Undead Sun
Jane & Louise Wilson

‘Undead Sun’ 2014

Amount of Funding: £30,000.00 funding from ACE Arts Council of England.
Collaborators: Film and Video Umbrella, Imperial War Museum, MIMA Middlesbrough and Wolverhampton City Art Gallery.
Start Date: October 2014
Anticipated End Date: Autumn - 2018
Associated PGRs: NA

‘Undead Sun’ 2014, video, 12 mins 39seconds, gauze cube, gauze wall elements and vertical gauze Fins. “Undead Sun” was commissioned to mark the Centenary of the First World War. The work explores perspectives on visibility, technology, camouflage and the reconstruction of narratives surrounding the conflict.

Much of the imagery in the film is inspired by the visual culture of the period. Uneasy, dream-like sequences are acted out against the ominous backdrop of a giant wind tunnel. These staged vignettes offer glimpses of individual, human-scale dramas, as well as intimations of the darker side of the society of the time. The film concludes by referencing a First World War account of an unnamed conscientious objector, stripping naked and shredding the uniform that he had been forced to wear. It alludes not only to the First World War, but to protests against subsequent wars. The film was selected for the Rotterdam Film Festival where it received its cinema premiere in 2015.

In order to highlight the hidden and the concealed. The film was presented within a specially constructed architectural setting, in which the viewer’s own lines of sight are directed, and partially obstructed by screens of gauze. Many sequences were based on my extensive research in the Imperial War Museums’ (IWM) archives in London and in Duxford and in the FAST museum archives of wind flow research, at Farnborough air base. Inspired by archive photographs and artefacts, and by diary entries and personal testimonies, the piece reflects on the visceral, elemental forces that the war unleashed. I filmed on location in the Wind Tunnels at Farnborough Air Field, I cast the performers from unknown actors based in London. Much of the voice over script was based on ‘C’ by Tom McCarthy, published by Jonathan Cape in 2010 with some quotes from 'Hide and Seek: Camouflage, Photography, and the Media of Reconnaissance' by Hanna Rose Shell, published by Zone Books in 2012.

I wanted the film to blend animation, historical photography and staged scenes to underscore the paradoxical relationship between warfare and technological progress, emphasizing the evolving surveillance programme of World War I, as a precursor to current day drone technology.
Project Overview

Jane and Louise Wilson’s *Undead Sun* is a large-scale video installation that looks back at the seismic impact of the First World War and considers how so many of the products of that conflict continue to shape our contemporary experience. At its heart is a now-familiar pattern of military action – new and hard-learned in the First World War – in which control of the airspace assumes as much strategic importance as the campaign on the ground. This desire for panoramic overview, to rise beyond the deadlock of the trenches, brings with it its own rapid advances (in camera optics and other technological innovations) but also its counter-measures, as armies seek to hide their movements and positions from this ever-present eye-in-the-sky. Alluding to the unceasing threat of exposure from above, *Undead Sun* highlights these earthbound, subterranean arts of concealment and camouflage, as well as the unremarked, invisible contribution made by women to this facet of the war.

**Read more**

#UndeadSun

**Imperial War Museum, London**

**Exhibitions**

Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (mima): 1 October 2016 - 22 January 2017


Commissioned by FVU, for IWM (Imperial War Museums), in partnership with Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art and Wolverhampton Art Gallery. Supported using public funding by Arts Council England. With special thanks to Artliner.

**Media**
Image Gallery

Jane and Louise Wilson: Undead Sun

Press
Screen Daily | Geoffrey Macnab | ‘Wilson sisters bring Undead Sun Rotterdam’
27 January 2015

Link to article
The Guardian | Corinne Jones | ‘This show is like going into seven different artists’ brains’
1 February 2015

Link to article
Wall Street International | ‘Jane and Louise Wilson. Undead Sun’
15 October 2014

Link to article
Apollo Magazine | Melanie Vandenbrouk | ‘Jane and Louise Wilson’s ‘Undead Sun’ at the IWM’
28 October 2014

Link to article
Art News | Elizabeth Fullerton | ‘DOUBLE TAKE: JANE AND LOUISE WILSON’
15 December 2014

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