

BORDER LANDS

**From the Welsh Borders
to Antarctica**

A Meadow Arts exhibition
at Hay Castle

15 May – 31 August 2026

Cover image: Lucy + Jorge Orta, Antarctica Flag, 2007–2009

kindly supported by



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ENGLAND

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Welcome to BorderLands

Welcome to Meadow Arts' BorderLands exhibition presented in partnership with Hay Castle. Throughout the castle and its grounds, BorderLands brings together a diverse range of artistic voices that confront the personal, political, and cultural dimensions of borders and boundaries.

The exhibition is part of our 3 year programme, BorderLands, which attempts to uncover a more layered understanding of borders. Conceived in the region known as the Welsh Border and based across a series of towns straddling the divide, the project proposes the example of such liminal places to explore the paradox of borders. With this project comes a suggestion that borderlands can be envisaged as vibrant spaces of interaction, exchanges and innovation where revitalised identities and communities can thrive.

At a time of increasing polarisation and renewed political tensions, when issues around identity, belonging and territory are being exacerbated and amplified, borders can become the focal point of multiple strains and stresses. The rise of new nationalisms along with that of populism all too often leads to exclusion and a tendency towards isolation. The online, always 'on' world of digital communications, which should have brought the world closer together has instead raised new levels of division.

At the same time, actual geographic transformations and displacement of communities, often induced by climate change, are redefining local and global borders. While borders have always helped to delineate cultural, linguistic and historical identities, we are witnessing how they can become useful irritants for the power-hungry, compromising yearnings for a gentler world.

A Castle on the Frontier

Almost all the works in this exhibition reveal a longing for unity beyond borders and boundaries, inviting us to a redrawing and perhaps a knitting together of new communal entities. This attitude could be deemed idealistic and utopian, but the artists represented in the exhibition don't necessarily advocate for the abolition of borders. Instead, they express a desire to reconsider the scale of human values and suggest new perspectives.

Anne de Charmant
Artistic Director, Meadow Arts

Welcome to Hay Castle. Border fortress, mansion, learning centre – and very special contemporary art space bringing memorable encounters to our borderland communities.

Rescued from ruin through a £7.5m restoration, the castle's luminous and serene interior belies a chaotic history that began over 900 years ago when the frontier stronghold was first built by Matilda, a seven-foot giantess.

Borders are not only the context for which Hay Castle was first built, but also for the violent tides of control and resistance that our building has witnessed across centuries.

The border is also the context for the vibrant spirit of Hay. In zoology, the interesting part is the edge of the pond – the middle is tranquil while frantic activity is found at the edges. A thriving culture has formed at this edge too! Away from the centre, where two countries meet.

Past friction and fluidity at our frontier drive us to respect local and national cultures, while encouraging cross-border dialogue in the hope that we might do a little to cool conditions for conflict.

We're not bound by this history, but we are shaped by it – we wish to be forever fresh, always original, alive to the present.

That's why we're thrilled to be working with Meadow Arts, who've brought together these works to review the theme of the border in the light of preoccupations and tensions in the world today. And we're immensely grateful to our funders – the Colwinston Charitable Trust 30th Anniversary Fund, the de Laszlo Foundation, the Elmley Foundation and Arts Council Wales.

Leo Fitzmaurice

Arcadia, 2007, Metal road signs



Fitzmaurice's practice is deeply rooted in a process of roaming and observation. His focus invariably centres on the everyday and highlights subtleties so common they are often overlooked.

Arcadia uses the familiar form and visual style of road signs, but Fitzmaurice's playful artworks invite us to replace factual information and directions with an abstract ideal.

Named after a region in Greece, Arcadia became a by-word for a simple, unspoiled and perfect place. It has come to describe an imagined natural and harmonious environment, a utopian vision of a rural idyll where native populations live in perfect harmony with their rural surroundings.

Placed on the large terrace of Hay Castle the signs refer to the beauty of the landscape and hint at the view some visitors may have of attractive rural places like Hay-on-Wye.

This exhibition breaks out from the walls of our gallery. We're excited to see different spaces and atmospheres throughout castle and grounds newly activated by beauty and fresh enquiry.

I wonder what Matilda would have thought, riding out to defend the border at sword-point, to see her tower lit with Hilary Jack's neon words –

No Borders. Just Horizons. Only Freedom.

We hope that you're moved by the show.

Dr. Tom True

Director, Hay Castle



Lucy + Jorge Orta

Antarctica Flag, 2002-2009



Lucy and Jorge Orta are a collective of English contemporary visual artists, living and working between London and Paris. *Antarctic Village No Borders* is a key work in their practice, a long-term research project 'Antarctica' which explores environmental issues, habitat, autonomy, mobility, politics and cooperation.

As a territorial entity, Antarctica is the only truly politically neutral region on earth. In 2007 Studio Orta embarked on an incredible journey to Antarctica. Aided by the scientists and crew stationed at the Marambio Base, Antarctic Village No Borders was installed on the continent in a symbolic act.

The Antarctica Flag represents a kaleidoscope of different nations, as if through the filter of a prism, the flag concentrates all the national colours into the sum of light... All identities coexist, side by side, hand in hand. The edges blend, symbolising belonging to a larger common identity. It could be the flag of a new World Community, to be raised as a supranational emblem of human rights.

Lucy + Jorge Orta

Antarctic Village No Borders, 2002-2009

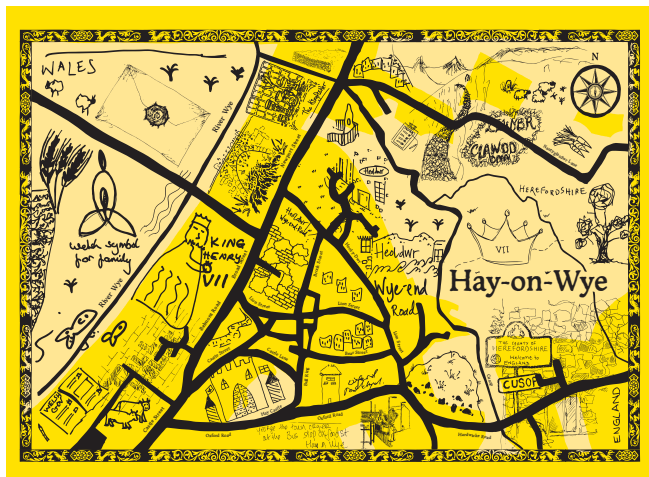


The dome-shaped tents of the village reflect the qualities of nomadic shelter, a signifier of the struggle to gain freedom of movement and a safe place to reside. The domes are assembled using traditional tent-making techniques onto which are stitched second-hand clothing, flags and glove extensions symbolising the multiplicity and identity of cultures.

World flags are overlaid with silkscreen printed text excerpts proposing an amendment to the UN Declaration for Human Rights, "Art 13.3.: borders." Everyone has the right to move freely and cross frontiers to their chosen territory. No individual should have an inferior status to that of capital, trade, telecommunication, or pollution that traverse all borders"

Maya Rose Edwards

Borderlands Banners, Printed textile, A Meadow Arts Commission, 2026



In the first year of the Borderlands project, commissioned artist Maya Rose Edwards worked with communities along the border to explore their relation to the unique place they inhabit. Across the three towns of Hay-on-Wye, Presteigne, and Kington, Maya engaged residents to join in conversations, collaborative making, and shared mapping and heritage traditions. The resulting artworks capture the physical landscape as well as the collective consciousness and memory of those who inhabit it. By reimagining the border as a living, evolving space, the work blends local history and contemporary perspectives.

The 'Borderlands Maps' were co-created by communities in the 3 border towns who shared and drew everyday, personal landmarks that reflect their lived experience. These new maps formed the itinerary for the performance of Beating the Bounds walks.

Maya Rose Edwards

Out of Bounds, hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn, A Meadow Arts Commission, 2026



Another artwork resulting from Maya's residency is a full-sized hedge built collaboratively by the artist and master hedge-layer Trefor Prothero, combining contemporary art practice and rural craft.

The hedgerow has a complex history,

enclosing land that was once shared, before the Enclosures Act. They are now protected and cherished for their vital ecological and cultural value – when laid traditionally. Maya and Trefor's hedge incorporates hazel sticks used during the communal Beating the Bound walks recorded in the film. The ancient custom of Beating the Bounds, practiced before drawn maps were widely used, reflects a deep relationship between communities, land and memory.

The walks traced a collective sense of belonging that exists beyond political borders and the incorporation of the stakes transform what might appear to be a barrier into a record of shared movements and connection across the Borderlands.

Hilary Jack

No Borders, 2026, Neon on metal frame, a Meadow Arts commission



Hilary Jack works across media in research-based projects, site referential artworks, sculptural installations and interventions.

Her work has an activist element which comments on the politics of place, socio-political and environmental issues.

The quotation "NO BORDERS JUST HORIZONS ONLY FREEDOM" is borrowed from Amelia Earhart, the American pioneer aviator, feminist icon, and explorer. Her quote resonates in the politics of today and can be read through a contemporary political lens referencing Brexit and the Irish border; the ongoing debate of Scottish independence and the many current border conflicts over contested land across the globe, including recent expansionist conflicts.

Hilary has made a new version of the large outdoor work specifically for BorderLands at Hay Castle.

Andre Lichtenberg

Tale of Two Moons, 2025, Photograph



In the summer of 2016, shortly after the Brexit referendum, André Lichtenberg, a Brazilian-German artist based in the UK, decided to create a new body of work reflecting on the United Kingdom's south-eastern border and the vast waters of the English Channel. Each seascape in this series, *Impossible Utopia*, is captured over several continuous photographs taken over one hour. The scene is photographed in small detail in a slow methodical process that creates a large-scale representations of the border, evoking more than could be achieved by a single photograph.

As an artistic response to the turmoil caused by Brexit, Lichtenberg aimed to offer the viewer a calm canvas for reflection, a utopic but also pragmatic space for reflection and hope.

Border Matter

Borders are constants in our collective imagination, serving as essential distinctions between people, culture and place. While Borderlands addresses geographical and national divisions and the forces that maintain them, the exhibition also explores how myth, landscape and community shape "border sensibilities."

In the global political consciousness, borders exist as territorial expressions of power that dictate belief systems, diplomatic relations, trade and the regulation of movement. This exhibition subjects these structures to scrutiny to ask a range of questions including how borders exercise influence over liberty and what consequences have arisen to preserve, that which the border seeks to contain.

Borders are pervasive, relying on specific narratives and forms to exert their effect. They are not universally "hard" or visible; many have been historically porous or softened over time, necessitating an investigation into the mechanisms of their evolution. By navigating the "prickly terrain" of border politics, art provides alternative perspectives—not as a resolution to conflict and other significant problems, but as an opportunity for insight and hope.

The exhibition's site at Hay Castle connects directly with a legacy of Welsh border fortification under French and English rule. The prevailing systems of surveillance, administrative regulation, and the binary of "self and other" are inextricably linked to 12th-century defensive architectures including castles, towers, walls and earth defences. Nearby, Offa's Dyke—the 8th-century earthwork of the Kingdom of Mercia in the slow annexation of Wales—remains a monumental testament to how territories were historically contested and a people contained. Equivalents are found in artworks made in response to various locations in the UK, but



Cyril Fox, *Offa's Dyke at Mellington Park, Montgomeryshire*, c.1930.
 Courtesy Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales

also where artists have engaged with local and national narratives in Iran, Continental Europe, Morocco and the wider African continent. The featured works interrogate historical strata to establish contemporary relevance, keeping a memory of the past "raw". By combining colonial and post-colonial perspectives, cartography and the folk imagination, certain artists analyse the governing mechanics of the border but also mine the quieter stories of place rooted in tradition and vernacular skill. In doing so, the fabric of "Border Matter" and the associated boundaries that are so often contentious divisions, can be experienced and understood on different terms.

The exhibition exists in the space between the harsh realities of the more disturbing problems of our time with more poetic and ambiguous imagery. It arrives as our gaze flickers between the visceral tragedies of conflict in the Middle East against the silent, dark frontier of the Artemis lunar missions. With the infinite reach of space, the absurdity of earthly tensions is laid bare yet serves as a reminder of how conflict and exploration have been active agents in defining borders. By framing this process through art, the exhibition looks to anchor us against the ongoing tide, refusing to let us drift—as the American author and activist Wendell Berry warned—"in the wreckage of yesterday, in the nightmare of tomorrow."

Russell Roberts
Powys, April 2026

Russell Roberts has held major posts in national museums and universities with an emphasis on curating art and photography. He lives in the Welsh borders.

Donovan Wylie

Golf 40 Watchtower. South East View. South Armagh. Northern Ireland. 2007. Photograph



Produced from 2005 to 2014, Northern Irish photographer's Wylie's Tower Series examines the mostly invisible architectures that weave the presence of conflict and borders into the fabric of daily life. The watchtower is not, typically, an offensive weapon. It's an anticipatory instrument, a hedge against the inevitability of future conflict.

Built out of utilitarian materials watchtowers in Wylie's photographs appear almost fragile, small-scaled against the stretch of the terrain under their gaze. Alert and unsettlingly anthropomorphic, they are ciphers to the immanence of conflict; emblems of war as a state of mind and a state of being.

Donovan Wylie

4th September 2019 – Torr Head, Ireland to Mull of Kintyre Lighthouse, Scotland. A bill to block a no-deal Brexit is defeated 328 votes to 301. New Prime Minister Boris Johnson demands a general election. Photograph



Belfast based photographer Donovan Wylie began photographing lighthouses in the Irish Sea in June 2016, following the Brexit referendum. His photographs were taken on key dates of the Brexit timeline.

To try to understand the United Kingdom's current position, Wylie's project explores ideas of closeness and distance, familiarity and fractured relationships. It contemplates how isolation and identity shape its sense of self. Glimpsed from the opposing coastlines of France, Northern Ireland and various points in Great Britain, the afterglow of the distant lighthouses became a way to process the tensions and complexities of identity and insularity, loneliness and love. The project also comments on the conceit of attempting to place borders in an ever-changing sea.

Charlie Hurcombe

Wanderlust, 2025, Oak and reclaimed flooring

Artwork curated by Caroline Allen, Ridgebank Gallery, Kington (Herefordshire).



Charlie Hurcombe's practice often engages with notions of location, displacement and constructed meaning. He recently engaged deeply with the landscape of Hergest Ridge, above Kington, which is split in half by the English/Welsh border and the ancient Offa's Dyke earthwork - though the exact line is often faint or even lost.

The work is made from an oak tree felled by a storm and donated to the artist, combined with found pieces of flooring. The 22 oak pieces meander across the gallery serving as a metaphor for borderlands and the duality of separation and connection. They evoke tracks and passages, signs and lines, mapping and exploring: all forms of the tension that exists between visual and physical experience. Visitors are invited to walk across and follow the line of the sculptural installation.

Henna Asikainen

Future Pasts, 2023, Film



Future Pasts is the outcome of a 3-year project involving people new to the North-East which explores immigration, belonging and national identity through the living legacy of Hadrian's Wall.

It documents a performance staged at Hadrian's Wall in collaboration with people who have lived experience of forced displacement and of seeking asylum in the UK. The work reflects on borders as both historical constructs and contemporary instruments of exclusion.

Hadrian's Wall is perhaps the most potent image of a border in our national landscape but it is also a reminder of historical multiculturality that counteracts the idea of rural England as a homogenous, white space.

Henna's project underlines how this ancient frontier can be, re-viewed as a site of integration, a transnational site of connection. *Future Pasts* invites reflection on continuity, resistance, and the enduring violence of borders —past and present.

Larry Achiampong

Siblinghood, 2025, Textile appliqué



British Ghanaian artist Larry Achiampong considers the current social and political moment, with the rise of nationalisms and moments of tensions such as the Brexit vote of 2016.

In the same year, the Pan African Union embarked on a project to establish the free circulation of people within the continent, with a view to potentially open borders across a unified African continent in the future. The flags evoke solidarity and collective empathy, bearing an iconography symbolising a move towards unity and equilibrium. Green, black and red reflect the land, people and the struggles of the African continent, while yellow-gold represents a new day and prosperity.

Achiampong's Pan African flags have toured the country, but this version, 'Siblinghood', was selected specially for BorderLands and is seen here for the first time.

Mark Houghton

Plan, Bronze, 2019



In this sculpture Mark Houghton uses the fact that most people are remarkably comfortable in translating the 2 dimensional pictorial information on a map to the vastness of a 3 dimensional landscape, and vice versa, which constitutes an extreme form of abstraction.

Transmuting the map into another medium removes all legible information, so the map now becomes a pure object. With only the form remaining, it is no longer a tool. The familiar now feels unfamiliar as it hovers between figuration and abstraction.

The piece is primarily a monument to the futility of naming and claiming landmasses in the face of geological time and the oneness of land and sea. Given recent world political events, and global climatic concerns, the piece retains and extends its significance in an ever-changing geopolitical landscape.

Verity Howard

Caetomkins, Ceramics, 2026



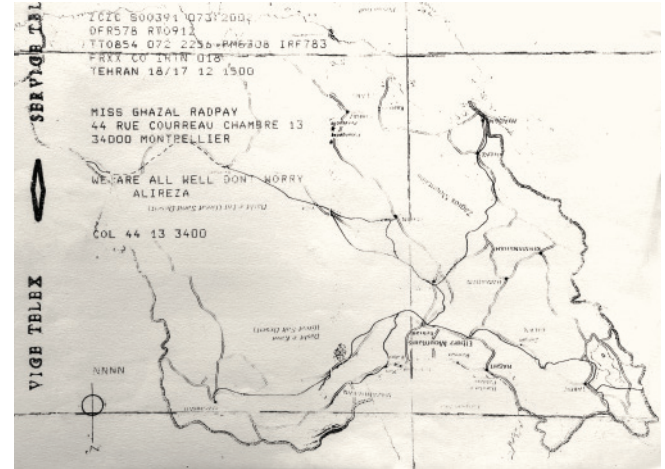
Verity's work is rooted in the borderlands of south Herefordshire into Wales and inspired by how its social history has shaped not only the identities of the local communities but also impacted the physical landscape itself.

Fascinated by the drovers who used to walk cattle from fields to market, she has researched and walked many old drovers routes on either side of the border and of the historical Offa's Dyke. These lanes are often hollowed and sunken, shaped by the many feet and hooves that have pounded them over the centuries.

In her ceramics, Verity explores the boundary between the distant past and the present, as well as that between the natural and the man made. She believes these boundaries are not clear cut, but interwoven, forming a new entity of its own. The work attempts to contain the space created by the tension between the ancient and the new, the man-made and natural.

Ghazel

Untitled, 1988-2016, Print on paper



Franco-Iranian artist Ghazel has been trapped in Teheran since the beginning of the US-Israel war against her country. Her planned participation in BorderLands became severely compromised as communications and travel were impossible. However, Ghazel managed to get in touch and send Meadow Arts a digital file of an early work of hers.

The work consists of 2 superimposed images. The first is a telex from the artist's father, sent at the height of another historical conflict in her country, assuring her that "We are all well don't worry". The second image is a faint map of Iran upside down, though it is not immediately recognisable as the map of Iran with its familiar territorial borders.

With this early work, Ghazel means to communicate that she is well and tells us not to worry.

Daniel MacCarthy

The Crossing, Oil on canvas, 2024



Daniel MacCarthy grew up in Herefordshire on the Welsh borders and has recently decided to come back and live in a town nearby, on the Welsh side.

His painting, *The Crossing*, shows a pair of feet tentatively treading over a red line above water. By the careful position the feet and the outstretched arms of the person reflected in the water, MacCarthy expresses the sense of instability and awkwardness that borders and boundaries can engender.

In the Welsh border, as in many other places, rivers and other bodies of water often mark and embody the edge of territories. Natural landmarks, such as wide rivers or mountain ranges, probably felt unpassable in distant times. Though more easily crossed nowadays, they often remain recognised as natural boundaries. Their status is more difficult to contest.

Sally Payen

Cross-Stitch Through the Dirty Page of History, Oil on canvas, 2017



A large part of Herefordshire-based artist Sally Payen's work is about protest and its place within western

democracy. One of her main inspirations was the historic women's peace camp at Greenham Common, a military site with a long history of contested landscape in the 1980's, near to where she grew up.

Here, the subject of the painting is the fence itself, made of the ubiquitous security weld mesh panels, as well as the reaction of the female campaigners to it. They attached crafted or knitted objects and banners, opposing a slow peaceful form of protest to the repressive boundary. In response, Sally painted the fence on the canvas by making crosses in a slow process of repetition, expressing her democratic right and personal memories in a decisively gendered action.

Gabriella Hirst

Skin 1, Wrought iron, garden planters, plants, 2025



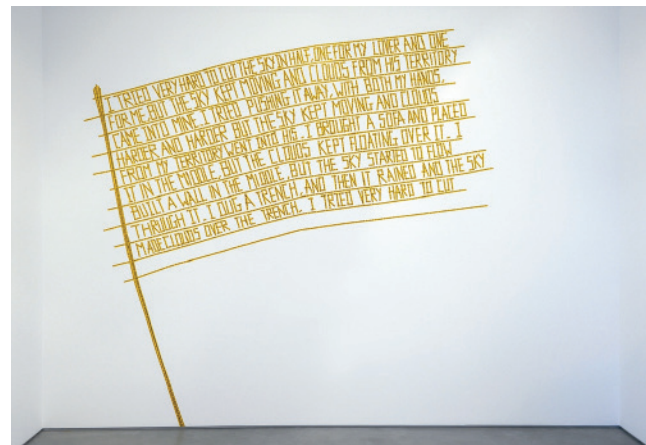
Gabriella Hirst (Australian) is an artist and writer whose practice spans moving image, performance, installation, and gardening as a site of critique and care.

Skin explores architectural boundaries of defence. During WWII a PR morale-boosting exercise saw UK civilians urged to remove the ornate, spiked Victorian fences that edge parks and properties so that they could be melted down into weapon supplies. In fact, London's fence metal was useless for military repurpose.

Skin 1 evokes the saying that an "Englishman's garden is his castle" and presents the garden as a fiercely defended territory, a personal space that mirrors a wider political stance. Closed off property becomes subtracted from the common landscape. The contrast between the ornate gates and the sinister, lethal security blades belies the sense of the gentility that is traditionally associated with the English garden.

Shilpa Gupta

There Is No Border Here, Self Adhesive tape, 2006
courtesy of Bristol Museums and Archives



Shilpa Gupta is an Indian artist based in Mumbai, India. Much of her work addresses borders drawn between countries, people and within ourselves.

The yearning, lyrical text of Gupta's pattern poem *There Is No Border Here* underlines the abstract nature of border divisions. The high-visibility tape from which the letters are made, draws attention to a more violent aspect of border politics, while also reminding us of security measures in the era of terrorism.

Here Gupta uses highly poetic language and imagery to express a very personal attempt to deal with ideas of control. She inserts the 'I' and the 'you' in the image of an anonymous national flag, reminding us of the psychological damage that political divisions can induce.

Hélène Muheim

Ending frozen line, Graphite, eye make up powders, 2022



In her drawings Hélène Muheim proposes new representations and perceptions of the landscape. She works with graphite but also coloured eye make up powders that give her drawings a dreamlike and mysterious quality.

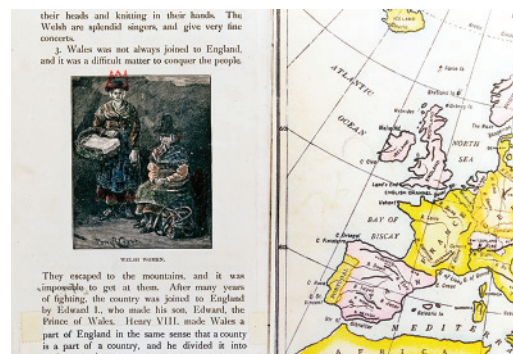
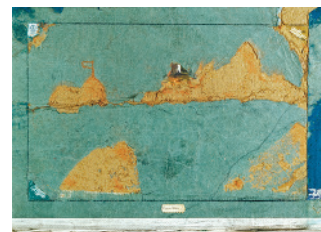
Hélène's passion for landscape and mountains has driven her to walk trails and paths since childhood, often crisscrossing borders. Muheim says:

'I see the border as a place of awareness, a space where one can begin to relate. What I'm interested in is not so much to show what is, but rather to focus on what changes, what links or separates.'

Her drawings amplify the singular and terrestrial power of landscapes as indivisible entities. They express their awesome and perennial coherence. In this continuum, humankind has little agency, yet it attempts to divide it along arbitrary lines.

Peter Finnemore

Lesson 56-Wales, Works on paper, 1997



Peter Finnemore's Lesson 56-Wales was made in the months following the devolution referendum in 1997 that voted for the creation of the Welsh Assembly. The work is based on photographs of schoolbooks studied by the artist's grandmother at her school in Carmarthenshire.

The books, published at the height of the British Empire, undermine the autonomy, language and culture of Wales, telling the story of the nation from an exclusively British perspective. Finnemore explains that the work represents "the state's role in the colonisation of the mind and imagination through education, and the perpetuation of stereotypical assumptions and impotent mythologies".

3 works on paper, Cestyll Bobman, 2010/2025
On The Border - Ar y ffin-diroedd, 2026, Colony Cambromundo,
2014/2025



Iwan Bala is one of Wales' most emblematic artists. His work is often described as 'muscular mark-making'. He is an observer and a 'teller' of both truths and stories that reflect on his country's status and place, its culture and history.

He uses calligraphy and language, visual signs and emblems on hand-made Indian Khadi paper in what he calls his 'field notes'. Castles and maps feature regularly, and Bala lends them character and a voice to tell their own tales. The motif of the castle finds renewed significance here in Hay, as the castle is one in a string of fortresses dotted along the border. We are honoured and hugely grateful that Iwan Bala has produced a drawing - *On The Border* - especially for the *BorderLands* exhibition.

*Untitled I, New suburb of Tangier, placed in former mining region
La Unión, Murcia Site-specific installation from the Imported
Landscapes series, 2010*



The landscapes of southern Spain and northern Morocco share many geographical and geological features, just as the two nations share a long and often painful history of migration, trade, invasion and colonisation.

To consider these connected and overlapping Mediterranean landscapes beyond their natural borders, Silva's series of photographs of Moroccan scenery were installed on 8 x 3 metre billboards in specific locations in Murcia in southern Spain.

The act of placing one landscape inside another connects the adjoining continents, knitting together lands that might have been one, back in the depth of time. This creates a space to contemplate not only the 2 countries shared topography, but also memory and ongoing political strife.

Delaine Le Bas

No State Control, Photograph on textile, 2026



Delaine Le Bas' work addresses nationhood, land, belonging and gender across diverse media (including embroidery, painting, decoupage, sculpture, installations and performance) that reflect on domestic

claustrophobia and the transient nature of modern materiality. It is inspired by the rich cultural history of the Gypsy, Romani, Traveller people and their mythologies.

Delaine has participated in many international events and exhibitions and was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2024. In 2007 she actively participated in the first edition of the Roma Pavillion at the Venice Biennale, which questioned the very notion of national identity. Delaine defines herself as an activist. Her more recent work explores the idea of No as an affirmation and an active proposition of resistance: "I am interested in breaking the borders and boundaries, not being confined or bound by them".

Thanks and Acknowledgments

Exhibition curated by Anne de Charmant with Emma Morris

Meadow Arts would like to thank:

The de Laszlo Foundation
Colwinston Charitable Trust
Arts Council Wales
Arts Council England

Hay Castle

Maya Rose Edwards
Trefor Prothero
Ben & Lottie Morgan
Kim Greig – Open Arms Kington (OAK)
Alison Parry
Joby Barnard
Finn Beales
Mark Houghton
Russell Roberts

All the participants in the workshops and Beating the Bounds walks

And all the artists

Some works in the exhibition are for sale, please email emmamorris@meadowarts.org with enquiries.



Scan to take part in our survey.

meadowarts.org