

Welcome to Make/Believe at the Prague Quadrennial 2015

The 22 designers representing the UK have been selected from our national exhibition of over 150 designers in January 2015. Our exhibition title Make/Believe indicates the skills, vision and commitment found in the diversity of today's UK performance design and as exemplified here within the temporal contexts of music, weather and politics.

All of the production designs explore and occupy a passage of time, - story time, time lived, time lost and the 'necessary' time - to make, achieve, overcome and resolve. They variously consider the relationship between audience and performer, between performance and society and grapple with the UK's identity, our history, politics and our future, including how we relate to the rest of the world.

They encompass designs for found space, digital, landscape, heritage, media and a range of community contexts. A variety of performance spaces, from opera house to cardboard box, from pebbled beach to helicopters, in rain, waves, car headlights and LED projection, enable the re-envisioning of buildings, gardens, characters and their narratives.

All of the work was created as a part of the process of designing and making sets, costumes, lighting, sound and other aspects of performance production. What started as ideas, responses, conversations, sketches in 2D and 3D, developed through craft and technical skills, collaboration with other artists and makers. Many of the designers were also the makers, painters, finishers, producers, performers even, of their realised designs.

For Make/Believe they have re-visited their work, in many instances re-conceiving it for a new form of performance – one in which the design is displayed in its own right, not in the measured timeframe of live performance, but in the contemplative space of the print catalogue and in the projected, immersive experience of our gallery installation. We have brought no models, artefacts or costumes, instead, with this presentation we celebrate the temporal, transient aspects of scenography as they transform, decorate and comment on their palace environment.

We ask that PQ visitors spend some time with us in the illusory worlds of these visual narratives, and that this joyful and inspirational collection of work will provide a rich source of pleasure, fantasy and contemplation, while provoking new performance ideas, technologies and contexts.

Kate Burnett, Curator