

ArtSway

Contemporary Visual Art in the New Forest

Teachers Pack

Igloo: Summerbranch

4 March – 30 April 2006

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SWAY PARISH COUNCIL



Igloo: Summerbranch

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Exhibition Information for Teachers

Igloo (Ruth Gibson & Bruno Martelli)

Ruth Gibson & Bruno Martelli have collaborated on experimental multimedia projects since 1995. They formed Igloo after the success of 'Daylight Robbery', a motion capture animation & 'WindowsNinetyEight', CD Rom 1996-8, which was nominated for a BAFTA award in 2002. Their work explores metaphysical worlds using video, internet, performance & installation. Informed by contemporary dance practice, the body is the medium that drives the effects of multiple software & hardware use, which generate the screen based & live performance pieces. Recent works include 'Winterspace', installation/performance 2001-2003, which explores the use of digital technology to abstract the human body, it's movement, & it's senses using custom built software interfaces & responsive systems for performer & player, installation & DVD 'Warstars', 2002-2003 & performance 'Viking Shoppers', 2000. Their enquiry of interactive, 2D & 3D computer graphic media & process has consistently challenged the boundaries of digital imaging within the context of dance installation & live performance. <http://www.igloo.org.uk>



The Exhibition

Summerbranch is a new commission by Igloo that explores movement and stillness in nature. Using camouflage and other disguises, a person or a computer character can blend into a 'natural' environment captured and treated through the moving image.

This installation in the ArtSway galleries uses the tools of the military-entertainment complex: computer gaming, motion capture, 3D environments and special effects to question what is truth and artifice in our attempts to reproduce nature. Through the creation of a computer generated virtual world Summerbranch seeks to address this through the use of disguise in dance and movement. Igloo not only investigate the role of the 'real' in virtual environments but also that of the reproduction of nature in the history of art and particularly landscape work.

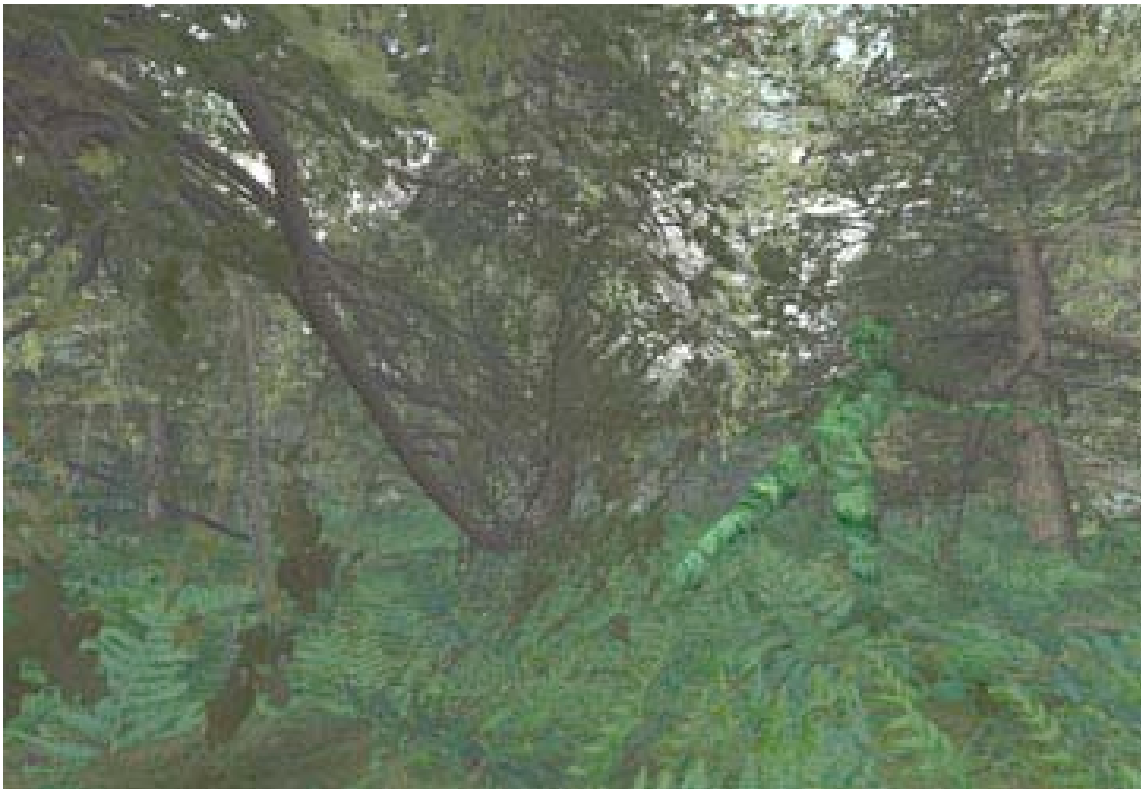
The gallery installations include multi-channel projections offering the visitor the opportunity to navigate around the virtual world; full screen video works, three dimensional work and prints; all acting together to form a work which challenges our notions of dance and our experience of the real.

Igloo founder members Ruth Gibson and Bruno Martelli have been working together since 1995. Their projects are interdisciplinary and are made working with teams of practitioners drawn primarily from dance and technology backgrounds. Collaborators on Summerbranch include: Joanne Fong, Mark Bruce, Adam Nash, John McCormick, Henry Dalton, Lisette PunkyPixie, Animazoo, Bionatics, Interlace4d, Jeffrey Jacobson, essexdance, 3T RPD Ltd.

Images of Works by Igloo



The following images are from Summerbranch:



Themes for Lessons and Workshops

We are interested in the visual & kinaesthetic applications of the computer. The imagery, movement & music in our work, whether CD Rom, DVD, web based or hybrid performance are all balanced through the technology. Uniquely we develop our own software tools & methods of working & presenting. Our methodologies for combining creative art forms bring theatrical experiences to new audiences. Artistic processes are being reinvented all around us, as the use of digital media is now widespread, we want to create new methods of interaction. Developing ways of blurring the boundaries between spectator & participator both passively & actively we view 'interactivity' as a new kind of audience engagement.

Statement by Ruth Gibson & Bruno Martelli (Igloo)

As described in the **Exhibition Information for Teachers** part of this booklet Igloo's work contains varied themes and ideas – many of which could be adapted for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum for Art, as well as IT, and Design and Technology.

Themes and Ideas to consider for Lessons:

- **Nature/ the Natural World and Camouflage**
- **Movement of the body/ Stillness**
- **Truth and Fiction**
- **Use of New Technology**

Nature/ the Natural World and Camouflage

Although the world created in Summerbranch is virtual – made by using a computer and high-powered software – it is nevertheless based in reality. For example: the trees in Summerbranch are not just random pixels designed to simply mimic a tree, but are created using a software package that references hundreds of varieties of trees from around the globe. Even the distance one travels through this virtual world is equivalent to that of the real world. Alongside Summerbranch Igloo will also be exhibiting a video film that will feature a person wearing camouflage, seated within a landscape. Although this film is about disguise, it also references nature and how human beings fit into the natural environment.

Movement of the body/ Stillness

Summerbranch features a female character whose body is made up of elements of the virtual world that surrounds her (see the **Images of Works by Igloo** section of this booklet). Igloo created this character using motion capture technology. Sensors were attached to the body of a dancer who then moved through the landscape, directed by Igloo – her movements captured and recorded by a computer. As the viewer interacts with the virtual world of Summerbranch they will come across this virtual character who at times morphs into and becomes one with the landscape that surrounds her.

In addition to Summerbranch is the film, also by Igloo, in which a person wears camouflage within a landscape. This work is the antithesis of

movement – as the aim here is for the person wearing the camouflage to stay still and undetected for as long as possible. This person becomes one with the landscape, and is arguably no more or less important within that landscape than a tree or a bush.

Truth and Fiction/ Reality and Unreality

The very nature of a virtual environment, as used in Summerbranch, makes us question what is real and what is not. Although the trees and other elements of the virtual landscape are facsimiles, they are still very much made using bits of real information. These assembled pixels, although not perfect copies, prompt us to question and to look more in-depth at the world around us.

The film of a person wearing camouflage is much more ambiguous than Summerbranch. In the latter we know the world we are interacting with is an unreality – but with the former we must constantly question our senses. This film is itself incredibly still – the camera is fixed in one position – and the only references to movement is the wind blowing through the trees, and the accompanying music. The question here is: can we trust the artists that there is in fact a person – in camouflage – actually hiding within this film?

Use of New Technology

The range of tools and materials an artist can use to make artworks is evolving all the time. Summerbranch has all the hallmarks of a video-game, but is different in that it is the realisation of emotional, physiological and psychological themes as manipulated by the artists. This virtual world is created simply for people to explore and interact with – and is less about achieving a specific aim and more about exploring emotional responses in the viewer.

To create this world Igloo had to master and utilise new technology – such as motion capture – as well as existing technology. This existing technology entails using specific and bespoke software packages, and being able to programme the computer correctly to realise their work.

Guided Tours and Workshops at ArtSway

ArtSway is always keen to welcome school groups visiting the gallery. Please see the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet for more information. **Please note:** we would only be able to accommodate between 20 and 25 children in the galleries per visit.

Guided Tours

One of the best ways to experience an artists work, as opposed to looking at images in books and on the internet, is to actually visit a gallery to see their work in the flesh. ArtSway has hosted many school group visits in the past, offering **Guided Tours** around the gallery by the Exhibition and Education Officer and Audience Development Officer.

The tours sometimes involve power point presentations, but usually consist of ArtSway's Officers taking the students from work to work, explaining the origins and content of the works on display. A tour will usually end with a question and answer session.

On some occasions it may be possible to have the artists present for a school visit.

Workshops

ArtSway employs a wide range of artists to lead workshops. However, they are all professional artists who will charge a fee to lead a workshop. If a school is interested in scheduling an artists to lead a workshop, please contact the gallery. Contact details are in the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet.

There are a series of one-hour workshops available, taking place after the tour of the exhibition, that will be lead by ArtSway's Exhibitions and Education Officer. These workshops, that will involve simple drawing and paintings techniques, will be based on the themes outlined in the **Themes for Lessons and Workshops** section of this booklet. These themes will be relevant to the Alison Turnbull exhibition and are: **Patterns and Plans, History of a Place, Research and Developing Ideas, and Use of Tools**

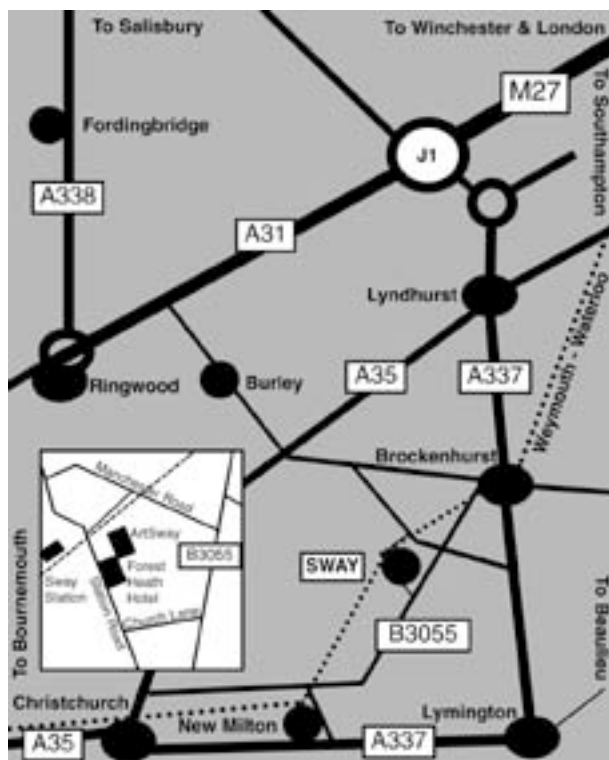
A Timetable of a Typical School Visit to ArtSway

- 10.00am – 10.10am: **Introduction and welcome to ArtSway.**
- 10.10am – 10.30am: **Tour of the exhibition.**
- 10.30am – 11.30am: **Workshop activities.**
- 11.30am – 11.45am: **Discussion and round-up of activities.**
- 12.00pm: **End of workshops and school visit.**

Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway

The following is information for school groups visiting ArtSway for **Guided Tours and Workshops**.

Getting to ArtSway



By Rail: Sway Station is on the London Waterloo to Weymouth Line.

By Car: Follow signs to Sway from Brockenhurst, Burley or Lymington, then follow signs for Village Centre & Train Station. ArtSway is just behind the Forest Heath Hotel on Station Road.

Access: All parts of the gallery are accessible via level access.

Parking: ArtSway has its own car park which is reached along the access drive between the surgery and chemist on Station Road in the centre of Sway

In the Galleries

Works of art, especially Alison Turnbull's paintings, are very fragile and cannot be touched. We ask that children visiting the gallery take care both of their own safety and of the artworks on display. Teachers and their assistants are responsible for their groups. At the beginning of the tour the relevant ArtSway Officer will give a brief explanation to the visiting children of what they can and cannot do in the gallery.

Contact Details for ArtSway

If you would like to discuss a visit to ArtSway, or what we could offer in terms of educational resources, please contact:

Exhibitions and Education Officer Peter Bonnell on Telephone: 01590 682260 (extension 14), or Email: peter@artsway.org.uk

Address: ArtSway, Station Road, Sway, Hampshire, SO41 6BA
Telephone: 01590 682260 **Fax:** 01590 681989

Email: mail@artsway.org.uk **Web:** www.artsway.org.uk

Opening Times: Tuesday to Sunday, 11am – 5pm. **Admission is FREE.**