

Head Cold

Add eucalyptus or Peppermint
oil to hot water in a bowl, place towel over head and body
inhale vapours



HELEN PYNOR
RED SEA BLUE WATER
OPENING 14.04.07
SATURDAY 3.00–5.00PM

Constipation
Castor Oil - Californian, says it figs
to the Mescal Indian Root pills



Never Ever Been a Blue Calm Sea

Notes on the works of Helen Pynor

by Jan Guy

Water, reflections and somatic interiors are repetitious motifs in Helen Pynor's work. I own an early work of the artist's (like most artists she would probably prefer I didn't speak of it, but I will); it hangs in my hallway, the last image I see before sleep catches me. It is a simple image; in the foreground a dead hand, its skin parted to reveal a network of veins, behind, a blurred, floating, blue image of a sexual embrace photographed off a television screen. Its violent calm has echoed through subsequent works, but like such reverberations, the further it travels the softer the form's image, the more skin is shed. The early allusion to water has, in *red sea blue water*, become a vast, unconscious ocean.

The water is deeper now, the currents stronger. One has been dragged under, though still weightless, like a drowned man floating just beneath the surface. Each of the seven panes is a glass-bottomed boat revealing a teeming subterranean life in a frigid twilight. I stare into the reflective surfaces and my interior is revealed to me like an x-ray. Diagrams of essential organs frozen in their true bodily positions are unanchored; bodiless, deadly jellyfish with an internal source of light threatening and adrift. I, too, am unanchored; my grounding dissolves into the shallow depths of each image. When the God of the Old Testament freed the Chosen Ones from slavery he parted the Red Sea; as it closed behind them it engulfed their oppressors. The Book of Revelations speaks of the sea turning red as a sign of the End of Days. Above each organ floats text written in tangled hair strands that spells out a cure or balm for a specific disease or illness connected to the disembodied organ that hangs below. Like the biblical red seas, each image suggests redemption and violent destiny.

The ancients prophesied by reading the organs of sacrificed animals, today the medical professions, both East and West use detailed maps of our inner structures, borne from millennium of fascination with the human body, to divine futures.

The same prurient curiosities are partially sated in Pynor's strangely beautiful images. She has stripped away egotistical constitutions to disclose our visceral fragility, our being in the world. However, these are not images of surety, but the uncontrollable tides of existence – birth, illness, death and evolution. Here in *red sea blue water* we are examined meat, but also the flesh of mysteries. We are trapped in reflections that reveal some of the unknown of the meat, only to be cast adrift in the infinite amniotic silence that is the final response to life.

Cover image:

red sea blue water I (detail), 2007

173 x 39cm, c-type print on fujitran, face-mounted on glass

Back image:

red sea blue water III (detail), 2007

173 x 39cm, c-type print on fujitran, face-mounted on glass

Inside image:

red sea blue water II, 2007

173 x 39cm, c-type print on fujitran, face-mounted on glass

Special thanks to Richard Luxton for his work on this project.
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Opening Saturday 3pm
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Until 12.05.07

ACGN

dianne tanzer gallery

