

The background is a dark, atmospheric landscape painting. It features a path or road winding through a hilly, forested area. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds, and the overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and muted greens, creating a somber and moody atmosphere. The text is overlaid on this artwork.

RAIN WIND AND CHANGE

Drawings and Paintings

BRIDGET MACDONALD

Lead holds up liquid that's too slow for tears.
Musk dark, in this tiny church, a banner marks
Resurgam... two tiny wood pigs stuff themselves
on a carved arm. A wire donation bowl, biro rota
signature for flowers, tub of instant coffee.
And this pulse – to slip out salty from lead's complex eye
into the clicking corn and hike with a big dog
down crack-floor lines split by a pilgrim sun –

Rick Twygge solders up lead to meet rain, wind and change...

extract from *The Maker* by Catherine Swire
from the collection *SOIL* published by The Artel Press

These drawings have their roots in SOIL, a book of eight poems by Catherine Swire which was published in October 2021. The poems, with associated maps and essays, consider the layers of history and trauma in the landscape of the Herefordshire/Worcestershire borders.

The landscape drawings came first, done in the wild and stormy January of 2021 when the River Severn was in flood. They set the scene for the figure drawings which came later. I found myself focussing mainly on two poems: Chantry Song and The Maker. Catherine's poems sparked my interest in Prince Arthur, whose exquisite tomb is in Worcester Cathedral and she also introduced me to the existence of two medieval glaziers working in Malvern.

The poignant story of the life and early death of Prince Arthur, groomed by his father Henry VII to be the embodiment of the Tudor dynasty, is less well known than the lurid reign of Henry VIII who took the throne as the 'spare' after Arthur died at the age of 15 in 1502. Arthur and Catherine of Aragon had been betrothed since childhood but were only married for a few months.

Prince Arthur appears in the Annunciation stained glass window in Great Malvern Priory, sponsored by Henry VII and others. The glaziers Richard Twygge and Thomas Wodeshawe had their workshop in the grounds of the Priory and were also responsible for the window at Little Malvern Priory which features in the poem The Maker.

Catherine mixes past and present which is trickier to achieve visually than verbally. I did not want to recreate a medieval past but to suggest that human beings would have had much the same emotions 500 years ago as they do now, although they lived in a very different society from our own.

I therefore decided to use contemporary models and set them in interiors which give an idea of a place and time but are not specific. It helped that Catherine's teenage son bears an uncanny resemblance to contemporary descriptions of Prince Arthur, and her daughter makes a convincing Spanish princess. For the glaziers I used local craftsmen who were roughly of the age group that I imagined Richard Twygge and Thomas Wodehouse to have been.

The final drawing of the series 'At Ludlow Castle' was suggested by a visit to the castle where Arthur and Catherine spent their brief married life. I looked out of the window of a bedchamber in the Solar Wing, where traditionally they had their living quarters, and saw the landscape and the River Teme below. I thought that they would have seen that view.

The three black pears on the Worcester coat of arms are there at the behest of Elizabeth I, Henry VIII's daughter, who admired the tree when she visited the city in 1575. They are represented here by three small paintings of the Black Worcester pear from trees growing in our orchard just over the county border in Herefordshire.

It happens by chance that the exhibition at Worcester Cathedral coincides with the Coronation of Charles III, and the refusal of Prince Harry to accept the burden of being born into the Royal Family. Issues of how individuals come to terms or otherwise with the demands of the monarchy have come into focus once again.

Generations come and go, the rain floods the rivers and filters through the ancient rocks. Worcester Cathedral, Great Malvern Priory, Little Malvern Priory still stand.

Bridget Macdonald, Malvern 2023



Eastnor Obelisk
charcoal on primed paper, 32 x 48 ins/81 x 122 cm



Little Malvern Priory
charcoal on primed paper, 32 x 48 ins/81 x 122 cm



British Camp
charcoal on primed paper, 32 x 48 ins/81 x 122 cm



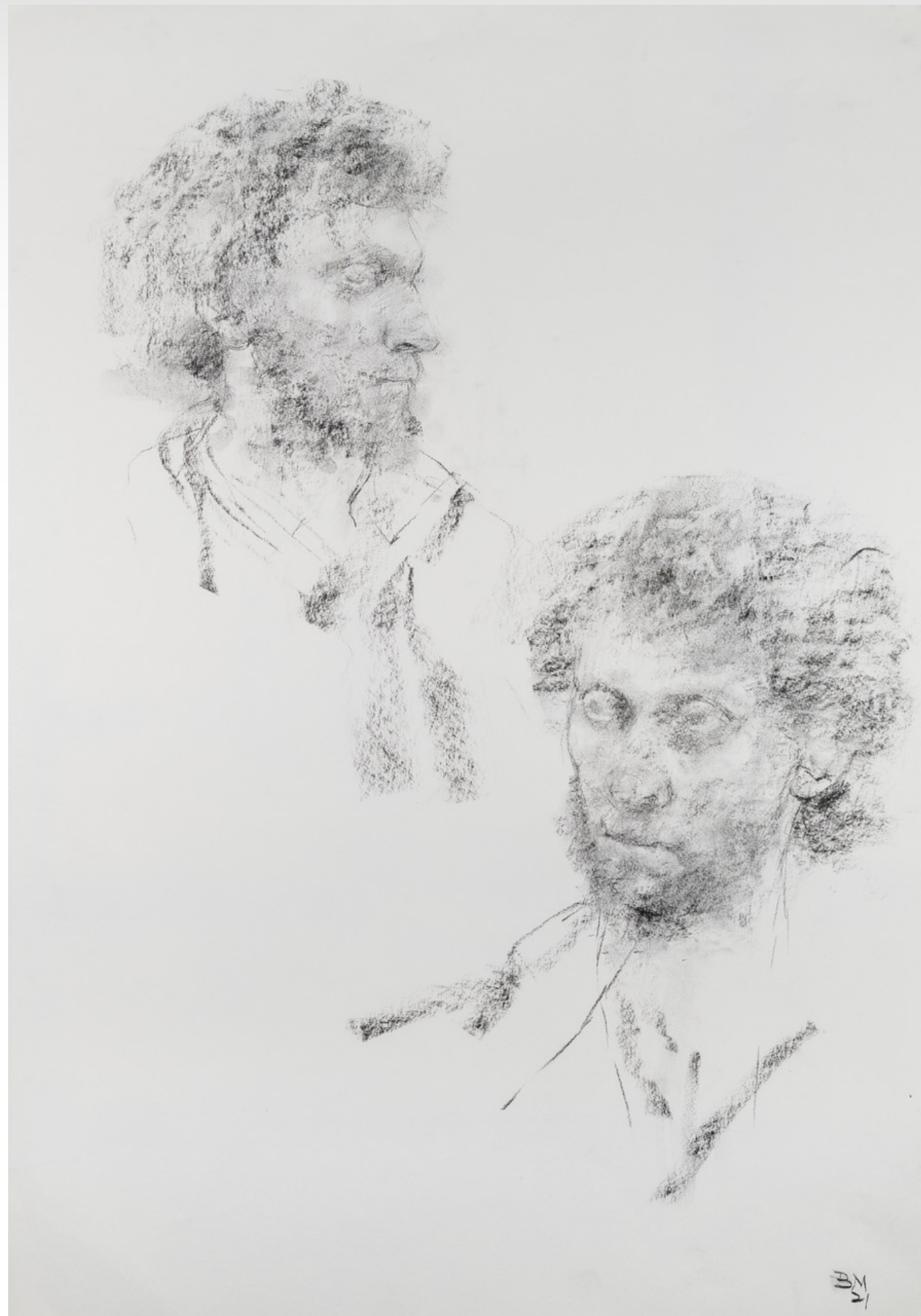
Emblems for a Lost Prince
charcoal on paper, 32 x 48 ins/81 x 122 cm



At Ludlow Castle
charcoal on paper, 32 x 48 ins/81 x 122 cm



The Malvern Master Glaziers
charcoal on paper, 32 x 48 ins/81 x 122 cm



Study for Richard Twygge (Eric)
charcoal on paper, 30 x 22 ins/76 x 56 cm



Study for Thomas Wodeshawe (Ben)
charcoal on paper, 30 x 22 ins/76 x 56 cm



Study for Prince Arthur (Sam)
charcoal on paper, 30 x 22 ins/76 x 56 cm



Black Worcester Pear 1/2/3
oil on gessoed panel, 6 x 6 ins/15 x 15 cm

SOUTH CLOISTER, WORCESTER CATHEDRAL 3 -21 MAY, 2023

**The exhibition is free and can be seen during Worcester Cathedral's normal opening hours:
Monday – Saturday 10 am – 5 pm , Sunday 1 – 3 pm**

Acknowledgements

Bridget Macdonald would like to thank all who have helped bring this exhibition into being:

Catherine Swire for her inspirational poems

My models - Eric Seward, Ben Lee, Grace Clifford and Sam Clifford

Angus Macdonald and C'ART Art Transport for their invaluable technical assistance

The Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral

www.bridgetmacdonald.co.uk

Bridget Macdonald is represented by Art First, 15 St Mary's Walk, London SE11 4UA

www.artfirst.co.uk

Photography: Luke Unsworth. Design: DMD – Hereford