

The Woollen Line documents a journey that began in 2009.

Artist Pip Woolf set off on an impossible task to repair the damage that has haunted the top of Pen Trumau mountain since it was torched by fire during the summer of 1976.

Climate. It's all about the weather. It's not all about the weather. As any one who has worked on the woollen line will have experienced, the exposed peat is situated in an unforgiving and extreme environment, grid reference SO 20295 - 29405, scorched and reduced to dust in dry conditions, blown away and washed down the mountain in wet, wind and rain.

It's all about peat. It's not all about peat.

Unstable, fragile, degraded.

“A 1% loss per year of soil carbon would increase net Welsh carbon emissions by 25% and where upland moorlands are already severely degraded or where large tracts of eroding peat are exposed, soil carbon is already being washed or evaporated out.” Paul Sinnadurai
BBNPA Senior Ecologist

This exhibition marks the inception of one artist's vision to explore the possibility for change brought about through community, cooperation and creative endeavour. Pip Woolf's work is concerned with the surface and what lies beneath it. If the scar on Pen Trumau presents the artist with a large canvass, the work in the exhibition reveal an interest in the layers that lie beneath. The exhibition reconsiders the mountain in the context of its geography, ecology and history alongside the poetics of the place.

3 years and 750 volunteers later the Woollen Line is a work in progress. The exhibition references some of the rich and provocative encounters that have happened along the way. The work has been the catalyst for conversations with Black Mountain graziers, conservationists, artists, families, students, horse people, walkers, tourists, amongst many others, raising questions along the way about where art and conservation meet, the role of art in conservation and ownership and responsibility of place. Artists have a long history of responding to landscape. The work invites us to re-examine our own connection with place.

Taking a line for a walk, drawing a line, the healing of the scar on the mountain. A legacy. Fragments of peat, like a scattering of ashes, dust, memories, a monument in loss and restoration. The question. What do you value? Carried on the wind, seeds, words, ideas.

The past. The future. The perfect and imperfect, present.

Kirsty Claxton March 2013