



In Camera

Artist's statement

In camera ('in private' or 'in secret') traditionally refers to legal testimony heard in private chambers instead of in open court, usually when reliving the experience of a violent and traumatic event through verbal narration would be aggravated by having to do this publicly.

The exhibition consists of a controlled, immersive environment of light, sound, drawings and photography. All installation components are intended to work together to create an experiential space, rather than a gallery of individual works.

The material for the drawings was sourced from a range of print and online media photographs and processed so as to blur the distinction between the handmade and the mass-produced. All drawings are executed by hand and the photographs include overdrawing that reveals something of the characters that have populated these neighbourhoods in the recent past.

The subjects are the victims and perpetrators of violent acts, the circumstances of which remain almost incomprehensible in their extremity, even if the facts informing tabloid revelations of these cruel private desires are known. There is a particular focus on violence done to, and by, children.

I am particularly interested in how, through repetitive media circulation, certain photographic images get detached from their subjects and the representation of a person becomes emblematic of 'victimhood', 'the missing', 'monstrosity' or 'evil'.

This kind of rhetoric functions as a means to situate the perpetrators outside the realm of human behaviour, preventing us from dwelling on the particular human and social circumstances of each violent interaction.

The drawings have been made with brush, paper, acrylic and ultraviolet-sensitive inks invisible to the naked eye. The lighting design, set to a computerized timing schedule creating intermittent phases of blacklight exposure, complete darkness and ambient light, inverts the camera's function of an open shutter where a light-sensitive surface is exposed, and a dark state where nothing is captured nor visible.

In setting up a relationship between the visual spectrum and the spectral, disruption, revelation and obfuscation, *In Camera* is a project about ghosts and mental afterimages, an attempt to reclaim that which eludes cognitive and emotional capture and retention.

Kathryn Smith