

REVIEW

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BURNT HISTORIES

By Carry Gorney

Ragged Clown Publishing, 2017 (no ISBN available)

Price £7.50: available from carrygorney@gmail.com

Can an artist portray the emotions aroused by the memories of the Holocaust, or is this a subject beyond the scope of artistic expression? Carry Gorney's book "Burnt Histories" evokes a powerful response, with half-seen and ghost-like memories, through the unlikely medium of embroidery and sewing.

She recalls her family's history prior to WW1, when "My granny sat stitching a world of delicate lace, linen and crochet", all the while seething that because she was a girl, she was not allowed to attend medical school and become a doctor like her brother.

Some of the exquisite lace and embroidery, as well as old family photographs, found their way to England when the grandmother and her sisters fled Germany in the 1930s. Carry Gorney has printed a number of these photographs onto torn, distressed paper and overlaid them with gelli-prints of the one hundred-year-old pieces of lace; then she has added gold, coloured inks and paints.

The illustrations in "Burnt Histories" beautifully portray the faces which she remembers "but can no longer quite see. Ghosts' faces coming out of printing. Colours are faded, the outlines blurred".

Some works make use of found materials such as old newspapers and recycled waste items. A picture entitled "Small Girl" includes partially burnt, pre-war German newspapers encircling a ghost-like, half-seen child aged about three.

The pictures are profoundly evocative and moving. They formed part of the Ancestry Exhibition at Lauderdale House in Highgate, North London, and it is hoped that they will be seen more widely throughout the UK. In the meantime, this book is an excellent introduction to the work of this original artist.

Kathy Cohen