

'what is the colour of memory?'

In 2001 I wrote three short texts concerning the relationship between architecture, memory and colour. 'Moss Green' describes the derelict house of an architect, in which, on a Sunday in March, I found photographs of a brave new world of high rise housing blocks. 'Bittersweet' is the account of a visit made to a disused cork factory in Palafrugell in Catalunya in April, where the floor was scattered with the names of colours. Later that year, in November, I dreamt about a childhood home that had just been sold. 'White Linen' remembers this dream.

These scenes were then translated into Korean for an installation in a disused print factory in Seoul. The installation was a triptych consisting of three images, three objects and three audio recordings in Korean.

moss green

It's a beautiful house - one storey building, with a square plan - born at the birth of modernism in the aftermath of the First World War. It embodies the values of early English modernism, of the arts and crafts movement: 'truth to materials' and honest craftsmanship. From the road it looks a little un-loved, in need of some care and attention. Up close it is clearly derelict, almost in ruins. We enter a room with windows at each end. Curtains are falling away from the runners. The fabric has been soaked overnight and is drying in the spring afternoon sunshine. On the window cill and spilling over onto the floor are piles of old magazines. The pages are stuck together and disintegrate if you pull them apart. There are some photographs of buildings. One is particularly damp, the corners are soft, the surface is wrinkled. It shows a tower block, just completed, empty and pristine, a moss green utopia, the modernist dream dispersing as it soaks up spring rain.

white linen

I dreamt of the house last night. My mothers house in Cwmgors, south Wales, a place where it always rained in the holidays, that as a kid I resented, but now as it is being taken from me, I already begin to miss. I was in the dining room; the rest of the house was empty except this one room. The furniture was far too big and covered in linen. The air was thick and still, silent. With the curtains drawn, it was very dark, but the linen glowed white. I went towards the mantel- piece to take a look at myself in the mirror, and I saw for the first time in the reflection, that the room was full of plants; so alive I could smell moisture still on their leaves.

Bittersweet

In Palafrugell, a small town north of Barcelona on the Costa Brava is a derelict cork factory with a clock tower in front. The clock tower is a handsome structure, elegant and robust, but the clock on top has stopped. The floor is covered in dust and pieces of furniture, lamp-stands,

chairs and old printing machinery. There are words everywhere scattered all over the floor: burnt orange, turquoise, black and white, bittersweet. We stay in the factory a long time. We don't speak, just walk and look. Later, once we've left the building, he brings something to show me. It is a white sign with carefully painted black letters: 'Bittersweet'. I reach into my bag and pull out a clear square section rod; along one side of it letters printed onto cardboard are embedded in the perspex. From the top it is out of focus, but from the side, you can read it: 'Bittersweet'.

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For associated publications see Jane Rendell, 'Writing in place of speaking', Sharon Kivland and Lesley Sanderson (eds.), Transmission: Speaking and Listening, (Sheffield Hallam University and the Site Gallery, 2003) and Jane Rendell, 'Site-Writing', Sharon Kivland, Jaspar Joseph-Lester and Emma Cocker, (eds.), Inscription, (Sheffield Hallam University and the Site Gallery, 2005).