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Melanie Friend *The Home Front*

14 September to 23 November 2013

The Home Front explores the uneasy relationship between militarism and entertainment, ranging from public air shows viewed at British seaside resorts to the secret world of international arms fairs. Made over four years, this is the international premiere of photographer Melanie Friend's major new exhibition, commissioned by Impressions Gallery.

Friend presents three related photographic series that together explore the civilian experience of conflict and war as spectacle. The first shows children and holidaymakers on beaches that are disrupted by the roar of fighter jets overhead. Nostalgia for the Second World War is evoked by Lancaster Bombers and other 'warbirds', whilst contemporary jets such as the Tornado (recently deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan) are also showcased.

The second series reveals the on-ground attractions of air shows, held at Royal Air Force bases and private airfields. These events are frequently billed as a fun day out for the family, and may combine opportunities for military recruitment and commemoration of past conflicts.

In the final series, Friend offers a rare glimpse into the environments of international arms fairs and air show trade days, usually off-limits to the general public. Her photographs depict how military technology and services are marketed and sold, from the latest drone aircraft to gold-plated automatic weapons.

To find out more, pick up an exhibition guide, browse our reading table, or watch the short video featuring an interview with the artist.

Artist Talk Melanie Friend will be discussing her work with Pippa Oldfield, Head of Programme at Impressions Gallery, at our free artist talk on Saturday 12 October at 2pm. Booking is advised.

Publication The new full colour hardback book *The Home Front* is published by Dewi Lewis in association with Impressions Gallery, and available from the Gallery Shop at the special exhibition price £20 (usual price £25).

Melanie Friend began her career as a photojournalist and radio reporter producing features for the anti-nuclear movement and for The Guardian, Times Educational Supplement, BBC Radio Four and BBC World Service. Much of her work has directly or indirectly engaged with conflict. From the mid 1990s she began working on long-term photographic projects, exhibiting at international museums and galleries including Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary

Photography, Toronto; Belfast Exposed Photography, Belfast; Hasselblad Centre, Sweden; and Houston Center for Photography, USA.

Previous books and exhibitions include *Homes and Gardens: Documenting the Invisible* (1996), *No Place Like Home: Echoes from Kosovo* (2001), and *Border Country* (2007). Her work is held in the public collection of the National Portrait Gallery, London. She has lectured internationally including at the University of Harvard, USA; University of Oxford, UK; University of Paris, France; and University of Berne, Switzerland amongst others. Friend is currently Senior Lecturer (Photography) in the School of Media, Film and Music at the University of Sussex. www.melaniefriend.com

An Impressions Gallery touring exhibition curated by Pippa Oldfield.

The Home Front is supported by Spectrum Photographic, Metro Imaging and The University of Sussex.