



The Prison Project

April Virgoe

The output is a series of artefacts comprising small scale smoke stencil drawings, derived from architectural spaces. The drawings focus on details such as stairs and windows, places of transition and escape.

Research Process

The drawings are informed by Virgoe's previous visit to Berwick-upon-Tweed, where she was struck by the drawings and messages that had been stencilled onto the ceiling by soldiers. The drawings are made by holding a flame beneath the stencil, leaving a sooty deposit.

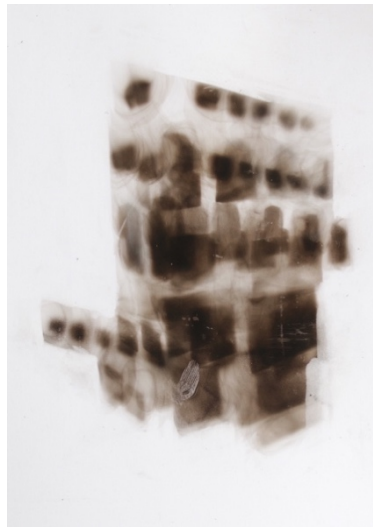
Research insights

The drawings are evidence of the human need to leave a trace, to make something as fleeting as smoke remain a little longer. An attempt to fix or mark time, to hold time in place as the days, weeks and months slip by. Whilst derived from architectural spaces, the drawings read more as fantastical: architecture of the mind rather than the world.

Dissemination

The drawings were disseminated as part of the 'Scarborough Prison Drawing Project' at Dean Road Prison, Scarborough, 12-14 February 2016. The work was also disseminated through an accompanying exhibition catalogue: The project was sponsored by Arts Council England, Coastival and Scarborough Borough Council.

Proposal



The Prison Project **April Virgoe**

Some years ago I was visiting Berwick upon Tweed museum and I was struck by the drawings and messages that had been stenciled by soldiers onto the ceiling of the barracks with the soot of a candle. These drawings are crude, small and simplistic but they are also striking, and, because they often represent soldiers and other figures they carry a strong emotional charge.

These drawings convey both an existential need to leave a trace, to make something as ephemeral as smoke remain a little longer; and an attempt to fix or mark time, to hold it in place as the days, weeks and months slip by. With an elegant resignation to the limits of the materials at hand, and the resourcefulness of prisoners, the soldiers found distraction and perhaps escape. Foucault has cited both prisons and barracks as a form of heterotopia, isolated spaces in which time is endlessly accumulated. The series of smoke stencil drawings for this project are derived from architectural spaces, but can be read as fantastical; architecture of the mind rather than the world. These drawings focus on details such as stairs and windows - places of transition and escape, exits and entrances that could take you outside or on a labyrinthine journey back to where you began.

Installation

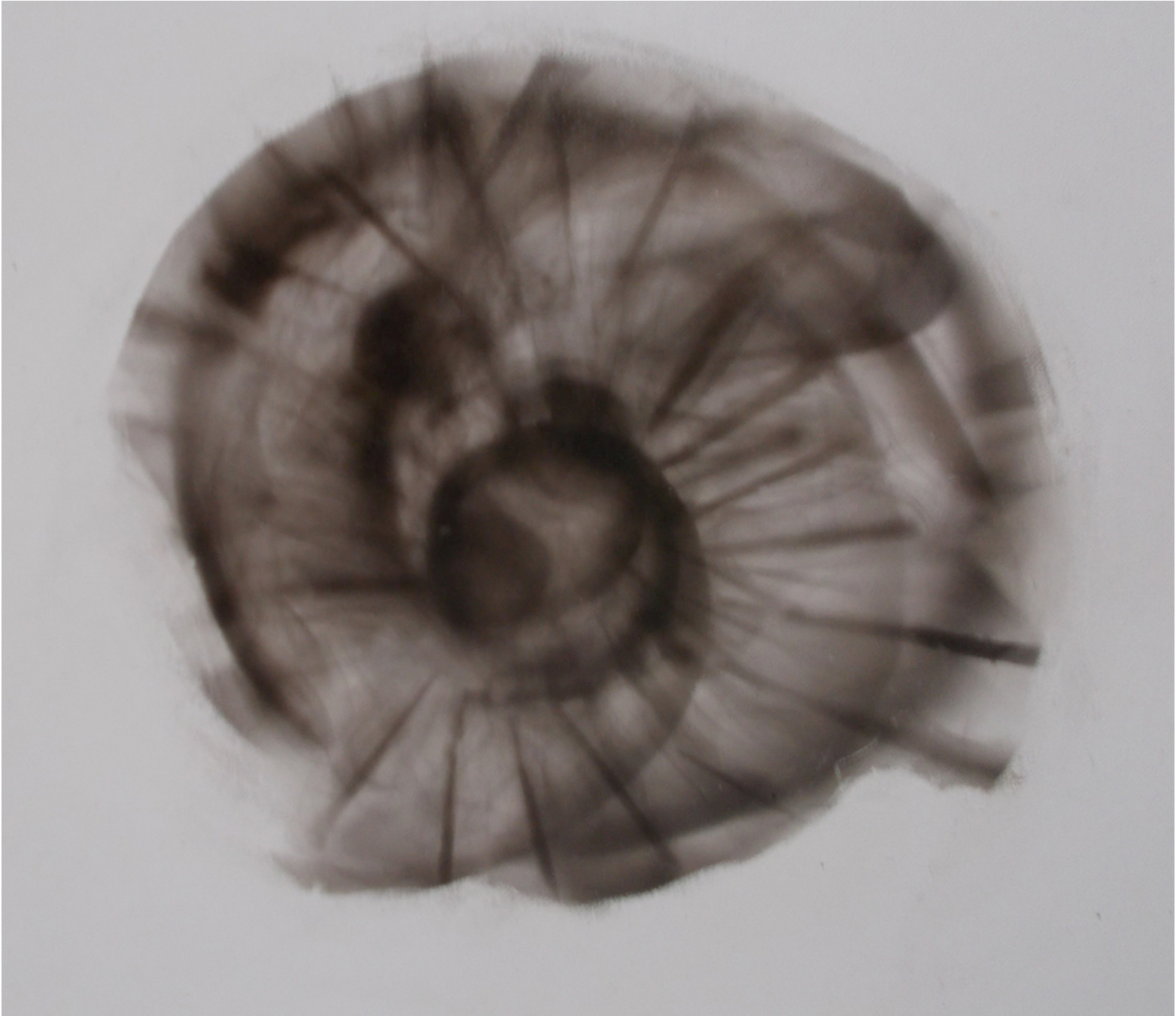






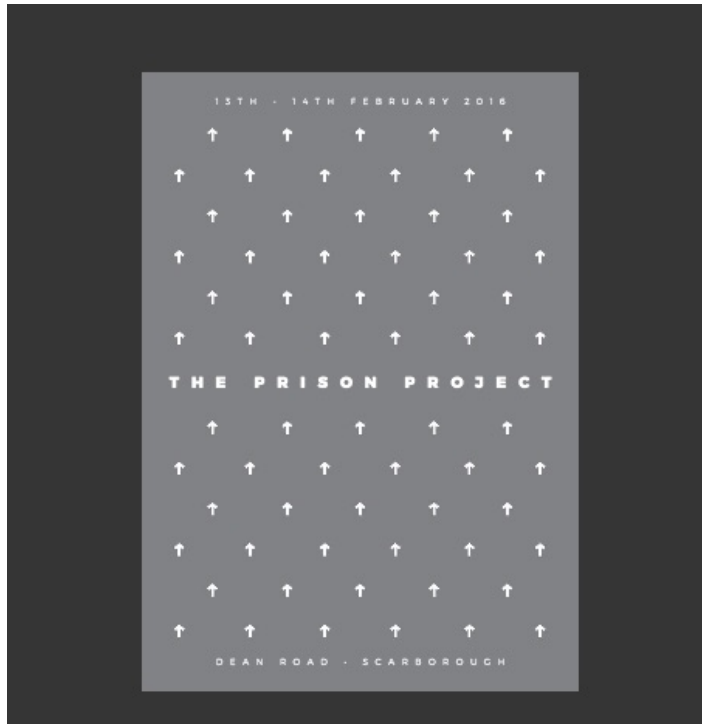






Catalogue

Accompanying essay by Lucy O'Donnell



- https://issuu.com/team_prison/docs/the_prison_drawing_project_is_suu_op