




SOME OBSERVATIONS AND CURIOSITIES ABOUT LOCATION

(BY MICHAEL ASBURY)

The research centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN) was formed in 2004 out of several research projects across UAL that investigated themes such as the formation of national identities in post-colonial contexts and how art and design are able to reflect upon decolonial perspectives as well as critique facile assumptions about globalisation.

UAL's Chelsea College of Arts was founded in 1895 and throughout its long history has witnessed many former students become world-renowned artists: Edward Burra, John Berger, Patrick Caulfield, Helen Chadwick, Samson Kambalu, John Latham, Steve McQueen, Mariko Mori, Paul Nash, Chris Ofili, Mark Wallinger, are just a few in a long list of names. Amongst the Brazilians who studied at the College are: Fernanda Albuquerque, Carolina Cordeiro, Alexandre da Cunha, Maria Laet, Maria Lynch, Caroline Menezes, German Alfonso Nunes, Cristina Salgado, Felipe Scovino, Fernanda Pequeno, and many more. Faculty has had its fair share of celebrities too. Henry Moore, for example, taught at Chelsea during the mid-20th century and donated a sculpture that now stands in one of the College's courtyards. Moore's sculpture travelled from Manresa Road, in the Chelsea neighbourhood, to Atterbury Street, on the shores of the Thames, when the College moved to Milbank in 2005 occupying the former site of the Royal Army Medical College.



A vestige of that former institution, the apartment offered by Chelsea for the purpose of this residency, is located at the site of the "married couples' quarters", where officers and their families used to be housed in the days of the Medical College. Since 2005, the apartment has been home to a series of Fulbright Distinguished Professors visiting from the USA and hosted by TrAIN. It has also received Brazilian artist and 2018 Pipa Prize winner, Arjan Martins, and more recently, curator Moacir dos Anjos with his partner, the journalist Fabiana Moraes. While Moacir interacted with Chelsea students from different levels at the college and enjoyed the proximity to Tate Gallery, Arjan made use of the pier on the Thames, adjacent to the College, to travel by river to Greenwich, visiting the Royal Maritime Museum amongst other locations. The apartment itself offers views to the former Military College 'parade ground', to Tate Britain across the road and the Milbank Housing Estate to its rear.

Tate Britain, formerly the National Gallery of British Art, the Milbank Housing Estate, one of the first social housing projects in London, and the Royal Army Medical College had been erected on the site of Milbank Prison after its closure in 1890. Built in 1816 along Jeremy Bentham's theory of the panopticon, the prison followed a configuration of six pentagons within a wider hexagonal structure, and its outline can still be perceived by the shape of the embankment along the Thames. In 2008, in conjunction with his retrospective at Tate Modern, artist Cildo Meireles held an installation entitled *Ocasão* which played with the principles of the panopticon. To this day, exhibitions, performances and events, such as those connected to London Fashion Week, are often held at the Chelsea College of Arts' Rootstein-Hopkins Parade Ground, while it is also the site for several works that spill out from the College's always lively annual degree shows. These might, with some luck, still be visible during the course of this residency and may be a first step into the extraordinary transcultural and transhistorical exploratory adventure that this residency will certainly unleash.