

BIOGRAPHIES

Ness Lee draws upon history and personal narratives to create tender and surreal illustrations, paintings, sculptures and installations. Exploring states of mind during intimate stages of vulnerability, Lee's work takes form as an effort in seeking comfort, forgiveness and desire for an end of a self-perpetuated state. Based in Toronto, their work has been featured at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Agnes Etherington, The Art Gallery of Hamilton, Art Toronto, as well as galleries in Boston, Los Angeles, New York, Montreal and Toronto. They are currently represented by Patel Gallery.

Clare Samuel is a visual artist, writer, and educator originally from Northern Ireland, now based in Toronto. She holds a BFA from Ryerson and an MFA from Concordia University. Her work has been exhibited and screened internationally and recognized by funding and awards including the Canadian National Magazine Awards, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and the Roloff Beny Foundation. Clare's images and writing have appeared in publications such as Prefix Photo, BlackFlash and Border Crossings. She serves on the board of directors at Pleasure Dome, and teaches at OCADU and Ryerson University in Toronto. Clare is also a founding member of Feminist Photography Network, a nexus for research on the relationship between feminism and lens-based media.

Clare would like to thank: Kathleen Edwards, Mark Vernon, Feaven Abera, Victoria Brennan, Victoria Anderson-Gardner, Micky Smith, Isabelle L. Hazlewood, Adreana Ramkarran, Christina Zdravetski, Khadijah Salawu, Meagan Brown, Donna Marie Baratta, Precious Osarenkhoe, Stephanie Megraw-Fabian, Daniel Brackenbury, Amber Anglin, Alexandra Tse, Erin Kang, Stella Kulagowski, Charlene Heath, Alisha Piercy, Jenny Brotherstone, Marsha Shandur, Natasha Ward, Asma Malik, Pascale Lalonde, Raven Lam, Candice Purwin, Paula Cleggett, April Hickox, May Friedman, Lauren Schreiber, Shayne Hontiveros

Vicky Moufawad-Paul is a Toronto based curator and writer. She is the Director/Curator at A Space Gallery. She has curated exhibitions across Canada and published texts on a variety of art practices.



January 24 - February 29 2020

Regarding the Enclosures

Ness Lee
Clare Samuel

Curated by Vicky Moufawad-Paul



Ness Lee, *As Long As I'll Let Me*, 8.25"x12", Ink on Koza, 2018

Opening Reception January 24th, 6 - 8 PM

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Regarding the Enclosures is a two person exhibition comprised of a new site specific installation and drawings by Ness Less and photographs and video by Clare Samuel. The pairing of their works takes the notion and history of 'enclosure' as points of inspiration and departure: enclosure of possibilities around hegemonic gender norms; enclosure of non dominant knowledge, especially ones that are not well documented; and the enclosure of common lands in the Middle Ages in Europe and the related struggles against the advent of capitalism.

Ness Lee has built a body of work by drawing figures that do not obey expectations. The bodies, even when reclined, queer gravity and scale. They float in the sky and water, their hair are the clouds and waves. Clare Samuel also untethers bodies from gravity: women crawl across a snowy field into a forest. The trans, non binary, and female identified bodies on view in both artists' works often show what we are told to hide: times of rest, times of sadness, times of intimacy, and times of excess.

For the majority of us, we must contort our bodies and minds to fit into the capitalist and colonized world. Some of us can get along—we can pass sometimes—and some cannot. Ness Lee describes some of the excess of feeling stemming from the experience as a member of the Hakka diaspora. Lee writes in their artist statement, "Hakka in itself literally translates as '*Guest*' people, being considered a minority ethnicity to southern China and forced out to a continued history as a nomadic community. Further, the Hakka language, rather than acknowledged as a language in itself, is often described as a language '*in between*' mandarin and cantonese." In our political moment, the in-between is coming to be acknowledged as a permanent and legitimate way of being. But for generations those that are not firmly identified as part of the majority national body faced significant legalized oppression and internalized shame. And of course, minority ethnic groups are often misidentified as being part of the majority culture when they enter a new and more dominant culture. This misidentification is often taken on by the community to make it easier for the new host community. Ness Lee is interested in how the exploration of these feelings might reverberate with communities outside their own.

Clare Samuel's project is called *To Bend and to Shape*. She explains that "the word 'witch' comes from the Indo-European root word 'wic' meaning to bend or shape, which could refer to materials, reality or consciousness." She is interested in Silvia Federici's writing about the Middle Ages in Europe and the oppression of women as central to the shift from feudalism to capitalism. Federici explains that as common lands were enclosed, there was a process of degradation of women that was meant to place them as unpaid labourers in the home. Far from idealizing feudalism, Samuel's lens based exploration of this shift focuses on the embodiment of a world of female subjects. Hair was thought to have the devil hiding in it and shaving was often a form of humiliation, thus hair features strongly in her work. In *Transformation* what appears to be an older woman with silver hair is bent over, her face covered by hair. The title suggests that the woman might transform into a young beautiful maiden or something frightening. In *Untitled (Daughter)* a mother covers her daughter's face with her hand, while her hair remains visible. This gesture by the mother could be one of protecting her child from patriarchy's interest in her through the camera's gaze.



Clare Samuel, *Transformation* from the series *To Bend and To Shape*, 24"x24", c-print, 2018

Both artists feature figures with their backs turned to the viewer. Let us imagine that they are turning their backs on the conventional geography of national borders which define the Hakka as perpetual outsiders and the exploited unpaid labour of women in the home. Let us imagine they are turning our attention toward things we almost know: fairytales, fantasies, legends. Some people have thought the figure in Ness Lee's work is herself. It is not. It is all of us. It is none of us. It is the idea of person whose hair is the clouds and her body is the landscape. There is no need to pin it down to one cosmology or history. As Audre Lorde writes in *Sister Outsider*, "poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives."

The enclosure of land is ongoing in different parts of the world while simultaneous enclosures of other kinds are happening. Samuel's and Lee's projects find ways to look at bodies that are not productive from the hegemonic view—and in our looking perhaps transform and hold space for intersectional transnational possibilities outside the systems that encircle us.

-Vicky Moufawad-Paul, Curator

TO BEND AND TO SHAPE



CLARE SAMUEL

Exhibition Essay by
Lodoe Laura Haines-Wangda

White Water Gallery
2024

TO BEND AND TO SHAPE



Clare Samuel's *To Bend and To Shape* exhibition at White Water Gallery is a catalogue of feminine gestures. In Clare's photographic images, movements are stilled and made available for interrogation. In *Untitled (Rings)* (2024), a woman in a white shirt reaches her hands together, her motion frozen by the light-sensitive emulsion of the camera. She stares into the lens, at the viewer. What does her motion mean? What is she trying to convey? What does she know?

Many of the women in Samuel's photographs stare back at its viewer. Their expressions vary. Some meet our gaze with their brow furrowed. Some look back with softness. In *Untitled (Noose)* (2017), we are face-to-face with our subject. She tilts her head to the side, her posture open to the diffuse daylight. In the large scale of the image, we can see her up close; her features made available for searching eyes. The woman's dark facial hair looks wispy and soft, and her collarbone and neck suggest a delicateness. However, it is something in her stare, and the title Clare gives to the image, that point to something more ominous.

The title of Clare's exhibition is an unpacking of the word "witch." The word's root, "wic," – meaning to bend or to shape – can refer to materials, reality or consciousness. The title of the exhibition and Samuel's photographic series references the ways that the female body morphs and shifts – through the stages of growth, and through the process of creating new life. Its inner logic could also point to the social implications of the feminine body – which includes its physical, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions –, often made to bend and to shape into a form that is deemed acceptable, digestible or desirable.

Samuel's series of photographs was deeply influenced by Silvia Federici's *Caliban And The Witch* (2004). In the book, the author investigates the historical mechanisms that led to the witch trials of mediaeval Europe; the subsequent

execution of tens of thousands of people – mostly women, as well as intersecting identities also considered as “other” such as the poor, racialized, and disabled –; and the global effects of their widespread systematic persecution. Federici advances a theory that the witch trials of early Europe were not a mere peripheral event in its continental history, but that this explosion of violence and persecution was a core component of the rise of Western capitalism and modernity itself.

The rise of the European mediaeval city brought a massive population transfer from the country to urban centers. This gave rise to a shift from production-for-subsistence to production-for-profit, bringing with it the money economy, and the rapid privatisation of land through the enclosure of the commons. Federici argues that, in a time when Europe was bridging the transition from feudalism to capitalism, accusations and prosecutions against sovereign women meant the transfer of their property and the consolidation of male-dominated power.

At the time, Federici contends, urban women had a great deal of social sovereignty, and accusations of witchcraft were used to stomp out their independence. It was during this time that public waged labour became the territory of men, and private unpaid domestic labour became the domain of women. Women were separated from the public sphere and from one another, stripped of their autonomy, and relegated to the home. They were made responsible for the care of men-labourers and for the production of their lineage. The female body was also a target, and women were especially marked for their knowledge of their own reproductive technologies. Federici examines texts of the witch hunters of the era, which perpetually reference women's bodies, and their control over their own sexuality and fertility. The literature of the time often uses the word “witchcraft” interchangeably for birth control or abortifacients.

For Federici, the European transition to capitalism was only possible through the destruction of women's power and by confining their role to the home and the reproduction and care of workers. A collective misogyny pitted working class men against women, turning them en masse against their mothers, sisters, daughters, wives and neighbours, and implicating them as conspirators in the women's slaughter. Put into their global context, the European witch trials, the devaluation of women's labour, and their dehumanisation based on faulty spectral evidence was a precursor that laid out a blueprint for the treatment of non-Europeans in the colonial expropriation and subjugation that was forthcoming.

Some of Clare's images directly reference the history Federici researches. *Untitled (Fire)* (2018) points to the records of witch burnings. In Samuel's image, a woman sits

atop a tree stump in front of a circular fire pit filled with ash. She meets our gaze solemnly.

Hair becomes a theme in Clare's series. During the European trials, a witch's magical power was said to be bound by their hair, and those accused had their hair forcefully cut off or shaved in an attempt to remove their power. This was a brutal act intended to remove the bodily autonomy of its subject. In *Transformation* (2018), a woman bends over, gathering her long grey hair together with her hands. A metal pot – a caldron? – is placed beside her. In *To summon hail and thunderstorms* (2017), Clare's subject looks somewhere beyond the frame, a petite fist tightly wrapped around her long hair. She holds up a small silver pair of scissors to its ends. The woman's hair is blurred; as if by magic, a gust of wind has picked up her hair, resisting the fixed view of the camera. In *Untitled (hand in hair)* (2018), a young brown-haired woman runs one hand through the short, light-coloured hair of her mother, her other hand resting upon her shoulder. The older woman faces the camera head-on, while her daughter seems weary of its presence. She is perceptive of a viewer; her expression and body language signalling a knowing of something impending.

Some of Clare's images reference witch lore and folktales, in which women's bodies have magical and transformative properties. In *Ritual* (2018), two women sit cross-legged on a wooden picnic bench. One woman has gently placed her hand on the knee of the other. The women are engaged in a beauty ritual, using a bottle of nail polish to transform their nude nails red. Like mirrored images of one another, they stare back at the viewer, bathed in the warm glow of the sun. There is some alchemy when two women are pictured together by Samuel. In *Untitled (Touch)* (2019), one woman in a printed dress lifts her chin to fix her gaze towards us. She stands bathed in a low, warm, Western sunlight. Her hands are pushed into her pockets, her posture open. A second woman beside her presses her thumb into the corner of the first woman's lip. There is an air of mystery in their gestures. In both images, one gets the sense that they've stumbled into a communion between two women that is both private and sacred.

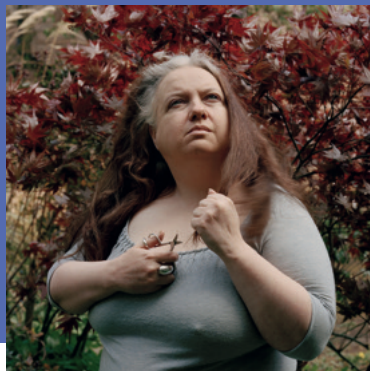
Samuel's video works *By Daylight* (2020) and *By Daylight II* (2024), are presented here as a two-channel video for the first time. The video works were influenced by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper." Written in 1892, the story chronicles a woman's descent into madness as she is confined to a single room following a postpartum hysteria diagnosis by a domineering and severe husband and doctor. Separated from the world, the woman becomes obsessed with the tattered patterned yellow wallpaper of the room, and begins to see women confined, creeping

on all fours, behind the wallpaper. By the end of Gilman's story, the woman drops to her knees and begins to crawl around herself, finding in the movement a sense of wild bodily freedom separate from her patriarchal constraints.

In Samuel's *By Daylight*, a cavalcade of women trudge through a snowy landscape before falling to their knees and crawling through the frame. The repetition of the women's gesture seems to reject the singularity of experience. Their actions echo the movements of the woman in Gilman's story, and speak to the social detachment and segregation one might feel navigating a patriarchal culture, mental illness, and dogmatic allopathic medical systems that often extend little to no value to the lived experiences of individuals. Given that the work is being screened here relatively soon after the most intense years of the COVID-19 pandemic – a period of social isolation that disproportionately affected society's most vulnerable – we can expand its understanding to include its current collective contexts.

Screened for the first time at the White Water Gallery exhibition, *By Daylight II* is presented as a second channel, adding another dimension to the first video and to Clare's oeuvre. The static nature of the images in her photographic series and the fixed camera angle of *By Daylight* are offset by this strange, more unsettled view. In the video, we are able to see the details of the women and their repetitive motions forward in space. Up close, we see their gaze, fixed on something undetermined and unseeable ahead. There is a mystery in their movement; the women move as though they were compelled by a force arcane and impenetrable by its viewer. By what energy are they compelled? What do they see that we do not?

These are questions that can be asked of all the subjects in Clare's *To Bend and To Shape* exhibition. Samuel makes images of women that defy a narrow, definitive viewing. There is a dense inscrutability she brings to her image-making that eludes a flat and limited witnessing, and the coherence of her photographic and video works relies on an intimate understanding of the inner life-world of the feminine. Taken wholly, Samuel's work addresses the interdimensionality of the female body – containing within it its structural, communal, affective and metaphysical proportions.



Lodoe Laura Haines-Wangda is an artist and writer currently based in Tkaronto / Toronto. Influenced by her hybrid Tibetan-Canadian ancestry and upbringing, she is interested in human-centric experiences as disruptions of what we think we know in Western-dominant spaces. Lodoe Laura spent several years working in archives, galleries, museums and artist-run spaces, and is currently pursuing an education in traditional Eastern Medicine. When she's not looking at or writing about art, you might find her spending time in nature, making pottery, or teaching classes focused on embodied movement.

Clare Samuel is a visual artist originally from Northern Ireland, now living in Toronto. She holds a BFA from Toronto Metropolitan University and an MFA from Concordia University. Her work focuses on connection and distances between the self and other, as well as notions of social division, borders, and belonging. Spanning mediums such as photography, video, text and installation, her projects are often a dialogue with the idea of portraiture. She has exhibited internationally, most recently at OBORO, Belfast Exposed, and VU Photo, with upcoming solo exhibitions at Public Space One (Iowa City) and PAVED Arts (Saskatoon). Clare's practice has been supported by Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Council. She is co-founder and co-director of Feminist Photography Network, a nexus for research on the relationship between feminism and lens-based media.

White Water Gallery is a not-for-profit Artist-Run Centre committed to supporting artistic practices that prioritize risk and innovation. Understanding the need to advance the public's threshold for viewing contemporary art, the gallery encourages outreach programming that promotes accessibility and shared knowledge. Founded in 1974 and incorporated in 1977, the White Water Gallery (WWG) was originally created to facilitate opportunities for local artists in need of professional development who were unable to find accommodating venues for their research and dissemination projects. This need, combined with the dedication of many local artists, founded an institution devoted to the support of artistic development prioritizing research, risk-taking and experimentation in the arts. Today many of Canada's most established and successful artists acknowledge the role WWG has played in advancing their careers.

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For more information on the White Water Gallery please
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Clare Samuel

Over the last few years, Clare Samuel, an artist based in Tkaronto/Toronto, has increasingly grappled with her complex relationship with family and kinship, and with Northern Ireland, where she was raised. Her photographs, videos, and installations are intimate and vulnerable. They ask what it means to inherit the weight of blood ties. Oscillating between proximity and distance, her work stays with the trouble, while simultaneously fleeing from it—as a survival mechanism.

In *Us (& It)* (2016 and 2020), she presents portraits of herself and her immediate family set in oval frames. In each, the hand of another family member intrudes into the frame, breaking its edge with an ambiguous gesture inspired by a nineteenth-century clinical psychiatric portrait reproduced in Georges Didi-Huberman's study of the invention of madness. At once comforting and restraining, the hands knit the sitters together into a family unit: "Us." The overdetermined "it" of *Us (& It)*—the unnameable other bracketed in her title—evokes the mental illness that afflicted her late father, Malcolm, the patterns of behaviour that replicate themselves across generations through genetic markers and social norms, and the fraught social ideals of family. In dialogue with the oval portraits is a silent video of the sea in the coastal town in Northern Ireland where Samuel's family still lives. Interrupting the cyclical repetition of the waves, her abrupt cuts engender a future in which continuity is severed.

In *Flesh/Light/Blood/Water*, Samuel interjects her body—hair, skin, and hands—into family photographs. The project has taken different forms, including a frieze (2020) and a book (2023) that reflect on the intensity of affect and emotion that accumulates in the body and in images. By reworking these precious childhood photographs, she negotiates the "absolute distance and totalizing closeness" of familial relations. She reinserts her present self into these images, but their flat surfaces resist her efforts to *become kindred* on her own terms. Samuel's recent work speaks to us as much of photography's limits as of the complicated intimacy of belonging that blood ties force upon us.

Gwynne Fulton

Depuis quelques années, Clare Samuel, artiste installée à Tkaronto/Toronto, est aux prises avec la relation complexe qui la lie à sa famille, à sa parenté, ainsi qu'à son Irlande du Nord natale. Ses photographies, vidéos et installations ont un caractère intime et vulnérable. Elle s'y interroge sur le lourd héritage des liens du sang. Oscillant entre proximité et distance, ses œuvres font face au problème en même temps qu'elles le fuient – simple mécanisme de survie.

Dans *Us (& It)* (2016 et 2020), elle présente, dans des cadres ovales, des portraits d'elle-même et de sa famille immédiate. Dans chacun, la main d'un autre membre de la famille s'immisce dans le cadre dont elle vient rompre la bordure, geste ambigu inspiré d'un portrait de psychiatrie clinique reproduit dans l'étude de Georges Didi-Huberman sur l'invention de l'hystérie. En même temps réconfort et contrainte, les mains tissent l'unité familiale en reliant les sujets : *Us*, « nous ». La surdétermination du pronom *it* – cet autre innommable entre parenthèses – évoque la maladie mentale dont souffrait son père, Malcolm, ainsi que les schémas comportementaux qui se répètent au fil des générations dans les marqueurs génétiques et les normes sociales, et les lourds idéaux sociaux concernant la famille. En dialogue avec les portraits, une vidéo muette de la mer tournée dans la ville côtière d'Irlande du Nord où vit encore la famille de l'artiste. Interrompant la répétition du cycle des vagues, le montage haché suggère un avenir à la continuité sectionnée.

Dans *Flesh/Light/Blood/Water*, Samuel précipite son corps – cheveux, peau et mains – dans les photos de famille. Le projet prend différentes formes, notamment une frise (2020) et un livre (2023) qui réfléchissent à l'intensité des affects et de l'émotion qui s'accumulent dans le corps et les images. En remodelant ces précieuses photographies d'enfance, l'artiste manœuvre cette fois entre « la distance absolue et la proximité totalisante » des relations familiales. Elle réinsère son soi actuel dans ces images, mais leur surface plate résiste à ses tentatives d'*apparentage* unilatérales. Le travail récent de Samuel nous parle tout autant des limites de la photographie que de l'intimité problématique de l'appartenance imposée par les liens du sang.

Traduit de l'anglais par **Sophie Chisogne**



Clare Samuel

Flesh/Blood/Light/Water (détails | details), 2020.

Photos : permission de l'artiste | courtesy of the artist



Clare Samuel
Us (& It), 2016.

Photos : permission de l'artiste | courtesy of the artist



Clare Samuel

Us (& It), captures vidéos | video stills, 2016.

Photos : permission de l'artiste | courtesy of the artist

Malcolm

Clare Samuel

4 February- 11 March 2023

Cosmos in a Shell

In an intimate and moving meditation on loss and madness, Tkaronto/Toronto-based artist Clare Samuel memorializes her father, Malcolm, who died in 2018 following heart surgery complications.

Malcolm was acutely aware, as early as the 1970s, of the science of anthropogenic climate change. Gripped by a vision of the future that looks much like our present reality, he distributed flyers to raise awareness about the environmental impact of fossil fuel emissions and increasing carbon dioxide concentrations. On two occasions, he even ran for office with the Green Party. As a member of the British Interplanetary Society—the world's oldest space advocacy organization—he petitioned leaders to work collaboratively to expand space exploration and to ready planet Earth for our collective "off-world" relocation. Malcolm envisioned a future "on Earth, the moon and beyond" that included renewables, biodiversity protection, solar radiation shelters, and coordinated defense against comets and other "near-Earth objects," as well as airlock space stations and moon colonization. His techno-survivalist vision feels all more prescient today against the backdrop of the climate catastrophe we are presently living—however unevenly in different parts of the planet.

Paying homage to Malcolm's engagement with ecology and astronomy, Samuel combines photographs and video, weaving a personal cosmology from fragments left behind in his Northern Ireland council flat: medical records, photocopied ecojustice pamphlets, snippets of hair, dense hand-written journal entries. The act of sifting through objects and their affects is crucial to Samuel's attempts to come to grips with loss, which is complicated by Malcolm's experience of living with schizophrenia.

A large-scale vinyl facsimile depicts Malcolm's flat, hollowed out of its contents by Samuel in three tumultuous days following his death. Gone are the blue curtains, the wingback reading chair that once sat by the window, and the stacked boxes of belongings that were shipped to him after his mother's death. Tracing the contours of absence, his room confronts us as an empty shell.

Samuel responds to this absence with a series of lumen prints—an early photographic process of solar photograms—of her pony tail and of Malcolm's diary from 1978-79 in soft millennial shades, alongside a view of Holywell Hospital, a psychiatric intensive care unit in Antrim where Malcolm spent several stints of time following serious mental health episodes. Her images examine how memory is held within objects, while transforming it through a material process that pushes towards abstraction. An image of Malcolm's hair cuttings collected

from the undertaker recalls the finitude of mortal bodies, while a shell, likely collected by Malcolm on his 1978 trip the West coast of Canada, floats against a dark backdrop, its spiral structure transformed into an iridescent cosmos.

Malcolm once warned a young Clare to burn the hair she cuts: "so that no one can get a hold of it and do magic on you." But Samuel has other ideas. Perhaps she has her own magic in mind when she places her own hair on photographic paper, exposing it to sunlight for up to twenty-four hours—the time it takes for the Earth to spin 360 degrees on its axis. With these durational exposures, she casts a counter-spell that draws him closer, deepening connections with a father who remained evasive in life.

Samuel's rituals reflect on the structure of inheritance and mourning. One leaves things behind—pieces of paper, journals, a corpse, traces and memories—and those who remain inherit. Samuel mourns her father, who she has called "Malcolm" since early childhood, by collecting and transforming the traces he has entrusted to her in a constellation that is both intimate and tender. It recalls Malcolm's unique and singular life, and bears witness to her relationship with him. Yet, her portrait of him is also a portrait of herself, or more precisely, of the planetary threads that weave them together across generations.

In *Malcolm*, Samuel holds her father's abalone shell to her ear. Is she listening for the sounds of the sea that separated them at the time of his death? Can we hear in this image the low murmur of a world beyond the grave? Or the venous hum of the flow of her own blood-in-the-ears? In "Seashell Sound" Stefan Helmreich discusses historical explanations for the oceanic sounds that reside in seashells.¹ Nineteenth-century spiritualists believed they could hear the ghostly sounds of the departed. Trading enchantment with empirical explanation, in the twentieth century, scientists claimed the sounds were actually our own blood surging in our veins. Without taking sides, Samuel's images asks us to listen: to the space that opens up when the voice of a loved one falls silent and to the resonance of our own bodies in the gallery space.

— Gwynne Fulton

1. Stefan Helmreich, "Seashell Sound: Echoing Ocean, Vibrating Air, Brute Blood," *Cabinet Magazine* n° 48, *Trees* (hiver 2012–2013), <https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/48/helmreich.php>.

Malcolm

Clare Samuel

4 février- 11 mars 2023

Le cosmos dans un coquillage

Dans une méditation intime et émouvante sur la perte et la folie, l'artiste de Tkaronto/Toronto Clare Samuel immortalise son père, Malcolm, décédé en 2018 des suites de complications liées à une chirurgie cardiaque.

Dès les années 1970, Malcolm était parfaitement conscient de la science des changements climatiques anthropiques. Fasciné par une vision de l'avenir qui ressemble beaucoup à notre réalité actuelle, il distribuait des prospectus afin de sensibiliser les gens à l'impact environnemental des émissions de combustibles fossiles et de l'augmentation des concentrations de dioxyde de carbone. À deux reprises, il s'est même présenté aux élections pour le Parti vert. En tant que membre de la British Interplanetary Society – la plus ancienne organisation de défense de l'espace – il a demandé aux dirigeant.e.s de travailler en collaboration afin de développer l'exploration spatiale et de préparer la planète Terre à notre relocalisation collective « hors du monde ». Malcolm imaginait un avenir « sur Terre, sur la lune et au-delà » dans lequel on trouvait notamment des ressources renouvelables et des abris pour se protéger des radiations

solaires, où la biodiversité était protégée et une défense était coordonnée contre les comètes et autres « géocroiseurs », en plus des stations spatiales à sas et la colonisation de la lune. Sa vision technosurvivaliste semble encore plus prémonitoire aujourd'hui dans le contexte de la catastrophe climatique que nous vivons actuellement – mais de manière inégale dans les différentes parties du monde.

En rendant hommage à l'engagement de Malcolm envers l'écologie et l'astronomie, Samuel combine des photographies et de la vidéo en tissant une cosmologie personnelle à partir de fragments laissés derrière dans son appartement coopératif situé en Irlande du Nord : des dossiers médicaux, des prospectus photocopiés sur la justice environnementale, des mèches de cheveux, de denses extraits de son journal écrit à la main. Le geste de trier les objets et leurs affects est crucial pour Samuel qui tente de faire face à la perte complexifiée par le fait que Malcolm vivait avec la schizophrénie.

Une reproduction en vinyle de grande dimension représente l'appartement de Malcolm, vidé de son contenu par Samuel durant les trois jours tumultueux suivant sa mort. Les rideaux bleus ont disparu, ainsi que le fauteuil de lecture à oreilles qui était près de la fenêtre et les boîtes empilées remplies d'effets personnels envoyées après la mort de sa mère. En traçant les contours de son absence, la pièce nous apparaît comme une coquille vide.

Samuel répond à cette absence par une série d'impressions lumineuses – réalisée à l'aide d'un ancien procédé de photogrammes solaires – de sa queue de cheval et des journaux de Malcolm datant de 1978-79. Les teintes douces et vieilles des tirages laissent aussi voir l'hôpital Holywell, une unité de soins

intensifs en psychiatrie située à Antrim, où Malcolm a passé de nombreux séjours à la suite de crises sévères. Ses images examinent de quelle façon la mémoire est contenue dans les objets, tout en la transformant par un processus matériel qui tend vers l'abstraction. Une image des cheveux coupés de Malcolm récupérés chez l'embaumeur rappelle la finitude du corps mortel, alors qu'un coquillage, probablement récolté durant le voyage de Malcolm sur la côte ouest du Canada en 1978, flotte sur un fond sombre, sa structure spiralée transformée en cosmos iridescent.

Malcolm a un jour prévenu une jeune Clare de brûler ses cheveux coupés : « pour que personne ne puisse s'en emparer et faire de la magie sur toi. » Mais Samuel a d'autres idées en tête. Peut-être a-t-elle à l'esprit sa propre magie lorsqu'elle place ses cheveux sur du papier photographique pour les exposer à la lumière du soleil durant vingt-quatre heures – le temps que prend la Terre pour exécuter une rotation de 360 degrés sur son axe. Avec ces longues expositions, elle jette un contre-sort qui rapproche son père, approfondissant des liens avec celui qui, dans la vie, est demeuré évasif.

Les rituels de Samuel se reflètent sur la structure de l'héritage et du deuil. Une personne laisse des choses derrière – des morceaux de papier, des journaux, un corps, des traces et des souvenirs –, celles et ceux qui restent en héritent. Samuel fait le deuil de son père, qu'elle a appelé Malcolm dès la petite enfance, en collectant et en transformant les traces qu'il lui a confiées en une constellation à la fois intime et tendre. Cela rappelle la vie unique et singulière de Malcolm, et témoigne de sa relation avec lui. Pourtant, le portrait qu'elle fait de lui est aussi le sien, ou plus précisément, celui des liens planétaires qui, entre les générations, les rassemble.

Dans *Malcolm*, Samuel porte à son oreille la coquille d'ormeau de son père. Est-ce qu'elle écoute le son de la mer qui les sépare au moment de sa mort ? Dans cette image, pouvons-nous entendre le doux murmure d'un monde d'outre-tombe ? Ou le bourdonnement veineux de son propre sang dans ses oreilles ? Dans « Seashell Sound », Stefan Helmreich aborde les explications historiques des sons océaniques qui se trouvent dans les coquillages de mer¹. Les spiritualistes du dix-neuvième siècle croyaient que nous pouvions y entendre les sons fantomatiques des personnes disparues. Troquant l'enchantement pour une explication empirique, les scientifiques du vingtième siècle ont déclaré qu'il s'agissait en fait du son du sang qui coule dans nos veines. Sans prendre position, les images de Samuel nous demandent d'écouter : l'espace qui s'ouvre lorsque la voix d'un être cher se tait et la résonance de nos propres corps dans l'espace de la galerie.

— Gwynne Fulton

Traduction: Catherine Barnabé

1. Stefan Helmreich, « Seashell Sound: Echoing Ocean, Vibrating Air, Brute Blood », *Cabinet Magazine* n° 48, *Trees* (hiver 2012–2013), <https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/48/helmreich.php>.