

Trace

Artist's Statement

We may think we are going to objects for knowledge about the past but it is the knowledge we bring them that makes them historically significant, transforming a more or less chance residue into a precious icon.

Samuel Raphael

Trace was made whilst on a ten week Arts council of N.Ireland residency to the very beautiful Banff, Canada. The piece was made in response to a series of English Literature books donated to the Banff library in 1938 by a local lady. Visually appealing and sensual to the touch the books with their ravaged leather covers and gold embossed titles letters missing or barely discernible through frequent usage from their owner and subsequent faceless borrowers appealed to me from the moment I extracted them from their long undisturbed space on the library shelf. Inside the quotes and comments laced the pages and created a narrative dependant yet strangely autonomous in nature to the text it grew from.

I realised I stumbled upon something beautiful and profound trapped and ignored by the weight of the intellectual force and magnitude of the library. I sat myself the task of recording, interacting with and creating work around the books to inventory the traces of a lost existence and make whole again the forgotten reference of a lady who had passed through the same beautiful landscape I was temporarily inhabiting.

At some stage, in addition to making independent original work I began placing subtle marks on the pages of the books, depositing a residue of myself to continue along, intersperse and overlap with the existing words. I was drawn to the idea of becoming an element within their undiscovered history, perhaps months, even years would pass before my words or lines were noticed.

The day I left Banff I discreetly deposited the books in the library shot wrapped in brown paper, which, whilst offering a protective layer for the delicate books, was also obscuring the force of the past and unknown future encapsulated within. I wondered how long our presence would endure, two women separated by two generations and two continents united in the confines of several leather books in a library, their existence and location known only by me.

Jennifer Trouton