

## **Project ' Women with a Past'**

From 2003 until the end of 2005 I concentrated on women's portraiture. From the reading of biographies and archive material I produced a series of women's portraits using painting and collage techniques on canvas.

The work is in black and white for a starker more dramatic impact reminiscent of silent film and early cinema. Text is introduced in the final stages of the work. These portraits are of women who through suffering and perseverance have achieved their creative potential and whose historical and political properties are translated into cinematic story lines.

In 2005, coming across some sketchbooks with images I made during the 1984/85 miner's strike (I was studying for my B.A Fine Art in Cardiff and living in the Rhondda valleys), I decided to research the lives of women who were active during the strike in the South Wales area. I wanted, within the framework of contemporary portraiture, to give these women the iconic status they deserved.

In 'Women with a Past', an ACW funded project, I investigated a form of portraiture demonstrating hidden aspects of women's lives with a combination of story telling, text and painting.

The raw material for the project came from a number of archive collections including the South Wales Miner's Library in Swansea. A number of personal interviews, collected stories and visual 'sketches' of women I encountered through the research complimented this.

I produced six portraits in the studio using collage and painting techniques on canvas, finally introducing written information over the finished image. I wanted to arouse curiosity in the viewer about these women's lives and present their stories through a combination of image and text.

The portrait sizes range from 86cm to over a meter in height and were shown in a 5-week exhibition at 'Llanover Hall' Art Centre in November 2005. The exhibition traveled to the Circle Gallery in Pontypridd in January 2006 and some of the portraits were shown in January 2007 in St.Davids Hall, Cardiff.