

jessica cooper essays

Jessica Cooper and Richard Hawkins

along the same lines : double vision (NSA) : the exchange : cornwall 2009

Jessica Cooper is a visual artist who has been working in Cornwall since graduating from Goldsmith's College, London in 1989. She began surfing five years ago. Richard Hawkins has been surfing since childhood and in 1993 started shaping surfboards in California. In 1996 he moved to West Penwith, Cornwall where he met Jessica. Both have a shared passion for the sea which began in childhood, has shaped their careers and in many ways dictates their lives today.

They have made a book which charts their lives from childhood to the present day. They were assisted by a graphic designer, Paula Johnson. The making of the book became an all consuming and cathartic process, taking on a life of its own. It unearthed forgotten childhood photos by the sea, teenage memories, reflections on friends and family life. It retraces the development of their respective careers and reaffirms their love of surfing and the sea.

The clinical purity and space found within the canvas frame and the blank of the surfboard, is reminiscent of the open space of the sea. This space is only interrupted by the splash of colour found in a painted object on the canvas or the inclusion of coloured fins on the board - as a boat crossing the water or a rock form jutting above the horizon.

'I was fascinated by the process of shaping a surf board and the similarities to my painting process. In both, there is the juxtaposition of design and craft, with a subjective and deep rooted knowledge of the chosen subject. The collaboration has made me question much about my life, personally and professionally, at times it has been a painful process but also rewarding. It has been a great learning curve to work with other people instead of preferred isolation and I have realised that I can push my career in new directions, other than painting.' Jessica Cooper.

'Our choice to collaborate on a book took us both out of our comfort zones. The more we looked, the more common ground we found; personal history, similar interests in the sea and surfing and working solo.'
Richard Hawkins.



*photograph by jacob yarwood 2009
taken from the book along the same lines*