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Chloe  
Laurence

S w e e t

P o t a t o



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CHLOE  
LAURENCE



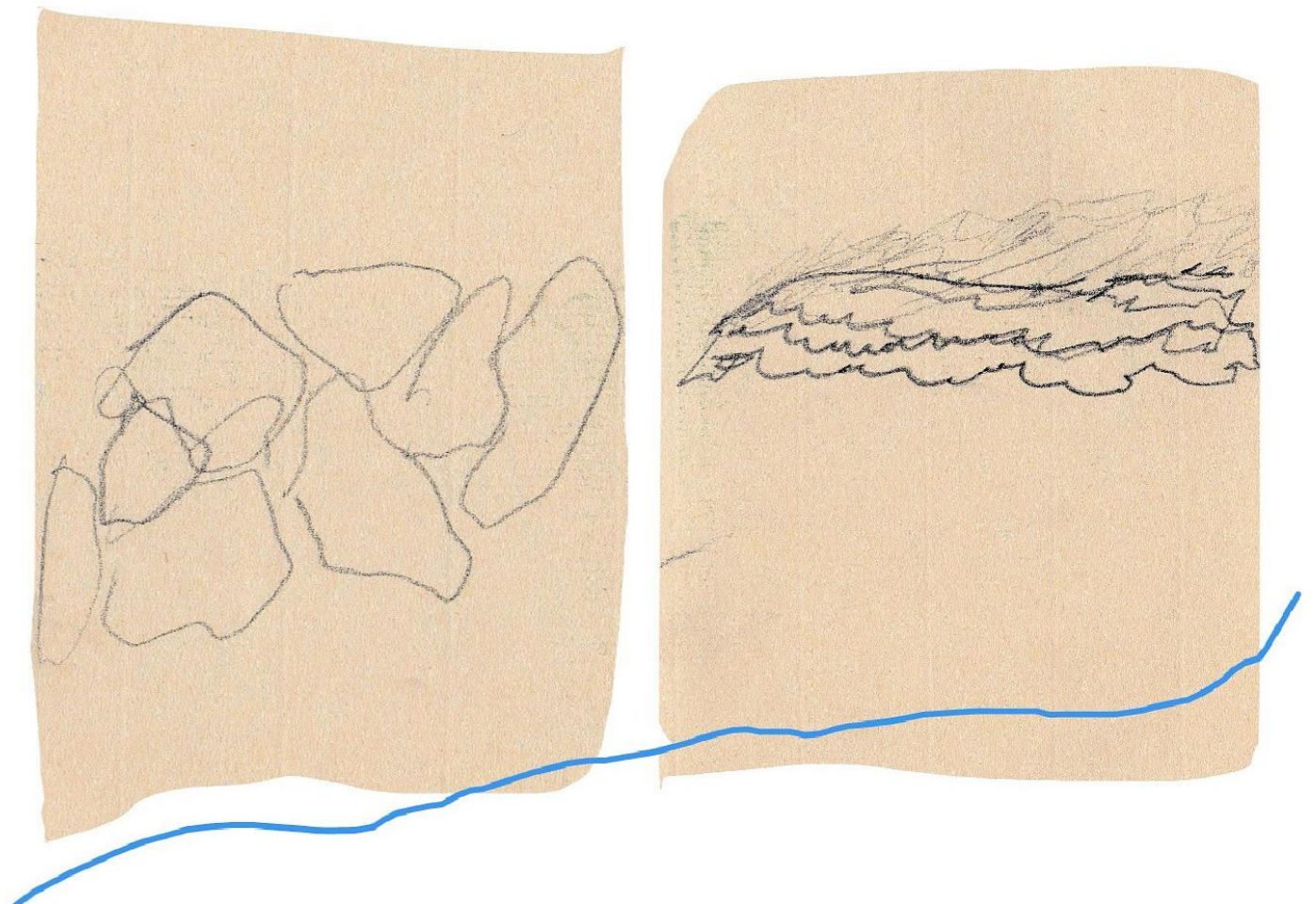
# S k e t c h b o o k

Inside the collective creative consciousness





'Cyanotypes within  
Grasslands'  
2017



'Drawing whilst walking  
through sand dunes'  
2018

I studied Printmaking at the University of Brighton, I completely boxed myself as a printmaker without realising. It wasn't until I met a dancer when on a residency in Denmark last year that it opened me up to thinking about performance. Like how you move your body when you create an etching, to moving the etching press around, pulling a print from the surface of a plate is like a dance. Etching is a powerful process to evoke the place, meaning, and feeling of the continual shifting environment. A willingness to embrace the unknown, experiment and challenge my senses is vital.



# PEELED

Interview by: Kerry Ann Cleaver

Chloe's work instantly captured my attention, from her nature driven artwork and her natural affinity with crossing mediums such as printmaking, film and poetry. Laurence for me also produces a feeling of nostalgia, being transported back to my childhood of coastlines, salt air and windswept hair. Laurence doesn't just create final pieces, but events and multi-sensory experiences, the whole projects are the final pieces, the process also taking center stage. Here we converse about her experiences and inspirations.

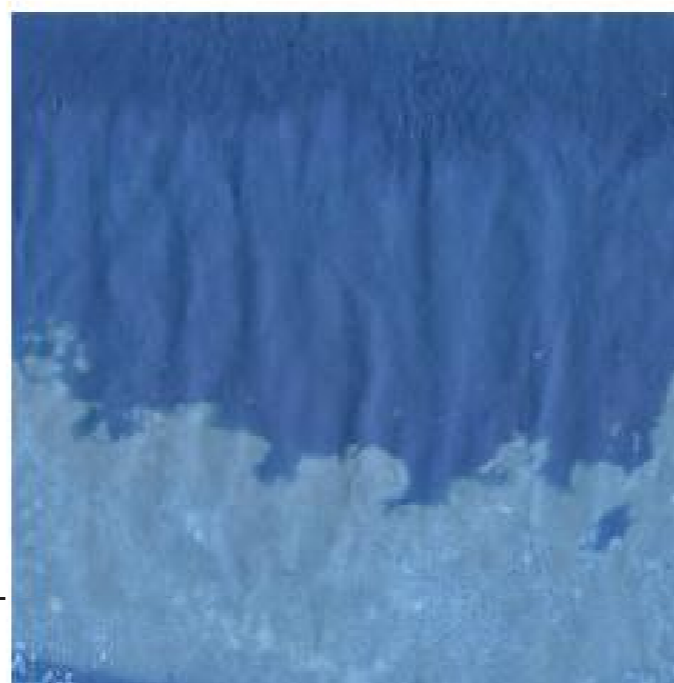
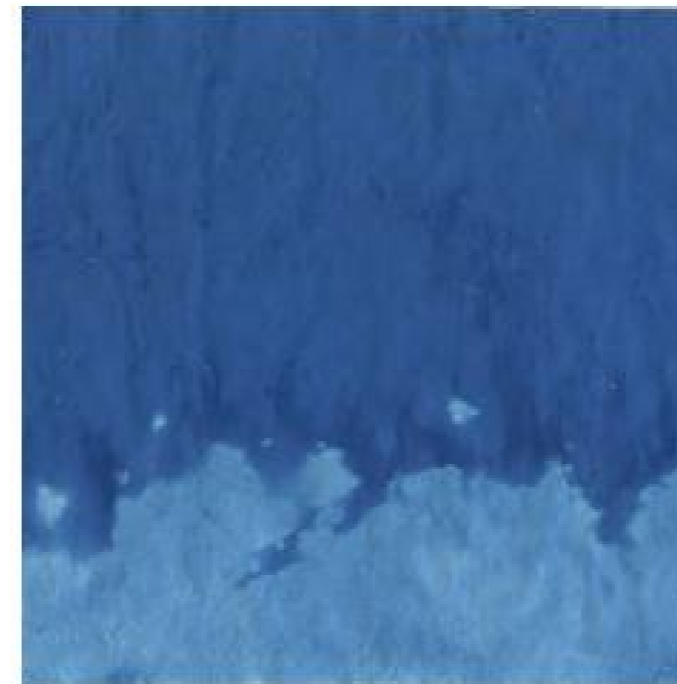
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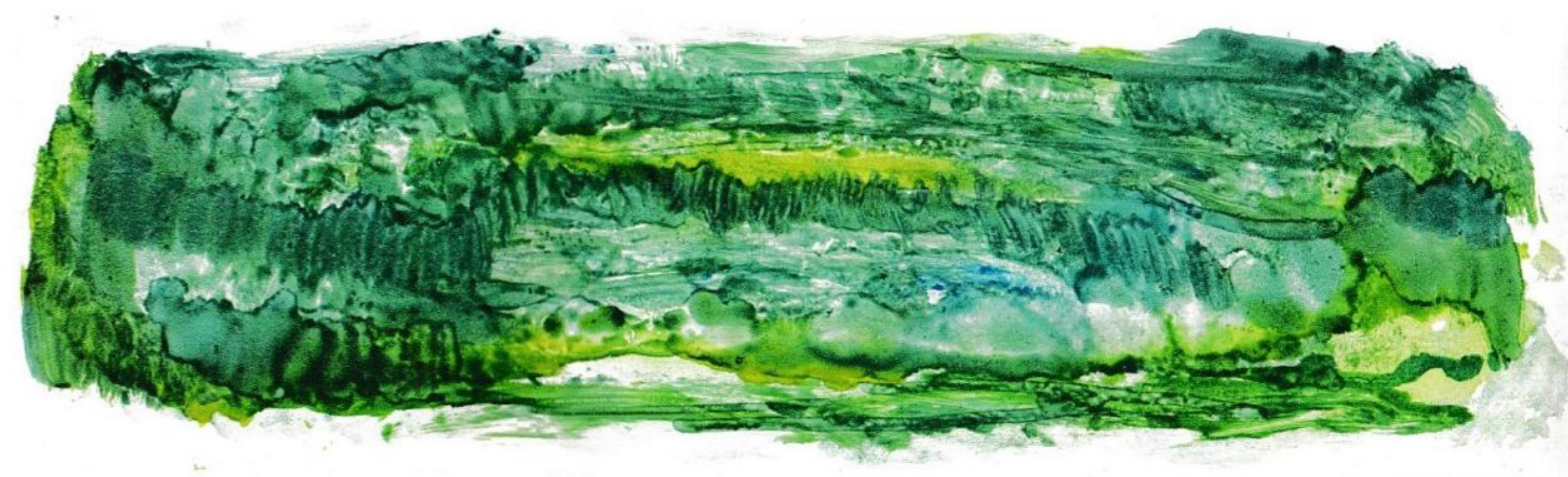
<http://www.chloelaurence.com/>  
[https://www.instagram.com/chloelaurence\\_artist/](https://www.instagram.com/chloelaurence_artist/)

Living in London, but having a nature based practice must at times be challenging, what are the ways in which you balance the two environments, and continue your work?

A city is a landscape and my work reveals the landscape to itself. It is challenging but lately I've been allowing it to challenge me. This year I have been working in Kew Gardens, and noticed more than ever plants pushing their way through concrete walls and seeing how unstoppable nature is. I feel that London is teaching me that using nature in my work as a core should not be confined. To start where you are and explore what's around you, you never know what you may find. That under the city, trees roots still grow. With re-rooting my feet in the ground, I get the chance to expose it!

'Becoming the land'





'Drawing light'

From viewing your practice, the way in which you create your pieces and the prints themselves/ final outcome, are equal, the process is in essence just as important as what you are creating. Would you agree? and how to you find documenting all aspects of the process?

I definitely agree! The work is all about process, each step informing one another. Documentation is certainly important as a lot of the work begins with performance or with a walk, which opens up my journey to the viewers. I want to take them with me on my path so they can almost feel the landscape on their skin.

I recently went a spoken word night and read my poetry aloud. Saying the poems aloud brought a new life to them. They took me back to the forest where they were born. Transporting me to where I was lost under glittering trees, feeling free and moving through my body to my voice. These words were always for me. Yet that night they were freed into the world. They just took their time to travel aloud.

People were to me like trees, the earth, the water around. They supported me to hold the space to experience deeper feelings. This is the same for when I post my work online. It becomes something new and always holds power.

**'My thoughts are born from movements and energy of the body'**

The way in which you work is also very experimental and playful, containing kinetic energy, has this way of working always been a focus for you?

I like that, kinetic energy. My thoughts are born from movements and energy of the body. It's where it all begins. As a kid I was always climbing trees and covering myself in mud, collecting objects to hold something that I could take with me.

During University in Brighton, I would go out and sketch on the south downs or along the coastline. I would then go back to my studio and create monoprints and etchings using the sketches to capture the movement. I would close my eyes to find the colour that I walked through and the feeling of the weather felt whilst walking. It was a way for me to convey stories in the most romantic sense! It wasn't until I paired the two together, walking and taking an etching plate with me where a revelation happened. Everything aligned. I started to birth ridiculous ideas like walking through a bush of leaves with an etching plate as a helmet (which turned out to be holly leaves) and getting stuck in them!

I continued often when I found myself being overwhelmed with thoughts and deepening feelings. Basically an emotional tornado. It's a blessing in disguise because it pushes me to go out and walk in many therapeutic ways. It's this that is the delight and humour in my work.

Since graduating you have been involved in exciting projects and self made residencies, can you explain your favourite or most impactful project during this time and how you see yourself developing in the future?

After graduating I worked as a waitress for what felt like a long time, but it was powerful in itself as it led me to the tip of Denmark. I stayed on a Workaway living with a family that ran a ceramic centre. I helped in their day to day activities like cooking and cleaning for their bnb, picking fresh veg from their garden whilst exploring the Northern landscape with others that had arrived from all over the world. (One night I was sitting down for dinner and there was 12 nationalities around the table!) These chance and brief encounters with others is what I became enamoured by.

It turned out the family had friends that ran a printmaking studio. I jumped at this chance and used the studio as much as possible. Work started to pour out of me and a few weeks I had planned to stay there turned into a few months. I had created my own residency over time and kept flying home to waitress more and flying back out again!

During one of my trips in Denmark I attended the Nordic Culture Camp where I met Niamh, a dancer and choreographer from Ireland. Our discussions on the importance of slowing down within everyday life in order to see the world with fresh eyes brought us together to collaborate. We challenged preconceived boundaries and formed new ideas about what dance and

printmaking can be, creating a performance where we balanced stones on our bodies blindfolded. The stones had paint on them and fell to the ground mark making on paper beneath our feet. Afterwards I detected a huge shift in the way we both work as artists, broadening our minds, practices and horizons.

Our collaboration opened me up to thinking about performance. Like how you move your body when you create an etching, to moving the etching press around. Pulling a print from the surface of a plate is like a dance! Printmaking, performance and poetry are powerful process's to evoke the place, meaning, and feeling of the continual shifting environment we live in, which is why I keep unravelling new ways to use this artform! A willingness to embrace the unknown and the space to experiment and challenge my senses is vital to opening myself and my audience up to our surroundings, and collaboration is a way to create completely new visions!





'Taking an etching  
plate for a walk'  
2016

Absolute absorption of colours,

The glittering roof of stars, behind the roof of clouds,

Plunge into the forests

in the forest, rooftop of trees

drawing light

just to connect with the movement

surrendered

minutes, hours and days

natural beat.



'Rooftop of trees'



What was your role at Kew? did this impact your immediate work or influence future developments?

I've always been drawn to Kew Gardens, visiting with friends and family and on my own. A job came up for Historic Royal Palaces in the gardens, the same week I quit waitressing. The role was to guide visitors around the historic sites in the gardens and a main part of the job was to dress up as Georgian! From the edges of winter, falling into spring and in the heat of the summer.

To do something that you have no knowledge on certainly tested me. It meant that I was continually learning new facts and became ecstatic to tell the visitors. I constantly researched facts on the history of herbal remedies too, which meant that I was drawing each day. I noticed whilst arriving and leaving the gardens each day, roots pushing through the concrete walls and pavements, noticing that nature is unstoppable. Becoming friends with the trees they weaved their branches around my arms holding me. I stood as tall as them with falling back in love with London.

I don't want to forget how I feel so these acts of engagement and the way that I move through the world is collected as an act into knowing the world.

Being an artist who crosses a variety of mediums, who are your main influences? and does this crossing happen naturally? or are you consciously looking at your research while you are working?

I tend to not look too much into other artists work when I'm in the studio working. Research becomes like boxes, that I can open and close when I'm in-between projects. Although I'm constantly listening to a compilation of folk, dreamy and wistful soul music, that makes me dance when creating mono-prints! It pulls me into another realm. The best is when the music stops playing, but I haven't yet realised, because I'm so in the moment of my body's engagement with hand and ink and paper. I come from a family of musicians, so it's deeply embodied in my blood.



I'm drawn towards certain books when I'm in a new environment, to allow certain feelings to appear. I remember reading 'If Women Rose Rooted' by Sharon Blackie at the time when I created 'A Dance at Sea' in Denmark, it's filled with mythical tales and celtic stories. A quote that strongly resided with me and pushed me closer to the seas edge:

*"If there is to be a change, it will come from us. Right here, where we stand. Women were always the story-givers, the memory keepers, the dreamers. Listen now to the land's long dreaming. Do you see what it is dreaming? It's dreaming you."*

Also another about standing in feminine power:

*"If women remember that once upon a time we sang with the tongues of seals and flew with the wings of swans, that we forged our own paths through the dark forest while creating a community of its many inhabitants, then we will rise up rooted, like trees...well then, women might indeed save not only ourselves but the world."*

I always look back on the moment I knew I wanted to be an artist.

I was 16, and walking around the Tate modern I found the Mark Rothko room. I became absorbed in the blocks of colour in the large paintings. I sat in there for an hour or so transfixed, time had just left me. Like being in a portal. I left that room a different person. I knew I wanted to be an artist. I wanted to create my own universe.

Pauses, distinct drop sounds,

you listen to.

steadily

a murmur

Where do you hope to end with your practice? is there a aspiration your aiming for? or do you simply create art from the need to?

I'm always embarking on new journeys to makes sense of the old. And I must remember how this feels. I create to feel and remember all of my senses opening wider. I walk to ultimately explore the importance of quiet contemplation. Walking allows these observations. Something so natural, quiet, and slowness, allowing my mind to drift. It's about the movement of my body to my surrounding landscape.

I hope with my practice to end with the love of action of intimate presence with the reality of moments. I wish to take my audience out of being indoors and into what goes unnoticed, bringing a sense of belonging to the land they live on.

# FEATURETTE

Currently based in Manchester, does this influence your embroidery? do you think in the future urban pieces may be an interest to explore? or is the coast line your pure influence and inspiration when it comes to deciding a new piece

The coast was purely a time specific influence. The body of work that has been created around Anglesey was because I was there when this idea was developed, it was somewhere that I felt safe and happy, and my ideas naturally evolved from things I was already doing. I think had I been in a more urban environment at the time, my work could have been very different.

I was in Switzerland for a whole summer so I now have work that stems from those textures whilst I was travelling, some are completely natural, some have elements of urban components like spray paint or textures on reclaimed wood. I'm open to any and all environments, just to put it into perspective, I've taken images in the last two weeks that are less than 100m from my house - I had just never noticed the textures before! So nothing is off the table.

My particular favourite pieces of yours are ones that include an element of the environment you are working from, such as shells. They are sensory, the colours, focal points, textures and composition make you want to hold them, study them and get involved. What are the reactions you are wanting to create when you start stitching?

To be completely honest, I have no end goal in mind when I start a piece. There's no blueprint for the final outcome, nor is there a blueprint for how I want someone to feel when looking at my work. It still is, and probably always will be, incredibly humbling when people reach out to me with how my work has reminded them of their environments or has evoked a memory of a place near them. I'm just still blown away that other people are enjoying what I create.

You create a range of sizes, from necklace pendants to 18" hoops. From your source photography how do you decide which photograph is best for a particular purpose? or is this instinctive and indicative of what you wish to make at the moment?

Completely indicative of where I'm up to at any given time. At the beginning, things like the necklaces spawned from waiting for larger scale fabric samples to arrive and needing to still be creating something in the interim, so I was using off-cuts from previous work. Now I am a little more selective. If it's a photograph that has maybe one or two defining features in the texture for example - I'm more likely to earmark that for a larger piece to keep the composition. Larger ones can be trickier because they are more prominent in a space (and much more of a long term commitment) so I definitely spend more time thinking about which images would work best for those.

Relatively new to the stitch platform, Salt stitches is owning the game. Her detailed embroidery gives new identities to time old environments. Exploring textures, colours and size. Emily Wright works instinctively, choosing thread colours, beads and compositions as the pieces progress. Knowing many of the locations the artist concentrates on it has been a delight in conversing and finding more information about the Manchester based artist.



@SALTI\_STITCHES



Being very active on your 'story' about presenting a non filtered look into a artists life which may not be what they present on the feed. Do you think that Instagram as a platform is a good one for artists? art isn't just what you create, its a life choice in my mind. For me, creating anything is a way of self care, and a way to tackle social media blues, you then post pack on social media to present what you create, a circle. Is this the same for you?

Originally I started an Instagram account to keep a log of what I was creating - there was no intention of selling my work or using it to ask for critique so the non-filtered aspect is very much just a true-to-life window into me as a person. I learned very quickly that it was an incredible way of advertising my work without The help of a third party or gallery space - which for any artist is an invaluable resource. It's a tough one. I think you always have to have in the back of your mind that no matter how genuine you try to be there's always going to be negativity and imposter syndrome and all the nasty stuff that comes hand in hand with the Internet. Take care of each other! Overall I think it can be a blessing and a curse, it's going depend on the individual to decide whether it's right for them.

You mention that you have been stitching, or at least presenting your embroidery on Instagram for 7 months. In that time you have gathered a large viewer base. Has this effected the way in which you view your art work, your process of creating and mental health?

I'm not so sure it has affected the way I view my own work, but it has definitely given me more confidence in what I am creating. Using social media for validation is never a good starting point, however, having a curated space to reflect how far I've come in such a short space of time can be really positive. It also keeps me pretty driven (not that I need the push, mind) to be creating as much as possible! I wouldn't have said it affected my mental health up until recently, I had quite a nasty experience where I called out some behaviour on my feed that I wasn't happy with, and was met with some quite nasty (and deeply personal) messages. It's the first time I think I really understood how many people were viewing what I'm doing online and it knocked me for a few days. I still actually haven't been back online since it happened.



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