

ABIGAIL REYNOLDS
RUINS OF TIME: LOST LIBRARIES ALONG THE SILK ROAD
BMW ART JOURNEY
ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH 2016

ROKEBY presents two brand new works by Abigail Reynolds created as a response to the first stage of the artist's journey across China and Uzbekistan where she visited six lost library sites. The work will be shown in the Collectors Lounge during Art Basel Miami Beach 2016.

These two new works are closely related in form and concept. There are no narratives, but suggestions of narrative. There is damage and disruption, but also echo, repetition and association.

Included in the installation are three new collages which reference libraries.

In light of recent political decisions in the democratic world Abigail Reynold's journey visiting the lost libraries along the Silk Road feels more and more emblematic of our contemporary disdain for facts and knowledge. Such a great project.

Sam Gaskin, China correspondent for Ocula.com and Cultural Content Editor at Flamingo

Defaced, hidden, stolen, burnt, torn, neglected, buried, forfeit, forgotten, wounded, estranged, (working title) 2016



Two grooved shelves (18mm birch ply) in a corner: 360 x 13 cm (upper), 210 x 26 cm (lower)
Shelf height from floor: 152cm and 102cm
Textured and coloured glass, screen print, inkjet printed stills from 16mm film, powder-coated welded steel

The library shelf is an ordering system. It is a container for a collection of thoughts, narratives, and voices spanning the globe and time. The shelves contain fragments and layered obscurities which take different forms and materials to honour the diversity of book forms across the libraries encountered by the artist. Reynolds transposes the layered denials, distortions and mis-readings of the lost libraries upon the housed objects.

Throughout the lost library sites Reynolds' visited she captured details on 16mm colour Kodak film. Upon the shelves are printed still frames - fragments of a film. The work is not assembled like a film edit, but works sculpturally in chapters or discrete pieces. This is a fluid, open work mirroring the open face of the library.

The artist's use of glass runs throughout both works and acts to slow the process of looking and viewing. Complete access is withheld, images are distorted and the act of looking and therefore reading is made difficult.



194cm x 55cm x 85cm. The screens are in 8mm square profile
Powder coated steel, 2-way mirror
Edition of three

The work is named after the stone books or stelae - tall angled walls of Chinese characters - which the artist encountered in Xi'an.

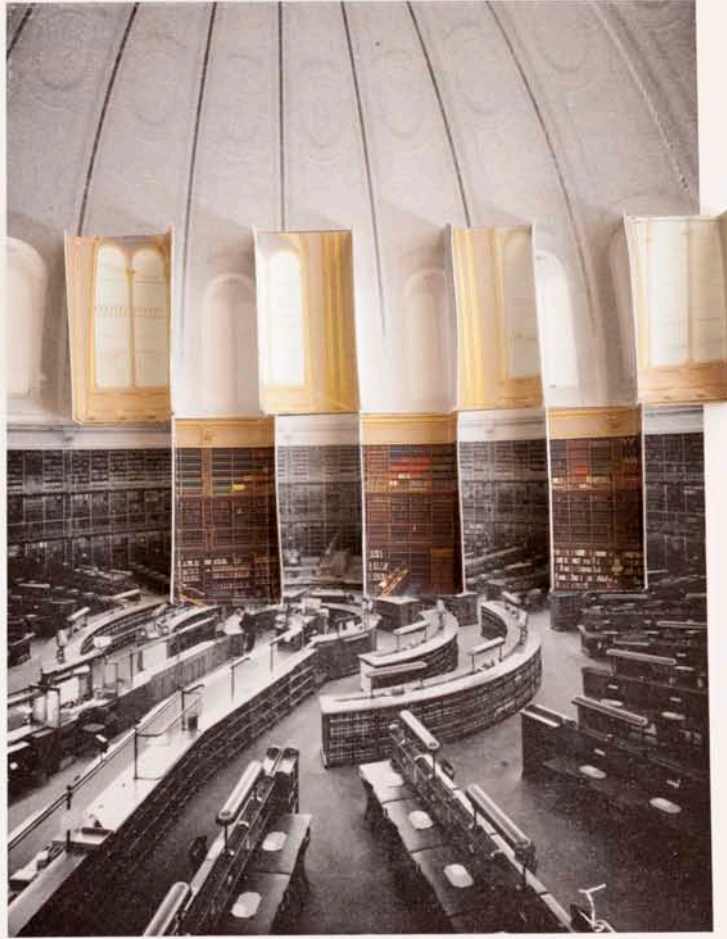
Following the Silk Road through China to Uzbekistan the artist was repeatedly confronted with screens. Northern architecture makes little use of screens or grilles, instead glass is used. Both screen and glass project an idea of transparency and fluidity yet prevent access. The screen is an intermediary. It creates the other and keeps it present. They reveal yet block.

"As I journeyed, the screens that repeatedly presented themselves to me became a sort of metaphor for my pilgrimage to these emptied sites. They point to what's hidden but guessed at. One imagines beyond personal experience - imagining beyond the screen. It is perhaps obvious that I lived in Oxford for a decade, fully aware of Lewis Carroll's 'Through the Looking Glass'".

Stelae does not directly mimic a particular screen the artist encountered on her travels, but refers to them whilst referencing previous work, being in actuality a cut pattern she has used in making the 'Universal Now' collage works (which merge images of one London monument, in two photographic moments.) For this work she simply erased the images.

"Shadow is important to this piece. I consider the lost library sites as the shadows of a library. The 2-way mirror used in the piece allows light to pass through from both sides, but the brighter side obscures the view of the dark side."

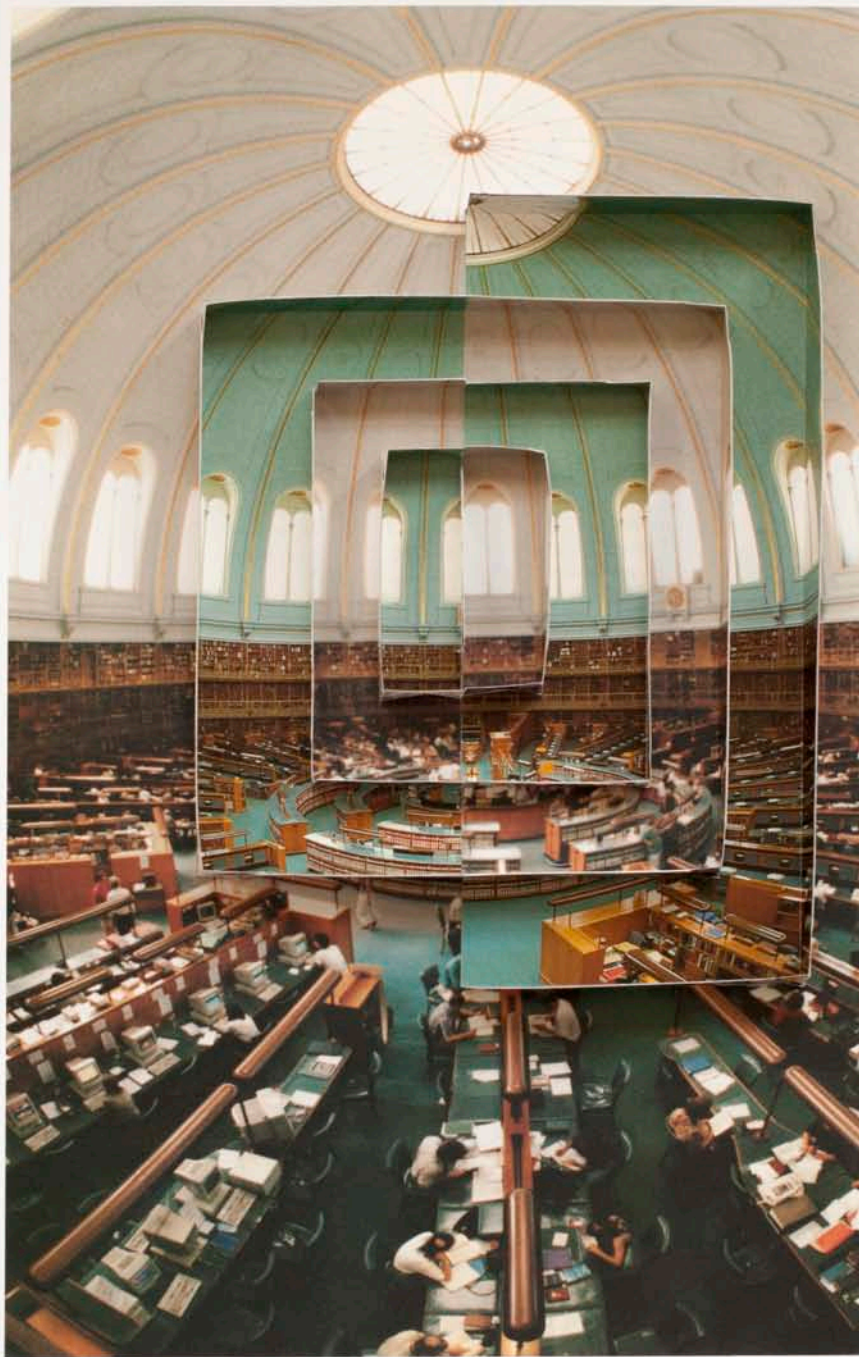
Examples of very simple cut patterns and merged photographic moments are included in the three new collages which all incorporate the Great Library at the British Museum.



A view of the Reading Room, built in 1855 and recently redecorated

1964 / 2005

The British Museum Reading Room 1964 | 2005 (2016), dims unframed 215 x 140mm
Cut and folded book pages
£3,500 (plus VAT where applicable)



2001 / 1988

LONDON AT WORK 149

The British Museum Reading Room 2001 | 1988 (2016), dims unframed 280 x 205mm
Cut and folded book pages
£3,500 (plus VAT where applicable)



READING ROOM OF THE GREAT LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM SEEN FROM OVER THE ENTRANCE

Taken from one of the two galleries that run round the wall, the photograph shows ranks of leather-covered reading-desks and the concentric circles of bookcases containing the great thousand-volume catalogue and many lesser ones. At the counter of the innermost circle the reader hands in his slips, after reference to the catalogue or assistance from the staff, and the volumes are in due course brought to his desk by an attendant. Twenty thousand books such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc., may be extracted from the lower shelves round the wall without making out a slip. The Reading Room will accommodate between 150 and 500 readers.

1926 / 1986

The British Museum Reading Room 1926 | 1986 (2016)
Cut and folded book pages
£3,500 (plus VAT where applicable)