

RÉCIT

Brenda Draney

Brenda Draney was in a group of fifteen artists who went to Fogo Island Arts (FIA) in 2017 for a three-month residency. She was invited back by the FIA and the Fogo Arts Gallery to present her solo exhibition *Smelling Salts* from May to September 2019.

“At the time I did the residency at Fogo, I had just completed a large permanent public art installation, *The Trampoline*, at MacEwan University in Edmonton. My mother was recovering from a major health event. Attending the residency at that time allowed me space and time, literally and figuratively, to sit with what had happened over the last few years. It was a kind of lovely isolation. And in that quiet space, I could think about what this meant to me. So, it was at Fogo Island that I learned how I might work through these ideas, and I think that it will stay with me. The day-to-day is the quiet. Any residency that calls you away from your home will always call on you to see your work in a new context. There is something to be said for quietude.

“The exhibition and the residency are really two separate spaces and moments. However, I would say that even if they are separate, they also are related. And because of that, I don’t know if I could tell which space is more significant than the other—whether the residency or the exhibition. During the residency, you have time to think about your practice and the ways in which you want to work, and you also want to get informed by the place. You are given the time and space to create relationships, to sit quietly, and all of that is important to paintings and the practice. The exhibition is quite different.

“The narrative I hoped to create with *Smelling Salts* was about vital institutions. This work was about how these institutions help us and how they also fail us. What was of interest to me was how these particular institutions, such as hospitals, are for people at their most vulnerable, yet they may not always be a soft place for the fragility of our humanity.”

FOGO ISLAND ARTS

Founded in 2008 by the Canadian charity Shorefast, whose mission is to build economic and cultural resilience on the island, Fogo Island Arts is dedicated to contemporary art and offers residencies for artists, filmmakers, writers, musicians, curators, designers, and thinkers from around the world. The island, situated north of the main island of Newfoundland, offers a majestic context for artists to live and create during the three-month residency. In 2019, FIA received nineteen artists in residency, each of whom was required to give one public presentation, performance, or workshop or to lead a public event during his or her stay.



I
Another Promise (2019)
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 48 in
Courtesy of Valide Agency

II
Atlas (2019)
Oil on Canvas, 48 x 60 in
Courtesy of Valide Agency

III
Theatre (2019)
Oil on Linen, 118 x 62 in
Courtesy of Valide Agency