



## Andrew Munnik

WILFRED OWEN

Dulce et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through  
sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.  
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, –  
My Friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

These works focus on the daily violence that occurs across, and between, nations.

The continuous global conflict has been a disappointment (to this artist), and a sad start to the 21st century. In an age of extraordinary technological and intellectual development, there is still the daily image of humankind acting in the most primitive and barbaric fashion. The actual result of this is manifested in hundreds of thousands of maimed men, women and children. These works attempt to highlight these aspects through the use of images, forms, logos, materials and signs.

As an artist who is dealing with the problem of 'doing' politics in art, one is shaped by struggles and conflicts outside one's immediate experience, yet inextricably linked to a historically accountable view of these events. An attempt has been made to consciously juxtapose 'decorative' colourful, organic elements with hard, bright, formal ones, as a metaphor that highlights what seem to be insurmountable differences of religion, culture, lifestyle and viewpoint.

Overleaf images: (from left to right) Rings of vassal; The poet's way; Ring-a-rosy. 2005  
Medium: Ceramic, sand, rice, semiprecious stones, beans, black silica and collage on board  
Dimensions: 120cm x 120cm each

