

*WITH THE LAST BREATH I HAVE, I WILL BE SHOUTING ABOUT HOW BEAUTIFUL WE ARE. YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IT. I HAVE TO BELIEVE IT.*

*RECORD THIS* is, in essence, an archive: a year of image, word, and sound. I've been describing it as *Socially Engaged Artfilm*, since I am an artist and director, and a proud maker of socially engaged work. By this point however, that descriptor feels a bit clinical.

What developed was dirtier and shakier by far than I had ever prepared for. I sat down to pull it all into shape this spring, and found it expansive, alive, almost wriggling in my hands. This isn't what I wanted to make at the start of the year. In summer 2021, I had a treatment for a film, a script, storyboards... but circumstances demanded something different.

I have never been so glad to have worked against my instinct. By the time the leaves had fallen, it was as easy as breathing.

Autumn's sorrow revealed a little red thread for me to pull on - and it unwound and unwound. The more I photographed my friends, the more I tried to show them how beautiful they were, the more I saw the hypocrisy in the lack of tenderness I show myself. I thought deeply, and sought answers, and have pieced them together, bit by bit, from all these hours of footage. Featured are intimate portraits of my life, surrounded by queer friends and artists, many of whom have begun their transitions and own explorations during our time together. Alongside the images, I've developed a body of reflective poetry, providing voice for my previously internalised thought processes. I've combined the written work, the performance of it, and my archival footage into a short film: a sort of multimedia collage.

I hope I can communicate something of what this year has been like to you. I hope I can bring you into Seafield, my flat. I hope I can tell you something about my friends, and myself, and how we love each other in the ways it's hard to love ourselves.

In a time when the political climate is trending towards violent hostility against trans people, I feel it is more vital than ever to celebrate the intricacies of our rituals, and the intimacies of our relationships. This project has given me a vector not only for self expression, but for survival. Every day I'm uncovering something new; doing my due diligence; learning queer history; learning queer present. I have never shied away from expressing myself, but somehow, now, the thought of showing this work to the world makes my stomach churn. There is a rawness in me, a vulnerability I haven't felt in a long time. This new skin hasn't acclimatised to the sun yet.

But it will.

Historically, many artists have focused on self documentation and provided us with complex, stunning windows into time and place. While digital platforms are bringing day to day life further into the public eye, our closest relationships and truest selves are often only revealed in private. This is what I've tried so hard to capture. There is a fleeting, desperate beauty in transformation

at this moment in history, and it deserves to be preserved. The title draws upon this urgency.

Resist the erasure of our presence. Declare our identities as worthy of documentation.

Celebrate our beauty. **RECORD THIS!**