

OBSCURE --- SECURE

EXHIBITION

06.09.14—18.01.15

Christchurch Mansion, Wolsey Art Gallery
Soane Street, Ipswich IP4 2BE

Anna Airy, Claudia Böse, Prunella Clough, E M Every,
Hayley Field, Lucy Harwood, Helen Kiddall, Beatrice Lithiby,
Peggy Somerville, Effie Spring-Smith, Jacqueline Utley,
Blanche Vulliamy, Kathleen Walne, Connie Winn

obscuresecureproject.wordpress.com

OBSecure SECURE

Obscure Secure uncovers work by 20th century women artists from the Ipswich Borough Council collection and exhibits it together with paintings by three contemporary artists.

Through a process of exploration and research, **Claudia Böse, Hayley Field** and **Jacqueline Utley** have selected work from the collection and created new work in response.

This process has been supported by Colchester and Ipswich Museum Art Curator, Emma Roodhouse.

Note: *Obscure Secure* title is taken from *The Harwestead Panels*, probably painted by Lady Drury, c.1610



Jacqueline Utley
Hannah, Jean, Ella
Oil on linen, 2014

Selecting Work from the Museum's Collection

The selection process included researching the lives of the artists in the collection as well as viewing their work in the museum stores, creating an immersive experience of rich visual material along with biographical narratives. The selecting artists found the dedication, persistence and determination of the women artists in the collection an inspiration and discovered work that resonated with them and their practice.

Obscure Secure Artists

Claudia Böse
Born in Germany, studied at St Martins and the Royal Academy Schools. Has participated in many residencies and has had solo and group exhibitions. Lives and works in Suffolk.

Hayley Field
Born in Essex, studied at Chelsea School of Art and Middlesex University. Has exhibited in London and Suffolk. Lives and works in Suffolk.

Jacqueline Utley
Born in North Somerset, studied at Chelsea School of Art and Camberwell. Has exhibited nationally and internationally. Lives and works in London.

Selected Artists from the Collection

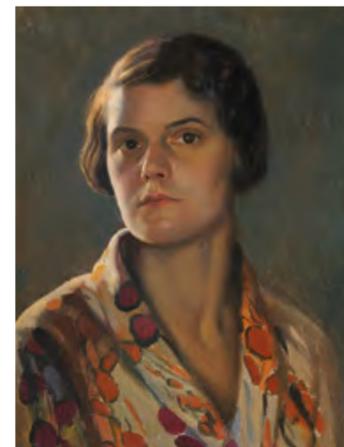
Anna Airy (1882—1964)
London born, educated at the Slade School of Art, one of the first women officially commissioned as a war artist. She exhibited at the Royal Academy and her work is included in numerous collections such as Imperial War Museum. She moved to Suffolk in the 1930s.

Prunella Clough (1919—1999)
London based artist with strong ties to the Suffolk coast—she attended Chelsea School of Art and went on to be a Jerwood Prize winner with exhibitions at Camden Arts Centre and Kettle's Yard among many others. Her work is included in numerous public art collections.

Miss E M Every (1864—1935)
Born in Derbyshire, received some formal art training before becoming a social worker in a



Prunella Clough
Sweetpack
Oil on canvas, 1988



Effie Spring-Smith
Self Portrait
Oil on canvas, c.1932

deprived area of London. She remained a painter all her life, making frequent visits to Suffolk.

Lucy Harwood (1893—1972)
Born at Belstead, near Ipswich, attended the Slade School of Fine Art and the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing. She continued to live in Suffolk, exhibiting at The Minorities and in London.

Helen Kiddall (1888—1980)
Born in Lincolnshire, she won a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy Schools. She exhibited at Grosvenor Gallery and Liverpool Walker Art Gallery among many others, moving to Suffolk in 1932.

Beatrice Lithiby (1889—1966)
Born in Surrey, lived in London and studied at the Royal Academy Schools. Following service in both world wars, she moved to Suffolk, exhibiting at the Royal Society of British Artists and the Society of Women Artists among others.

Peggy Somerville (1918—1975)
Born in Middlesex, moved to Suffolk as a teenager. Internationally acclaimed as a child prodigy, she exhibited work in London from the age of four and continued painting and exhibiting her work throughout her life.

Effie Spring-Smith (1907—1974)
Born in Woodbridge, studied at the Ipswich School of Art and the Slade School of Art. She exhibited at Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts, Walker Art Gallery, the Royal Academy among others. She went on to live in London and finally Kent.

Blanche Georgiana Vulliamy (1869—1923)
Ipswich born ceramicist, she went on to live in London and then Devon where she had success working in the pottery industry.

Kathleen Walne (1915—2011)
Ipswich born artist who went on to live in London, finally Brighton. She exhibited regularly in London, had a solo exhibition at Salford Museum and Art Gallery and has work included in numerous public art collections.

Connie Winn (1899—1985)
Born in Surrey, lived in London and Aldeburgh. She studied at Chelsea and Camberwell, had works regularly

accepted by the Royal Academy and was a member and exhibitor at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colour and The Royal Society of British Art.



Connie Winn
Girl in a Yellow Hat
Oil on panel, c.1973



Helen Kiddall in her studio

CONVERSATIONS

PROCESS MATTERS



Artists **Hayley Field, Claudia Böse** and **Jacqueline Utley**

A conversation with **Claudia Böse, Hayley Field** and **Jacqueline Utley**

When we met in early 2013 we spoke of how we have developed or recognised what we need from our work as a reaction against something, or a pushing against something—is this something you recognise? What informs your decisions? What do you need to work against?

Hayley Field: I need to work against immediate recognition—ease on the eye. I am frequently working on quite a literal level, but there is a cloaking of what I want to visualise that seems to be necessary. I feel like I am laying clues for people.

Jacqueline Utley: I am always torn when making a painting, part of me wants to make

pictures the other part paintings—I guess it's the same thing that happens between object/image and paint on the surface of the canvas—so there is always a lot of paint put on and paint taken off.

Claudia Böse: I know when I 'get going' there is a certain energy, impulse and urgency within me and a picking up from the leftovers, residues of previous sessions, remnants that I have been living with since. One of the main ingredients that informs my decisions seems to be reacting to an impulse to distil and repair something. Even though I don't know what it is.

Painting is only ever going to be as useful as anybody finds it to be. Is it part of the process of painting to reconsider the unacceptable in ourselves and others; in our personal and cultural histories, in our desire and thoughts and feelings and beliefs. Does the process assist us to wonder why we should want to paint?

HF: I am constantly going through thoughts as I paint—making many and varied connections for myself. I think this is a fundamental reason why I paint and I am fascinated with its link with the work I make.

JU: I think painting is a potential space for many things. I think it is still relevant as a questioning medium, an examining tool for our lives, for example history, politics the everyday—for me it's often what a painting can leave out in its image making that still makes it relevant as a medium to address these subjects by the hand in paint. The commercial art market is what blurs it's relevance.

CB: Part of my process of painting is drawing out things that are unacceptable and unknown to me. Things to do with my family and the history of Germany. It is an exploration of how I got drawn into wanting some things but not others, thinking only in one direction; feeling responsible for things outside of my world; and believing there will never be a closure of anything. How this makes sense with painting I don't know.

Is the process in painting a commitment to straddling rather than resolution of problems? Do we value process as it has something to do with prizing our incompetence?

HF: Yes, perhaps it is—perhaps it is an unravelling, a lucid, liquid moment that we can be immersed in—that doesn't solve things but makes discoveries and finds some solace.



Claudia Böse
Nana
Oil on board, 2013

Sometimes I am unsure of whether I think a painting will be resolved, but on some level I enjoy the failing element of painting—it gives me permission to feel more free with a piece of work. If something falls into place quickly I find it more difficult and stifling and usually have to sabotage it to move on.

JU: I can leave the studio after a day's painting having wiped off the day's work, this can happen for a number of days! I am beginning to learn that is as much part of the process as the days when it all fits into place. Sometimes I come back to them at a later date in hope that my clumsy hand will have caught up with the paintings I imagine.

CB: Yes, I feel similar about the wiping of everything after a day's work. This is quite an act, ending up with 'nothing' to look at. Making a decision to wipe it all off is a very certain moment in the painting process. I thrive on these conditions. There are moments though where I think why didn't I take up the cello or bass guitar, acting, gardening, baking, film making or languages.

How do you structure your time and balance the research and the evident exploration through making? How does your research permeate your work?

HF: I sometimes make drawings/notes to record a composition or specific colours, or to try and understand what I am looking for—how I can visualise something. Sometimes I use photography to remind me of my interest in something. Most of my planning is done in the work.

JU: I am always impatient to make the painting but research always pays off for me in the end.

CB: What is my research? Daily life and looking. Looking at others' paintings. Recording what strikes me (taking photographs, drawing, writing). Reading. Nature. Meeting others. How

do I balance the research and exploration? For me they are the same. How does my research permeate my work? They are interwoven.

What does the exploration of your process reveal about your paintings and the thinking behind them? Does your process reveal anything about your view of the world or where your work sits within the context of painting?

HF: There is an element of 'exposure'—openness/honesty that is important to me, with that can come a fear of revelation. I have had some thoughts about work and painting—that we are in this space of designing our own way of working—this is a special place we allow ourselves to be in: privileged, challenging, brave, indulgent.

CB: Today I feel that our exploration has given me some strong ideas to reconsider and develop through painting. The second question is easier. It's got something to do with audiences in the wider sense. Buyers, galleries, collectors, admirers. The late banking turmoils /investors/off-shore tax evaders etc. has something to do with my process—a process that is so anti-all-that/trying so hard in life not to get into this sort of mind and body space.

JU: I am very slow and I need to sit with paintings and think, build them up over time. There is a still life always set up in my studio—alongside other ongoing series of paintings. I increasingly work from drawings, notes, collage and watercolour. I gather from multiple sources and it is important to me that there is no hierarchy present in my paintings that a found object or a lamp from a high street catalogue, an art historical reference and the women that come together for the first time are all equal.

Some extended conversations:

HF: There is something quite radical in your work—in its scale, subject matter (domestic/



Hayley Field
Creekside
Oil on board, 2014

feminine) and quiet nature—is that intentional?

JU: I have found working small has a different set of challenges but I guess it's an attempt to see the surface/canvas as an area for intense investigation—I often employ repetition in my paintings as a means of examining and looking at something, for example, still life, interiors and art historical/feminist investigation.

JU: When I look at your work I see a sort of edited mirroring back of an image/feeling/sense from our everyday or our inner worlds—your work triggers and articulates those senses to me—do you have a clear image of the painting before you start?

HF: I have a clear idea about the composition usually—the dominant shape/shapes and where they sit. Quite how they're described, the colours, the marks, the way they work with the surface is something that gets worked out as I go along. The unpicking is in understanding what quality I find interesting and how to make that visual.

PROGRAMME

TALKS & EVENTS

Obscure Secure Introductory Talk and Reception

Saturday 6 September 2014, 11.00—13.00 (Talk 11.00) Refreshments and 'Out of the Box' Free

Claudia Böse, Hayley Field, Jacqueline Utley discuss the project with Martha Fleming, artist and Director of University of Reading's Collections Based Research Programme. Includes 'Out of the Box' viewing of Blanche Vulliamy's First World War pastel drawings of London searchlights.

Art in Focus: Women as Artists

Sunday 2 November 2014, 14.00 £6 or £5 for FOIM (please book by calling 01473 433691)

Art Curator Emma Roodhouse presents an interesting introduction to the female artists represented in the Ipswich museum collections. Includes tea and cake provided by the Friends of Ipswich Museums.

In Conversation—Frances Spalding with Valerie Sinason

Saturday 15 November 2014, 14.00—15.15 Free (please book by calling 01473 433691) Art historian, critic and biographer Frances Spalding discusses her work and reflections with psychoanalyst and poet Valerie Sinason.

Does Process Matter?

Saturday 29 November 2014, 14.00—15.30 Free (please book by calling 01473 433691) Panel discussion facilitated by artist and art therapist Emma Cameron with artists: Molly Thomson, Jane Frederick, Claudia Böse, Hayley Field and Jacqueline Utley.

Obscure Secure at Studio 1.1

Thursday 26 February—Sunday 1 March 2015, 12.00—18.00 Discussion/Event 1 March, 15.00—17.00 Studio 1.1, 57A Redchurch Street London E2 7DG

This final event will see a re-creation of the exhibition at Studio 1.1, London—a contemporary artist-led project space. A discussion event will reflect on the learning from the project.