

## Maja Daniels - Statement

My work can be described as a multi-layered academic and audiovisual artistic practice that includes working with photography, sociological methodology, sound, moving image and archive materials, aiming to further explore each medium's narrative and performative functions. I work across various platforms making artist books, site-specific installation work, screen based cinematic work as well as sculptural work for the gallery space.

With a background in sociology, my work is grounded in a critical and creative engagement with the politics of aesthetics at its core, looking at societal aspects and frameworks that relate to questions of heredity, family relations and identity construction. I am interested in the function of the image; what images do and what they offer to us as individuals as well as a society. By conjuring up new ways of relating to and looking at the world, my aim is to go beyond that which is initially considered "given" and to engage with the visual in ways that both question and expand its narrative potential. This, I argue, is necessary both in order to challenge the deep-rooted stereotypical ideas of photographic (still and moving) representations and to try to further understand how deeply images are affecting us today.

My research interest lies in the invisible ties between history and the present and how the representation of historic events and personal memories can reshape how we read and understand contemporary events. I aim to create visual expressions that challenge a linear and chronological concept of time and explore counter-hegemonic narratives in order to challenge established knowledge and resculpt or reconfigure the boundaries of the world as we traditionally know it, often starting out in the shadows, in the less visible.

Today we live in a hyper-visual world that is producing an increasingly visually literate population - people can read and interpret increasingly complex images - but at the same time science suggests that imagination (and the capability to think outside the box) is decreasing among children today. In this context, I believe as an image-maker that it is important to investigate how to provide alternative visual worlds that engages the viewer and encourages imagination. With the recently completed short film *Hauntings* (2020), I have been investigating how the use of multiple aesthetic tropes - such as darkness and underwater photography aligned with a subjective, poetic and fragmented cinematic form - can avoid fact-based representational modes and instead bridge different worlds and encourage a more contemplative response and inquiry in the viewer.

The aim with my work is to create a fragmented yet narrative-driven inquiry that seeks to expose the limits of notions of visibility and representation whilst creating a fluid, curious and expansive forward-looking relation to the past.

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