

**"Photography is Magic," curated by Charlotte Cotton**  
**Aperture Foundation, New York, July 15th - August 11th 2016**



**Island: Starfish (2015-16) on right**  
 Archival pigment print, 50x50cm , framed gold mylar on plinth

**Shell (2015), left**  
 Archival pigment print, 40x40cm framed with gold Mylar

Dates of project: August 2015- June 2016

**Outline:**

The installation pieces that I exhibited included the photographic installation titled "Island; Starfish" and "Shell."

The photographic installation "Island; Starfish" comprised of one framed photograph of the starfish with a framed sheet of Mylar material positioned diagonally on a plinth opposite the framed photograph. With the specific lighting from above at a particular angle, a reflection is cast back onto the photograph, creating a real-time experience for the viewer.

The selection process was a response to an Open Call, which attracted over 800 submissions internationally. Charlotte Cotton curated the show titled "Photography is Magic" and selected the works for the exhibition from the portfolios that artists submitted. Charlotte Cotton is at the forefront and leading figure on contemporary photography, having previously been curator at the Victoria and Albert museum in London and at the Wallis Annenberg Department of Photography at LACMA, Los Angeles.

This exhibition is a continuation of her project and book publication by Aperture, titled "Photography is Magic" (August 2015). It is a critical survey in the field of contemporary and more specifically, experimental photography.

The final selection of about 50 international artists working within experimental practices of photography demonstrated "a rich and deep curiosity for the magical medium of photography. The artists actively play with the medium's heritage – re-animating and re-contextualising its alchemical properties – to render ideas about its contemporary material value. They are astutely aware of the viewers' perceptions and trains of thought, grounded in our shared context of an ever-expanding image world" (Cotton: Aperture 2016).

The group showcased the international cohort of artists working at this particular time within the expanded field of experimental photography. The exhibition brought together younger as well as established artists, notably the work of Ellen Carey, whose colour photograms are considered as forerunner of the experimental photographic analogue tradition.

Participating artists included (amongst others) Amelia Bauer, Thom Bridge, Ellen Carey, Jo Longhurst, Megan Paetzhold, Marco Scozzaro and Tabitha Soren.

**Research problem/Question/methods:**

The particular idea of an installation with the reflective material is part of my method of what I call "Constructing reversibles."

In many ways, I consider this method to be related to a 'fieldwork' of anthropologists and material cultures, where objects are able to narrate stories. What if the anthropologist was asking questions about how these objects 'feel'? In this expanded field of anthropology, I constantly ask questions to the objects, but my tools are that of a reflective material. The journey is one of found objects, vases and decorative objects, plastic flowers, make-believe settings, and then enveloping them with the light cast from the reflector. Brought back into the photographic studio, away from their natural environment, I seek to create for them a play that will allow

The viewer is thus asked to interrogate or question the light reflection, creating the potential for the reversibility of the object to occur. The reflections create a sense of escapism and a temporary feeling of enclosure or reflections similar to when light ripples through water.

**Originality:**

Reflective material, such as this is common practice in studio lighting and used widely within commercial and other photographic methods. For me however it is about employing the material as a lighting tool as well as creating a photographic installation.

Light can emit warm or cool tones, depending on its quality. Similarly, objects lit in a particular gold or silver light can equally take up a different emotional transformation. What happens when the same object is lit through a cool or warm tone?

I see my work as an inquiry into the properties of light. Light is the fundamental property through which photography as an art form acquires its unique status. It can be staged and transformed, shaped and manipulated in a variety of forms.

Inspired by the Light and Space movement of Californian artists of the 1970's, the works of Barbara Kasten and James Turrell, I see my work as an expanded and updated field of experimental practices in photography. Barbara Kasten builds large-scale models of abstract shapes in her studio, using the properties of light. The photograph becomes the record or document of her sculptural studio experiments.

The other side of my ongoing inquiry is into the nature of objects and how objects become animated. Objects from the organic world such as snails, starfish, and extensively, domestic objects such as vases, containers, cutlery are objects that remain at the borders implying an inside out, either through their functionality or way of organic being.

**Significance:**

Aperture is a non-for profit foundation that has a significant presence internationally on all aspects of photography. The gallery space is located at Apertures main premises in the prestigious main gallery district of Chelsea in Manhattan, New York. Aperture was created in 1952 by photographers and writers for the advancement of photography locally and internationally. Predominantly a publishing house for photography, it has its flagship Aperture magazine, published quarterly and funds and supports major awards like the Annual PhotoBook prize, in collaboration with Paris Photo, that helps establish the careers of new photographers. It is also responsible for managing and promoting the work and legacy of photographer Paul Strand in collaboration with the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

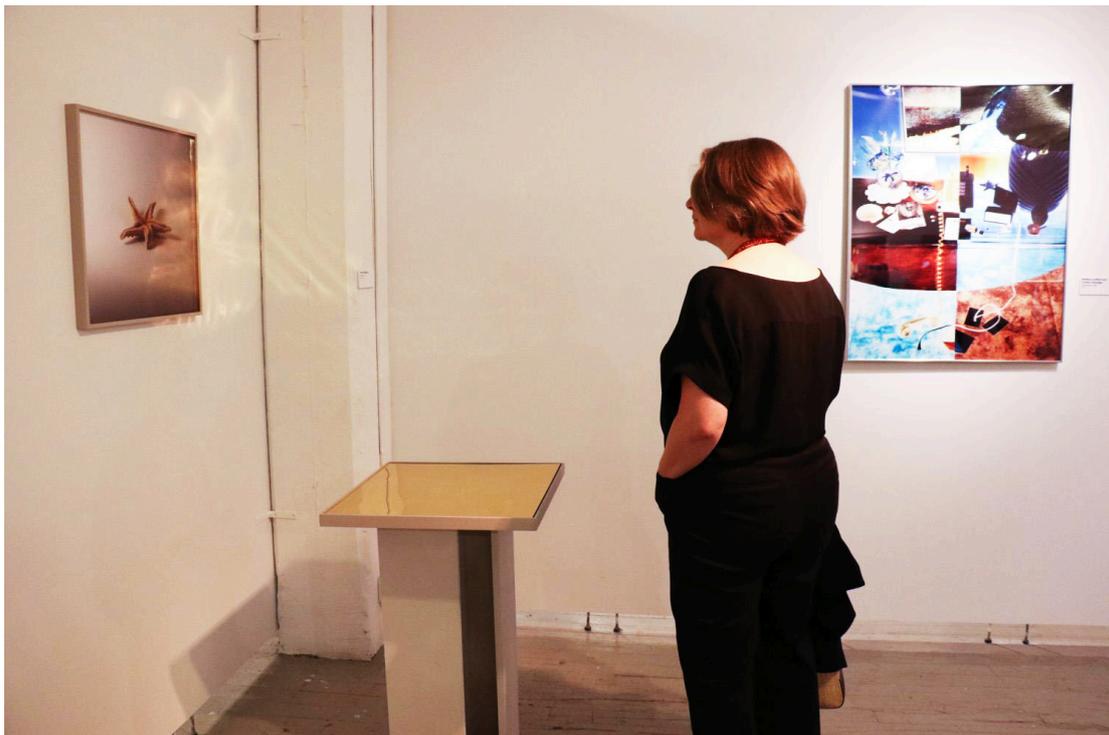
The group show attracted a very large number of visitors that reached over 5,000 throughout the exhibition.

A short video piece was made interviewing the artists involved, I was one of the artists to be included in the video piece.

The exhibition was widely publicised. Online reviews included: <http://museemagazine.com/culture/2016/7/15/aperture-gallery-bookstore-2016-aperture-summer-open-photography-is-magic> where my photographs was featured.



Starfish, studio shot, December 2015



Island: Starfish, Installation, Aperture Foundation, July 2016