

PRESS RELEASE

Siân Bowen: Of Dust

Christopher Jones: In-Between

10 September – 9 October 2008
 Monday – Friday 9.30am – 5.00pm
 Admission Free

Late night openings:
 25 September & 2 October (until 8.00pm)

The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation is pleased to announce two bodies of works - Siân Bowen's images of folding tea house models on lacquered papers and Christopher Jones's print assemblages exploring memory, place and erasure.

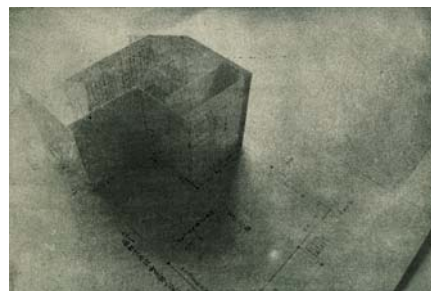
Siân Bowen and Christopher Jones were both Japanese Government Scholars at Kyoto City University of Art during the late 1980s. Since 2005 they have made a number of return visits to Japan in order to develop projects, both individual and collaborative. The two bodies of works presented for this exhibition reflect a range of Japanese cultural references from aesthetics to notions of renewal.

Siân Bowen: Of Dust

“At times Siân Bowen’s art parallels that of a museum conservator, cleaning and mending. To clean is to take away layers of dirt: to brighten things or rather to allow brightness to return.”

- Tony Godfrey, extract from, *To See is to Touch, To Touch is to See*, 2007

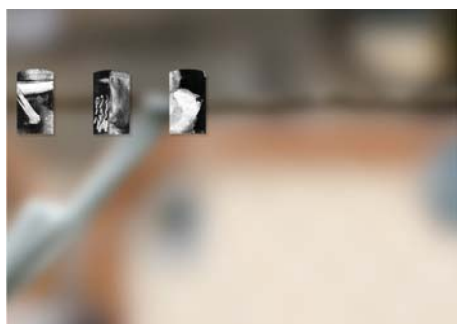
During the second phase of her Residency in Drawing at the V&A, Siân Bowen has been exploring threads of Junichiro Tanizaki's celebrated discourse on Japanese aesthetics and architecture, *In Praise of Shadows*. Tanizaki's premise that "...there is no beauty without shadows" lies at the core of these new works. As Bowen investigates architectural forms in miniature – 18th century Japanese *okoshi-ezu* or three-dimensional folding teahouse plans – the novelist's comparison of shadows to dust, and his celebration of grime in relation to elegance, have been translated into visual terms. Many of her works in this exhibition have evolved through the age-old technique of *maki-e* which involves dusting wet Japanese lacquer with pure silver or gold powder. The resulting works – photographic images of the teahouse models transposed onto lacquered surfaces – bring together ancient and contemporary techniques and materials, and in doing so blur the boundaries between photography, print, painting and drawing.



Siân Bowen, *Of Dust*

Christopher Jones: In-Between

“For easy remembering one should imagine a certain order of places upon which images of all those things which we wish to remember are distributed in a certain order.” -Thomas Aquinas




Christopher Jones, *From a Distance*, (detail)

In 2006 Christopher Jones returned to Japan for the first time, eighteen years after his two-year residence in Kyoto as a Japanese Government Scholar. On returning to the area in which he lived in the late 1980s he found that his former apartment was no longer standing – in its place was a roped off area of barren ground awaiting redevelopment: every sign of its previous use had been erased.

PTO



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The experience of this visit was the catalyst for a body of work which explores the relationship between memory, place and erasure. As Jones says: "When something is erased we register subconsciously what was and what might be. We are caught 'in-between' in terms of both the physical and the temporal. When we remove something, whatever trace or residue is left often has a particular charge to it. Part of this is due, I think, to the fact that it links the past to the present."

In two subsequent visits to Japan, Jones gathered imagery from such diverse sites of renewal as city building developments, rice fields and the grand shrine of Ise. He also began both re-examining and photographing some of the work he had made in Kyoto in the 1980's. These two sets of material were the starting point for a group of print assemblages in which a range of print processes and collage are exploited to model the juxtapositions of past and present inherent in memory.

They reflect Derrida's description of memory prompted by the poetry of Paul Celan: "the random occurrence, the chance meeting, the coincidence or conjuncture which comes to seal one or more events once, at a given hour, on a given day, in a given month, in a given place."

Siân Bowen: Of Dust and Christopher Jones: In-Between is organised by the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation. It is supported by Northumbria University and Newcastle University.

Notes for Editors

- **The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation** is a UK charity supporting links between Britain and Japan. Its activities include scholarships, grant giving and an events programme at its headquarters in central London, Daiwa Foundation Japan House.
- **Siân Bowen** was born in Birkenhead, Merseyside in 1959 and studied Fine Art at Newcastle University and Edinburgh School of Art. In 1985 she was awarded a Japanese Government Scholarship and lived in Kyoto until 1989. Since 1998 she has lectured in Fine Art at Northumbria University. She has been carrying out a residency in drawing at the Victoria and Albert Museum since 2006 and on its completion will take up a two-year residency at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Recent solo exhibitions include *Gaze* at the V&A, *Shift* at Kyoto Art Centre and *Siân Bowen - New Work* at The Drawing Gallery, London. Her work has been included in a number of surveys of contemporary drawing such as *Drawing Inspiration*, Abbot Hall Art Gallery; *Drawing Itself*, Drawing Space, Southwell; *Drawing Breath*, *Ten Years of the Jerwood Drawing Prize*, Wimbledon School of Art, and was a prizewinner at the *Jerwood Drawing Prize* in 2001. Her work is held in public collections including the V&A and the British Museum.
- **Christopher Jones** was born in 1958 in Hertfordshire and studied at Newcastle University and Chelsea School of Art. He was Fine Art Fellow at Glos CAT, Cheltenham and Artist-in-Residence in the School of Art, Hull before taking up a Japanese Government Scholarship to Kyoto City University of Arts, 1987-89. He is currently Senior Lecturer in Painting at Newcastle University. His recent solo exhibitions include *Erasure* at Gallery Woosukhall, Seoul National University, Korea; *Trace-Retrace* at Kyoto Art Centre, Japan and Northern Print, Newcastle; *Residue* at A1 Art Space, Nagoya, Japan and *Postscript* at Galerie am Markt, Schwäbisch Hall, Germany. Recent awards include two Arts Council England Grants for the Arts, a Northern Print Bursary, Asem Duo Korea Fellowship, Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation Grant and a research award from the Arts & Humanities Research Council of England.

Press Information

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