

# Craig Wood

Senior Lecturer  
University of Wales Trinity Saint David  
Research Group: Fine Art

## **Evidence Portfolio: *Witness***

### **Output Number: 1 of 2**

Output Code: WIRAD-UWTSD-CW01

Output Type Code: L

Output Description: Artefact

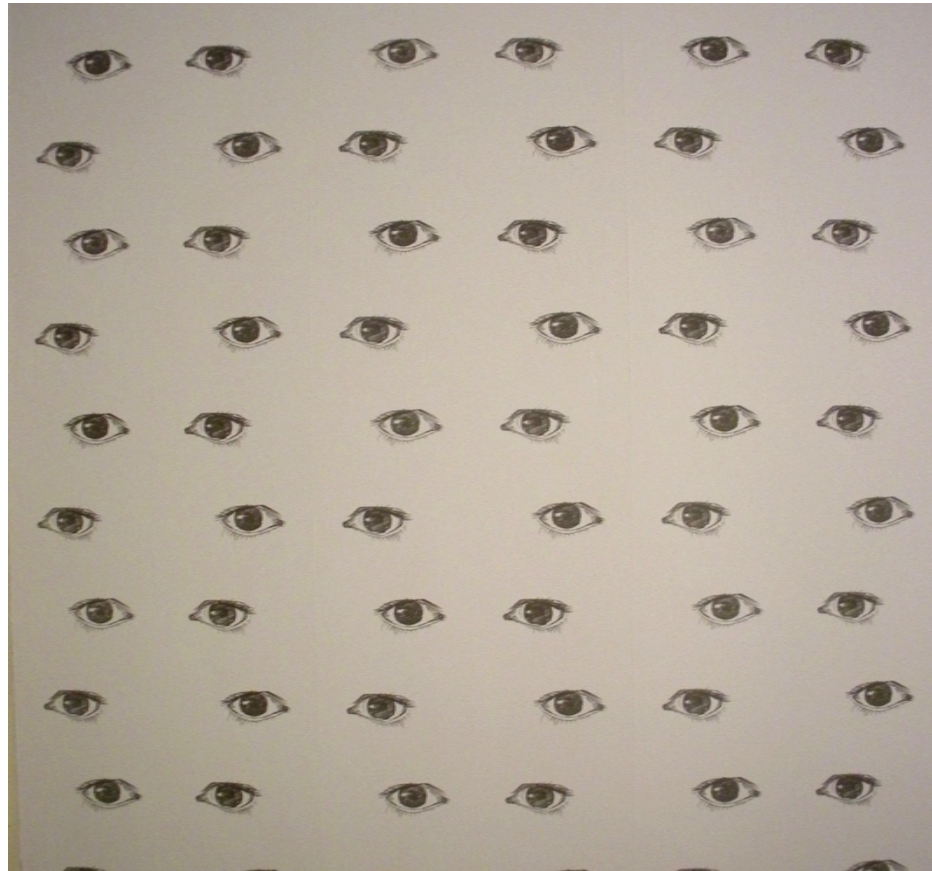
Author(s): Wood, Craig; Taylor, Chris

Year of Publication / Production: 2010

Location / Venue(s): Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester and other venues

Media: Wallpaper design printed as 1005 cm x 52 cm rolls

Number of Works: 1 Wallpaper design produced as exhibition artefact



*Witness*, 2010. Studio Installation

## Research Context

The long-term and ongoing collaboration between Wood and Taylor began in 2000 with the internationally disseminated and reviewed wallpaper *Frames*, an interactive wallpaper where 'an unknown third party' was invited to complete and customise the monochrome picture-frame pattern through text, drawn line or colour. *Witness*, the latest manifestation of the collaboration, blurs the boundaries between conceptual art, craft, and public art, and uses repeating wallpaper pattern as a medium to explore the issue of generational responsibility. It was produced during the same period (2010) and in the same context as Wood's other collaborative output, the wallpaper *Blank Cheque*.

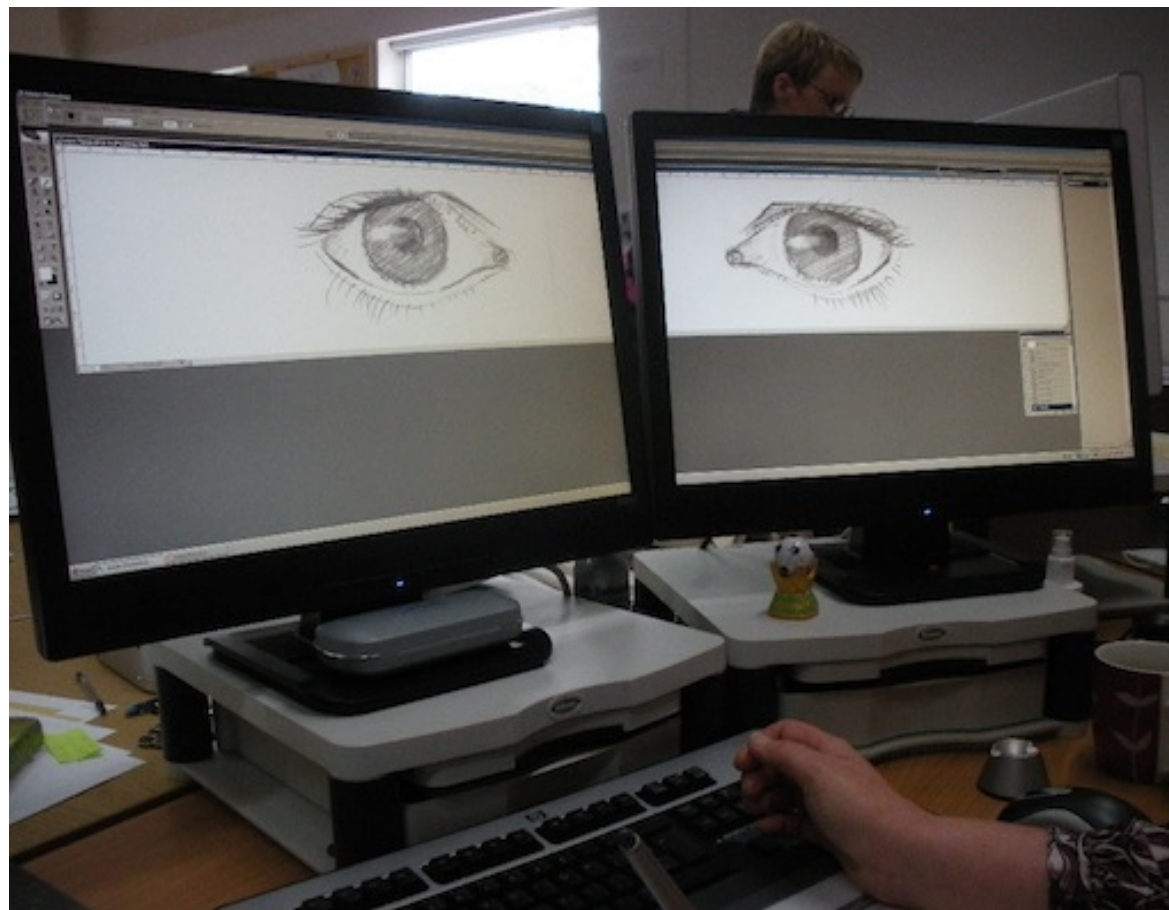
*Witness* is the outcome of a collaboration between the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester for the major survey exhibition and associated publication at the Whitworth: *Walls Are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture*, in 2010. The exhibition displayed historical and contemporary wallpapers from the collections of both museums and featured works by more than thirty international contemporary artists. Artist wallpapers were presented in context to demonstrate how historic motifs, styles, methods and existing patterns have been appropriated and subverted, testing a new model for exploring the relationship between historic collections and contemporary works. This mode of contextual display also allowed the artists to examine the influences of their work on both limited edition wall coverings and those produced for the general market.

## **Research Imperatives**

The research aim was to develop a novel visual means of evoking concerns such as our environmental future, the current national economic debt problems, and more specifically the way parents raise their own children. The title of the project, together with the repeated motif of a child's eyes, suggests that current actions or failures to act are being observed by the innocent generation that will inherit the consequences. By translating the drawing of a unique pair of eyes into an endlessly repeating pattern, the viewer is potentially scrutinised by a mass of individuals from the next generation, who demand accountability. That the eyes are identifiable as those of a young female is an additional and important nuance, since major economic, environmental or parental decision-making powers remain predominantly the male domain.

## **Project Methods**

Having worked with the V&A and Whitworth institutions on previous occasions, Wood and Taylor were invited to develop new designs at the interface between wallpaper-as-artefact and as decorative product designed or made commercially. The two artists worked closely with wallpaper printers Graham & Brown Ltd of Blackburn and the company's technical experts to successfully develop their ideas from concept through to finished product.



Working on *Witness* with the team at Graham & Brown Ltd

The design for the *Witness* wallpaper is reproduced directly from a pencil on paper drawing of a child's eyes and the immediacy of the sketch, which was completed in a single sitting, is reproduced on the wallpaper in an essentially undiluted form. The wallpaper was printed at Graham & Brown Ltd using a flexotype press in order to retain the quality of the original line drawing. By the end of this creative exchange two designs, *Witness* and *Blank Cheque* were produced as exhibits. They were the only artefacts from the exhibition available to the public through the gallery's commercial outlet.

## Outcomes and Dissemination

### Exhibitions and Publications

The *Witness* wallpaper was exhibited at the following:

- *Walls are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture*, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, 6<sup>th</sup> February – 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010, a major survey exhibition of artists' wallpapers

Exhibition publication: Saunders, G., Heyse-Moore, D., Keeble, T., Woods, C. (2010) *The Walls Are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture* London: KWS Publishers

- As part of Wood's installation *From Under Glass* in the inaugural Oriel Mostyn Gallery exhibition, *We Have The Mirrors, We Have The Plans* 22<sup>nd</sup> May – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010

Exhibition catalogue *We Have The Mirrors, We have The Plans*, (2010) Llandudno: Mostyn. ISBN 9780906860632. The exhibition was featured in *The Culture Show*, BBC2 on 27th May 2010

- *Assegno in Bianco/Blank Cheque*, SG-Gallery, Scuola Internazionale di Grafica Venice, Italy, 7<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2010  
Exhibition catalogue Kelly, D. and Taylor, C. (2010) *Assegno in Bianco = Blank Cheque* : Taylor & Wood  
Venice, Italy: SG press. ISBN 978-88-906253-0-5

The work was included in *The Observer* publication *Coolbrands 2010/11*, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2010, an anthology of cutting edge design n ISBN 978-0-9565334-0-





*Witness* at the *Blank Cheque* exhibition, SG Gallery, Venice, Italy, 2010





*From Under Glass, Wood's installation at  
We have the Mirrors, We have the Plans, Oriel Mostyn, 2010*



Graham & Brown Ltd catalogue featuring *Witness*



Window display featuring Witness wallpaper,  
House of Fraser department store, Manchester, 2012