

You'll have had your tea?

Alec Finlay

Alexander and Susan Maris

3 May – 7 June 2009

The HICA art-space is to host *You'll have had your tea?* an exhibition by Alec Finlay and Alexander and Susan Maris, opening on the 3rd of May 2009. The artists have collaborated together on a number of projects and hold a deep respect for one another's work. In an appropriately sympathetic selection of works they employ various food items and beverages to reflect on the nature of the particular and the generation of poetic meaning.

Alec Finlay continues his commitment to the poem-object, presenting an anthology of simple forms: the outlines of islands and lakes realised as biscuit cutter patterns, baked as biscuits; mesostic poems composed on the names of fruits used to make jam and jelly; and a piece, bread, baked with an imprinted poem.

The exhibition will also feature the first showing of Finlay's *tea-moon*, with 16 tea-prints selected from a substantial new body of work. These gently stochastic spills of different tea brews are each imprinted with a cup mark or 'moon' and their own unique handwritten mesostic. Resonant of John Cage's smoke prints, this serial project bears out Finlay's continued unfurling of the traditions of haiku and renga into the present day. A newly published collection of some of these poems published by *Painted, Spoken* will be available from the gallery. Alec will also give a short reading at the opening.

Alexander and Susan Maris have collected 900 ml of water from each of the 21 named rivers on Rannoch Moor and using heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) gathered from the surrounding moor they have prepared and consumed a series of 21 kettles of heather tea. Each kettle has been used just once and is engraved with the name of the corresponding river. The scorch marks on the base of the kettles add to the uniqueness of each multiple in the edition. As a documentary record, each kettle has also been filmed coming to the boil. Consequently, the duration of each video varies according to the prevailing weather conditions at each location.

Extrapolating from the Marises' theory that the gelatine 'offering' made by Joseph Beuys to Rannoch Moor in 1970, has metabolically transformed the Moor - its energy transmigrating through generations of trout - the heather and water on Rannoch Moor must also contain a homeopathic dose of Beuysian Gelatine. And though the nature and efficacy of this remedy are as yet unclear, it has been proven that heather tea does in fact detoxify the body and alleviate depression. The piece also raises the question - were the artists still 'at work' when they paused to drink their therapeutic brew?

You'll have had your tea? is supported by the National Lottery through the Scottish Arts Council.

The exhibition runs from 3rd May – 7th June 2009, and will be open on Sundays 2 - 5pm, or by appointment.

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