

**Alys Tomlinson**

Searching out the next generation of an alternative lifestyle

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Reflects how digital technology has affected his sense of place

**Fiona Yaron-Field**

Piecing together short stories from the heart of relationships

**Julie Cockburn**

Found photographic portraits are given a new life and imbued with personal meaning

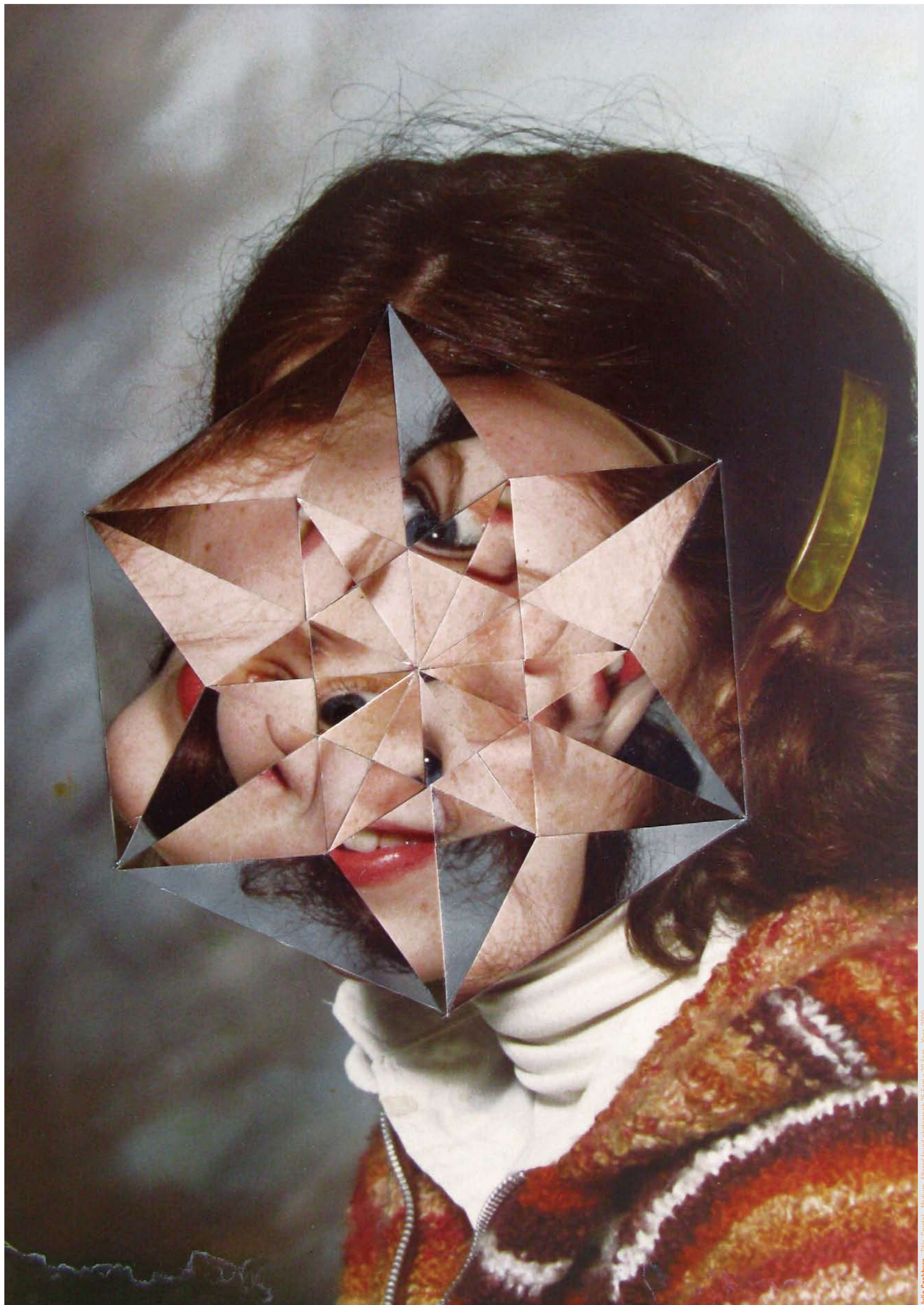
**Mary Pritchard**

Portraits of ancient natural monuments

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Re-examining and reconstructing the evidence of a breakdown

# UNCERTAIN STATES / 02



Julie Cockburn Title: Crystal - Medium: Altered found photograph 25.5cm x 20.5cm - Year: 2009

(IMAGE ON FRONT PAGE)

# JULIE COCKBURN

No image is safe after it enters my studio. These eclectic portraits I choose to work with - studio shots of 50s movie stars, a school photo of a young teenager lost and found in a box of car-boot rejectementa, the beauty queen from a vintage American year book - become my puppets, the cast in my imagination's movie. This all started when I was very young. I didn't like to read much, and when I wasn't allowed to watch TV for some misdemeanour or other, I would make up stories from picture books and magazines like a surreal game of Consequences.

These found photographic portraits have a real history. Chosen for their age, the quality of the printing, a certain nostalgia and an accepted genre that finds them submerged in a collective consciousness. I feel that I have a right to them, that they are mine for the taking, or rescuing even, as so often they are discovered dusty and crumpled, stained and discarded in the corner of a junk shop or offered by some chancing e-bayer for a few pence plus p&p. I imagine each final image is carefully chosen from a chinagraphed contact sheet, in itself a storyboard or movie strip, and we are left with the nanosecond of the shutter-speed for half a century or more.

I ask myself what the image really is, if, perhaps, what we are presented with is not the absolute truth. (That old adage 'the camera never lies' is paradoxically untrue - I know this because of all the photos taken of me through the years that look nothing like me, that lie about my chins, my crow's feet and my wonky ears. Or the beautiful self-portrait I chose for my Facebook profile that shows none of the above. These pictures say nothing about me.) I begin a Miss Marple investigation through the archived corridors of my imagination, memory and subjectivity to shape the character of the persons depicted in front of me, questioning who, what and where. Like Mary Shelley, I can conjure up a monster, with a nod to Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray, I'll have a stab at "Where Are They Now"; or like Freud, discover the sitter's alter ego, exposing their perceived hidden dreams, nightmares or fantasies. It's like grown-up playing with dolls.

The ones that work (and there are many that don't) somehow look like they should be this way. In "Bond", 2009, the photograph of the baby and the folds of its blanket fit so perfectly on the contours of the woman's lips, nose and eye, that the physicality of the collage is very solid. But there is something that happens beyond my control with a successful work; it is greater than the sum of its simple parts, becoming a new image with a new history to unfurl and, by association, a new memory. Perhaps it is something about the vulnerability of being human that I am trying to address. The dialogue that I pretend to have with these richly colourful characters who I embellish, manipulate, torture and caress, is actually a conversation only with myself.

The finished works leave my studio improved and updated or at the very least rejuvenated. Now they are out of my hands, released back into the real world to speak a slightly different language and the process starts all over again.

Julie Cockburn studied at Chelsea College of Art and Central St Martins College of Art and Design, graduating in 1996. She has shown extensively in the UK, Europe and the United States and has works in the the collections of Yale Center for British Art, The Wellcome Collection, British Land and Goss-Michael Foundation. She lives and works in London.

Some of these portraits can be seen as part of 'Print Now', an exhibition showcasing over 100 innovative new works by emerging and established artists presented by Bearspace Gallery and selected by Kay Hartenstein Saatchi, Pyle Behrman, Julia Alvarez and Mike Sims at the London Art Fair, 13 - 17 January, 2010.

www.juliecockburn.com

(IMAGE ON NEXT PAGE)

# DAVID GEORGE

**Interview with David George**  
I would like to talk about the creative intention behind your work, and how your process helps dictate the style, namely, your use of the digital medium.

I suspect that the digital medium doesn't dictate my style as much as it allows me to use my style in situations that are problematic for film. My personal work, and to some extent my commercial work relied heavily on available light with a dark, some would say "moody" undertone (I was called Prints of Darkness by my photographer friends) but this would require lengthy exposures, several lastolites, much maths and a touch of luck to produce the images I wanted to capture transparency film. With digital, I can shoot tethered, even on location, and get a good idea of what I am going to get as a final image, which means I can relax and enjoy the shoot and only have to worry about a hard drive failure. Consequently, I can spend time to push the aesthetics of the image, making more variations of the same image, because I don't have to worry about third stop bracketing every shot and wondering if the film will take the "push", I'm going to have to give it. In short, I can go into very low light level situations with digital and realise my preconceptions of the shots with a high level of success

I am referring to your projects 'Persistence', 'Enclosures, Badlands and Borders' and your latest work

You use the word sublime to describe your present work, can you elaborate? Is there a sense of sadness for your subjects' demise? A feeling of time running out? Perhaps for the people involved in those industries? Can I ask these questions from both a personal and process point of view?

I don't describe my work as "Sublime" I think that would be a conceit. I was interested in exploring ideas of the sublime in the 21st century landscape. Historically the sublime existed in mountains, forests, oceans, and landscapes and was an element that made us fearful of these places through a combination of ignorance, misunderstanding and religion. We do not have the same feelings of "awe" towards nature as we feel we understand it now, so I was curious to find out where the idea of the 'sublime' may exist today, if anywhere. I had an idea it may be contained in these industrial, ultimately obsolete landscapes that I had grown up with, this idea was coupled with my interest in New Topographic photography with their ideas about man altered landscape and these notions, once locked together were the backbone of the series. As to the idea of time running out, I'm unsure as to what you mean. I have always had a fascination for the obsolete, and most of my personal work seems to hinge on that idea, the "dissolution", "persistence", Limehouse cut" and "enclosures, badlands and borders" all contain this theme. As for the people who work in these industries, you notice they are conspicuous by their absence, I worked in the petrochemical industry when I left school. It is hard, dirty and very dangerous work, I feel sad for the loss of jobs and income for the people who work in these places but ultimately it is not the sort of work you can take pride in as you never see the thing you produce so it is a bit disingenuous to give the workers some sort of romantic veneer, to all of them, it's just a job.

Your work, and specifically your series 'Enclosures, Badlands and Borders', has a magnificent sense of beauty, although it is of a subject that wouldn't naturally lend itself to that description. Could you elaborate?

Again, I would have to view that as a value judgement pertaining to you. The images were supposed to be a balance between the subjective (sublime) and the objective (the documenting of these man made landscapes). I am pleased that you use the words "magnificent " and "beauty" to describe the images which show the element of the "sublime" are present but because you see the objects as not naturally lending themselves to beauty then the pictures begin to fail in the sense that the documentation and recording of these places through the images is not as

strong an element as I would have wanted. Thinking about it, because I enjoy these landscapes so much I perhaps allowed the pictures to become over romantic in an effort to persuade the viewer to cherish these places as much as I do, to the detriment of the intellectual premise of the project.

How, if at all has the digital process enabled you to express yourself as opposed to film do you feel?

Are there aspects of your process that wouldn't be possible on film? As discussed earlier, it takes away a lot of the problems associated with low light level photography and although digital has it's own set of problems, in certain conditions they are the lesser of two evils

When taking on commercial or art projects what is your process as regards deciding on your method of production?

I think I always have to work out what the end product will be then work backwards to find the best way of achieving that

I could say your project E.B&B 'is defined by the digital process'. Would you comment on such a statement?

I think that it is correct to say that. The use of a long exposure on a digital format gives a very particular feel to the images. It has been described as "painterly" and it presumed that the images were worked in Photoshop whereas the opposite is true. There is no work done on the images except for colour balancing the raw file as there are often multiple light sources (though I only do a general balance as to specific area balancing), a noise reduction filter (as long exposures create a lot of noise) and a tweak on the histograms, apart from that they are as they come off the back as raw files. The other consideration with these images is that I could not have produced them on film because of the incredibly long exposures involved. Digital does not have reciprocity failure issues that create not only complicated calculations, but unfeasibly long exposures, both of which I could bypass with the use of digital. I think it is fair to say that these images would not exist if not for digital technology. I had actually started the project 2 years previously under a slightly different guise which I shot on 5x4 transparency, but the results were dismal so I thought the project was unfeasible, and it was only after the success of the " Persistence " series that I went to explore the idea again with digital.

I was lucky enough to spend time inviduating your work during Photomonth last November and was intrigued by how many viewers really engaged with your images, specifically image No.142 I was asked many times 'are these photographs or paintings'. In context to your capture and post production methods, can you respond to this?

I actually answered that unwittingly in the previous question

What part of your past are you referencing when you create these 'beautiful' images?

I'm not aware that I produce, conspire, or collude to produce "beautiful" images. I just find the world an endlessly amusing, benign and wonderful place and that is what I try to capture in my pictures, I suspect the beauty is inherent in the subject rather than the photograph, the photograph just acting as a sort aesthetic amplifier. I think I tend to take pictures for myself that are ultimately inclusive for the viewer, in short, if I find these things wonderful, mystical, magical or all three, then the viewer will as well. I respond to the world around me rather than trying to intellectualise it, if you see beauty in my pictures, it is probably just a by-product of the pleasure I get from producing them coupled with the natural beauty of the subject. On the notion about my images referencing some period from my past, I personally, don't think my images are particularly referencing anything from earlier years. I'm aware that my sense of aesthetic is constantly changing and reforming as it comes in contact with new ideas in the form of writing, film, painting, photography and more often than not conversations.

Obviously a persons world view is informed by their experiences, but those experiences can be contemporary as well as historical and I believe any person working in a creative field has to constantly exposing themselves to new ideas and situations that challenge their preconceptions in order to be able to produce new, fresh work.

In an age of digital dissemination and ease of Internet referencing, do you worry about issues of copyright and usage with your images?

Not at all, I think photographers worry overly about this. Your images are an extension of you and your personality. Why would another photographer want to claim your images as their own ? and if they did, they would probably be found out quite quickly. If anyone uses your images for a project that involves a large fee, then those images will inevitably be in the public domain (advertising etc) so you will become aware of that usage and embedded meta data will prove you have the intellectual copyright to the images, and any thing else, who really cares. Design agencies have been cutting images out of magazines for years to create mood boards, now they just download them off the Internet.

What gives your art a sense of 'permanence' (my words) although the images are often about a disappearing landscape?

I think my images are more about residue than permanence. I suspect the sense of permanence comes from the fact that the subjects are recorded in a photographic image where as, in reality, the subjects quite quickly change or disappear. For example, the "dissolution" series of images, for me at least, took on the air of "The Turin Shroud", leaving just a faint, ghostly record of the subject I was photographing. The area recorded in those images is quite unrecognisable to how it was two years ago when I took those photographs.

Was there any signal or project that suddenly turned you over to the digital image or is that decision still dependant on the project?

I think you may mean single, but signal is probably apt. The "persistence" series is the one that made me appreciate the advantages of digital. I shot the series on 5x4 and digital and the digital was by far the most successful. However, as stated earlier I will try and find the most suitable medium for any project.

What is your sense of importance in the documentation of the subjects you chose?

I think it is very important to document the subjects you photograph and choose a style and format that informs the viewer to the subject, otherwise you are just imposing a style onto the subject which ultimately tells the viewer all about the photographer and nothing about the subject (Annie Leibowitz, Jurgen Teller) which in the long run it means you are just producing "pictures" as opposed to photographs. Ultimately, by trying to document your subject, you could argue you are trying to achieve some sort of aesthetic empathy.

Would you feel the same level of intense engagement with similar subject in, say, the US? Where your history is not as attached?

I think it's a supposition to argue I have intense engagement with my subjects. It would be fair to call it an "aggravated conversation", but I would have that same sense of aesthetic and curiosity not only in the U.S. (I know because I have worked there on personal projects) but also theoretically in any geographic location. I hope that my concerns and interests are not confined to any particular colour race, creed, or nationality and my background is of no particular importance.

www.davidgeorge.eu

Visit [www.YouTube.com/user/UncertainStates](http://www.YouTube.com/user/UncertainStates) for the full in depth interview with David George. Interviews that explore different aspects of the creative process.



David George Title: persistence series NO 2-1 - Medium:30x30 cm Galerie Archival - Year: 2009



# ALYS TOMLINSON

## Seeking Utopia: Intentional Communities in the UK

An intentional community is a planned residential community with a common social, political or spiritual vision. There are over 100 intentional communities in the UK, many of which remain hidden from mainstream society. In the turbulent modern day world they represent experimentations for what is possible in the humane and social development of political, economic and cultural relations.

The communities I visited included a Quaker Community in Derbyshire, Tipi Valley in Wales, Hedgehog Eco-Community in Sussex and Redfield Community in Buckinghamshire.

I photographed the teenagers in these communities, many of who were born and raised there. In all of the communities I found kind, compassionate and interesting people looking for a better way of life. Although not always harmonious, the communities embody the possibility of an alternative way of living and the search for a utopian lifestyle.

[www.alystomlinson.co.uk](http://www.alystomlinson.co.uk)



(IMAGE ON NEXT PAGE)

# MARY PRITCHARD

## Rooted in Time

*'The oaks and the pines and their brethren of the wood have seen so many suns rise and set, so many seasons come and go, and so many generations pass into silence, that we may well wonder what 'the story of the trees' would be to us if they had tongues to tell it or we had ears fine enough to understand'*  
Author unknown

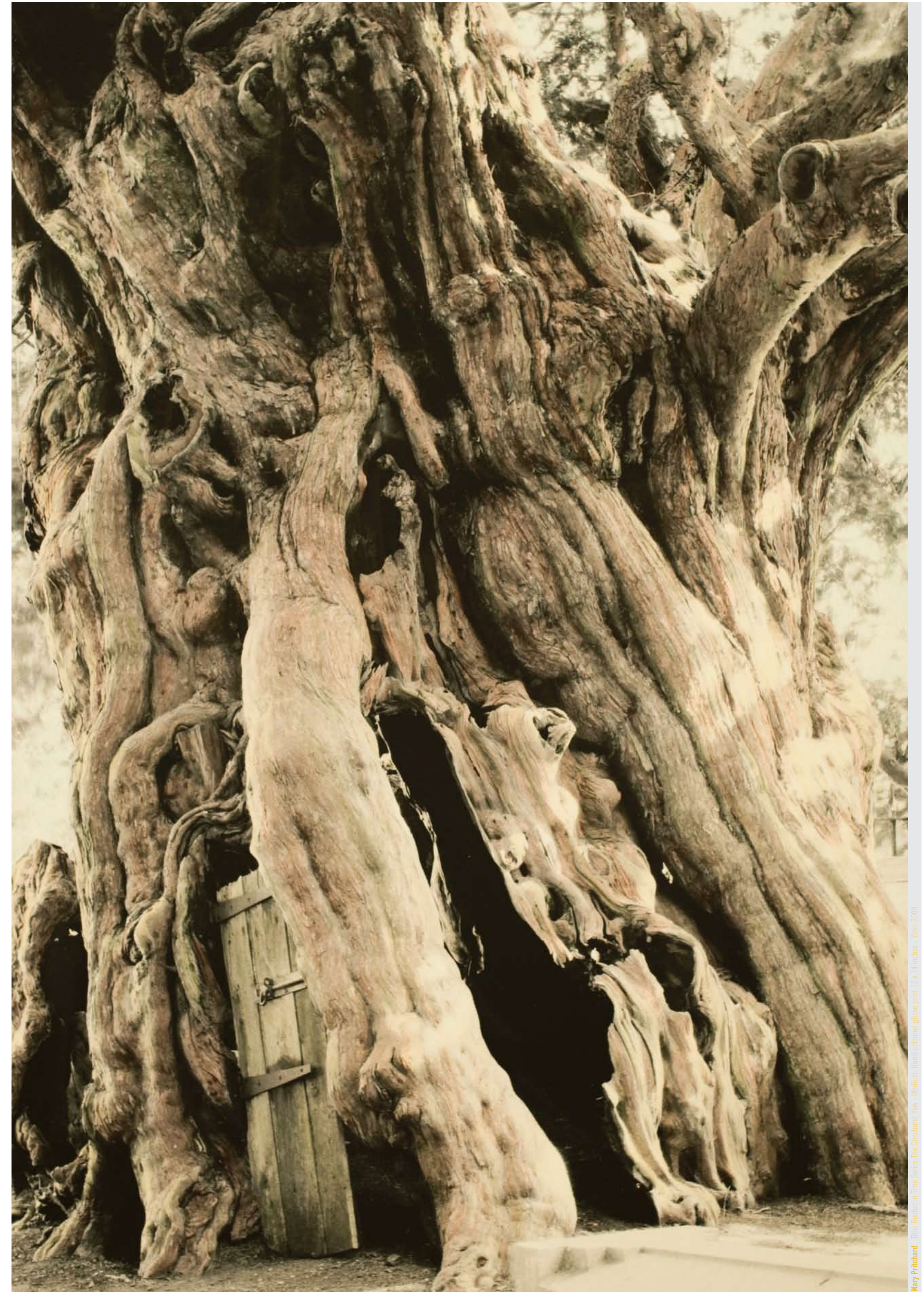
Trees and forests have long provided a rich source of legends, myths and inspiration for our society.

My area of interest is the symbolic nature of very old trees, which have been living silent witness to so much of our cultural heritage over the centuries. 'Rooted in Time' is a series of portraits of ancient heritage trees in which I aim to capture the personality of these 'green monuments' and their long interaction with humanity.

The classification 'ancient heritage tree' is given to these particular trees not only because of their great age (many are thought to be several thousand years old) but also because they have some cultural or historical significance. However, in spite of their longevity and great size they are vulnerable and fragile - a metaphor for human life and the state of the earth.

I chose to use a classic large format field camera to capture the trees as I see them as architectural in scale. This choice also mirrored the historical significance of the trees. I also followed this through in my treatment of the final images by hand-colouring black and white images as a way of referencing early photographic techniques and ensuring that each image is a completely individual 'one-off'. This seemed a symbolic way of treating these extraordinary trees with respect and reverence.

[www.marypritchard.net](http://www.marypritchard.net)



Mary Pritchard. The Oaks and the Pines and their brethren of the wood. Hand-coloured photograph 12 x 14 inches - Nov 2009



# FIONA YARON-FIELD

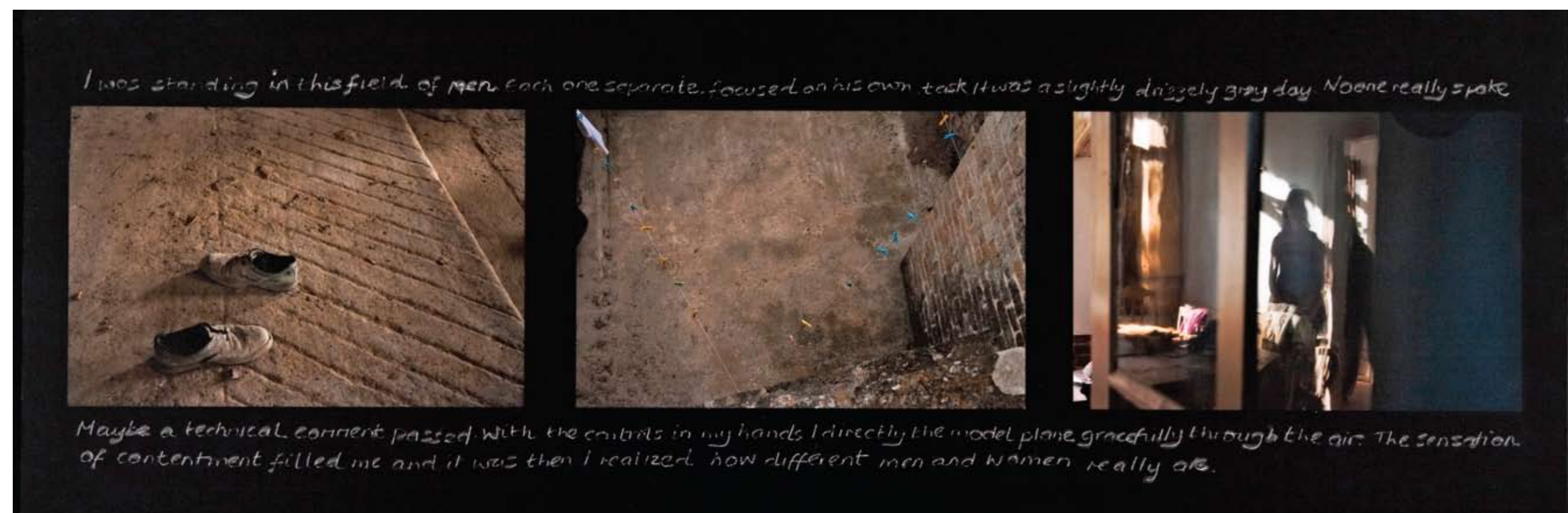
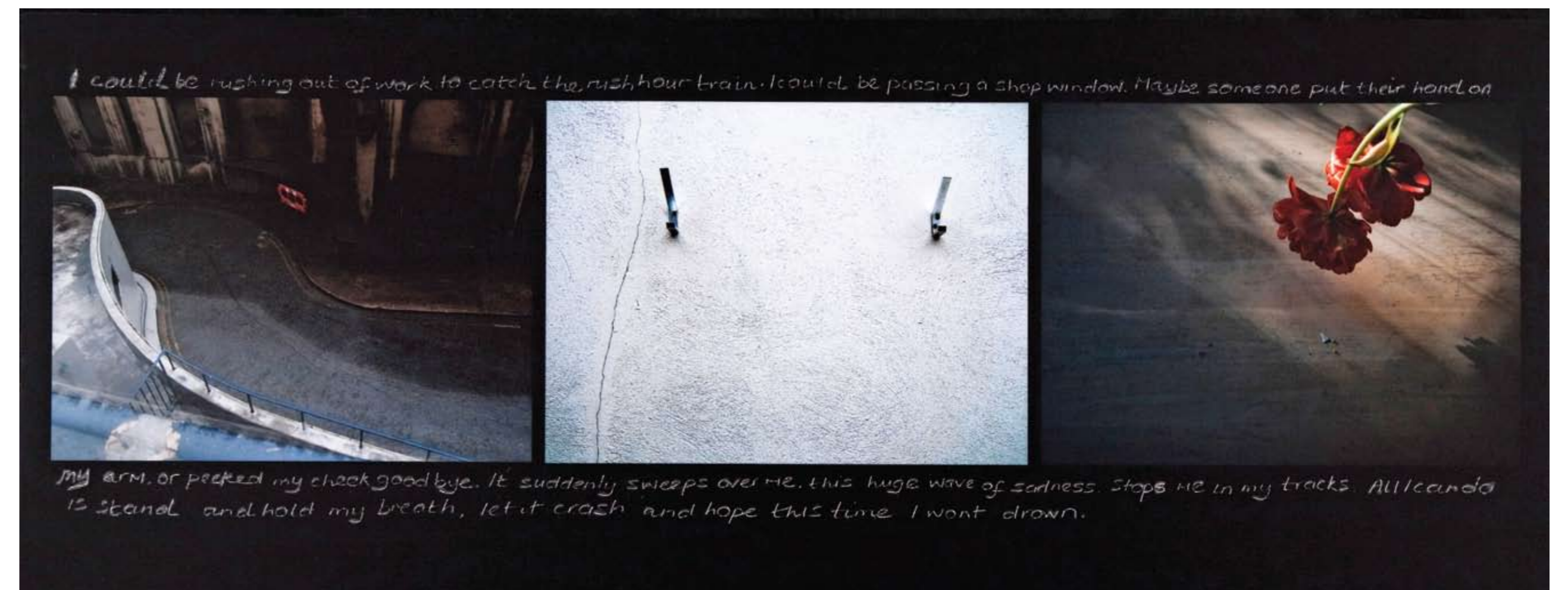
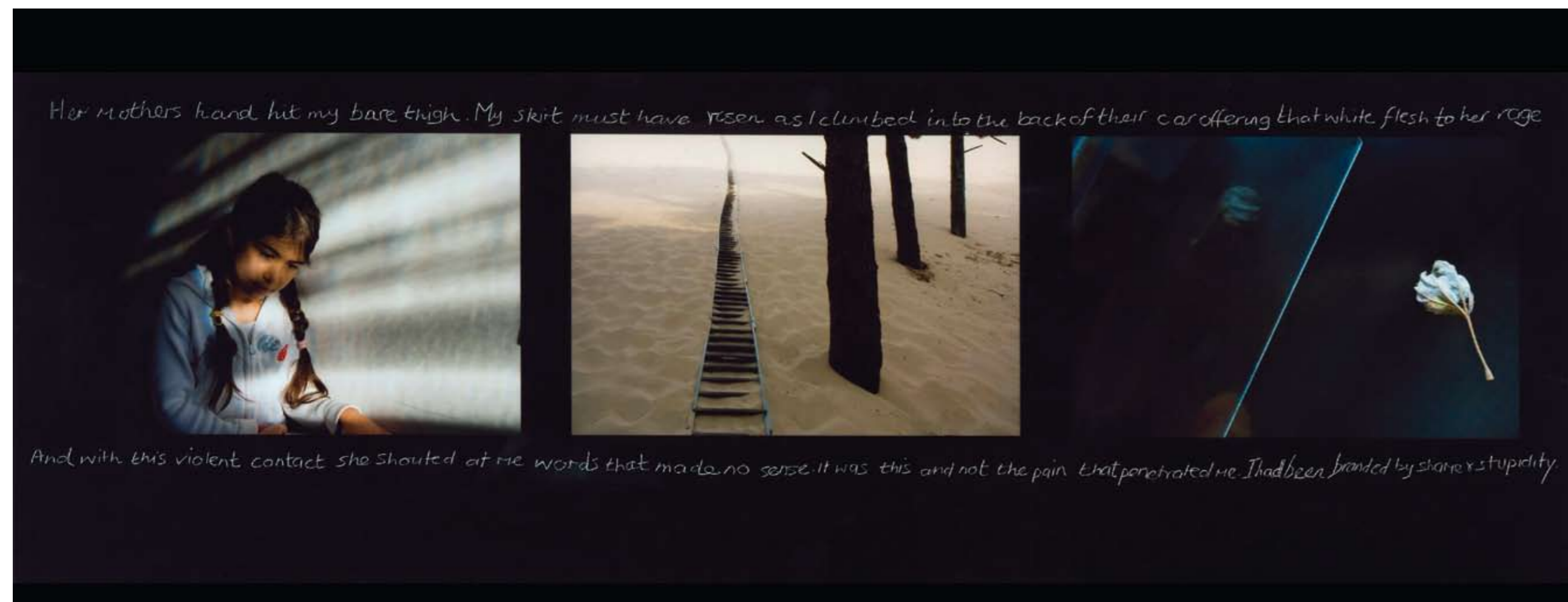
The images in this sequence are observations of the material around me in my daily life. They are things that ordinarily are passed by or may not be seen as 'something'. These are not constructed images, just things stumbled across that resonate with an inner significance. These found images are a momentary mirror - connecting the outside visual world to the 'self'. 'Cut a long story short' is an evolving project. This on going ness about it is what is interesting for me. These fragments, repeat themselves in many different variations and this represents for me how we piece together the fragments of our lived experiences. Like the imagery, the text has been stumbled upon, found in casually thrown away comments, conversations in passing. I decided to really listen to the words spoken to me and write them down. Later, I have played around with the structure or tense, in order to crystallize a meaning. In 'Cut a long story short' the relationship between image and text is ambiguous. There is no direct link between the two; the link is only created by the viewer. When we see a sequence of images, triptych or diptych we are naturally inclined to see it as a code that has to be decoded. We try to decode in order to decipher its meaning. In this case there is no code or fixed meaning these fragments just exist, and the process of moving them about and changing meaning reflects the subjectivity of it all. We follow the story through intuition rather than intellect. The writing here has been etched with nail scissors. The intention

is to emphasize the rawness of feeling, the sense of someone scratching on skin. I have this sense of words and images being inside us, scratched into our body memory. Something someone says or does, can trigger these memories. We are always piecing together these fragments that live inside us and re-telling ourselves our stories.

I am interested in paring down stimulation and getting as close as I can to photographing 'nothing'. For me, it is in the 'nothing' or 'absence' that more space opens up to feel. In Gestalt terms it is in the 'void' that the potential for creativity develops. In the Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-Sabi, nothingness itself instead of being an empty space is alive with possibilities.

Wabi-Sabi is a Japanese aesthetic initially inspired by the idea of Taoism and Chinese Zen Buddhism. Its principles are based on simplicity, naturalness and acceptance of reality. Wabi-Sabi focuses on the minor and the hidden. In order to experience Wabi-Sabi one must slow down, be patient and look closely. At it's heart it the core spiritual philosophy of Zen Buddhism which outlines that all things are impermanent, imperfect and incomplete. In this aesthetic approach truth comes from the observation of nature and greatness exists in the inconspicuous and overlooked details

[www.fionayaronfield.co.uk](http://www.fionayaronfield.co.uk)



# MARIE\*CLAIRE



LES 100 NOUVEAUX MODÈLES DE MARIE\*CLAIRE

PRIX : 1.75  
N° 106 - 10 MARS 1939

Julie Cockburn - Title: Bond - Medium: Altered found photograph 25.5cm x 20.5cm - Year: 2009

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