



The Foot and Mouth Series



Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s) Foot and Mouth No:5 after Macleod, Darwell and May
In-glaze decal collage (screen print) on Royal Worcester bone china platter. Paul Scott 2001.

In 2001 an outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease devastated farming communities in Britain. Animals were rounded up in fields and killed, before being piled up in corners awaiting disposal. Burning cattle pyres were a very common sight (and smell) in the border country between England and Scotland. In spite of constant government assurances that these were the best way of disposing of diseased cattle and perfectly safe, the palls of choking black smoke were blamed by some for spreading the disease, and later the health of those living downwind of pyres was the subject of medical concern and research. Photographers John Darwell, Nick May and Murdo Macleod recorded and responded to the horrific scenes in images that are still shocking today.

I made a series of works commemorating the event, erasing images of cows and sheep from traditional Spode patterns, and a series of works with sepia collages using Bewick images.

One collaged piece which referenced press images of the tragedy, caused some outrage. *Foot and Mouth No:5*, a bone china platter, suited for carving roast beef contained, fused in its surface an image of burning cows. This shocked in a different way to the images seen daily on TV and in newspapers and was criticised at the time as 'controversial' and 'tasteless'. I was interested that a printed ceramic object with ultimately very familiar imagery could illicit such a strong response...

Paul Scott



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