



PEAK CYMRU
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PLATFORM 2 COMMISSIONS 2024-25

GWAITH COMISIWN PLATFORM 2 2024-25

Mariana Zentella

Mariana (Zeta) Zentella's installation, *Place of Transit*, was the second in a trio of commissions by young artists for the windows of Peak's spaces on Platform 2, Y Fenni Station.

It was on display between March and June 2025 and was launched with an artist talk, walk and mapping workshop led by Zeta and queer ecologist Izzy Mcleod. In dialogue with the artworks at Platform 2, Zeta created an edition of 75 unique prints, offered to travellers in exchange for their memories and reflections of journeys along the Marches train line.

For each Platform 2 commission in this series, we invite a writer based in Wales or the Welsh borderlands to respond to the artwork with a short text. We're delighted to share a response from writer Mike Parker, shared alongside documentation from Polly Thomas.

Gosodwaith Mariana (Zeta) Zentella, *Place of Transit*, oedd yr ail ddarn o waith o dri chomisiwn gan artistiaid ifanc ar gyfer gofodau ffenestri Peak ar Platfform 2, Gorsaf Drenau'r Fenni.

Roedd i'w weld rhwng mis Mawrth a mis Mehefin 2025, a chafodd ei lansio gyda sgwrs artistiaid, taith gerdded a gweithdy mapio gan yr artist Zeta a'r ecolegydd cwiar Izzy Mcleod. Mewn deialog gyda'r gwaith celf ar Blatfform 2, creodd Zeta gyfres o 75 o brintiau unigryw, i'w cynnig i deithwyr yn gyfnewid am eu hatgofion a'u myfyrdodau o deithiau ar hyd rheilffordd y Gororau.

Ar gyfer pob darn comisiwn Platfform 2 yn y gyfres yma, rydyn ni'n gwahodd awdur sy'n byw yng Nghymru neu ar y Gororau i ymateb i'r gwaith celf gyda thestun byr. Rydyn ni'n falch iawn o rannu ymateb yr awdur Mike Parker, sy'n cael ei rannu ochr yn ochr â dogfennaeth Polly Thomas.



Mapping the Borderland



Maps at railway stations are two-a-penny, but the ones lately appeared on Platform 2 at Abergavenny are not your normal network plans or walking routes into town. Four great banners show a large portrait of Wales, turned on its side, and strangely, beguilingly stylized. There is hint of a fantasy land, perhaps something from Tolkien or the world of gaming. They are familiar, yet not.

“Abstracted” is the word that their creator, Mexican artist Zeta Zentella, uses for them. She has been in Wales for just over four years, and turning to the maps of her new home helped her get a sense of it, and of its bounds and possibilities. Unexpectedly, it also gave her a new direction for her art. “I looked at lots of maps, tracing the landscape and its textures, colours and shapes. I loved the layers of them, and I wanted to get that into the work, because that’s how I see it. I get lost in the process of it, which is ironic really, when I’m making maps!”

In 2009, I wrote a book called *Map Addict*, a love letter to this most prosaic of artefacts. Maps rarely garnered the limelight, but were always there in the background, doing their job with the minimum of fuss. Writing the book, I thought that my audience was tiny. How wrong I was! The letters and emails came pouring in, from fellow map addicts all over the world. There are so many of us.

Some people adore maps because they love place and travel. Some because of a fascination for science and endeavour. In recent years, the aesthetic of cartography has become a more significant draw too, seen in the very many artists who use it in their practice. Maps tap into something primal and profound, and are the perfect tools to illustrate questions of identity and belonging. And for all the same reasons, in the wrong hands, maps can be the most terrifyingly effective propaganda.

Like many other artists, Zeta’s conversion to using maps in her work was instant, and revolutionary. “I really liked it!”, she says. “It was very graphic, very strong, it translates really well.”

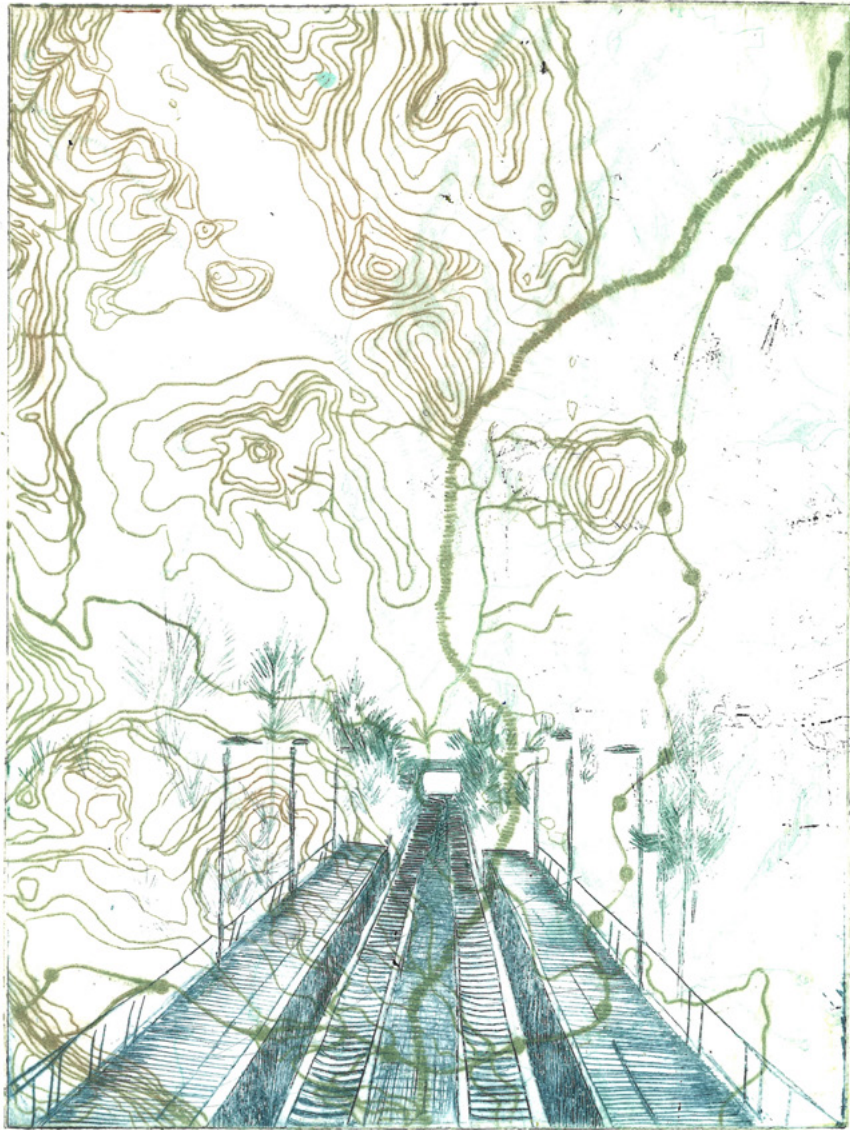


They also touch any theme you care to overlay them with. Zeta's banner maps at the station and the cards that accompany them represent the quiet that she has found here, especially in travelling around the country by train. "Back home [in Mexico City, population over 20 million]," she says, "we don't really have passenger trains in the same way for these long journeys. I started coming here to the Peak office at Abergavenny, and it was so strange, so wonderful. I would get dizzy on the train with the rocking, and the towns and countryside passing by. It's such a different experience to anything I'd known before."

Especially inspiring was the sharp-yet-soft border between urban and rural. "You leave the city and so quickly you're into the sheep and the nothingness...between the movement and the sudden change of scenery, it was so magical, while other passengers seemed not even to notice! One day, I was on the train, and it was pouring down, and then the sun came out, there were sheep in the field, a rainbow came out, and it was just a postcard Welsh landscape." She smiles, flooded with memory.

I get it. I'd just come to Abergavenny by train from Cardiff, on an ebullient spring morning, blossom-heavy and bright, and had been stirred beyond words. Most of my fellow passengers sat glued to their phones, oblivious to it all. When Zeta travels with people, she reminds them to look out of the window. "You have to pay attention to it!", she declares, fiercely. We laugh in agreement.

That's the thing with maps too. They work in the now, orienting you, but also in the other dimensions of time, past and future, as aids to the joyous anticipation of travel and delicious recollection of it too. They tell us that to process through a landscape, any landscape, is to enjoy the journey, and not just demand the destination. "You have to learn to love the journey," says Zeta. "That's one of the big things that I learned growing up where I did, because everyone moves at the pace that is just *go, go, go, go!*, and I thought 'I can't possibly do this forever, it's horrifying'." On the back of the cards, she has



Mariana
Zentella

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written her motto: 'Remember to pause on the journey.' Sometimes we need to be told.

In four short years, Zeta has made more of Wales than many here for life. She is though, being forced to leave, falling foul of inflexible immigration rules that demand a guaranteed income, something few creative professionals can manage these days. She came to Wales instead of taking up a scholarship in New York, because of her unease with what the US was doing now and in the past to her country and people. "I very specifically decided to come to Wales," she says, "and not go to England – I decided I couldn't morally go NYC, and being based in England would have been more of the same." There is no hope of her staying? "I tried everything!" she says. "When you feel so unwanted, you just have to decide when you have to give in. I've held quite a few jobs here. The government is very clear that I have to hold a certain position and make them a certain amount of money in order to stay, something I didn't achieve, so that's it."

Instead, she is off to Dublin, to study for a Masters in Education for Migrant Communities. "My experience has made me realise how important that is globally," she says. Her art, and her maps, will go with her. "Maps are about place, but they are also about movement," she reminds me, and that is more true today than ever. Our loss is Ireland's gain.

Mapio'r Gororau

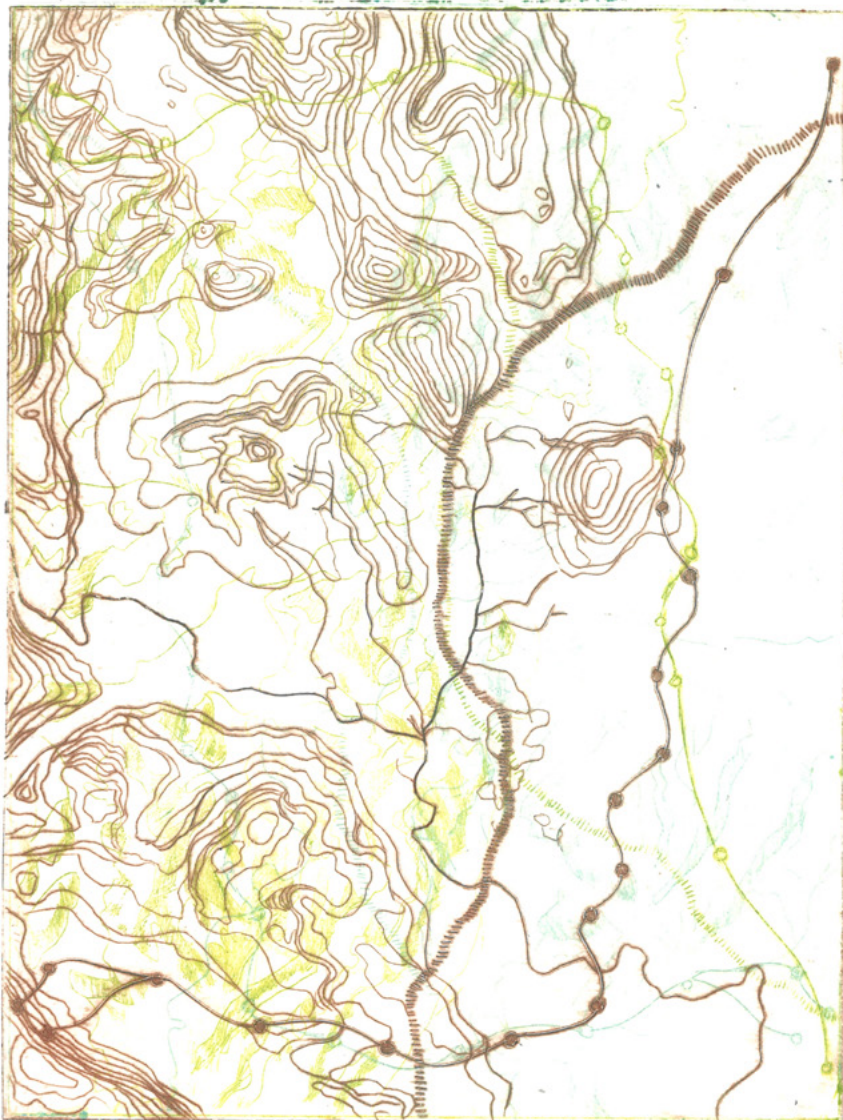


Mae mapiau mewn gorsafoedd trên yn ddigon cyffredin, ond mae'r rhai sydd wedi ymddangos ar Blatfform 2 y Fenni yn ddiweddar yn dra gwahanol i gynlluniau rhwydwaith neu lwybrau cerdded i'r dref arferol. Mae pedair baner eang yn dangos portread mawr o Gymru, wedi'i droi ar ei ochr ac, yn ddigon rhyfedd, wedi'i steilio'n ddeniadol. Mae yna awgrym o dir ffantasi, efallai rhywbeth o Tolkien neu'r byd gemau. Maen nhw'n gyfarwydd, ond eto ddim chwaith.

“Haniaethol” yw'r gair mai eu crëwr, yr artist Zeta Zentella o Fecsico, yn ei ddefnyddio ar eu cyfer. Mae hi wedi bod yng Nghymru ers ychydig dros bedair blynedd, ac wrth droi at fapiau o'i chartref newydd bu modd iddi feithrin synnwyr o'r lle, o'i ffiniau a'i bosibiliadau. Yn annisgwyl, cynigiodd hynny gyfeiriad newydd i'w chelf hefyd. “Edrychais i ar lawer o fapiau, yn olrhain y tirlun a'i weadau, ei liwiau a'i siapiau. Ro'n i wrth fy modd â'u haenau, ac ro'n i am gynnwys hynny yn y gwaith, oherwydd dyna sut dw i'n ei weld. Rwy'n mynd ar goll ym mhroses y peth, sy'n eironig a dweud y gwir, wrth greu mapiau!”

Yn 2009, ysgrifennais lyfr o'r enw *Map Addict*, a oedd yn llythyr serch i'r arteffact hynod anfarddonol yma. Prin y byddai mapiau'n cael sylw, ond roedden nhw bob amser yno yn y cefndir, yn gwneud eu gwaith yn ddi-ffwdan. Wrth ysgrifennu'r llyfr, ro'n i'n meddwl mai pitw fyddai fy nghynulleidfa. Mor anghywir o'n i! Llifodd y llythyrau a'r e-byst i mewn, gan gyd-selogion mapiau o bob rhan o'r byd. Mae cymaint ohonon ni.

Mae rhai pobl wrth eu bodd â mapiau am eu bod yn hoff o lefydd a theithio. Ac eraill oherwydd eu diddordeb mewn gwyddoniaeth ac ymgais. Yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf, mae estheteg cartograffeg wedi dod yn atyniad mwy sylweddol hefyd, sydd i'w weld drwy'r artistiaid niferus sy'n ei defnyddio yn eu harfer. Mae mapiau'n taro rhywbeth cyntefig a dwys, yn arf perffaith i gyfleu cwestiynau am hunaniaeth a pherthyn. Ac am yr un rhesymau, yn y dwylo anghywir, gall mapiau droi i fod y propaganda mwyaf dychrynlyd o effeithiol.



manana
zentella

14/75

Yn debyg i lawer o artistiaid, roedd symudiad Zeta at ddefnyddio mapiau yn ei gwaith yn sydyn, ac yn chwyldroadol. “Ro’n i wrth fy modd ag e!”, meddai. “Roedd e’n rhywbeth graffig iawn, yn gryf iawn, mae’n trosi’n dda iawn.” Maen nhw hefyd yn cyffwrdd ag unrhyw thema rydych chi’n eu haenu gyda nhw. Mae baneri map Zeta yn yr orsaf a’r cardiau sy’n cyd-fynd â nhw yn cynrychioli’r tawelwch mae hi wedi’i ganfod yma, yn enwedig wrth deithio ledled y wlad ar drên. “Nôl adre [yn Ninas Mecsico, poblogaeth o dros 20 miliwn],” meddai, “does dim trenau ganddon ni i deithwyr yn yr un ffordd ar gyfer y teithiau hir yma mewn gwirionedd. Dechreuais ddod yma i swyddfa Peak yn y Fenni, ac roedd mor rhyfedd, mor hyfryd. Byddwn i’n mynd yn benysgafn ar y trên gyda’r siglo, gyda’r trefi a chefn gwlad yn mynd heibio. Mae’n brofiad mor wahanol i ddim byd ro’n i wedi’i nabod o’r blaen.”

Yn arbennig o ysbrydoledig oedd y ffin sydyn ond meddal rhwng y trefol a’r gwledig. “Rydych chi’n gadael y ddinas, a chyn pen dim rydych chi yng nghanol y defaid a’r dim byd... rhwng y symudiad a’r newid sydyn yn yr olygfa, roedd mor hudol, a’r teithwyr eraill fel petaen nhw ddim hyd yn oed yn sylwi! Un dydd, pan o’n i ar y trên, roedd hi’n tywallt y glaw, ac yna daeth yr haul allan, roedd defaid yn y cae, daeth enfys i’r golwg, ac roedd yn gerdyn post o dirlun Cymru.” Mae’n gwenu, gyda’r atgof yn llifo i’w meddwl.

Rwy’n deall. Ro’n i newydd gyrraedd y Fenni ar y trên o Gaerdydd, ar fore braf o wanwyn a’r blodeuo’n drwm a disglair, wedi fy nghyffroi tu hwnt i eiriau. Eisteddodd y rhan fwyaf o fy nghyd-deithwyr a’u pennau yn eu ffonau, heb sylwi ar ddim. Pan fydd Zeta’n teithio gyda phobl, mae’n eu hatgoffa i edrych drwy’r ffenest. “Mae’n rhaid i chi dalu sylw iddo!”, mae’n datgan yn ffyrnig. Rydyn ni’n chwerthin yn gytûn.

Mae’n wir gyda mapiau hefyd. Maen nhw’n gweithio yn y fan a’r lle, yn eich cyfeirio, ond hefyd o fewn dimensiynau eraill amser, y gorffennol a’r dyfodol, fel cymhorthion i’r cyffro llawen cyn teithio ac atgof pleserus y peth hefyd. Maen nhw’n dweud wrthon ni er



mwyn prosesu drwy dirlun, unrhyw dirlun, rhaid mwynhau'r daith, ac nid dim ond mynnu'r gyrchfan. "Mae'n rhaid i chi ddysgu caru'r daith," meddai Zeta. "Dyna un o'r pethau mawr ddysgais i wrth dyfu i fyny ble wnes i, oherwydd mae pawb yn symud ar gyflymder *mynd, mynd, mynd, mynd!*, a meddyliais i 'alla i ddim gwneud hyn am byth, mae'n ddychrynlyd'." Ar gefn y cardiau, mae hi wedi ysgrifennu ei harwyddair: 'Cofia oedi ar y daith.' Weithiau mae angen i rywun ddweud wrthon ni.

Mewn pedair blynedd fer, mae Zeta wedi gwneud mwy o Gymru na mae llawer wedi drwy eu hoes. Ond mae hi'n cael ei gorfodi i adael, yn sgil rheolau mewnfudo anhyblyg sy'n mynnu incwm gwarantedig, rhywbeth na all fawr ddim gweithiwr proffesiynol creadigol ei gyflawni y dyddiau yma. Daeth i Gymru yn lle derbyn ysgoloriaeth yn Efrog Newydd, oherwydd ei hanesmwythder gyda'r hyn mae'r Unol Daleithiau yn ei wneud nawr ac yn y gorffennol i'w gwlad a'i phobl. "Penderfynais i'n benodol iawn i ddod i Gymru," meddai, "ac nid Lloegr – penderfynais na allwn i'n foesol fynd i Efrog Newydd, a byddai bod yn Lloegr wedi golygu mwy o'r un fath." Oes gobaith y gall aros? "Dw i wedi trio popeth!" meddai. "Pan rydych chi'n teimlo nad oes croeso i chi, mae'n rhaid i chi benderfynu pryd mae'n rhaid i chi ildio. Dw i wedi bod â sawl swydd yma. Mae'r llywodraeth yn glir iawn bod yn rhaid i fi fod â swydd benodol a gwneud swm penodol o arian iddyn nhw er mwyn cael aros, rhywbeth nad ydw i wedi'i gyflawni, felly dyna ni."

Yn hytrach, mae'n mynd i Ddulyn i astudio gradd Meistr mewn Addysg i Gymunedau Mudol. "Mae fy mhrofiad wedi gwneud i fi sylweddoli mor bwysig yw hynny'n fyd-eang," meddai. Bydd ei chelf, a'i mapiau, yn mynd gyda hi. "Mae mapiau'n ymwneud â lle, ond maen nhw hefyd yn ymwneud â symud," mae hi'n fy atgoffa, ac mae hynny'n fwy gwir heddiw nag erioed. Drwy ein colled ni, mae lwerddon ar ei hennill.

BIOGRAPHIES

MARIANA ZENTELLA

Mariana Zentella is an artist from Mexico City, currently living and working in Cardiff; she studied in the Dominican Republic at the Escuela de Diseño Altos de Chavón (2021) and Cardiff School of Art and Design (2023). Zeta uses layers of different media, including maps, paint and textiles inspired by movement and experiences of migration to explore a visual portrayal of how people inhabit and move through culturally and socially complex environments.

[@marianazentella](#)

MIKE PARKER

Mike Parker is author of – amongst others – *Map Addict*, *The Wild Rover*, *On the Red Hill* and *All the Wide Border: Wales, England & the places between*.

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BYWGRAFFIADAU

MARIANA ZENTELLA

Artist o Ddinas Mecsico yw Mariana Zentella, sy'n byw ac yn gweithio yng Nghaerdydd ar hyn o bryd; mae hi wedi astudio yn y Weriniaeth Ddominicaidd yn Escuela de Diseño Altos de Chavón (2021), ac Ysgol Gelf a Dylunio Caerdydd (2023). Mae Zeta'n defnyddio haenau o wahanol gyfryngau, gan gynnwys mapiau, paent a thecstilau, sydd wedi'u hysbrydoli gan symudiad a phrofiadau o fudo i archwilio portread gweledol o sut mae pobl yn cyfanheddu ac yn symud drwy amgylcheddau sy'n ddiwylliannol a chymdeithasol gymhleth.

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MIKE PARKER

Awdur a darlledwr yn y canolbarth yw Mike Parker, sy'n teithio ledled Ewrop gyda'i waith ysgrifennu teithiol. Mae'n awdur ar – ymhlith eraill – *Map Addict*, *The Wild Rover*, *On the Red Hill* ac *All the Wide Border: Wales, England & the places between*.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS DIOLCHIADAU

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Cerian Hedd (Peak Cymru Curator for Young People, 2024-25)
/ (Curadur Pobl Ifanc Peak Cymru, 2024-25)

DOCUMENTATION / DOGFENNAETH

Polly Thomas

CRITICAL RESPONSE / YMATEB BEIRNIADOL

Mike Parker

THANKS / DIOLCH

TFW staff at Y Fenni station and across the Welsh Marches Line /
Staff Trafnidiaeth Cymru yng ngorsaf y Fenni ac ar hyd Lein y Gororau

TRANSLATION / CYFIEITHU

nico

DESIGN / DYLUNIO

Cathy Buckmaster



Paul Hamlyn
Foundation



TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
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Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

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