

Hryre (ruin)

AN ARTWORK BY NAYAN KULKARNI

*As I stood there it began to emerge
out of the darkness. I love this, because
for me it is like the space between two
columns of sound—it is so important
that we preserve this darkness between
the forms of light.*

Terence, local resident

... man,
Din ab mōm dō
i gēzēl an i gēzēl i gē
u kēzēl zūzōt kēzēl
gē i fōm nīd aūzēn aūz
aūz bōm gēzēl i fōm i fōm
nān i fōzēl i wēzēl i fōzēl
wē i gēzēl an i gēzēl
zūzōt fē na mōm aūzēl
u bōm mōm o gēn mōm
zūzōt pōi dōm fōzēl o mā
ool i wēzēl zūzōt
u ai bōlō tē fō tēzēl
ai tēzēl pōm. tēzēl
u ai gēn gēn mōm
gēzēl zūzōt
u gēzēl

INTRODUCTION

'Hryre' (the word for 'ruin' in Old English) is a new artwork created to explore the medieval heritage of Chester and of St John's Church in particular. It draws on the research of the 'Mapping Medieval Chester' project and is part of a new 'Discover Medieval Chester' project both funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Artist Nayan Kulkarni was commissioned to produce this artwork by Cheshire West & Chester Council's Arts & Festivals team in partnership with Museum Service, Street Lighting and Chester Renaissance. The artwork is funded by Cheshire West & Chester Council, Chester Renaissance and the AHRC. Nayan has worked closely with Professor Catherine Clarke of the English Department at Southampton University, who is also the Director of the 'Mapping Medieval Chester' research. They have refined the ideas in conjunction with local people through workshops and discussion groups.

THE ARTWORK

The projections across the ruins at St John's are formed from fragments of medieval texts which describe the city of Chester in English, Latin and Welsh. Medieval Chester was a multi-cultural city with a rich multi-lingual tradition which these texts reflect. As the words are projected across the uneven, fractured stonework, they take on new shapes and abstract visual forms. Some letters and words remain legible and are designed to open up ideas and themes for reflection. The artwork asks viewers to contemplate subjects such as ruin and memory, decay and survival, the passing of time and the idea of a spiritual, peaceful place.

The illumination is created by combining light and projected text from different positions around the ruins. A remote computer controls which lights are on at any moment. This means that the artwork gently changes from hour to hour and night to night revealing the different qualities of the ruins and highlighting the texts. Sometimes the work is a bold illumination and at other times there is a more subtle play of light and shadow.

Throughout 2011 Nayan and Catherine collaborated on the development of the permanent content of the artwork. Between

October 2011 and March 2012 the Eastern Ruins were illuminated using a series of texts developed in consultation with various stakeholders and community members. This allowed them to reconsider the content and form of the emerging permanent artwork. The temporary work indicated how they might approach balancing the textual sources and lyrical content with the formal possibilities that the ruins offered within the technical and budgetary constraints. The temporary projections were intended to:

- preview the way that light and text would change the ruin
- represent the principal languages
- reflect the inputs from the public workshops
- examine the difference between the three languages and their perspectives on Chester
- test the sequences and durations
- create an opportunity for a meaningful dialogue.

PERMANENT ILLUMINATION

This booklet sets out the slides that form the permanent illumination of the Eastern Ruins. The reaction to the temporary artwork was very positive. Nayan responded to the feedback with Catherine to form a work that refers more closely to the site of the church and ideas of the ruin and the fragment. The artwork explicitly makes connections between the fragments of the Eastern Ruins and the medieval texts.

Some of these texts make direct reference to memory and loss. However, themes of renewal and rebirth are also prominent in the selected fragments. The permanent artwork makes stronger biblical references whilst maintaining its poetic references to ideas of time and tide. The experience of the illumination is akin to a form of remembering in light. Like a palimpsest, the texts appear as a form of writing rather than projection. Finally, the artwork is underpinned by the idea of light as a form of solace, consolation and liberation.

THE SLIDES AND LIGHTS

The installation is formed of sixteen LED projector systems mounted on specially modified poles. Four of the lights are used to model the ruins. These lights create the dynamism of light and darkness that the artwork depends on. The remaining twelve lights form the basis through which the texts are projected across the ruins. To create the images, specially fabricated glass slides are focussed on the architectural fragments using cinema lenses. The slides take two forms. The first are a series of tracings from the original manuscripts. The second group contain key words or phrases that have been extracted from the manuscripts and made into images using a serified font. Thus the artwork reveals the source and the fragment of text.

The program uses Easter as its harmonic fulcrum. This relates to Nayan's ongoing interest in Bede's scientific observations of tide cycles and his important work in ecclesiastical calendars. This is exemplified in Maredudd ap Rhys's poem referring to the rood arriving on a tide, 'Llanw a'i dug dduw Llun i dir' (a tide brought it on a Monday to the land).

Each slide is an image no larger than fifty millimeters in diameter. The brightness of the resulting illumination is a factor of its size on the ruins. The control system selectively brightens and dims each fitting according to a program.

The projection system was designed by Nayan Kulkarni and Scottish engineer Duncan Turner (Carbon Lighting). The electronics that precisely optimise the system's dimming and power use were only possible because of the generous contribution of computer scientist and electronics fanatic Jamie Craig. Each light consumes no more than 90 watts and has an anticipated service life in this installation that exceeds 20 years. The electronics and precision metalwork were all manufactured in the UK and the systems were hand assembled by Nayan and Duncan. The build quality and material choices mean that they are capable of being reconditioned as lamp technology changes or completely recycled.



SOURCE TEXTS

LIGHT 1	MAREDUDD AP RHYS (TYPESET) <i>Lasar o fol ddaear dud</i>
LIGHT 2	MAREDUDD AP RHYS (TYPESET) <i>Llanw</i>
LIGHT 3/4	LEWYS GLYN COTHI (MANUSCRIPT TRACING) <i>Archaf am dref Gaer a'i maer a'i mach oerchwedl i'r dinas mewn dwfr bas bach, i wehydd, i grydd, o grach—i erddyrrn, i'w hesgyrn cedyrn ym mhob cadach, i ieuanc, i hen, nid amgenach, i Gaer Lleon Gawr, i fawr, i fach, i wraig, i forwyn, i wrach—i siopwr, i ŵr, i glerwr ac i gleiriach. O mynasant fy na mewn nawsach, naw ugain mintai o gŵn mantach, mynnwn pe'u gwelwn yn gulach—o dda ym Moel-y-Wyddfa neu ym Mleddfach. y dwfr a'u boddo tra fo tref iach, y tân a'u llosgo pe baent llesgach, yr awel a'u gwnêl gan niwlach—gwinau, ond yr eglwysau yn dir glasach.</i>
LIGHT 5	LEWYS GLYN COTHI (TYPESET) <i>ond yr eglwysau yn dir glasach</i>

TRANSLATIONS

Lazarus from the belly of the black earth

Tide

From the town of Chester and her mayor and her guarantor, I seek
vengeance on the city in its shallow little water,
on a weaver, on a shoemaker from scabs to wrists,
on their strong bones in every piece of clothing,

on the young, on the old, no exceptions,
on Chester the Giant, on the great and the small,
on a wife, on a maiden, on an old woman, on a shop-keeper,
on a man, on a wandering poet and on a decrepit old man.

Since they appropriated my goods in nine sacks,
those nine times twenty troops of toothless dogs,
I could appropriate, if only I could see more keenly, all the goods
in Moel-y-Wyddfa or Bleddfach.

If only the water would drown them while the town stays safe,
the fire burn them if they are too slow,
the air cause them to have fog and cloud,
but let the churches stay in a greener land.

but let the churches stay in a greener land



LIGHT 6	<p>HENRY BRADSHAW (MANUSCRIPT TRACING)</p> <p><i>Alas, great heuynes it was to beholde</i></p> <p><i>The cite of Troye all flamying as fire:</i></p> <p><i>More pite of Rome cite was manyfolde,</i></p> <p><i>Feruently flagrant / empeiryng the empire:</i></p> <p><i>As to quantite, the cite of Chestire</i></p> <p><i>Myght be assembled this tyme in like case</i></p> <p><i>To the sayd citees, remedeles, alas!</i></p>	<p>heaviness, misery</p> <p>pity</p> <p>damaging</p> <p>In terms of the scale (of the fire)</p> <p>Might at this time resemble a similar situation</p> <p>without remedy</p>
LIGHT 7	<p>HENRY BRADSHAW (TYPESET)</p> <p><i>Troye</i></p>	<p>Troy</p>
LIGHT 8	<p>RANULPH HIGDEN (TYPESET)</p> <p><i>velut Hercules actus</i></p>	<p>like a deed of Hercules</p>
LIGHT 9	<p>LUCIAN (TYPESET)</p> <p><i>sullimiter emigrare</i></p>	<p>escape without limit</p>
LIGHT 10	<p>LUCIAN (TYPESET)</p> <p><i>Tempestas docet quid tranquillitas donet</i></p>	<p>a storm teaches what calm weather can grant</p>
LIGHT 11	<p>LUCIAN (MANUSCRIPT TRACING)</p> <p><i>Fateor eo die differenter ac uarie temporis tractus ef-</i></p> <p><i>fluxit: castellum tedio, set ecclesia solatio fuit</i></p>	<p>I must admit that time passed that day in a variety of ways: the</p> <p>castle was a nuisance, but the church was a consolation</p>
LIGHT 12	<p>LUCIAN (TYPESET)</p> <p><i>solatio</i></p>	<p>solace</p>



Tempestas docet quid tranquillitas donet

ond yr eglwysau yn dir glasach



velut Herculis actus

...tatis didicera res ho
...sient: plenius preterit comparat
...amo tustret: 7 luctare luct dulcedine
...nt tenet: tegere no ualeres: clerici pham
...gent: salutatione oblata: alaceri accessisti: hila
...stultis: amabilis deduxisti. **De sinu pectoris tu**
...nt: qd honestate refunde: qd humilitate sape
...de gram redolere. **Secunde** uniu debriabaz: qd al
...de facili pssuebat: quia pleruq: qd nec ciuit acer
...degrinas appende. **Quod** uniu uelut paru op
...er plurimum reputauit: qa nich adeo demulo
...er caste imponit: carnis obsequiu. **Ea** q
...ferent ad uarre: temporis tractus efflu
...q: ecclia solatio fuit: in definitio
...uminal 7 supbia idar

sullimiter emigrare



Troye

The fire contraynt without any offence
 frequently stamping cart conueniently
 From place to place mercifully tunning
 As it were tyber continuing court and wall
 The citizens fairly laboured in Cadesse all
 By the police of man was founde no cumber
 To cōt the fire to frequent and murther
 Was great buyment it was to beholde
 The cite of cōrye all burning
 The pace of stone cite was manyfole
 frequently flaming empyering the empire
 As on the quante the cit of Cadesse
 Myght be affembly this tyme in last cite
 To the layo citess remembled alas
 On any place still abode that was
 Richer manchaunce howe to destruction
 Churche and chauncell went to great decay
 And that tyme was byent the mass part of the towne
 And to truste but the fowle flame of murther
 Brought a myghty churche a myghty of faynt adchall
 And the people was byent and to ruine fell
 When the people came to payme full
 To bygent labour with many paye
 To subdue the fire but flyll paye argment
 To almyghty god they cryd call and crye
 And to faynt the burge the gracious tope
 To beise and succour the people
 Theyng and weeping to bynd and byment

[illegible]

Lasar o fol ddaear dud



solatio

[illegible]



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Read the medieval texts in full and explore the digital atlas of medieval Chester at www.medievalchester.ac.uk

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