

HELEN SEAR

[hmsear@gmail.com](mailto:hmsear@gmail.com)

Helen Sear's practice focuses on the co-existence of human, animal and natural environments and is rooted in an interest in Magic Realism, Surrealism and Conceptual Art. She studied Fine Art at Reading University and University College London, Slade School, her practice coming to prominence in the late 1980s, when she worked primarily with mixed-media installation, performance and video. Her photographic works became widely known in the 1991 British Council exhibition, **De-Composition: Constructed Photography in Britain**, which alongside artists including Tim Head, Boyd Webb and Mari Mahr, explored ecological and political discourses of the time. Photography remains a central subject and medium in her work, which often challenges the dominance of the human eye and the fixed-point perspective associated with the camera lens. Often working within a rural context she explores our inseparable connection to the environment and how the nature of experience might be embedded in the artwork, bringing the body back into the act of viewing.

Sear was the first woman to represent Wales with a solo exhibition at the **56th Venice Biennale 2015** presenting a suite of new works **...the rest is smoke**. Her most ambitious video work to date, **wahaha biota** has been shown in the UK, Netherlands and Switzerland in 2018/2019. Her inaugural exhibition with Martin Asbaek Gallery, **Fascination**, opened in Copenhagen in March 2018 and in 2019 two major pieces were acquired by the **Hyman Photography Collection**. **Era of Solitude** was published by Dewi Lewis in 2021 and 12 silverpoints from the series **Viewfinder** were acquired for the UK **Government Art Collection** in 2022.

#### EDUCATION

1975 -1979      University of Reading Fine Art. BA Hons 1st Class  
1981 - 1983      University College London Slade School, HDFA  
2009              PhD by Publication - *Reconstructing Experience*. University of Wales Newport

#### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024              Martin Asbaek Gallery Copenhagen  
2023              *Coldframe, Caetera Fumus, Winter Stack* : Centre for British Photography London  
2020              *In Waiting* : James Hyman Gallery (online)  
2019              *A Hiding Place in Waking Dreams* : Pennings Foundation Eindhoven  
2019              *Prospect Refuge Hazard* : Impressions Gallery Bradford  
2018              *Prospect Refuge Hazard 1* : Dalby Forest, Ryedale Folk Museum, Crescent Arts 2018  
                      *Prospect Refuge Hazard 2* : Hestercombe House, Taunton  
2018              *Fascination* : Martin Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen

2017 ...the rest is smoke : Glyn Vivian Museum and Art Gallery, Swansea

2017 New Photographs : Klompching, New York USA

2015 ...the rest is smoke: representing Wales at the 56th Venice Biennale

2014 Pastoral Monuments : Rencontres Internationales, Gaspésie, Canada

2013 Lure : Oriel Davies, Newtown, national touring exhibition

2012 Sightlines : Klompching Gallery, New York USA

2012 Beyond The View : Bildkultur Galerie : Stuttgart

2011 Pond : Crescent Arts Scarborough

2010 Beyond The View : Klompching, New York

2009 Inside The View : Klompching Gallery, New York USA

2005 Grounded : Leeds Metropolitan Gallery

2003 Hide : Ffotogallery, Cardiff

2003 Spot : Yard Gallery Nottingham

2000 Unsettlement : Zinc gallery, Stockholm Sweden

2000 Axel Thieme Galerie Darmstadt Germany

1999 Twice...Once : Angel Row, Nottingham

1999 Between there and Now : Impressions Gallery York

1998 Twice... Once : Anderson O'Day, London

1994 Gone to Earth : John Hansard Gallery, Southampton

1994 Gone to Earth : Portfolio Gallery, Edinburgh

1994 Gone to Earth : Montage Gallery Derby

1992 Threshold : Gray Gallery, North Carolina, USA

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 Dialektik der Präsenz. Eine Ausstellung von Hans Dieter Huber : DZ Bank Kunstsammlung Frankfurt

2022 Electric Eden : Swedenborg Film Festival London. Collaboration with Christian Carrière

2022 Royal West of England Academy : Invited Artist Photography Open

2022 Sussex Landscape : Chalk Wood and Water - Pallant House Gallery, Chichester

2021 Object Artefact Photograph, Zelda Cheatle and 100 Heroines : The Grange Rottingdean

2021 The Rules of Art?/Rheolau Celf?, National Museum Wales Cardiff/Amgueddfa Cymru

2021 Turn To Return, Two person exhibition with Robert Darch: Centre Space Bristol

2020 Unearthed: Photography's Roots, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

2020 Summer in The City : Martin Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen

2020 Royal Academy London : Summer/Winter Exhibition

- 2019 *Lunar Gardening* : Kingsgate Project Space, London
- 2019 *LAND\_\_SCOPE*. Photographic Works from Roni Horn to Thomas Ruff in the DZ BANK Art Collection – Münchner Stadt Museum, Munich
- 2019 *Silent Green* : Villa Renata, Basel
- 2019 *Is This Planet Earth?* : Ferens Gallery, Hull
- 2018 *Material: WOOD* : Messums, Wiltshire
- 2018 Galerie Pennings, Eindhoven
- 2018 *Is This Planet Earth?* : Ty Pawr Wrexham, Aberystwyth Arts Centre
- 2018 *Women in Focus* : National Museum Wales
- 2017 -2018 *Good Life Ceramics*, Kunst Museum St. Gallen, Switzerland. Part of a 12-month exhibition project by Caro Niederer.
- 2017 *[AN-]SICHTEN*  
*VOM UMGANG MIT DER WIRKLICHKEIT* DZ BANK :  
Kunstsammlung, Frankfurt
- 2017 *The Moon and a Smile* : Glynn Vivian Museum and Art Gallery, Swansea (co-curator)
- 2015 *Wild Flower Arrangements* : Victoria Gallery and Museum Liverpool as part of LOOK/15
- 2015 *Double Take* : Photography and the Garden, Hestercombe Gallery, Somerset
- 2014 *About Face* : Klompching Gallery, New York USA
- 2012 *New Perspectives: Landscape Art in Wales since the 1970s*, National Museum, Wales
- 2012 *Hijacked 111 Quad* : Derby, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Australia, Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane ACP, Sydney Australia
- 2011 *Paris Photo* : Aperture Foundation, New York
- 2010 *We Have The Mirrors, We Have The Plans* : Oriol Mostyn, Llanduddno, Wales
- 2006 *Z15* : Museum of Fine Arts, St Petersburg, Florida USA
- 2005 *La Mirada Reflexiva* : Espai D'Art Contemporani de Castellon, Spain  
(with Robert Longo and Perejaume )
- 2004 *About Face* : Hayward Gallery, London  
*Je t'envisage, la disparition du portrait* : Musée de L'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 2003 *Photo Espagna* : Madrid, Spain
- 2003 *Land Escape* : VTO Gallery London
- 2002 *Unscene* : Gasworks Gallery London
- 2001 *Solid State* : Kettles Yard, Cambridge
- 2001 *Gone Missing* : Fredereike Taylor Gallery New York USA
- 2000 *Tierisch* : Galerie Ahlers Gottingen Germany
- 1998 *Here to Stay* : Arts Council of England purchases from the 1990's
- 1998 Greece, Thessaloniki, Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1998 Greece, Athens, Illeana Tounda Gallery : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1998 Bulgaria, Varna, Art Gallery : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1998 Bulgaria, Plovdiv, International Photography Meeting : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1997 *A Quality of Light* : Office of Art project, Tate Gallery, St. Ives
- 1997 Poland, Lodz, Museum Sztuki : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1997 Hungary, Budapest, Ludwig Museum : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1997 Romania, Bucharest, National Gallery : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*

- 1997 Romania, Constanta, Museum of Art : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1996 Slovakia, Bratislava, Slovak National Gallery : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1996 Italy, San Giovanni in Monte : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1995 *Blindfield* : Coventry Gallery, London
- 1995 Mexico, Mexico City, Centro de la Imagen : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1995 Mexico, Guadalajara, Instituto Cultural Cabanas : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1994 Venezuela, Caracas, Museo de Artes Visuales Alejandro Otero : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1993 *Indivisible* : Valencia, Spain and Southampton City Art Gallery
- 1992 Argentina, Buenos Aires, Cultural Centre Recoltea : *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography*
- 1991 *Decomposition, Constructed British Photography* : British Council touring(catalogue)  
Wales, Cardiff, Oriol & Chapter (Simultaneously)

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

UK Government Art Collection - 2022  
 The Hyman Collection: British Photography  
 Al Dabbah Group  
 Cassilhaus Collection North Carolina  
 National Museum Wales  
 DZ Bank Art Collection Frankfurt  
 Glynn Vivian Museum and Gallery Swansea Wales  
 Ernst & Young  
 Victoria and Albert Museum  
 Arts Council of Wales  
 British Telecom  
 Unilever  
 Manfred Heiting Collection Museum of Fine Arts Houston  
 Department of Trade and Industry  
 Virgin Communications Collection  
 Texaco Collection  
 Paul Wilson Collection  
 Arts Council of Great Britain  
 British Council

## EDUCATION

2009 PhD by publication University of Wales Newport  
 1981-1983 University College London Slade School, HDFA

1975-1979 University of Reading Fine Art Department, BA (hons) 1st Class

#### AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2014 Selected to represent Wales at the 56th Venice Biennale 2015  
2013 The Wakelin Award for video "Chameleon": purchase prize art collection Glynn Vivian Art Gallery and Museum Wales  
2012 *Inside The View* nominated for best international photography book at Photo Espagna  
2011 Joint first prize Visual Art at National Eisteddfod  
2011 Major Creative Wales Award, Arts Council Wales  
2004 Arts Council and University of Sunderland International Photography Fellowship, Jyvaskyla Finland  
1996 Artist in Residence, Electronic Imaging, Oxford Brookes University  
1993 Abbey Awardee, British School at Rome

#### COMMISSIONS

2022 Hapax Magazine : Edition 3  
2021 VISTO - Dorchester Hotel Collection London  
2017-2020 CONNECT – 3Ts Hospital Redevelopment Commission Photoworks in partnership with Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, Willis Newson and the University of Brighton  
2017 Arts Council / Forestry Commission Dalby Forest North Yorkshire  
2015 ...*the rest is smoke* : representing Wales at the 56th Venice Biennale  
2012 The World in London, The Photographers' Gallery London  
2005 Art Director and photographer for Marco Pierre White restaurant P&O Cruiseship, Ventura  
2000/1 *The Whole Story* : Photoworks Commission Maidstone Library and Museum.  
1999 Millenium Commission The Earth Centre Doncaster.

#### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS / REVIEWS

2022 Hapax Magazine : Edition 3  
2022 Sussex Landscape : Chalk Wood and Water - Pallant House Gallery, Chichester  
2021 *Era of Solitude* : Dewi Lewis Publishing : Monograph  
2020 *Unearthed: Photography's Roots*, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London  
2020 *On Photographs* : David Company, Thames and Hudson (UK) MIT Press (USA) Guilio Einaudi, Editore (Italy)  
2020 *Salon For a Speculative Future* : Ma Bibliothèque Ed: Monika Oechsler and Sharon Kivland  
2018 *Unique: making photographs in the Age of Ubiquity*. Katherine Oktober Matthews  
2017 *Fare Luce : Shedding Light*. Text by Roberta Valtorta : Fare Luce Shedding Light Edited by Beppe Finessi Corraini Edizioni

- 2015 *Art Photography*. David Bate : TATE Publishing
- 2015 ...*the rest is smoke* : monograph published by Ffotogallery, Cardiff / Wales in Venice
- Perspectives on Place: Theory and practise in landscape photography' J.A.P. Alexander, Bloomsbury Publishing, London
- 2013 *Brisées* : Bookwork published by GOST
- 2012 *Inside the View* : monograph published by Ffotogallery, Cardiff
- Hijacked 3* : Australia/United Kingdom, Big City Press, Western Australia
- 2011 Aperture, May 2011, with text by Jason Evans
- 2010 The New Yorker : May 24th Vince Aletti
- 2009 Portfolio: 50th edition
- Frieze: [http://www.frieze.com/shows/review/helen\\_sear/](http://www.frieze.com/shows/review/helen_sear/)
- Hotshoe International: Peggy Roalf
- Tale Bookwork published by g39 Cardiff. Text David Chandler.
- 2006 *Face. The New Photographic Portrait* : Thames and Hudson
- Stilled* : published by IRIS and Ffotogallery
- 2005 Photoworks Journal Autumn /Winter 2005-2006. Text David Company
- Work in Progress Published by IPRN
- 2003 *Masquerade* : Published by Ffotogallery. Text Caryn Faure Walker
- Guardian review 'Beauty and the beast', Alfred Hickling August 21st
- Spot; published by Yard Gallery text: Stuart Cameron
- Art Monthly (November) Martin Herbert
- 2002 *Natural's Not in It* : John Slyce Portfolio no. 35
- 2001 Twice published by Zelda Cheatle Press essays by David Bate and Sharon Morris
- "Solid State" Kettles Yard Cambridge
- 2000 *The Whole Story* : Published by Photoworks.
- Hotshoe International May/June Jean Wainwright.
- 1999 *Public Sightings* : Cornerhouse Publications
- BJP 18.8.99 : Grace Lau interview
- "Chora" catalogue. Sue Hubbard and Simon Morley
- Contemporary Visual Art No 24. Hugh Stoddart.
- 1998 "Here to stay: Arts Council Collection purchases of the 1990's" catalogue;
- Hayward Gallery Publishing Ltd, London
- Art Monthly No.216 Valerie Reardon
- Contemporary Visual Arts Issue 17. Sue Hubbard
- 1997 Time Out Nov 12th Martin Herbert
- Art Newspaper, June Richard Prinsent
- Time Out, June 11th-18th Sue Hubbard.
- 1995 Coil - Journal of the moving image, no. 2
- Portfolio magazine No 22. Caryn Faure Walker
- Creative Camera, Russell Roberts
- Untitled* : Stuart Cameron
- A & D "The Contemporary Sublime" A & D "The Photographic Image"
- "Gone to Earth" John Hansard Gallery, Southampton
- 1993 Creative Camera, CC25
- Arts Review, January (Critics Choice)
- City Limits, 7th January, Robin Dutt

1992 Time Out, 30th December to 6th January, Sarah Kent  
 Women's Press Diary  
 Art Vu, Contemporary South Eastern Visual Arts, vol. 6 U.S.A

1991 Creative Camera, CC12, Carol McKay

1989 Arts Review, July

1980 Flash Art (Britain), no 100 Marc Chaimowicz

## EVENTS AND RESIDENCIES

2021 Presentation lecture of *Era of Solitude* at Books on Photography at Royal Photographic Society and Martin Parr Foundation Bristol

2019 CCA Andratx, Majorca : Residency

2018 Invited artist in residence Cassilhaus NC. USA

2018 Hestercombe Gallery DISRUPTED VIEWS – A Seminar with Helen Sear, Gareth Evans and Lauren Châtel

2014 Selected to represent Wales at the 56th Venice Biennale

2013 The Wakelin Award for video installation *Chameleon* : contemporary art collection Glyn Vivian Art Gallery and Museum

2012 *Inside The View* : nominated for best international photography book at Photo Espagna

2011 Joint first prize Visual Art with Bedwyr Williams at National Eisteddfod Wales

2011 Major Creative Wales Award, Arts Council Wales

2004 Arts Council and University of Sunderland International Photography Fellowship, Jyvaskyla Finland

1996 Artist in Residence, Electronic Imaging, Oxford Brookes University England

1993 Abbey Awardee, British School at Rome

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2022 Visiting Professor, Royal Academy Schools ( replacement )

2014 - 2019 Visiting Professor, Royal Academy Schools

2015 - 2016. Professor of Photography Falmouth University

2007-2015 Reader in Photography and Fine Art University of Wales Newport

2008 - 2011 External Examiner Royal College of Art, MA Photography

2007 - 2011 External Examiner University of Westminster. MA Photography

2006 - 2008 External Examiner BA Photography and Media Arts Maidstone

2004 - 2007 Senior fellow at Centre for Photographic Research University of Wales Newport

2001 - 2004 Tutor School of Painting RCA.

2003 Internal Moderator Curating Contemporary Art. RCA.

2000 - 2003. External Examiner University College London Slade School BA Fine Art Media

1997 - 1999 External Examiner BA Fine art Reading University

1993 -1999. Regular part time teaching at Chelsea School of Art . BA and MA Painting

1997 Visiting lecturer and workshop leader at FAMU Prague

1997 Visiting Lecturer, Budapest, Ludwig Museum

1997 Part time Lecturer BA Fine Art, Photovisual Studies. University of Wales Institute Cardiff

1996 British Council - Lecturer and exhibitor , Bratislava, Slovakia

1992 - 1996 Senior Lecturer Lens Media, Southampton Institute of Higher Education. BA Fine Art

1986 - 1992 Lecturer 2 Lens Media Faculty of Art and Design, CIHE. Cardiff. HND Design and Fine Art

1992 Lecturing and workshop facilitator at Escola de Arts e Comunicacoes San Paulo and Arts School Rio , Brazil.

1991 Visiting Lecturer (one semester) East Carolina University USA.

1985 - 1986 Lecturer 1 in charge of photography and video, South Devon College of arts and technology.

Part time teaching visits have included Reading University, the Slade School, Gwent College of HE, Cardiff MA and BA Fine Art, Kingston University, Middlesex University, Derby MA. Bournemouth and Poole, Ruskin School of Art Oxford, Winchester School of Art MA.and London College of Printing. MA.and BA.