

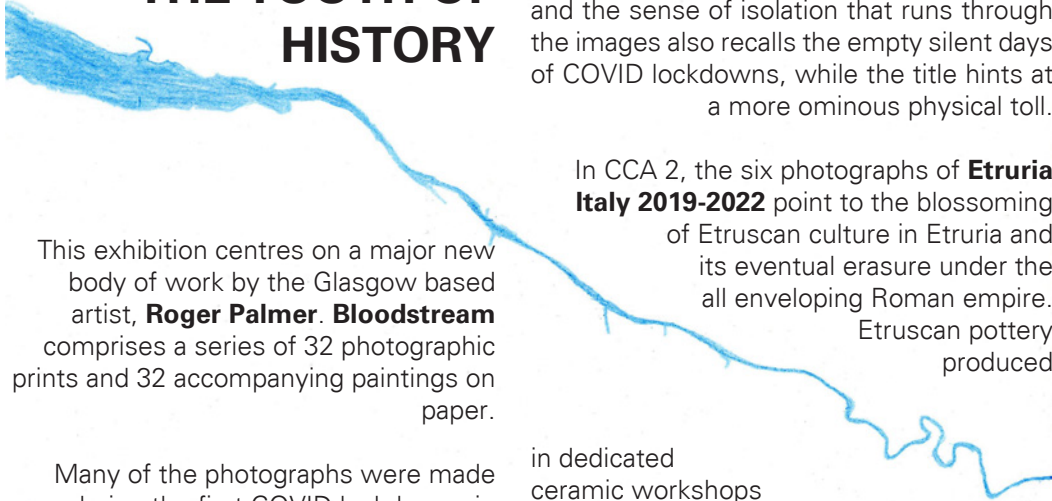


The Tooth of History

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Roger Palmer

18/11/22 - 23/12/22

THE TOOTH OF HISTORY



The liminal perspective of the river banks and the sense of isolation that runs through the images also recalls the empty silent days of COVID lockdowns, while the title hints at a more ominous physical toll.

This exhibition centres on a major new body of work by the Glasgow based artist, **Roger Palmer. Bloodstream** comprises a series of 32 photographic prints and 32 accompanying paintings on paper.

Many of the photographs were made during the first COVID lockdowns in 2020. Palmer cycled to various points along the River Clyde where he would make photographs, at first without any overarching idea or design. Gradually, he began to consider these images in tandem with another strand of his lockdown activities, the paintings on paper which had brought him back to much earlier experiments with acrylic paint.

The sequence of the *Bloodstream* images is determined by the flow of the river: beginning closer to the river's source east of Glasgow and moving west towards the Firth of Clyde. A gradual shift of colour in the paintings can also be traced through the sequence of works around the gallery.

Through the metaphor of bloodstream, Palmer references the importance of the Clyde to the history and growth of Glasgow – its key role in the colonisation and exploitation of Virginia, its centrality to the spread of industrialisation and empire, its nurturing of workers' rights and its more recent function as a symbol of the post-industrial city.

In CCA 2, the six photographs of **Etruria Italy 2019-2022** point to the blossoming of Etruscan culture in Etruria and its eventual erasure under the all enveloping Roman empire. Etruscan pottery produced

in dedicated ceramic workshops stylistically reveals the influence of both Grecian and Phoenician cultures. While it has been celebrated for its aesthetic qualities, it also plays an important role historically, providing insights into the Etruscan way of life in the absence of more definitive surviving documents.



On the opposite wall, **Etruria, England, 2016-2022** traces the Etruscan influence through to one of the key generators of the industrial revolution – Josiah Wedgwood. The potteries he founded in Stoke-on-Trent were based on the principle of division of labour combining craftsmanship and factory production. Wedgwood pioneered innovations in marketing and retail, shaping the emergence of a consumer market.



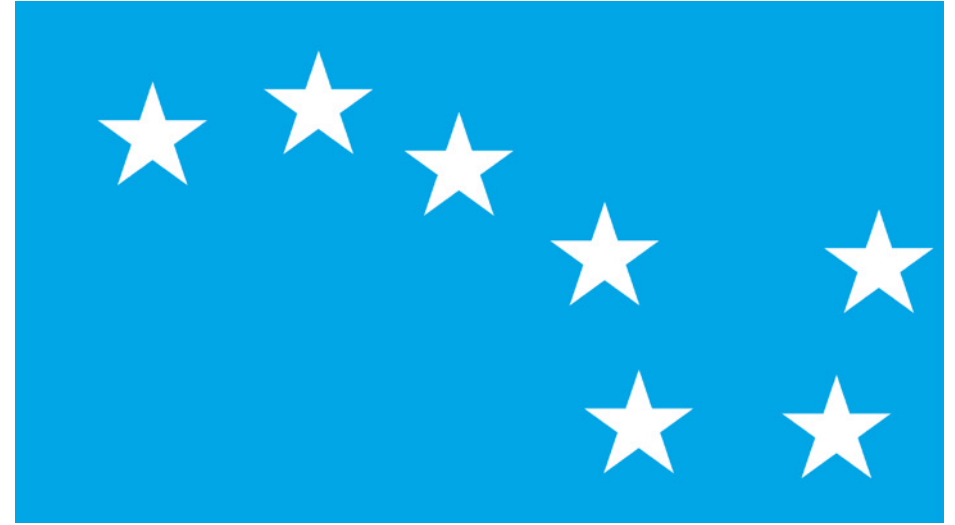
Two other major works occupy the remaining two walls of CCA 2. The first, **Partial Eclipse (2015-2022)**, was conceived in Kronstadt, a Russian naval port near Saint-Petersburg which was the scene of a mutiny against the Bolshevik government in 1921. The dispute centred on shipyard workers and sailors whose campaign for independent soviets was brutally repressed by a battalion of the Red Army. Palmer explains the circumstances around the genesis of the work:

Partial Eclipse is the product of a residency hosted by the Saint-Petersburg branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Art. On March 20th, 2015, as a solar eclipse occurred over northern Europe, I made my first visit to the city centre. In gloomy midday sunlight, I walked to the State Russian Museum to see work by Kazimir Malevich and other early 20th Century Russian artists. The collection includes Malevich's Composition with Mona Lisa (1914); a painting formed of layers of angular shapes, figurative clues and collaged fragments. Two painted words, 'Частичное' and 'затмение' are clearly visible. As these translate as 'partial' and 'eclipse', the absence of the work from the museum's walls on March 20th, 2015, represented an unrealised moment of synchronicity.



An installation photograph from The Last Exhibition of Futurist Painting 0.10 (Zero-Ten)

1915-1916, shows a group of Malevich's early 'Suprematist' works hung as components of a fragmented composition. At the centre of the installation, the first 'Black Square' occupies a right-angle between two walls, immediately below an ornate cornice. **Partial Eclipse**, a grid of twenty photographs, present layers of material fragments encountered in and around Kronstadt. They are placed on a graphite wall-drawing: a tilted rectangle suggestive of a recurring motif in work by Malevich and other Zero-Ten artists.



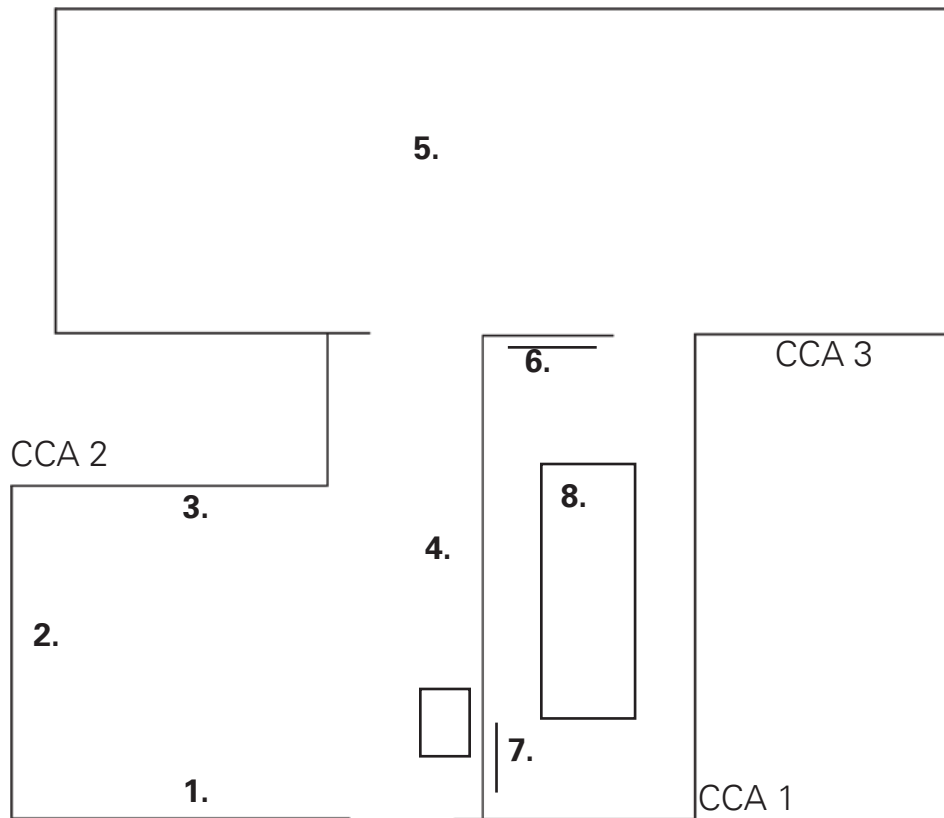
Following the Starry Plough, 2015-2022 references The Starry Plough, an Irish socialist flag. James Connolly, the founder of the Irish Citizen Army, described its design as an aspiration for a free Ireland that controlled its own destiny 'from the plough to the stars'. A simplified version of the flag, comprising seven white stars on a blue ground, was adopted by the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union in 1934. Palmer combines the image with a digital map, a reproduction of a 1958 map, *Irlanda*, appropriated by Piero Manzoni, and seven silver gelatin prints to create his own complex mapping process:

By superimposing the 1934 version of the flag on a map of the island of Ireland, the positioning of stars identified seven random zones in which I would make photographs. In September 2015, I spent three days working in each of the zones and subsequently selected one photograph from each.

Piero Manzoni's 1958 silkscreen print, Irlanda, adds a further dimension to a project that spans a century of change and conflict. The dimensions of Manzoni's print are retained, as is the typeface used to identify the locations of photographs on my rotated version of the Starry Plough flag.

A colour photograph, printed as a multiple edition, was made in Strokestown, County Roscommon. Ireland's National Famine Museum is housed in Strokestown Park House, an 18th century Palladian mansion on an estate owned for over 300 years by an Anglo-Irish family.





CCA 1

1. *Etruria, England, 2016-2022*
Silver gelatin prints
2. *Partial Eclipse 2015-2022*
Silver gelatin prints; graphite wall-drawing
3. *Etruria, Italy, 2019-2022*
Chromogenic prints from digital files
4. *Following the Starry Plough, 2015-2022*
Silver gelatin prints; reproduction of Irlanda c.1958 (sourced from Piero Manzoni, *Tavoli di Accertamento*, 8 silkscreen prints on paper, 1962); star-map inkjet print; *Strokestown*, inkjet print multiple from digital file.

CCA 2

5. *Bloodstream 2020-2022*
Silver gelatin prints; acrylic paintings on paper

CCA 3 - A Reading Room

6. *2014 Commonwealth Games Glasgow street poster designed by Richy Lamb*
7. *1987 Third Eye Centre Exhibition poster Designed by Pavel Büchler*
8. This room presents an overview of artist books made by Roger Palmer over a 50-year period: 1972 - 2022. Including *A Stone's Throw* (Fotohof edition, Salzburg 2022):

A Stone's Throw
Fotohof edition, Salzburg, 2022

Limited edition includes a signed print hand-made by the artist: either AST 2.5 or AST 8.5 (both in editions of 20)

£260

Available for purchase from CCA Box Office

CCA: Centre for
Contemporary Arts

