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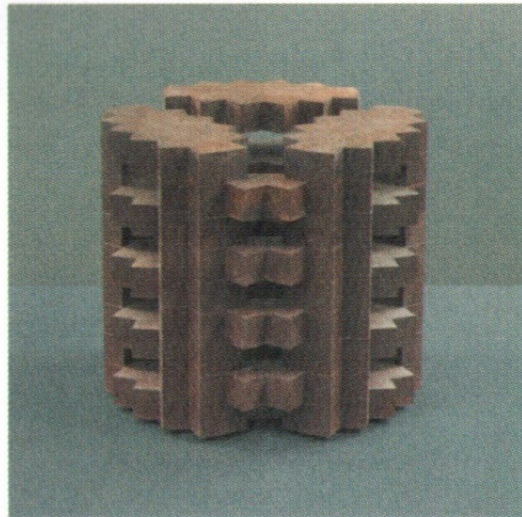
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Narrow Escape

Normally this magazine doesn't review past shows but, given what an atmospheric exhibition Vaughan Grylls put on at the **Landmark Arts Centre** in January, for once I'm going to break the rules. Grylls, who emerged as a photographic montage and installation artist of some distinction in the late 60s and has had a substantial career since, was showing 4 recent pieces, one of which in particular, 'Grandmother' told a

remarkable story in a touching and original way. Briefly, as a baby in a pram in 1943, Grylls had been rescued by his granny from a Dornier 217 bomber strafing everything that moved along the Fosse Way where they lived – pulled up the front steps as the bullets hit the family house. 70 years on Grylls came across a huge cache of family photographs and revisited this wartime story, heard just once from his parents, in the only way that seemed appropriate to him, as a giant photomontage.

Constructed (photos pinned to white sheets – washing?) to simulate the exact head-on, full-scale profile of a Dornier 217 and with the self-same pram parked in front (echoes of Eisenstein's Potemkin Steps), the effect was remarkably moving – history, autobiography, family and personal myth all wrapped in resonant visual motifs and in a way that also made you really examine the 1000 or so individual images that formed it. As a 1943 baby myself I really identified with it . . .