Tessa Morrison

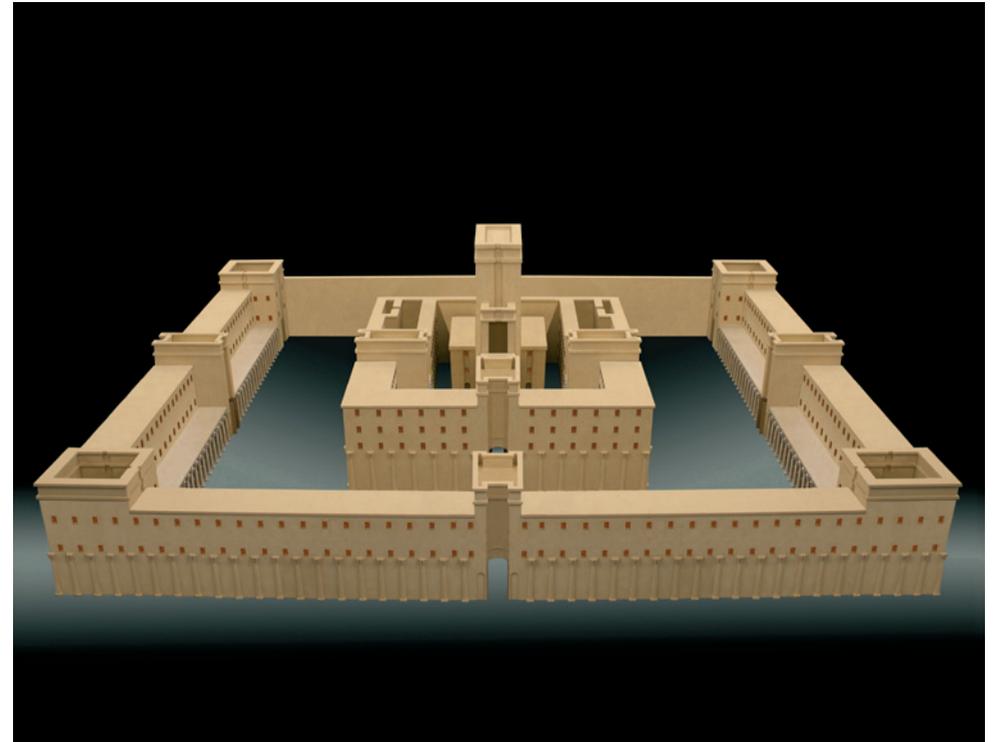## ISAAC NEWTON AND
THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

Tessa Morrison
Facing South in the East of the Outer court
2011
photograph on canvas
580 x 435mm

Isaac Newton and the Temple of Solomon continues until 3 September

Exhibition Dates
17 AUGUST - 3 SEPTEMBER 2011

THE UNIVERSITY
GALLERY

Isaac Newton's unpublished manuscripts reveal that for over fifty years he had an interest in the Temple of Solomon. He wrote on the rituals performed in the Temple, its significance and meaning, and he recreated the plan of the Temple. Yet the only published work of Newton on the Temple is a small chapter in *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* which was posthumously published in 1728. The chapter is only 3000 words long and it has a few measurements of the Temple, but the chapter is largely a Scriptural exegesis of Ezekiel's vision of the Temple but with no architectural description. There are three ground plans with a great deal of detail provided but these plans do not equate to the belief description in *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*. These detailed plans are not the work of Isaac Newton and were added in by the editor of the manuscript, John Conduitt. However, in an unpublished manuscript entitled 'Prolegomena ad Lexici Prophetici Partem secundam' (*Introduction to the Lexicon of the Prophets, Part two: About the appearance of the Jewish Temple*), or more commonly known by its call name, Babson MS 0424, written in the mid 1680s – 1690, Newton described the plan and the architecture of the Temple in detail. This description is different to the detailed plans in *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*. The main source used for his recreation was the Book of Ezekiel, but he also used and compared it with a wide selection of Jewish, Classical and contemporary sources in his search for the truth regarding the structure and purpose of the Temple. He also demonstrated a good working knowledge of the norms of architecture as codified by Vitruvius. This manuscript is written in Latin with some Greek and Hebrew.

This exhibition is a result of Dr Tessa Morrison's Australian Research Council Post-Doctoral Fellowship. She translated Babson Ms 0434 into English and recreated Newton's reconstruction of the Temple in the architectural modelling program Archicad. The translation, a commentary and reconstruction has been published as, *Isaac Newton's Temple of Solomon and his Reconstruction of Sacred Architecture*, Birkhaser, Basel, 2011. The computer model was then used as a basis for constructing the physical model of the Temple that you see at this exhibition. It was built at the Architecture and Built Environment Workshop, the University of Newcastle. It was constructed with an architectural modelling laser machine and involved fused deposition modeling, an additive manufacturing technology which is commonly used for modelling, prototyping and production applications. The materials used include MDF and ABS plastic. There are 1000 columns and 1200 window grids and it took over six months to build. The builder was Ben Percy and the painter and decorator was Dr Tessa Morrison. Travelling though the Temple, its structure, its symmetry and its proportional elegance is to the glimpse into the mind of Isaac Newton.

Tessa Morrison
Eastern Gate of the Outer Cuter
2011
photograph on canvas
580 x 435mm

ABOVE
Tessa Morrison
The Inner Court Altar for the Burnt Offerings and the Temple
2011
photograph on canvas
580 x 435mm

COVER IMAGE
Tessa Morrison
Newton's Temple of Solomon
2011
wood, MDF and ABS plastic
2.2m x 2.2m

Tessa Morrison

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THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON