

Genesis' Slideshow - Documenting Intimacies from the Future – first instance

I work as a nurse. I like my uniform, the colour range complements my skin and the fibre quality continues to improve.

My strut has been noted on many occasions. It is a gliding assemblage. There is a bounce in my step that makes my bum sway from side-to-side like a wave. When in the mood, I accentuate the swagger. When people see me walk it makes them feel happy. Making people feel happy is my calling. Making people feel happy, even if for short bursts, is rewarding when you are a nurse working with the terminally ill.

A while ago I received the unusual invitation to create a slideshow for a person named Genesis. Genesis was not ill or about to die in the conventional sense. The prognosis was not clear, but she had been experiencing memory lapses, she would occasionally evaporate altogether, or have seemingly halted halfway through reincarnation. She was an inbetweenener, that much was clear. From studying Douglas at holistic anthropology forums, I knew that it is a porous state and can produce dangerously high body temperatures, as well as fits.

I explained to those wanting to help Genesis that I am not a time traveller, an exorcist, a private investigator, and certainly not a fortune-teller or a medium. The methodology of my work is simple; firmly set in the present, I go back into the past and move linearly forward. I do it in order to ease and welcome the future. I have never travelled in any other direction. I never scrambled the trajectory. I hold respect for linearity. It does not mean that things can't be serendipitous, surprising or idiosyncratic, but you have to start somewhere.

Revisiting Genesis Slideshow (research)



1. A couple looking at a box of sweets

The Adam and Eve of Swindon, was a sentence scribbled on the back of the photo. In the mid 1990s you were invited to document Swindon. It was a photographic assignment commissioned by Swindon Council. At the time you had no idea why they chose you. While you photographed, the weight of responsibility and realisation of the magnitude of the day's task overwhelmed you. A council worker took you around the city. Lets call her Leah. First you went to document the Rolls Royce factory and the Marks & Spencer's cake-making factory. Both factories were filled with proud working people showing you around. The Rolls Royce factory resembled a dungeon-like adventure theme park. A warehouse full with hooks and heavy chains, holding dangling shiny pieces of metal, you loved it. In M&S you were overwhelmed by the whiteness of the walls, the white piercing lights, white trays, the whiteness of the coats, trousers, shoes, the white hats. The hands and faces, by comparison, were mainly non-white. The reflections were impossible to capture if you wanted to maintain details in the highlights. It proved hard to get the correct light reading, with each photograph needing 8 bracketing stops as a safety percussion. At that time cameras were manually operated. You climbed small ladders to peak into giant swirling metal tubs filled with pastel-colours gooey cake mixtures. You have done some tasting as well. It was sweet and comforting. The workers were warm and hospitable. In the afternoon Leah took you to document a random football pitch, an housing estate, a pub and a community garden. You ended the day photographing a couple in their living room. The couple was clearly of significance to the city. You were told that they came to Swindon from India, but what was their exact role in Swindon, officially or otherwise, you were never told. Your head was full of phlegm and snot; you were keeping yourself upright with repeated dosages of Lemsip, the drug of the time. At the end of the day, you were ready to go back home to London. But Leah surprisingly suggested that you stay over at her house. Over dinner she said that she was single and a lesbian. She was forthcoming. Was this the reason you got the commission? Was a question that kept playing on your mind. The transition from a subjugated contractor to an object of desire was jarring. You felt sick and trapped. You could not work out your

relationship to Swindon; you an immigrant, an outsider at the best of times, are you really qualified to document a national project such as this? You felt like a fraud. A feeling that continuously troubles you but rarely seems to stop you, on the contrary. Later on and from a safer distance you remember with shame and guilt Leah expressing her disappointment with the photographs. Or was it the rejection. Last time I visited, you mentioned that you would like to go back to Swindon and reshoot.



2. Amateur circus group

During the late 1980s and early 1990s you lived in a shared house in Sheffield. One of the women in the house had a beautiful German Shepherd dog. Lets call the woman Sophie. You called the dog *The Lion*. Sophie was part of an amateur circus group who practiced on a regular basis in various locations in Sheffield. Sophie continuously complained that the men were getting all the best roles and forever was doing press-ups and crunches. She slowly developed a muscle-strength that would allow her to lift other members. Later when you read her pained and explicit poetry about sexual abuse you experienced her relationship to acrobatics with a mixture of sympathy and fear. Occasionally when you came home you saw her crouched at a corner of the ceiling or hedged high up between the walls of the narrow corridors. She was like Spider Woman. Not using any ropes or tools, Sophie was just fixed to the walls, defying gravity. You could never figure out how she did that. It was a freak show.

One day you went to a marked field in the countryside, about 20 minutes bus-ride away from Sheffield town centre. Everyone was on all fours collecting magic mushrooms. You were surprised to find many farmers collecting the mushrooms and consuming them at the same time. You copied the locals. You felt like your perception of Sheffield has changed. It was no longer merely a deprived city, but rather, by means of a self-organised yearly ritual - a city with people who made themselves feel better. It was subversive. You overdosed and underwent a dark psychedelic experience. Your hair was made of snakes and electric ants were crawling inside your blood stream making screeching sounds. Friends and flatmates explained that they have to leave you alone in your room because they don't want to 'contact-trip a bad trip'. You felt abandoned but could see the sense of it. It was a psychotic merry-go-round ride that took hours. But luckily, in the midst of this tormenting isolation, *The Lion* came to the room. He rested his head on your lap. He spoke the warm deep language of lions and reassured you that

everything will be alright. Within seconds you were floating in a sky atmosphere of nirvana and pure love and joy. You've been experiencing the disorientating effects of flashbacks for years to come. Recently you bumped into Sophie in a train station but pretended that you didn't know her, or maybe you really don't know her.



3. In a community centre

In the early 1990s you run a black & white photographic darkroom in a community centre in central London called 1A. In the darkroom you worked closely with women from Bangladesh, homeless women, refugee children and you also run general photography classes. The centre held ceramic classes, salsa classes, and other group activities. During the mid to late 1990s the community centre was torn by a row over its future. Some wanted to keep it as it was whilst others wanted to change it into a Muslim community and prayer space. In the end, like many other community centres at the time, the space underwent various regeneration cycles and eventually became a building complex of luxury flats with a privatised paid activities-centre on the ground floor. The model of a multi-residence housing facilities for senior citizens with full board, health care, fitness rooms, communal dining rooms, leisure activities, personal grooming services in situ, is the only model that survived from that time and made its way into the Spectrum-Share Habitus.



4. Portfolio image

In the early 2000s you spent time in Toronto with a collaborator, running a project titled Open Surgery. Together in a large disused graphic design office you created a social space for activities and interactions. But the meat of the project was a series of one-to one interactions where visitors spent time with you both in the carefully planed and designed surgery. Following the encounter participants received a treatment. The treatment was conceived as a treat. You adjusted the treat to the specific needs of the users. One user who was an actor, let's call him Paul, wished for an alternative portfolio. Paul wanted images of himself in different outfits. He wanted a portfolio that would be useless on the acting job market.

Worth noting that the share value of Intimate Psychic Encounters Globes have been rising steadily for years and their net value has superseded any other similar socioentertainment initiatives. On the morning you flew back from Toronto you felt queasy, upon landing you heard that the Twin Towers have just collapsed.



5. Food in Leather Lane Market

Since the mid 1980s and for many years you worked as a waiter. At some point during the early 1990s you worked in a small place in Leather Lane that served a mixture of Middle Eastern food and city-food. You became friends with the owner of the place. Lets call him Serge. Serge was addicted to gambling and together you spent hours counting his money. In the end he lost everything and had to close down. As the shops and cafes in Leather Lane market kept changing you decided to take a picture of each shop and each doorway and open a stall throughout the night giving the photographs away to those taxi drivers, clubbers and insomniacs who happened to pass by. For years you wished someone would document the life of the thriving Italian community in the area, but this had not happened.



6. Check point

During the mid 1990s you developed an on-line friendship with an architect living in Ramallah, then the Occupied Territories by the Israeli state. Lets call him Abad. You arranged to meet Abad at Qalandia Checkpoint. It was an important meeting. At the time it was illegal for Israeli citizens to visit the territories. The law was elucidated as a mean to protect Israeli citizen from what may happened to them if they entered the West Bank. For this reason you could enter but not leave through the passport control at Qalandia checkpoint. You had to get a ride with an Israeli-Arab taxi driver who specialised in smuggling people in and out of the territories. You took a two hours detour through the mountains, instead of a 15 minutes drive from Ramallah to Jerusalem. However, you were still stopped by a temporary military checkpoint. The experienced taxi driver managed to get you out of the situation. You felt part of the Jewish history of being smuggled across borders.

Some of the bioatmospheric discharges used in simulated historical Palestinian/Israeli encounters have been used sonically to stimulate the regrowth of extinct wild birds species.



7. People watching

In the early 2000s you created a one-to-one interaction with participants in a bedroom. You were dressed as an orthodox Jew and facilitated any type of encounter participants have asked for. The project was set in Ljubljana. Photographs from the encounter, displaying two people in a bedroom, were featured in a gallery. One of the participants was a British Council employee. Later on the head of the British Council in Slovenia, Lets call him Nick, visited the exhibition and found it offensive. As a result the British Council in Slovenia decided to stop all support to British artists from the UK who were exhibiting in Slovenia that year. You mainly felt guilty.



8. Drum circle

During the early 1990s you learned to play African Drums. You spent time going to classes and also to drum circles across the country. The drum circles were run like campsites, or festivals, and attracted hippies, anarchists, activists, lost souls and the middle classes. The teachers were accomplished professional musicians. You felt generally alienated during those times. You met someone at one of the drum circles and kept in touch through letters. Lets call him Guy. When you asked Guy if you could meet in person, as the letters' exchange was fun, he refused and explained that he is dying of AIDS. That was before the time the HIV genevirus became a high priced commodity.

Later on you joined a band called DogRack as a percussionist. The lead singer, lets call her Charlotte, has been involved in a kidnapping of a taxi driver at a knife point in the Sheffield Moors. Charlotte and her partner, lets call her Emily, were put to trial. Their act was defended in court by a well-known theatre director which might have helped them get a reduced prison sentence. When they came out of prison, Emily became an activist and advocate for the conditions of women in prisons and was achieving results. One day when Charlotte went to Emily's new flat to pick her up for their planed holiday, she found her dead in the bath. Emily died of a scentless gas poisoning coming off the boiler. The landlord was put to trial.



9. Stones in water
Still unable to recall, but appears to have a strong significance.

* Revisiting Genesis is now in development with Stanley Picker Gallery