



School: Bath School of Art

Researcher: Stephen Vaughan

Project Title: *Kourion: Earthquake House*

UOA: 32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

300-Word Statement

Kourion: Earthquake House uses photography to consider the relationship between ancient seismic disaster and contemporary archaeological discovery; the found body as museum artefact; and the place of finding as a repository of knowledge. This project is part of a long-term enquiry that considers the relationship between volatile seismic geology and the human-cultural landscape, at the edges of Earth's tectonic plates.

This research involved an extended critical dialogue and exchange of ideas between a group of internationally diverse artists and curators. The collective ambition was to generate new and original perspectives and understanding as part of the *Ar[t]chaeology: Intersections of Photography and Archaeology Project*, led by the International Association of Photography and Theory, European University, Cyprus.

Kourion: Earthquake House examines layers of archaeological excavation and the subjective interpretation of catastrophic seismic histories at Kourion – a Roman city in south-west Cyprus, destroyed by an earthquake in 365 AD. It catalogues the discoveries of human and animal remains – now transformed into the status of museum artefacts – and re-presents them in parallel with images made at technological sites of Digital Seismic Monitoring. The preserved bodies of ancient earthquake victims – and the landscape from which they were taken – are also shown in the context of current archaeological excavation and discovery.

The early development and testing of photographic material began between 2013-2014 at sites in Greece and Turkey, followed by further research at Kourion in 2018, facilitated by the Cyprus Department of Antiquities. The photographic survey of Digital Seismological Network Stations was facilitated by the Cyprus Geological Survey Department.

Kourion: Earthquake House was shown as part of the *Ar[t]chaeology: Intersections of Photography and Archaeology* exhibition (2018). Images from the series – and

from the earlier *Helike-Maeander* (2014) series – were included in the 2-volume publication that coincided with the exhibition.