

THE
TOWN
IS THE
VENUE

DEVERON EXPRESS



/WALKING WITHOUT WALLS

SPRING 2018

**WALKING WITHOUT
WALLS . THE COMMUNITY
CROCKERY . SPRING
PLANT PARTY . SEASON
OF WEEDS . LUNAR
ODYSSEY**

Is it possible to undertake a socially engaged art project, when the community and the collaborators will never physically meet?

Deveron Projects has been in operation for over 20 years, and has undertaken more than 100 projects, working with almost as many artists. Whether from our locality or a far-flung place at the other side of the globe, artists stay with us to realise their projects in collaboration with folk from the Huntly community.

More recently, we have been wondering how an arts organisation can work with artists and

communities that cannot join us here in Huntly, due to political barriers of freedom of movement.

The Gaza Strip sits on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea and is one of two Palestinian territories, alongside the West Bank, that make up the State of Palestine. Gaza is self-governed and geographically separated from the West Bank, surrounded by Israeli territory. Since 2007 Gaza has been under an international economic and political boycott. Travel outside of Gaza requires a great deal of extenuating circumstance or support from Egypt or Israel.

The internet has been an unprecedented revelation for people with travel restrictions like those living in Gaza. May Murad is an artist who has lived in Gaza her whole life. Since meeting May in early 2016, Deveron Projects began to devise methods of digital residency, in order to work with creative people who faced such barriers and who had important stories to tell. Partnering May Murad with an artist based near Huntly, Rachel Ashton, allowed the two artists to share imagery and experience of their respective landscapes, over the course of a year, through the project *Walking Without Walls*.

Rachel and May have been walking and talking together via email and WhatsApp communication.

Along their ways they have been sharing the wild plants and flowers of their landscapes, exchanging properties and folklore. Both artists have been sketching and painting from the imagery of the other, influenced by the plant journals of Marxist theorist, philosopher, economist, anti-war activist, revolutionary socialist and World War I pacifist – Rosa Luxemburg – who collected wild plants sent to her in prison by her friends, meticulously composing them in jotters before her execution by the Freikorps in 1919.

Inspired by the realisation that the Gaza Strip is approximately 26 miles long, the length of a marathon, Deveron Projects' annual Slow Marathon has this year been devised by Rachel and May in both Huntly and Gaza. Rachel's Slow Marathon begins in Dufftown, passing through Keith, back to Huntly, following a portion of the Isla Way. May's works with the restrictions of walking in Gaza and follows a repetitive circular route around its streets.

**Deveron
Projects**

THE TOWN COLLECTION QUIZ

by Alix Rothnie (2018) Town Collection Curator

HOW TO PLAY

- Find the artworks located in each of these six buildings in Huntly
- Answer the questions below
- Email your answers to towncollection@deveron-projects.com or pop by the office and ask for our Town Collection Curator
- The first 3 people to answer all questions correctly will win a Huntly mug!

What is the Town Collection?

A collection of photographs, sculptures, paintings, documents and artefacts that archive the projects of artists, musicians and writers who have been invited by Deveron Projects to live and work in the town of Huntly. These works are on display throughout the town in shops, businesses, public buildings and private residences. To view the collection, or for further information, visit our website deveron-projects.com/town-collection or contact us on towncollection@deveron-projects.com



1

Hamish Fulton - *21 Days in the Cairngorms*



6

Eva Merz - *Empty Shop*



5

Jacques Coetzer - *Room to Roam*



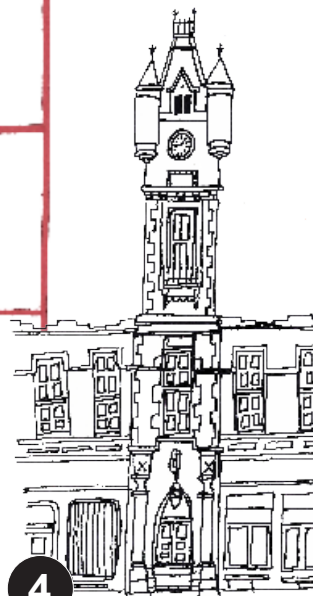
2

Kenny Hunter - *Where in? Where at?*



3

Leán Coetzer - *Bus Stop Dance*



4

Elsebeth Jørgensen - *Cinemagic Tour I and II*

QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. On which date did Hamish Fulton complete his walk?
2. What kind of bird features on this sculpture?
3. What pose is the fourth stick man making?
4. In what year did the old Playhouse cinema open?
5. What is the third line of the song *Room to Roam*?
6. On which street was Eva Merz's Monument to an Empty Shop?

Rachel Asthon and May Murad
In conversation with Elisabetta Rattalino
March 2018

Elisabetta: *Walking Without Walls* started in May 2017. Since then you have been in digital contact. How often and in what ways have you been in touch over the past year?

May: We have been in touch via WhatsApp and via Facebook once or twice a week. We used Skype mainly for our official meetings. Rachel, would you agree?

Rachel: Yes! We write messages, send audio files of ourselves speaking and send each other photos and videos of family, friends and landscapes.

Elisabetta: You have probably learnt a lot about each other's life and culture. What about your experiences as artists... You are both painters, and you have been mainly representing each other's landscapes. Please, tell me a bit about your creative process... how did it work? What was the more suitable means for you to understand and represent the landscape of the other?

Rachel: I would say that videos with descriptions were the most helpful means for understanding Mays landscape. For example, when May filmed for me the entrance to Nuseirat refugee camp, I asked her to tell me the story about it, so that I could understand better what I was seeing. Likewise, when she went to Jerusalem for an exhibition and filmed some parts of the journey, she described for me which stretch of the journey she was filming and from what mode of transport.

May: I agree with Rachel: sharing videos with oral explanation was the most effective form of exchange. I could understand what was in front of my eyes and choose a still image freely. Indeed, it has been a very enriching overall experience... I felt that I was away from Gaza many times!

Elisabetta: How did your practice change during this experience? Could you send me a picture of one of the paintings you have created so far?

May: My practice did change a lot.



My usual style is more expressive and dramatic. Working on this project made me realise my abilities in landscape painting.

Something I had never thought before to depict. Look at all those green spaces that I have been painting during the project... for once, I've been drawing things that are not grey! This made me feel brighter. Life in Gaza is quite different: there are nice natural landscapes, but we cannot enjoy them because of our besieged and restricted circumstances.

Rachel: Yes, I am learning things and seeing things I would not read about, I think. Like seeing in detail May's Grandparents' back garden, hearing her uncle's knowledge of plants and witnessing May's family's personal olive harvest. It's very enriching indeed...! In my paintings of the North East of Scotland, I am drawn to dramatic light on rippling fields on the sides of hills, valleys full of trees and the shadows they create and curving rivers. I smooth and round off everything I see into stylised dream-like scenes in exaggerated and enhanced colours. I couldn't do this with the Scenes May sent me from Gaza. To begin with, they were mostly urban scenes. Moreover, there was much less colour and, to me, it seemed wrong somehow to exaggerate this landscape that was not mine... I felt I needed to be more sensitive and I was less confident about how to approach the subject. This, for instance, is one of my paintings for the project...



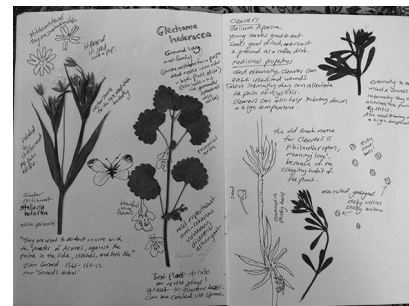
I was trying not only to paint the beautiful green scenes that featured in our exchanges, but also to depict some of the more urban ones and reflect the desolation of those spaces. To be pushed out of one's comfort zone has been a good experience as an artist.

Elisabetta: Whilst you were learning about each other's landscape, you were plant journaling your own everyday landscapes. What kind of information have you collected about the plants?

Rachel: I have collected some samples of the actual plants and pressed them. Then I have stuck them in my book and drawn in any missing parts, like the flowers or seeds. I have researched the plant lore and medicinal and edible properties, and I have included the information I liked in my book. Some plants which had many uses, I have

dedicated a whole page or more. In other cases, I have put several plants on a page and just included a little information about them.

May: I did almost the same work, I was filming the plant, so I could find their names. Then, I dried the plants in books. I also made a diagram, and then looked for information to discover whether the plants were useful or harmful. There were plants I knew before starting this project, plants that can be eaten or used for infusions, like malukhya or chamomile. I loved including some plants' traditional popular names, also because it was rather hard for me to identify the plants through their scientific names.



Elisabetta: Beside painting and plant-journaling, you have also been working the route for the Slow Marathon 2018. What were the main difficulties in plotting the 26 m route?

Rachel: I suppose for me the main difficulty was when the route went through someone's land who was not happy about people using that route, even though it was an obvious right of way. We only faced one difficulty there, which we hope won't be an issue on the actual marathon. I got quite anxious about exercising our 'Right to Roam' when it involved walking right through someone's curtilage, but we have avoided that where we can. Another difficulty is making the route clear to participants, particularly the section on forestry tracks, which are very easy to get lost on.

May: Well as you know, my experience has been rather different. The Gaza Strip has been besieged by many wars. Now we are threatened with a new war. The situation is unstable, the government is rather rigid, and the traditional society does not accept anything easily. Walking 26 miles without going through disages, and there will be a lot of obstacles on the way. Taking a permit or walking without disturbing anyone will not happen easily, unfortunately. In addition, there are military zones that cannot be crossed, and the areas close to the border with Israel are very dangerous. There is also no 'Right to Roam' as in Scotland. Here, walking through private property will also be very dangerous.

Elisabetta: Thank you very much for sharing. We will look forward to continuing this conversation during the PathMaker's Gathering and Slow Marathon on April 21 and 22.

Events Calendar

/ April

Friday 6, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Janet Starkey, *An Alternative Story of Strathbogie*

Sunday 8, 9am, meet at Brander Kitchen
Walking Without Walls
Slow Marathon Training Session - 30k

Wednesday 11, 6pm @Small Gallery ARI
Gill Russell, *Waterlines*

Friday 13, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Elena Romero Passerin, *The Botanist, the Tea-Bush, and the Scottish Weather: Tales of Acclimatization in Eighteenth Century Edinburgh Botanic Garden*



Saturday 14, 10am - 2pm, No.11 Gordon St
From Little or Nothing: A mushroom growing workshop with Ann Miller



Monday 16, New Moon

Saturday 21, 4pm - Scouts Hall
Pathmaker's Gathering
Pathmakers, pilgrims and other political walkers

Sunday 22, 6:45 - Meet Huntly Square
Slow Marathon from Dufftown to Huntly

Friday 27, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Blake Morris, *A Wonder is not a Slog*



Monday 30, Full Moon

/ May

Friday 4, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Andrew Watson, *The HoneyBee: Friend or Foe?*

Friday 11, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Colin Whatford, *A River of Wondrous Delight*



Tuesday 15, New Moon

Friday 18, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Ami Skanberg Dahlstedt, *Slow Walking in Finland*

Saturday 19, 10 am - 2pm, The Brander Garden
Spring Plant Party

Friday 25, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Walking Without Walls @TATE Exchange



Tuesday 29, Full Moon

/ June

Friday 1, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch Talk
Barry Peter Ould, *Percy Grainger*

Friday 8, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch Talk
Ela Orleans, *Lunar Odyssey*



Saturday 9, 10am
Katie Johnston's *The Community Crochery Launch*
Join us for tea, cake and conversations about craft, home and homemaking.

Katie has been working on a set of crochery that will be available for lending from Deveron Projects. The set consists of 100 plates and 100 mugs, which have been crafted and designed with local community groups.



Wednesday 13, New Moon

Thursday 14, 6:30 pm,
At Home
Claudia Zeiske shares her reflections on her *Home to Home* project.
@ Goethe Institute, Glasgow

Friday 15, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Joanna Helfer, Artist's talk

Saturday 16, 10 am - 2pm, The Brander Garden
The Town is the Garden
Possible Gardens of Kinship:
A permaculture workshop, of sorts

Saturday 16, 7am - Meet Huntly Square for the bus
Claudia Zeiske leads the Isla Marathon Walk
@Moray Walking Festival

Monday 18, 6pm - 9pm, Moray Art Centre
Pilgrimage talk and workshop
with Claudia Zeiske
@Moray Walking Festival

Thursday 21, Meet at the Brander Building
Summer Solstice:
Guided Walk to the White Wood
with artist Ela Orleans and forester

Ela Orleans's *Lunar Odyssey* elaborates on the soundscape -past, present and future- of the White Wood to conceive a curated walk that will contribute to its living heritage. The walk will be part of the artist's research activities for the project.

Friday 22, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Ellie Turner, *The Ethical Gift Shop*



Thursday 28, Full Moon

Friday 29, 1pm, No. 11
Friday Lunch and Talk
Diane Smith, *Moray Walking Festival*

THE TOWN IS THE GARDEN

Notes from the Gardener

By the time this newsletter reaches you, we hope that Spring has finally arrived. After such a long, hard winter everything should be finally emerging.

If you are feeling a little daunted, wanting to grow lots of your own fresh food but wondering where to start, thinking carefully about what you really want to eat might help. Are you a family of fruit lovers or do you like nipping out for fresh salad and herbs at the back door? Trying and growing what costs most at the supermarket but can easily be grown at home could also be a good idea. Mange-tout, salad leaves and many herbs are expensive to buy but easy to grow. Strawberries are too, but they could find place in containers, if you are short of garden space. Container gardening is a great way of growing fruit and veg in a fairly low maintenance way. Salads, tatties, carrots, chards and herbs all grow well in containers. It is also a bit easier to keep pests out of a smaller space, whether that's putting fleece over to prevent carrot fly, net to deter pigeons or copper tape to try and stop slugs.

Look out for the *Town is the Garden* project at the farmers market each month. We will be giving seeds and plants away again this year. You can also pop into the No.11 Gordon St where we will have our barter shop, seed bank and resource library. We will also be making containers again at our plant party this year, Sat 19 May in the Brander Garden.

We are delighted to announce that the Climate Challenge Fund has awarded us with another two years of funding. Thank you to everyone who took part in last year events, gave us feedback and contributed to the application.

In this new phase of the *Town is the Garden*, Huntly's public spaces, private gardens and surrounding countryside will continue to be activated as sites for debate, exchange and action to investigate issues surrounding food sustainability. We hope to raise awareness of our relationship with food, how it shapes the land around us and influences the types of communities we build. While acting locally on a small scale, we will also examine the implications of our reliance on a global food system.

This year's programme include a wide range of experts, artists and growers. The aim is to create a local platform for the sharing of skills and knowledge that may help our community better deal with uncertain futures shaped by the climate crisis.

SPRING

DANDELION JELLY MARMALADE

A simple springtime marmalade
Makes about 5 jars

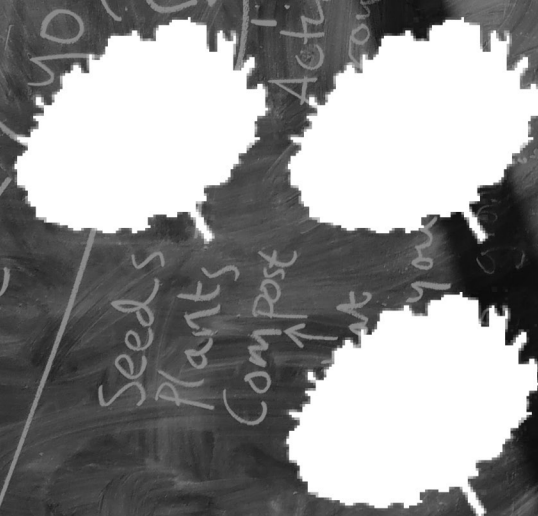
Fresh apple juice (not from concentrate)
80G of dandelion petals
100ml lemon juice
750G jam/sugar (with added pectin)

Pour the apple juice into a saucepan and stir in 60g of dandelion petals. Bring to simmering point, remove from heat. Cover and leave to infuse overnight.

The following day, strain juice through a sieve. Return juice to a pan, add the lemon juice and heat slowly to boiling point. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved, then add remaining dandelion petals. Increase heat and boil rapidly for 6-7 mins, or until setting point is reached.

Remove from heat and skim the surface to remove any scum (this is normal). Pour into warm sterilised jars and seal.

Adapted from John Wright's Hedgerow, River Cottage Handbook No.7



Stay in touch / find out what we are up to
www.deveron-projects.com/town-garden
townisthegarden@deveron-projects.com

Notices

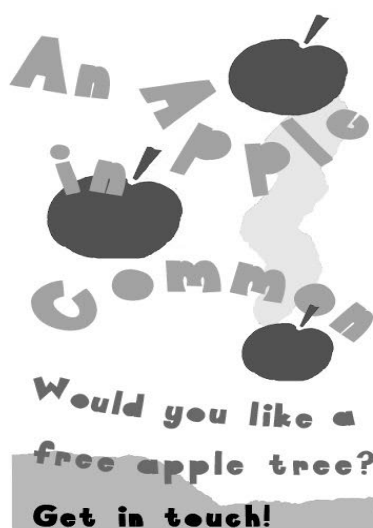
People

Welcome

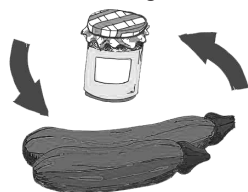
Katie Johnston, **Artist**
Ela Orleans, **Artist**
Robyn Wolsey, **Intern**
Lola Otto, **Intern**

Goodbye

Abeer Alhalabe, **Intern**
Marc Higgin, **Al Nofara Cafe project**
Josephine Pierrel, **Intern**
Alix Rothnie, **Town Collection Curator**
Hayat Shahoud, **Intern**



Gift / Swap / Share
Every Fri, 9.30am - 5.30pm
No 11 CAFE
A food sharing scheme



SLOW MARATHON

21 APRIL

Pathmaker's Gathering

4.00 pm Welcome

4.15 pm Blake Morris Walking as a political artistic gesture

4.45 pm Mik Napier: Walking in Palestine and in and out of the Gaza Strip

5.15 pm Claudia Zeiske, Rachel Ashton, May Murad: Walking Without Walls in the Making

5.45 pm Exhibition Opening and Refreshments

6.00 pm Registration for all walkers

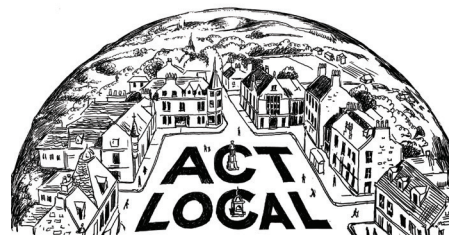
22 APRIL

Slow Marathon

6.45 am Meet Huntly Square



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Huntly, ABERDEENSHIRE



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Our Guests

Aya Haidar, Emily Savage, Libby Curtis, Aastha Chauhan, Ruth Lamb, Alastair Wilson, Sue Beveridge, Natasha Lloyd, The Project Café, Pat Scott, Alan Macpherson, Mlitt students from Aberdeen University, Alecia Neo, Vicky Flood, Chris Pepper, Annabel Pinker, Andrew and Margaret Lear, Camille Sineau, James Reid, Katy Stewart, Pat Scott, Eleanor Brown, John Malster, Colin Clark, Ice Cream Architects, Anna Francis, Neil Cooper.

Deveron Projects is based in the rural market town of Huntly, Scotland. We connect artists, communities and places through creative research and engagement. The *town is the venue* describes the framework in which we work and contribute to the social wellbeing of our town. We have engaged with local people, and their clubs, choirs, shops, schools, churches, bars and discos since 1995.