

MEDIA RELEASE

August 13, 2012

KLOMPCHING GALLERY

HELEN SEAR SIGHTLINES

SEPTEMBER 13—OCTOBER 26, 2012

OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 6-8PM

KLOMPCHING GALLERY is delighted to present the third solo exhibition of new artworks by the British photographer, **Helen Sear**, together with the US launch of her publication *Helen Sear: Inside The View* (Ffotogallery, 2012).

There will be an Opening Reception on Thursday, September 13, from 6pm to 8pm.

Two new series, never before exhibited in the US, will be presented as the gallery's opening exhibition for the 2012–2013 season, accompanied by the US launch of the monograph charting her 25+ years practice. *Sightlines* and *Pastoral Monuments* continue Sear's commitment to conceptual applications, integration of photographic process, historical reference and visual allure.

Sightlines is an exquisite set of 21 photographs, partially concerned with ideas about the unique object and the copy. The images themselves depict a portrait of a woman whose face is obscured by a mass-produced, but hand-painted figurine of a bird. Sear alters the final photograph through the application of several layers of white primer—gesso. The images, then, are also about photographing paint and painting photographs. This convergence of the unique and/or the copy is further implicated by notions of her concern with identity. Through obscuring the face of the woman, Sear interrupts the gaze of both sitter and observer. The spectator of the photograph is unable to know the sitter's identity, in a similar way that she/he can't know the identity of the person(s) who hand-painted the bird. These small-scale photographs confound our expectations in the most delightful way, and are a testimony to the conceptual and visual strength of Sear's practice.

Showing alongside *Sightlines*, is *Pastoral Monuments*, which expands an underlying theme of the real and the re-representation of it. In this case, Sear references the historical photographs of the botanist and photographer, Mary Dillwyn, whose photographs from the early 1850's depicted wild flowers arranged in domestic



crocker. Sear has sourced more than 80 wild flowers from the same Welsh field and photographed them in jugs and vases from around the world. Through handling the resulting prints and re-photographing them—evidencing this handling—Sear believes that “the flowers and their containers become connected in a material sense, across the surface of the image.” Further, we see in the photographs familiar ideas associated with flowers—youth, beauty and mortality. In some ways, these photographs become monuments to flowers.

With the recent publication, *Helen Sear: Inside The View* (Ffotogallery, 2012), which surveys Sear's 25+ year career as an active artist, this exhibition marks a period in which Helen Sear can be seen to be at her most productive.

Helen Sear's (b. 1955) photographic practice has developed from a fine art background of performance, film and installation work made in the 1980's. Her photographs became widely known in the 1991 British Council exhibition, *De-Composition: Constructed Photography in Britain*, which toured Latin America and Eastern Europe. Her work is included in *Face—The New Photographic Portrait* (Thames & Hudson) and has been featured in several publications. Collections holding her work include the

Victoria & Albert Museum, Ernst & Young, British Council (Rome), Paul Wilson Collection and Virgin Communications Collection. In 2009, *Portfolio Catalogue* named Helen Sear one of the 50 most significant artist photographers in the UK. This was followed in 2010, by Helen Sear being awarded the prestigious Major Creative Wales Award and more recently, the National Eisteddfod of Wales 2011 Gold Medal for Fine Art.

Exhibition continues through October 26, 2012.

For additional information and press images, contact Debra Klomp Ching

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