

How did you approach writing the texts for Swedenborg House?

Writing texts based on features of the building is as much an act of exegesis as it is one of creation.

Swedenborg's purported revelatory interpretation of Genesis and Exodus gives certain words and phrases increased meaning unknown to the original writers. For instance, to Swedenborg any reference to wood in scripture *means* something beyond itself. Swedenborg indicates that if we adhere to the rules and references laid out in his works we might be able to apply them to any scripture and find its hidden meaning (or its Swedenborgian meaning anyhow).

The notion of scripture holding deeper levels of truth is not unique to Swedenborg, but few have pursued its allegorical or hidden landscape with the same fullness and rigour. The work I have created for Swedenborg House extends the exegetical possibility of Swedenborgian reading beyond scripture, and applies it to mundane things.

By imagining the elements of an object or an architectural feature as phrases in a text it becomes possible to describe anything in Swedenborgian terms. But the pieces I've written are not pure regurgitations from a dictionary of symbols; they also include descriptions of imagined events in Swedenborg's dreams and in the spiritual realm. The addition of these completely fictional elements obfuscates the logic of the work as outlined above. Similarly it is experiential events that upset the clear lines of Swedenborg's own scriptural interpretation because they have the ability to import new elements and meanings into what is present in the text alone.

Ultimately the works are about the notion of authority and reliability in writing. These themes are certainly at stake for anyone reading Swedenborg. Therefore they also play a part in my work; I have written as Swedenborg but I am not him (nor am I in communication with any spirit on the matter).

Writing these texts allowed me to highlight certain things from Swedenborg's work. For instance I wanted to bring up his ability to conjure conflicting meanings from the same signifiers. I was also aware of the problem of allegory: The issue that by revealing a definite hidden meaning to scripture, Swedenborg was limiting its potential for other readings and significance. Writing as Swedenborg allowed me to think through possible responses to these observations.

Ultimately the work is not about Swedenborg but about how we as readers read things.