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# Defaced! Money, Conflict, Protest

Opens 11 October - 8 January 2023



Boo Whorlow, Harry of England/Ten Megs fantasy note, edition of 100. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge © Boo Whorlow. Harry of England/Ten Megs is a next-generation reworking of Banksy's influential Di-Faced tenner in which Prince Harry replaces the Queen and Meghan Markle appears on the reverse next to her father with the message 'Trust No Press'.

**'If you're fed up and throwing rocks isn't your thing, take it out on money'**  
Mark Wagner

**Defaced! Money, Conflict, Protest** (opening 11 October – 8 January 2023) is the first major exhibition to display money used as a public canvas for political and social rebellion.

From Harry, Duke of Sussex replacing The Queen on a £10 note with Meghan, Duchess of Sussex on the reverse, Harriet Tubman appearing as the new face of a \$20 bill whether Trump officials approve it or not, to a unique coin commemorating the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, **Defaced!** presents a world history of protest from the last 250 years through currencies that have been mutilated as cries of anger, injustice, mockery or despair.

The exhibition showcases for the first time a new collection of defaced coins and banknotes recently acquired for the Fitzwilliam by its curator Dr Richard Kelleher. These objects are complemented by important loans from private collections and museums.



USA, twenty-dollar bill, 2017 series. Stamped with portrait of Harriet Tubman over Andrew Jackson. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Given by Dr Richard Kelleher. Courtesy Adafruit.

Press | The Fitzwilliam Museum

The acts of defacement on show reveal the hidden struggles behind some of the major events of the past 250 years, as disparate as the French and American Revolutions, the suffragette movement, the Siege of Mafeking, the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi concentration camp system and occupation, the deadly sectarian Troubles in Northern Ireland, and the Black Lives Matter protests.

The exhibition begins by exploring how the state manipulates the concept of value in times of conflict, and how coins and banknotes are defaced to attack authority and challenge power. It shows the unintended consequences of shifts in conceptions of value as revealed by **George Cruikshank's 1819 Bank Restriction Note** – a satirical protest against the severe punishments for those caught using counterfeits of the new pound notes brought in during the wars with France.

The exhibits show the power of money as a tool for communication. Engraved, stamped and mutilated coins rage at figures of power. **George III, the Pope, Prime Minister Pitt all appear on the gallows, while other** defacements are more satirical, George IV is converted into 'the patron of vice and frivolity', William IV is 'the Idiot King', and Queen Victoria has 'shag for ever' engraved across her image. From Thomas Spence's call for the abolition of landlords, to the 'Votes for Women' penny, to the stamped US \$20 bills featuring the portrait of Harriet Tubman, money has been used to publicise campaigns for change and equality for over 200 years.

Money is the perfect medium to highlight issues of wealth distribution, including the chasm between those at the top and the bottom, and the effects on those living in poverty. Money – both as a physical and theoretical entity – has been used by artists to draw attention to the links between government policy and the financial and banking systems.

A room devoted to the theme of poverty and wealth inequality forms a hinge-point to the exhibition with the spectacular loan of the fragments of an exploded transit van detonated by the **HSCB (Hoe Street Central Bank) as part of the Big Bang 2 project** which bought up £1.2m of payday loan debt in Walthamstow, London. Ben Oakley's *Jesus I'm Skint* uses an icon-like religious figure in a pastiche of Roman Catholic kitsch.

Currencies invented for use in policed, occupied or besieged spaces were weapons of propaganda, control and a source of resistance. The Nazi POW and concentration camp systems used camp money as illusory incentives, while the Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen concentration camp was notorious for 'Operation Bernhard', the largest counterfeiting operation of all time intended to undermine the British economy. The fake banknotes, valued somewhere between £100,000,000 and £300,000,000, were produced by inmates, many of whom were highly skilled artists, engravers and typographers.

The stamping and counter-stamping of coins by opposing Fascist and Communist sides in the Spanish Civil War and by Loyalists and Republican Nationalists in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s, illustrate the ways that messaging on money was used as a form of intimidation, provocation and declaring allegiance.

In the 21st century, politicians and other authority figures have remained a popular target for defacement. The satirist monikered **Wefail** applies his famously grotesque caricature style to Tony Blair in '**It's Complicated**' (2019), a specially commissioned physical version of his £10 note print which satirises Blair's explanation for Britain's involvement in the Iraq War. **Harry of England/Ten Megs** (2019) is a next-generation reworking of Banksy's influential Di-Faced tenner in which Prince Harry replaces the Queen and Meghan Markle appears on the reverse with the message 'Trust No Press'. The controversy around Donald Trump's wall on the US-Mexican border, and his administration's alleged links to Vladimir Putin, are subjects of **Sean Kushner's** trademark colourful satire on a US dollar.

In our pandemic age where the use of money is increasingly being replaced by digital methods of payment, and against the backdrop of the current cost of living crisis, times of inflation and spiralling costs and debt, the exhibition's themes in which currency has been, and continues to be, created and defaced remain urgently relevant.

***Defaced!** will also have a design as radical and unexpected as its contents. A series of immersive spaces are being created by the partnership of Tom Piper Design and RFK Architects. Piper, previously associate designer for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and Alan Fairlie, of RFK architects, have been working together since 2012 and are leaders in innovative exhibition, museum and gallery design. Recent exhibition projects have included Alice: Curiouser & Curiouser at the V&A (2021) and Inspiring Walt Disney: The Animation of French Decorative Arts (2022) at The Wallace Collection.*

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#Defaced! | 11 October 2022 - 8 January 2023 | Admission Free | **15 – 17 is a priority booking period for our Friends of The Fitzwilliam** become a member today for more benefits. Follow updates via #Defaced! on our Twitter @FitzMuseum\_UK, Instagram @fitzmuseum\_uk and Facebook @fitzwilliammuseum and sign up to our e-news.

**For further enquires please contact the Fitzwilliam Museum Communications:**

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## **Notes to Editors**

The illustrated exhibition catalogue, Defaced! Money, Conflict, Protest, edited by Dr Richard Kelleher, will be published by Paul Holberton Publishing in October 2022.

The Fitzwilliam Museum is grateful to the support of the **Art Fund** for their [New Collecting Awards](#) programme, which invests in the development of some of the UK's rising curators. The award enabled Dr Richard Kelleher to acquire a new collection of currencies for the museum which are on show in this exhibition.

## **The Fitzwilliam Museum**

Founded in 1816, the Fitzwilliam Museum is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge and lead partner for the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funded programme. It houses over half a million objects from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman artefacts, to medieval illuminated manuscripts, paintings from the Renaissance to the 21st century, world class prints and drawings, and outstanding collections of coins, Asian arts, ceramics and other applied arts. The Fitzwilliam is an internationally recognised institute of learning, research and conservation.

[www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

**The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB | Free admission** Tuesday – Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 – 17.00; CLOSED: 24 - 26 & 31 December, 1 January, Good Friday.