

J A N E W A R D

biography

Lives and works in London, UK

My digital collages are composed of a profusion of photographic images, ranging from aerial views of mountain forests and lakes to industrial complexes and metropolitan developments. Each has been deconstructed and fragmented into component parts, and then reconstituted as fantastical new scenes. The process forces together contradictory perspectives, juxtaposing architectural close-ups with grand vistas and fine miniature details so that all sense of scale and proportion is dissolved. I then paint many of the scenes with ink and watercolour as a means of enhancing the dissolution of one image into another.

I graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2007. My work has most recently appeared in exhibitions including the solo shows: 'The Reconstructed Romantic' at James Freeman Gallery, London 'In These Solitudes', Le Salon Vert, Switzerland and 'Watcher of the Skies', Hospital Club, London, and 'Utopia', Jan Kossen, New York, 'Saudade', Foyles, London, 'Printing New Worlds', Opere Scelte, Turin, Italy, 'Up a Hill Backwards', Bearspace and at art fairs including Christie's Multiplied and London Art Fair.

Recent residencies include: Open Spaces, Gstaad, Switzerland, CPS, Lisbon, Portugal, Galeria dos Prazeres, Madeira, Pedra Sina Residency, Funchal, Madeira and I was the artist in residence at No.72 John St. Kilkenny, Ireland

My work has also featured in Bloomberg New Contemporaries and the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition, London. I have been awarded the Terrence Conran Foundation Award and the Tim Mara Prize.

Crystal Worlds, Concrete Islands: The work of Jane Ward

Jane Ward's ambiguous, convoluted spaces formed of ruptured topographical schisms offer up more than cartographic logic or empirical representation. Ward appropriates the building blocks of landscape; suburban housing tracts, shimmering glass towers and industry choked hinterland - then inverts, misaligns, ruptures, re-employing familiar form in other places and other times.

The architectural elements deployed in the images are edited from photographs taken by Ward, though digital manipulation and hand-applied chemical erosion combine to dissolve image detail and deny understanding of conventional pictorial space - Ward has described this as a 'reordering that leads us to question the layering of memory with landscape'. [1]

A distant metropolis recedes – or does it emerge? - into a colour saturated palimpsest of unease or impending disaster. Contradictory vantage points conflate natural space into a plasticised hall of mirrors; a dream state poetic space, a conceptual opening in which possibility exceeds evidence. It is in this space of possibility where stories, impressions, memories, and affects emerge.

The images convey a sense 'of not being tied to Place, of having broken the bonds of the local'. [2] Ward's images contextually dislocate, yet also offer an encounter with place as memory, or memorial: cities we once visited, homelands from which we are estranged, stories internalized and happened upon. The images evoke the uncanny sensation of territories we have never visited, but nonetheless feel at once familiar with.

The works glow with a strange luminosity. It is as if light is frozen in a moment. It seems to bleed from the surface, corroding the fractal landscapes rather than illuminating them. It is a portal through which both the past and future seeps, a path to sensorial elsewhere. Ward's light is alchemical, a conjurer in the most numinous sense. It holds on to us not for what it shows but for the elusive substance it makes palpable, the weird assemblage it allows us to amass between past, present, and future. 'The sense of light is both euphoric and terrifying. Is it the end of time, or the beginning?' [3]

These images are guides for a hallucinatory journey through multiple sources of light, space and time. They unite us with the intangible, with the elusive past and present. They destroy the linearity of time and render it associative, topographical. In simultaneous pretension to reality and impossibility, Ward's fantastical, apocalyptic landscapes present a view of the world we can never have. They promise random connections, disturbances of lineages and hierarchies. They reproduce the logic of the traditional landscape as a pictorial space to navigate through observation, while simultaneously rendering this impossible. Some images move in circles, others are blurred and light saturated, as if someone has semi-erased them. Some have gaping holes, illegible vantage points, or are totally shattered. These images deny the systematized knowledge that is the promise of the landscape painting.

Perhaps most curious is the way the images deconstruct our sense of place without making us feel homeless. Conversely, Ward's images imply an absent populace. Where is everyone? These are worlds stripped bare of births, meals, wars, dictators, battered books and lost toothbrushes. All that remains are houses and summer storms - J.G Ballard worlds of the mundane, melancholic and sublime coexisting in a fractured moment. They remind us of our dependence on a sense of home, even if this home is irreconcilable. Our territory, and our strange tie to it, becomes a precarious thing, unknown yet always demanding to be explored.

Colin Ledwith

[1] Roger Hylton, *Once Removed: New work about location*, 2015?

[2] Robert Harbison, *Eccentric Spaces*, p. 126. New York: Avon Books, 1977.

[3] Graham Crowley, *A Sense of Places: The work of Jane Ward*, 2013.

Jane Ward's Website : <https://janewardart.wordpress.com/>