'Transforming Long Kesh/Maze' Martin Krenn and Aisling O'Beirn in

_Contentious Objects/Ashamed Subjects_: Artistic research methods and strategies regarding images, objects, spaces, and events of contentious cultural heritages

TRACES Final Exhibition 18 January – 6 February 2019 | Galleria del Progetto, Politecnico di Milano, Milan

Curator: Suzana Milevska

‘Transforming Long Kesh/Maze’ is a collaborative social sculpture by artists Martin Krenn and Aisling O'Beirn, exploring the future of the Maze/Long Kesh site beyond its current state of limbo. The former prison has both a physical presence and conceptual importance. Indecision about its future at government level says much about the political climate of a ‘post-conflict’ society. Given this, the artists are interested in how one can think beyond the site’s legacy and to its future.

Krenn and O'Beirn worked with participants who had 1st hand experience of the prison, such as ex-prisoners, former visitors, ex-prison staff and community museums from across the political spectrum to partake in the project. The artists worked with them to collaboratively photograph existing prison artefacts or to co-create unique small sculptural objects to reflect their personal experiences of this site.

Three principal dialogical methods for working with diverse participants were devised specifically for this project: _restaging_ (whilst occasionally _repairing_), _reappropriation_ and _retelling_. The aim was to avoid negatively dwelling on the past or the reiteration of previously rehearsed and ideologically overdetermined narratives.

For the exhibition _Contentious Objects/Ashamed Subjects_, the final event in the TRACES project which Milevska curated to present the research processes employed by the different Creative Co Production teams in TRACES, Krenn & O'Beirn exhibited 32 postcards from their set of 64 cards along with documentation outlining their research process. The Traces Final Conference “Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritages With The Arts” took place in parallel with the exhibition.

As a result of our ongoing dialogues about process and methodologies with the curator Suzana Milevska she included a discussion of our methodology discussed in “Artistic Research” organised by Michelle Teran (one of the artists included in the project _Microhistories_) who organised the seminar at Trondheim Academy of Fine Arts, Trondheim, November 26-28, 2011.

The project is part of Traces, a three-year project funded in 2016 by the European Commission as part of the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme. Ulster University is a partner in the TRACES project. The published book received funding from the Art and Design Research Unit at Ulster University. [http://www.traces.polimi.it](http://www.traces.polimi.it)

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Opening night of Contentious Objects/Ashamed Subjects, visitors reading and taking postcards from Transforming Long Kesh/Maze. Photo Suzana Milekva TRACES
Opening night of *Contentious Objects/Ashamed Subjects* Wall Text (left) Visitor reading and taking postcards from Transforming Long Kesh/Maze cards (right). Photos Suzana Mileskva TRACES