

In their own words:

Joy Gregory

This Q&A was produced alongside the exhibition Lost Languages and other voices, shown at Impressions Gallery from 24 November 2010 to 19 February 2011.

IG: Who are the particular photographers and/or artists that you admire?

JG: Andre Kertez, Mona Hatoom, Alfredo Jaar, Luc Tuymans, Olivia Parker, Sarah Moon and Anna Atkins.

IG: What are your main influences and how have they influenced your work?

JG: Women's magazines from the 1970s to the 1990s, Black photography/art movement in 1980s, 17th century Dutch still life painting, early photographic processes and the print room at the V&A.

IG: Why do you use photography?

JG: Because it is the most plastic and accessible of all the creative arts. It is understood and easily read by everyone because it is part of our everyday more so now than ever before.

IG: How do you approach a project/what is your methodology?

JG: In the early days used to draw things out in a sketchbook, like an art director, as that was my training.

Depends on the project. On residence I tend to work with materials and people that surround me, responding directly to the environment. That said I always bring a 'safety blanket' of familiar materials from home.

On other more research led projects I spend much more time reading around the subject and getting familiar with materials and relevant contexts. I do lots of fieldwork and then thinking before approaching the actual visual side of the finished work. It can be up to 12 years from the start of the project to the finished piece.

IG: Some of our visitors will be interested in the technical aspects of your projects. What equipment and techniques do you use? And do these techniques and equipment affect the way that you worked and the project outcome?

JG: I tend to still shoot on film, using a Hasselblad. More recently I have, like everyone else, been trying out everything digital from mobile phones to compact cameras and digital backs for traditional film cameras. I also use a lot of early print processes, especially when I want to experience the physical nature of photography again – making it none labour intensive. I tend to think of the different processes in photography having a language into which we all attribute particular meaning.