



PRESS RELEASE

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Strangest Dream Exhibition 17th December – 26th January

Last night I had the strangest dream I'd ever had before, I dreamt the world had all agreed to put an end to war... (song, written by Ed McCurdy 1950).

In the months leading up to the anniversary of the beginning of The Great War, the war meant to end all wars, Brook has taken the opportunity to observe human conflict and examine the connection between the events and emotions that war engenders, and the art that is inspired by, and created in, its name.

The works produced by war artists illustrate and record many aspects of war and the individual's experience of war, whether allied or enemy, service or civilian, military or political, social or cultural. The role of the artist and his work embrace the causes, course, and consequences of conflict, and has an essentially educational purpose.

Artists record military activities in ways that cameras and the written word cannot. Their art collects and distils the experiences of the men and women who endured in it. The artists and their artwork affect how subsequent generations view military conflicts.

Official war artists have been appointed by governments for information or propaganda purposes and to record events on the battlefield but there are many other types of war artists. These can include combatants who are artists and choose to record their experiences, non-combatants who are witnesses of war, and prisoners of war who may voluntarily record the conditions or be appointed war artists by senior officers.

This exhibition incorporates art produced in the last 100 years, looks at past and future of conflict and the images that represent it. Brook's interest in remembering these great conflicts however must ultimately be to facilitate peace.

Although people often tend to consider themselves and others as unique individuals, there are many situations in which they think, feel, and act primarily as group members. This can bring out the best in them, as when they are inspired to help fellow citizens in need, or the worst, as when they show hostility against others simply because they represent another religious or ethnic group. Understanding when and why the group self becomes more important than the individual self, and how this affects people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, can help to prevent and redirect unwelcome aspects of human behaviour by addressing them at the appropriate level of self.

Art in a situation of conflict can be a form of "making amongst the unmaking", a phrase used by theatre director Jonathan Chadwick. Art can be a proposition, a challenge, a witness bearer. Art can make you see individual people - rather than aggressor or victim. It has the capacity to hold your attention longer than a news column. Art at its best art is an alchemy of ideas that are activated by engagement by us as audience or participant.

The arts provide a language that has the capacity to transcend cultural boundaries, encouraging enhanced understanding and empathy, as well as strengthening connections between people. Artists and cultural practitioners encourage people to look at familiar situations through a different lens and enable them to see things in new ways.

Artistic and cultural work can inspire collaboration, opening the door to creative ways to bring people together where other disciplines, or more formal approaches, often fall short.

We hope that this eclectic mix of styles, genres, memories and sentiments will assist in the journey toward 'an end to war'.

Prior to the exhibition dates as per website, an exhibition of work by George Grosz. An appropriate and poignant precursor to the First World War and the events which ensued.

Included in the exhibition:

Frank Brangwin (1857 – 1956)

Henry Moore (1898 – 1986)

Edward Ardizzone (1900 – 1979)

Chris Orr

Mila Furstova

Mule – Street Artist

Michael Sandle

Ed Wilson

Justine Smith

Stephen Chambers

- End -

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Open 10.30am to 5pm, closed Sunday mornings and Mondays

For more information on this and more images, please contact Brook Gallery. If you would like to know more about the Brook's exciting schedule of events for 2013/2014, contact Angela on 01395 443003 or angela@brookgallery.co.uk or go to www.brookgallery.co.uk