

Williams, Robert ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7771-2415> and Wilson, Bryan McGovern (2014) *Cumbrian alchemy: certum quia impossibile est*. [Show/Exhibition] In: *Cumbrian Alchemy*, 16 February - 13 April 2014, Rheged Centre, Penrith, UK. (Unpublished)

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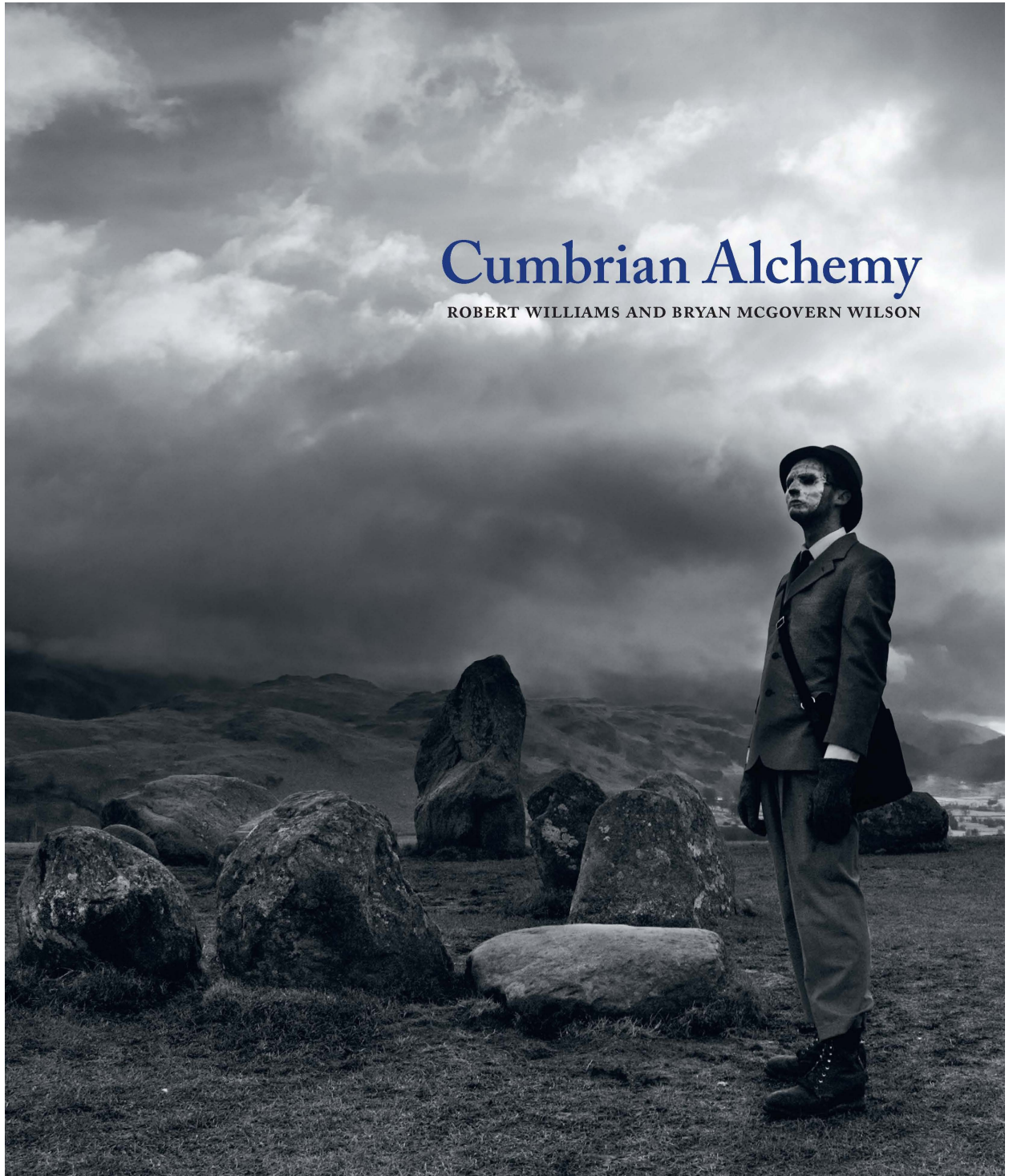
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Cumbrian Alchemy

ROBERT WILLIAMS AND BRYAN MCGOVERN WILSON

Cumbrian Alchemy
Exhibition Information



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

University of
Cumbria 

Cumbrian Alchemy is an ambitious contemporary art project hosted by the University of Cumbria and supported by Arts Council England. It brings together New York artist Bryan McGovern Wilson and British artist Robert Williams in a collaborative enquiry that explores the significant relationships between the nuclear, mining and renewables industries of the north-west *Energy Coast*, with the landscape, archaeology and folklore of North Lancashire and Cumbria.

‘This project by Robert Williams and Bryan Wilson is an epic example of how greatly artists benefit from sharing ideas, expertise and skills. It exemplifies the way artists sharing related interests can make connections between bodies of knowledge; in this case secret bodies of knowledge, which may be separated by centuries.’
- **Mark Dion**. Artist

‘Williams & Wilson have imagineered a project that excavates the incredible and many-layered relationships that mythology, art, mysticism, geo-politics and the natural sciences have developed with what we now conceptualise as ‘deep-time’. Their working rhythm is clearly built on dialogues, with one-another, with other experts and allies and with the material ‘stuff’ (from nuclear power plants to Norse stone carvings to protest pin badges) that frame their critical approach to the frightening near-term crisis of nuclear waste management. This book represents a project formed at the juncture of the speculative imaginary and a future so real that not even science fiction could foresee it.’
- **Nick Thurston**. Information as Material.

Robert Williams is an artist and academic. Professor of Fine Art at the University of Cumbria, his interdisciplinary practice is known for a number of collaborative projects dealing with archaeology and heritage, the history of science and alchemy with his 14 year old son, Jack Aylward-Williams and American artist Mark Dion amongst others.

Bryan McGovern Wilson is an interdisciplinary artist whose work addresses themes of time, the body, and ritual. Wilson looks to craft traditions as methodology, archaic symbolism as source and field research as strategy to inform his practice. A rising star in the USA and internationally, he currently lives and works in New York City.

The lavishly illustrated book, designed by the artist **James Brook**, brings together material from the ***Cumbrian Alchemy*** project with essays by eminent professionals in the field in an enquiry into the place, the spaces, the people and the monuments of the region. The project explores what may be imagined in such close proximity to ‘places of power’, be they within landscape, of natural phenomenon, megalithic monuments, or industrial installation. Williams and Wilson have interests in working with impossible materials such as deep-time, ghosts, narrative and imagination. Essayists include the archaeologist **David Barrowclough** from the University of Cambridge, an expert on the prehistory of Lancashire and Cumbria who considers the concept of deep-time in Cumbria and the future archaeology of long term storage of nuclear waste. Nuclear specialist **Paul Abraitis** investigates the natural history of radiation in the region, whilst Cumbrian journalist **Alan Cleaver** provides insights into the folklore of ‘places of power’ in Cumbria in his discussion of semi-mythical animal and supernatural stewards of the land. **John Disney** provides a narrative as rich as any Norse saga in his story of the famous Viking Hogback Stone at Heysham on the North Lancashire coast. The introduction is by American artist **Mark Dion**.

Unipress Cumbria is proud to present ***Cumbrian Alchemy*** (96pp 245x210mm, 145 full-colour illustrations. ISBN: 978-1-869979-39-3. Softback. 2013 rrp. £19.99). Edited by Robert Williams.

**For further information contact Professor Robert Williams
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To order copies of the book please contact: The Art Shop. Email: artshop@cumbria.ac.uk

Cumbrian Alchemy

Robert Williams & Bryan McGovern Wilson

Exhibition Technical Details

X8 A/0 (841x1189mm) Framed Drawings – Ash frames, flush fixings requiring direct fixing by screws.

X3 A/0 (841x1189mm) Diasec Photographs mounted on aluminium. Direct fixing via hanging rod and screws.

Ideally a gap of 549.5 should be maintained between 2D works – although this will also be mediated by the setting and context.

X2 A/0 sized plan chests:

Plan Chest 1 c.1260mm (H) c.915mm (W) c.655mm (D)

Wheeled carcass x6 drawers. Top display Perspex box – wooden box containing geological & glass objects. This requires electrical power for installed LED lights – 240v stepped down via transformer (supplied) to 12v. American 2 pin plug.

Drawer 1 – Printed Matter – Deeptime

Drawer 2 – Printed Matter – Representations of the Atomic for children

Drawer 3 – Printed Matter – Cumbrian Myths and Legends.

Drawer 4 – Printed Matter – Sellafield material

Drawer 5 – Printed Matter – Antique prints & Lake District

Drawer 6 – Geological material, Mining and minerals, antique Cumbrian miner's lamp.

Plan Chest 2 c.1260mm (H) c.915mm (W) c.655mm (D)

Wheeled carcass x 6 drawers. Top display Perspex box – Steward Animals includes biological skeletal material – pig, dog, sheep, crow. (This may need special license to cross borders.)

Drawer 1 – Printed Matter – Cumbrian Topography - Maps

Drawer 2 – Printed Matter – Cumbrian Topography - postcards

Drawer 3 – Printed Matter – Romano/British & Mediaeval Cumbria

Drawer 4 – Printed Matter – Antique Prints – a Cumbrian Miscellany

Drawer 5 – Printed Matter – Popular ideas of the Atom – comics.

Drawer 6 – Period objects – Popular ideas of the Atom - 1950's design, fabric, ceramic, metal & plastic. Printed Matter.

42" LCD TV with Blu-Ray player and independent stereo speakers. HDMI cable, 1.5mm mini-jack to mini-jack cable. Film: *The Heysham Hogback*. 23.5 minutes, looped presentation. Black & white, stereo. Direct fixing to wall, bracket and screws. 240v for all three devices. British 3 pin plug.









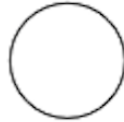


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Hogback (Griss-hryggr)

BD-R LTH
9.2.14



23:01:15 D14
Norse Version
with John Disney

