



Frederick Bell

“Looking at Looking”

(An exhibition sequel to, ‘Some Corner of a Foreign Field....’)

The Greene Gallery, St John’s International School, Waterloo.

Opening/Vernissage 18hr-20hr October 7th 2016

Exhibition closes 26th October.

This exhibition revisits an earlier one that Frederick Bell made specifically for the gallery at St. John's in 1998 entitled 'Some Corner of Foreign Field', a fragment quoted from Rupert Brooke's famous poem, 'The Soldier' which in 1914, at the outbreak of the First World War, evoked a patriotic sense of English identity.

St. John's and its gallery with its proximity to the location of an earlier conflict, the Battle of Waterloo fought in 1815, formed a significant site-specific context for Fred's exhibition. He explored the way visitors to the site of the battle, which took

place in what is otherwise today an unremarkable field in Belgium, brought with them and projected onto this place their own mental conditioning made up of pre-conceived ideas and images often culled, consciously or unconsciously, from significant images of the conflict and icons of national identity, based largely on romantic or heroic paintings of the Battle featuring Napoleon and Wellington seen in historical collections like The Louvre.

The central concern of Fred's work, then and now, has been, as the title of this current exhibition suggests, to explore the nature of looking itself and to understand how personal, social, historical and cultural contexts both condition and 'frame' the way we choose, consciously or otherwise, to see the world and construct meanings around it and to examine and question these conventional and conditional realities by engaging the viewer in a visual dialogue with the work, its creative processes and the nature of perception itself.

Steve Scott, a PHD researcher at the Royal College of Art recently asked Fred, *"would you consider that any of the pieces of work you have made are ever finished?"* In discussions with Fred about his art it is clear that he sees his work as engaging both himself as the artist and the viewer in an ongoing process of making, remaking, looking and introspection in which the individual pieces of work and the whole exhibition and its context are balanced, sharing equal value and importance for finding and connecting meanings. Fred has said, *"everything I do includes the history of itself and myself"*. This remake or sequel to the first exhibition can be better understood by considering that in the intervening years Fred's work has, in his own words, 'changed, becoming more open and flexible'.

Oscar Wilde once famously said in the context of his book 'A Picture of Dorian Grey,

"It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors"

It is a great pleasure and privilege to be able to invite Fred, who has been a personal friend for many years, to make this exhibition and to collaborate with him and our current students once again in the context of the school, this gallery and our visiting artists programme and to invite our International, Belgian and local community to engage with us in exploring the nature of looking itself through the unique and special opportunity this exhibition offers us, like a mirror in which we may be able to explore our own reflected minds and the inner and outer contexts that condition the perceptual realities we construct. In a world in which mindful reflection in the public discourse is rare, we can hopefully raise our awareness and understanding of the complex and conditional nature of these realities by participating in this dialogue with ourselves and with each other.

Alan Mitchell, HS art teacher

Frederick Bell

Short Biography:

<http://whatareyoulookingat-fredbell.blogspot.com>

Worked as a medical laboratory scientist for 7 years until going to Art College in Sheffield in 1982. Was a student of the conceptual artist John Hilliard at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham and graduated in 1986 with a first class BA Hons Degree in Fine Art. Awarded a British Academy scholarship in 1992 to the University of Dundee, Scotland and graduated with a Master of Fine Arts Degree.

First exhibited in 'The Young Contemporaries' at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester in 1985. Moved to Brussels in 1988. Has since shown work regularly at 'Ruimte Morguen' Antwerp, as well as being involved in many exhibitions and projects in Austria, Belgium, Britain, the Netherlands, France and the USA. These include the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; Museum of Photography, Antwerp; Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp; J&J Donguy, Paris; The Nunnery, London; and Fotogalerie Wien.

Has worked as a visiting Lecturer at several universities and colleges in the U.K. including Camberwell College of Arts, London. Has also lectured and given seminars in Belgium at the Museum Van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerp and The Open University Brussels.

Worked for 10 years as a Senior Examiner in Visual Arts for the International Baccalaureate Organisation, has written for and been documented in various international publications.

Most recent exhibitions include:

'What's Your Location' Contemporary Art Platform, Kuwait City. 2016		May/June
	CEEE, Porto Alegre, Brazil	August/Sept
2015		
'Sense of Place' 2015	Ruimte Morguen Antwerp	Oct/Nov
'(Re)View'	Cultuurcentrum, Hasselt	June 2015

