Research Report

To begin this module, each member of the class was presented with the task of proposing a site of their choosing that was to house a potential site-specific exhibition. Although my own proposed site was ultimately not selected as on of the final choices, I was very pleased with the site that I ended up being assigned to, and the group with whom I was to be working. The Old Police Station (or Llys Glas) (*fig.1*) was a site proposed by numerous members of our group and was immediately intriguing to me. Our group, made up of five individuals – Serena Killen, Josh Williams, Kai Samuel, Karol Dierzuk and myself – seemed to be, overall, enthusiastic from the beginning. This fed into my own excitement surrounding the use of this fascinating landmark of a building.

Fig.1, Swansea Central Police Station, date unknown

Built in 1912-1913 and designed by Swansea architect Ernest Morgan, our exhibition space has accumulated its fair share of stories during its time as The Old Police Station – stories that, as a group, we decided fairly early on we would like to bring to light through our work. The building has served as a constant for Swansea throughout its hundred years of standing, successfully seeing the city through two world wars and emerging on the other side with plenty of scars to tell its tales. In order to construct our investigation into this space we began research – each with our own areas of particular interest and, as a result, expertise. Within the first two weeks, we had collated a well established understanding of our site, its history and an emerging theme that our initial response work seemed to create. Arranging meetings, both in person and on social media, to make minor and major decisions became our routine, as the group gradually found a rhythm to work along to. And it was within these meetings that our project gained its title. Through the study of Police radio signals, we named our exhibition accordingly, after the 'time check' call, "10-36".

For use within an exhibition, our group essentially had two separate project spaces available. The first was a room which we have referred to as the 'Entranceway'– which later came to be known as the 'Investigation Room', and the second, the Idris Room as it has been known by the building for some time.

Supposedly named after famous poet Idris Davies, the Idris Room (*Fig.2)* has had numerous past-lives, serving as a gymnasium and a locker room along with numerous other purposes throughout its history. Today, the room is used primarily for hosting various functions, such as this year's Christmas Fête.

The first thing our group acknowledged upon seeing Entranceway room *(Fig.3)* was that it has a very unique layout. Serving as an access route to the HQ Urban Kitchen Café from Orchard Street the external doorway opens into a small entrance area, followed by a short staircase up to a similarly sized landing that is elevated to match the level of the café itself.

Fig.2, the Idris Room, Old Police Station, Llys Glas

Fig.3, the Entranceway room, Old Police Station, Llys Glas

Due to the nature of our investigative work within the Entranceway room – an artistic interpretation of a Police investigation – our vision for the exhibition relied on a collaborative effort from the group. Each individual had the opportunity to contribute their own style of work towards the final presentation, and following this idea, the work I made had an intentionally interpretive quality to it. Within the Idris room, our final production of the 'Static Locker' was to be an intentionally sudden contrast to its counterpart production in the Entranceway. The two spaces play into the concept of a 'time-check', with the viewer entering into a chaotic, interlinking and potentially overwhelming room of information and red string, followed by the walk down a quiet corridor leading into an large empty hall with a lone locker situated at its centre, loud static and blue light emitted from within. This explosion of research in contrast to the attempted containment of history, was an idea that I feel our group executed well.

I studied artists from various fields to support each of my ventures, including the work of Larry Sultan and Mike Mandel and their collaborative project *Evidence* and Piers Secunda's *Cultural Destruction,* along with other works from fellow students such as Katie Nia. Our group also received the donation of numerous collections of photographic and information sources, from individuals such as Ann Dineen, a fellow UWTSD student and retired Police Officer based out of Swansea Police Station, and Keith Mills, author of *Flames Across The Tawe.* This research led into numerous different bodies of work, such as my choice to experiment with resin and mould casting, and the photographing of imperfections, oddities and unusual perspectives. My aim within this project was to fully utilise the opportunity to broaden my choice of materials, artistic processes and editorial styles, and in reflection upon this project, I am pleased with my dedication to this aim. I worked with materials that had been previously foreign to me such as resin (*Fig.4*), honed my skills in areas such as darkroom work and knowledge of the working of enlargers and expanded my use of post-production software to finalise my work in order to help me best represent my findings.

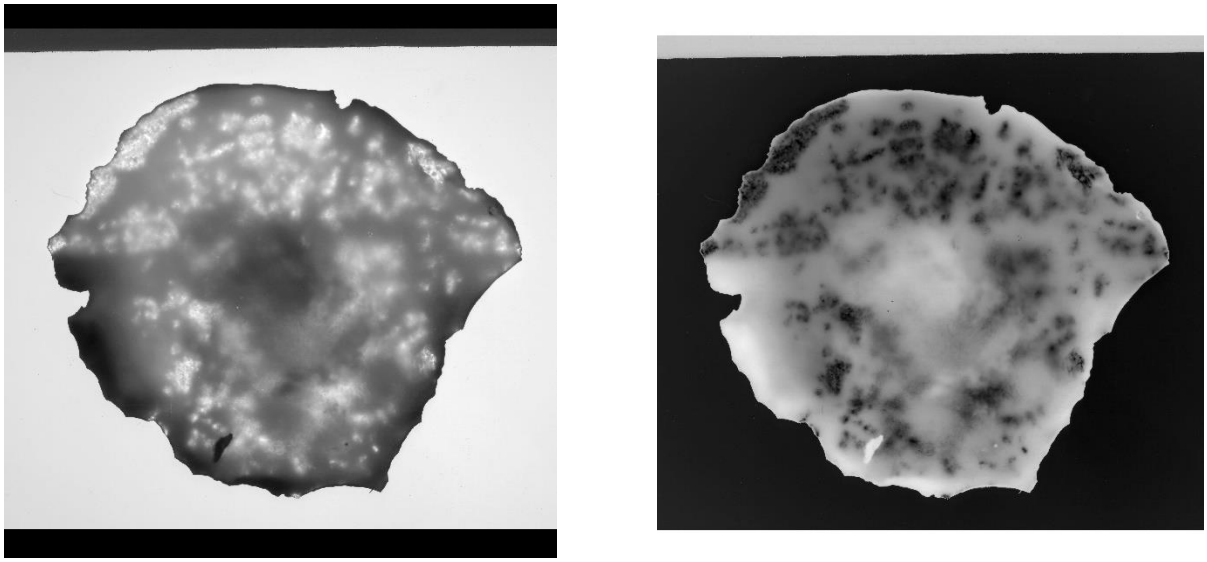

Fig.4, Resin Casts of Bullet Holes, Llys Glas, Swansea

As challenging and often tedious as this project was to work through, I truly feel as though I have gained valuable knowledge from this experience. The new practice of a collaborative production presented obstacles that I had not encountered within my previous individual workings. The collaboration of five individuals to produce a single cohesive end product was a difficult task to navigate, as each person had their own unique and often contrasting ideas to contribute. The disagreement and resolution surrounding decisions made within our group was awkward to manage at times, although myself and a couple of other members had expected some friction within the group from the outset, and were quick to acknowledge this early on. The main difficulty our project faced was the lack of attendance to group meetings, as this directly correlated to the lack of work produced by some which immediately created a much greater workload for others. Due to some members' absence, the members that were present were therefore tasked with making the decisions alone for topics such as marketing strategies, display preferences and the setting of 'group homework', along with the purchasing of minor – luckily inexpensive – items necessary for the requirements of the exhibition.

However, even with these issues to work through, our project was a considerable success, and despite the absences, disagreements and technical difficulties, I feel as though our determined efforts to create a collaborative exhibition, ultimately prevailed. Through the majority of the time spent working on this project, I have enjoyed working with my peers, as the knowledge I have shared and had shared with me in-turn has allowed us to develop our individual work styles alongside each-other and granted me interesting insight into the making of a group exhibition through the progression of coordinated research and joint decision making. Overall, I have found this project highly beneficial to my development as an artist, and whilst testing my skills in many areas, I have genuinely enjoyed seeing our group aspirations come to life through hard work and mutual passion for our studies.

Fig.5, Four members of 10-36 artists accompanied by the Glamorgan Constabulary Police Re-enactment group. Image courtesy of Paul Duerinckx