

### Protest and Remembrance

#### Miriam de Búrca | Joy Gerrard | Mary Griffiths | Barbara Walker

28 February - 30 March 2018

Private View Wednesday 27 February, 6 - 7.30pm



Joy Gerrard, *Protest Crowd, London (Brexit 1, June 2018)*, 2018.

**Protest and Remembrance** at the Alan Cristea Gallery, London, (28 February - 30 March 2018) brings together four British and Irish women artists; Miriam de Búrca; Joy Gerrard; Mary Griffiths; and Barbara Walker; all of whom use drawing to examine elements of protest and/or remembrance through a range of subjects that include war, political demonstration, burial sites and lost industry, set in both the urban and the rural, past and present.

As a society we often come together, in times of celebration, in times of crisis, to protest or to mourn, or simply to remember. Whether we are reflecting on our past or challenging our future, these artists are telling us the story of something that should not be forgotten.

Drawing on over a decade of image-making and research on themes of protest and urban space, **Joy Gerrard** (b.1971) archives and painstakingly remakes media-born crowd images from around the world. Gerrard's crowds are viewed from above, suggesting the remove of media observation, while the fluidity and drama of their moment is expressed through precise, expressive mark-making. Working in Japanese ink on both a small and a large-scale, for this exhibition she has made new paintings and drawings of protest scenes from London, including the recent anti-Trump demonstration, and the anti-Brexit march which actually passed by the doors the gallery. More poignantly, the looming Brexit deadline of 29 March 2019 will pass while the exhibition is taking place, making these protest images even more relevant.

**Barbara Walker's** (b.1964) works depict people who are often cast as minorities, inviting the viewer to look beyond the anonymising act of categorising or classifying citizens. This particular body of work is part of a series of drawings which highlight a forgotten history of black soldiers who fought for Britain in the First and Second World Wars. Walker comments;

*"At the outbreak of WWI, thousands of West Indians volunteered to join the British army on the basis that, if they showed their loyalty to the King, they would be treated as equals. However, in the beginning, only white soldiers were allowed to fight, so the West Indians were relegated to carrying out arduous physical tasks such as loading ammunition, laying electrical wires, digging trenches and cleaning latrines for their white colleagues. I intend to challenge and then revise history in order to make the men and women from colonial empire visible, validated and centre stage where they belong."*

Working from public photographic archives, Walker creates beautifully drawn portraits of these men and women that effectively transfer visibility back to the subject, offering an alternative and balanced interpretation of a nation's history that celebrates the contribution of African and Caribbean servicemen and women to the two World Wars. Walker makes these portraits in a range of media and formats, from small embossed works on paper to paintings on canvas and large-scale charcoal wall drawings.

**Miriam de Búrca** (b.1972) focuses on the ancient burial sites in Ireland called *cillíní* which were used to bury unbaptised babies (until as recently as the 1980s) and many others considered 'unsuitable' for consecrated ground: unmarried mothers, the mentally ill, unknown strangers, disabled children (or 'change-lings'), suicides, excommunicates were all laid to rest here, exiled to a state of eternal limbo. One way she responds to these strange spaces is to select samples of plant life that grow from these grounds, making detailed studies as a way of interrogating the land and the charge that it holds. de Búrca comments;

*"What interests me about these landscapes is how they have become a physical manifestation of the dark recesses of the human psyche; parts of ourselves we would prefer not to acknowledge. The peripheral locations that people chose for these cillíní are like a metaphor for the alienation and marginalisation of those buried there. They are in hidden spaces or left out in the wide open, so exposed they go unnoticed. "There is nothing to see here"; as they would say.*

*But the forgotten are everywhere. They are at crossroads, on hilltops, river banks, lake shores and where land meets the sea. They are in the corners of fields, outside graveyards, in bogs and forests. They are overgrown with brambles, moss and ferns, slowly melting into the soft ground, being eroded by rain and eaten by waves. They are in valleys and on cliff edges, they are placed in pre-Christian sites, handed over to the pagan gods. They are everywhere turn; as forgotten as they may seem, they are still here, around us, beside us, and under us."*

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## Alan Cristea Gallery

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**Mary Griffiths** (b. 1965) investigates the lost industry of coal mining, through the study of a colliery in Lancashire, Astley Green Colliery, which has been transformed from a place of work to a place of leisure, from mine to museum. Griffiths' carefully rendered graphite drawings on gesso panels pay homage to the miners who used to work there, the volunteers who now run the museum, and the intricate machinery that was used to bring up the coal from the depths below.

*"Many of my drawings are of industrial sites and engineering and they are always tied in with the history of the site and also the working class history of the place. I spent a year visiting and drawing and very quietly getting to know the men and women who run the museum at Astley Green Colliery, keep the locomotives going and the magnificent winding engine working. The challenge to myself was to make art that had the same tone and gravity as a finely worked engine part or steel rope, and that the ex-miners would feel did some justice to the beautiful machinery and the black stuff that they heaved out of the ground."*

**ENDS**

### About Alan Cristea Gallery

The Alan Cristea Gallery, established in 1995, is one of the world's largest publishers of original contemporary prints and editions, and the primary representative for a number of renowned contemporary artists, artists' estates and emerging artists.

The gallery's ethos is artist-led and its principle objective is to assist artists in bringing new bodies of work to fruition, including editions, works on paper, paintings, sculpture and installations, which are presented in a continuous programme of public exhibitions, events and art fairs.

#### Visitor information:

Mon - Fri 10am - 5.30pm

Sat 11am - 2pm

Closed on Sundays and public holidays

Travel: Piccadilly or Green Park underground station

+44 (0)20 7439 1866

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Twitter: @AlanCristea

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#ProtestandRemembrance

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## Press Release November 2018

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### About the artists

**Miriam de Búrca** was born in Munich, Germany, in 1972. Her family moved to the west of Ireland when she was three years old. She studied Fine Art at Glasgow School of Art and the University of Ulster, Belfast and in 2010 completed a practice-based PhD at the University of Ulster. Her drawings and experimental film and video-works have been exhibited internationally in London, New York, Montreal, Tel Aviv, Warsaw and Berlin. She has works in the collection of the University of Limerick; Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast; and Queens University, Belfast. de Búrca lives and works in Galway, Ireland.

**Joy Gerrard** was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1971 and graduated with a BA Fine Art from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, and an MA and MPhil from the Royal College of Art, London. Recent exhibitions include Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin (2017); Drawing Room, London (2017); MAC International, Belfast (2016); Hayward Gallery Touring show (2016); and Peer UK, London (2015). She has installed multiple public installations including major works for Facebook and Tideway in London (2017/18); Chelsea and Westminster Hospital (2012); and the London School of Economics (2009). Gerrard lives and works in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Website: [www.joygerrard.com](http://www.joygerrard.com)

Instagram: @joygerrard

**Mary Griffiths** was born in the Wirral, England, in 1965. She graduated with an MA Fine Art from the Manchester School of Art in 2009. Recent exhibitions include The Turnpike, Leigh (2018); Great Exhibition of the North, Newcastle/Gateshead (2018); Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester and touring internationally (2016 - 2018); and Black and White Room, curated by Cornelia Parker at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London (2014). Her book, *Pictures of War*, was published by Carcanet in 2009. Griffiths lives and works in Manchester, England, where she is the Senior Curator (Modern and Contemporary Art) at the Whitworth. Website: [marygriffiths.org](http://marygriffiths.org)  
Instagram: @mary\_griffiths\_\_

**Barbara Walker** was born in Birmingham, England, in 1964. She studied Art and Design at the University of Central England Birmingham and completed post-graduate studies at Wolverhampton University. In 2017 Walker exhibited work at Diaspora Pavilion for the 57th Venice Biennale. Recent exhibitions include Jerwood Gallery, Hastings (2018); Dakar Biennale, Senegal (2018); The Drawing Room, London (2018); Modern Art Oxford, Oxford (2018); MAC Birmingham (2016); Royal West of England Academy, Bristol (2016); and The Djanogly Art Gallery, Nottingham (2013). Walker lives and works in Birmingham, England. Website: [www.barbarawalker.co.uk](http://www.barbarawalker.co.uk)  
Instagram: @b.cogle