

Simeon Nelson *Cryptosphere* mapping paradise

The First Artist's Residency at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Private View Friday 4 April 2008, 6-9pm, RGS (with IBG) Exhibition Pavilion
Entrance: Exhibition Road, London, SW7 2AR

Exhibition Continues through to 9 May 2008 (open Mon – Fri, 10am-5pm)

Panel Discussion 9 May 2008, 6-9pm

The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) and Parabola are pleased to announce the exhibition of new work developed in response to the Society's first Artist's Residency with Simeon Nelson.

Developed and curated by Jordan Kaplan from commissioning group Parabola in consultation with Vandana Patel and Steve Brace at the RGS (with IBG), Nelson's Residency began in January 2007 with investigation of over 5,000 of the Society's maps (one of the world's largest private collections). Following detailed discussions with RGS Fellows and staff, Nelson's research has focused on maps that consider mythical places as physical locations, as well as the evolution of Western cartography and the shifting philosophical and global perspectives of the past 1,000 years.

Nelson is interested in what he describes as the 'Cryptosphere', which he perceives as, 'the sum of all withheld and hidden information in a given system'. He has developed responses to complex mapping methodologies that contain multiple layers of meaning through the creation of a new body of work, specifically locating the mythological and ornamental within the physical and temporal world: El Dorado, Utopia and Hell are addressed alongside the development of cartography as a science via a large gallery installation in which a cartographically-inspired architectural grid attempts to contain ambiguous ornaments that, unwilling to be held by the grid's rigid embrace, spill out over the pavilion floor.

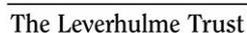
A detailed publication produced by Parabola accompanies the exhibition with commissioned texts from **Dr Denis Alexander**, Faraday Institute, St Edmund's College and The Babraham Institute, Cambridge; **Prof Denis Cosgrove**, Royal Holloway, University of London and Humboldt Professor at UCLA; **Dr Alessandro Scafi**, Warburg Institute and University of Bologna and contemporary art writer and critic **Rebecca Geldard**. Documentation and dissemination of works produced alongside archival resources graciously loaned by the RGS (with IBG) work together to shed light on the historical significance of, and the artist's interest in, the mapping of myth and the unveiling of 'fact'.

The Residency involved Year 5 pupils at Gayhurst Community School, Hackney, East London in a series of workshops that encouraged pupils to consider issues of the built environment, the natural world and diaspora communities, giving access to RGS maps and information in school and outings.

A panel discussion is also planned for the close of the exhibition on 9 May from 6-9pm.

Cryptosphere has been made possible through the generous support of The Leverhulme Trust, Arts Council England and The University of Hertfordshire.

For more information about ***Cryptosphere***, images and bookings, contact: jordan@parabolatrust.org



NOTE TO EDITORS

Simeon Nelson's practice was established in Australia in the 1980s. He lives and works in London, with commissions and exhibitions in Asia, Australia, Europe and the UK. He is Reader in Sculpture at the University of Hertfordshire and Co-director of Elastic Residence, London. His work is held by a number of high-profile public and private collections. He was a Finalist in the National Gallery of Australia's National Sculpture Prize in 2005 and a Finalist in the 2003 Jerwood Sculpture Prize.

Jordan Kaplan is a curator, writer and founding member of Parabola. She is a visiting and guest lecturer at several universities and initiates and oversees the production of contemporary art outside traditional gallery settings.

Parabola is a commissioning and curatorial body dedicated to the production of contemporary art and critical debate. Through exhibitions, publications and events, Parabola opens up dialogues between different groups and disciplines, from architecture and new technologies, to museological practice and the interpretation of histories. Recent work includes **Little Savages**: Tessa Farmer at the Natural History Museum, London and the upcoming **Tatton Park Biennial 2008**.

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is the learned society and professional body for geography & geographers. Founded in 1830, it is a world centre for geography: supporting research, education, expeditions and fieldwork, and promoting public engagement and informed enjoyment of our world.

