

Warhorse

Northamptonshire artist Jamie Poole is currently working on a new painting based on the book 'Warhorse' written by Michael Morpurgo. Using his 'text' technique to illustrate the story Jamie hopes to draw our attention to the sacrifices made by soldiers and animals that were drafted into the conflict. An interlaced, collage of poetry written by soldiers on the front line between 1914-1918 and from poets in recent campaigns almost one-hundred years later combine in this dramatic, evocative vision.

During World War One horses were both necessary and indispensable for moving gun carriages, wagons, ambulances and munitions. They were also extremely vulnerable and it is estimated that 225,856 of the 869,931 horses drafted into the British Army were killed during the conflict. It was the [Blue Cross](#) that brought relief to animal victims of the war just as the Red Cross did for humans.

(The Blue Cross at War: 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, By Carmen Smith 1990.)

The horse stands as symbol of a natural free spirit, and the close relationship of the horse to humanity has been recorded, many times by artists, poets and photographers. General Jack Seely who published a book about his horse 'Warrior' which, he took to France in 1914 wrote: "The soul of a horse is a great and loyal soul, quite unspoiled by the chance and changes of humankind. Above all, it is a courageous soul, and an affectionate soul. But let there be one cruel blow from a grown up man, and you have ruined the horse's fine soul and spirit forever."¹

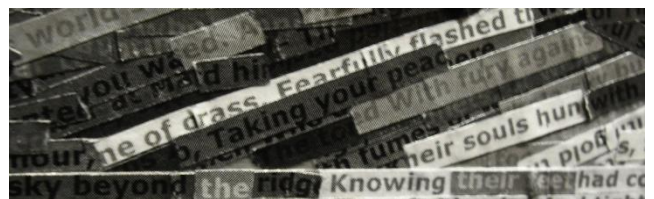


Detail of 'Warhorse' by Jamie Poole 2012



A photograph of the painting to be rendered in poetry.

Many other artists have inspired the development of the work including well known painters from the time. Paul Nash's depictions show the desolation of 'no-man's land' and C.R.W Nevinson's stark interpretation of the mechanised nature of modern warfare helped forge this work in Jamie's imagination. Later in 1937 the great masterpiece, 'Guernica' by Pablo Picasso also shows a horse with its distorted form wild and pained as the harlequin of a bull and a javelin pierces its body. Furthermore, it was through the newspaper that Picasso first learnt of the catastrophe in Spain. This is why black and white text is used as a symbol of how news is widely reported around the world – now even more so in this digital age.



Text Detail showing the mosaic of poetry on the 'painting'.

Jamie's painting of the horse running terrified through a war torn landscape melds words and images to comment about the power of recording these dramatic events. Poems written during World War One such as 'Spring Offensive' by Wilfred Owen and In 'Flanders Fields' by John McCrae are included. These are merged with contemporary poems with titles such as - 'In Times of Peace' by John Agard, and 'War on Terror' by Fred D'Aguiar. The words from these poems all form part of the physical painting and glimpses of them can be read when viewing the work. Here different periods of time are drawn together to speak in unison about the horror of war. Jamie hopes that as the centenary of World War One approaches his painting will serve as a timely remembrance.

Jamie Poole was born in 1973 in Northampton, England. He studied at the School of Design and Ceramics in Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire for a [BA Honours Design: Surface Pattern](#) and graduated in 1996. Jamie has exhibited widely around the UK where his work has primarily been landscape paintings. In recent years he has been an active member of the arts event known as 'Open Studios' in Northamptonshire and has produced commissioned works for private clients.

Follow Jamie's blog at: www.visionpoempaintings.blogspot.com/

Also other work is displayed at: www.jamie-poole.co.uk

¹ Seely, J. (1934). Warrior: The Amazing Story of a Real War Horse. Racing Post: Great Britain