

## Double Take: Photography and the Garden

This exhibition brings together photographs taken over a twenty-five year period by Gertrude Jekyll, mainly of her own garden at Munstead Wood and also of the surrounding landscape and villages of West Surrey, with works by contemporary artists Mark Edwards, Sarah Jones, and Helen Sear, each of whom have an ongoing and distinctive engagement with gardens and landscape.

Six of Jekyll's original photo albums are now in the collection of the University of California, Berkeley. The prints we are exhibiting are a selection of the copies made from these albums for the exhibition *Gertrude Jekyll: A Vision of Garden and Wood* organised by Michael R Van Valkenburgh and Judith B Tankard in 1988. That exhibition opened at the Bank of Boston, moving on to various venues in America and the United Kingdom. The copy prints were subsequently donated to the Garden Museum, London, the final venue of the tour, and are now on loan to Hestercombe. We are grateful to the Garden Museum; to Mark Edwards, Sarah Jones and Helen Sear for their enthusiastic involvement in this project and their generosity with work and time; and to our other lenders - Maureen Paley for the loan of Sarah Jones' work and Glyn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea, for Chameleon by Helen Sear.

For the Hestercombe Gallery we have chosen to exhibit Jekyll's photographs alongside contemporary photographs and film, choosing pieces where the subject matter overlaps or where we found affinities with her approach to recording gardens and landscape. By looking at Jekyll's photographs through the prism of these contemporary projects, we can look again - make a double-take - at images often passed over as illustrations and draw out associations between works and over time. The works on display also encourage us to consider the interconnection between the endeavours of gardening and photography, both situated in the tension between the human desire to shape the world and the ultimate transience of our existence.

The exhibition title also refers to the ways in which Jekyll photographed and re-photographed her garden over time and resonates in different ways with the practices of the three other exhibiting artists. Furthermore, it is hoped that visitors to Hestercombe will see the gardens here in a fresh light after viewing the exhibition. Although none of the photographs on display were made here, they have been chosen with the context of this gallery in mind, framed as it is by Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens' Formal Garden, the Victorian Terrace and Coplestone Warre Bampfylde's intensely theatrical 18th century Landscape Gardens, with their embedded layers of representation, illusion, and surprise that are echoed in the work on display.

Kate Best, Exhibition Curator