

SERENITY

A Photographic Exhibition Presented By The Old Bank Vault

The Old Bank Vault 6 May - 29 May, 2022

Private View: 5 May, 6-9pm

The Old Bank Vault presents SERENITY, a group exhibition of photographic works by Soo Burnell, Jo de Banzie and Kate O'Neill, highlighting alternative processes and celebrating the poignant, devoted relationship of the artist and their practice.

This exhibition weaves together separate bodies of work by three different artists, illuminating themes of transience, nostalgia, and story-telling, while praising their individual techniques and various approaches to the print process. From digital photographic prints to polaroids, silver gelatin prints to cyanotypes - this is a showcase of beautifully constructed concepts and images by artists immersed in their processes.

Works on show include *To The Water* by Soo Burnell, *May* by Jo de Banzie and *[RE]CONDITION* by Kate Ormond O'Neill.

The viewer is invited to enjoy the individual artworks on display, as well as take-in the whole exhibition as a means of drawing their own stories under the common narratives.

SERENITY opens at The Old Bank Vault Gallery May 5th 2022 and runs until May 29th with a programme of online and in-person events taking place throughout, stay tuned to [The Old Bank Vault](#) website and social media for dates and events.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS & ARTIST INFO

SOO BURNELL: TO THE WATER

Growing up in Edinburgh, Scotland's historic capital city, photographer Soo Burnell constantly found inspiration in the iconic buildings and architecture surrounding her.

Following a project at Glenogle Baths, a pool she swam in as a child, she was re-introduced to the beauty of the architecture and serenity of these spaces. Beyond their unique architectural qualities, Soo was also drawn to their history and place at the heart of local communities.

Traditionally, generations of families used these pools for practical purposes, but often these became popular meeting places too. During her research, Soo met with residents who affectionately retold stories of visiting their local pool—often bringing back memories long since forgotten.

Inspired by her work at Glenogle, Soo began photographing other historic pools across Edinburgh with the intention of capturing their striking architecture and, by contrast, the stillness housed within. This led to her first exhibition, 'Poolside', in 2018.

Soo has gone on to photograph many different locations across the UK and Europe, documenting their striking geometry, dramatic proportions and muted colour palettes. Each one unique in its own right.

Her intention behind these images is to celebrate the original architecture while minimising modern elements. They capture everything from the pattern of the tiles, lines on the bottom of the pool, poolside lettering as much as the scale, light and atmosphere of these historic buildings. The images manage to encompass the stillness of each space as well as the individual beauty of each location.

Drawing inspiration from architecture and cinematic imagery, Soo's impeccably stylised shots are dreamlike and often reminiscent of stills from a film. Early collections found inspiration in her love of Wes Anderson's work, with recent collections inspired by other directors, including Terrence Malick, Stanley Kubrick and Bong Joon-ho.

Every image is carefully styled to evoke a timelessness that gives the final piece a unique painterly quality. Figures are unadorned and used to accentuate the scale and vastness of each location rather than being the main point of focus. The dappled reflections on the water. The starkness of the pool signage. The intricate beauty of an ornate railing. These are the details that demand attention. There is an undeniable sense of nostalgia in Soo's work that honours the richness of history in each location.

The result is both intentionally restrained but with a softness that beckons you to look further.

This exhibition contains a collection of photographs from across the UK and Europe. Each offers a stripped-back insight into how these buildings appear in their purest form. When they are quiet and the water is still. They offer a window into a hidden world, a view to the past, and serve as a reminder of how fortunate we are to have them still.

JO DE BANZIE: MAY - Life and loss in the subjunctive

All the sunbright hopes and a mother's anxious love are re-framed by loss in this series of thought-fragments on love, longing and what could have been.

North London, April 1902, newly engaged and dancing for joy, 22 year-old May dies suddenly from a brain haemorrhage after tripping and colliding with a mantelpiece. Her grieving mother Maria records that tragic day in words and flowers pressed between the pages of her Bible.

120 years later, their story is a mere wisp of smoke drifting beyond familial recollection. But before it goes, it settles for a moment and lingers just long enough to be told.

Jo de Banzie is a London born and based photographic artist who employs the materiality of historical and alternative processes to explore memory, imagination and the unseen. Often commemorative in nature, her work combines archive, oral history and the imagined, to create visual narratives as seen through the gaze of motherhood.

KATE ORMOND O'NEILL: [RE]CONDITION - Vol I: Shadows Follow Vol I

[RE] C O N D I T I O N is an ongoing, long term project documenting the many Islands off the coasts of Ireland. The first volume 'Shadows Follow' explores the west coast in particular through themes surrounding 'Objet petit a' – the unattainable object of desire, through the characteristics of addiction and learned behaviour, challenging our memory and recall of factual events. The work aims to illustrate that we are addicted to nostalgia - always remembering people, things, places, or events, better than they were and always longing for something we don't possess.

Utilising the legacy of traditional Irish storytelling, the project is conveyed via a variety of land and seascapes in several mediums including photography, poetry, glass plates and cyanotype prints. Similar scenes are captured from varying viewpoints and produced in different ways mimicking the way we remember - recalling memories slightly different each time to suit our current narrative.

The selected images on show are from two, close-by but separate, archipelagos - *The Skellig Islands* and *The Blasket Islands* - on the south west coast of Ireland, along the coastline of Co. Kerry. No longer inhabited, the Islands are still rich with a haunting history left behind by the poets, storytellers, monks, scholars, farmers and communities who called them home ...

Kate Ormond O'Neill is a contemporary photographic artist and curator. Her work focuses on environmental and historical themes through landscapes and seascapes, which are produced via digital and analogue processes on various media.

As a photographic practitioner she is inclined to work on long-term projects through alternative photographic and print processes, with environmentally sustainable media and materials at the heart of her practice.

This - combined with a core belief that art and expression of art should be accessible to all and used as a universal tool - has enabled her to utilise her skills in social engagement and professional development via exhibitions, talks, mentorship and workshops. Her roles with The Visual Loop, Life Framer, and Brighton Photo Fringe have enabled her to achieve large-scale projects, events and collaborations with leading organisations and established artists.

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