



Susan Francis

Case Study: Cicatrix - the scar of the healed wound

A visual arts project, funded by Arts Council England on the themes of land and memory, incorporating installation, drawing and film.

The audience is offered further insight into the WW1 legacy surrounding the Salisbury Plain and its physical, historical and sociological features through the interpretations of artists Henny Burnett, Susan Francis and Prudence Maltby with the concepts of mapping, scarring and the creation of shrines.

This project highlights the need to understand the complexities of the environment in which projects take place, particularly access to sites and the importance of rigorous project planning.

Arts Symposium—17 November 2015



Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

Touring exhibition

This touring exhibition of art installation, drawing and film provides a challenging viewpoint to mark the 100th anniversary of World War One. Based on the notion that memory provides the fourth dimension to any landscape, it explores the development of the Salisbury Plain landscape “searching beyond the fallout of conflict and seeing the marks left behind—on a landscape—on humanity”.

The three artists forged links through regular meetings, finding common ground and collaborating to develop and deliver the project. It took eighteen months from concept to the first exhibition. The project continues to manifest itself and the final exhibition will mark the end of the WW1 centenary at Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

Community involvement

The exhibition has been complemented by workshops, an academic paper, artist discussion forums and film maker presentations in schools. The public have also been invited to participate in each exhibition by exchanging sculptural pieces.

Access to locations

Working on land which requires permission to be obtained presents challenges to artists who often need to explore and develop their ideas in situ. Salisbury Plain is open to the public, yet some areas are not easily accessible and information and permission is subject to change at the last minute. Social media and online newsletters give access to information on the safe use of the Plain, but these need to be treated with caution.

The experience within this project was that despite an introduction to key contacts, followed by months of preparation and planning, obtaining maps, attending training sessions, gaining permissions and receiving entry passes to secured areas; it wasn't possible to access some of the areas planned.

Fees and charges may also be levied for access to sites and for the subsequent use of photos and film generated as part of a project.

Legacy

The project continues to develop and includes the exploration of a cultural exchange with Commonwealth countries that sent troops to the Salisbury Plain.

Commissioners, key project partners and stakeholders:

Arts Council England · Wiltshire Council · First World War Centenary Partnership · Imperial War Museum · The Pound Corsham · The Young Gallery Salisbury · Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

Cost: £15,000



Henny Burnett

Achievements, outcomes and reflections

- Provided learning opportunities to explore and understand the landscape.
- Provided opportunities for artists to develop their own individual and collaborative practice, providing support to each other.
- The project requires commitment from the artists for four years and is fuelled by their enthusiasm and passion.
- The project has been bigger and more challenging than expected and artists have welcomed positive feedback.
- The project budget needed to factor in more for administration, licences and fees.
- Good project planning including building in sufficient time to research and gain permissions is key.



www.cicatrix.co.uk

Prudence Maltby