

© Jo Dennis, from the series, *Shifting Sands - The Waste Land* (2020)

## HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

JO DENNIS

LAURA EL-TANTAWY

ELENA HELFRECHT

MAYA ROCHAT

MARTIN SEEDS

**9-26TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

Seen Fifteen is delighted to announce a new group exhibition - *Hurry Up Please It's Time* - to reopen the gallery space this September. The show brings together five contemporary artists working with photography and responds to themes related to the shared experience of coronavirus lockdowns across the world this spring and summer.

With lockdown came an enforced slowdown of twenty-first century life and a dramatic shift in our relationship with our lived environment. Isolation confined us to our domestic spaces. Nature and green space became a tonic to balance physical and mental wellbeing. The abrupt change in global pace also revealed that the world can quickly adapt destructive forces if it's believed to be urgent enough to do so. Each artist in the exhibition raises questions around our relationship to our environment - the personal, the political and the organic. The gallery is pleased to present new bodies of work made during lockdown, as well as existing works that can now be read with new context.

*Hurry Up Please It's Time* takes its sense of urgency from a line in T.S. Eliot's disorientating modernist poem, *The Waste Land*, written a century ago at the time of the last global pandemic, and also a reference for new work on view by Jo Dennis.

### **OPENING WEEK PREVIEW EVENING APPOINTMENTS**

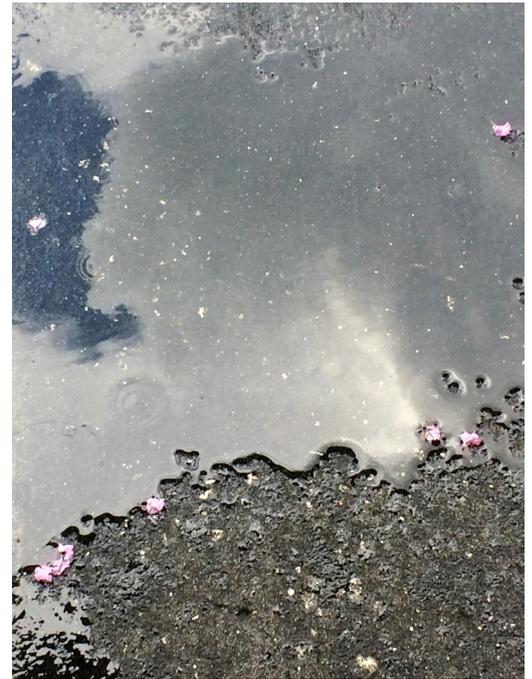
**Wednesday 9th, Thursday 10th, Friday 11th September 5-8pm**

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**Jo Dennis** is a British multi-disciplinary artist living and working in London. Her new photographic series, *Shifting Sands - The Waste Land*, was created during the early days of lockdown. Taking residual materials in the artist studio she creates a catalyst for thinking about the passing of time, our environmental impact on nature and the parallels we can draw with the human condition. Leftovers and broken pieces from previous works - dust, sand, cement and glass - form the materials for the creation of new tableaux and imaginary places of escape. Shot in the daylight of the studio, colour is sprayed onto the assembled waste materials, imagining the colour as light and shadow, both toxic and illuminating. Jo Dennis studied Fine Art and Contemporary Critical Theory at Goldsmiths College London, and will begin her MA in Painting at The Royal College of Art London in September 2020.

**Laura El-Tantawy** is a British / Egyptian photographer living and working in London. Having lived between the East and the West for most of her life, this multidimensionality inspires her work. The series, *Beyond Here is Nothing*, presented at Seen Fifteen is a photographic meditation on the notion of home. The personal experience of growing up in contrasting cultures is the window to this intimate visual exploration of the unsettling feeling of rootlessness, the mental burden of loneliness and the constant search for belonging in unfamiliar places. In 2016 Laura El-Tantawy was shortlisted for the prestigious Deutsche Borse Photography Prize for the project, *In The Shadow of the Pyramids*.

**Elena Helfrecht** is a visual artist working with photography, based in the Fichtel Mountains in Germany. She is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Art MA in Photography and was selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries in 2019. Before returning to Germany, she made new work examining the experience of lockdown in London. *Inwards* is a series of photographs taken inside the house, and on nightly walks, which focus on symbols and representations of external events and the world within. The artist considers the concept of inside and outside, and the changing weight and meaning of both. Inside and outside are reversed. Humans are pushed back into their shelters and nature reclaims the space.



© Laura El-Tantawy, from the series, *Beyond Here Is Nothing* (2017)



© Elena Helfrecht, from the series, *Inwards* (2020)

**Maya Rochat** is a visual artist based in Lausanne, Switzerland. She works in the fields of photography, painting, installation and performance. Trained at the prestigious ECAL in Switzerland, Rochat's starting point for image-making is photographic. She works from an archive of her own photographs which she continually revisits and recycles - breathing new life into her images by working on them by hand with paint, chemicals and various forms of textural layering. The concept of propelling images into an altered state is central to Rochat's practice. Working first in the landscape and then in the studio, latent organic images of ancient trees, mountains and rivers are layered expressively with paint and chemicals, unravelling abstract messages of alarm around man's destructive impact on our natural resources. Works from Maya Rochat's series, *A Rock Is A River*, were on view in the recent exhibition, *Shape of Light*, at Tate Modern in 2018.

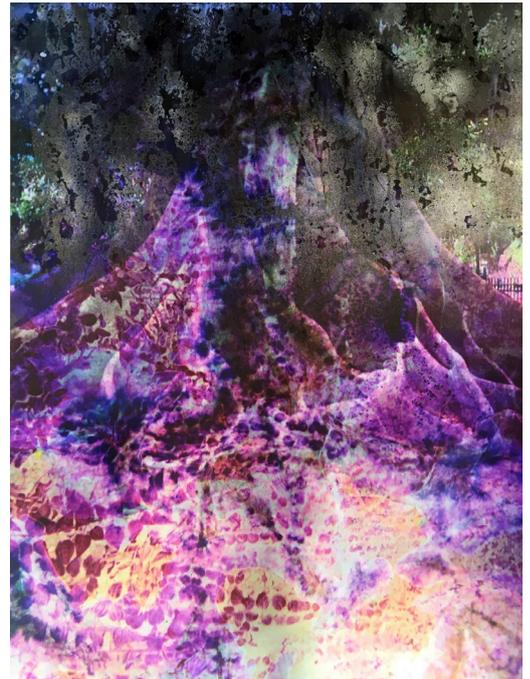
**Martin Seeds** is a photographer and educator, originally from Belfast. His practice is shaped by his relationship with his Northern Irish homeland. Personal narratives, the relationship to place, politics, conflict, sameness and difference, diaspora and myth, are underlying themes that recur and interconnect in his work. He experiments with combinations of analogue and digital imaging technologies as a way to draw attention to the conflicting experiences of identity, history and culture. During lockdown, Seeds has been working on a new series of collaged works made from images of the sea between Northern Ireland and the mainland United Kingdom. *Surface Tensions* is the second in a trilogy of works that considers territorial borders and the social, political and cultural implications created by them. Martin Seeds was nominated for the Deutsche Borse Photography Prize 2020 for his solo exhibition, *Violence Religion Injustice Death*, at Seen Fifteen in 2019.

#### ABOUT SEEN FIFTEEN

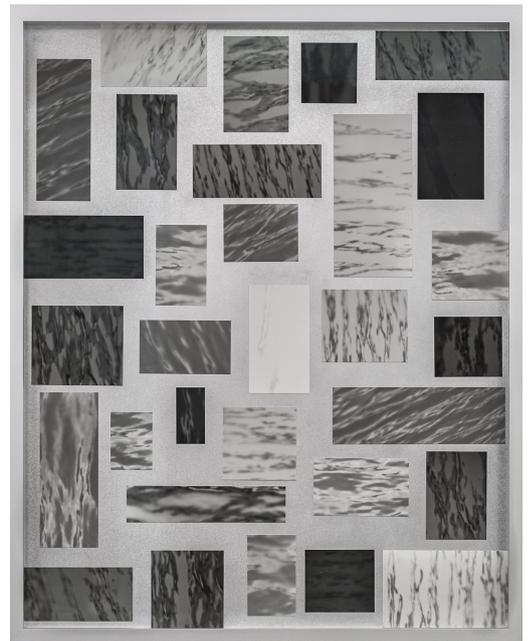
Seen Fifteen is a contemporary photography space based in Peckham, South East London. The gallery was founded in 2015 by Vivienne Gamble upon graduation from her MA Photography (History and Theory) at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London. The artistic programme at Seen Fifteen is dedicated to the work of contemporary photographers, with a specialist focus on photography's "Expanded Field" and artists who push the boundaries of the medium.

#### ALL ENQUIRIES

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© Maya Rochat, from the series, *A ROCK IS A RIVER* (2018)



© Martin Seeds, from the series, *Surface Tensions* (2020)