

Anna Fairchild

Brutal Dream

Anna Fairchild is a UK based artist and researcher working with sculpture, photography and audiovisual work. She has exhibited and curated in the UK, Turkey, & Europe.

The starting points for her work are aspects of organic and urban environments, with a particular interest in Brutalism and post war architecture, visual layering and contemporary cartographic practices. Her interest in cartography takes the position that this includes a broad set of spatial practices such as drawing, movement, gesture. She uses experimental, process led methods of casting and analogue and camera-less photography and has more recently extended her audiovisual work through live collaborative performances using moving image and amplified acoustic sound on cello.

Inspired by ideas drawn from the space between utopian visions and dystopian futures in science fiction and novels such as Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* (1888) and *Concrete Island* by JG Ballard (1974), her work situates itself between objects excavated from the future and a grainy and crackling analogue world all around us. In fact, Bellamy's novel said to have inspired Ebenezer Howard's Garden City vision for Letchworth, has been a recent focus in making a new body of work. The interest here lies partially in what connects the protagonist's experiences in both novels; a sense of disquieting dislocation, of place and time and of lost future visions; the tension between a stasis and sense of time having moved on unnoticed. In terms of sculptural and photographic processes, it is the way in which objects and surfaces may be able to convey these ideas, allowing the thinking to emerge through the process of making.

"I like to imagine the work as hovering somewhere in the realm of archæological sci-fi, a kind of excavation of potentially lost futures. It's the sort of space, which oscillates between two and three dimensions; fragments of things and some kind of feeling of texture or colour, which emerge out of barely remembered dreams. There is a kind of glimpse or sense of something tangible, structurally solid, yet on the point of collapse at the same time."

For the exhibition, *Brutal Dream*, she has created a new body of work, exploring further where her experimental photographic and sculptural practices merge. The title also referencing the way that making work happens through intuitive processes and a 'playing with' approach to material, and as textures and forms emerged for Fairchild upon waking each morning. The sculptures and experimental photographic works in *Brutal Dream* investigate visual and conceptual patterns and parallels between hyperlocal observations of the everyday and unfulfilled imaginative utopian architectural visions, set within her interest in science fiction and 'lost futures'[1].

Brutal Descent is an analogue photographic work comprising sixty-four camera-less darkroom photograms stitched together in a map like image. There is a grainy, analogue almost black and white TV quality here, albeit the image we are looking at may appear to be from a future or off-world landscape.

The digital collages on brushed aluminium use online gravel images digitally collaged and distorted. These oscillate between two and three-dimensional perspectives, deliberately setting up tensions between flat surfaces and illusions of three dimensions, where an effect rather like *trompe l'œil* is created. From a distance, the images appear almost structurally sound within the shifting two and three-dimensional perspectives, yet on further inspection we are able to clearly identify the loose gravel fragments in the original photographic material.

The sculptural wall and floor pieces play with a similar tension between flat surface texture and three-dimensional structure. Using Jesmonite plaster, cement, flint, gravel, plastic and paint, the forms oscillate between areas which are clearly defined and designed three-dimensionally, to areas of solidified movement and spillage, making apparent, the process of change.

"What I find interesting about working with both photographic and sculpture simultaneously is that the incidental discoveries found along the way are in themselves like a kind of archæological dig. Fragments of ideas are sort of excavated in one process two-dimensionally in the darkroom, for example, which seem then to make sense when trying to realise a piece of sculpture. And this is also conversely true. It's never, for me, about designing something in two dimensions to realise in three, or indeed the other way around. It's more about how the processes merge, where the work tends to hover simultaneously between dimensions."

Fairchild graduated from Kingston University with a BA(Hons) in 1988. In 1990 she moved to Istanbul to live and work as artist and teacher. Returning to the UK in 2001, she established a permanent studio, and in 2012 completed a Masters in Fine Art by Research at the University of Bedfordshire. In 2019 he was awarded a Professional Doctorate in Fine Art from The University of East London in for her body of work and research, *The Fluid and the Fixed; Materiality and Place*.

1. Fisher, M, Ghosts of my Life, 2014, UK

List of Works

- 1. Brutal Echo, 2024**
Jesmonite, paint, flint stones
- 2. Brutal Dream Part 1, 2024**
Jesmonite, paint, flint stone, breeze block, gravel, plastic
- 3. Brutal Dream Part 2, 2024**
Jesmonite, paint, concrete aggregate, breeze block, gravel, plastic, gold leaf
- 4. Concrete Sunset, 2024**
Jesmonite, Paint, cement fondue
- 5. Descent, 2024**
63 stitched photograms
- 6. A505 Flyover, 2024**
Digital print on brushed aluminium
- 7. Concrete Library, 2024**
Digital print on brushed aluminium
- 8. Sunset Flyover, 2024**
Digital print on brushed aluminium
- 9. Concrete Archive, 2024**
Jesmonite, paint



Biography

Anna Fairchild BA MA DFA

Recent Reviews & Awards

2023: Broadway Gallery Bursary 2023-24

2022: Shortlisted for the 2022-23 Mark Tanner Sculpture Award

2021: Cluster, Saturation Point. Reviewed by John Stephens

https://www.saturationpoint.org.uk/Cluster_John%20Stephens%20review.html

Recent Solo Exhibitions

2022: Brutal-Lab, Departure Lounge Gallery, Luton supported by Luton Culture Trust (Invited)

2021: Congruous, Salon 12, Saturation Point, London, sculpture installation (Invited)

2021: Igneous Staring, Cloud 9 Residency exhibition funded by Arts Council England supported by Eastcheap Projects, Letchworth Garden City (Awarded)

2019: Mill Flow, Mill Green Museum Gallery, Hatfield, Hertfordshire. (Selected)

2019: The Fluid and the Fixed: Materiality and Place, University of East London

Selected Recent Group Exhibitions

2023: The Bath Open Art Prize (Selected)

2023: Equinoks, Visual art, sound performance festival, St Mary's Church Luton (selected)

2023: Space, Places, Curated by NoHat at The Broadway Gallery, Letchworth Garden City (Selected)

2022: Hat House, Luton Lates large hanging photogram and improvised sound installation supported by Luton Culture (Invited)

2021: Cluster, Howards park Corner, supported by The Broadway Gallery Letchworth & Letchworth Culture Project (Selected)

2021: Correspondence 01 The Broadway Gallery Letchworth & Exeter Phoenix Gallery (Selected)

2020: Made With... Cross Lane Projects, Kendal, Cumbria; 5 Sculptors, curated by John Stephens (Invited)

2019: Inside, Inside/Refrain, The Stone Space, London. Sculpture and light installation (Selected)

2019: Miniscule Part 2, parallel programme at the Venice Biennial, Italy, curated by Vanya Balogh, Miniature direct cast sculpture (invited)

2019: Miniscule, Cross Lane Project Space, Cumbria, curated by Vanya Balogh, Miniature sculpture (invited)

2019: Pupa, Atelier de Melusine, France, In Between Things Text & Photographs (invited)

Publications

2025: Drawing as Place Making, Chapter 6; Drawing Luton Narrative with Camera-less Photography Bloomsbury Publications

2024: Northbound Dreams, essay published by Saturation Point, London

2022: Brutal (Light) Foraging at Drawing Conversations 4, Engaging with Narratives and History of Site, University of Huddersfield

2020: Lido Memories, essay published by Saturation Point, London

<https://www.saturationpoint.org.uk/Lido%20memories.html>

2018: Feeling the Grafting, paper presentation International Royal Geographical Society Conference 2nd CfP RGS/IBG Annual Conference Felt Knowledges, Cardiff