

Landscape in Pain 0436202105

This image is from a body of work titled *Landscape in Pain* comprising a series of digital drawings and films. I am making these in response to the on-going construction of the Viking Energy Wind Farm on Shetland's Mainland, which will become one of the largest onshore wind farms in Europe. Construction of this wind farm commenced in September 2020, after many years of public debate and local dissent, and coincided with lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Construction is due to be complete in 2024, and thus this work represents a small beginning to a larger project.

Lockdown restrictions have enabled me to refresh my connection to Shetland. The experience of staying in one place with limited movement over a prolonged period of time has helped me reacquaint with the Shetland landscape more deeply and has brought sharp focus to my view of it. As I adjusted to the pandemic restrictions on mobility, my understanding of landscape has been challenged, and my perception of our relation to landscape has shifted. How can we achieve sustainability in our lives, and leverage renewable energies, without causing harm?

My body of work, *Landscape in Pain*, is open-ended. Because it is relatively new, and in an early stage of what I see as a long term project, I have not yet formulated specific intentions. I am very much indebted to the on-going dialogue with Dorothea Rust which the exhibition project, *Hidden flowers bloom most beautifully*, has directly enabled. It has enriched, guided and inspired development of my work, to the point that I feel it is a kind of collaboration. While the title, *Landscape in Pain*, pre-dates our dialogue, we quickly agreed to talk about the subject of pain. We have considered the idea of pain in relation to the land through writing and image making. We are reading Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain*, scrutinising definitions of pain and sharing our thinking and creative processes. We agree that pain is a complex condition, way of being, and it is felt in many different ways.

"These images which we are creating are an attempt to give form to pain, to a violation we see done to the landscape. Through our art, or with art, we are mending, treating the scars done to the landscape, to the land, the soil and its inhabitants [plant and organisms] ... We can't live with the pain, we don't want to put up with it." (Rust & Permar, 2021)