

Post Memorial as Object Art:

In Sacred Remembrance

august rose cassrels klein

Singh's installation 'Life Is But A Vapour' functions as a 'in memoriam' time-piece; both as it appears and in a state of flux - living, dying and honoured.

a translation:

- i. *Calling A Circle - He Karanga Pae McCahon House Artist Residency 2013-14 Auckland, New Zealand.*
- ii. *Life Is But A Vapour - Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery: Installation work December 2014-February 2015, Auckland New Zealand.*

Love, Death and Remembrance:

loving - dying - remembering

[active/passive conscious/unconscious acts].

- 1 In Singh's social practise project *Calling A Circle -He Karanga Pae* and her current installation *Life Is But A Vapour* Singh has engaged in a spiritual discourse which addresses the human experience of time, memory and loss.
- 2 Both historic and contemporary art works concerned with memorial and commemorative art in public spaces inevitably respond to collective suffering, loss and remembrance. Like-wise Singh has cultivated an evolving and public memorial project which has facilitated individuals in transforming their relationship with death through conscious and ceremonial acts of remembrance.
- 3 During Singh's McCahon House residency project *Calling a Circle -He Karanga Pae*, Singh created a therapeutic and intimate studio environment where those who responded to the project could return to the memories, grief and unconscious trauma surrounding the loss of their loved ones.

- 4 Using both readymade and natural materials provided by Singh those who engaged in the project hand crafted memorial strings imbued with their memories, emotions and intentions. By doing so, the participants were guided through conscious processes of commemoration, initiating a transformative spiritual and psychological process of healing, acceptance and release.
- 5 The memorial strings were then gathered together, and strung up from the ceiling in what was once Colin McCahon's painting studio. Singh then blessed and honoured the strings during a seven day period of sitting meditations.
- 6 Following on from this process a ceremonial burning of the memorial strings took place under the auspices of an Indic fire puja during a dawn ceremony. Traditionally the fire puja serves to purify, and release. This presented the participants with a finite process in which their deeply personal creations must be both released and surrendered.
- 7 The memorial strings were then re-memorialised into another form and rebirthed anew using the corresponding string colours and hydrangeas from the McCahon house garden and premises. In amongst a plethora of offerings, keepsakes, poetry and ornaments the memorial strings were then organically placed and strung up on Singh's living memorial wall.
- 8 Bridging both the material world and spirit realm, Singh's living wall became a multi-layered memorial site overflowing with both ready-made and natural objects such as bells, flowers and beeswax casts of religious images and deities.
- 9 Post residency Singh continues to make offerings to the wall as well as planning for its next public site of memorial and unveiling. Thus we have a material and spirited 'in memoriam' time-piece which goes beyond the memorial art as object but serves instead as a living, revisited and ever-transforming site of love, death and remembrance.
- 10 In addition, Robert George has produced a digital component to Singh's residency work which takes the form of an abstract and two channel film diptyches. This work responds to the spirituality and aesthetic of *Calling A Circle He Karanga Pae*. Simultaneously the work also revisits and

