

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

Press Release

JANE AND LOUISE WILSON
Decoy Tank

in THE BOX

23 January – 21 February 2015



Jane and Louise Wilson, *Decoy Tank (The Box)*, 2015

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present a new commission for The Box by Turner Prize nominated artists Jane and Louise Wilson. This project will constitute part of the duo's ongoing investigation into key elements of the legacy of the Great War – specifically focusing on surveillance, camouflage and decoy techniques.

The artists have created an at-scale replica of the form of a 1914 dummy tank using their trademark device - a series of yardstick measures, painted in stark black and white. The yardsticks mark out not only the physical form of the sculpture itself, but by virtue of the obsolete units they were intended to measure, reflect on the passage of time from the outset of war a century ago and the seismic shifts in technological advances now deployed in contemporary conflict.

During WWI, the advent of aerial warfare and new surveillance techniques spurred rapid advances in optics. Simultaneously, new countermeasures in the arts of concealment and deception emerged. Having lined the interior of the box with mirrors, the artists allude to this threat of exposure by enabling the viewer to see the tank from multiple angles. Furthermore, by having to step into the space in order to look into the box, the artists facilitate the sensation of peering over a parapet or through a periscope. At the same time, the infinity effect caused by the mirrors serves to exacerbate the disorientation created by the camouflage, thus drawing attention to the various devices used to ward off potential attack.

The model tank is placed in front of a photograph taken by the Wilsons which reconstructs a mode of camouflage used in combat. Inspired by a photograph found in the archive of the Imperial War Museum, the image was recreated with painted tarpaulin in a field positioned next to the Farnborough wind tunnels. Mimicking a set of railway tracks, this particular example was designed to evade attacks specifically from above. Both the tank and the photograph originally featured in the artists' film *Undead Sun* (2014), which was recently exhibited in their solo exhibition at the IWM. Commissioned by FVU to mark the Centenary of the First World War, the film similarly explores perspectives on visibility and technology during said period. *Undead Sun* will be screened at the Rotterdam Film Festival in February 2015.

Running concurrently with their project in The Box, the Wilsons have been invited to curate a section of the exhibition *History is Now: 7 Artists Take on Britain* at the Hayward Gallery, London. Alongside John Akomfrah, Simon Fujiwara, Roger Hiorns, Hannah Starkey and Richard Wentworth, each artist has been asked to look at particular periods of cultural history from 1945 to the present day as part of Southbank Centre's *Changing Britain 1945 – 2015* festival. The exhibition will run from 10 February – 26 April 2015.

Jane and Louise Wilson (b. 1967, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) have had solo exhibitions at the Imperial War Museum, London; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester; British Film Institute, London; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal; De Appel, Amsterdam; Bergen Art Museum; Dallas Museum of Art; Serpentine Gallery, London; 303 Gallery, New York; Hamburger Kunsthalle; Museum of Contemporary Art, Geneva; Chisenhale Gallery, London and MIT List Visual Arts Centre, Boston.

After receiving the Barclays Young Artist award in 1993, Jane and Louise Wilson were nominated for the prestigious Turner Prize in 1999. Their work is in public and private collections around the world, notably the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London; British Council Collection, London; Government Art Collection, London and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Undead Sun was commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, for IWM (Imperial War Museums), in partnership with MIMA, Middlesbrough and Wolverhampton Art Gallery. Supported using public funding by Arts Council England. With special thanks to Artliner and Nick Mortimer.