

# The installation at the Swiss Church London

## Hierophanies

A **Hierophany** is a manifestation of the sacred. The word is a formation of the Greek adjective **hieros** (ἱερός; sacred/holy) and the verb **phainein** (φαίνειν; to reveal / to bring to light).

Hough's digital artefacts discuss the absence of the materialized object, while the agenda of the object remains within the predominant theoretical construct. In reference to reformation, the idea of the virtual artefact takes the place of the transcendental within the church. In both cases the boundaries between the elements of the earth and the sky, the past and the present, and the dead and the living are blurred and explored. This makes the context of the Swiss Church London not just an interesting exhibition space, but part of the artwork itself.

The main piece of the exhibition is a commissioned, site-specific installation that combines audio and visual elements. Based on photo evidence of the iconoclasm by the Islamic State in Palmyra, Patrick Hough will recreate an ancient relict from a temple of Palmyra into a digital animation. The result is to draw attention to the specificity of the digital artefact, its non-fixed identity, and break the illusion that we might be witnessing an image of a physical artefact. The video is accompanied by a multi channel sound installation that moves between a range of genres, forms and atmospheres - from site specific field recordings within the church to composites of archive sampling and atmospheric foley, creating both a highly cinematic and reflective experience. It also lends an animistic quality to the digital artefact, in a sense bringing it to life. The aim is to allow us to think about the multiple registers of meaning digital artefacts can operate within (from cinema to the museum) and to question the ontological status of these 'things' that are set free from the burden of words such as "history" and "originality".

Accompanying the installation in the great church hall, a sculptural installation named **Funerary Relief**, consisting of an object and a spotlight, will be positioned in the upper gallery space, in which the meditation classes take place.

**Funerary Relief** is a sculptural work that as well focuses on the reconstruction of an artefact from the ancient ruins of Palmyra, which were destroyed by the so-called Islamic State militants in 2015. Again Patrick Hough used the jpg data published by the IS, and this time reconstructed it first digitally through 3D modelling. The object was then made physical again at a major film prop production workshop in South West London where the 3D model was CNC milled in polystyrene and hand finished by an expert team of prop makers. This opens up a new critical avenue in the work, questioning the thin line that lies between the preservation and forgery of history.

By including the virtual as well as the analogue artefact in the installation, two experiences for the visitor are created, which can be the starting point for an internal and external investigation of object, matter and meaning relations within digitalization, history, reformed theology and the personal life.