

STREET LEVEL PHOTOWORKS

NICKY BIRD - LEGACY

27TH APRIL 2021 - 6TH JUNE 2021

Over the last fifteen years, Nicky Bird has examined the themes of land, heritage, personal and social memory through a collaborative photographic practice. This show includes new works and brings together several of her site-specific projects for the first time, especially reimagined for Street Level Photoworks, which largely focus on Scotland's rural and small town communities.

She considers contemporary relevances of 'found' photographs and latent histories of specific sites, investigating how they remain resonant. Her work incorporates new photography, oral histories and collaborations with people who have significant connections to the original site and its photographic archive. Alongside commissioned projects, she has exhibited nationally and internationally, published essays on themes of erased place and digital exchange of photographs. Nicky is a Reader in Contemporary Photographic Practice at The Glasgow School of Art.

Travelling with photographic archives and the creation of new photographs is to encounter the memories, identities and lived experiences belonging to others. Legacy shares distinct stories and memories of place, work and family life through a range of photography, from the domestic postcard to civil engineering documentation. Particular photographs from the 'past' and its relationship to a present-day landscape reveal both personal and community memory within a changing Scottish Landscape.

"Photographs are often the starting point for a project, and working out their relationship to a present-day landscape. Living memory – before it becomes 'history' – is an important link to all my projects, which is why the recent past is of special interest. While the final outcomes may take different forms, they share the themes of land, memory and heritage, working with individuals and communities who have witnessed significant change. This means stories and memories of place, work and family life include an aspect of the 'unmaking' of place, whether through the processes of economic decline and regeneration, or even coastal erosion." – **Nicky Bird**

BIOGRAPHY

Nicky Bird considers contemporary relevances of 'found' photographs and latent histories of specific sites, investigating how they remain resonant. Her work incorporates new photography, oral histories and collaborations with people who have significant connections to the original site and its photographic archive. Alongside commissioned projects, she has exhibited nationally and internationally, published essays on themes of erased place and digital exchange of photographs. Nicky is also a Reader in Contemporary Photographic Practice at The Glasgow School of Art.

Examples of her commissioned residencies, events and projects include: The Decorators in Land Mark, Art Walk Projects, Edinburgh (2019-2020); Ghosting the Castle, Timespan, Helmsdale (2017); Travelling the Archive, Atlas Arts, Isle of Skye (2015-2016); Making Space: Towards a Public Artwork, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow (2009-2010), and Beneath the Surface/Hidden Place, (2007-2010), Stills, Edinburgh. Group Exhibitions include Media Archaeology: Excavations, NEoN Digital Arts Festival, Dundee (2017); Alt-w, Edinburgh Arts Festival (2016); Tall Tales: women artists' playful exploration of the human experience, a UK Touring Show (2016); Family Ties; Reframing Memory, The Peltz Gallery, London (July 2014); Seduced by Art: Photography Past and Present, National Gallery, London & CaixaForum Barcelona, Madrid (2012-13); 21 Revolutions, CCA, Glasgow & The Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh (2012-13), and her solo show Beneath the Surface/Hidden Place, Stills, Edinburgh (2008) and The Dick Institute, Kilmarnock (2009).

Her published works include: 'Ghosting the Castle: the case of (re)landscaping in a Northern place,': Proximity and Distance in Northern Landscape Photography edited by Chris Goldie and Darcy White (Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2020); 'Wanted – New Custodians for Family Photographs: Vernacular Photographs on eBay and the Album as Artwork' in Picturing the Family: Media, Narrative, Memory (Bloomsbury, London, 2018); 'Whither the Roots? Photographing the erased home,' in Home/Land: Women, Citizenship, Photographies (Liverpool University Press, 2016); 'From Car Showroom to Casino: A Slice of Midlothian History' in True North: From Documentation to Rewriting History (Timespan, Helmsdale Heritage and Arts Society, 2016); 'Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth: Generosity and the Digital Exchange of Family Photographs' in The Photograph and The Album: Histories, Practices, Futures (MuseumsEtc, 2013), and Beneath the Surface/Hidden Place (Stills, Edinburgh, 2010).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

Beneath the Surface / Hidden Place (2007-2010)

A photographic project investigating the physical and emotional effects of economic change and regeneration in Scotland.

Collaborators: Karen Hamilton, Martin Peter, Mark Scott & Lesley Weir (Ardler, Dundee), Drew Johnstone & Mary Kennedy (Doon Valley, East Ayrshire), Jan McTaggart & George McTaggart (Foxbar, Paisley)

Commissioned by Stills, Edinburgh

Supported by: Scottish Arts Council, The National Lottery through the Scottish Arts Council, The Kraszna-Krausz Foundation (for publication), City of Edinburgh Council & East Lothian Council

Thanks to:

Alistair MacLeod & the Ardler Village Trust, Ardler
Mike Greenlaw, Craigmillar Arts Centre, Edinburgh
Dr Mike Cressey & Dr Melanie Johnson of CFA Archaeology LTD
Elaine Mackie, Doon Valley Museum, East Ayrshire Council
Kate Maynard, Principal Museums Officer, East Lothian Council
Biddy Simpson, Heritage Officer/Council Archaeologist, East Lothian Council
Cheryl Connell, Kirsten Lloyd, Deirdre MacKenna & Evan Thomas of Stills, Edinburgh

Heritage Site (2014-2016 / 2020)

A lens-based art and archaeology project working with the story of a house buried in five industrial spoil heaps, known as the Five Sisters

Collaborators: Isabella Mason Kirk & her family
The Calder History Group: Davie Rennie, Alan Tuffs & Shelagh Steele
Dr Stuart Jeffrey, Mike Marriott & Clare Graham of the School of Simulation and Visualisation, The Glasgow School of Art
Clara Ursitti, Artist

Commissioned and supported by
New Media Scotland's Alt-w fund with investment from Creative Scotland

Thanks to:

Mark Daniels, Executive Director, New Media Scotland
Kevin Thornton, Prop Maker,
Ross Finnie, Photographer, The Glasgow School of Art

Travelling the Archive (2015-2016 / 2020)

A site-specific project that brought together the past and present through returning a slide collection back to its original location.

Collaborators:

Kyleakin Local History Society: Caroline Clouston & Margaret Macrae
Anne MacDonald, Archivist, Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre

Participants:

Kyleakin Local History Society: John Robertson, Stuart Taylor, Anna Belle Robertson, Hector Grant, Calum MacAskill, Hugh Davies, Roddy Morrison, Angus MacLennan

Commissioned by ATLAS Arts, Isle of Skye
In collaboration with Kyleakin Local History Society & Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre

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The Highland Council

Thanks to:

Emma Nicolson, Rosie Somerville and Atlas Arts Team, Sandi Beatson, Ian Montgomery and Ruth Macdougall, Will Maclean MBE RSA

Projection Exhibition, 2016: Tommy Stuart and Tom Cullen
Booklet Design, 2016: Maeve Redmond
Street Level Production, 2020: Eastern Exhibition

Ghosting the Castle (2017 / 2020)

A photographic mapping project that focused on the layered histories and issues related to Helmsdale's medieval castle and the A9 bridge which replaced it.

Collaborators: Timespan: Jo Clements, Archive Development Manager & Frances Davis, Curator

Timespan's Heritage Group
John King, Walking Guide
Kate Morrison, Architectural Technologist
Chris Taylor, Wild Pansy Press

Participants:

Brian Adams, David Cowie, Elizabeth Gray, Morag Martin, Jean Sargent & Gerry Wood
Commissioned by Timespan, Helmsdale, Sutherland

Supported by
Creative Scotland
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The Decorators (2019-2020)

A vitrine work that represents a new project that focuses on a group of women who worked as decorators for the Buchan & Co Thistle potteries in the late 1960s.

Collaborator: Mairi Fortuna

Participants: Irene Forbes, Irene Macintosh, Barbara Naughton

Commissioned by Art Walk Projects

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City of Edinburgh Council

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