

Lena Phalen

Residence period: August 2017

Website: <https://cargocollective.com/LenaPhalen>

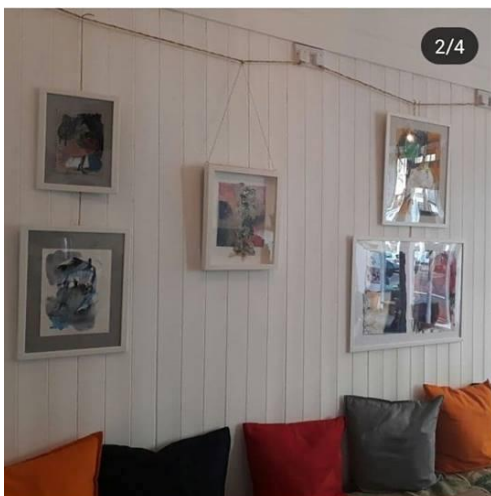
My creative process is to a large extent intuitive. I'm interested in the subconscious and the creative process. I applied to go on a residency in Can Serrat because I was interested in experiencing how taking the creative process outside the ordinary studio setting would influence my practice. I was one year out of art school and Can Serrat was my first residency.

It is important for me to keep my practice free and I usually develop a direction for my work as I go along. For me the residency was a time for exploring. I went for walks in the surrounding landscape, and photographed and drew things that caught my interest. In the studio at night I made spontaneous paintings and sculptures. I had just developed an interest for working with clay, and attempted making my own clay from the ground, which I later used as a base for painting. In the time since the residency I have incorporated clay in to my practice and started making ceramic sculptures.

The environment and the people I met at Can Serrat made a direct imprint on my artwork. When looking at the photos next to the work, I can see how shapes and colours from the photographs are reflected in the work.

Before going on the residency I took Spanish lessons at a language café in Edinburgh, and on my return I asked them if I could exhibit some of the paintings made in Can Serrat in the café. I exhibited between October and December 2017. I also did artist talks in Spanish in front of the language classes. It was good to summarise the experience of going on a residence with an exhibition.

Below are some photographs which capture the process and some of the artwork from the residency.



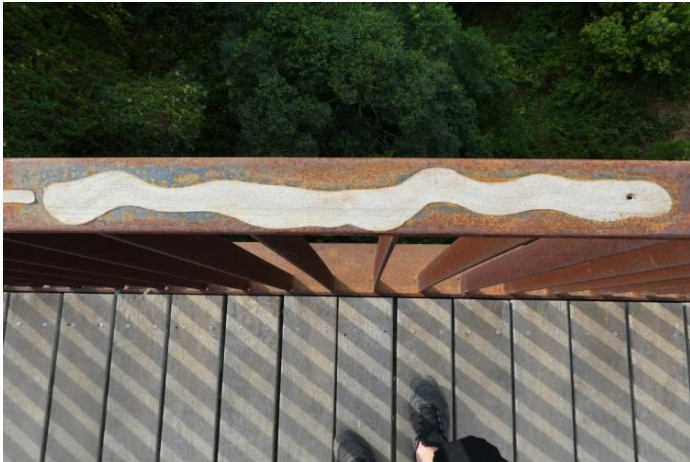
The clothes hanging to dry in the garden might have inspired me to hang my paintings off a line in the studio. In the exhibition in Edinburgh the paintings were hanging off lines too.

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I drew and photographed forms that caught my interest. You can see how they return in the intuitive process in the studio.

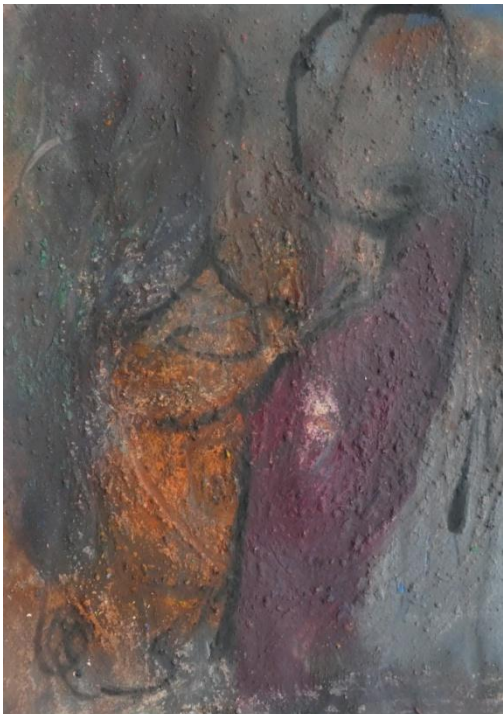


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Some works were less abstracted, and the source of their making was clearer to me. I'm not conscious of the direction my work is taking as I make it, but I can see it after, sometimes with surprising clarity, as if it was always intended.



On one of the hot days I saw a dead baby bird on the ground in El Bruc. It re-appeared a few weeks later in sculptural form.



A few days after a visit to the monastery the shape of the Black Madonna appeared in a painting made on top of dried clay.



After painting this I realised it had picked up the energy of another resident, so it's a portrait of a fellow resident.