PORTFOLIO NATALIA PONIATOWSKA

CELEBRATION is a project that came to live naturally or even surprisingly during my third-year of study at the Glasgow School of Art when I have been working a lot as an event photographer to support my art career.

As I have been busy with events, I had no time to make a project for a group exhibition. Instead, I thought I would search through my hard drive and commercial shots and try to find at least one good picture I could print for the show. When searching for that one photograph I've noticed something quite interesting. I was capturing the moments that were not really about celebrating the events themselves. The function room corners, where no one is dancing became almost like an empty theatre sets and the feeling that if I would just slightly move my camera I would capture a big group of people dancing or eating, was something that fascinates me about photography. The ability to present the situation within one frame, with no sound, with no description of what's happening next to it. Just one frame, for the viewer's imagination, to make a story of the moment. I've been noticing that while taking pictures of kids during the big events, like the photographs of a girl lying down next to the buffet – taken on her parent's wedding renewal. But these photographs were not showing kids having fun or dancing, but escaping into their own fantasy, careless, doing whatever they want to do. (2017)

Sam & James' Wedding Renewal, 2017

Summer's 6th Birthday Party

It is enough that I come from a country that lies east of the west and west of the east Sławomir Mrożek

TWELVE DYING PALM TREES

The red snout beetles (Rhynchophorus ferrugineus) larvae can dig up holes in the heart of a palm tree up to a meter long, thereby weakening and eventually killing the palm. These weevils were likely brought to Greece in 2004, along with palms imported from North Africa in order to give the Olympic Games an exotic feel for athletes and tourists. Thanks to the hitchhiking beetle all of those trees that were planted are on their way out and the ones that were here before that are also suffering. The damage it has caused has worried not only producers and importers but also private businesses, mainly hoteliers who have planted lots of palms, like Maria, the owner of Mariliza where I photographed those palm trees. She said that treatment would cost her five hundred euro for each palm. She lost the shade that leaves were creating and she lost guests who were coming to her hotel as the lane of palm trees was making it so luxurious and what's left doesn't look as inviting. The red palm weevil is not easy to find. In some countries, people use sensitive microphones and earphones to track it down from the noise made by the caterpillar inside the tree trunk. Scientists are conducting research into ways of combating the insect by means of microorganisms that kill insects, nematodes, fungus and viruses as biological enemies. Such research is still in its infancy in Greece.

On 24th of April 2018, all palm trees I photographed in Kos were cut down. (2018)

Royal Scottish Academy, New Contemporaries exhibition and below Twelve Dying Palm Trees, Installation View, Argyle Street, Glasgow, 2018

MOMENTS I NEVER SHOWED YOU

For many years of being a natural picture maker and taking photographs of whatever caught my attention, I've noticed that people became a part of the landscape I create. Observing, sitting, relaxing. The images place the figure in surroundings that complement simultaneously two conditions – being and looking. This project focuses on my observations but also raises wider questions about photography as a medium and the act of observation itself. It is an attempt to look at my practice and question my selection of images in which unexpected connections and conversations can occur between images.

The body of work includes an animated scan of 35mm black and white negative. As some images remind me of either smell, sound or movement, I wanted to bring this photograph back to life by moving selected still elements.

This project has been shot in several countries, mostly outdoors and shows places I don't belong to and people I have never got to meet, and as such, it is a departure from previous work that had nostalgia, homesickness and belongs at its heart. This project accepts personal and visual encounters that speak of a connection that is grounded in the photographic composition and as such is a pause in the flow of time: fleeting. These images propose questions and allow me to evoke the conditions that occurred during the moment of taking the picture again. (2018)

Moments I Never Showed You, installation view,
The Glasgow School of Art degree show, 2018

videos included in the project:
Debby: https://vimeo.com/274341769

Moments I Never Showed You - BOOK:
https://vimeo.com/276137376

Fotografia Ożywiona (35mm scan annimated): https://vimeo.com/263028467

Observing, part of the Moments I Never Showed You

Gathering, Kos Island, Greece, 2017

Dad I never had, Kos Island, 2017

BEHIND is my recent project on homesickness. I left Poland 6 years ago, and during my visits there I have been constantly portraying it since then. I wanted to capture everything that sits in my memory and the camera seemed like the best tool for it. The project includes work that recorded many different emotions, like longing for belonging, realising at the same time, that there is no return, that even if the home is still the same, it's me who changed. The project includes 6 photographs and one video piece. All photographs are almost like still images from one's memory – someone's back, sofa pattern, moments... When finishing the series my homesickness transformed into nostalgia. Realising that I'm not longing for the place or people but for the time that passed, after 4 years of working on this subject I could leave it behind. (2017)

Recent work - single pieces + working on a project about my grandma - she was resettle from Lviv during the Second World War to Poland, the project would touch up the subject of belonging to the place and migration. More:

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