

Pillow Talk

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Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.

— C.G. Jung

Concept:

Pillow Talk, an installation based on the theme of shadows, is a hybrid art-poem project comprised of 60 silk pillows and related video. The project, bridging artistic disciplines, will provide a quiet intimate space for the viewer to reflect on the liminal nature of the human condition. Ideally, the presentation will be in an enclosed room with subdued lighting and comfortable seating. The intent of the installation is to create a peaceful place for reflection, and to provide the opportunity to contemplate the ephemeral nature of shadow and psyche's dualistic nature. The video projection format adds an audio component that reflects the transitory nature of shadow, as light is necessary to create shadow.

Process for Shadows:

Helena started the drawings for the Shadows project in 2011 at an international artist residency in Can Serrat, Spain. The 60 original drawings, all of consistent size, each relate to a single line of verse from Ming-Dao's suite of poetry entitled *Shadows* (2011). The images are created with a variety of media including watercolour, charcoal, ink and chalks on frosted mylar. The visuals are intended to be complementary to the poetry and are organized in pairs to reflect the couplet structure of the poetry.

Shadows (2015), an 11 minute HD video created at the Banff Centre, will provide an audio component to the installation. The video presents sixty mixed media images organized into six chapters, each with a different theme. The projection is a compilation of the images created by Helena and corresponding poetry composed by Ming-Dao with audio narrated by David Mulsby.

Process for Pillow talk:

To create the pillows for the installation, the original drawings from the *Shadows* series were scanned as digital files. The 60 images were printed onto prepared sheets of Habotai silk using an inkjet printer. Helena then printed the corresponding line of poetry onto Habotai silk to integrate the imagery and text as a constant design element for each pillow. The printed silk images, paired with coloured silks for front and back, are cut to size to create 20" X 20" 100% silk pillows. Helena is making each pillow by hand using her sewing machine. Each individually constructed pillow will have a polyester insert and a functional zipper. So far, she has completed 20 silk pillows as illustrated in this prospectus.



Memories cast long shadows

#49 – oil & watercolour on frosted mylar, 7.5" x 10"

#50 – watercolour and ink on frosted mylar, 7.5" x 10"

with edges blurred by tears.





The original drawings are scanned and printed on raw Habotai silk. The text is printed on a separate piece of silk. Silk panels are selected and cut to size.



Silk for the backing is dyed and dried before the pillows are stitched together by hand with the image and text on one side.



Chapter 2 in Helena's sewing room

Chapter 1 (selected couplets)



Pencil traces shadows:

contours of vanished stones.



Shadows on a lit screen,

puppets of remembrance.



Shadows on a drawn face

chalk highlights far whiter.



Loved ones die and leave prints:

shadows of sunlit lives.

Chapter 2 (selected couplets)



Night is the earth's shadow,

moon marks phases of dark.



Every exploded star

birthed millions of shadows.



Before the universe,

all was complete shadow.



The greatest constancy —

shadow — is not solid.

