

Professor Karen Ingham

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University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Research Group: The Centre for Lens Arts and Science Interaction;
Creative Industries Research and Innovation Centre

Evidence Portfolio: *Narrative Remains*

Output Number: 1 of 4

Output Code: WIRAD-UWTSD-KI01

Output Type Code: M

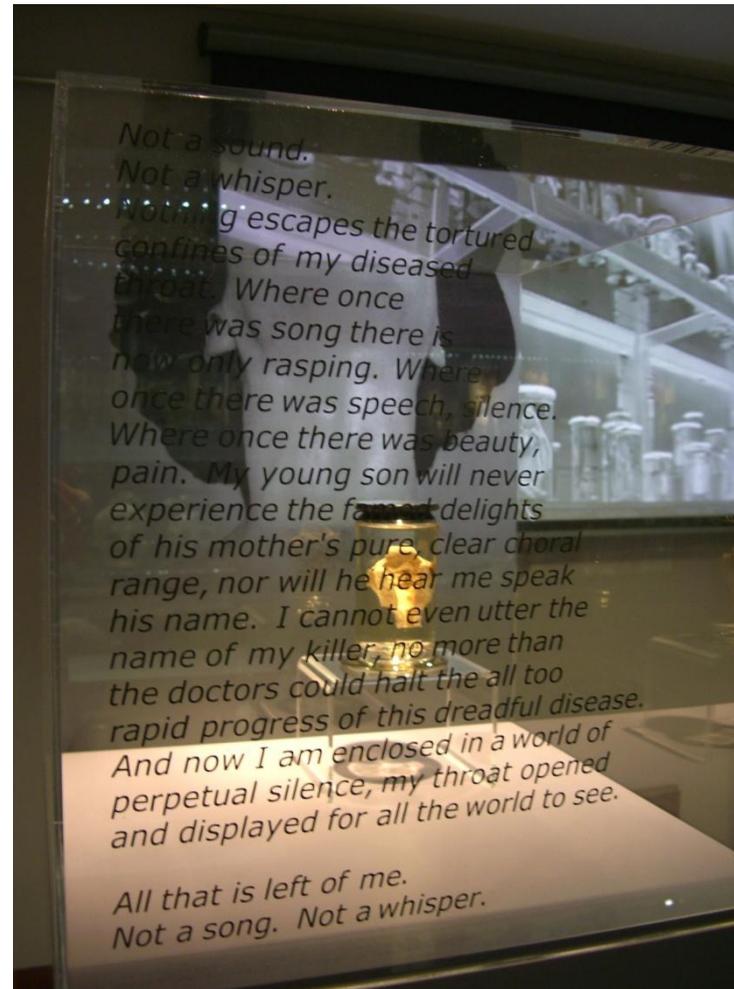
Output Description: Exhibition

Author: Ingham, Karen

Year of Publication / Production: 2009

Location / Venue(s): Royal College of Surgeons Hunterian Museum, London, UK and others

Media: Six Photo-sculptural vitrines, video 12 minutes duration, 58 page publication



Installation shot, Hunterian Museum, London



The Throat | RCSHC/P 364 Marianne Harland

“ Not a sound. Not a whisper. Nothing escapes the tortured confines of my diseased throat. Where once there was song there is now only rasping. Where once there was speech, silence. Where once there was beauty, pain. My young son will never experience the famed delights of his mother's pure, clear, choral range, nor will he hear me speak his name. I cannot even utter the name of my killer, no more than the doctors could halt the all too rapid progress of this dreadful disease. And now I am enclosed in a world of perpetual silence, my throat opened and displayed for all the world to see. All that is left of me. Not a song. Not a whisper. ”

Narrative Remains 060

Specimen Narratives

*The Throat RCSHC/P 364, from the installation and p. 52 from the publication *Narrative Remains**

Research Context

The exhibition *Narrative Remains* was the primary outcome of a twelve months collaboration with the Hunterian Museum in London and was funded by the Wellcome Trust and the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Ingham researched the RCS database, worked closely with the Hunterian Museum's Director at the time Dr. Simon Chaplin, also studying John Hunter's 18th century collection in the Hunterian's Crystal Gallery. She identified human tissue specimens (for example a heart, throat or lung) that could be metaphorically 're-embodied' by writing a semi-fictional subjective narrative for each selected specimen. By re-instating a human narrative and projecting it back on to the actual anatomical specimen, via film and through the production of bespoke museum vitrines with layered image and text, the museum became a space where the first-person post mortem narratives tell of the disease, death and dissection of absent bodies as a form of their re-embodiment. The installation and accompanying public events programme were exhibited for eight weeks, and the film and publication are still being disseminated.

Research Imperatives

Ingham's key research question was: can anonymised human organs, displayed as objects disembodied from their subjective narrative context, be recontextualised through contemporary arts practice. Human body parts displayed in anatomy collections are normally stripped of the donor's identity and subjectivity and are numbered rather than

named. These kinds of collections are used in medical teaching practice and museum studies. They may also be accessible to the public, thus a reconsideration of anatomical preparations as subjects not objects acts as a reminder that patients (historical or contemporary) are individuals rather than 'types'. In his essay for the accompanying publication Hunterian Director Simon Chaplin states: '*Narrative Remains is not simply the product of artistic invention, but it is something much more: an act of revelation and reinstatement. By resurrecting the dead and reinvesting the patient with their story, we recover a sense of the museum as it was: a place of lively stories told through morbid remains.*' Chaplin, S. in Ingham, K. (2009) London: Wellcome Trust Publications, p. 14. ISBN 978-0956100313

Project Methods

The research method and approach was based on a period of concentrated study in the Hunterian Museum considering John Hunter's historic 18th century collection of anatomical specimens and searching the Royal College of Surgeons database to arrive at a final selection of six human anatomical preparations that would form the basis of the project. These ranged from the heart of Richard Bulstrode to the throat of Marianne Harland. The medical records of the 'back stories' for the specimens were used as the basis for six creative writing texts that sought to re-imagine what the organs would say if they could only speak. These voices were then layered alongside photographic imagery of the corresponding area of the body onto specially made museum vitrines in which the

actual specimens were placed. A 12 minutes artist's film was produced as part of the project and installation, to be projected on and through the vitrines, or exhibited as a stand-alone artwork.

Funding

Narrative Remains was funded by a Wellcome Trust Arts Award and The Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Outcomes and Dissemination

Examples of Impact

Inside Information was part of Clod Ensemble's 'Performing Medicine Season 2011' and was an evening event (December 2011) open to the public on a pre-booked basis at the Hunterian Museum in London (the site where Narrative Remains was researched and produced) and consisted mainly of medical students, art students, medical humanities students and researchers and interested members of the general public. The event explored how the body 'speaks' its narrative of disease and dissection through the eyes of an artist (Ingham) and anatomist (Prof. Susan Standing).

In June 2012, the project formed part of an International Medical Teaching Workshop *Between: Embodiment in Science Teaching*, exploring the definitions and role of embodiment in science teaching and science practice, complementing the exhibition *Between* at the Inigo Rooms, East Wing Somerset House.

The film was screened and the exhibition viewed and discussed and Ingham was one of the invited speakers at the event, which was sponsored by the Higher Education Academy and the School of Biomedical Sciences, KCL.

The decision to make the digital film from *Narrative Remains* freely available globally (through the Wellcome Collection website) has enabled other researchers and practitioners in medicine, museum studies, performance studies, literature and the arts to use it. For example:

June 2010, the film was screened and the project discussed at The British Records Association Conference
Researching Lives: Medicine, Science and Archives in London

April 2012, Screened and discussed as part of the teaching of anatomical collections in the Department of Medicine at the University of Vienna

June 2012, as part of the *Screening the Museum* programme at Birkbeck University, London

2013 in Toulouse it was screened and discussed at the British Society for Science and Literature Conference
Representations of Science

Examples of Dissemination

The film is part of the Wellcome Collection and is freely available to view online worldwide. It is part of two collections: Art and Science, and the Dissection collection. To view the film go to:

<http://www.wellcomecollection.org/explore/science--art/video.aspx?view=narrative-remains>

Hunterian Museum RCS website: <http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/museums/hunterian/exhibitions/archive/narrative-remains>

Featured in the publication, Ingham, K. (2010) 'Tissue to Text: Ars moriendi and the theatre of anatomy', *Performance Research* 15:1, 48 – 57.

To link to this Article: DOI: URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2010.485763>

Citations and peer review include:

Betterton, R. (Feb 2014) 'Maternal Bodies In The Visual Arts' (Manchester University Press)

Knoeff R. (2011) 'The Visitor's View: early modern tourism and the polyvalence of anatomical exhibits' in (Ed.) Roberts, L., *Centres and Cycles of Accumulation in and Around the Netherlands in the Early Modern Period*, (Berlin and Zurich) Lit Verlag

Arnold, K. (2012) 'A Strange Crossover', in *Wonder Chamber*, Ffotogallery and Cornerhouse Publications

Hill, R. 'What Does Thinking Feel Like?' in Culture Lab, *New Scientist*, April 2012

M.K. Palomar, 'Between Embodiment and Identity', *Review*, Studio International, May 2012

J. Deane, 'Body of Evidence at Somerset House' in *The Architectural Review*, May 2012

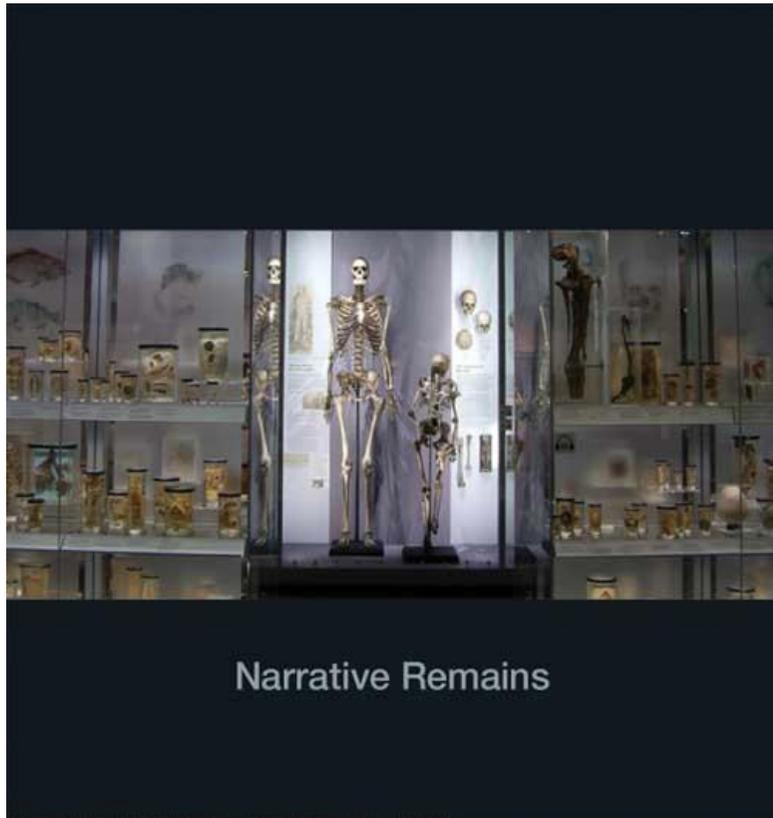
Ingham, K. 'Between: Curating Representations of The Embodied Brain' in *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, Vol 38 No 3, 2013

The installation *Narrative Remains* has been exhibited and disseminated at the following venues:

- Hunterian Museum, London, 6th October – 5th December 2009
- Screened as part of the exhibition *Between* (with artist Susan Aldworth) at the Anglia Ruskin Digital Gallery, Cambridge, 30th January – 3rd February 2012
- As part of the solo exhibition *Wonder Chamber* at Ffotogallery, Penarth, Wales, 10th March – 14th April 2012, and included in the publication Ingham, K. (2012) *Wonder Chamber*, Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications and Ffotogallery. ISBN 978 1 872771 89 2
- Screened as part of the *Between* exhibition (with Susan Aldworth and Andrew Carnie) at the Inigo Rooms, Somerset House East Wing, London, 19th April – 30th June 2012, including programme of public talks as part of an International Medical Teaching Workshop *Between: Embodiment in Science Teaching*, exploring the definitions and role of embodiment in science teaching and science practice in collaboration with the School of Biomedical Sciences KCL, 30th June 2012
- MOOT discussion event, *AHRC Digital Transformations*, London, 19th November 2012
- As part of the *Between* exhibition (with Susan Aldworth) at Casa de Cultura, Uberlandia, Brazil, December 2012 – May 2013 in conjunction with the international symposium *The Body and Discourse* at the Federal University of Uberlandia where Ingham was the international keynote, 3rd – 4th December 2012
- As part of the May 2013 exhibition *Between-Passagens* and international conference *Art, Technology and Society* University of Campinas, Brazil, 10th May 2013 where Ingham gave a keynote address.

National and International screenings and conference presentations include:

- Screening and peer-reviewed paper 'Narrative Remains: lost voices of the Hunterian Collection' at the *International Death, Dying and Disposal Conference*, Durham University, 9th – 12th September 2009
- Screening and peer-reviewed paper 'Medicine, Materiality and Museology: collaborations between art, medicine and the museum space' at 15th biannual conference of the European Association of Museums for the History of Medical Sciences, Medical Museion, University of Copenhagen, 16th – 18th September 2010
- Screening at University of Tartu Medical Collections of The Faculty of Medicine Museum, Estonia, September 2010
- Screening and peer-reviewed paper 'Narrative Remains and Ghostly Projections: a cinematic intervention at London's Hunterian Museum' at Cambridge University's *Moving Image and Institution: Cinema and the Museum in the 21st Century Conference* 6th – 8th July 2011
- Screening and artist's presentation at Leiden University's *Cultures of Anatomical Collections Conference*, 15th – 17th February 2012



Publication cover (2009)

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Narrative Remains
Karen Ingham, 2009

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'Narrative Remains' is a collaboration between artist and writer Karen Ingham and the Hunterian Museum. This film accompanied a site-specific installation at the Hunterian, which contains a large number of 'wet specimens', preserved elements of human anatomy, collected by the anatomist John Hunter.
Ingham's work brings the dead back to life through their displayed organs, giving the patients a voice and a narrative that connects to the preserved specimen. One such is the throat of Marianne Harland, a musically talented young woman who lost her throat to tuberculosis, and then her life to tuberculosis.

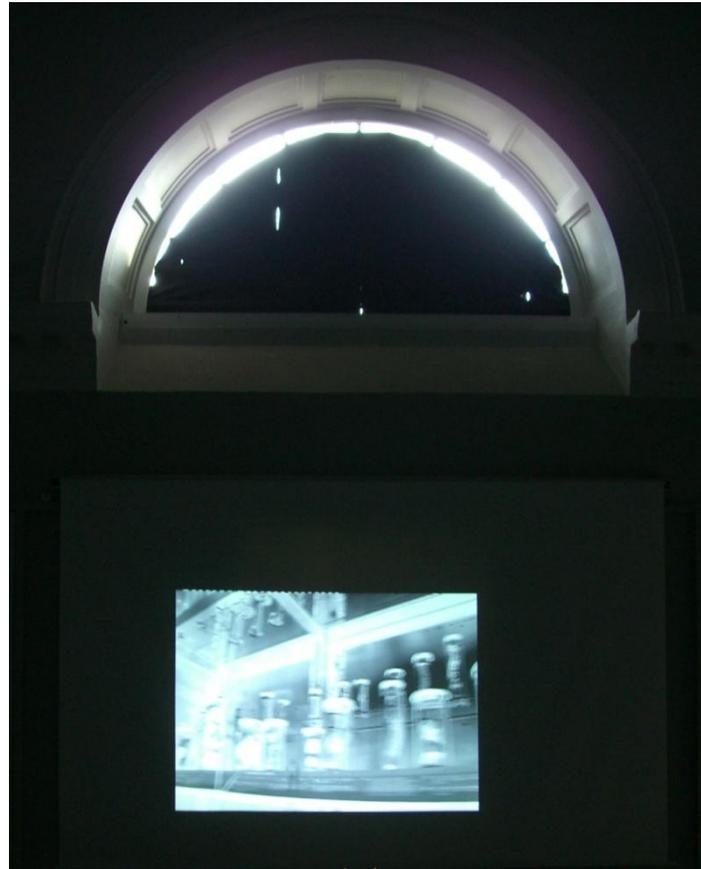
In both the Science and Art and Dissection Collections, Wellcome Trust



Portrait of Richard Bulstrode's Heart, Hunterian Collection, London, page 50, Narrative Remains



Invitation to the *Between-Passagens* exhibition, *Narrative Remains* one of three artworks shown, Casa de Cultura, Brazil 2012 and Campinas 2013



Installation shot, Copenhagen Medical Museum 2010
15th biannual conference of the European Association of Museums for the History of Medical Sciences, Medical Museum,
University of Copenhagen



Installation shot, Anglia Ruskin Digital Gallery, 2012
Part of the *Visualise* programme at Anglia Ruskin Digital Gallery, curated by Bronac Ferran