

## **Residual Exhibition Programme Notes**

### **The Work**

'Residual' is about our feeling of place, about the way buildings and landscapes accumulate residue over time; about the leftovers that surround us.

The piece specifically focuses on Bristol's presence wishing to unearth the remnants of historical events and relationships between chosen sites. Far from being a documentary, it aims to reach us much as we would subconsciously perceive a new physical environment. Three key elements form the core of our research: the history of the city's water landscapes, architectural remains both sacred and naval, and found objects.

Bristol's water has been largely altered by mankind: the deviation of the River Avon to accommodate the floating harbour; the burial of the River Frome underneath the apocalyptic scape of Eastville Flyover; the networking of St. John's underground conduit (which surfaces a few meters from St. John's Crypt); and the digging of Ravens Well, impressive subterranea tunnelled by Augustinian Friars in the 14<sup>th</sup> C who had a settlement South of Temple Church. 'Residual' rediscovers some of these sites, invisible to overground life.

The piece explores the feeling of abandonment, erosion and disappearance. It references forgotten sites such as a corridor inside Customs House (once the tax collection point for the incoming merchant boats in the 18<sup>th</sup> C) and the 1940's operating cabin on the Redcliffe Bascule Bridge, both now empty.

Details and corners of St. Mark's and the Cathedral's Elder Chapel expose scars, traces, organic ridges and holes - trauma created by architectural reconstruction and the passage of time, gradually dissolving a site's meaning and identity.

'Residual' suggests historical connections between different geographies by multilayering both picture and sound. The Hot Spring, Clifton Rock Rail and Grand Spa Hydro sequence is an example. The spring, now a trickle of water surrounded by rubble and buried under the Avon, was in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> C a prosperous site which attracted many visitors internationally. A Grand Spa was built, now next to the Avon Gorge Hotel, with an elegant pump room decorated with Roman bath motifs. To transport visitors from the spring the Clifton Rock Railway was constructed, now disused since World War II when it became an air rade shelter for civilians and the BBC studio.

Both an unearthing and a burial of meaning, 'Residual' uses a language based on dual image/sound juxtaposition, cross dissolves and overlays, where the movement mainly arises through the relationships and 'progression' of the piece rather than an active subject or visible event within the frame. Devoid of human presence, the work wishes to draw attention to place and time in its most stripped down state: simply 'being'.

### **The Venue**

St. John the Baptist Church incorporates the only surviving medieval gateway on the city walls. Our site, the crypt beneath the church, was dedicated to the Holy Cross and dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> C. Although principally a place of burial for distinguished citizens, there are many indications that the crypt was used for other religious ceremonies. Today both crypt and church are under the Jurisdiction of The Churches Conservation Trust.