



The colour of pearl – sugar lift, etching – 15 x 20 cm, 2015

HELENE DELMAIRE

Colorless

An ongoing series of etchings inspired by Sylvia Plath poems: "Contusion", "Poppies in July", and "Purdah".

As a visual artist, Plath's poetry feels like a gold mine of material to me. Its poetic devices bring forth line upon line of untapped word associations that create fresh, vivid images in my mind. Reading a Sylvia Plath poem is to me as much of a visual experience as it is an auditory one, especially with the *Ariel* poems and their whirlwind of colors and sensations. The urge to illustrate her work was there from the beginning.

As I started scanning the *Ariel* poems for specific images however, I realised it would be extremely difficult to translate such abstract image associations into something that would not feel stiff and literal.

A smile fell into the grass;
In a forest of frost, in a dawn of cornflowers;
The hills like a green sea / Run fold upon fold far off, concealing
their hollows, / The hollows in which rock the thoughts of the
wife - / Blunt, practical boats;
Echoes traveling / Off from the center like horses

These lines have power because the visual mind of the reader has no technical limits. Drawing something however is precisely limiting it to your own vision of it, turning an abstract image into something finite with only lines and shading.

So instead of picking one specific phrase for a drawing, I simply went with what image the overall poem, or some parts of the poem, had evoked in my mind. The end result can be quite removed from the poems they come from, yet the visual clues are there. In no way do I believe I could convey the same feelings as these poems do, I simply humbly borrow for my own pleasure, I suppose.

In the end I wanted to channel the creative energy reading *Ariel* gave me, and spend a lot more time with the poems, in another way. It was a fun project and more might come (I have big hopes for *The Surgeon* at 2 A.M.).

ABOUT THE ARTIST

HELENE DELMAIRE is a 28-year-old French artist working primarily in oils, but also with drawing and printmaking, as in this series. Her work addresses the notions of fragility, femininity, of man's relationship to nature and what is mirrored of him through her. She is primarily interested in what happens within us, sensations that are difficult to articulate but might be brushed upon through senses and intuitions, through images rather than descriptions.



If I could bleed, or sleep! – etching, 20 x 25 cm, 2015



From the small jewelled Doll he guards like a heart – mezzotint, drypoint, etching, 15 x 20 cm, 2015