AUCTION

THE Art OF REPROCESSING.

Friday 15th March | 6–8pm
The Beacon Museum | 4th Floor

Raising money for Mind West Cumbria.
Sellafield’s Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant, which we all know as Thorp recycles used nuclear fuel. But it is so much more than that. It is an icon of British industry. An incredible feat of political persuasion, chemical engineering, construction, innovation and commercial perseverance.

Thorp was highly engineered. Machinery and the innovative use of fluid mechanics meant that much of the reprocessing work inside the building was automated. But it still relied on the art of human observation; on human intervention if things didn’t look right.

The final shear in Thorp is not the end of the story. It is the start of a new chapter.

To celebrate the life of Thorp we commissioned artists from across Cumbria, the UK and from Japan to produce artworks inspired by the art of reprocessing.

The resulting paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures and collages were displayed for the public in The Beacon Museum in Whitehaven, helping to bring the plant to life for people who would never have the opportunity to see it for themselves.

Almost 6,000 people have been to see the exhibition. Now that it is coming to a close we are auctioning the pieces in aid of our chosen charity for 2019, Mind West Cumbria.
Lots:

01 South parade at dusk
02 Innovation ships
03 The town that went boom
04 Thorp Purex
05 Thorp community – a paper interpretation
06 Lifecycle
07 Pipework
08 Looking forward
09 Powerlines in Eskdale
10 Thorp – in miniature
11 Fluidics in motion
12 Knowledge
13 The narrative of construction
14 Shear ingenuity
15 Intervolve
16 Windscale
17 Keeping the lights on
18 Behind the glass
19 Pylon, Drigg
20 Connected
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Raffle prize: REPURPOSE
Mental illness does not discriminate and can affect anyone at any time.

Our chosen charity for 2019 – Mind West Cumbria – was selected by our employees and provides vital services to people in West Cumbria who are suffering mental illness.

They provide counselling, working with individuals and families. Every year the team helps hundreds of people – from Silloth and Wigton right down to Seascale and Gosforth, and everywhere in between.

People can walk in to Mind West Cumbria without an appointment and have a discussion with volunteers and other group members.

How will your donations help?

The money you raise at the auction will mean that Mind West Cumbria can continue to help people in our area.

- £5 covers the cost of the refreshments which are provided free to attendees at these sessions
- £10 covers the cost of an hour-long session with a Mind West Cumbria counsellor
- £25 covers a full day activity session aimed at helping people who suffer from social exclusion because of their mental health
- £30 means that people on the full day activity session can stay overnight
- £70,000 covers the total running costs of Mind West Cumbria for one year

Thank you for your support.
The Auction

Friday 15th March 2019
18.00–20.00
The Beacon Museum,
West Strand,
Whitehaven
CA28 7LY
thebeacon-whitehaven.co.uk

Payment and collection of artwork
Full payment of winning bids must be made on the evening of the auction. Payment can be made by cash or card.

All artwork will be securely wrapped and available to take away on the evening of the auction. Any items not taken on the evening must be collected on Saturday 16th March.

With thanks
Once again we would like to thank all of the artists who contributed their time and effort into creating these amazing pieces of artwork. We would also like to thank our Thorp employees and supply chain, as without Thorp we would not be able to draw inspiration for these artworks.

Raffle prize
Aimee Green’s “REPURPOSE” is being raffled off at the auction.

An industrial inspired piece with a fluid style reflecting Thorp’s journey, processes and change. Layers of colour reflect the years that Thorp has been in commission, a circular spiral focuses these elements’ to symbolise Thorp’s past and present whilst moving positively into the future.

Remember to win it, you have to be in it. So, dig deep, raffle tickets are £10 per ticket. All of the funds raised will go to Mind West Cumbria. £10 pays for one hour of counselling for someone who needs help from Mind West Cumbria.
This set focuses on the local landscape of West Cumbria. Jill based this series of prints on drawings that included street lights, powerlines and pylons. They provide an interesting counterpoint to the natural scenery and vernacular architecture. It is easy to forget that it is the electricity generated by nuclear fuel, some of which has been reprocessed, that allows us to live in the beautiful countryside and still be able to enjoy the comfort and convenience of modern amenities.

All three images are of places very close to the Thorp plant. South Parade at Dusk is in the adjacent village of Seascale, Power Lines in Eskdale reveals the path electricity takes in the valley and in Pylon, Drigg, Drigg Church, the old school and vicarage are dwarfed by a much more recent construction.
‘Innovation ships’
Debby Akam

My print depicts imagery from purpose-built ships that were built to bring used nuclear fuel to Thorp for reprocessing. I’ve chosen to juxtapose fragments from photographs found on the Pacific Nuclear Transport Limited website, and technical data about them. Using a variety of techniques: woodcut, silkscreen and digital imaging, and modes of representing the ships, I hoped to allow a meditation on what these representations might conjure up and how they might hold different meanings, depending on who is responding to them.
- LOT 03 -

“The town that went boom”
Paul Leith

For his artworks and sketches of Cumbrian towns; Paul has recently been exploring the social impact of industry in West Cumbria. During the construction of Thorp a large volume of people came to the West Cumbria area.

Paul’s image includes West Cumbria landmarks such as The Candlestick in Whitehaven and The Old Hall in Egremont which was a hub for night life during the construction years.
The painting summarises the reprocessing of used nuclear fuel, from nuclear reactors, by the Thorp Purex (i.e. Plutonium Uranium Extraction) process that takes place within a pulsed column and represents the innovative modifications made by Thorp scientists to this process.

The used fuel, dissolved in an aqueous solution of nitric acid, enters the pulsed column at the top. With the addition of a solvent, air is then pumped into the column, creating turbulence and mixing the solvent with the aqueous solution, in effect mixing oil and water.
The quilling is of a generic employee face that fades into the background to link this sense of community, using bright colours to make the face stand out to show how important the employees are to make the whole corporation a success. It is the people that make a company and I wanted to make this evident in my piece. I thoroughly enjoyed creating this work and I am so grateful for the opportunity and to have my work displayed in such a professional and successful establishment.
This piece represents the past and the future of the Thorp plant; a visual life cycle from its build and structure, through its working life to the final shear and beyond.

The shapes and colours on the left are inspired by those found in Thorp. The Browns and reds of the outer façade, the yellow structures inside, the bright blue of the ponds, and the circular shape of the flasks seen below the surface of the water. The red handrails take us on a journey round the plant, and then start to evolve into natural shapes to represent the plant making its final journey.
I focused on the snaking network of pipes, the gantries and supporting struts of a section of the interior at Sellafield, to make an abstracted image of the plant. The white red and black combination of colours are appropriate for the industrial subject matter.

Relief prints, using wood, lino or plastic blocks, means cutting out the design so that areas of white paper remain unprinted. The cutting process leaves the tool marks visible. Ink is rolled onto the block, paper is carefully positioned and pressure is applied. Usually a press is the norm, but because this Lino block was so large, the printmaking was by hand, using a large, heavy roller.
“Looking forward”  
Charlotte Ellis

Looking forward explores the purifying and rejuvenating properties of water in the process of cleansing and revitalising the consequences of the past. The continual transformation of the paint movement and build-up in composition mirror the gradual impacts of progress through positive change, rippling through to shape the future.

Shifting, adapting and evolving uninterrupted, the paint droplets develop and grow through the continual build-up of additional paint, steadily materialising into a bold, dynamic painting.
This set focuses on the local landscape of West Cumbria. Jill based this series of prints on drawings that included street lights, powerlines and pylons. They provide an interesting counterpoint to the natural scenery and vernacular architecture. It is easy to forget that it is the electricity generated by nuclear fuel, some of which has been reprocessed, that allows us to live in the beautiful countryside and still be able to enjoy the comfort and convenience of modern amenities.

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"Thorpy – in miniature"

Helaina Sharpley

Having demonstrated the feasibility of reprocessing oxide fuels, a Thorp Miniature Pilot Plant was built. The miniature pilot plant was 1/6000th scale of the full size Thorp plant.

As a wirework artist inspired by architecture, creating a wire drawing of the construction of Thorp was the natural answer for Helaina. The complexities and sheer scale of the plant were at first daunting, but the piece of work soon began to come to life.

Hand twisting and manipulating the wire to follow the drawing, she has added depth and perspective to highlight the size and structure of Thorp.
In my mixed media approach I’ve used glass beads to represent the gases used to transport the radioactive fluid and an underlying layer of texture to give a sense of the power involved with this movement. I chose to use blue tones to reflect the colour of the Thorp processing pools and the fluid nature of the liquids involved. I’ve represented the radioactivity of the solution with green for uranium and silver for plutonium. The hints of gold are a metaphor for the money saved by this state-of-the-art process.
As an artist and illustrator, I aim to create a world I can communicate to others without the usage of words. I find inspiration in daily life and society by telling stories behind the surface of things. Within this realm, my work varies from representational to abstract, and I am continuously moving along the continuum between the two. I use minimal materials to create my illustrations.

The story I want to tell by this work is to show the meaning of Thorp, its importance in the nuclear world and who is behind it. This technology's aim is to solve nuclear waste issues. Sellafield has been carrying this important mission for over 60 years.

Although we only see armoured concrete of Sellafield, the facilities are not only built by physical materials, but also from expertise from the UK and Japan. Their knowledge are the strong base behind the construction of Sellafield. Without these experts working hard behind this facility, great things cannot be born.
This sculpture plays its part within the exhibition by displaying the story on the theme of construction within the clean-up of the Plant. A detailed miniature sculpture designed around the structural likeness in scale and complexity of the project. The theme delivered using a mixture of found objects and wire sculpture. Each element of the theme was carefully considered on likeness and scale, and then strategically placed within the model. The use of ready-made found objects lends itself to the bold look of the construction site. This is complemented by the handmade wire sculptures of plant and machinery.
“Shear ingenuity”
Ali Heggie

Showing the throughput of Thorp ‘in the round’, it’s possible to see that there have been many great achievements across the years, as well as a few less successful periods too. The complexity of the task undertaken at Thorp makes the levels of achievement, throughout the decades, all the more impressive.

The colours represent the shearing throughput rates for AGR (Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor), BWR (Boiling Water Reactor), PWR (Pressurized Water Reactor) and annual throughput totals.

It’s fascinating how taking a visual approach to data not only changes the industrial into art, but also creates a visual representation of the facts. It enables the viewer to interpret the performance without needing to know the details.
This piece represents the link that Thorp has created between West Cumbria and the rest of the world. The wheel or round form of the piece is laid out in a way that invokes a sense that it is rotating. This rotation represents renewal and is the key principal of what Thorp does in its bid to reprocess nuclear fuel. This piece revolves around the hub and spoke principal.

The hub represents Thorp and the many people involved in the operation and development of the plant. The spokes represent linkages to Thorp’s overseas contracts. The coloured shoelaces towards the outside of the piece represent each of the countries that Thorp has been fortunate to work with over its years in operation.
“Windscale”
Katie Edwards

The original silkscreen print which includes many hand painted layers is a story of the Windscale Inquiry. The plans for Thorp were both supported and opposed. The plant would create billions for the UK economy by recycling nuclear fuel and was backed by trade unions and the community. Anti Nuclear campaigners wanted to stop construction.

The views of scientists, technologists and environmentalists were aired publicly during the inquiry which was run by Mr Justice Parker. Sir Frederick Warner, a chemical engineer, and Sir Edward Pochin, a radiologist, are pictured on the left of the image, and were very much involved. As were Friends of the Earth who argued that reprocessing doesn’t reduce waste management. The inquiry lasted 100 days at the Whitehaven Civic Hall.
“Keeping the lights on”
Neil Dawkins

The closure of Thorp is not about making redundancies, but more about reskilling and redeployment. Some industries such as steel or shipbuilding have seen large scale redundancies when work stops – but they have taken a different approach.

As Sellafield Ltd transforms and reprocessing operations at Thorp and Magnox come to an end, the focus will shift to the clean-up of the site and environmental remediation.

Sellafield Ltd are reskilling and redeploying people from Thorp to use their skills to ‘keep the lights on’ during the decommissioning of the site.

This electrical item was tested prior to installation.
Use of this item is done at the owner’s risk.
"Behind the glass"
Thomas Hedger

This piece is inspired by the everyday operation of Thorp and the work which goes on behind the scenes on a day to day basis. An ‘operations eye view’ draws you in to take a glimpse at the work in Thorp that happens behind walls and windows in cells that you would not normally see but which is vital to the identity, impetus and impression of Thorp itself.
“Pylon, Drigg”  
Jill Davis

This set focuses on the local landscape of West Cumbria. Jill based this series of prints on drawings that included street lights, powerlines and pylons. They provide an interesting counterpoint to the natural scenery and vernacular architecture. It is easy to forget that it is the electricity generated by nuclear fuel, some of which has been reprocessed, that allows us to live in the beautiful countryside and still be able to enjoy the comfort and convenience of modern amenities.

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This piece is focused around the Thorp building, using this as my inspiration, I wanted to illustrate the changes that are occurring at Sellafield which revolve around the building and the workforce within. As they move into a new era where they will no longer be reprocessing, but undergoing a clean-up process whilst still storing nuclear waste.

It is the workforce that make this happen, it is their energy that will carry Sellafield through these changes. I wanted the building to be the centre of the work, symbolising the continuation of employment there, solid and unchanging but the lines to represent the energy of the workforce within and also show the interconnections between all these elements as they undergo this transition.
I was inspired to make the work by the beautiful countryside that surrounds Sellafield – lush interlocking hills and forest and the deep vast ocean beyond. I was intrigued by the difference in textures between that of the man made objects and the natural world.

I wanted to create something that reflected this; the layered textures and tones of the landscape.
Exploring colour and form REPURPOSE emerged. An industrial inspired piece with a fluid style reflecting Thorp’s journey, processes and change. Layers of colour reflect the years that Thorp has been in commission, a circular spiral focuses these elements’ to symbolise Thorp’s past and present whilst moving positively into the future. REPURPOSE is a reflection of the growing abstraction of the tides of change in industrial society.
All proceeds from the auction will go to Sellafield Ltd’s chosen charity for 2019, Mind West Cumbria.