprooted tree or plant and its newfound environment adapting reciprocally. As such they both undergo irreversible change in such a way as to become indispensable to one another as part of the local ecology.<sup>30</sup> Wentworth's figurative installation is based, then, on that which one might call a 'natural science of immigration' – even a form of 'inverse colonialism' – but it also proposes, in a very real sense – which potentially returns us, contrapuntally perhaps, to Iglesias's framing of wilderness – that the flora and fauna of nature itself is a form of site-specific artwork in its own right. That is, trees and plants with intriguing histories and vital relationships with their ecological surroundings are implicitly 'happening' around us all the time, but tend to be taken for granted. Thus, not unlike the public's fickle and uncertain relationship to art sometimes, there is a general indifference to the integrated presence and enduring work of trees.

### **Folkestone turned? – a conclusion**

To emphasise the very point I turn in conclusion to the question of lasting urban change in Folkestone, and the role art may have here in the town's reconstitution of itself, by focusing on the example of Michael Sailstorfer's *Folkestone Digs*. In many ways this was the standout artwork of the 2014 Triennial in the sense that it made a big splash and got everyone talking (and digging), attracting immediate media and public attention – not just locally but both nationally and globally – at the onset of the nine-week Triennial event on 30 August. In one sense the effect of this widespread news coverage – which was carefully orchestrated by the artist in terms of the timing of press releases –



represented an incalculable boon to the Triennial. The blaze of publicity got it known and off to a great start, and it enticed a whole host of visitors to Folkestone who would normally not even have heard of the event, let alone contemplated attending it. In another sense, though, the controversial content and open-ended participatory nature of the piece – again, carefully conceived by the artist for its probable impact – tended to soak up all the interest and energy of visitors, with attention inclining towards remaining exclusively with Sailstorfer’s installation rather than the Triennial as a whole at this early stage of the event.

Briefly to explain the artworks conceit: on the eve of the Triennial’s opening the artist let it be known that he had spent £10,000 worth of his commission on producing 30 pieces of gold, all of which had been buried somewhere in the sand of Folkestone’s outer harbour area. The pieces weighed either 10g or 20g and were worth £250 and £500 respectively. Anyone was free to come and dig and try their luck at locating one of the pieces; finders would be keepers. This would only be possible, of course, when the tide was out, so the artwork implicitly aligned itself with one of the principle rhythms governing life in the town. The announcement naturally triggered a range of public reactions, from initial doubt as to the veracity of the claim – surely it was all a con – to disgust at the childishness of it and the unethical waste of subsidies for the arts. Where was the art? Surely this was the kind of thing to give artists and art a bad name. And so on. Importantly, however, it drew the crowds on that first sunny weekend of the Triennial, and one of the things that can surely be said for the piece is that it generated

a form of temporary community – anticipated in the title of the work – borne of a common sense of intrigue and purpose. While not every lucky finder necessarily identified themselves, there were one or two early on who did. That proved it was not a cheap gimmick and provided further incentive to keep looking.

Fig.12 Outer harbour, Folkestone 2014.

When I arrived in town in late October, however, there was nothing to be seen in Folkestone's outer harbour except the customary scene of floating boats and buoys, and a strip of deserted sandy beach (Figure 12). Even the arrival of low tide saw little more than the odd dog walker and dog or fisherman tinkering with his nets. Should I attempt a lonely little dig of my own? It didn't feel right. The word on the street was that the hubbub had long since died down. No-one knew exactly how many gold pieces had been found or may be left. What remained was the collective memory of the initial flurry, and the speculation about future finds and what the ultimate value of such a gold piece might be. For one thing, was it worth more as a unique part of an artwork or as straight bullion? And, like the speculative rumours generated by the presumed treasure of a sunken ship whose precise whereabouts is unknown, what a story it would make were there to be a lucky finder say fifty years from now. What value would the piece have then?

The post-party feel begins to permit the fuller implications of Sailstorfer's event to sink in. An interesting temporal interplay exists between the *immediacy* of the initial explosion of interest and its *long-term* effect. Interestingly, the frenzied digging for gold at the outset, which seems in part to be about a kind of impatient, unthinking, something-for-nothing delirium, also emerges unexpectedly as an exercise in *communitas*: a participatory improvisation that gets folk talking to one another, even if it is merely to share in the amusing absurdity of this particular common activity. For many the appeal turned out to be less about the promise of instant personal gain than the sport of engaging in an exercise whose collaborative nature may lead to *someone* being lucky: like the striker who happens to be the one to put the ball in the net, it would be more like 'one for the team'. The collective digging up of the beach aspect even generates its own sense of creating a form of land art, which, in being bound by incoming tides that immediately smooth over the disturbed sand, emerges as a repeatable time-based performance. The long-term implications of the intervention, meanwhile, suggest it has made its mark above all as a 'good yarn' whose narrative will etch itself into the folklore of the town and doubtless receive a few embellishments as it circulates over time. But if it is a good yarn that endures, it is one that is also instructive, even cautionary (look out!), in the way it shows how all kinds of primitive, knee-jerk responses are triggered by staging such a 'dream of cashing in'.<sup>31</sup> And this applies in a sense that is very specific to the future of the town as well: in 2004 Roger de Haan dug into the billions for which he had just sold Saga and bought the whole of Folkestone harbour, including the pier and station, for £11 million. So, whether intentional or not,

the notion of buried treasure evoked by the artwork carries connotations of the entrepreneur effectively sitting on a gold mine. The question is: what will he do with it?

Above all, though, *Folkestone Digs* stands perhaps as an emblematic instance of the way in which artworks – the artworks of the Triennial – have indeed got the capacities to mobilise and bring people together and to generate profound critical and transformational discourses about the town. Viewing them as spectacular money-spinning investments is not helpful. They are more likely to begin to work towards fulfilling the promise of turning a town's fortunes by implicitly lodging themselves in its complex fabric, posing searching questions by virtue of their siting and being permitted to germinate over a period of time.

There is an interesting tension between ephemerality and longevity that is worth reflecting on briefly in conclusion. The assumption of artworks – in whatever form – confirming their value on account of their capacities to endure is, of course, a contentious one in the modern era, not least because of its alliance with notions of universality. In other words, one reason an artwork supposedly endures is because it transcends cultural boundaries, speaking to 'all of humanity' and thereby clinching its 'greater significance' over time. More recent perceptions of the purpose of art in public space – previously thought of as 'sculpture' – reflect a move away from the durable material object and towards an expanded temporal field where the life of the artwork-as-intervention may, for instance, be deliberately finite. As such, the enduring artwork

may not be the goal where the enduring *work* of art may indeed be. And it may even be that the ephemeral artwork, as a short, sharp intervention, better enables the latter to come about. As the Bristol-based group Situations, who sponsored Sailstorfer's piece, put it in their 2014 manifesto outlining the new rules of public art: 'Rule no. 2. It's not forever. From the here-today-gone-tomorrow of a "one day sculpture" to the growth of a future library over 100 years, artists are shaking up the life expectancy of public artworks. Places don't remain still and unchanged, so why should public art?'.<sup>32</sup> The key point is that the *work* aspect of the sited work of art has shifted position from the discrete artwork itself, and the artist's labour to produce it, to the relationship of the artwork to its particular location and to its interlocutors: to that which happens *in between*. And that ongoing work is something still worth valuing in terms of longevity, above all in terms of its specificity as a gift to the local community.

## Notes

1. Folkestone boasts five remaining Martello Towers of the 103 originally built along the UK coastline between 1805 and 1812, the most prominent of which, Martello 3, lies fully exposed on top of the town's Eastern Cliff and was used as the basis for an artwork entitled *Entanglement* by the Turkish artist Ayse Erkmen for the first Triennial in 2008.

2. A. Schlieker, 'A Million Miles from Home', in Andrea Schlieker, ed., *Folkestone Triennial: A Million Miles from Home* (London: Cultureshock Media, 2011), p.30.

3. Cited in J. Rendell, *Site-Writing: the Architecture of Art Criticism* (London and New York: IB Tauris, 2010), p.170. *Towards the Sound of Wilderness* references an earlier series of pieces by Iglesias (to which the quote refers) known as *Vegetation Rooms*

(2002). These feature the *bas relief* panels but are made for the gallery (see Rendell, *Site-Writing*, pp.170-2 and Schlieker, 'A Million Miles', p.30).

4. Schlieker, 'A Million Miles', p.30.

5. The term 'weathered threshold' derives from Walter Benjamin who used it in his review of Franz Hessel's 1929 book on *flânerie* in Weimar Berlin (*On Foot in Berlin*) to describe the *flâneur's* dismissal of the customary tourist spots in cities as 'so much junk' in preference for 'the scent of a single weathered threshold or the touch of a single tile – that which any old dog carries away'. See Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings Volume 2: 1927-34*, (ed. M. Bullock, H. Eiland and G. Smith; trans. R. Livingston and others), (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p.263. The threshold is seen, then, as that which leads to unsuspected insights. *Backward Glances* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), meanwhile, is the title of a book on the history of gay cruising in which, as Geoff Dyer remarks, the author Mark W. Turner writes of 'the illicit thrill of gliding through the city, stealing glances at strangers, looking for a reciprocal sign that someone is out for the same thing'. Geoff Dyer, 'An Explosion of Delight', *Guardian*, 14 October 2006, p.30.

6. Rendell, *Site-Writing*, p.169.

7. Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: a Place Between* (London and New York: IB Tauris, 2006), p.6.

8. Rendell, *Site-Writing*, p.7.

9. Gavin Butt, *After Criticism: New Responses in Art and Performance*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p.15.

10. The Leas Lift was built in 1885 and is the only feature of this seafront complex that still exists – and functions. The principle behind its mechanism – which, in stark contrast to the swish, enclosed modern-day elevator, is wholly exposed in all its clunking glory – is remarkably straightforward: its two carriages are symbiotically roped together, so while they are headed in opposite directions, the activity of one is entirely dependent on the other. Once the carriage at the top of the steep cliff face has fully filled up with water pumped from the sea, gravity pulls it downwards while the other one waiting at the bottom rises. In 2011 Martin Creed sited his aural installation *No.1196 Piece for String Quartet and Elevator* in the lift. Users were subject – often unwittingly – to the ethereal sound of ascending or descending chromatic scales played on stringed instruments.

11. The hackneyed phrase ‘giving something back to the community’, which is clearly designed to garner approval, is always haunted by the hint of a confession, as if the individual concerned were only too aware of their historical culpability in ruthlessly and shamelessly ‘taking an awful lot out’ for personal gain to begin with.

12. Andrea Schlieker, ‘Tales of Time and Space’, in A. Schlieker, ed., *Folkestone Triennial: Tales of Time and Space* (London: Cultureshock Media, 2008), p.12. The UK-based German curator Andrea Schlieker, who was responsible for the 2008 and 2011 editions, was instrumental in developing the essential concept of the triennial model for Folkestone. The 2014 Triennial was curated by Lewis Biggs, who had been artistic director of the Liverpool Biennial and heavily involved in that city’s activities as European Capital of Culture in 2008.

13. Schlieker, ‘Tales’, p.12

14. The Danish artist Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen presented a three-screen film entitled *Promised Land* at the 2011 Triennial which focused on Afghan and Iranian migrants seeking illegal passage to Britain from the notorious refugee camps in Calais.

15. Lewis Biggs, 'Introduction', in L. Biggs, ed., *Folkestone Triennial 2014: Guide Book* (Folkestone: Creative Foundation, 2014), p.4.

16. Biggs, 'Introduction', p.4.

17. Biggs, 'Introduction', p.4.

18. The students were members of University Centre Folkestone which, as another example of an arts and education initiative of the Creative Foundation, had opened its doors as a satellite of Canterbury Christ Church University in 2007, focussing on offering degrees in the visual and performing arts. However, as a salutary warning perhaps of the difficulty of sustaining such well-meaning revitalising ventures, the Centre was forced in 2013 to return its operation to the Canterbury campus and close down owing to complaints about a lack of adequate study resources and support.

19. Bruce Chatwin's well-known evocation of Australia's aboriginal songlines describes how the entire landscape is delineated by a network of invisible pathways made up of songs invented by the ancestors, telling of the creation of the land: 'One should perhaps visualise the Songlines as a spaghetti of Iliads and Odysseys, writhing this way and that in which every "episode" was readable in terms of geology... Anywhere in the bush you can point to some feature and ask the Aboriginal with you, "What's the story there?"'. Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines* (London: Pan Books, 1988), p.16.

20. Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street and Other Writings* (trans. E. Jephcott and K. Shorter), (London and New York: Verso, 1997), p.298.



21. To illustrate the point using an artwork that seems in itself to be performative of the very concept being outlined: at the decennial Münster Sculpture Projects in 2007 Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster prepared a form of miniature theme-park of Sculpture Project icons from previous decades (going back to 1977). Entitled *A Münster Novel* and choreographed within a delimited, inner-city parkland setting in which the spectator was enabled to wander around at leisure, it effectively presented both a concertinaed version of the story of public sculpture's general evolution as an expanded form in recent decades and a microcosm of sited Münster artworks in which connections between sculptures, between past and present – the miniature toy-like forms evoking 'remembered playthings' – and, finally, between the artworks and the city itself could be established by the active, perambulating spectator. Importantly the spectator, or 'reader' of this 'novel', was positioned to 'bring into being' (or perform) the various possible linkages on offer, thus effectively completing a version of the work.

22. The letters were not visible at the 2014 Triennial owing to their temporary removal while the harbour arm undergoes refurbishment.

23. See Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London and New York: Verso, 1995).

24. In *Explore Everything*, Garrett writes: 'Ruins may be decaying, but they are not dead, they are filled with possibilities for wondrous adventure, inspiring visions, quiet moments, peripatetic playfulness, dystopic preparation and artistic potential'. Bradley L. Garrett, *Explore Everything: Place-Hacking the City*, (London and New York: Verso, 2014), p.63.

25. Tim Etchells, *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.78.

26. Tim Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005).

27. Hou Hanru, 'The Ghost of Venice', in A. Valdés, ed., *Alfredo Jaar: Venezia, Venezia* (New York: Actar Publishers), p.51.

28. Biggs, 'Introduction', p.4.

29. The etymology of Folkestone is obscure but appears to have little to do with 'folk' as such, although the 'stone' part of it is held to refer to its role as a public meeting place.

30. Nicolas Bourriaud's application of the trope of the 'radicant' in his disquisition on the future of cultural globalisation would seem to resonate here in his delineation of its bio-dynamic properties: '[c]ontemporary creators are already laying the foundations for a radicant art – *radicant* being a term designating an organism that grows its roots and adds new ones as it advances. To be radicant means setting one's roots in motion, staging them in heterogeneous contexts and formats, denying them the power to completely define one's identity, translating ideas, transcoding images, transplanting behaviours, exchanging rather than imposing'. Nicolas Bourriaud, *The Radicant* (New York: Lukas and Sternberg, 2009), p.22.

31. Retroactively that sense of a symbolic 'gold rush' was emphasized all the more with the events of the summer of 2015 when Folkestone was directly implicated in the effects of refugees and economic migrants seeking to make their way to the UK from Calais, often on the vague assumption of 'UK pavements are paved in gold'.

32. Situations (with Claire Doherty), *The New Rules of Public Art* (Bristol: Situations, 2013), p.4.

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