

Sharing Little Sparta - Residency Programme 2016

Thomas A. Clark, Peter Manson, Sarah Rose

Briefing Document

Sharing Little Sparta - Background

Ian Hamilton Finlay's Little Sparta is widely acknowledged as one of the most distinctive gardens in Europe. Developed by Finlay between 1966 and 2006 (and initially in collaboration with his wife Sue Finlay), the garden at Dunsyre contains almost 300 individual works by the poet and artist. The Little Sparta Trust was established in 1994 with the aim of preserving Little Sparta and maintaining access to what has become one of Scotland's most influential public artworks.

In February 2016, the Little Sparta Trust, working in partnership with the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS), the Scottish Poetry Library (SPL) and the University of Edinburgh, received an Open Project Fund award from Creative Scotland. This award, coupled with support from the Monument Trust, made possible Sharing Little Sparta: a new project designed to improve and enhance access to Little Sparta, both for the public and for artists.

Over an 18 month period, Sharing Little Sparta will develop new ways for the public and artists to engage with the garden, enhancing intellectual, creative and virtual access through a wide variety of means. This pilot project will bring a new openness to Little Sparta, whilst maintaining the vital balance between what is an enjoyably secluded place and a work of international cultural influence. The project will also develop the range and number of ways in which the garden can be accessed, employing innovative digital technologies in formats which are appropriate to this exceptional context. In this way, Sharing Little Sparta will ensure the public and artists can engage with the garden fully both on site and remotely.

As part of this project, the Little Sparta Trust is launching a new programme of funded research residencies for visual artists, poets and writers based in Scotland. This programme will create opportunities for artists to engage fully with Finlay's work and the ideas that informed and were generated by it. The residencies will enable the participating artists to take full advantage of supported access to Little Sparta and to the extensive collections of Finlay's work held at both the NGS and the SPL. Although these opportunities are non-residential (accommodation is not provided at Little Sparta), the artists will be given supported access to the garden and to the Research Centre and Library located within Finlay's house. Through these means, the residencies will provide the participating artists with a period of focused time for research and the development of new ideas.

Participating Artists 2016

Following a nomination and application process, residencies of three weeks each have been awarded to: **Thomas A. Clark** (poet), **Peter Manson** (poet) and **Sarah Rose** (visual artist). The artists share a longstanding interest in Little Sparta and the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay and the residencies, which will begin in August 2016, will allow them to explore Finlay's work further in relation to their own practices.

Thomas A. Clark (born Greenock, 1944) is a poet, editor and curator based in Pittenweem, Fife. His poetry collections include *Farm by the Shore* (forthcoming from Carcanet), *Yellow and Blue* (Carcanet, 2014), *The Hundred Thousand Places* (Carcanet 2009), *The Path to the Sea* (Arc 2005), *Distance & Proximity* (Pocketbooks 2000) and *Tormentil & Bleached Bones* (Polygon 1993). His involvement from the mid 1960s with the international concrete poetry movement led to close associations with Ian Hamilton Finlay, Edwin Morgan and Dom Sylvester Houedard. In 1973, with the artist Laurie Clark, he founded Moschatel Press, publishing work by Finlay amongst many others. In 1986 he and Laurie went on to launch the Cairn Gallery, specialising in Land Art, Minimalism and Conceptual Art. His work as Director of the gallery, now located in Pittenweem, and his association with artists such as Roger Ackling, Hamish Fulton and Richard Long, has directly influenced his most recent work and collections of poetry on Scottish landscape and culture.

Thomas A. Clark

Thomas A. Clark/Scottish Poetry Library

Peter Manson (born Glasgow, 1969) lives in Glasgow. He is a poet and translator of poetry. His books include *English in Mallarmé* (Blart Books, 2014), *Poems of Frank Rupture* (Sancho Panza Press), *Adjunct: an Undigest* and *For the Good of Liars* (both from Barque Press), and *Between Cup and Lip* (Miami University Press, Ohio). Manson has delivered numerous talks and lectures on his work on Mallarmé and his publication *Stéphane Mallarmé: The Poems in Verse (Miami UP)* was shortlisted for the Poetry Society's 2013 Popescu Prize. His poetry has appeared in many national and international anthologies and journals. Between 1994 and 1997 he co-edited eight issues of the experimental/modernist poetry journal *Object Permanence*, which published and reviewed a wide range of writing from the UK and North America. Manson has been invited to read from his work at many UK and international centres and festivals, including most recently Boise State University, Idaho (2016), *Hi Zero* (Brighton, 2016), Oxford Brookes University (2015) and the Universities of Bydgoszcz and Poznan, Poland (2010).

Peter Manson

Peter Manson/Scottish Poetry Library

Sarah Rose (born London, 1985) is a visual artist based in Glasgow. Recent solo exhibitions include *Difficult Mothers* (SWG3 Gallery, Glasgow, 2016) and *The Printer's Devil* (CCA/Intermedia Gallery, Glasgow, 2015). Her work has been included in many national and international group exhibitions in centres such as Auckland, Edinburgh, Munich and New York. She has taken part in several acclaimed residency programmes, such as Hospitalfield Arts (Arbroath), Seoul Art Space (Korea) and a thematic residency led by Will Holder at the Banff Centre (Canada). She currently co-hosts *tenletters*, a publishing project based in Glasgow, and is part of the ongoing collaboration *lightreading*. Both of these projects are concerned with art, writing and publication. Rose graduated with

a Masters of Fine Art from The Glasgow School of Art in 2012, and a Bachelors degree majoring in Fine Art and Writing Studies from the University of Auckland.

Sarah Rose

Sarah Rose/Glasgow Sculpture Studios

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Further information on Little Sparta and the Little Sparta Trust is available at:
www.littlesparta.org.uk



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