



MAGIC STONES

A sound installation designed for a gallery setting. In December 2006 it received the accolade of the winning work in the British Composer Awards New Media category.

The work consists of a nineteen minute stereo or surround sound composition combined with the visual focus of a small container constructed out of four bricks containing marbles and a free-to-take postcard displaying of the rules of the listening game mentioned within the sound composition. The installation is controlled via a simple audioPlayer and can be adapted so that it can be listened to on either loudspeakers or headphones. Work is also in progress on an accompanying film

Inspired by the south east corner of Lough Neagh and its surrounding countryside, the work takes its title from a listening game played by young visitors to the Portmore Nature Reserve who would be invited to take a 'magic stone', grasp it, and with their eyes closed see what they could hear. In the moment of stillness offered to them by the game, sounds that would usually be ignored would seep into the consciousness of the listeners. As a result the players would become aware of not only the detail of those sounds surrounding them but also the wonder of them, and before long imaginations would run riot....

The composition's slowly moving atmospheric score is made up of sounds recorded from the area and encourages a deep listening experience. Weaved through the composition are sections of an interview with local resident and ex-nature warden Eddie Franklin, whose conservational concerns add a potency to the soundscape. The layered sounds tell their own story of a countryside on the verge of change - an area being taken over by the 'progress' of our time. 'Magic Stones' invites the listener to pause and to reconsider this relationship.