

## A reformulation of the statement *no man is an island.*

Consider the means by which a white man experiences the world through the images that he makes- the default perspective assumed to be white and male. The way that he might interact with a particular landscape, group of people or spend his leisure time. His no-island status is particular to his perspective, his body and the way that he interacts with his surroundings. A Black woman who also makes images in these same spaces would undoubtedly negotiate no-island status differently. For her a central consideration may be: How does one remain connected to a landscape, body or community without being absorbed or erased into another form of representation? The reformulation of the statement - *no man is an island* - into a question -*how does one connect with another?*- destabilises the assumption that we all universally connect on equal ground. Instead what follows is an exploration of images where the subject refuses to meet the eyes of the viewer. Images which erode physically and with the changing of contexts, colours and histories. What follows is an exploration of images at the limits of their translation. In search of a connection, these images do not make a concession for a community which erases our differences. The position I have chosen to speak from is peculiar; the eroding landscape of Happisburgh, East Anglia and its history as a site of early European man, the forgotten archival colours of Kodachrome film, my own family photographs at Happisburgh and my contemporary movements around the same area of coastline.

Colour, like the use of 'man' is assumed here as a universally experienced categorisation, a standard by which to navigate the world to produce images. Yet the number of processes and complexity of development for Kodachrome film is a contributing factor as to why the film is no longer in commercial operation. Colour here is a language shaped by our needs as bodies. Processing the film was no longer viable or profitable for Kodak. My images are shaped by this errant colour. An alternative home development of Kodachrome produces black and white images, a way of negotiating image production outside of the inflexibility of its commercial production. We can think of colour as a medium which appears differently depending on economic context. The importance and presence of particular colours changes within a society depending on the usefulness of those colours or the labour required for their production. Can the absence of colour therefore be thought of as a refusal to be used, to labour or an assertion of difference? The metaphor extends somewhat (although not all the way) towards racialised bodies. How might a subject refuse to perform that which is expected of it? As a person of mixed heritage, how does the readability of my body affect my no-island status? Might it be possible to make a strategic island out of myself, to refuse as a means of preservation?

*And you would wave goodbye to me at that hour to see me on to the next  
and an eye for an eye  
I would take a photograph of you to travel your face while it was gone.  
But I performed a violence on a body  
on my own body too.  
I meet a resistance in the image that spits.  
The other.  
An absence which means that I cannot graft it  
onto any other photographs  
I cannot claim it's body  
I do not possess it like the others.  
The image which violently rejects me  
but sits beside me nonetheless.*

*You can't see it here.*

*I cannot voice it.*

The camera (and the person behind it) not only produces an image of the body. The camera (and the person behind it) is also affected by the context/landscape/community/leisure in which the image is taken. That is to say that the act of photography is a porous one. The medium, or technology of imaging has implications for the image. Just as the sea slowly eats away the land, wave by wave, the development process is like a ritual washing too, a liquid which eats into a solid film plane to form the image. A baptism of sorts. Language confirms this correlation, grain referring both to a particle of sand and the density of the silver particles present on the emulsion of the film. Imagine silver particles so close (no-islands) that they produce precious images. This porosity between bodies extends to other senses. How often does an image of the sea evoke the sound of waves? Sound contaminates space and floods our eardrums like water, like a siren, which leaks through into our vision.

*And I would come back to this place  
and click click until I had a pile of memories  
which did no longer remain discrete and melded into one image.  
So that when I recall the body of photographs  
I recall not just the discrete elements on swatches for my inspection  
but delectable morsels of still skins  
which contain any number of movements burned within me.  
A burning wash of memories  
which do not confine themselves to their bodies.*

What is the place of family photographs, these shared intimate moments made historical in the personal archive? The way that we pose for portraits and their lives on the shelf is not universally standardised, the fact of which, as a Caribbean diasporic subject, I am painfully aware. Sometimes poetics fail to grasp the sickness for a nostalgia-time that never really existed. To have and to hold, the photograph enables a connection across time, a yearning for the otherworldly quality of the archive image, the 'not now'. We imbue the photograph with context retrospectively. (The photograph is after all porous). For subjects shaped by the legacies of slavery, a historical lineage is often lost or partial. What context does the personal archive have when familial connections and personal histories are missing? Images are also more likely to be produced and preserved by those who are structurally best placed to capture and be represented in images- those who are able to manoeuvre and position themselves in their context most easily. The ability to be still is a pleasure afforded by those who, in that small snapshot of time, do not have to labour. It is a privilege to be able to decide how to travel and who to travel with. These are the subjects which ultimately enter the archive. How does one connect with another? Perhaps by making an image. Perhaps by refusing it.

*A place where you might be still a while.  
An opening onto the world and all of its sensations.  
A seat from where you might so lovingly encounter the world and all its rhythms.  
A spot for your accumulating eye.  
And mine.*