

Lottie Davies

Work from two series; 'Observations' (2016) and 'Ten Miles (1976-1986)' exhibited as part of a group exhibition concerning the periphery entitled 'Notes on a Periphery' curated by Dr Jon Blackwood of Grays School of Art, Aberdeen. The exhibition was part of the conference 'Culture & The Periphery', held at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, 04/10/19.

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Artist's Statement: Observations (2016)

This project was prompted by a feeling of dislocation, both from a sense of purpose and from my creative work. To address this drifting purposelessness, I went back to my original way of working - simply taking an analogue camera around with me as I travelled to different parts of the country, walking in woodlands and through towns, on my way to somewhere, or to nowhere in particular. I set myself two rules - I could only use two exposures for any one subject, and each image would be reproduced full-frame.

These images are of somewhere and nowhere. They are specific, as all photographs are, but they are also generic - in many ways, things are the same everywhere. Banality is all around us, and yet there is beauty to be found in each flapping curtain, each doorway, each section of worn paint. As I progressed through this work, looking for the moments when I would see an image and think "ah, there it is", I found myself becoming more aware of the grace in the world, which flickers in glimpses all around us.

Artist's Statement: Ten Miles (1976-1986) (2012)

One of the first photographs I ever took was made with a 110 camera, a narrow plastic box with a tiny fixed lens, and I would make one roll of film last over a year. The only image I now remember from that camera is a portrait I took of my family in our garden. It must have been sometime in the late 70s. My parents are sitting on a curved stone bench, my mother's pink shrub roses in puffy pale bloom behind them, my youngest brother is sitting on my mother's lap, and my other brother (the middle one) is crouching on the lawn a little closer to me. It was sunny, and everyone is smiling except for Rupert (the middle one). I lost the print in 1990, in India during my year-out travelling, and who knows where the teeny-tiny negative got to.

I mention it because the walk which made this project began a few yards from that garden. For ten years, between 1976 and 1986, I took a blue and white striped double-decker bus to school from Rowledge in Surrey to Alton, in Hampshire. The bus was unmistakable, and Mr Vane-Hunt, the bus driver, was a big, white-haired fellow who inspired respect from all of his young passengers by being generally inscrutable. I sat in the same seat every year, a window seat on the bottom deck, three rows from the front, on the left. There was a sign behind Mr Vane-Hunt, which said, confusingly, 'Do Not Distract The Driver. Do Not Stand Forward of This Notice'. Confusingly, because I didn't understand the phrase 'stand forward of'. I was a precociously well-read child, and I had a reasonably sophisticated vocabulary, so I worked

out that it must be an archaic phrase meaning ‘Do Not Disobey This Notice’. This idle confusion over the internal tautology of the notices stayed with me for years.

I walked from my bus-stop in Chapel Road, within view of the house I grew up in, through semi-rural villagescape to the train station in Farnham, following the bus-route, noting changes and sameness along the way. The bus journey continued all the way to Alton of course, but I stopped at the station because the further section is mostly dual-carriageway now. Every location and picture has some kind of memory attached to it.

From the curator’s abstract:

“An exhibition of recent photography and video work by four artists: Anne Campbell, Sapphire Goss, Lottie Davies and Eugene Schlumberger. Whilst peripheral regions have loomed large in traditional histories of art made in the British group of nations, the history of art has largely been the history of art in national capitals and larger cities. What then does making art in a so-called peripheral region mean? What contributions do artists make in developing a civic and local sense of self, and who buys, engages and supports this work? What crossovers are there between differing perceptions of the peripheral? The exhibition features established and emerging artists who respond to notions of the periphery in its broadest sense in their work. The new work features a mixture of themes, including hauntology, suburbia, edgelands, remoteness and wilderness.”

J. Blackwood (curator)

Links:

‘Observations’ on my website: <https://lottiedavies.com/PROJECTS/Observations/1>

‘Ten Miles (1976-1986)’ on my website: <https://lottiedavies.com/PROJECTS/Ten-Miles-1976-1986/1>

‘Notes on a Periphery’ by J Blackwood (pdf download): <https://rgu-repository.worktribe.com/output/608796>