

Curious Nature: Artist's profiles

Helena Goldwater

Helena Goldwater is a well established performance artist and in the last few years has developed a parallel painting practice, showing her new works at The Drawing Room, London, Newlyn Art Gallery, Cornwall and Spacex Gallery, Exeter as part of the Liverpool Biennial. Both her painting and performance practices seek to destabilise the viewer's relationship to intimacy.

At first glance her paintings are delicate and obsessive watercolours of plants. Their attention to detail reveals a process of hermetic intensity - every hair is painted and every vein observed as a mark of devotion. Yet their powers of seduction are disproportionate to their scale and they quietly undermine the viewer's expectations to identify them as flora since they pervert and hybridise existing plant forms.

In 2000 and 2007 Goldwater was nominated for the prestigious Paul Hamlyn Foundation Awards for Visual Arts and is also a recipient of awards from Arts Council England, Live Art Development Agency and the British Council.

www.helenagoldwater.co.uk

Melanie Stidolph

Melanie Stidolph's practice is concerned with producing iconic images which reference both a wide pictorial tradition and the specificity of their subjects. Described as a 'cross-breed between the documentary and staged traditions within photography', she works with a close attention to the subject and an awareness of the symbolic and cinematic in the selection and presentation of the final image.

The photographs are displayed for exhibition full frame, with the edge of the negative showing in the final print, and printed to a

large scale (generally 160 x 130cm). This emphasises the original moment of taking the picture, through referencing the film it was captured on and the lack of subsequent editing of the image.

Melanie Stidolph completed her BA at the University of Leeds in 1991 and then went on to complete her MFA at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada under the tutelage of Jeff Wall. She has exhibited her photographs in solo and group shows in the UK and abroad including exhibitions at the Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland; Cynthia Broan Gallery, New York; Keith Talent Gallery, London; MOT, London and Permanent Gallery, Brighton.

www.melaniestidolph.com

Andy Harper

Andy Harper's work creates complex visual fodder through paint using the medium to physically build the dense foliage. Through an exact and repetitive technique he builds up leaves, fruits and twigs into a disturbing image of barely controlled wilderness. His subject matter, whilst overtly depicting nature, uses the language of the medium, a process of 'instinctual mark-making' (Martin Herbert), to subvert and reference a more complex psychological manifestation of our relationship to our internal and external habitat.

Following his graduation from the Royal College of Art, London in 1995, Harper has shown extensively including: Fieldgate Gallery, London; ArtMbassy, Berlin; solo shows at Frost & Reed Contemporary, London and 319 Gallery, London; Danielle Arnaud Gallery, London (all 2007); Art Futures, BloombergSPACE, Jerwood Drawing Prize, Jerwood Space and U.K. tour; Museum of Garden History, London; Mostyn Open, Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno, Wales, (all 2005). Lemon Sky Projects, Miami; Illuminate Productions, Globe Walk; John Moores 24, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; The Royal Academy Summer Show, Piccadilly, London (all 2006).

Harper also teaches at Goldsmiths College and Central Saint Martins.

www.andyh.net

Leonora Chan

Leonora Chan's landscapes are highlighted with an eerie, effervescent light that makes an ordinary hedgerow or shoreline appear magically staged. In fact these are all lit 'naturally' by light pollution. This unsettling fact brings in to question the human and urban impact on nature.

Chan is an art director and designer based in London who graduated from the Royal College of Art. Her work mainly focuses on print based projects collaborating with photographers and illustrators with a strong emphasis in image making. Conceptual and narrative structures feature greatly in her work. Her clients range from luxury brands through to fashion, film and publishing.

Chan has exhibited her works in Paris, New York and London, most recently at agnes b, London; as a featured artist at Asia House, London and at Allmanna Galleriet 925 Stockholm. In 2005 she exhibited at Fotofeast, Studio 95, London and DiVA (Digital & Video Art Fair) Kube Paris. She was shortlisted for the Helen Hamlyn Award in 2004.

Chan is a visiting lecturer in BA Graphic Design at the University College of the Creative Arts.

www.leonorachan.com

Nadège Mériaux

Nadège Mériaux's haunting works appear as formal compositions whilst evoking a dreamlike quality. Nature acts as a counterpoint to the material world but we are aware of the manipulations at play. The images are invested with many layers of meaning for us to unravel. In Curious Nature a range of work is presented, from plants torn from the earth and tenderly captured on film, to surreal narratives depicted in her series 'mises en scene'.

Meriau is an award winning photographer who has worked with many international clients including The Guardian Weekend (editorial) ; MacCann Erikson Agency (Petits Filous campaign) and M&C Saatchi (Ribena campaign). She has won several industry awards including Rencontres d'Arles. Photo Folio Review and Gallery winner, nominated by Benoit Rivero (Actes Sud) in 2007 and in 2004 the Judge's Choice Award for the Association of Photographers Open Competition

She is represented in London, New York and Amsterdam by Wyatt-Clarke and Jones and in Paris and Europe by Maureen Sale.

Recent exhibitions include: Bloody Beautiful, group exhibition with Karen Knorr, Alexnader McQueen and Risk Hazekamp at the Rotterdam City Museum, Rotterdam 2007; The Subterranean Garden, crypt of Euston St Pancras Church, London and GPA Summer Show at Kew Gardens, London (both 2006).

www.nadegemeriau.com

John Timberlake

For Curious Nature Timberlake presents a series of works depicting moon and landscapes in the style of astronomical illustrations from the 1950s and early 1960s. Notionally derived from fictional transcriptions of early moonlandings and other planetary explorations, the works are explained through text in English or Cyrillic, again fictitious, yet evocative of a bygone era. Alongside these constructed fantasies are manipulated works, part photograph, part drawing, where Timberlake has shot a particular view using a large format camera and later, in the studio, has added drawn "maps" and "territorial divisions". We are encouraged to look below the surface of the immediate into what may lie beneath.

Recent exhibitions include A Song Turning Inward, Tatjana Pieters/One Twenty, Ghent; Colony at the New Art Gallery Walsall (both 2007); There's Always an Alternative, temporarycontemporary, London; International 3, Manchester

(2005) and East International, Norwich Gallery (2004). His work is included in the collection of the Imperial War Museum, the West Collection at SEI, and several private collections in Belgium, Germany and France.

Timberlake completed his first degree at Brighton Polytechnic and is an alumnus of the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program. He is currently undertaking a PhD at Goldsmiths College, University of London.