

Photography from
**Thinking Space
for the North**

project by
Dan Robinson
& Artist House

photography by
Polly Braden with TSN

exhibition open
3 - 24th March 2006
3rd - 30th April 2006
Artist House
7 Saw Mill Yard,
Leeds, LS11 5WH
Admission free
Open Thursday - Friday
12.00 - 4.00pm
or by appointment
Tel: 0113 2467515

supported by
Grizedale Arts
The National Trust



IMAGINE THE FUTURE

Art brings new life to disused Lakeland farmhouse



Thinking Space for the North is an art project by Dan Robinson and Artist House to create a new identity for a remote Lake District farmhouse site above Coniston Water. The exhibition 'Photography from Thinking Space for the North' features a selection of large-scale photographs from the project made in collaboration with Polly Braden, 2003 winner of the Jerwood Photography prize. This exhibition will run at Artist House, Leeds from 3rd March - 30th April 2006.

Art project Thinking Space for the North is creating new understandings of the site's heritage whilst developing its imaginative future as a hybrid artist retreat / hotel space. The project explores art's function in wider society as a catalyst towards achieving imaginative regeneration from redundant buildings and economies.

The exhibition of large-scale photographs is part of Thinking Space for the North's aim to raise the level of public awareness and dialogue about the site in transition. In pictures of physical renovation work, magnificent views across fells, decades of dust and debris, or simple moments of reflection; these documentary scenes suggest narrative fictions. In one image, a young man in jeans carries a rock partially covering his face, behind him a young woman in waxed jacket completes a dry-stone wall, the sky closes in over the landscape. These photographs makes room for open readings and framed here, within the story of Thinking Space for the North, this contemplative space relates to the wider ambition of the project "to celebrate the imaginative potential of the site." - artist and project partner, Dan Robinson.

When filmmaker Ken Russell called in, he added 'Just Like Home!' to the visitor book. Russell visited the farmhouse in September 2005 during 10 days of public opening as part of the Coniston Water Festival. During the festival Thinking Space for the North created a temporary identity for the farmhouse as a 'Centre for Imagined Futures'. Instructions in the Coniston Water Festival newspaper - along with flags, signage and a giant helium balloon - guided walkers from the solar boat at Coniston to the farmhouse. Bryan Davies, co-director of Artist House, commented, "It was incredibly lively, we had 500 visitors come by on foot, mountain bike, 4x4, even horseback! It will be interesting to see if our exhibition in Leeds has that level of visitors."

Christopher Hirst wrote, in The Independent Magazine, "Centre for Imagined Futures, it was a dark, dank, derelict dump" (October 8th 2005.)

Thinking Space for the North is part of 'Cumbriana Proof' a programme of art projects curated by Grizedale Arts. Grizedale Arts deputy director Alistair Hudson said, "Regeneration is the 'Big Thing' in Cumbria right now, and the idea was to do a number of projects which would analyse the role of regeneration and tourism within the rural environment. Cumbriana Proof was created as the overall title for this endeavour as it touched upon the problems of marrying change and investment for the future with the demands of conservation and tourism." Thinking Space for the North will be part of 'Virtual Grizedale' at this year's Liverpool Biennial.

For further project information on how Thinking Space for the North is developing renovation work with local skills and materials, Outdoor education Ruskin-style, challenging new visual designs, or eco-technologies and rural aesthetics visit project website: www.thinkingspacenorth.org

For further information on Thinking Space for the North, or for digital scans of 5 medium format photographs taken by Polly Braden contact: Bryan Davies - Tel: 0113 246 7517 bryan@artisthouse.org.uk (or) Dan Robinson - Tel: 0113 255 2320 / Mob: 07985 562 874 / mundyrobinson@hotmail.com

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Editors' Notes

The exhibition '**Photography from Thinking Space for the North**' takes place from 3 – 24th March and 3rd – 30th April 2006, at Artist House, 7 Saw Mill Yard, Leeds, LS11 5WH. Tel: 0113 2467515. Admission is free. Opening times are Thursday – Friday, 12.00 – 4.00pm or by appointment Photography is by Polly Braden with Thinking Space for the North.

Thinking Space for the North is an art project by artists Dan Robinson and Artist House (Bryan Davies and Laura Quarmby). The website <http://www.thinkingspacenorth.org> goes online on 6th March. Thinking Space for the North has been developed in partnership with The National Trust and Grizedale Arts and is supported by funding from The National Trust, Grizedale Arts and Arts Council of England. Low Parkmoor farmhouse is owned by The National Trust and leased to Grizedale Arts.

Polly Braden is a photographer based in London. She is a winner of the Jerwood Photography Prize (2003) and The Guardian Newspaper Young Photographer of the Year (2002). Her photography has appeared in The Guardian, The Saturday and Sunday Telegraph magazines, Photo8, ICON, Frieze, The Sydney Morning Herald, D Magazine (Italy). Recent commissions have come from UBS Bank with the London Symphony Orchestra, Tate Modern and the Barbican. Recent exhibitions include the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago (USA) Impressions Gallery (York, England), Stills Gallery (Scotland).

Dan Robinson (born 1974, UK) is an artist based in Leeds whose collaborative artworks explore narrative and co-authorship with other artists and organisations. He uses events, photographs, drawings and texts in dialogue with sites and architecture. He is the founder of Centre for International Success. In 2003 he won an AHRC research award for the PhD project 'The Noise of Fiction: site, score, document' at the University of Leeds where he also formed 'The Department of Inbetween'. Recent exhibitions include PM Gallery, Zagreb, Leeds City Art Gallery, and the 51st Venice Biennale.

Artist House is the Leeds based studio and show space of Bryan Davies and Laura Quarmby. Established in 2003 they make public art commissions and visual artwork projects ranging from publications to furniture. Many of their projects take place at Artist House in Leeds, but recent works have been exhibited in Cornerhouse Manchester, at Leeds City Art Gallery, and the 51st Venice Biennale. Recent Commissions include Culture Company new media commission, a public art work commission for the new Electric Press building and civic theatre, & a commission for public art work for King Charles Street, Leeds.

Grizedale Arts is a leading UK Arts organisation. Based in the English Lake district, it built a distinctive reputation through forest sculpture such as Andrew Goldsworthy ephemeral structures. Recently they have curated projects at PS1 New York, and commissioned work by Jeremy Deller (Turner Prize winner 2004), and numerous Becks Futures finalists. Their 2006 programme includes 'The Seven Samurai', Echigo-Tsumari Triennial, Japan. 'A Public Art Strategy for Egremont', a new approach to public art, & 'Virtual Grizedale' at the Liverpool Biennial, a live programme for the A Foundation. (<http://www.grizedale.org>)

Coniston Water Festival (16th – 25th September 2005) is a village festival that was reintroduced by Grizedale Arts after having lapsed for 8 years. Other festival events in 2005 included a Boat Dressing Competition, the 'River Cottage' programme filming a summer special and a Coniston 'It's a Knockout' by artists Karen Guthrie and Nina Pope.