

Laurence Dubé-Rushby

Installation Art

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Press release; "A Thousand Sheep" Art project, set at River Bourne Community Farm, Salisbury.

A Thousand Sheep Project started in 2010 at River Bourne Community went on display for the first time in **Bridport Arts Centre from March 2nd to 31st of March** and had a home coming exhibition, **24th of May to 31st of June**, at the **Salisbury Arts Centre** as part of the Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival 2013, with an official launch Event shaped as a family picnic with sheep related activities to celebrate the volunteers' work.

The work is now going on tour across the UK. If you think your venue can host it, please contact Laurence Dubé-Rushby .

"A thousand Sheep"; A Conversation between the British Landscape and a french artist.

Introduction

"A Thousand Sheep" Art project focussed on developing new values, and knowledge related to local natural resources including human, economic and historical resources. People of all ages and abilities slowly engaged in the project at many different levels and developed an understanding of a contemporary art piece from its origin on the land to the Art Gallery setting. Learning and passing on traditional skills for a modern purpose was at the centre of all activities.

The project was set as a practice based research in a non-art environment and out of university context; the aim was to reconnect people with the land and gain a sense of responsibility towards local resources and sustainability. It was an open invitation to the public to get involved in making a large piece of contemporary artwork. The process was to provide the trigger for conversations and reflection on natural resources, the environment and the management of the land.

The artist and the surrounding community grew and changed through discussions and first-hand experience of natural raw materials. The project was offering to explore the way we currently respond to our basic needs for food and safety through farming and the military, and the inherent compromises and sacrifices that we make.

Artist Statement on “A thousand Sheep”;

There are many ways to explore and represent a landscape. Laurence Dubé-Rushby creates Installations in social, geographical and historical contexts, that questions the relationship between individuals and their environment. The landscape around her current home near Salisbury Plain has been shaped by two basic human needs – food and safety: farming and the military – which often put conflicting pressure on the environment.

A Thousand Sheep has been developed during a 3-year residency at the River Bourne Community Farm, Salisbury. The project, supported by a **Grant for the Arts from Arts Council England**, involved the public in making as a way to engage new audiences with contemporary art.

The installation is made from sheep fleece collected locally and hand-dyed by the artist With madder plants (also grown experimentally at the farm). In order to create this piece, Laurence had to learn all wool related skills from scratch, which she then passed on to all people involved.

The woollen thread tying the bundles (15000metres long) was hand-spun by Laurence and her volunteers. Through Laurence’s commitment to using traditional processes and materials, the piece challenges the limits of sustainable living in a contemporary context.

The use of lamb’s wool and madder red (the colour of the original army red coats)

Symbolises the sacrifice of lives that is inherent to the defence of physical, moral, religious and social boundaries across the world. As part of the residency, more than 500 children from army families and recovering soldiers took part in the shaping of the bundles, enclosing in some a personal message, tribute or wish.

“The project has been a real social adventure. As part of the research for the project, I travelled to India, contacted sheep shearers in Australia, dyers in Canada and in the UK and learnt to dye with madder in large scale with the Mulberry Dyers in their farm house in Calais. I invited volunteers to take part in the making of the piece and met people from all sorts of background. Together we washed and dyed 100 fleeces, and spun over 15000 metres of yarn for the piece.” All the bundles are tied with hand spun yarn (please note that the yarn for hanging was not spun at the farm but in a French spinning factory due to deadlines and was then dyed with madder at the farm).

“A Thousand Sheep” art project has created much interest and involvement in the community; to date it attracted

- Over 15000 visitors of which 1800 school children
- 700 school children involved in the making, 85% of which were from army’s families
- 150 adult and youth volunteers of which 50 art students
- Over 80 local, national and international artists were involved in discussions and making of the pieces.
- 20 recovering soldiers
- 8 local organisations
- 6 work experience
- 5 farmers
- 4 local businesses
- 1 film maker

CV Summary

Laurence graduated in Fashion Design in 1993 and in Fine Art in 1995 at Université des Arts Plastiques de Rennes.

She has exhibited in shared exhibitions across England and France, in venues such as **Pall Mall, London**, Gavin Turk's touring project "**The House of Fairy Tale**", **Fort de Villes**, France and have undertaken commissions for organisations such as the **Salisbury International Arts Festival**, the **Queen's Golden Jubilee**, **Common Wealth Games UK Team**, The **Study Gallery** of Poole's College, **Winchester University** with the Dance Academy, **Salisbury Arts Centre**, **Artcare at Salisbury Hospitals**, The **Hospice** and for **South Wilts Mencap** and has work in private collections In France, England and Japan.(see full CV attached)

Visit the blog to view the development of the project over the 2 years; <http://athousandssheep.blogspot.co.uk>
and the website www.laurencerushbyart.co.uk

Please, feel free to contact me would you need any extra information on 07870536303 or email info@laurencerushbyart.co.uk