



School: Bath School of Art

Researcher: Rosie Snell

Project Title: Cold War Anglia

UOA: D32 Art and Design

Statement

In 2013, Snell became involved in a research project being run by Dr Richard Maguire from the University of East Anglia. This project aimed to explore how the Cold War impacted on the local community of East Anglia and the significance of the region's role in the conflict. The plan was to document the sites involved in order to produce a body of work – paintings, drawings and photographs – but also to collect archive material from the East Anglian Film Archives, as well as from the local population who had lived with the disturbances of these sites.

East Anglia was chosen as it contains a variety of Cold War sites, including the former RAF Coltishall airfield; the Radar station at Neatishead; Orford Ness, which housed our Atomic Weapons and Radar Research facilities; and Gorse Hill Industrial Estate in Thetford, formally RAF Barnham, which was one of Britain's first nuclear bomb storage facilities.

Historians increasingly see the Cold War as an identifiable historical era, which spawned its own social, intellectual, political and cultural history. However, a majority of the research surrounding the Cold War has been concentrated on policy making and military strategy. This project aimed to readdress the balance by examining the impact on a local level. The front line of this secretive war lay in the heart of Britain's rural communities, where nuclear weapons sites, listening stations and airbases sprang up next to small villages.

Through this series of paintings and drawings Snell explores how the local landscapes saw successive stages of new militarisation as the Cold War progressed and the technology of warfare altered. This work was discussed in public lectures in Norwich and Trowbridge as well as with students within Bath Spa University. Work from this series was included in *Landscapes* a group exhibition (2019).