

All That Remains

Mojo Gallery, Dubai, May 2011

An exhibition of textile art by Mary-Clare-Buckle

Pies In The Sky

Felted wool with transferred digital images - 105cm x 86cm - Jan 2011

This piece is a (fairly) light-hearted comment on clichés associated with Britain.

Virtually all tourist attractions in Britain have been ruined by updating them to include an 'experience centre' or just generally decorated in some sort of fake, ersatz way - 'Ye olde tea shoppe', with waitresses dressed in some idea of Victorian costume; gardens with a fake 'colonial-style' restaurant; 'traditional' English pubs, done up 5 years ago by replacing an old fake theme (normally Victorian) with a different fake theme (normally now earlier, more 'earthy').

So the country increasingly looks like a historical theme park or a collection of clichés.

Down To A Sunless Sea

Photographic image collage on linen paper + other fibres - 170cm x 235cm - March 2011

The piece is a comment on our long-standing obsession with (or love of) the sea - in the absence of our Empire (obtained by sea), the sea is now simply a holiday destination. We go the seaside to 'enjoy ourselves' but, on this northerly island, that 'enjoyment' involves sitting on a windy beach looking at a grey sky, whilst our children play in swimming costumes - desperately trying to recreate a childhood image which never existed. We flee to the outside of our island, to stare across the sea at the invisible 'continent' and our glorious past. Lodged at the perimeter of our land, we simply exemplify what is missing in our country - the national pride which should be at the heart of a country and now only remains for us in football fans draped in British flags ... and this manufactured, alcohol-fuelled pride only exists outside our country.

The piece thus has the grey and forlorn images round the outside, with a symbolic hole in the middle.

But there are small beauties here still, even on a melancholy, grey end-of-season day and even amongst the now traditionally 'tacky' nature of much of it.

To See the Real England, You Have to Visit the Villages

Photographic image collage on Linen paper + other fibres - 190cm x 130cm - Dec 2010

and

Hidden London ... Get Off the Tourist Trail

Photographic image collage on Linen paper + other fibres - 175cm x 155cm - Feb 2011

Inspired by the Philip Larkin poem Going, Going ("*And that will be England gone, the shadows, meadows, lanes; but all that remains for us will be concrete and tyres*").

Whilst people normally visit the UK to see the glories of our urban and rural landscapes, as someone who has lived in both cities and the countryside, it is all too easy to see many examples of how we are inexorably despoiling the country - both urban and rural.

All we have here is our ('glorious') past, but even the historical heritage we have is being inexorably ruined by over-development and under-sensitivity (to the natural and built environments).

To See the Real England ...

Look in front and up and you will see green meadows, pretty hedgerows and blue skies with wispy clouds.

Look down or round that corner and there will be piles of rubbish; rusty farm machinery; farmers' favourite materials – old tyres and plastic; 'Keep out' signs; crumbling or abandoned buildings; electricity pylons stalking the landscape.

Hidden London ...

Move outside the centre of London, or look to your left and right even in the centre, and there will be the familiar landmarks or modern urban Britain – high streets which look the same as each other: just a long row of plastic corporate shopfronts; boarded up shops, long out of business; CCTV signs; rust, rubbish, grime; graffiti; building sites; signs banning just about everything.

My main aim here with both pieces, as an artist, is to try to reclaim the beauty, by 'amending' the photographic images, such that (at least at first glance) they are 'pretty pictures'.

If I Had a Flag I (Wouldn't) Fly It

Cotton Muslin with transferred digital images - 7 lengths of 43cm x 5m - Feb 2011

The text on this piece are from a series of responses to questionnaires I devised.

There seems really nothing much to celebrate any more about 'being British'. We have an increasingly vague idea of what that means - the responses to the questions (particularly from young people) demonstrate an extraordinarily confused (and, in some cases, quite bizarre) idea of exactly what we 'do' and 'are' here in the 21st century.

There is more empty space on this piece than text – symbolic of the empty space where our national identity used to be. The individual lengths are only joined together at the top: we are only partially a coherent nation; coming apart at the seams?

Lost Trees

Silk Chiffon - 11 lengths of 3m - Jan 2011

Britain was a once heavily-wooded country. Now, many forests are simply coniferous commercial wood plantations, with a dead forest floor – our loss is the traditional mixed deciduous woodland with a mass of many different types of plant at ground level.

Blind-Man

Felted wool and cane inclusions, with transferred digital lettering - 58cm x 530cm - May 2010

The lettering is a quote from E F Schumaker - "Modern man talks of a battle with nature ... forgetting that if he won the battle he would find himself on the losing side".

This piece ties in with *Lost Trees* and *To See the Real England, You Have to Visit the Villages*

Net Worth

Felted wool - 4m x 3m - Feb 2011

There is much more negative 'empty' space than positive space. I am thinking here about the idea that the 'glories' of Britain are now empty holes in our culture, filled by nothing contemporary, and that there seems very little that's positive to be said about us now.

Small Flags - series

These are all around the idea of rotten or threadbare, referring to our lack of culture, lack of real weight in the world and despoliation of the urban and rural landscapes.

Past Is Best

Cotton, wool, silk and other fibres - 96cm x 90cm - Oct 2010

All Mixed Up

Felted wool, cotton velvet, silk, wool + other fibres - 78cm x 57cm - July 2010

Full Of Holes

Felted wool - 80cm x 62cm - Feb 2011

Jack Falling Apart

Wool, silk and other fibres - 69cm x 45cm - Jan 2011

Exploding Flag

Wool, silk and other fibres - 78cm x 41cm - Jan 2011

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[Note – all sizes quoted are unframed]