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The Silent Village

Humphrey Jennings | Peter Finnemore
Rachel Trezise | Paolo Ventura



A Ffotogallery Touring Exhibition

Curated by Russell Roberts

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The Silent Village, curated by Russell Roberts (Reader in Photography at the European Centre for Photographic Research, Newport) explores the role of the photographic image and film in bearing witness to historical events and in particular, their role within an iconography of commemoration. In doing so, the exhibition and accompanying publication raise important issues around post-traumatic memory, documentary ethics and propaganda.

The destruction of the Czech village of Lidice in 1942 was a particularly brutal act of retribution by the Nazis following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich by the Czech resistance. In total, 340 villagers were murdered, either by firing squads or later in concentration camps. Within a year of the massacre, artist, poet and filmmaker Humphrey Jennings had produced *The Silent Village*, a commemorative film set in the Upper Swansea Valley which was both a reconstruction of the Lidice atrocity and evocation of Welsh life in the early 1940s.

This new exhibition and book feature contemporary artistic responses to the film by the artists Paolo Ventura and Peter Finnemore, and writer Rachel Trezise, which although markedly different in approach are equally concerned with memory and the visual culture of history. Their work seeks to shed new light on the tragedy and also on the resilience of the human spirit in such extreme circumstances.

Exhibition Details

Works

Humphrey Jennings - single screen b/w video (36 min, with audio)

Peter Finnemore - 16 framed b/w prints (91.5x71.5cm) & single screen looped video (5min, monitor provided)

Rachel Trezise - audio recording (mp3 player/headphones provided)

Paolo Ventura - 13 b/w prints & single framed work (all 50.8x40cm)

Space/Equipment Required

Approximately 75 – 120 linear metres and projection facilities or video monitor to screen the original *The Silent Village* film

Publication

The Silent Village accompanying publication comes in a slipcase that includes the main publication, with essays by curator Russell Roberts and film historian Dave Berry, and two artist books featuring Rachel Trezise and Peter Finnemore's work.

Publications are provided on a sale or return basis.

Interpretation and Education

Text for introductory wall panel, captions and handout will be supplied but produced by the hirer. Advice available for developing education resources.

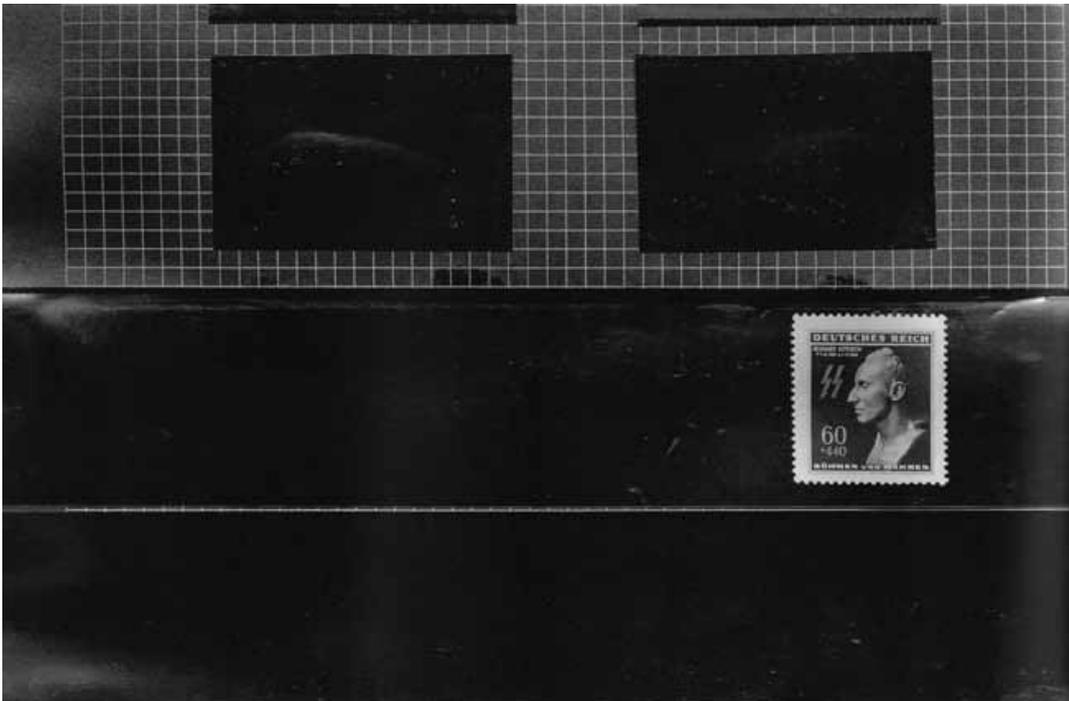
Hire Fee

£2500 + VAT

Transport and Insurance

Transport and insurance are the responsibility of the hirer

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From Peter Finnemore, *Everyday*, 2009

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From Paolo Ventura, *Dead Village*, 2009

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Installation shots from The Silent Village
Fotogallery, Jan - Feb 2010

Humphrey Jennings

Humphrey Jennings (born Suffolk, 1907 - 1950) is best known for his work as a filmmaker. In a relatively short career; also spanning photography, literary criticism, poetry and art history; Jennings was prolific, directing over 20 films in 16 years.

Jennings founded the magazine *Experiment* with William Empson and Jacob Bronowski and in 1936, he co-organised the *International Surrealist Exhibition* in London with Herbert Read, Roland Penrose and André Breton. In 1937, he co-founded *Mass Observation*, an ongoing anthropological survey of everyday life in Britain.

Jennings' Surrealist interests are evident in films such as *Spare Time* (1939) and *Listen to Britain* (1942) blurring distinctions between documentary and fiction, but also in wartime films including *Fires Were Started* (1943) and *The Silent Village* (1943).

Peter Finnemore

Peter Finnemore (born Llanelli, Wales in 1963) is a Wales based photographer and Researcher/Senior Lecturer at Swansea Metropolitan University. Finnemore's first major exhibition in 1986, was *New Contemporaries* at the ICA in London. Since then, he has exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally, including representing Wales at the 51st Venice Biennale (2005). His major published works include *Gwendraeth House* (Ffotogallery, 2000) and *Zen Gardener* (Oriol Mostyn, 2004).

Rachel Trezise

Rachel Trezise (born Rhondda Valley, Wales in 1978) is a writer based in Wales. Her debut novel *In and Out of the Goldfish Bowl* was published in 2000 and won the Orange Futures Prize. In 2003, she was voted as new face of literature by *Harper & Queens* magazine and in 2005 her debut short fiction collection *Fresh Apples* won the distinguished Dylan Thomas Prize.

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Dial M for Merthyr, her first non-fiction book, a travelogue and documentary about Merthyr rock band, *Midasuno*, was published in 2007 and her first radio play *Lemon Meringue Pie* was broadcast on Radio 4 in 2008. Her second novel *Sixteen Shades of Cray* will be published in 2010. She is currently working on her third novel, *The Whore's Hustle (And the Hustler's Whore)*.

Paolo Ventura

Paolo Ventura (born Milan, Italy in 1968) is an artist living and working in New York. In the last 5 years he has developed his interest in constructed realities combining model making and photography to pursue his exploration of personal and collective histories, particularly relating to war.

His major project *War Souvenir* was exhibited in 2006 at Rencontres de la Photographie, Arles, and an accompanying monograph was published the same year. His solo exhibition *Fabulous Fictions* was recently shown at The Hague Museum of Photography and he has exhibited extensively in international group exhibitions.

Ffotogallery

Ffotogallery is the national development agency for photography and lens-based media in Wales. We have an ongoing programme of temporary exhibitions of contemporary photography and other lens-based media, often with accompanying publications. Our extensive learning and engagement programme delivers opportunities for creative participation for a wide cross-section of the community.

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