

Edinburgh College photographer in residence launches HEAD STUDIES exhibition



Edinburgh College's photographer in residence Albie Clark is holding a new exhibition of photographic still lifes, called HEAD STUDIES. The 11 black and white shots centre on a single glass mannequin head and are designed to showcase how abstract effects can be produced in camera and in the studio without any digital manipulation.

The free exhibition will take place at the Creative Exchange Leith – a creative business development hub run by Edinburgh College in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council – from Friday 13 December to Friday 17 January.

Albie is part of Edinburgh College's Centre for Creative Industries artists in residence scheme, which gives college graduates the chance to return to mentor students and undertake their own projects. The scheme also includes BAFTA-winning filmmaker in residence Garry Fraser and contemporary artist in residence Hayley Mathers.

The exhibition represents the work Albie – who studied photography at the college – has produced as photographer in residence, a role he began in August. HEAD STUDIES is the result of a studio-based project using the glass bust, expired film, careful lighting set ups, and large and medium-format cameras to produce stylised images influenced by abstract expressionism.

Each shot involved often-elaborate set-ups, composition and

framing, with all effects performed in the studio and recorded onto film. All images were shot, developed, processed and printed at Edinburgh College's Granton and Sighthill campuses, where he has access to all the facilities of the photography studios.

Albie said: "This project is a celebration of expired film as a format, using its idiosyncrasies to demonstrate how it's still relevant to modern photography, so much of which now relies upon digital manipulation than on faithful image capture. There are no digital post-processing techniques – besides scanning in the negatives – applied to any of these images; everything was done naturally in the studio and processed in house, as it were."

The project is a departure for Albie, who works as a freelance commercial and fine art photographer. Besides commercial commissions including product photography, his work largely involves what he calls 'edgelands' and is concerned with capturing the otherworldliness of apparently normal places that are neither urban blights nor gleaming modernities.

Albie says: "This exhibition afforded me the opportunity to attempt a largely conceptual body of work contrary to my typical personal photographic practice. Limiting my subject matter to the glass head and using various geometric shapes to frame the image, HEAD STUDIES developed from a period of research into abstract expressionism and its reliance upon form and chance rather than a straightforward rendering of the subject involved. Having the luxury of a large quantity of expired film as well as time to shoot in a studio environment were key factors in my methodology. One of the most rewarding aspects of shooting on film is the anticipation of what has been recorded on the negative, and much of the work in HEAD STUDIES could be viewed as a series of happy accidents."

Albie is also a founding member of The Photographers Collective, an organisation representing Scottish photographic

talent which holds an annual group exhibition as well as workshops.

The Creative Exchange was launched in 2013 to provide a flexible working space for people working in creative industries. It offers support and development services to give new start-up companies the best chance of success. HEAD STUDIES is the first art exhibition to be hosted at the Creative Exchange by Edinburgh College, but more are being planned.