

In their own words:

Helen Sear

This Q&A was produced alongside the exhibition Prospect, Refuge, Hazard, shown at Impressions Gallery from 18 January to 16 March 2019.

IG: Which artists/photographers do you particularly respect?

Max Ernst, David Lynch, Jean Cocteau, Jane Campion, Helen Chadwick, Boyd Webb, Susan Hiller and Joan Jonas. Also younger photographers such as Clementine Schneidermann and Lua Ribeira.

IG: Why do you choose photography as your artistic medium?

Photography as a subject is as important to me as it is as a medium or tool. In the construction of my pictures I am often playing with the single point perspective associated with the camera lens. Humans have two eyes in a body and experience the world somewhat differently from a single lens.

I was first drawn to the “magic” and materiality of the photographic image in the darkroom. I studied Fine Art at both undergraduate and post-graduate level which mean't that photography or video were not always stand alone media and could be incorporated in sculptural installations that utilised other media.

IG: What was the trigger each series?

Most of my work is triggered by spending time in particular locations and a process of observation over time.

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

Technology , landscape and the human and animal body have played an important part in a lot of my work, our changing human relationships with our environment. The physical presence of the image is very important to me. I have also been very influenced by literature(magic realism) cinema and painting, in the way that I work with colour and light, and Conceptual art in the way that I think about what I am making.

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

I work almost solely digitally now but often incorporate hand drawn elements using photoshop and experiment with how the meaning and reception of work is altered through different scales and surfaces.

IG: Do you have any recommended reading to further contextualise your work?

Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer*
James Elkins: *The Object Stares back*
Laura Mulvey: "*Death 24 x a Second*"
Ursula le Guinn: *The Word for World is Forest*
Jacquette Hawkes : *A Land*

IG: What plans do you have for future projects?

I am planning to return to North Carolina this year to finish a project I began whilst artist in residence at Cassilhaus Chapel Hill in 2018. This will include a new series of portraits taken at the Scrap Exchange in Durham NC, a nonprofit organisation whose mission is to promote creativity, environmental awareness, and community through reuse.

I have a solo exhibition in Eindhoven, *Nature's Shadow*, in May this year and am working on the construction of a new 3 x 5 metre work for this exhibition.