

OCCUPY THE VOID

Laura Noble presents ten female photographers aged over 50 for the fourteenth edition of Photo50 at London Art Fair 2020



Wendy Aldiss | Samantha Brown | Elaine Duigenan | Miranda Gavin | Elizabeth Heyert | Sandra Jordan | Rosy Martin | Mercedes Parodi | Danielle Peck | Kim Shaw

The latest edition of Photo50, ***Occupy the Void***, curated by writer, collector and gallerist Laura Noble, explores the vast pool of talented living female photographers aged over 50 and the cultural 'space' that they inhabit. The annual guest-curated exhibition will run during London Art Fair from 22-26 January 2020 (Preview 21 January), providing a critical forum to examine some of the most distinctive elements of current photographic practice.

Through the work of ten contemporary female artists working in the UK and internationally, the exhibition interrogates the physical, psychological and ephemeral nature of space and our experience of existing within it, both during our lives and after death. The exhibition is split into three key themes: how women occupy space; the psychological and personal view of space; and the notion of time and the abstract in space. Viewers will be taken on a personal, psychological and spiritual journey, and will be invited to reflect on their own lives and to challenge their perceived place within society.

Occupy the Void is an inclusive exhibition, presenting both established names and artists in the early stages of their careers, all of which are female and over the age of 50. Although 85% of women studying photography at university are women, only 15% of the industry is female. Thus Noble provides a platform for a diverse group of artists who are commonly underrepresented in the cultural dialogue, and offers them the opportunity to reclaim their space and the void.

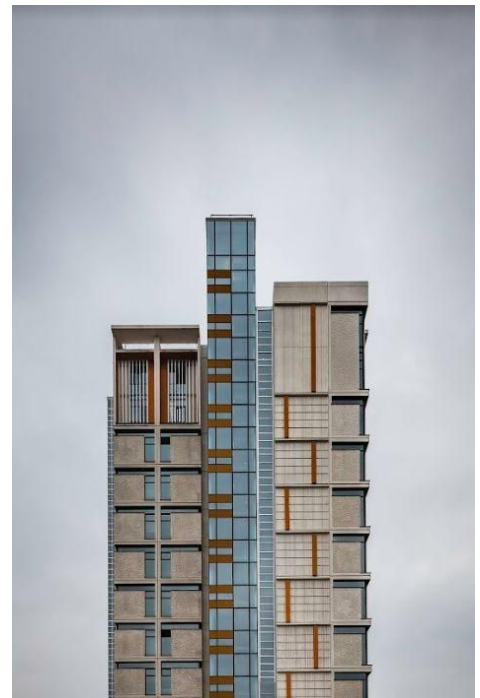
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Premiering new and never-before-seen works, the exhibition reflects the variety of photographic formats in 2D and 3D, and the diverse traditional and non-traditional materials employed in photography today.

Curator Laura Noble said: *“Occupy the Void is an exhibition about how we take up space, both literally and conceptually. A void is somewhere where we are put, relegated to or overlooked. Older women are frequently among those who feel that their voices are invisible – veritably placed into the void. I wanted to show the importance of those voices in the arts and, in particular, in the male-dominated area of photography.”*

All female and over 50, these artists explore how we take up space in their own unique way by reflecting on the past, facing the present and looking ahead to the future. This immense collection of female talent provides a powerful insight into a lesser-seen perspective, which we all hope will become the norm.”

Sandra Jordan’s series *Hidden Beauty* examines beauty and space through the device of architecture, creating a visual expanse even in densely populated urban scenes. Whether photographing the expansive landscapes of the Arctic or crowded urban environments, Jordan seeks solitude and calm within her work. The unremarkable concrete buildings in her photographs often go unnoticed, despite being lived in by many. However, in Jordan’s eyes, they are full of enticing shapes and repeating units with their own individualities; like architectural portraits viewed ‘face-on’. Her stark, unflinching façades set against grey expanses of sky create space for the buildings to breathe in their environment, reflecting her belief that we all need space to ‘just be’.



Rosy Martin will be showcasing brand new works at London Art Fair, based on her relationship to the domestic space she occupies and the space that her parents left behind when they passed away. Martin considers how she occupies her own physical space in her London flat – her ‘nest’ that she has filled with items collected since 1981, some of which she kept from her parents house as they hold so much emotional significance.

Danielle Peck’s *Dreamland* series is shot in Margate, a British seaside resort town that has seen highs and lows over the years. Covering themes of regeneration and nostalgia, the series goes behind the seafront to explore the private and public lives of both residents and tourists. These nostalgic interiors hark back to a seemingly simpler time, showing residents rooms in what was once a hotel, then a boarding house and later bedsits in varying states of disrepair. Now redeveloped, the interiors bear no resemblance to the glimpses captured by Peck’s lens.

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Kim Shaw's work analyses the areas that she can and cannot access through her critique of the art world and the void she inhabits (or tries to as a woman of a certain age). Known as the *Shoebox Gallerist*, Shaw creates her own shoe-box size residence as an alternative to the places to which she has been denied entry in the past. For *Occupy the Void*, Shaw presents prints and sculptural representations of various arts venues, hanging both in large scale on the exhibition walls and in her own portable handmade spaces, which will also feature the works of fellow Photo50 artist, Wendy Aldiss.

Occupy the Void also brings together works that reflect on much more personal issues, from domestic abuse to loss as a means to examine a more psychological view of space.

Wendy Aldiss's *My Father's Things* is a deeply personal and heartfelt series, featuring 9,000 photographs of her father's possessions taken after he passed away. The artist's father, Brian Aldiss, was a famous science fiction novelist, and the exhibition shows his desk and bookcase strewn with photographs of his belongings. This piece of work was a way for Aldiss to cope with the upset and adversity of her loss, but also to celebrate his life and keep him connected to the space and surroundings.

Miranda Gavin's *Home Discomforts* is a series of 35mm colour transparency photographs taken in the flat where Gavin grew up and where she was sexually abused by her stepfather. Taken in the unoccupied flat years after she moved out, the photos show the rooms in daylight with verses from her poem, *Don't Touch Me Like That*, written on the walls. Gavin intentionally shot with light and shadow cast on the walls, breaking up the text and forcing the viewer to lean in closer to read it. By cleaning the space through burning sage, writing on the walls and photographing the interiors, Gavin reclaimed this void and the space of home, or at least gave voice to the abuse that had been kept behind closed doors.



Another key theme for this year's Photo50 is the notion of time and looking at the idea of space in a much more conceptual and abstract way. **Samantha Brown's** *Botany of Silence* combines her original documentary photographs of a demolished shoe factory with other source materials from social media, advertisements and archival images, to join together the past, present and future with notions of physical and narrative space. The photographs and 3D collages hanging from the ceiling of the exhibition are told through the eyes of a woman, with men omitted from the images to instead reveal old ruins of the factory. They look at the way in which the memories of these working women reside and still linger long after the doors closed on the factory.

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Elaine Duigenan premieres brand new works, shown for the first time at this year's London Art Fair, which reveal the fleeting existence of objects in space. Experimenting with numerous waxes and ways of 'cooking' the wax, Duigenan creates small bubbles which she captures before they burst. The resulting images are of tiny sculptures which are both out of this world and part of it, preserving a space that barely existed and would normally live a complete but brief existence, held under threat until pierced.

Elizabeth Heyert's *The Sleepers* is an intimate portrayal of how individuals and lovers sleep, exploring the physical space taken up when we are unconscious. Heyert challenges the idea that a portrait photograph is about the relationship between the photographer and the sitter by intentionally keeping her presence missing, observing rather than directing. Projecting

her images onto the ruined town of Poggioreale in Sicily, Italy, which collapsed during an earthquake in 1968, Heyert invites the viewer to see the emotion as opposed to the superficial image of a naked body. Both the stone and the figures seem perishable and historical, but at the same time completely immortal. The images are displayed in the exhibition on wallpaper over 7m in length, giving the illusion of these people hanging by a thread.

Mercedes Parodi's *You Will Always Be* will be presented for the first time at London Art Fair 2020. It is an evolutionary series of photographic sculptures exploring the cycle of life, our passage through time and space, and the traces that we leave behind. The beginning of the series relates to our creation and the emotive, cerebral and metaphysical aspects of our existence. Then, centrally, it depicts lift-off as we launch into the unknown, and ends with the freeing of our energy, which will leave in this universe an indestructible trace of our unique essence.

Photo50 2020 is kindly sponsored by **Genesis Imaging**.



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NOTES TO EDITORS

LONDON ART FAIR

22 - 26 January 2020 (Preview 21 January)
Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 0QH
www.londonartfair.co.uk

Tickets: £22, £17 in advance. Full ticket types and prices at: londonartfair.co.uk/tickets.

For our latest news, follow @LondonArtFair on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (#LAF20)

PRESS CONTACTS

For further information please contact Julia Safe or Elliot Thompson at Flint
Julia.Safe@flint-culture.com | 0203 470 0096
Elliot.Thompson@flint-culture.com | 0203 463 2097

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IMAGES From top to bottom and left to right

- Kim Shaw, *Eye Candy*, 2017, pigment print © Kim Shaw
- Miranda Gavin, *#4*, 2009. From the series Home Discomforts © Miranda Gavin
- Sandra Jordan, *Hidden Beauty #26*, London, 2016. From the series Hidden Beauty © Sandra Jordan
- Danielle Peck *Many Original Features, Sunlight* From the series Dreamland, C-type Fine Art print mounted on dibond © Danielle Peck
- Samantha Brown, from the series Botany of Silence, 2015 - 2019, Inkjet print © Samantha Brown
- Elizabeth Heyert, *Sleepers 03*, 2003. From the series Sleepers, Selenium toned gelatin silver print © Elizabeth Heyert

ABOUT LONDON ART FAIR

London Art Fair will return to London for its 32nd edition in 2020, recognised as a platform for connecting the best galleries from around the world with both seasoned and aspiring collectors, providing a unique opportunity to discover and champion outstanding modern and contemporary art.

The Fair seeks to nurture collecting at all levels whilst providing expert insight into the changing international market. Sitting alongside the main Fair, curated sections Art Projects and Photo50 feature the next generation of artists, collectives and gallerists; showcasing increasingly innovative and interactive ways to engage with art. The Fair's strong gallery line up is also complemented by an extensive programme of engaging talks, panel discussions, interactive performance art, and onsite activations from the Fair's partners.

Taking place from 22-26 January 2020 (VIP Preview 21 January), London Art Fair is an unmissable opening to the international art calendar. www.londonartfair.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY FOCUS DAY

London Art Fair's Photography Focus Day (Friday 24 January 2020) will feature a day of talks and tours dedicated to the examination and discussion of some of the most innovative and distinctive elements of contemporary photographic practice.

Programme highlights include a talk from **The Photographers' Gallery Director Brett Rogers**, titled *Women Photographers Through the Lens of The Photographers' Gallery*, providing a unique look into the past 50 years of exhibitions hosted by the Gallery.

Full details of London Art Fair's Talks Programme will be announced in late November.

ABOUT LAURA NOBLE

Laura Noble is the Director of L A Noble Gallery in London and independent curator. She is also the author of *The Art Of Collecting Photography*, with primary essays in many monographs. She curates at LANG and independently at venues worldwide, most recently at Magazzini Fotografici in Naples with Chris Steele-Perkins Japan and at the 50th Anniversary of Rencontres d'Arles in France with Yvonne De Rosa *Negativo 1930*.

Noble launched FIX Photo Festival on London's South Bank in 2016 which gained worldwide recognition and is a nominator for the global Prix Pictet Prize. She is also an Ambassador for the Royal Photographic Society's 100 Heroines project and Docking Station in Amsterdam, as well as being a judge on many photographic competitions and residency programmes. As a proud feminist, Noble continues to champion the role of the female/non-binary voices in photography, currently mentoring and writing a book on the importance of their role in the Industry.

Laura's commitment to photography is paramount - lecturing on all aspects of collecting photography and gallery practice worldwide. With a commitment to emerging photographer's she runs a volunteer program,

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regular portfolio reviews and mentoring for photographers at every stage of their career. As an avid collector, Noble prides herself on discovering new talent and writes extensively on photography in numerous journals internationally and at home.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

WENDY ALDISS

Focusing on the human condition and our experiences therein, the work by photographer Wendy Aldiss is influenced by the people around her and moments in the key stages in life. Her evocative portraits connect to her sitters, their environment and depict their emotions and experiences. Her work has been widely exhibited in the UK and Europe. In 2018 Aldiss documented her late father's possessions in their entirety. Clearly a way to keep her father closer for longer, the resulting body of work resonates with all as a reminder of family members no longer alive and provides a visual anthropological study of one person's life through their possessions. Based in Oxford, England, she was nominated for the RPS 100 Heroines in 2018.

www.aldissphotography.co.uk

SAMANTHA BROWN

Samantha Brown is a photographer and visual artist born in London in 1968 and currently residing in Ireland. She studied Fine Art Painting in Camberwell University of Arts, London. Moving from London to Ireland saw a new investigation with the landscape using photography and computer aided design to create paintings that were a combination of these mediums. Returning to education to study Multi Disciplinary Design at the University of Ulster, 2008, she explored documentary photography, light installations, video and drawing. At a residency at Digital Arts Studio, Belfast, Samantha compiled a moving image work documenting her daily routine drive home. www.samantha-j-brown.format.com

ELAINE DUIGENAN

Elaine Duigenan is a photographic artist based in London. Her approach is one of prolonged focus on single objects. She has exhibited internationally and has work in collections which include the V&A and The Museum of Fine Art in Houston. The objects Elaine works with are either found or made. Things are never quite what they seem and her work is pared down to find singular beauty. In late 2009 one of her images was flown to space on the Shuttle Atlantis and photographed in The International Space Station.

www.elaineduigenan.com

MIRANDA GAVIN

Miranda Gavin is a visual artist, writer/editor, and educator using photography, text, film, and performance—sometimes under the guise of a persona, The Handbag Projectionist. These bodies of work engage with a variety of approaches that embrace experimentation to explore identity, gender relations and power dynamics, and the way meaning is constructed, conveyed and interpreted. Some are situated in domestic contexts in which there is a focus on themes of love, abuse and betrayal. The dissemination of the work, including the spaces in which it is shown, is as integral to her artistic process as its subject. She has exhibited in solo and group shows in Europe; given readings at spoken word events; and is co-founder and facilitator for Tri-Pod, a creative initiative that offers facilitated, peer mentoring to artists creating personal photographic and lens-based projects. www.theroamingeye.wordpress.com

ELIZABETH HEYERT

Elizabeth Heyert is an American photographer known for her experimental portrait projects. Formerly a world-renowned architectural photographer, Heyert established her reputation in the art world with her groundbreaking trilogy THE SLEEPERS, THE TRAVELERS, and THE NARCISSISTS. Heyert's photographs are in the

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permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and numerous private collections. Heyert graduated from the Royal College of Art, London. A native New Yorker, she lives in Greenwich Village, and has a studio in the Chelsea art district. www.elizabethheyert.com

SANDRA JORDAN

Sandra is an award-winning fine art photographer who creates minimalist photographic meditations that offer the viewer a sensory escape from our hectic lifestyles. She spent nearly 20 years working alongside some of the best cinematographers in the world as a production manager in the film industry. Jordan has led photography workshops in both the UK and Morocco and worked as an Expedition Photographer sailing around the archipelago of Svalbard, halfway between Norway and the North Pole. She has also published two books *Adfectus: An Exploration of Life and How We Fit Into the World* and *U N I T* which shows work from her *Hidden Beauty* series. She is currently working on her next book. www.sandrajordanphotography.co.uk

ROSY MARTIN

Rosy Martin is a London based artist-photographer, psychological-therapist, workshop leader, lecturer and writer. Her work explores and interrogates the relationships between photography, memory, identities and unconscious processes. From 1983, together with Jo Spence, she pioneered Phototherapy in UK and they originated Re-enactment Phototherapy. She has published extensively in books and journals on photography, cultural studies and Phototherapy/Art Therapy since 1985 to 2019. She has exhibited Internationally since 1986. www.rosymartin.co.uk

MERCEDES PARODI

Mercedes Parodi is a British photographic artist based in London and in Aix En Provence, France, where she studied photography at the Ecole Supérieure d'Art from 2010 to 2013. Parodi's approach to creation is largely immersive experimental and governed by the senses. The interactive relationship between the artist and her work in Versailles is a complex one. To date, Mercedes Parodi has had two solo exhibitions in France and been awarded 21 honorable mentions in major international photography competitions. www.mercedesparodi.com/

DANIELLE PECK

Danielle Peck is a photographer and documentary film director/producer. This year she has shown a series of work in Seaside: Photographed, a major exhibition for Turner Contemporary in Margate, which will go on tour around England in 2020. She also published a book in conjunction with the exhibition. Dreamland juxtaposes contemporary imagery of Margate alongside text from promotional brochures dating back to 1880 in an exploration of the town's struggle to stay relevant as a travel destination and shed the pull of nostalgia. Danielle is a highly respected film-maker, having produced numerous internationally award-winning documentaries. Her current production is a deep dive into popular music of the early 70s. www.daniellepeckphotography.com

KIM SHAW

Kim Shaw is an American photographer who lives and works in London. She works with analogue processes, capturing on film with toy cameras and pinhole boxes as well as with traditional film cameras. She has been making and exhibiting work for over twenty years. Her work is rooted in the landscape, which she often uses to explore ideas around maternal inheritance. She has been included in numerous group shows in the UK and in the US, and several of her images are held in the permanent collection of The Kresge Art Museum at the University of Michigan. Her latest project, "The Chaos Next Door" was featured in issue 31 of *Uncertain States*, published in August, 2019. Kim is the Director of Photofusion in London. www.kimshawphotography.com