

## JERWOOD/PHOTOWORKS AWARDS 2020

Silvia Rosi & Theo Simpson

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5<sup>th</sup> August – 25<sup>th</sup> September | Gallery 1



Image © Silvia Rosi

Belfast Exposed presents Jerwood/Photoworks Awards 2020 which showcases new photographic works by two early-career artists, Silvia Rosi and Theo Simpson. Both awardee artists explore the idea of history through their photographic practices, across themes of family, industry, identity and architecture. The Jerwood/Photoworks Awards support artists using photography to make new work and significantly develop their practice. The awards particularly seek to encourage artists and photographers exploring new approaches to photography, and/or whose practice is experimental.

Deirdre Robb, CEO, Belfast Exposed: *"We are delighted to be partners once again with Jerwood Arts and Photoworks in supporting exceptional emerging artists as they embark on their photographic career. Their commitment to and depth of practice will challenge viewers to question cultural relationships associated with identity and landscape."*

Silvia Rosi's work explores her personal family history drawing on her Togolaise heritage, and the idea of origins. Her mother, who has been the source of inspiration for much of her previous work, plays a central role in this project, as well as her father, and their experiences of migration from Togo in West Africa to Italy. She has been informed by this history and her position as a European looking in on her family heritage. Her project is partially inspired by the West African studio portrait and also includes a visual deconstruction of head carrying techniques, a practice with its own histories, skills, rituals and aesthetics, and a strong connection to Silvia's own family history. For this exhibition, her work will include new examples of colour and black and white photography, as well as works where she explores working with video for the first time.

Theo Simpson's practice is drawn from the evolving environments and elements of the world we live in today, the notion of landscape is expanded through an intersection of theory, fact and myth, oscillating between topological studies, technological innovation, social analysis and speculation of the future. The artist's work navigates between real and imagined worlds; pictures of human possibility, political impulses and economic transformations. Created as self-contained pieces, the works are made by both hand and machine; principally incorporating various photographic and engineering techniques alongside a combination of other mediums and disciplines such as sculpture, drawing and printmaking.

Following a national open call, the two awardees were selected from over 450 submissions in response to an open call to UK-based artists using photography within 10 years of establishing their practice. The selection panel for the Jerwood/Photoworks Awards 2020 was: Aaron Schuman, artist; Marta Weiss, Curator of Photographs at V&A Museums; Shama Khanna, freelance curator and writer; Shoair Mavlian, Director of Photoworks; and Lilli Geissendorfer, Director of Jerwood Arts. Supported by expert mentors, including artist Roger Palmer and curator Renée Mussai, the artists created new bodies of work exhibited for the first time at Jerwood Arts in London in 2020 followed by a UK tour, which includes Belfast Exposed.

Lilli Geissendorfer, Director, Jerwood Arts says, *"We are delighted to be launching 2020 with an exhibition of new photographic commissions by Silvia Rosi and Theo Simpson at Jerwood Arts in London. The Jerwood/Photoworks Awards is a key part of our mission to support outstanding artists from across the UK to develop and thrive at a pivotal point in their practice. Over the past 12 months Silvia and Theo have been developing distinctive bodies of work that explore history and identity through family, industry and place; considering the unique role of photography in giving voice to these subjects."*

Shoair Mavlian, Director, Photoworks, adds, *"The Jerwood/Photoworks Awards is an important part of our programme and in 2020 will be an exciting start to our 25th anniversary year. The award gives opportunities to talented early career artists and helps to cultivate the exploration, expansion and development of their practices. Silvia Rosi and Theo Simpson's work stood out to us for numerous reasons. What is so exciting in this year's recipients is that for both Silvia and Theo what is central to their practices is how photography integrates other mediums."*

## Notes for Editors

Belfast Exposed is Northern Ireland's premier contemporary photography organisation, commissioning, publishing and showing work by artists and photographers from Northern Ireland and across the world. We believe photography is for everyone, it is accessible, meaningful and has the ability to tell stories, allowing us to create dialogue that reflects upon our history, informs our present and inspires a positive future.

## Artist Biographies

Silvia Rosi (b.1992, Scandiano, Italy) is an Italian/Togolaise London based artist, working with photography and video to explore ideas of memory, migration and diaspora. She graduated from London College of Communication in 2016 with a BA (Hons) in Photography. Recent exhibitions include Presenting Cultural Connections, I:54 Art Fair, Somerset House (2019); Emergence, The Art Pavilion, Mile End (2016); Beyond the Camera, Pingyao International Photography Festival (2016); Black Blossom Exhibition - Highlighting the Voices of Black Women (2016). Silvia Rosi recently undertook a Thread residency in Senegal, which she also spoke about at a talk for I:54 A Contemporary African Art Fair.

Theo Simpson (b.1986, Doncaster) lives and works in Lincolnshire, UK. Recent exhibitions include Toward the Metal, solo show, Photo London, Somerset House, London (2019); Loading, group show, Foam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2018); Part and Whole, solo show, Foam 3H, Amsterdam (2018); A Green and Pleasant Land, group show, Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne (2017); The land of the day before, solo show, Webber Gallery, London (2017). He was also the 2017 Outset Unseen Exhibition Fund Winner. Theo Simpson is featured in public collections including, Fotomuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland; Foam photography museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Tate Artists' Book Library, London, UK.

## Exhibition Events

Exhibition Dates: 5<sup>th</sup> August – 25<sup>th</sup> September  
Exhibition Opening: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August, 6pm-9pm

## Acknowledgments

'Jerwood/Photoworks Awards 2020' is generously sponsored by Jerwood Arts, Photoworks, Arts Council England, Spectrum Photographic, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council.

## Image Use

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## Press Images



Image © Theo Simpson



Image © Silvia Rosi





*Image © Theo Simpson*



*Image © Silvia Rosi*



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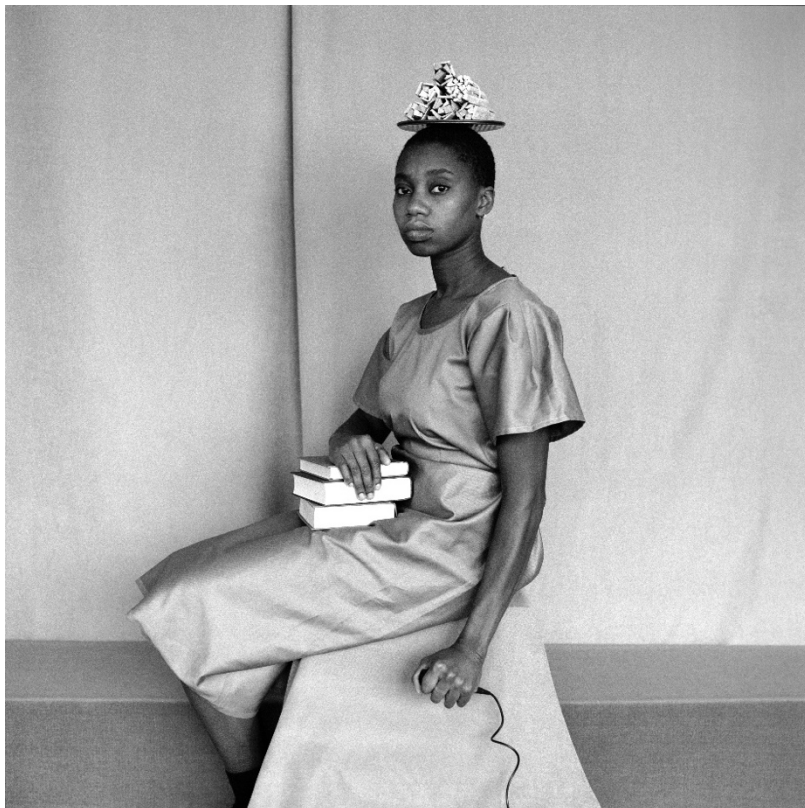


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