Seven interpretations of Memory — photography exhibition at Oxford's Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital

Friday 1 May, 2015

A new exhibition of work by seven photographers from across Europe opens at Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital in Oxford on 3 May. The work on display - from landscapes and 'selfies', of trees and the East End of London - explores the way in which people respond to photographs by addressing the notion of memory.

The photographers, all students of higher education charity The Open College of the Arts (OCA), interrogate this question in different ways. Their work reminds us that the camera has had the responsibility of being the bearer of truth since its invention in the first half of the 19th century.

Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital: Windmill Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 7HE

Exhibition dates: Saturday 2 May to Tuesday 30 June 2015, admission free

Exhibition Times: 9am to 5pm seven days a week

John Umney, one of the exhibitors, said: 'Photographers approach a scene from perspectives unique to themselves. All seven of us have brought our own understanding to the idea of remembering into a visual form. It is impossible for us to predict what each person who looks at them will see and remember, and we would not wish to predict.'

Seven photographers, seven interpretations of memory

Mike Cookson, www.mikecookson.com, ***Recollective*** considers the differences in the weight of memory from the casual capture of 'selfies', scribbled notes and group photographs to the more profound such as personal remembrances attached to railings and the silence of visitors at the Holocaust memorial centre.

Keith Greenough, www.photo-graph.org, ***Lifting the Curtain*** revisits the Victorian East London by juxtaposing photographs of modern-day places with descriptive texts from Charles Booth's 1889 survey 'Life and Labour of the People'.

John Umney, www.johnumney.co.uk, ***Are you still there?*** explores how images are like words, inviting interpretation, changing their meaning from one day to the next, and never wide enough open to let others in.

Sue Jones, http://www.flick.com/photos/reverendjones/, ***Remembering I'm ill*** shows the photographer in various guises struggling with a relapse in ME: remembering she is ill, trying to learn new skills to replace the ones she's forgotten, trying to remember to stay awake and cope with her illness.

Penny Watson, www.pennywatson.co.uk, ***Eudosia*** explores the relationship a child has with their landscape, which is not a backdrop, but something to interact with, a theatre for imaginative play, an extension of their physicality and the sources of memories for adult folklore.

Margaret Taylor, www.metphotography.co.uk, ***Vandals or Memories?*** considers whether people leave their marks on trees because they are vandals or as a way of memorialising themselves, drawing parallels with photographs, which also make marks and act as memories of things that have been.

Mirjam Bollag Dondi, www.mirjamphotography.com, ***Along the frozen valley*** features pictures taken after a chance encounter with a friend the photographer had not seen for several years, which reflect both the sadness and the beauty of human existence mirrored in the frozen landscape of the river.

OCA Principal Gareth Dent said: 'The Nuffield is hosting the first public exhibition of student work organised by the students themselves since OCA was established in 1987. Having followed the development of the exhibition over the last few months, I understand much better than before how we underplay the benefits the arts and creativity bring to health. It is particularly appropriate that the exhibition is taking place in the centenary year of birth of our founder, the social entrepreneur Michael Young.'

The exhibition was initiated by John Umney and has been staged in collaboration with the hospital and

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Artscape, a charity that provides workshops and mentoring services for patients and their families. Artscape's Tom Cox commented: 'John has been volunteering at Artscape for two years. We are delighted to support him and other students from the Open College of the Arts taking part in this exhibition.'

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