

BUTLER ■ GALLERY

TIM DAVIES

KILKENNY SHIFT

May 2 – June 14, 2009

The Butler Gallery is delighted to host an exhibition of the multi-media works of Welsh artist Tim Davies.

Tim Davies' practice deals with the relationship between power, politics and architecture, and often results in temporary and ephemeral works which are site-specific. *At the centre of his process is the issue of identity and the means we use to identify ourselves as having value...*¹ Place, as it is with many artists in Wales, is of great concern to Davies. His places are invariably inhabited by people distinguished by their absence. They have shifted. The allegorical objects that develop are confirmation that they once existed.

In this instance, for one of his exhibits, the 'place' is Kilkenny Castle. Davies spent time exploring the castle, and delved into issues around its social, historical, geographical and cultural location. A DVD work entitled 'Kilkenny Shift' – also chosen as the title for the exhibition – resulted from this research, and has been made especially for the Butler Gallery. Davies photographed one of the servant's staircases in the Castle, taking a static shot of each individual step. These images are edited together in a walking pace dissolve, followed by a dashed, chaotic and blurred descent, with the sound of hurried footsteps. These cold, grey, stone staircases were 'hidden' from the sight of the wealthy inhabitants, who had their own splendid carpeted mahogany stairs to enter and exit.

*... Tim Davies ... in the work based on the staircases of Kilkenny Castle, unerringly puts his finger on a pulse – a visual manifestation of a fundamental, political set of power relations, between masters and servants.*²

Also among the exhibits is 'Between a rock and a hard place', a work that employs postcards, a form that he has used in the past. Davies has scratched away the surface of the cards to leave only a bridge hovering in an empty space. He says of this body of work "I remove the landscapes or terrains that these constructions are built to connect. They are amongst the first

¹ & ² From a text 'Another Kind of 'Public' Art: Thoughts On The Work of Tim Davies by Declan McGonagle, 2009.

bits of architecture that get destroyed in conflict, their removal celebrated as a moment of triumph. They are a major coup. Amongst this first group of the series is the bridge at Mostar which was blown up during the Bosnian war in 1993. It has since been rebuilt. Several bridges have been bombed in recent conflicts. It's a physical and symbolic act. Break a connection and you break a spirit".

Tim Davies lives and works in Swansea, Wales. He received a M.A. in Art and Architecture from the University College for the Creative Arts in Canterbury and a B.A. from the Norwich School of Art, in the U.K. Davies has exhibited widely and was an exhibiting artist and curator of *Strata* in Kells, Kilkenny in 2005. He has been the recipient of many awards including a Major Creative Wales Award in 2008. His work can be found in many public collections including the Hayward Gallery, London, the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Tim Davies is represented by Tom Rowland Fine Art, London.

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