

Lydia Hannah Debeer
Shedding Skin
FRED&FERRY GALLERY
02.09-30.09.2023

In her quest for the liminal, Lydia Hannah Debeer shifts and slides videos until she obtains aural and moving collages, in which the spherical and emotional blend into a subtle wave that draws you in. She encounters the images around her, and chooses them intuitively. The artist patiently takes her time to create compositions that fall into place, following a suitable rhythm. Through her carefully balanced work, she blurs the boundaries between different media, locations, and timelines.

Debeer's recordings are often unplanned. Like an accidental passerby, she gathers images that cross her path and capture her heart in moments where an immediate experience prevails. She isn't quite sure yet what the outcome of her shots will be, nor if they will ever find their place outside of the archive. The videos that materialise from these moments are not documentaries, but rather a sensory poetry born of real landscapes.

Melting Mountains (2023) arose from such a chance encounter in the Scottish Highlands. Enveloped by the serene, vast landscape, Debeer felt at home. It was a warm day, sunlit. The snow, which would otherwise cling to your feet, gradually dissipated under the touch of sunbeams. The evaporating snow is visible in the image as a vibration. Flowing streams gradually give rise to sound. The longer it persists, the louder it becomes. The melting was captured by the artist as she herself melted. In the local Celtic culture, there exists a notion of "thin places", where the divide between the "other world" and ours is thinner than elsewhere. So thin it collapses. A place where the landscape is imbued with mystery. She encountered something here. This place hangs suspended between a porous connection and a solid surface.

Sound and voice flow through Debeer's viewing experience like intimate threads. Image and music are brought together as deliberately selected branches of driftwood; their interaction is simultaneously thoughtful and intuitive. This results in a remix of both media where each component opens up the other. Purposefully, Debeer provides us with visual material that surpasses the static. Through an intricate editing process of arranging and rearranging, zooming in and out, pasting and peeling, the landscape takes on a choppy digital quality. A translucent textured layer grows as a top coat of the picture plane, detaching the natural aesthetic.

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The diptych *Shedding Skin* (2023) gradually permeates our physical space. The elongated, vertical screens compose a layered image of a tumultuous sea, with the waves unfurling like pulsating currents. Positioned opposite each other, the screens invite you to observe differing moments from differing perspectives. It is impossible to monitor both scenes simultaneously. The massive waves, spawned by severe weather, tower above us, the horizon unusually high. The swaying, drenched visuals represent, in a way, the culmination of water that dripped from the mountain snow. The interplay between the intensely moving water and the stationary mountains is laid bare.

Debeer lets us wander through ambiguous spaces that lie between the present and what is yet to come, between transitions teetering on the edge. Just as the gap between speaking and hearing is bridged by the speaking body, her work mirrors the underlying, insurmountable emotional distance to someone else. It embodies a position of passage as expressed by the artist, immersing the viewer in specific situations and settings. Her journey embraces the complexity of existence, entwined with the physical and emotional landscape, inviting the viewer to explore their own internal terrains. There is no puzzle to solve here, only an invitation to feel, experience, and connect. It portrays the artist as someone who aims to construct bridges between media, and between us and the world around us.

Yasminn Van 'tveld

This exhibition is part of Lydia Hannah Debeer's doctoral research (U Hasselt and PxlMad) *WANDERING THE BLUE FIELDS OF LIMINALITY*, which investigates liminal states and their sensory manifestations. This presentation is the first visual reflection after her first year of research.