

Maysey Craddock

Three Films : *Frownland (Events in dense fog)*

Ideas of borders, edges and liminal space is a central theme in my work. I am always listening for the ghost and mining the places in-between. I am interested in traces and in the idea that things continue to change whether we are there or not. Entropy becomes a force of inevitability - and nature is constantly changing and regenerating, no matter how we try to tame it.

Two of the films in *Frownland (Events in dense fog)* - *boat dock slip* and *Wheel* - were filmed in Perdido, on the southern coast of Alabama, while *Just Breathe* was filmed in the urban wilderness of Memphis, Tennessee. Both sites are borderlands, places between man and nature, land and sea, civilization and wilderness.

boat dock slip

I filmed this on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, in Perdido Bay. My grandmother built a house there in the woods about 60 years ago. Perdido Bay is on the border of Florida and Alabama, and is surrounded by forests of live oak and loblolly pine that line the edges of marsh and bay.

I filmed *boat dock slip* one afternoon just after a storm had passed through. At that moment, there were no sounds other than the birds which were starting to sing after the storm. As I crouched with my camera, I was really just trying to capture the architecture in the water. But then a gentle wave came from very far away like a gift, and animated the whole scene for me.

I did not have the intention of making a film, but when I was in this scene I knew that I had to record the movement of the reflection. After I filmed *boat dock slip*, I went back there a few months later with a much better camera, but I was never able to rediscover that magic moment of the first film. Of the three films in *Frownland*, this one is actually the most straightforward. The only change I made to the original was to slow it down, heightening the suspense and creating a real sense of the liquid world in the water. The sounds are in the original film as well - they are just the birdsongs slowed down.

Wheel

This was also filmed in Perdido. I was driving a small motorboat up Soldier's Creek, which empties into Perdido Bay. I was driving the boat myself and trying to keep my camera trained so that the place where the water and the land meets stays in the center of the frame.

Turned vertically, the film became less about journey and more physical and suggestive, the plants and their reflections turning into animals or demons. I started to think of it more as a sculpture than a film and wanted to turn this moving image into an object, so I asked a videographer to help me by turning it vertically and adding a reverse. I also asked him to slow down the beginning and where the image reverses, so that it feels like a giant spinning wheel that almost comes to rest before it begins again. This creates a feeling of disorientation when you are watching it, and hopefully encourages a more body connection to the object-film than you would feel with a more narrative film. I want it to feel like a physical thing that is in the room with you. I was also really happy that the sound of the motor on the boat feels like the mechanical inner workings of the Wheel, like it is turning. It also sounds a bit like an old super 8 film projector.

Much of the natural ecosystem of Perdido Bay is being developed by man, so part of what I am doing with this film is preserving a piece of a disappearing landscape.

Just Breathe

This work was filmed in Memphis across the street from my studio. There is an empty lot on this street with a fence that is covered with a deteriorating blue tarp, exposed to the elements and overgrown with vines. Many parts of Memphis are forgotten and abandoned; there are parts of this city that are really in Ruin. Nature, thanks to the fertile and lush climate of this part of the American South, is reclaiming them with vines and trees and plants that appear to consume these unused structures.

It was early Fall, and I was sitting outside enjoying the sun, when I started to notice how interesting the shadows were on the blue tarp. Every time the wind blew, it looked like the shadow could not decide which way to go. I was mesmerized, and at that time I was already working on paintings in my studio that addressed this idea of Nature's Reclamation.

A videographer friend helped me to shoot this with a very powerful HD camera, and we slowed it down to add the effect of both meditation and suspense. In this piece, I am interested in the life of the shadow, or the life under the surface. The shadow is the subject - it is alive and moves between vine and cloth, as the wind comes. I wanted to capture the idea that the air around us - the natural world - is living and breathing and happening all the time.