



## Research themes:

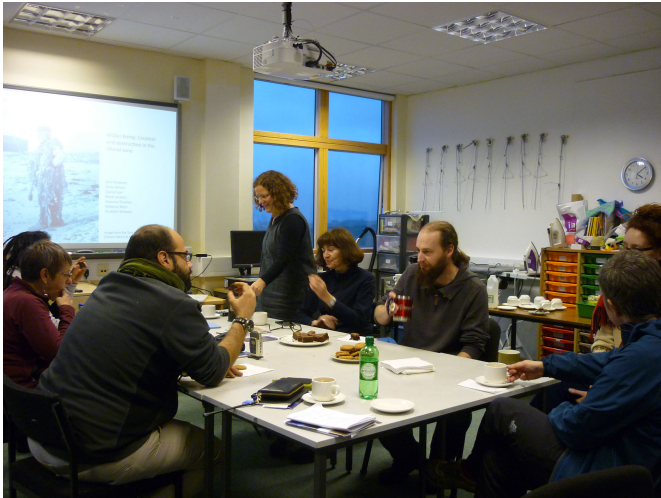
- People and Place
- Landscape and Embodiment
- Landscape, History and Transformation
- Wild spaces (including Forests, the North)
- Mapping
- Contentious or Coded Landscapes (including Heritage Preservation)
- Journeying as Fieldwork





**Day 1: *Landscape and embodiment: Walking as a research method***

Lesley Punton – Cairngorm mountains.  
Guided walk and discussion of Nan Shepherd's, *Living Mountain*, Chapter 12 – *Being*.



**Day 4: *Interdisciplinary research***

Susan Brind – with Anne Bevan, Head of Fine Art at Orkney College, University of Highlands & Islands, and an artist-researcher examining archaeology and environmental change.



**Day 2: *Landscape and embodiment***

Justin Carter – with Prof Tim Ingold, University of Aberdeen, Dept of Anthropology: on walking as a research method, embodied knowing and interpretations of landscape and nature based on Ingold's book, *Being Alive*, specifically the chapter *The 'weather world'*.

58.9629° N, 3.2983° W



Practicing Landscape Research Journey Day 5: Thursday 5 November, 2015

Andrew Parkinson, Curator of Pier Arts Centre in Stromness, Orkney, discusses the significance of surrounding location, history of the building – the backdrop for its important art collection.

**Day 5: *Reflexive Curatorial Process***

Jenny Brownrigg – at, Pier Arts Centre



**Day 3: *Looking for/at 'Northness'***

Nicky Bird – with Curator Frances Davis & Archivist Jo Clements, Timespan, Helmsdale to discuss their work relating to themes of 'Northness', identity and remoteness.



**Day 5: *Landscape and physical layering of history***

Susan Brind – Prof Jane Downes, Archaeology Department, University of Highland and Islands, Orkney: on archaeology, landscape and cultural identity in the Neolithic period.



# Creative Centre for Fluid Territories (CCFT)



## Research Questions:

- In what ways does a nomadic and dialogic encounter with other place(s) deepen cultural, philosophical and political understanding?
- How can the complex histories held in the landscapes of places be visually represented?
- Can creative practices transform those places or our perception of them?
- Might art practice/works of art provide a neutral reflective space that is other to the thing/place itself, and if so how does this contribute to our understanding of place?

These overarching questions are deliberately generic and apparently simple so that complexity and subtle questioning can be formulated in direct relation to the cultural and political context of each Nomadic Dialogue, to consider:

- In what way can creative practices play a significant part in constructing, questioning and negotiating ideas of cultural and social memory, modes of understanding and the representation of place identity?

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1304585/1304586>





Creative Centre for Fluid Territories (CCFT) at CCFT Symposium / Nomadic Dialogue, University of Nicosia, Cyprus, November 2016.



CCFT Nomadic Dialogue at Spanish Ambassador's residence, Nicosia, as part of *Agios Sozomenos : Timeless Encounters – Place of Barley*, Ayios Sozomenos, Cyprus, 26 March 2018.



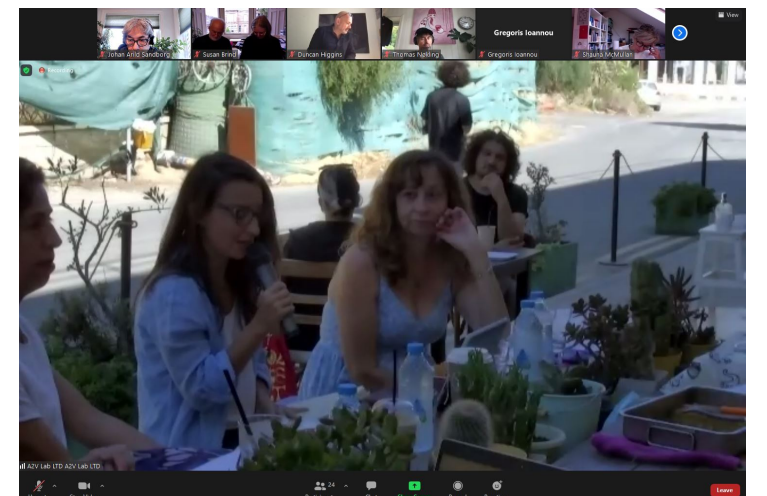
CCFT at 'Arendalsuka 2018', Arendal, Norway, 13-18 August 2018, 18 letters projected as part of CCFT presentation. (Arendalsuka is a national annual event and the largest political gathering in Norway. Its mission is to strengthen belief in political empowerment and democracy through open debate.)



CCFT Nomadic Dialogue – Telavåg/Bergen, 12-16 November 2018

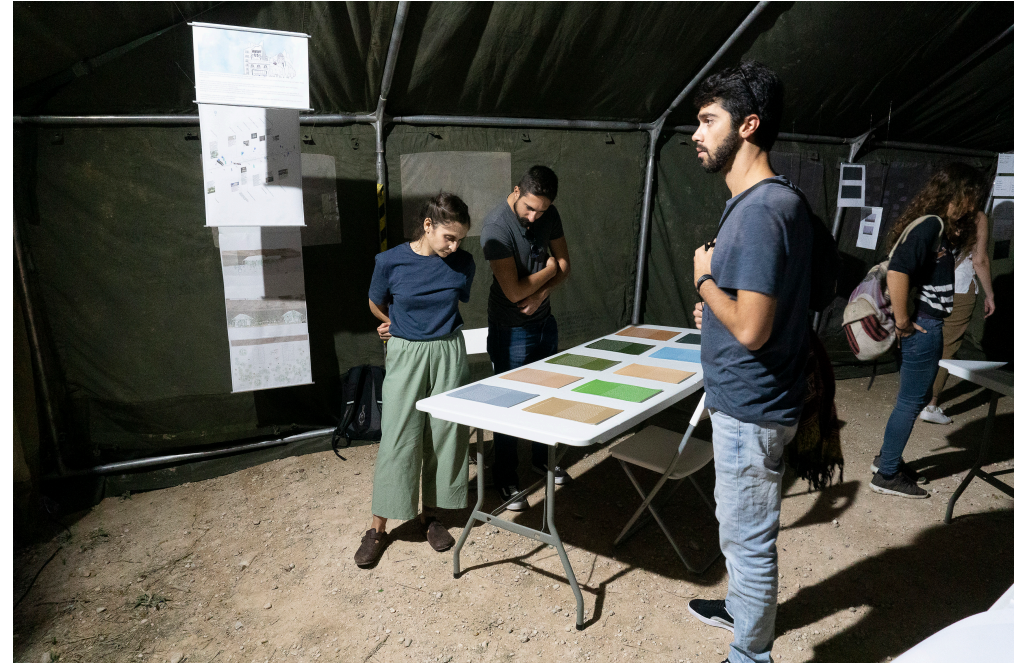


CCFT Nomadic Dialogue, *Urban Glendi* for *Buffer Fringe Festival*, Ledra Palace Border Crossing, Nicosia, 26 October 2019.



CCFT Hybrid Online Nomadic Dialogue for *Buffer Fringe Festival*, Home for Cooperation, Nicosia, October 2021.





***'Coffee Letters'*** – 20 letters displayed within UN tents inside the UN De-militarized Buffer Zone and at the Home for Cooperation Café at Ledra Palace Crossing, Nicosia.  
*Nomadic Dialogue CCFT 'Urban Glendi', Buffer Fringe VI Festival, Nicosia 2019.*



Yediler Turbesi, Lefkoça, North Cyprus, 31st March 2018

A very old woman brought the keys for me, walking from her house with the aid of a walking frame, her feet shuffling and scuffing over the ground. Her progress down the sloping street was painfully slow, and many minutes passed before she reached the tomb's green door, during which time I regretted having taken her from her rest. Seven tombs, each containing the remains of a martyr who had died during the siege and capture of the City by the Ottoman army some four hundred years ago, were each shrouded under a beautiful, well kept, green and gilt silk cloth. Their purity seemed so at odds with the sad dereliction of the locality, within the 'so-called' Dead Zone and up against the no-mans-land of the Buffer Zone. A mother of three boys had accompanied me into the tomb and she showed her children how to offer prayers and ask for blessings: her hand touching each headstone with a casual gentleness as she made her recitations. She then asked me to photograph her kids, despite knowing that they would only ever see the image on the back of my camera. I was reminded of that time many years ago now when you and I walked in an equally dilapidated area, just a few streets away in what had been the Armenian district of the Old City, and were accosted by a group of children who, after a few words of English were exchanged, gestured for their picture to be taken, and then ran away giggling shyly. I helped the old woman replace the gauze and wood screen over the doorway and lock up, and watched her slowly retreat to her home.

Glasgow, 11th April 2017

I've been working with D. today on a photo-etching using two photographs from the deserted village of Ayios Sotomennos that we visited last November. One is of the end wall of that abandoned schoolhouse, almost the only building left standing to its full height. Built of stone rather than mud bricks, it has withstood the inevitable collapse that the surrounding adobe buildings have been subject to over the last 50 years. The image, which you won't have seen yet, records all too well the traces of conflict that the place was subject to. The pattern of bullet holes and shrapnel marks on its outer walls seems, sadly now, to have more substance than the building and the ideals it once contained. The other photograph – a detail of one of the many thorn-covered bushes that have colonized the area in the absence of a community to tend the land – speaks of the encroachment of nature. But it wasn't just the image's meaning that drew me to it but the silvery lustre on the branches and thorns which seemed to shimmer. Or were they surrounded by light? For they seemed to hover in a kind of mirage, whilst the remains of the rest of the village was laid bare in the forensic afternoon sunlight. I'll package a copy of the finished print to you so you can see whether it captures the feelings we shared when we were there: of the tranquil beauty and brutal sadness of the place.

Ayios Sotomennos, South Cyprus, 5th August 2017

I still wanted it to be a small, picturesque, ruined, Greek temple, positioned with an artist's eye – in the spirit of Lorrain or Poussin – on top of a small hillock surrounded by a rugged, sun-soaked and deserted landscape. From a distance, the area is just as you described it: a landscape formed, in one direction, of limestone cliffs, hardy bush-scrub, occasional palms, eucalyptus trees and, in the other, a flat tabletop vastness of arable land, intersected by the Buffer Zone. Standing beside the building today, the reality was both more prosaic, and more tragic. Up close, the structure, far from being well preserved, is the brutally damaged and abandoned remains of what I've discovered was once the small, inter-communal, village school. Its roof and windows are gone, the ground around it is littered with fragments of masonry, and the stucco walls pock marked with countless bullet holes. One sign of more recent activity in the abandoned village is visible, though. On the building's west wall a line of graffiti has been inscribed, but whatever it had once said has since been obliterated by a subsequent action. Each character has been blocked out with brown or green paint: purposefully if crudely erased. It is as if what once was proclaimed, needed to be forcibly forgotten: so that the building and the surrounding landscape could settle into a deep silence – except for the rhythmic sound of cicadas, and the exhalation of my own breath.

This ongoing series of '*Coffee Letters*' – now comprising over 50 in total – have been exhibited in the form of white texts on coloured grounds, as A3 or A4 digital prints.

Extracts from this series of letters have been shown in the form of:

- installations and exhibitions in Glasgow, München and Nicosia;
- performed readings;
- integrated as a performative element within academic conference papers in Glasgow, Sheffield, London and Nicosia;
- integrated into published writings;
- and presented as artist pages in journals.

Glasgow, 14th December 2016

I'm looking at a photograph of friends – artists standing in a wasteland space. The photo was actually taken in the demilitarized zone. It is cold and raining here yet it was warm and dry when we were all there only a month ago. In the centre of the frame, four individuals and a dog stand facing the camera, barely lit by a solitary light within the no-man's land. We were in Kaimakli, an eastern suburb of Nicosia. I am invisible but I was there too, behind the lens. You are in the picture but not here now; away in Ireland – in the South. Looking at this image now I recall hearing the sound of the lahle asan drifting across the short distance that separated us from the North. In that moment, I realised that the mosque the sound was coming from was that same one we'd visited a few years ago: where the keeper had picked a rose for you – long since faded now – and where we shared tea with a man who spoke fluent German. Do you remember? He was the Turkish Director of an organisation working to settle immigrants and refugees. Then we were in Kaimakli too; we just didn't know it. The instant after this photo was taken, a Greek Cypriot soldier approached us out of the darkness. He walked directly towards us, not in a threatening fashion, more in the spirit of an informal warning: "Don't go further into the Dead Zone", he said, "because it is the Dead Zone." In that brief moment and in that small pool of light, we had witnessed a fragment of a parallel world. Just for an instant, our presence and the sound had brought the place alive.

Ledra Palace Crossing, Nicosia, 7th November 2016

Yesterday as dusk was falling I found myself, for the third time in one day, drifting into the liminal world of the coffee drinker; having already stopped at one café in the South near Ledras Street and then, after crossing into the North, at the Saray Square. This world was, however, not quite the same as the beloved and familiar street cafés frequented by Naguib Mahfouz and his characters, in his Cairo novels, where long-term friends frequently met, their conversations, struggles and lives evolving over coffee, time and the turning of Mahfouz's pages. This place is a transitory world of passage between States, and the realm of the solitary observer. A world, momentarily occupied, where snatched and partial phrases – some understood, some not – randomised half glimpsed sights, sounds and the meanderings of thought all seem to swirl and blend with the dark, bitter sweet, flavour of coffee as it mingles on the tongue, or settles into the gritty deposits that congeal at the bottom of my cup. Never simply nostalgic, this world of dreaming and coffee is, as you well know, a melancholy hinterland realm where certainty and meaning become relative and cinderous terms; both a place of life that might be written or spoken of, and a place shadowed by a sense of an unaccountable mourning that still lingers here.



