

## Autumn 2013 Project Proposal

Dan & Emma Hefty

### BOOK OF JOURNEYS – AN EXPLORATION OF TRAVEL NARRATIVES

There is a natural affiliation between artists and travel. Journeys are undertaken both to inspire and to create and exhibit work; it is an integral part of our experience. It can also serve as a metaphor for the creative process itself: following an idea through from that initial spark of inspiration through to wherever it takes us. Senegal is a place that has strong roots in the idea of “journey”: colonialism brought people there and migration – whether voluntary or involuntary – has taken people away. Travel and journeys have, in many ways, defined it and are part of its identity.

Our proposed project during our time at Waaw is an installation which calls for viewer participation. The center piece of the work is the book itself which has been inspired by the large ornate Qurans we saw at the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. It will be displayed upon a stand and both will be unique artistic creations influenced strongly by local creative practices and traditions. Our current plan is to make the basis of the podium from suitcases or items which are commonly used to transport belongings which we hope to source locally – preferably discarded – representing part of the physical reality of traveling: the use of recycled materials highlights the issue of the environmental impact of travel. However we are flexible as to the exact materials that will be used. The pages will be blank and that the viewer can contribute their own travel stories and thus becomes part of the work. Viewer participation is key to the project’s success. The viewer will also be encouraged to attach various items – postcards, luggage tags, maps, letters, and photographs – ephemera connected with travel, around the pedestal. The whole process from initial stages to completion will be photographed and videoed with the aim of producing a textual/photographic account of the project as well as a short documentary.

As a couple we have collaborated together before and we bring different strengths and talents to the creative process. Emma’s Celtic Studies MA thesis was on medieval travel literature (Giraldus Cambrensis’s journeys through Ireland and Wales) and she has just begun PhD research comparing Islamic and Christian travel narratives from the Middle Ages. Her MFA thesis project was in painting but she is now branching into installation work and did a few pieces in the course of her MFA work. Dan has a background in sculpture and public art as well as photography, and extensive practical knowledge of construction and design.