

Alex Frost
The Patrons

Cove Park
21 June – 26 September 2014

Covepark

GENERATION

25 Years of
Contemporary Art
in Scotland

Welcome to Cove Park and *The Patrons*.

Founded in 1999 by Eileen and Peter Jacobs, Cove Park is an international residency centre. We provide the time and support for national and international artists - at all stages in their careers and working in all art forms - to develop new work in an inspiring context. Artists live and work on site in unique units of accommodation (our Pods and Cubes) and can be with us for just one week or as long as three months. Residents have the freedom to experiment and to work on new ideas without the constraints of producing a final work. However, work that has been initiated and developed by artists at Cove Park has gone on to be exhibited, presented and published nationally and internationally.

Alex Frost's new work, *The Patrons*, was developed during 2 residencies in 2013 and 2014. The work consists of a series of temporary sculptures located at 4 points across Cove Park's 50-acre site. This work considers the sensitivities of the location and provides a counterpoint to the rather eccentric existing collection of architecture on site.

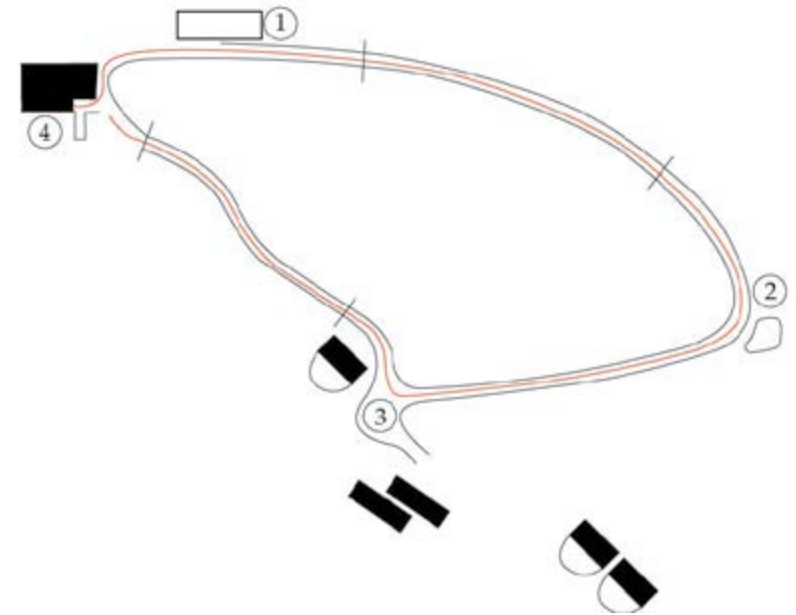
Alex's work begins with a structure that recreates John Kibble's first version of what is now known as the Kibble Palace: the iconic glasshouses at Glasgow's Botanic Gardens in the west end of the city. This early version, commissioned by Kibble for his house at nearby Couplort, was extended before it was sailed down the Clyde to Glasgow in 1873 and where Kibble intended it would act as a 'Crystal Art Palace', hosting concerts and talks and housing sculptures.

In addition to this new folly are 3 ruin sites, made primarily from sand and water and based upon elements reminiscent of Victorian sandstone architecture. Cumulatively, these sites will eventually dissolve into the ground (with some extra help from the wind, rain, sun, cows and sheep). As these forms degrade, the coins, bones and ceramic elements within these structures will reveal themselves, acting as an archaeological site in reverse.

To complement each sculpture Alex has sourced poems and prose written by a number of our former literature residents (Polly Clark, Joe Dunthorne, W N Herbert and Nicola White). These works all refer to the specific character of Cove Park as either an outstanding natural landscape, a place of contemplation or in its proximity to Couplort, the site since 1963 of the Royal Navy Armaments Depot (built on the original site of Kibble's home and conservatory).

The patrons of the title are in one sense historical: the Victorian industrialists who built their summer homes around the Rosneath peninsula, having made their fortunes through colonial trade. This is alluded to through the original Kibble Palace, the sand sculptures of elements from ruined Victorian buildings and the inclusion in these of coins collected from Commonwealth countries. But there is also a reference to the residency as a particular system of patronage; a system, especially in the case of Cove Park, that does not necessarily prescribe the making of objects but offers space to reflect, develop and encourage exchange between artists, art forms and audiences.

Map



Cove Park Friday Events

Complimenting Kibble's vision for a Crystal Art Palace, Cove Park will present a series of talks, studio presentations, readings and screenings every Friday afternoon from 27 June to 26 September (times may vary, please see announcements via our website and social media). These events are an opportunity to meet the artists on site and to see new work in development.

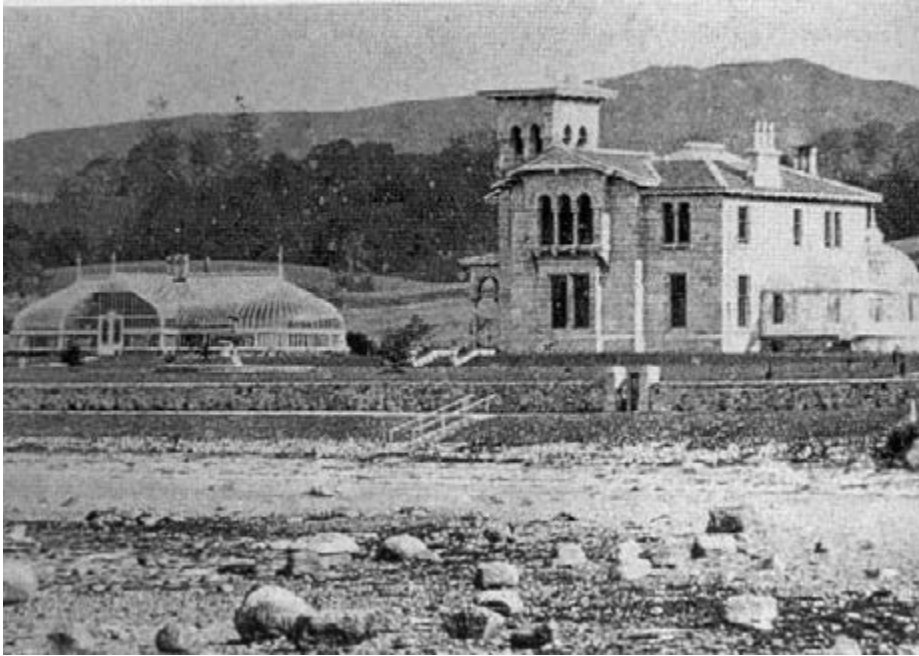
A New Centre

In 2015 Cove Park will build a new Centre and create more accommodation and studios. This building has been designed by Cameron Webster Architects and will provide space for our growing residency and public programmes. Creative Scotland has awarded 50% of the total £1.3million required and fundraising to secure the remaining amount is ongoing.

Please note, Cove Park's site is also home to 3 highland cows and numerous sheep. Please keep all gates closed and take care on-site: our paths and tracks are not level in some areas. If you require assistance on site, please contact a member of staff.

The Patron #1

CNC cut ply, CLS timber, wood stain (Urban Slate), debris netting and staples.



Mr. John Kibble of Coulport

Smoke rises from the woods at Ardentinnny.
Was it a day still as this, John, that you cycled on the loch?
Shore to shore on the turn of the tide.

Inventor, you were a man for marvels.
I see you incongruously top-hatted,
Pedalling hard to keep momentum through the swell.
Spindrift caught in your beard,
Plumes of water rising from your somehow-floating tires.

If the horse had pulled your camera to the shore at Peaton Layo,
You might have captured your fantastic voyage.
Why make a camera big as a room, John,
If not to show us all we missed?
Those wild Victorian days. So quiet here now.

I want to go back to Coulport as it was,
To look up through the revolving roof of your observatory
and see the red orbit of Mars,
To look up through the radiating spokes of your conservatory
and see the blinding sun.
A pantheon of light in a web of iron.

Another missing photo: The glass palace afloat,
Moving down the water, flashing farewells to the hills.
Your gift to the city, O lucky Glasgow!
And coming the other way, something black.
A machine beyond your ken, John.

Your mansion is gone, but beneath your gardens
Sleep such wonders would make your head reel;
Oppenheimer's centrifuge, Kali's whirl, The Great Wind.
The things that men have wrought.
A pantheon of light in a web of iron.

The Patron #2

Sand, water, animal bones, Commonwealth currency and broken ceramic.



Two Views of a Submarine

Loch Long

I

The loch is a factory where darkness
is welded and sparked into life,

sent up to breathe like a whale,
the water shattering from its back.

Ferries cross in shiny home-comings,
the loch trembles with a soft pulse

and an echo is sent to live in my skin.
It is a call to witness a miracle:

my wish in its flat black hat
ballooning out of the waves.

II

When I imagined exactly this
tilt and drift into the dark

I thought I would go mad for you,
that I would forgive everything.

But as I slowly press these walls
like Alice in her Wonderland

who was a child, and simply
reached for whatever caught her eye

and then suddenly did not fit her life,
I know that I would give you up

instantly for oxygen, or hope.
My murmured bargain creaks:

it is being considered, deeply.
I close my eyes and my wish

is granted: I wake open-mouthed,
drenched, cold, in flickering air.

The Patron #3

Sand, water, animal bones, Commonwealth currency and broken ceramic.



The setting sun picked out trees on the shore. Highland cows flicked their fringes in golden light. Later, I watched the moon rise from the marshland, pouring silver into the lake. There is nothing more lethal to creativity than a beautiful view. I was at a desk in a room overlooking Loch Long, completely unable to write.

But luckily for me, our nation's nuclear defence soon came to the rescue. Trident submarine slid through the water with tugboats at its flanks and speedboats front and back, cruising at the speed of a funeral cortege. I had time to take in its radar-absorbent paint, a reflection-less black. I walked down to the shore and from there, saw the military base further down the loch, a brutal concrete bunker scooped out of the hillside. When I went back to my desk, I was ready to begin.

Joe Dunthorne

From *Mount London: Ascents in the Vertical City*, edited by Tom Chivers and Martin Kratz, Penned in the Margins, 2014

The Patron #4

Sand, water, animal bones, Commonwealth currency and broken ceramic.



**Cove Park
(for Polly and Julian)**

The rain would like to make us all Chinese.
I climb the hill with my umbrella fanned,
through bracken drooping like a sleeve's brocade
where hands with long quartz nails have been withdrawn.
My feet are fussy as a scholar's clogs
as I traverse the wire-suspended bridge:
two studded planks above the thickened burn
that imitates a southern love song heard
last night, and all the grasses wave the pearls
they've caught in their sharp tentacles. I stop
and look back at the loch, the dark felt hills
beyond: a centipede of mist crawls down
and, waving its antennae, starts to cross
the water, while a rainbow's banner hangs
from trees, and on Loch Long the character
for 'submarine' tears in its wake.

W. N. Herbert

From *Bad Shaman Blues*, Bloodaxe Books, 2006

Biography

Born in London, Alex Frost lives and works in Glasgow. His most recent solo exhibitions include: *Reproduction* at Glasgow Print Studios Gallery, 2014, *Self-Defence and Other Hobbies*, 2013, *The Park Gallery*, Falkirk; *Future Spotters* (Kassel, 1987 & Münster, 2013), 2013, at Wewerka Pavilion, Münster, Germany; *The Old & New Easterhouse Mosaic (& everything in between)*, 2012, at Platform, Glasgow and *The Connoisseurs*, 2010, at Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee.

His work has also been included in group exhibitions at: Battat Contemporary, Montreal, Canada; *The Drawing Room*, London; *The Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA)*, Glasgow; Trinity Museum, New York; *The Times Square Gallery*, New York; Gimpel Fils, London; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; *New Forest Pavilion* at the Venice Biennale; Jerwood Space, London; A Foundation, London; *Studio Voltaire*; London and *Anton Kern*, New York.

For more information: www.alexfrost.com

The artist would like to pay special thanks to: All the staff and residents of Cove Park, Philippe Murphy, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Creative Scotland, Katherine MacBride, Bob Hardy, Richard Reeve, Polly Clark, Joe Dunthorne, W.N. Herbert and Nicola White.

The Patrons is a Cove Park Commission for Generation: a major, nation-wide exhibition programme showcasing some of the best and most significant artists to have emerged from Scotland over the last 25 years. It shows the generation of ideas, of experiences, and of world-class art on an unparalleled scale by over 100 artists in more than 60 venues. GENERATION is delivered as a partnership between the National Galleries of Scotland, Glasgow Life and Creative Scotland and is part of Culture 2014, the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme.

Covepark

outset.

The Elephant Trust

