

cicatrix



cicatrix

...the scar of a healed wound

Cicatrix is an arts project incorporating installation, drawing and film and offers insight into the legacy of The Great War. Henny Burnett, Prudence Maltby and Susan Francis are three Wiltshire artists whose collaborative partnership is concerned with the concept of scarring; the physical marks left behind, seen as part of the landscape, and then the other scars: obscured but clearly evident as memories mapped within those who've experienced conflict.

www.cicatrix.co.uk



Supported using public funding by
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Songs of Experience

*What the anvil? What dread grasp, Dare its deadly terrors clasp!*¹

The scarring of a total struggle runs deep. It affects the land, generations of those who fought, their families and friends as well as the institutions created to contain the forces of disassociation that conflict can unleash.

What place has art in this? The poets and artists of the First World War have left us a resounding testament to the power of art to engage these difficult themes. But the work continues. In wartime fearsome images of sound, spoken language and sight can enter our inner landscapes unbidden, unless we work with them they can run amok through the generations, at the level of an individual, a community or an entire society. As with physical wounds their effusions may be staunched, their 'fearful symmetry' wrestled with, connections established. 'Did he who made the Lamb make thee?' asks Blake in his famous poem *The Tyger*. The establishment of relations between disparate materials is one of arts defining activities. The primal roar of the Tyger is 'contained' in Blake's poem. So too we can act against the disassociations that fearfulness, pain, conflict and loss may materialize. Yet this pathway has a mystery at its heart.

Standing on the edge of a great plain three artists have come together to share a journey, an exploration of the 'landscape' they inhabit. They come to reflect on the Great War, on war in general, aware in one case of a childhood in Northern Ireland, in another seared by the terrors of the Rhodesian Bush War. Their immediate landscape presents them with contradictions and provoking associations. An open plain containing prohibited space. Villages, once home to living communities, emptied. They find fragments of the Great War from collapsed trenches to the 'Fums up' good luck charms Henny Burnett works with; baby dolls with winged feet carried by soldiers as protection against bullets, shells and gas.

¹ From 'The Tyger' by William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, 1794

Salisbury Plain Greenlands Camps © Martin Urmson 2014



The film by Susan Francis hints at a further truth. On her journey through an isolated landscape we see barbed wire enclosures where nature is allowed free rein. These images reverse those of the garden whose enclosing walls keep rampant nature at bay. But in the garden is the mystery. Acts of enclosure help us relate to the whole; the garden enclosed, the charm, the research laboratory, are ways of resisting the overwhelming character of the wild – of the open plain or the engulfing forest or the terrors of an unknown death. Disassociation can be a mechanism that allows necessary acts of survival. Through one lens it seems to be a falling apart, yet through another it represents an act of containment, and a new assemblage becomes possible, paralysis potentially overcome.

The plain's monuments – circles, avenues and pathways – indicate other acts of connection that art makes possible – the use of ritual and myth: re-enactment. There are hints of this in Pru Maltby's drawings scarifying the paper surface, part map, part dream, part pure embodiment. Her grandfather, Joseph Cribb, worked for a while at Ditchling in Sussex alongside the great poet of the first World War David Jones – mythologizing was the path Jones trod in his great long poem about the war *In Parenthesis*.

So what is a scar, a *cicatrix* (Jones would have loved the word – it sounds like the name of an ancestor sleeping beneath the barrow). It is the new tissue that binds a wound together, the evidence, after the trauma, of inter-connections that holds things in being. In this exhibition it is the theme that reaches out to visitors, binding past and future, ourselves and others, in shared reflection amidst the ambiguous legacies of human conflict.

Ewan Clayton, Professor in Design, University of Sunderland



Henny Burnett

Henny Burnett's work concerns itself primarily with location: gathering, casting and documenting the various artefacts given up by the surrounding land. Using found materials from the Plain, an interactive installation reminiscent of old church war memorials has evolved. Interspersed among the miniature assemblages are 'Fums Up' good luck charms given to many soldiers at the front. These charms originally had wooden heads: these have been replaced by juniper berries which are found on the Plain and whose bushes live for 100 years.

'My work revolves around the histories and personal stories of a particular place or object and the way these interact with the outside world. My current practice reflects a fascination with both museums and the personal memorabilia we all gather, and asks the viewer to examine how we relate to such artefacts today. I work in a range of media that includes casting, installation, collage, assemblage, photograms, light-boxes, projections and sound.'



Prudence Maltby

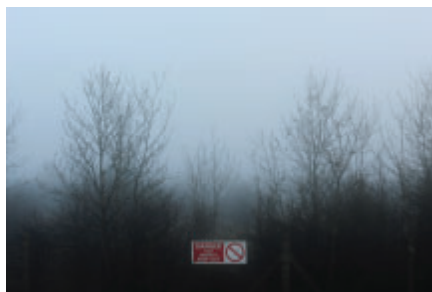
Prudence Maltby focuses on marks, not only the physical, but those of the invisible mantle laid heavily on the spirit. The 'scar' drawings feature layer upon layer of mark making, often with raw pigment added, bearing witness to the struggle within.

'The collection of images is directly appropriated from places where battle has occurred, with references to war as well as an acknowledgement to the conflict inside ourselves. My drawings are about 'storying' – they are neither didactic nor rhetorical, they are related to facts surrounding the threats presented when fighting for survival, and the effects on the human psyche.'



© Martin Urmson 2014





Susan Francis

Susan Francis utilises video, capturing moments and images, often shrouded by the quotidian and mundane, extracting them from the physical world, juxtaposing, reworking and presenting them back to us; their simplicity charged with the heightened intensity of the onlooker's gaze.

'Behind the ubiquitous red flags of Salisbury Plain lies the cordoned off territory once known as 'Experimental Ground.' It is here that the initial gas attacks of the First World War instigated the research which now continues in the chemical and biological defence laboratories of Porton Down. As an artist tentatively stepping through these historical remains, video provides a potent tool to tease out that which perhaps has been overlooked and unseen. Yet despite the focus of the camera lens, we are destined to forever view through a glass darkly, observing but not experiencing, documenting but not inhabiting, seeing perhaps, merely what we choose to see.'



Cicatrix and the Young Gallery Collection

The seed for Cicatrix originated with Prudence Maltby, who had been involved in Other Worlds (otherworldsproject.wordpress.com), an earlier project exploring the life of the soldier through the visual arts. Mentoring active servicemen and producing her own work alongside them, she began considering the notion of conflict and its effect on the inner being. The idea of 'scarring'; and what is implied by this became her main interest. A joining of forces between the Wiltshire artists seemed a natural progression; the First World War centenary providing the opportunity to make work with like-minded people. In collaboration with Peter Riley, curator of the Young Gallery, Salisbury, the artists have each selected relevant works from the Edwin Young Collection as a supporting element to Cicatrix; putting the exhibition into a wider context, and featuring thought-provoking contrasts. As the exhibition tours, this additional unit can be included to showcase pieces from other collections at different venues.



Left to right:

Henry Moore
Elephant Skull 1969
Etching, Plate XXII

Basil Beattie
Untitled 10 1995/96
Chinese ink on paper

Dame Elizabeth Blackadder
Still Life
Aquatint etching

Michael Cullimore Resurrection Watercolour and ink





linen map 1914



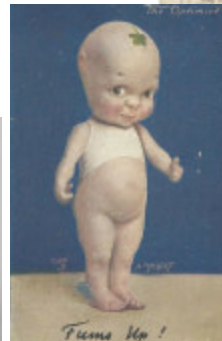
shepherd's crown



Funus Up
Penny with bullet
(penny together)



Juniper berries



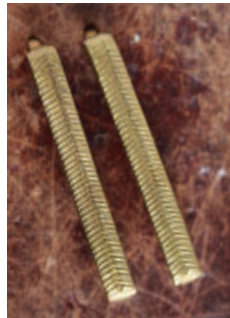
post card 1915
front & reverse



anti-gas goggles



Distinguished Conduct Medal



wound stripes



bullet shell casings



Voique (everywhere)



First World War
gas mask



the Vennid Bandage



curiosities

Having been owned, in part, by the military from 1897 onwards, the landscape reflects this modern usage in the surviving monument - relating to training for conflicts of the 20th and 21st centuries. The artillery impact area, north of Larkhill, is cratered by shell holes which are now vital habitats for chalk grassland species. It may seem incongruous, but this military presence is essential too for archaeological protection; having precluded major housing developments, road schemes or industrial ploughing that has the potential to be very destructive. With metal detectors also not being permitted, one has another facet that enables good heritage protection. As an archaeologist one has the rare privilege of being able to walk along a Roman street, notice how it cuts through prehistoric field systems which themselves respect earlier burial mounds. For the more modern sites, one can see many practice trenches which prepared soldiers for the maelstrom of the battlefields of the Great War – with some elements such as the mine crater north of the old Bustard Inn bearing witness to the minutiae of military planning that went into practice for specific battles such as Messines and contradicting thoughts that soldiers went into battles of the First World War with little or no training. The giant chalk kiwi carved onto the side of Beacon Hill near Bulford also serves to commemorate the sacrifices of soldiers from many miles away that served King and Country – cemeteries at Durrington, Tidworth, Bulford and around the Plain bearing mute testament to those who never returned to their homes. This legacy is one which the Defence Infrastructure Organisation has to manage for future generations.

Richard Osgood, Senior Archaeologist, Conservation, MOD



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Henny Burnett

www.axisweb.org/artist/hennyburnett

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Prudence Maltby

www.prudencemaltby.com

© Samuel Alibcus 2014



Susan Francis

www.susanfrancis.com

Cicatrix – the workshops

An important component of the touring exhibition is the availability of customized workshops which are accessible to groups, charities and educational institutions. Various techniques will be introduced and taught to achieve a high level of work, which where appropriate, will in turn become a part of the Cicatrix exhibition. Mono-printing, collage and casting are among the techniques offered by the artists, with opportunities to retain or exchange pieces created with the sculptures in the 100 Towers installation.



Catalogue designed by Prudence Maltby in collaboration with Sue Newnham of Salisbury Printing; funded and printed by Wiltshire Council.

The artists wish to thank the following for their support and contributions to the project: Faye Perkins (Arts Development Officer, Wiltshire Council Arts Service) Peter Riley, Peter Tyas, Ewan Clayton, Richard Osgood, Martin Urmsen, Klynn Alibocus, The Rifles Berkshire & Wiltshire Museum.

The artists acknowledge the co-operation of the MOD, and DSTL Porton Down, Wiltshire.

