

Spaces of Remembrance: Allen Ball

Proposal submitted to the Cultural Work in Times of Military Commemoration panel chaired by Lindsey Sharman, Curator of Art at the Founders' Gallery (UofC), and Dr. Laura Brandon, Acting Director, Research, with the Canadian War Museum, at the 2014 UAAC Conference, taking place October 23- 26 at the University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Abstract:

This paper traces the latest iterations of my over-arching project *Photography in a State of Exception*, stemming from research conducted as an official Canadian War Artist embedded with Canadian Forces Operation Calumet, Sinai Peninsula, in 2007. On the eve of the one-hundredth anniversary of World War I, I have installed public works at and around the ASC Gallery in central London, England, a city rife with its own histories of this war, following parallel installations in various Canadian cities. The increasingly complex socio-political, cultural, and visual milieux of contemporary war intersect with the geographic and historical specificity of World War I—the ‘war to end all wars.’ Despite this failed promise, collective global remembrances of World War I facilitate a singular opportunity to interrogate how we ‘make sense’ of war: how do such installations interrogate artists’ representations of and enable broader public engagements with the often fraught representations of conflict?

Biography:

Born in London, United Kingdom, Allen Ball received his Bachelor of Arts Degree (with First Class Honours) in Fine Art - Painting, with a Commendation in Printmaking, from Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in 1984, and his Master of Visual Arts in Painting from the University of Alberta (supported by a Commonwealth Scholarship) in 1990. He is an Associate Professor in Painting, Department of Art and Design, University of Alberta, and was recently the Scholar in Residence for Arts Research in Nanotechnology (SRARN), at the National Institute for Nanotechnology.

Over the past 25 years, Ball’s work has been grounded primarily in the practice of painting, interrogating the limits of its forms and extending its language into an expanded field of inquiry.

Recent projects include: *Bridge-Walker, Photography in a State of Exception* (2013), ASC Gallery, London, U.K., a large-scale photographic installation funded by a SHRRC Insight Development Grant; *The Wordless Book and other deserts* (2012), a series of paintings that interrogates the associative power of colour through Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon's nonverbal evangelical device *The Wordless Book*; and, in 2011, a large-scale photographic installation at the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, of images stemming from research conducted as an embedded official Canadian War Artist with Canadian Forces Operation Calumet in the Sinai Peninsula in 2007.

Both his research and teaching philosophy deeply embrace the importance of public art. He currently serves on the Public Art Committee, Edmonton Arts Council, and serves on the Visual and Performing Arts Committee at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital; and, he has previously served as Chair for the City of Edmonton Percent for Art Program, and as Chair of the Art in Downtown Public Places Program through the Business Council for the Visual Arts (Edmonton).

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