

DEVOLVER (Give Back)

In Cadiz's history the English tried to attack or invade it at least seven times. I decided as a English artist coming to Cadiz centuries later to 'give back' to Cadiz seven times: once for each of the times my nation tried to take from Cadiz.

At the end of the residency with Linea de Costa I exhibited three of the gifts which I was able to realise fully during the time. They are documented below. The others, not shown here, included playing with light and colour (which are strong attributes of Cadiz); dancing in or near abandoned spaces around the city; singing in the Cathedral crypt; and the actual act of making the kites. Almost all of the gifts were impermanent or fleeting, leaving a very different kind of mark from the effects of invasion, occupation and destructive acts of war.

Instead, the form these gifts took were light and playful. I could never fully 'Give back' what any nation might 'take' from another but by entertaining the idea lightly and playfully it was perhaps more profound. I used tools of playfulness and generosity to interrupt people, inviting them into interaction. It is the kind of interaction that people can take or leave; the kind of mark that lasts only in memory, hopefully as a positive one.

The British part in Cadiz's history does not seem to play a large role in current collective memory but it is part of the history of Cadiz and now these pieces are too. Whether they are taken down in conscious or unconscious memory, they mark a different kind of relationship from what has gone before.

1. DEVOLVER

The english took 7 times. I decided to give back 7 times and this was the first.

This is a different kind of invasion: one of giving and not taking. It's role was as an announcement of the concept; the Evangelion; an interruption announcing a series of interruptions that were each gentle and rich.

The letters were cut out and placed on the ground at the end of the peninsular on the area of painted floor that is flat, blue and expansive like the sea. It is a place I imagine that an invasion could come from, right on the sea, exposed.

It's nature was an impermanent happening; one that only passers by saw being laid out ceremoniously and watched as it lay on the floor and was, at points, blown about by the wind.



2. QUESTIONNAIRE GIFTS

As part of my research I collected 26 questionnaires from residents of Cadiz. They included questions like, 'What is your favourite memory of Cadiz?', 'What do you think of the light, sea and colours in Cadiz?', 'What is your favourite place in Cadiz?', 'What do you like or dislike about Cadiz's history?'

Using these questionnaires to provide clues I made an installation for each person and photographed them so that I could 'give' the installations to the people I had made them for. Within the questionnaires there were seven areas that people loved, some of which crossed over and some which were totally unique to them.

These gifts were for Johannes; for Manolo; for Rosa; for Carmen and Virgilio; for Carmen, Vanessa, Marta, Mine, Pablo and Francisco; for Maria, Ruben, Montse, Tere and Nona; for Ana, Carmen, Adela, Carmela, Francisco, Rosa, Juan, Miguel, Sarah and Leticia.



7. TOWER BLOCK

I invited residents of the tower block where I lived to take part in an installation that involved attaching kites to their balconies for one day. As the tallest building in the peninsular the hope was that it could be seen and photographed around the whole city.

My husband and I handmade 60 two-metre high paper kites to be attached to the balconies of each home. Each had a different design which was bright and colourful so that it could be seen far away. Each flat was given a letter explaining the project, invited to sign up, and then given two kites, one for each of their balconies on either side of the building. The residents then put the kites up and took them down themselves.

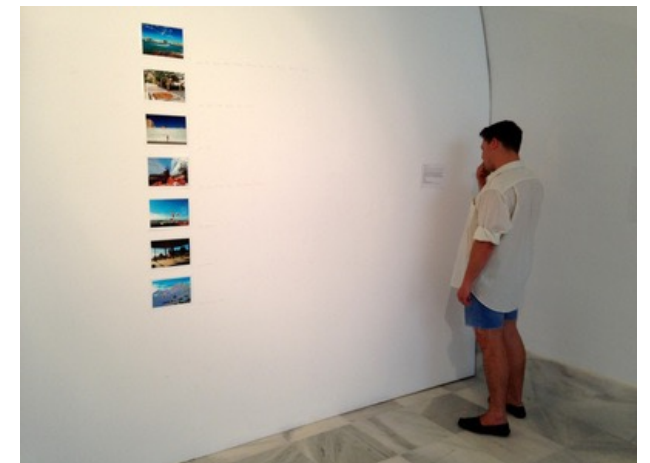
The building sits on the boarder between the old and new cities. This 'border-land' is perhaps an unlikely place of celebration and therefore it is a place of possibility. For one day, instead of a thin, cream tower block it was adorned with colour. People all around looked up to see, pointing to each other, taking photographs, and wondering what it was about.

The flags recalled a time in Cadiz' history when Children flew flags from the roofs of merchants houses in the 13th century. These were flown from the tower in a different kind of way, in a different part of Cadiz.



EXHIBITING

At the end of May I exhibited each of the three pieces: the letters from the announcement; the photographs of the seven installation gifts; and the kites that had adorned my building. The exhibition served as a reference point to the installation pieces, which could be seen on the screen as they had been.



With many thanks to Linea de Costa.