Helen Sear: Seeing in The Dark

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Let me begin with a framework, the image of a house. It is a simple schematic rendition, like a child's drawing, without particular scale or detail. It appears both as solid and transparent, closed and open, full and empty. It is subject to apparent extremes, and seems to weather them, a luminous presence against the night, the infinite black, shifting and reforming itself, a house, a cage, a hut; glowing gold, sheathed in fur, perhaps burning out there deep in the forest, or isolated, a strange gothic model picked out by searchlights on the edge of town. ***(Image: Fur House)***

This form, the schematic house, the cage, is a pivotal motif in the art of Helen Sear. It is not constant and does not constitute a single major work – in fact, fully formed, it does not appear in her work until the 1990s – but it stands as something of a marker in her career, some kind of centre, from which and through which her work fans out, into the past and forward into the future. Is it, we might imagine, Sear's 'oneiric house', her 'house of dream-memory', that Bachelard offered as unalterable but resistant to description, that first essence of a house that 'must retain its shadows'?[1] Its meaning appears unstable and ambiguous, a hiding place, a refuge, a cell, a trap, intimate and alien, a store for ideas and experiences, the well of some deep knowledge, or a flimsy shell through which the very air passes, a shimmering mirage made of light and longing. But the images distinctly define a structure in space, they present forms that occupy space and divide it, as outside and inside, the indeterminate exterior and the interior 'place'. And what seems to resonate in the works is an exchange – elemental, phenomenological – between the two, between what is seen and what is hidden, what is present and what is absent, what is trapped and what has flown. In fact the structures seem to embody that process, they pulse with that tension, they even ignite with the energy of it.

Sear's house form might be seen as a figure around which Bachelard's 'dialectics of outside and inside'[2] are conducted, and in this the image of the house as space merges with that of the body, and with a deep-seated sense of being. Not only are its rooms the places of dwelling, the protective 'cradle' of our dreaming, but also in a more metaphysical sense the house harbours and exists as the inner space of the imagination, within it is the room of our selves that Maurice Blanchot conjured as utterly dark but intimately known: 'About this room, which was plunged into utter darkness, I knew everything, I had entered into it, I bore it within me, I made it live,

with a life that is not life, but which is stronger than life…'[3] Sear's house images are ghostly traces of this physical and metaphysical merging, and it is significant I think that she has never attempted to account for them before; they simply hover, offered without specific meaning as something that exists 'before language'[4], indescribable but at the very core of her work and her identity. They are representations of some essential framework, perhaps, within which art and life are connected and separated, where the tangles of the artist and her sense of self exist. They provide us with a primary outline and an energy source, and they pose an extended question: what is the work, what is at its heart and what is beyond it?

'How concrete everything becomes in the world of the spirit when an object, a mere door, can give images of hesitation, desire, security, welcome and respect. If one were to give an account of all the doors one would like to re-open, one would have to tell the story of one's entire life.'[5]

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From this dramatic locus we can begin to imagine Helen Sear's work flowing out, out through an unlocked door, first to inhabit a more distinctly physical self and then to explore the locating of that self, that body, out there in the world, and in a landscape. The common threshold of that movement, that two-way traffic, from inside to outside, is the eye, and its enactment is bound up with the mechanics and symbolic properties of vision. In Sear's art the crossing of the threshold represented by vision has been an abiding preoccupation, one that, fundamentally, has drawn her to photography, and to film. The camera has become the principle instrument with which she has articulated a sense of being in and looking out onto the world, it is the surrogate 'eye' of her work, and yet its sightlines are rarely clear and unimpeded. If eye and aperture forms recur in Sear's imagery, they are opaque, often appearing as reflecting mirrors or pools of blinding light rather than windows or channels of connection. For Sear photographic vision is occluded; it is not just a layered process (the revealing of which in her work has in itself led to forms of opacity), but it is also a site of enquiry, a subject, one to be unravelled and examined as part of the work's conception and making, from idea, from theory, and from intuition into practice.

This defining fascination with the mechanisms of photography has embodied for Sear a profound and ongoing ambiguity. For her, as for many feminist artists who emerged in the late seventies and eighties, photography has been indelibly associated with the elevated status of vision in modernity, not only in its relation to what was considered certain and true – 'seeing is believing'

– but also, as an arbiter of truth, in its dominance over the other senses. And increasingly during this period the dominance of vision became identified with a male perspective. Writing in 1978, for example, Luce Irigaray noted: 'Investment in the look is not privileged in women as in men. More than the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters. It sets at a distance, maintains the distance. In our culture, the predominance of the look over smell, taste, touch, hearing, has brought about an impoverishment of bodily relations…The moment the look dominates, the body loses its materiality.'[6] This has also been Sear's principle point of engagement with and intervention in photography: to challenge its dominant viewpoint and all the assumptions flowing from that, and to offer a more 'fragmented experience', one that might be more 'aligned with the feminine'[7]. Her work has been forged in a space that is usually invisible in the final photographic print, a space that unfolds from the moment a subject is first seen and framed in the viewfinder and that exists until its reappearance in the developed image, the subject seen again for the second time fixed on paper. What happens, and what might happen in this interim space, is for Sear always associated with the potential for physical interruption, both in the image and in the work more generally. As she has explained while tracing her own motives: 'With the photograph, the body seemed absent, there were no markings or interruptions of the surface of the image as in a painting. It was suppressed and sealed, creating a yearning for physical intervention. The frustration of the thinness of the paper and its lack of substance prompted a greater desire to explore the sensual or active properties of the image.'[8]

There is a sense here that while Sear's early involvement with photography strained at its limitations and sought to contest what was seen as its complacent, masculine authority, her fascination with the medium was not entirely confined to the deconstructive antagonisms of the time. As a fine artist with no particular investment in photographic history or adherence to the radical shifts that had overturned photographic traditions since the 1960s, she nevertheless found photography seductive, and perhaps within her own critical discourse of contemporary art, dangerously so. Her particular challenge to traditional photographic values was, at heart, an attempt to press it into the service of her own interests and her own way of seeing, to take it apart in order to re-construct it and re-invest it with meaning. 'Construct' here is the operative word. For Sear this has meant adding to and embellishing the photographic process, extending it and finding ways to animate the interaction between the image, the work and the viewer in a way that consistently foregrounds physicality and the presence of the body. Photography, as she used it, became part of a 'recuperative', rather than overtly critical approach to the dominant codes of visuality. As she has said: 'Using the camera…I have attempted to recuperate the body into the

act of looking and explore the corporeality of vision through various processes of layering, drawing, excavating and rupturing, both in the still and the moving image.'[9]

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But to understand these ideas in a wider context, one that is both biographical and artistic, we first have to return to the house, to go inside and enter a room, a room that is both real and imagined, a room which exists and which is a memory.

This time it is an early Victorian house, and we are in a large room with high ceilings that is shaded from the full glare of the sun. It is cool in here, while outside we know the pavements bake. Light seeps into the room through drawn curtains, splintering into narrow shafts that pick out dust particles floating in the stale air. Looking up we see that the room is partly lined with shelves and on those shelves are arranged a collection of glass cabinets from which the light glints too, casting mosaic patterns back into the room to confound our sense of space and the room's velvet density. In the glass cabinets, and in the shadows that fall from them, are the shapes of birds; dark and static silhouettes with, here and there, a blush of colour and then another pinpoint reflection, this time from a glass eye. The taxidermist's specimens look down on us through the fractured gloom, and they are alive; some are perched and waiting, some are about to take flight, and all are set in meticulously constructed and now faded corners of nature, each a modelled and painted micro climate frozen in winter, spring or summer and overlaid with the fine patina of time.

Looking away and across the room into the far corner we see that we are not alone. A young, blonde-haired girl, about ten years old, sits at a table surrounded by open books and what seem like albums of photographs. We approach her and she appears momentarily disturbed, but by something other than us. She peers out briefly through a crack in the curtains and then sits back and is lost again in the pages and photographs on the table. Now, peering over her shoulder, we can see that the books are medical manuals, surgical texts illustrated by figurative diagrams and by black and white photographs of operations in progress. There are also portraits of people, of faces before and after reconstructive surgery. Some have open mouths and appear to be howling at the camera.

In the albums the spectacle of operations is more vivid and more visceral. Small colour transparencies and photographs, with rich Kodachrome saturation, glow on the pages: the crimson, orange and white hues of exposed flesh and bone, the deep sea-green of the surgeons' robes and the metallic sheen of their instruments, create lush stills from a theatre of the objectified body. And, as the girl stares at the photographs, this sense of theatre, one in which the very matter of life and death appears to be in question, or already reconfigured, extends around the room. In this small world, sentience exists most powerfully in the dead eyes that stare down from the glass cabinets.

Breaking her concentration the girl takes another photograph from her pocket and places it on the table. It is a picture of her own face in profile, brightly lit against a dark background that could be the night sky. Her eyes are closing; she may be drifting into sleep. But what is most striking, and most dreamily strange about the picture, is that across the girl's face and neck there are red, blue and black painted lines, like a system of veins. And then another, dotted line, which, given the presence of the medical manuals, seems to indicate the place of an incision. The girl holds the photograph next to a diagram in one of the manuals, and, as if illustrating the comparison, she touches her hand to her face and slowly re-traces the lines across her skin.

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This photograph reappears in Helen Sear's work, *Severance*, from 1991, where it is substantially enlarged, rotated through ninety degrees, printed in black and white and joined in a diptych with an image that frames the surface of a rocky landscape in abrupt close-up. Paired in this way, the painted lines on Sear's skin and the entire contour of her youthful face take on a topographic quality and appropriate the traditional perspective of the landscape photograph so bluntly denied in the image it accompanies. Sear's profile is now a far horizon, the dark space beyond *is* the night sky, and the lines on her face are mapped rivers of circulation. **(Image: Severance)**

The 'veins' were drawn by Sear's father, a doctor who specialised in reconstructive surgery from the late 1960s until his retirement in 1995. His area of expertise was oral and maxillofacial surgery, and as part of his research, as Sear has recalled, he often turned to his family to conduct experiments, firing flash bulbs into their mouths to reveal the surrounding bone and tissue. To illustrate educational demonstrations of reconstructive surgery he had compiled an extensive

library of photographs, and also photographed many operations in progress. For Sear, the familiarity of these images, and the domestic routine of the camera directed at and inside the body 'hold lasting memories of an experimental, scientific approach to the photographic'[10]. But this surgical imprint is also intertwined with another memory of physical intervention and reconstruction. The house that Sear was brought up in was originally filled with dozens of taxidermy specimens in glass cases. Although these were eventually sold, one – a stuffed woodcock – was kept as a 'memento of the former owner with a taste for the portable diorama.'[11] The twin spectre of these images from her childhood, with all their gothic, noir-ish and surreal overtones, have been foundational influences on Sear's art and imagination, and have persisted throughout her career, providing, as she has said, 'a visual language to be unravelled and extended.'[12]

These influences are certainly in evidence in the first works Sear made after completing her post-graduate studies at the Slade in 1983. Having taken a familiar journey for artists at the time away from painting towards a practice that utilised elements of sculpture, performance, film and video, she was experimenting with the sculptural presence of projected photography and video imagery to create immersive installations in which both the photographic image, the female body and our ability to see and grasp them as unified and whole are intensely disrupted. In this work she had also begun to combine lens-based technology with a feeling for materials nurtured during her training in a studio environment. For example, her installation *Between Us*, originally exhibited at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, in 1985, involved partially erasing the silver from pieces of mirrored glass and utilising gels to deflect and layer constantly changing projected imagery. The affect was to establish a sense of spatial and perceptual disorientation in which the gallery became what Sear has referred to as 'the inside of a broken camera'[13]. What emanates from this camera and its newly fractured perception is a degree of tension and threat, a dark undertow of menace only partially glimpsed through the fleeting shadows. **(Image: Between Us)**

This work and other pieces of the time, such as the collaborative *The Power and The Glory*, shown at the ICA's New Contemporaries show in 1983, bear the influence of key artists in Britain who had pioneered the development of three-dimensional and sculptural uses of film, photography, light and mixed media. To sketch in a broader context for Sear's emergent practice, it is important here to mention some in particular: for example, Tim Head, one of Sear's tutors at the Slade, who in the 1970s had made installations using projected light and photographic images that he characterised as 'alignments placed in jeopardy – a world sliding out of sync'[14]; Ron

Haseldon, who had taught Sear in the Fine Art Department at Reading University and had helped form a mixed media area there, and who in the 1970s had made a series of influential film and video installations using multiple projectors; Bill Culbert another of Sear's teachers, who formed the mixed-media area at Reading with Haseldon and who transformed everyday objects into beautiful and playful light sculptures; the mixed-media installations and performance pieces of Rose Garrard, that spoke of the body, and of physical experience, especially in relation to the social roles of women; the similarly intense physical performances of the late Kerry Trengrove; and Susan Hiller, another of Sear's tutor's at the Slade, whose work from the mid-seventies onwards embraced multiple and 'popular' media forms, postcards, photo-booths, wallpaper, as well as photography, video and sound. In addition during this period Sear came under the sustained influence of Marc Camille Chaimowicz, who became a close personal friend, and whose 1970s performances and room-like installations, such as *Celebration* (1972) and *Table Tableau* (1973) used domestic objects and motifs to create intimate spaces that, with deft use of soft light and mirror reflections, sparkled with what has been called 'Proustian sensuality'[15].

But perhaps of even greater significance for Sear was Helen Chadwick, not only in her ground-breaking works that merged the photographic image with sculptural form, as in *Ego Geometria Sum* (1983), or which integrated photo-based imagery into beautiful, neo-classically inflected installations such as the suite of works *Of Mutability* shown at the ICA in London in 1986, but also as the model of an artist as empiricist who also embraced pleasure and fantasy, one who placed the body, physical experience, flesh and felt sensation at the centre of work that searched for what she called a 'democratic appeal'. In this, as Marina Warner has said, Chadwick was also 'interested in downgrading vision: she aimed instead at passing beyond spectacle to engage all the faculties, to quicken the senses of smell and touch…the implications of a tactile understanding run through all her sculptures and images…'[16] This sense of a passionately engaged art, one that used photography not as measure of distance but as a means of registering physical proximity – Chadwick once said, 'photography is my skin' – has been an important example for Sear's artistic ambitions. But whereas Chadwick's own body was the locus of her sensual and material investigations, Sear's ambivalence about working with her own body – especially after a partly hostile public response to early works showing her naked body which she exhibited at the ICA, London, in 1980 as part of its Staircase Project – led her, as she has said, 'to look for equivalent visual representations to articulate the autobiographical self.'[17] For her it has been the 'physicality of production', the layering of techniques, and particularly drawing, onto and into the

photographic process, which has come to represent the defining presence of the body and the self in much of her work.

The forms of adoption and adaptation of photographic practice and language represented by artists such as Helen Chadwick, all with sculptural associations, and all pursuing an expansive mode that consciously disrupted, and regarded itself as liberated from, photographic continuities, can be seen as a distinct thread within what has been described as 'second-generation conceptualism' in art of the 1980s. If the 'first generation' of conceptual artists had been drawn to photography principally as a recording mechanism, and revelled in the low-grade nature of that recording, producing determinedly prosaic, artless black and white prints that 'mimicked a certain awkwardness and amateurism', then the second generation undertook forms of 're-skilling'. In her essay 'On Artificiality', written in 1983 the year of Sear's graduation from the Slade, Kate Linker suggested the emergence of the artist as 'arranger', 'who, working with sophisticated technology and under a post-industrial model, 'manages' the production of imagery.'[18] The adoption of more professional photographic techniques and modes of production, and the seamless, technological fusing of distinct media within a sculptural ensemble – that by her death in 1996 Helen Chadwick's had perfected to a particularly high degree of refinement – was part of that re-skilling and management. Although her work remained modest in scale and did not pursue the high production values that became so important to the work of artists such as Tim Head and Boyd Webb, for example, Sear's early work with photography and video can be seen as part of this general direction. More important, perhaps, is that the advent of these conceptually and technically sophisticated uses of photography defined a particular point of confluence between contemporary art and the newly buoyant photographic culture that had begun to establish itself in Britain in the 1970s and that flowered during 1980s, a culture that was to become an important professional and artistic arena for the development of Sear's work in the nineties and beyond.

The new network of galleries, organisations and publishing ventures devoted to photography and supported by new public funding opportunities, that slowly appeared in Britain during the 1970s – and that included The Photographers' Gallery, London; Impressions Gallery, York; Ffotogallery, Cardiff; and Creative Camera magazine – was galvanised by a general and straightforward desire to provide space and exposure to photographer's work that had remained largely outside the interests and programming priorities of existing visual arts institutions. In fact, increasingly into the 1980s, this network became the site of a feverish upheaval in photographic practice and debate. As critical ideas from conceptual art, from feminism and from the new body

of photographic theory began to challenge and impact on established genres and practices, the idea of what might constitute photography for this network necessarily altered and broadened. The 'photographic sector', borne from a sense of photography's importance as a powerful medium of communication and poetic expression, from a sense of its uniqueness and democratic appeal, grew into a place where disparate and often opposed interests, practices, histories and traditions converged, a place where photography was fiercely interrogated, and where, from one week to the next, it could be both celebrated and dammed. Although the factionalising that characterised this culture in the 1980s and early 90s, left a dreary legacy of recrimination that in some quarters still simmers today, it was in retrospect an extraordinary moment and a cathartic episode in the history of British art. One of its long-term affects was to considerably enrich the resilient strain of what might be broadly called 'documentary' photography, making it more progressive, ambitious and experimental, while instilling in 'post-documentary' practitioners a certain wariness of its own contradictions and limitations. But the spirit of questioning and re-invention that characterised this culture – reflected in the titles of key exhibitions of the period, such as *re-visions* (1985/86), *Shifting Focus* (1989) or *De-Composition* (1991)[19] – also effectively created the space for new hybrid practices to emerge, practices that, although they drew heavily on ideas and strategies from contemporary art, begun to find their most enthusiastic supporters within photographic institutions. Pre-eminent among the artists exploring and establishing these new practices in photographic contexts were women. For artists such as Susan Trangmar, Mari Mahr, Yve Lomax, Karen Knorr, Sharon Kivland, and also, but less specifically, Helen Chadwick, just taking control of a camera and using photography to undermine its own rationalist authority and objectifying, male perspective, was to express a feminist position. But, as Susan Butler said at the time, 'without relinquishing access to rationalist thinking fundamental to deconstructive tactics', women were also 'developing varieties of visual experience within the photographic that (made) it possible to see, and to think seeing itself differently.'[20]

Approaching this hybrid photographic practice from her training in fine art, Helen Sear, has, from the mid-eighties, also occupied this unfolding space. In many ways her 'constructed' approach to photography has survived and flourished even as the didactic context in which it was born lost its momentum, and long after the most radical deconstructive discourses had been extensively played out. In fact Sear's art has remained defiantly questioning and distinctly layered and textual during a period that has seen the resurgence of different forms of photographic realism: for example, the popularity of the diaristic mode represented by Nan Goldin; the appearance of Wolfgang Tillmans in England and his free-form fusion of documentary, personal revelation,

social commentary, art and fashion; and increasingly during the 1990s, the pervasive influence of Andreas Gursky and the Dusseldorf school, that seemed to simultaneously reaffirm and liberate traditions of photographic seeing, but also to sever them altogether, as Michael Fried has suggested, from the world of 'human spectatordom'[21]. In contrast, and inflected with a surreal playfulness, Sear's work has remained inextricably bound up with seeing as a physical experience of the world, and with the sensory condition of the (female) human subject grounded and located in space.

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The consistent 'location', or perhaps the condition, of this physical, sensory presence in Sear's work might be identified as the 'wild zone', not just a landscape or a vision of raw nature, but a site of transgression or one beyond constraint that has been linked to a 'female space', in which 'the symbolic weight of female consciousness' might find a centre, 'to make the invisible visible, to make the silent speak'[22]. The figure that Sear has used repeatedly to both denote and articulate this space, and her relationship to it, has been that of the animal. Spanning two decades, from works such as *Natural Habitat* (1991), *Gone To Earth* (1994), *Grounded* (2000) and *Still – a landscape in ten parts* (2002), to others such as *Light Seeking Transparency* (2003), *Spot* (2004) and *Display* (2008), Sear has chosen animal forms to register a complex psychological geography of desire and loss in relation to nature and access (or escape) to that other, transgressive space of the feminine. Animals have provided the contours of a landscape that is at once alluring and exotic (holding the promise of a liberating return to a pre-Cartesian physical sense of being in which our reciprocal relationship with animals is central) yet forever compromised and illusory. Like the stuffed birds in her childhood home, animals-as-nature appear in her work temporarily reanimated, their bodies given a kind of renewed power and revived dream-life by being abstracted, re-positioned and re-framed. But the works consciously play out that revival and repositioning as a kind of distorted mirror image; it is what lies behind the reflections – like those rolling muscular, skin and fur hills of *Grounded,* for example – that speaks of a dead reality of powerlessness and forlorn objectification within the institutional space of the museum, and which gives us a sense of the human condition that Sear is referring to. The sense of loss here, and of impotence, is ultimately ours, it is what we have discarded, what we have sublimated into the realm of the unconscious and what we might seek to reconnect with that seems to be the Sear's underlying subject What these works conjure most powerfully after all, as David Bate has said, is 'not the dreams of animals, but the animality of dreams.'[23]

As we all know the dimensions of the dreamscape collapse as we try to grasp or recall them; dreams are space-less and time-distorted, a layering of sensory impressions and re-deployed memories that might just cohere into an image that is in itself faintly memorable, and sometimes lasting. Helen Sear's animal landscapes, portraits (if we think of *Spot*) and still lives, might be drawn from this indeterminate world of dreams. They imply space, and distance, but also refute them; what is familiar, recognisable in the images, is also strange and altered; the works invite touch, they proffer the warmth of fur and skin, of freshly preened feathers, but of course they give none of these things; they are flat surfaces, or emanations of light, only pictures of dead life that we might begin to imagine ourselves into.

It is in these same compressed, flat, space-less imaginary landscapes that women appear as if suddenly from a long sleep, in Sear's work *Inside The View*, from 2004 to 2008, and then again in a kind of embellished reprise, in *Beyond the View*, from 2009 to 2010. In the broad span of the artist's practice over almost twenty years, the opaque, turned-away, back-view 'portraits' of women are something like suppressed, overdue appearances, past viewers or the referents of her work perhaps, who have now stepped into the frame themselves, looking out at the way forward as if to embark, finally, on a journey. These seeing women, the figurative embodiment and extension of Sear's camera lens, stand to confront landscapes that appear not only before them but also around and as part of them; they dissolve, or perhaps dream into these shadowy undefined spaces even as they look; Sear's digital blending of images here again suggesting a kind of metaphysical merging. But, as if to ponder this position, this point of fusion, to literally think over it, suspending the implied photographic moment further and extend it through time, Sear also digitally marks the already layered image with a tracery of drawn lines that forms a new, loosely woven, lace-like screen over the picture. Just as we are denied the view of the women's faces, their heads and hair (a mark of their individuality) disrupt our view over the landscape. Instead we are forced to acknowledge the process of contemplation itself, the seeing and thinking that becomes the imaginary merging with the land. A sensual claim is being made here, to a sightline and a place infrequently occupied or determined by women. But as she has strived to do throughout her practice, Sear works further to elaborate the theme. If her subject here is, most essentially, the privileged time of reverie, that 'wild-zone' attained and given form, then Sear characteristically brings touch to bear on it, folding the action of the hand and the making of art into the intangible act of thinking into space.

[1] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969 (originally published 1958), p.13.
[2] Ibid, see Chapter 9, p. 211–231.
[3] Ibid, quoted by Bachelard p. 228–229.
[4] Helen Sear's comments on the work from an email to the author dated 28 August 2011.
[5] Bachelard op cit, p. 224.
[6] Quoted in Craig Owens, 'The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism', in Hal Foster (ed), *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, 1985, p. 70.
[7] Helen Sear, from her notes 'Critical Commentary in partial fulfilment of a Doctor of Philosophy', University of Wales, Newport, 2010, unpublished and unpaginated.
[8] Helen Sear, ibid.
[9] Helen Sear, ibid.
[10] Helen Sear, Ibid.
[11] Helen Sear, Ibid.
[12] Helen Sear, Ibid.
[13] Helen Sear, from an email to the author 30 October 2011.
[14] Tim Head, from an interview published in Studio International, 1975, extracts from which were reprinted as a statement in Clive Philpot and Andrea Tarsia, *Live In Your Head: Concept and Experiment in Britain 1965-75*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 2000, p. 97.
[15] Ibid, from a biographical note by Oliver Lloyd, 1999, reprinted in *Live in Your Head*, p. 57.
[16] Marina Warner, from her preface to Mark Sladen (ed), Helen Chadwick, Barbican Art Gallery, London and Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2004, p. 10–11.
[17] Helen Sear, op cit, from her 'Critical Commentary…'.
[18] Kate Linker. 'On Artificiality', *Flash Art* No. 111, March 1983, p. 33–35. Quoted in David Alan Mellor, *Chemical Traces: Photography and Conceptual Art 1968–1998*, Ferens Art Gallery, Kinston upon Hull, 1998, p. 31.
[19] *re-visions: Fringe interference in British Photography in the 1980s*, curated by Pavel Buchler for the Cambridge Darkroom, 1985. *Shifting Focus* (An International Exhibition of Contemporary Women's Photography), curated by Susan Butler for the Serpentine Gallery, London and the Arnolfini, Bristol, 1989. *De-Composition: Constructed Photography in Britain 1991-1998*, a British Council touring exhibition, 1998.
[20] Susan Butler, from her introductory essay in *Shifting Focus*, Arnolfini, Bristol/Serpentine Gallery, London, 1989, p. 42.
[21] Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters As Art As Never Before*, Yale University Press, 2008, see p. 163-165.
[22] Elaine Showalter, 'Pluralism and the Feminist Critique', in *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness*, University of Chicago Press, p. 324. Quoted by Helen Sear in her 'Critical Commentary…'. Sear also points out that Showalter 'borrows the term 'wild zone' from cultural anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener to indicate women's space as a muted area within dominant male discourse…'
[23] David Bate, 'Once Bitten Twice Shy', in Helen Sear, *Twice*, Zelda Cheatle Press, London, 2002, p. 53.