‘We Put the World Before You’, 2016-17

Amount of Funding: £40,000.00 funding.

Source of Funding: Wellcome Trust Small Arts Award.

Collaborators: FaceLab, Liverpool John Moores University, Professor Caroline Wilkinson, Professor Iain Hutchison, The Wellcome Trust Archive, Film and Video Umbrella, Imperial War Museum, MIMA Middlesbrough.

Start Date: October 2016

Anticipated End Date: Autumn 2018

Associated PGRs: NA

‘We Put the World Before You’, 2016 In this recent single-channel video installation, I examined the origins of modern plastic surgery and the surgical innovations that were deployed to treat the horrendous facial wounds that combatants suffered during in the WWI conflict. Consulting with Professor Iain Hutchison (a practicing surgeon specialising in facial reconstruction), and Professor Caroline Wilkinson (a forensic anthropologist who uses computer techniques to restore facial likenesses to people who have remained invisible or gone unrepresented), I compiled a patchwork of newly filmed and historical footage, including rare material from medical archives. The title of the piece alludes to the championing work of the early cinema pioneer Charles Urban, who used microphotographic techniques to make the unseen marvels of the natural world visible (and entertaining) to the viewing public. These multiple layers of archive material were supplemented by two key scenes. The first of these involved computer graphic sequences of my own face materialising after being 3D scanned. And as a counterpoint to this, the film also featured a number of women undergoing a group hypnosis session, in which their faces are gradually voided of expression. As well as a reference to how hypnosis was used to treat cases of trauma caused by the war, the scene also alludes to how séances were employed, at the time, to make contact with the dead, or husbands and sons who were missing in action.
“We Put The World Before You” 2016 (duration 15mins) Installation MIMA, Middlesbrough, U.K.

The finished film was presented within a specially designed gauze structure and as a single-channel high-definition video.


To hear Jane and Louise’s thoughts on their work, watch here: Jane and Louise Wilson Interview