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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Gemma Pepper**  
*Silent Witness*

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| Exhibition                           | 23.11.2022 – 23.12.2022   |
| Preview in presence<br>of the artist | Thursday 11 January 2023, 6pm - 9pm<br>36 rue Falguière<br>75015, Paris |

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**Text :**  
**Gemma Pepper**

Visiting my grandparents' childhood home was like travelling through a treasure trove of cherished memories. Tattered photographs emerged from old suitcases, each one a testimony to surviving a near-fatal house fire. These vintage photographs, some burnt and torn, others remarkably intact, stood as silent witnesses - the only mementos left of precious moments. During these formative visits, my passion for photography, particularly in its printed, analogue form, was ignited.

The series titled "Silent Witness" goes beyond mere pictorial representation and reconstruction of images and investigates the intricate layers of intergenerational family trauma spanning four generations. This trauma encompasses the mentioned house fire, wartime ordeals, instances of domestic adversity, and notably, their profound psychological impacts. Through meticulous inquiry, this series ventures beyond visual restoration, probing the nuanced implications of familial trauma on the human psyche. It endeavors to unravel the profound repercussions stemming from these events, encapsulating the enduring effects across multiple generations.

The technique I employ involves dissecting and reconstructing vintage photographs to breathe new life and universal meaning into their faded narratives. I believe that these fragmented photographs have the potential to reinterpret the past and reshape our understanding of the present and future. Based on personal experiences, I interweave whimsical and ironic elements highlighting the revitalising power of recovery. The usage of photographic portraits and snapshots in collage as a medium to embody mental trauma is a poignant and thought-provoking approach to deep understanding and articulation. It forces me to consider what an artwork of mental suffering might depict and how photography can help to manifest the elusive and often inexpressible. Traditionally, photography has served as a means of preserving memories, capturing moments and making them tangible over time.

However, in creating art out of psychological trauma, photography takes on a transformative role. It moves from being a tool of memory to one of revelation and expression. It provides a channel for those who have experienced psychological trauma to illuminate their hidden inner wounds, which can be difficult to articulate. Photography, when used to document psychological trauma, becomes a powerful tool of revelation and expression, transcending its role as a mere repository of memory. It allows individuals to confront and validate their emotional pain, making it tangible and empowering proactive steps towards healing.

At the heart of my research are questions such as: What does a photograph really do? Can it act as a metamorphosis and, instead of capturing a moment in time, change that moment forever? Can self-documentation of psychological trauma, or trauma in general, facilitate the healing process? I aim to expose the hidden scars of the past through my work in order to create dialogues about healing and resilience.

**BIOGRAPHY**

Artist

**Gemma Pepper**

Gemma Pepper is a mixed media artist who uses photography, thread, fabric and other materials to create artworks that explore personal themes as well as identity, memory and society. She studied photography at Llandrillo College, Rhos-on-Sea, North Wales, UK and at the University of Derby, England. She then graduated with a Master of Arts ZFH in Art Education, with a specialisation in Curatorial Studies from the Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland in 2021. Her artworks are inspired by personal experiences and observations, as well as the historical and cultural contexts that shape her life. The artist uses archival photographs as the basis for her unique artworks. She manipulates the original photographs by cutting, weaving, covering or rearranging them to create new and unexpected compositions that challenge the viewer's perception and interpretation. Threads, fabrics and other materials are added to add colour, texture and dimension to the artworks and to convey emotions, thoughts and feelings. The unique artworks are a reflection of the artist's inner and outer self and serve as a means of communication and connection with the viewer and the world. They aim to question and critique issues that affect our identity and society, such as migration, globalisation, technology and intergenerational trauma.

**Group shows****2023**

Ph21 Gallery, Valid World Hall, Barcelona, Spain  
Gallery of Photography, Glasgow, United Kingdom  
Photoville4600 by Fujifilm, International Photo Festival Olten, Switzerland  
Vayo Collage Gallery, Lyons, New York, United States  
Museum of Photographic Arts, Sony World Photography Award, San Diego, United States

**2022**

Sony World Photography Awards, Sommerset House, London, United-Kingdom  
Swiss Photo Awards, Zurich, Switzerland  
ClampArt Gallery, New York, United States  
Fotofestival Lenzburg, Sony World Photography Awards, Lenzburg, Switzerland  
Photo Basel, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Basel, Switzerland  
Photo London, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, London, United-Kingdom

**2021**

Feature Shoot Street Exhibition, Los Angeles, United States  
Feature Shoot Street Exhibition, New York, United States  
Boomer Gallery, London, United-Kingdom  
Foley Gallery, New York, United States  
Van der Plas Gallery, New York, United States  
The Blank Wall Gallery, Athens, Greece  
The Blank Wall Gallery, Hanoi, Vietnam

**2020**

Noorderlicht Photography Festival, Groningen, Netherlands  
Swiss Photo Award, Zurich, Switzerland

**2017**

Northern Eye Photo Festival, Colwyn Bay, Wales

**2013**

Martin Parr Competition, Museum of Design, Zurich, Switzerland  
Best of the Best Show, University of Derby, Derby, United-Kingdom  
Neo Artprize, Bolton, United-Kingdom  
Freerange, London, United-Kingdom

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**Online  
Exhibitions**
**2021**

Analog Forever Magazine, Photographic Mysticism November  
Lensscratch, The 2021 Still Life Exhibition  
Shutter Hub, Yearbook 2021  
Lensscratch, The Artist Intervenes  
Analog Forever Magazine, Time, August  
Shutter Hub, Yearbook 2022

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**Publications**
**2022**

Sony World Photography Awards book  
Tatler magazine: May, June, July Issue  
Tiny Spoon Magazine  
Yearbook 2022, by Shutter Hub

**2021**

Artful Memories, by Jane Chipp, Jack Ravi  
NNC V World Magazine, September Issue  
Echoes of Yesterday, by Phototrouvee Magazine  
Poetry, by Shutter Hub  
NNC V World Magazine, June Issue

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**Awards**
**2022**

Finalist Lucie Foundation, CARTE BLANCHE, Object Category  
Nominee Fine Art Photography Awards Open Theme  
Shortlisted World Photography Organisation – Creative Category  
Shortlisted International Photography Award, One Shot Colour  
Winner Vienna International Photography Award, Free Subject

**2021**

Winner Emerging Photographer Award Feature Shoot

**2013**

Winner Museum of Derby Award  
Shortlisted Neo Art Prize  
Shortlisted Bolton Art Prize  
Shortlisted Brighton Art Prize  
Winner Community Foundation Award

## Press images



Gemma Pepper, Jung Frau Joch, 2022  
Photographie d'archive et mixed-media  
30 x 24 cm, Unique piece



Gemma Pepper, Picture This, 2022  
Photographie d'archive et mixed-media  
20 x 20 cm, Unique piece

The use of images is exclusively reserved for the promotion of the exhibition and valid up to its end.

Obligatory mention : © Gemma Pepper, courtesy Galerie Esther Woerdehoff

Press images



Gemma Pepper, *The Seamstress' Daughter*, 2023  
Photographie d'archive et mixed-media  
20 x 20 cm, Unique piece



Gemma Pepper, *Day Trippers*,  
2023  
Photographie d'archive et  
mixed-media  
24 x 30 cm, Unique piece

The use of images is exclusively reserved for the promotion of the exhibition and valid up to its end.

Obligatory mention : © Gemma Pepper, courtesy Galerie Esther Woerdehoff