

Summary Can Serrat International Art Residency Work

by Claudia den Boer (1979, NL) Residency period 05/06/2017 –
16/07/2017

My working period at Can Serrat was the starting point of a new long term project with working title 'When is a mountain'. I've also worked on two other and smaller projects, but for this summary I'll only highlight one.

When is a mountain A mountain is a living organism to me. They are very old and have this silent presence. It fascinates me how for millions of years earth crust got pushed out to the surface of the earth. The immense slowness of this, the extremely stretched out time it took to become the mountain I'm looking at today is very intriguing to me.

Mountains have a kind of silent presence, but at the same time constant change is happening. The idea of this constant change I find magical. The idea that no moment that is the same, the light, the clouds, the shades shifting constantly, almost unnoticeable, changing the atmosphere and shape of the mountain continuously and in this way constantly changing our perception of it too.

Not only time and light, but also place plays an important role in perception. The same mountain, the same piece of landscape can look so different from so many places. When I'm walking, or driving in a car or bus, my position changes all the time and so does the image of the mountain. The speed in which I move also influences how I experience the image. This every day magic intrigues me, because it can never be completely grasped. There is no 'fixed image' of it.

Stones are like mountains on micro level. Perceiving them as a mountain is a matter of perspective. During my residency at Can Serrat I started to work with that notion by using the stones I brought with me from the deserts I've been when making the work for my photo book Anchors (2016).

Collage technics, fragmenting images, making sequences, using different types of film and moments of the day are ways to explore this idea of perspective and perception of time and place by photographing mountains and stones. This project which started at Can Serrat residency is still ongoing, in 2018 I continued the work in the Georgian Caucasus. Work included in this file are images I've made while working at Can Serrat. At the end of this document you'll find an artist statement and short biography.

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Artist statement and photo book Anchors My work stems from a fascination with place. Photography is a means to explore and examine how I relate to places and spaces. Place as a phenomenon fascinates me because of its omnipresence; we move through places in each moment of the day, it's what we see around us, it's where we meet each other, it's the decor as it were in which our lives play out. I believe places to have a, maybe subconscious, but profound influence on our state of mind.

In 2012 I got interested in silence; what it is, where it occurs, what it means or provokes. Starting from small villages, the landscapes I felt drawn to and which I was photographing, became more and more quiet. The desert then slowly became my focus. The desert is not only a place where it's literally quiet, but can also be interpreted as a metaphor for silence; it's where a specific place and a 'state of mind' comes together. But to me being in silence is a two-sided experience; it brings me closer to myself, yet at the same time it is frightening to look at. Confronted with the vastness of, and silence in the landscape I was looking for something to hold on to in the images I was making. A branch, a rock, a tree, a house, an anchor. 'Anchors' therefore became the title of the book in which 24 images are brought together. The images are made between 2012 and 2015 on Dutch Islands, in small Belgian and Southern France villages, the New Mexican desert USA, the Tibetan Highlands and the Moroccan Sahara.

Short bio Claudia den Boer (1979) lives and works in the Netherlands. She studied visual arts and got her BA in photography at art academy AKV|St.Joost. Additionally, she got a teachers degree at art academy ABV. Her first long-term personal project Anchors was made into a photo book in the fall of 2016. The book was designed by Rob van Hoesel and published by The Eriskay Connection. It was presented at International Photofestival Breda Photo 2016 and was part of the Experimental Book Platform by Punto de Fuga during Paris Photo 2016. In 2017 her work was shortlisted and selected for the collection of FotoFilmic/PULP Gallery in Vancouver (CA). The book has been exhibited at photofestival Naarden (NL), Athens Photo Festival (GR) and it was part of the I Book Show in Brighton (UK) and in St.Petersburg (RU). Claudia participated in two desert AIR-programs; the New Mexican desert (US, 2013) and the Sahara (MA, 2015) while making the work which became Anchors. In 2016 she was selected to take part in the International Summer School of Photography (ISSP, LV). In 2017 she received a partial grand for a working period at International Art Residency Can Serrat (ES) where she started working on her new personal project. In 2018 she travelled to the Georgian Caucasus to further work on this project with working title 'When is a mountain'.

Besides making personal work as a photographer, Claudia also likes to collaborate in multi disciplinary projects. In the past she worked with architectural firm Ontwerplab (NL) on research project and publication Verborgten Stad (Hidden City). In 2016 she started collaborating with choreographer Katja Grässli (CH/NL) and became artistic partner of Foundation MoveToMeet. Katja and Claudia got funded by Makersfonds Tilburg in 2017, Prins Bernard Cultuurfonds in 2017 and 2018 and Impulsgelden in 2018 and are working on two long-term projects: project (TE)STIL on the subject of silence and intercultural project and collaboration with dancers Beh Chin Lau (MY) and Natalie Wagner (CH/DE) and cultural philosopher Marc Colpaert (BE) titled Cataract. In both of these projects she expands her photography to the space of the decor of the dance performances. In October 2018 Claudia was invited by choreographer and dancer Beh Chin Lau to collaborate on project YMOI in Malaysia to create a photo series, which she titled 'Silent Witness', and a scenography for Lau's dance piece 'Shou' (Hands).

Claudia works as a freelance photography teacher at SintLucas, creative community (NL), as a tourguide in the Van Abbemuseum for Modern and Contemporary Art (NL) and is selected as one of 9 artists supported by private fund AuntArt.