



## **Nathan Coley: A Place Beyond Belief – Palace Burg and Stadshallen (Belfry) courtyard**

For the Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015, Scottish artist Nathan Coley placed two illuminated word sculptures in the heart of the city. His works invite the viewer to take a moment for silence and reflection within the bustle of the city centre.

The context and the backdrop for a sculpture is of great importance for Coley, since these factors alter the meaning of the words. The sculpture and its surroundings form an overall picture of the artwork. He therefore went in search of places in the city that would add value to the words.

### **A Place Beyond Belief**

Coley has placed one of his most famous works on the Burg: *A Place Beyond Belief*. This piece originally referred to 9/11. The words come from a radio interview with a New York resident who said that for the city to move forward after the attacks it would have to find new ways to think and to perceive that would lead to “a place beyond belief”, Coley has installed this work in various locations since its first appearance. With each occasion, the specific context in which it is shown adds new, topical layers of meaning to the work. In Bruges, Coley chose the Burg as a location as this square is the geographical and metaphorical heart of Bruges. With the town hall and administrative services on one side of this square and the Basilica of the Holy Blood on the other, it represents both a political and a religious centre.

### **Palace**

The Stadshallen courtyard is a calm, enclosed space just outside the hustle and bustle of the Market Square. It forms a haven for quiet reflection. Coley placed a new work here, consisting of five separate illuminated sculptures: BELIEF, MIND, LAND, WEALTH and LIFE. They could be a motto for Bruges, words from a historic document or a fragment from a song about the city. But they also refer to the five rights that everyone has according to Islam.

Coley deliberately avoids the usual high-tech of today’s visual advertising. By using the round bulbs synonymous with 1950s Hollywood fairground attractions and mounting them on the typical industrial structure used for advertising at that time, he imbues his work with a sense of wistful nostalgia. This serves to accentuate the ambivalence between the text and image.



### **Bio Nathan Coley**

The Scottish artist Nathan Coley (°1967, Glasgow) was trained at the renowned Glasgow School of Art. His artistic practice revolves around words as carriers of many different meanings. He considers truth and conviction to be unstable and relative concepts. A preoccupation with religious and political ideas and ideologies is another recurrent theme in his work. For Coley, power is inferred through architecture and the public space. Through his artistic exploration, Coley seeks to establish a meaningful dialogue with the physical and mental environment. His work demonstrates a fascination for the visible, tangible manifestations of the invisible and intangible nature of faith. He makes liberal use of aphorisms and familiar architectural forms that he then strips of any superfluous detail. Coley was nominated in 2007 for the Turner Prize for his distinctive architectural constructions and light installations.

[www.studionathancoley.com](http://www.studionathancoley.com)

### **Visitor information**

20.05 - 18.10.2015

***A Place Beyond Belief***: Burg, 8000 Bruges

Accessible 24/7

***Palace***: Stadshallen (Belfry) courtyard, Market Square, 8000 Bruges

Monday: 8 am-6 pm, Tuesday-Sunday: 8 am-10 pm

### **Further press information**

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### **Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015 20 May – 18 October 2015**

What if the five million tourists who visit Bruges annually were to stay? What if a small, preserved, historic city should suddenly become a megapolis? This is the premise for the Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015. Eighteen international artists create new works that form an art trail through the city centre. Three indoor exhibitions provide the opportunity to further explore and contextualise the topics. Bruges will be transformed into URB EGG: the Triennial cracks the egg of Bruges in order to reinvent the city from the inside out.

Information and programme: [www.triennalebrugge.be](http://www.triennalebrugge.be)

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