

CORDON SANITAIRE
an installation by Nicky Hirst
25 April - 30 June 1996

I sat up late that night for I could not have slept. My mind was running round in circles. I remembered the day war was declared, the day we worked in the hayfield on a Sunday and the whirlwind caught up the hay and carried it far and wide. The whirlwind of war had caught up all our lives and tossed them into the air, they had been swept to and fro by eddying currents and dropped again in the same field. But was it the same field? The old landmarks had disappeared and the new ones were not yet clearly defined.

Constance Goddard: The Whirlwind of War 1945

"This installation is about dislocation, both locally and globally. Words that come to mind are territory, shift, citizen, home, hinterland, surround, imprison, boundary. Though made specifically for the Imperial War Museum, the installation could exist in another less loaded location, but I suspect that within this context it will gain a poignancy that could not be manufactured elsewhere. What I am saying is that the Museum itself is a proportion of the work. I find the experience of moving through the main atrium with its display of 'hardware' - tanks, aircraft, guns - to reach the gallery overwhelming and confusing. I think this is to do with the close proximity of very large objects that are usually seen from a distance. What I want from my installation is the initial sense of a calm refuge, then an unnerving realisation that this room has also been displaced". *Nicky Hirst.*

This is the second in a series of installations by artists who have been invited to make work in response to the collections and environment of the Imperial War Museum.

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