

# CYMRU YN FENIS WALES IN VENICE

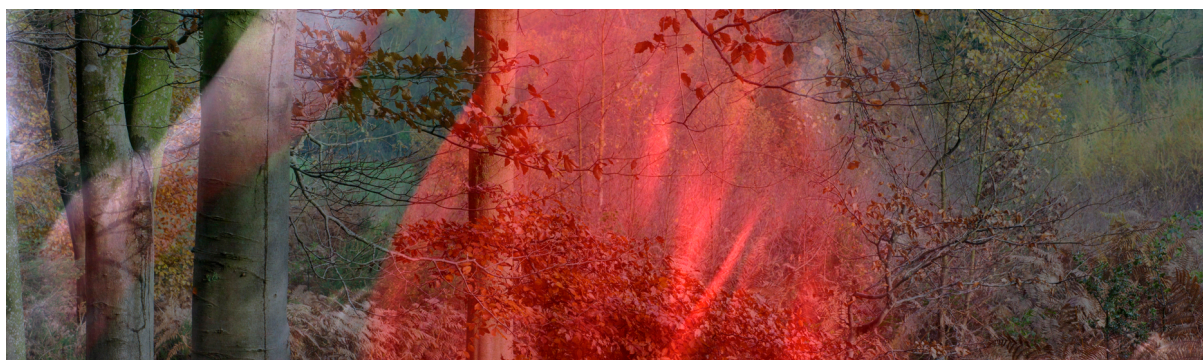


*Press Release*

*Issue date: 7 May 2015*

*Helen Sear...the rest is smoke*

*Collateral Event of the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition – La Biennale da Venezia*



*Helen Sear, in a project curated by Ffotogallery and commissioned by the Arts Council of Wales, is the artist to represent Wales at the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition. Her exhibition ‘...the rest is smoke’ will feature a suite of five new works, which are both rooted in the local and familiar landscapes of Wales, and respond to the wider context of the Venice Biennale. The exhibition will be housed in the **Santa Maria Ausiliatrice**, a church and former convent in the Castello area of Venice.*

*The title of Helen Sear’s exhibition is taken from an inscription in Mantegna’s last painting of St. Sebastian, now housed in the Ca’ d’Oro in Venice: *Nihil nisi divinum stabile est. Caetera fumus.**

*Ideas of mortality and temporality are explored through a series of new works in which agricultural landscapes marked for production and consumption are seen to exist simultaneously as magical spaces, imprinting themselves on the body and mind of the viewer. Sear’s photographic*

*and video works explore the image as sculptural form whereby the artist integrates different speeds of looking, contrasting physical scale, colour and vivid material presence. The works resonate strongly with each other and with the architectural site of the exhibition.*

*Helen Sear is the first female artist to be selected for a solo exhibition for Cymru yn Fenis/Wales in Venice. Known as one of Wales' most significant contemporary artists, Helen Sear continues to explore sensory ideas and expressions, vision, touch, and the re-presentation of the nature of experience with particular reference to the human and animal body and her immediate environment in rural Wales and France. Since moving to Wales in 1984, the artist has continued to exhibit and teach in Wales and internationally, with recent solo exhibitions in Quebec, Canada, New York and Stuttgart.*

*Presented by Ffotogallery, the national development agency for photography in Wales, the organisation has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the artist, having published Helen Sear's thirty year retrospective monograph *Inside The View* in 2012, and previously exhibited her work on several occasions both internationally and in Wales.*

*David Drake, Ffotogallery's Director, says:*

*"The artist's current work moves seamlessly between photography, sculpture and video, exhibiting great command of different materials and production processes. These developments, coinciding with renewed interest in and critical acclaim for her work, and an increased visibility internationally, make this the perfect moment for Helen Sear to represent Wales at the Venice Biennale 2015".*

*Ffotogallery's exhibition team also includes independent curator Stuart Cameron and assistant curator/project manager Kathryn Standing. Cameron curated Helen Sear's first major exhibition in Wales, and has been a consistent supporter of her work.*

*Helen Sear comments:*

*"These relationships have been built over many years and form the basis of a mutual respect and confidence, and working together with the Cymru yn Fenis/Wales in Venice team we are very excited to be presenting all new work specially conceived for Venice"*

*The exhibition is commissioned and managed by the Arts Council of Wales and Wales Arts*

*International with support and collaboration from the Welsh Government and British Council.*

*The Cymru yn Fenis/Wales in Venice exhibition will be presented for the third time at the Santa Maria Ausiliatrice in Castello, located just off Via Garibaldi, midway between the main Biennale Giardini and Arsenale sites.*

*- Ends -*

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### ***Notes to Editors***

*Cymru yn Fenis Wales in Venice presents Helen Sear ...the rest is smoke at Santa Maria Ausiliatrice Fondamenta San Giocacchin, 30122 Venezia 9 May - 22 November 2015*

### ***Opening Times:***

*Preview Days- 6-8 May Open: 10.00- 18.00*

*Press Preview – 6 May 12.00-14.0*

*9 May - 22 November Open: 10.00-18.00*

*[www.walesvenicebiennale.org.uk](http://www.walesvenicebiennale.org.uk) [www.facebook.com/WalesInVenice](http://www.facebook.com/WalesInVenice)*

*Twitter: @WalesInVenice*

1. **Helen Sear** first moved to Wales in 1984 after completing an HDFA at the Slade School, University College London. Her photographs became widely known in the 1991 British Council exhibition, **De-Composition: Constructed Photography in Britain**, which toured Latin America and Eastern Europe. Her work was included in the exhibition **About Face** at the Hayward Gallery, London in summer 2004 and **La Mirada Reflexiva** at the Espai D'Art Contemporani in Castellon Spain in 2005. Recent solo exhibitions include, **Inside The View**, shown at Gallery Harmonia in Finland in 2006, g39 Cardiff who also published the bookwork **Tale** in 2009, **Beyond The View**, Hoopers Gallery London, Klompching Gallery New York and Bildkultur, Stuttgart, 2010-12. Ffotogallery published her first major monograph in 2012 **Inside The View**. GOST published the bookwork **Brisées** in 2013 which accompanied a major national tour **Lure** in the same year. Her most recent exhibition was at the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of **Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie en Gaspésie**, Quebec, Canada. Summer 2014. [www.helensear.com](http://www.helensear.com)
2. **Ffotogallery** is the national development agency for photography and lens-based media in Wales. Its view is outward looking, with an exhibition programme featuring artists from Wales and the rest of the world. Ffotogallery seeks to widen its impact and influence through touring exhibitions, collaborations with other organisations and galleries, print and online publishing and an extensive education and outreach programme. Ffotogallery is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, in receipt of annual funding from Arts Council of Wales. <http://www.ffotogallery.org/>
3. **Stuart Cameron** is an independent curator and Director of Crescent Arts, an artist-development organisation based in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, and funded by Arts Council England. He was Visual Arts Programmer at Chapter, Cardiff from 1987 to 1996. He facilitated major new work with artists including Cornelia Parker and Mona Hatoum – both of which were subsequently nominated for the Turner Prize. Recent projects with artists include Rushton Tyman's 'The Wild', Keith Farquhar's 'In Domestos Chaos', Monica Ross's 'Anniversary' and The Art Party Conference 2013 with Bob and Roberta Smith.
4. **Arts Council of Wales** is the country's funding and development agency for the arts. Its vision is of a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life of the nation and to ensure that the contribution of the arts is recognised, valued and celebrated.

[www.artscouncilofwales.org.uk](http://www.artscouncilofwales.org.uk)

