

# **An interview with Liza Dracup by Anne McNeill In Sharpe's Wood**

**May 2007**

***AM: Good morning Liza, could you just tell me, how did you get interested in photography?***

*LD: I got interested in photography through art through an early age and then got really seriously into photography in my teenage years through cameras being around the house, my dad's cameras, using my dad's camera, then he bought me my own camera so that gave me the freedom to go out and photograph lots of different things. I didn't have a specific subject then, I was just intrigued by the whole magic of photography, just going out and documenting and photographing*

***AM: That's interesting that you say the magic of photography, too you what is the magic of photography?***

*LD: I'm not out to replicate what we see, and just as a medium of recording something or trying to express a mood an emotion or a response to landscape, photography its just a form of expression in that respect.*

***AM: And the landscape you mentioned you've mentioned that, what was it about the landscape that drew you to wanting to not record it but express yourself through the camera?***

*LD: I was drawn to photographing the landscape, I think, I actually photographed the landscape a lot in black and white at first but then I found myself putting the colour back in, so I'm drawn to landscape in many ways due to the ever changing colours, the seasons and just that kind of you know, that proximity to nature, that your actually out, within either a woods space or the seaside or in the rolling hills, you actually feel you have that closeness to nature.*

***AM: Well here we are in Sharpe's Wood and we are very close to nature, why Sharpe's Wood what drew you to here?***

*LD: Sharpe's Wood and there are a few other woods around Bradford that I photograph and have been drawn to and continue to photograph, and Sharpe's Wood just through making work became the more prominent space and as a child, I spent time in this wood as well so there are links with my childhood here.*

***AM: What kind of things did you get up to as a child?***

*LD: So when I was a child the things I used to do in Sharpe's Wood with friends, we'd kind of play around the trees, hide and seek not get up to too much mischief, just generally have fun in the space, cos I think child hood experiences and the books you read a child have links with woodland spaces and all that northern European*

***AM: What were your reasons for shooting between sunset and sunrise?***

*LD: I chose to photograph between sun set and sunrise because it was a different approach to photographing during the day which I'd always done and my photography has always had that experimental thread running through it. I've never wanted to replicate what your eye sees anyway through photography, and by photographing at night your actually getting images that only exist through the camera because of the minimal light, the ambient light you have, you have the transient light sources of cars that go by that illuminate kind of fractional bits of landscape fleeting going past. You got the kind of constant more waxing and waning of the moon which can bring on more additional lighting and then you have street lights around that give you a different quality of light so your really working with, real experimental nature, the unknown and the unpredictability but out of using the technical side of the camera you can control, in that respect how much light in the camera and through time.*

***AM: I'm very interested in that you said that it was through that you got into photography could you tell me an artist that has inspired you?***

*LD: I think very early on painting inspired me not photography and my mum always used to take me to see the pre Raphaelite paintings and reflecting back now the colours of Sharpe's wood where lush and dense and saturated and I just feel in the response, you know of your memories, coming back to that and I love in terms of painting again you got turners landscape, the sublime the fear, the edge that we don't actually, how we respond to landscape that it isn't just picturesque its just not pretty and I do think there is the element of threat in the landscape with nature and mother nature has the element of the unknown the unexpected.*

***AM: Liza, I think you really touched on a collective nerve by photographing into the woods and people do have fears of unknown spaces in the woods, particularly, I'm thinking of the Blair Witch project a few years ago and the hysteria around that, what do you think about that?***

*LD: I think the blare witch film did touch so many people, I think it tapped into the natural psyche of that inherent fear we have of the woods, through mythology as well as our ancestral past, I think the fear has existed through time and people have drawn inspiration from it you know a lot of northern European fairy tales and folk laws come from that and I think it has been with us because obviously there must have been the fear in the woods, the hunter and the hunted, so I think that is deeply imbedded within our psyche as a collective memory and personal memory as well, its kind of personal and*

*collective of my response to Sharpe's wood as well a response to the landscape and working with the element of fear, going out into the woodland spaces at night and making work and your working with fear and it kind of drives the work along*

***AM: Could you tell me how you feel about being the first artist to exhibit at the new Impressions Gallery in Centenary Square?***

***LD: To be the first artist to show in centenary square at Impressions Gallery is a very exciting prospect as in that, I'm a Bradfordian and to show in my home city is just a very exciting time and actually the scale of the show as well a whole collection of work, years of work, just really looking forward to putting my work out there in the public domain.***

**END**