

HELEN KIRWAN

The recurring themes in Helen Kirwan's conceptual practice are: *memory* and *memorial* and *fragment* and *trace*. For Helen, memory and memorial are not necessarily the same, but also, are not exclusive. Her work questions what is memory and how might it function and be represented, and what practices can be undertaken that are in the service of memory. These practices are subtle thoughtful and thought provoking, and include installation, assemblage, painting, drawing, moving image, photography and mapping. The memorial function of Helen's work is not directly representative, in the commemorative sense that events or persons are remembered with an object that is their equivalent, but rather she asks what action can be done, and what objects can be assembled and what journeys can be taken as memorial. Central to this is the question of how is time is in itself memorial *and* memory?

The themes suggested by her interest in the fragment and the trace is the pursuit of that which is apparently elusive, not necessarily in order to achieve a goal at the end but to consider the thing that can't be held. Helen Kirwan's work is underpinned by rigorous thinking and philosophical inquiry in to the concept of the fragment suggested by such thinkers as Schlegel, Benjamin and Adorno, and her own use of the fragment in her art work acknowledges and explores the partial nature of the fragment as a shard of memory. The idea of the trace is explored Helen's fascination in the question of the mark that has barely been made or that may disappear, and asks was something there, and was something left behind?

I have worked collaboratively with Helen Kirwan on several projects and have experienced her work and working methods directly, and have enjoyed and benefitted from her insight and precision of thought.

Jane Madsen
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<https://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/architecture/programmes/mphil-phd-studentwork/jane-madsen>

Jane Madsen is an artist and writer working in moving image; her work includes experimental films, installation and documentary.

She has an MA in Fine Art from Middlesex University and her current interdisciplinary research is a PhD in Architectural Design at the Bartlett School of Architecture with practice supervised by the Slade School of Fine Art.

She has taught at UAL in Fine Art, History and Theory. She has exhibited widely and written and published articles on film and art.