

THE JURORS

An artwork by Hew Locke for Runnymede, the site of the sealing of the Magna Carta in 1215, commissioned by Surrey County Council and the National Trust to mark the 800th anniversary.

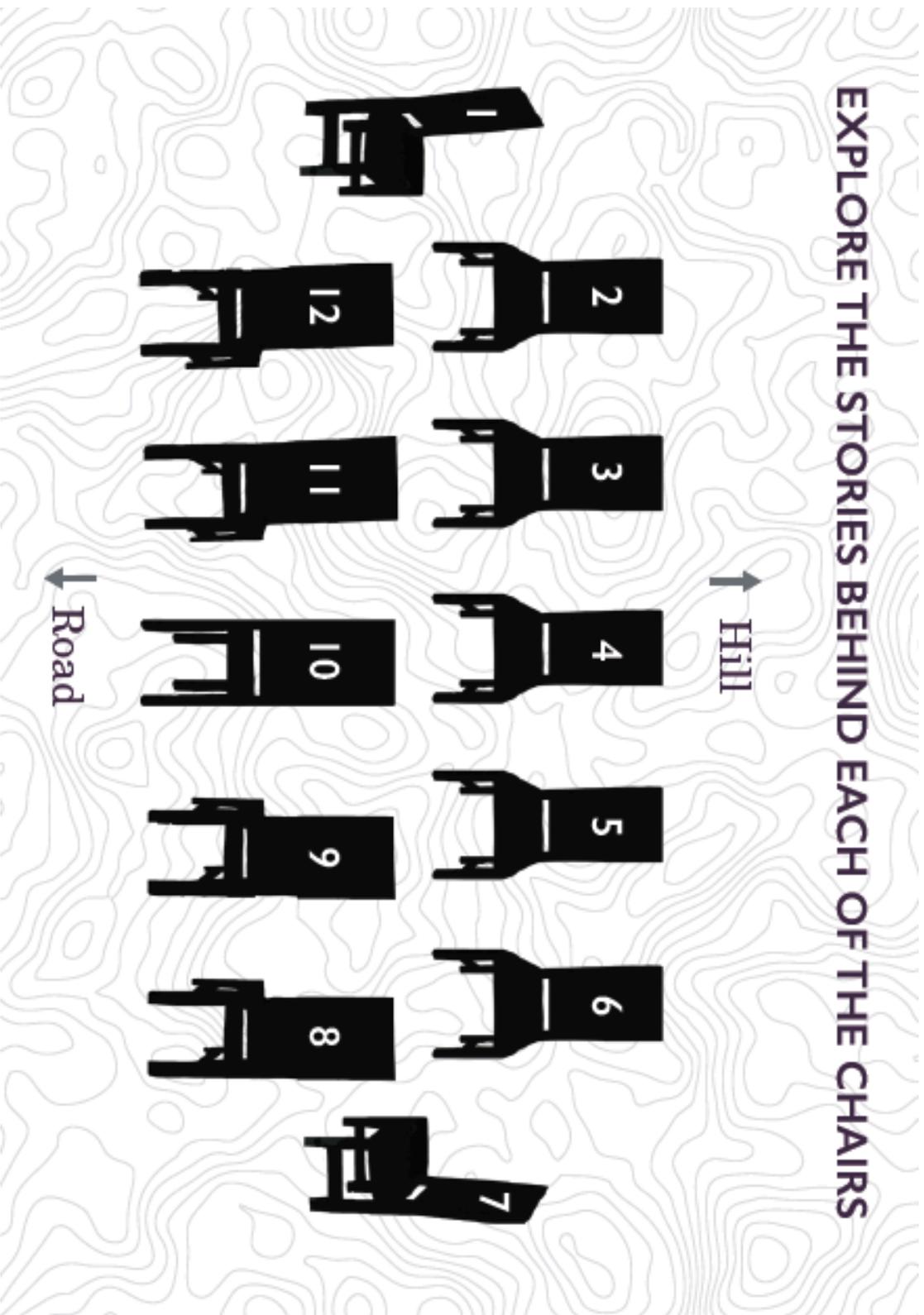
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The Jurors is an artwork by Hew Locke for Runnymede, Surrey, marking 800 years since the sealing of the Magna Carta on this ancient meadow. The Jurors is formed of 12 bronze chairs, each decorated with images and symbols relating to past and ongoing struggles for freedom, rule of law and equal rights. The Jurors is not a memorial, but rather an artwork which challenges us to consider the ongoing significance and influences of Magna Carta.

The chairs appear to be awaiting gathering, discussion or debate of some kind: an open invitation from the audience to sit, to reflect and to discuss together the implications of the histories and issues depicted. Each chair, front and back, has a main image, embellished with flowers, keys and other symbols. To complete the work, the artist has coloured and polished some areas, as well as adding slashes and gouges to the surfaces. This creates a rich layering of imagery, marks and textures to explore.

Hew Locke is an artist whose work is featured in exhibitions and collections worldwide. He is known for his exploration of symbols

EXPLORE THE STORIES BEHIND EACH OF THE CHAIRS



1.

Inside panel: A portrait of Lillie Lenton, wearing medals and badges relating to the imprisonment and activism of suffragettes. Lenton's image is derived from a 1912 surveillance photograph taken in Holloway Prison.

Outside panel: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, debated here in a modern classroom, though ratified in 1990, was based upon a 1923 document drafted by British social reformer, Eglantyne Jebb.

2.

In 1989, the Exxon Valdez tanker ran aground in the Gulf of Alaska, spilling at least 11 million gallons of crude oil. Subsequent environmental disasters and evidence of the cause and effect of pollution has led to the establishment of new principles such as the Ceres Principles, a moral code of environmental conduct.

Oscar Wilde's poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* describes the brutalising effect of the prison system, published in 1898 whilst in exile in France and based on his observations when incarcerated for homosexual offences in 1895.

3.

A section from Clause 39 of an edition of Magna Carta stating that no one is to be imprisoned without "lawful judgement of his peers", the fundamental principle of trial by jury in common law legal systems across the world.

Cornelia Sorabji was the first woman to practise law in India. She became a legal advocate for women in purdah in India, whose religious and cultural beliefs prevented them from speaking to men outside their family.

4.

In 1920, marches of blind trade unionists from across the UK converged on Trafalgar Square under the banner 'Justice not Charity' in support of the Blind Persons Act, which became law later that year and established disability rights as a fundamental principle in British society.

An Amerindian headdress, forest and a river clustered with gold nuggets. Indigenous land claims have been addressed, with varying degrees of success on the national and international level, since colonization. Such claims may be based upon the principles of international law, treaties, common law, or domestic constitutions or legislation.

5.

Poet Phillis Wheatley was the first published African-American woman (1773), and Mary Prince was the first woman to present an anti-slavery petition to the British parliament (1828) and the first black woman to write and publish an autobiography (1831), at a time at which it was claimed that slaves and former slaves were not capable of such writing.

A combination of images depicting the Emancipation of the Serfs (1861) by Tsar Alexander II, Serfdom was the feudal system that tied Russian peasants irrevocably to their landlords. The Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Moscow was to have commemorated the event, but was never finished due to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

6.

A portable charkha, or hand spinning wheel for cotton, designed by Mahatma Gandhi and used in the 1930s as a political symbol of resistance to British imported goods and British rule and later within the design of the Indian flag.

A loudhailer belonging to Harvey Milk, gay rights campaigner and the first openly gay person to be elected to public office in California from 1977-78. Before his assassination, Milk sponsored a significant civil rights bill that outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation.

7.

The destruction or redaction of evidence is a world-wide activity undertaken by states wishing to hide incriminating documentation of their activities. In 1989 the East German secret police's shredding of files was halted by German citizens taking over the Stasi offices.

Nelson Mandela's prison cell on Robben Island, South Africa, where he served 18 years of his life-sentence for sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the state, he was released in 1990 after 27 years incarceration.

8.

Two representations of freedom of speech: in public and online. In 2014, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the world wide web, called for an online Magna Carta to protect and enshrine the independence of the medium he created and the rights of its users worldwide.

"The Disappeared" – a collective name for those who have been taken away, at the behest of a state or political organisation. Displays, such as this, erected by protesting relatives play an important role in sustaining a visible reminder that the Disappeared's fates go unanswered and are a crime against humanity.

9.

The Golden Rule states you should treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself. Versions of this concept are found in all major world religions and philosophies and the phrase is expressed here in 14 different languages.

A boat carrying refugees inscribed with the names of boats connected to legal cases which marked changes to maritime law, the responsibilities of nations towards refugees, and maritime search and rescue protocols

10.

Chinese script that describes the Confucian principles of Ren (humaneness), Li (ritual) and Yi (justice) at the core of Confucian ideas of how a society should be organised, developed in the Han Dynasty (from 206 BCE).

This hollow boab tree in Australia was adapted in the 1890s by police as a temporary prison for aboriginal prisoners. Hew Locke has added graffiti referring to the ever-developing history of aboriginal Australians, their land and human rights.

11.

Ancient Egyptian scales are topped with the head of Ma'at, the goddess of truth, justice and balance. A dead person's heart is weighed against a feather to see if the owner is worthy to enter paradise. Ma'at's symbolism is still apparent in the western personification of Lady Justice.

In 1781, 133 slaves were thrown overboard from this ship, The Zong. The owners made an insurance claim for the loss of their human cargo and the resulting legal case caused public outcry. On the sails, the west African symbol Epa represents captivity, law and justice.

12.

The house in Yangon, Burma, where politician Aung San Suu Kyi was held under house arrest for 15 years, despite having fairly won government elections in Burma.

The xiezhi is a legendary creature and symbol of justice and law in Chinese mythology that can be traced back to the Han Dynasty (from 206 BCE). An inherently just beast, the xiezhi will point its horn at the wrong party in a fight or argument.

Flowers, Ermine and Keys

The flowers decorating many of the chairs are from the Victorian Language of Flowers. They are coltsfoot (meaning justice shall be done to you), hop (injustice), black-eyed susan (justice), and horse chestnut (do me justice).

An ermine (a stoat in its winter coat) and its heraldic representation can also be found on a number of chairs. The pure white fur of the ermine, a symbol of incorruptibility, is used in judicial gowns.

The keys found on some of the seats represent prison keys, and include the key to Nelson Mandela's cell on Robben Island, and one of the keys to The Bastille which was sent to George Washington in 1790.