

Kayte Brimacombe

Observing beauty in the autistic space

Jon Cardwell

Captures the return of American gold rush

Sophie Gerrard

Responds to blindness with a clarity of vision

Patrick Hogan

Finds creativity in the depths of solitude

Sukey Parnell

Extends the notion of beauty to last a woman life

Susan Andrews

Documents the ever shifting life of the road

Fiona Yaron-Field

Celebrates the struggle for individualism in a stereotypical world

Mick Williamson

Relentlessly records the minutiae of his daily life

James Russell Cant

Takes time to re-examine a past tragedy

UNCERTAIN STATES / 10





(IMAGE ON COVER)
FIONA YARON-FIELD

Becoming

When I was told my new born daughter had Down's syndrome, I looked at her sleeping in my arms and rather than see my baby girl I saw an image of a middle aged woman, white socks, pudding basin haircut, holding her ageing mother's hand in some supermarket. This immediate mental image was hard to push away, then, it was my only reference.

Now 16 years later I watch my daughter and her friends forging their identities, aspiring to the same images of beauty, of love, of popularity as their typically developing peers. 'Becoming' celebrates their individuality as they struggle, like their peers, to become who they are.

My portraits are about the individuals and not the condition. They aim to challenge out-dated attitudes and prejudice by offering an alternative photographic representation of people with Down's syndrome. Stereotypes, which can be either positive or negative, are one dimensional. They dismiss the complexity and depth that people experience both with themselves and in relationship to others. They deny the person any 'real' identity.

My position as a photographer and mother of a child with Down's syndrome has been central to my work. Being a photographer/mother influences the quality of relationship I form with my subjects, a quality perhaps closer to kinship. I feel a resonance, as though when we look at each other, we not only see the other but we also see ourselves. The photograph is directly referring to my own experience too. For both photographer and subject there is a unified feeling of working together to actively create social change. I believe that this shifts 'being photographed' from a passive event into an act of empowerment.'

'Becoming' is one series of portraits within a larger body of work made over the last 8 years. These include: 'Disclosure', 'Up Close', 'Portraits', 'Ordinary Love' and 'Safe Haven'. The work tours both in the UK and overseas as part of Shifting Perspectives (www.shiftingperspectives.org).

www.fionayaronfield.co.uk



THE INCESSANT ADVENTURE OF DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY
 JULIO ETCHART

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time"
 T.S. Eliot

English is not my first language; photography is.

But not the photography sequestered by the paparazzi, the big agencies or the holy curatorial brigades. Mine is a serious love affair, passionate, intimate, very personal, and yet one I share daily with the wider world without embarrassment.

My ardour has been under threat for a long time now, like the last rituals from extinguishing species in the Amazon or Borneo. But I need not travel that far, since here in deepest Hackney, east London, I encounter threats that assault my imagination recurrently.

I feel, like many of my fellow inmates, like a prisoner in a vast gulag where our guardians are determined to exterminate our collective memories and to crush our spirit.

Our crime? To believe in the power of visual storytelling. To be naive enough to be convinced by optical narratives, and sufficiently innocent to suppose that by constructing the fabric of a carefully composed photo-essay, we are contributing to the annals of history.



There was a time when our dreams were deemed part of a noble tradition. Being an eyewitness with a camera and a concerned eye was a desirable path, and to capture the decisive moment, the ultimate prize. But we have been de-constructed and trivialized for too long, and treated like yet another flicker in the eternal timeline of archaeology.

But maybe times are a changing: there is a breath, or dare I say, a hurricane, of fresh air circulating along the fault-lines of the old world order.

This resurgence comes not from the multitude of graduates that pass through our art colleges yearly, though, to their credit, they do provide a sense of rigour and some qualified enthusiasm to the preservation of the genre.

But is in the hands of the occupiers, the dissidents, and the rebels, that the dignified folklore of past generations is being revived. This angry brigade, armed only with the tools of the new age of vigilance, are creating a new archive of memories that is going to be stored in the book of life till the end of our time. They may have not been trained in the subtle nuances of visual representation and editing, yet they have the anger, the conviction, and, above all, the passion, to get a message across in whatever guise it may be. Ipods and guitars are the new tools of

resistance; blurred videos and protest songs the fruit of their obstinate angst. A new medium is evolving, where singers/ songwriters walk arm in arm with instant camera-bearing rappers, dropouts, nurses, squatters and travellers. They hold court in improvised stages; they share lofty dreams through endless discussions over campfires or in the flimsy shelters of tent cities.

Above all, they document* and bear witness to these extraordinary times.

*[Middle English, precept, from Old French, from Latin documentum, example, proof, from docere, to teach; dek-Indo-European roots.]

This renaissance has undoubtedly bounced back to the ranks of the professional image-gatherers, thus providing them with a new challenge to focus on, and bursts of renewable energy to resuscitate their dormant skills. In a flashback to the Thatcher years, photojournalists are now covering riots, demonstrations and rallies like in the confrontational 1980s, and are becoming, in the eyes of the Establishment, part of the 'enemy within'. Hence the need for the brave and aptly named 'I'm a photographer, not a terrorist' campaign initiated by the National Union of Journalists' Photographers Branch.

The long queues to see editors to get portfolio reviews at Perpignan and other events celebrating reportage photography demonstrate that the field is very much alive and kicking. But sadly, that is usually the only opportunity that aspiring freelancers get to have their work viewed. From the great effort of the yearly Photo Month fest in east London to the medieval setting of Visa Pour la Photo in the south of France and the recently re-launched Angkor Vat festival in Cambodia, the world is teeming with 'doc-photers' sharing their memory cards filled with images portraying the extremes of the human experience along the length and width of this ever shrinking planet.

My own personal journey has been a dislocated mirror of all the above. I arrived in these misty islands as an exile of a cruel regime, trying to rebuild my life and to keep my true vocation alive. Many trials and tribulations later, I found my path and sought training and discipline along the muddy waters of the river Usk, after being accepted at the - then pioneering - Documentary Photography course at Newport in Wales.

Maestro David Hurn, the course founder, gave us much sound advice, but there are two items of guidance that will remain enduringly with me:

... "be positive and follow your instincts, but don't get too greedy; know when to stop and take stock"
 ... "it's always exciting to go out there and 'cover' the world, but always remember to explore your own jungle, too"

So Buddha met T.S. Eliot in the mind of our teacher, an exotic blend of influences that marked my direction and my future.

I have endeavoured to pay heed to that counsel and have, over the years, mixed my expeditions to the farther corners of the globe with voyages to the most hidden recesses of my adopted city.

The rainforests of Malaysia or Ecuador, which I have visited to cover the plight of first nations making a stand against rapacious multinationals, seem not much different than the overgrown towpaths of the canals surrounding the London Olympic Park, which I explore regularly to record the dubious legacy of the forthcoming Games.

The displacement of small traditional businesses and communities by greedy corporations searching prime land to build white elephants in our capital city is part of the same insatiable global quest for prime resources around the globe. Once you make that connection, with your senses rather than with your intellect, you become a driven surveyor of the disparities that plague our world.



The pressures of a publishing industry dominated by new technology and the Internet has put enormous stress on our conventional skills as documentary image-makers. We have had to reinvent ourselves and also become bloggers and videographers; pushed to come up with a short three-minute multimedia piece to supplement a set of stills and showcase our work. Challenging times indeed, but history shows us, time and again, that scientific revolutions are followed by periods of fast change, deskilling and readjustment, and we have no choice but to play the game, or else...

Like many of my colleagues, I have accepted, - rather than embraced -, multimedia, and enjoy the extra dimension it adds to our craft. But it is reassuring to realize, after experimenting with new formats and equipment, that your old skills are still valid. If you can tell a story in a dozen well shot and chosen pictures, you can tell it in whatever guise you want. Is the narrative that really counts, and that, you can adjust to whatever medium is in demand.

On the plus side, we are learning to work more as a team, seeking advice from editors and sound people to turn our stills and short videos into coherent clips. The downside is that it is easy for our hard earned content to be relegated to a mere screensaver, drowned by the endless potential of the latest software.



Credit: Julio Etchart

So it is in this last frontier that we now have to make our stand, to ensure that our story, the tale that we want to convey, is the one that gets through. It is a full circle to our earlier disputes - and collaborations - with picture editors and graphic designers. The only thing that has changed is the relentless pace of the industry and the ever-decreasing attention span of the viewers.

We can live with that, though, and create new opportunities, - and re-create older ones -, where our skills can survive and even thrive. 'Uncertain States' is a fitting name for one such enterprise: a brave initiative by a collective of concerned photographers and artists to showcase their work and ideas in a startling broadsheet layout. It is a privilege to be invited to share my scattered thoughts in this forum and I am grateful for that.

Exhibitions in public and reclaimed spaces and short documentaries pitched to new media channels and TV are other examples of ways forward, but, naturally, I reserve my favourite outlet till the end.

I have experimented with poetry for some time now, and I would like to share with you one of my latest creations, inspired by the civic unrest that spread over London last year.

Respect!

© Julio Etchart
www.julioetchart.com

Requiem 4 London

In Court No. 3 at Westminster Magistrates Ms. L. pleads not guilty to handling stolen goods. She looks like a zombie three nights with no sleep It wasn't me, it wasn't me! A Big Plasma TV My daughter is only four, she misses me badly... Yet no mercy is bestowed, moved on to Crown Court, and no bail for you no future, no hope...

Back in the Caribbean or in Chiantishire the bankers play golf, forget what's going on here Martini dry, jug of Pimms reward their machinations

Don't break their vacation from this burnin' nation.

Sitting in Court no. 2 it could have been you a pair of trainers is all that it takes... a moment of weakness to wreck his life, change the stakes, a moment of weakness, easily done. Mr. P. 18 years young, pleads not guilty to burglary. It was just fun, all my mates were there. He is a Blood bro who hails from Haringey, his one-year-old son, what will he say?

when his dad can't get a job and he's 8 CCTV changed his CRB fate.

Temptations are multi-fold in our layered society, branding illusions the stuff of dreams; yet the admen and ladies are still at large sex on the beach and mojitos at sunset tell me who is in charge? no broken vacation from this burnin' nation...

Just round the corner from my humble abode the Penbury Boys are having a rest from an orgy of fire

that charred the hood. Corner shops cast shutters hiding the debris, no amount of brooming will clean the phantom of looting. E5 vs. E9; E8 are losers, N16 too posh, blade'em, kick'em quick, run, the Feds are coming!

Berlin 1945 Beirut 1984 1989 San Salvador Be it the BBC archives, or my own visual records. Something hits my memory cells as I lift my camera again... No, is sunny Croydon in south London, on a balmy summer afternoon in two thousand and eleven. The calm after the storm:

two nights ago, a deadly inferno now a tourist destination in this fractured nation. Innocent kids clicking their iPhones to capture their uncertain future for posterity.

The end of history some clever guy says. That, I do not know; but one thing I'm certain of, is that there is no vacation in this broken nation...

Hackney, London, 2012

SUSAN ANDREWS

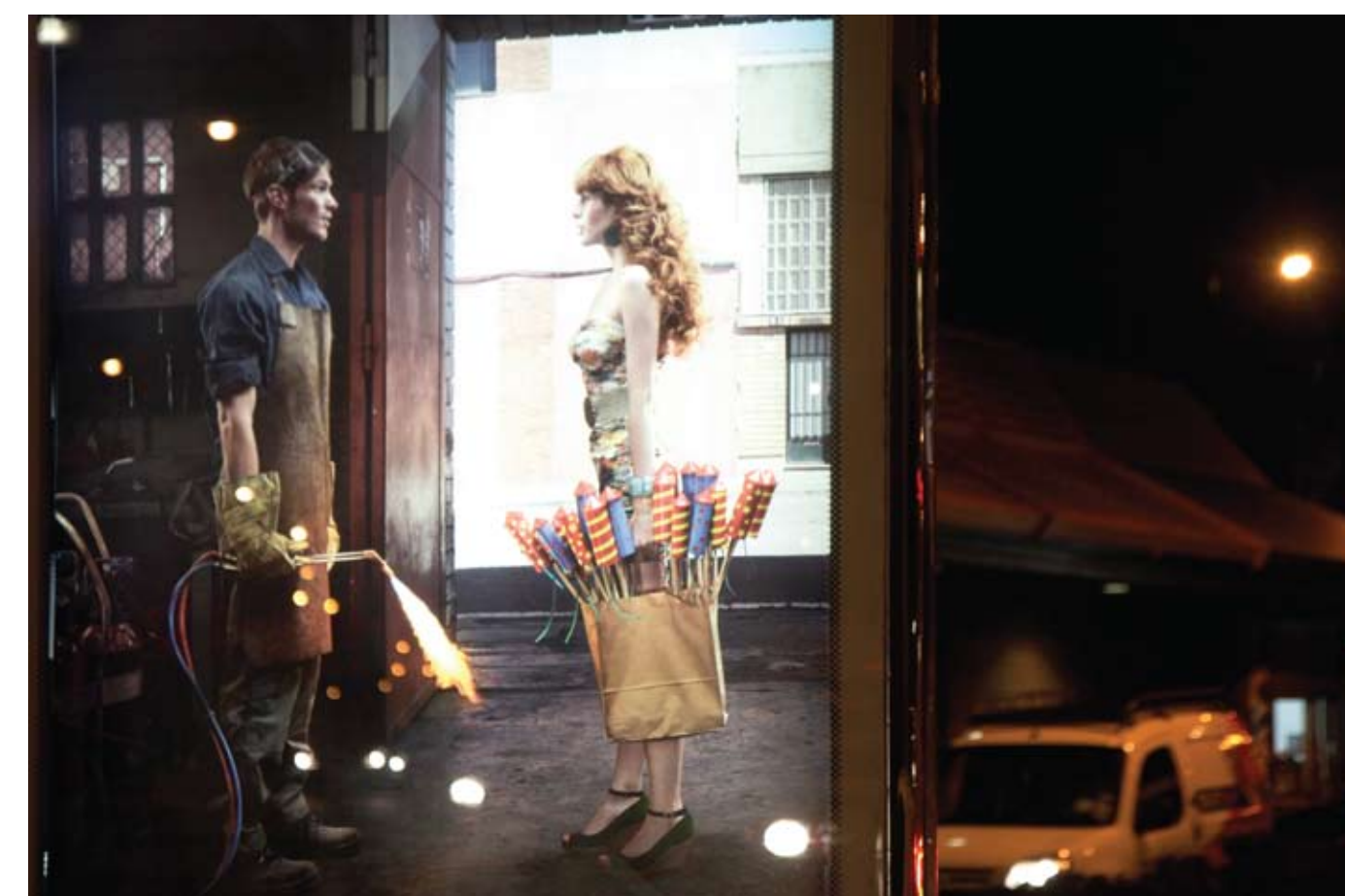
Up and Down Whitechapel High Street - Photographs from the car
 My daily journey to work takes me past the Bow Interchange to my destination at Aldgate East, travelling along the A11 as it moves towards the City and changes from Bow Road, to Mile End Road, Whitechapel Road and Whitechapel High Street; historically, this route formed the initial section of the ancient Roman road from London to Colchester.

Nowadays, frequently blocked by traffic due to road works, developments, incidents and accidents, this commute can be an unpredictable journey. Consequently, in late 2008, I decided to alleviate the frustration by giving myself a task - to take a photograph each time the traffic stops - to take a photograph each time the traffic stops - to take a photograph each time the traffic stops. I set myself a system where I only make a photograph when the car is stationary with the handbrake on, which means there are no snatched images, but there are no rules regarding the direction of the shot or the subject matter.

Sometimes, there appears to be nothing of significant interest to photograph, whilst at other times I drive by something remarkable, unable to record it. However, over time I have made a document of the ever-shifting life of the road based on the apparently arbitrary stops and starts of the traffic. In fact, I became aware that there are patterns to traffic flow based on the existing street activity, so that I frequently stop and record at the same place, unless something unexpected has occurred. The project marks changes: changes in space, season, time and direction as I make my return journey to home. By its nature, this photographic document and work-in-progress has a very particular view as it is subjective and non-participatory, with subjects quietly observed from a distance.

Personally, one of the most interesting things has been that this project has enabled me to reconnect with my surroundings, enjoy the constant flux (an extraordinary amount in these few years) and the immensely diverse population that the road offers. I no longer dread the erratic nature of the journey but look forward to recording the ongoing architectural transformations and capricious street life; the camera having provided me with the opportunity to see my environment, rather than being blinded by the frustrations of commuter travel.

www.susanandrews.co.uk





E Hagaki: Aoi Dori, Hiroshima



E Hagaki: Urakami Highway, Nagasaki

JAMES RUSSELL CANT

Past Imperfect

These long-exposure-cityscapes and written extract form part of a wider body of work entitled Past Imperfect. As well as the cityscapes it includes portraits, text and audio recordings of 18 Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors who strive to tell their experiences. Linking past and present the project as a whole attempts to consider the durative nature of such events and how paradoxically the very act of providing the viewer with more information, reveals the impossibility of, and the gaps in, understanding the experiences it recounts.

Okumura San (8 years old, Nagasaki): I decided to wait with my brother for the rest of our family in front of the nearby shelter. We waited and waited, but no one came back. The neighbours were reunited with their families again. No one from my family came. The two of us kept on waiting in front of the shelter.

www.jamesrussellcant.com

SOPHIE GERRARD

Protectors of Sight

Cataract blindness affects nearly 18 million people worldwide. Cataract surgery is one of the most cost effective health interventions known. The World Health Organisation is committed to the global eradication of cataract blindness by the year 2020.

Initially begun as an NGO commission and completed over 2 years and several visits to the remote and rural Indian state of Bihar, Protectors of Sight presents a social document and subjective and metaphorical narrative on the story of cataract blindness. Bihar alone is home to nearly 1 million people suffering from cataract blindness.

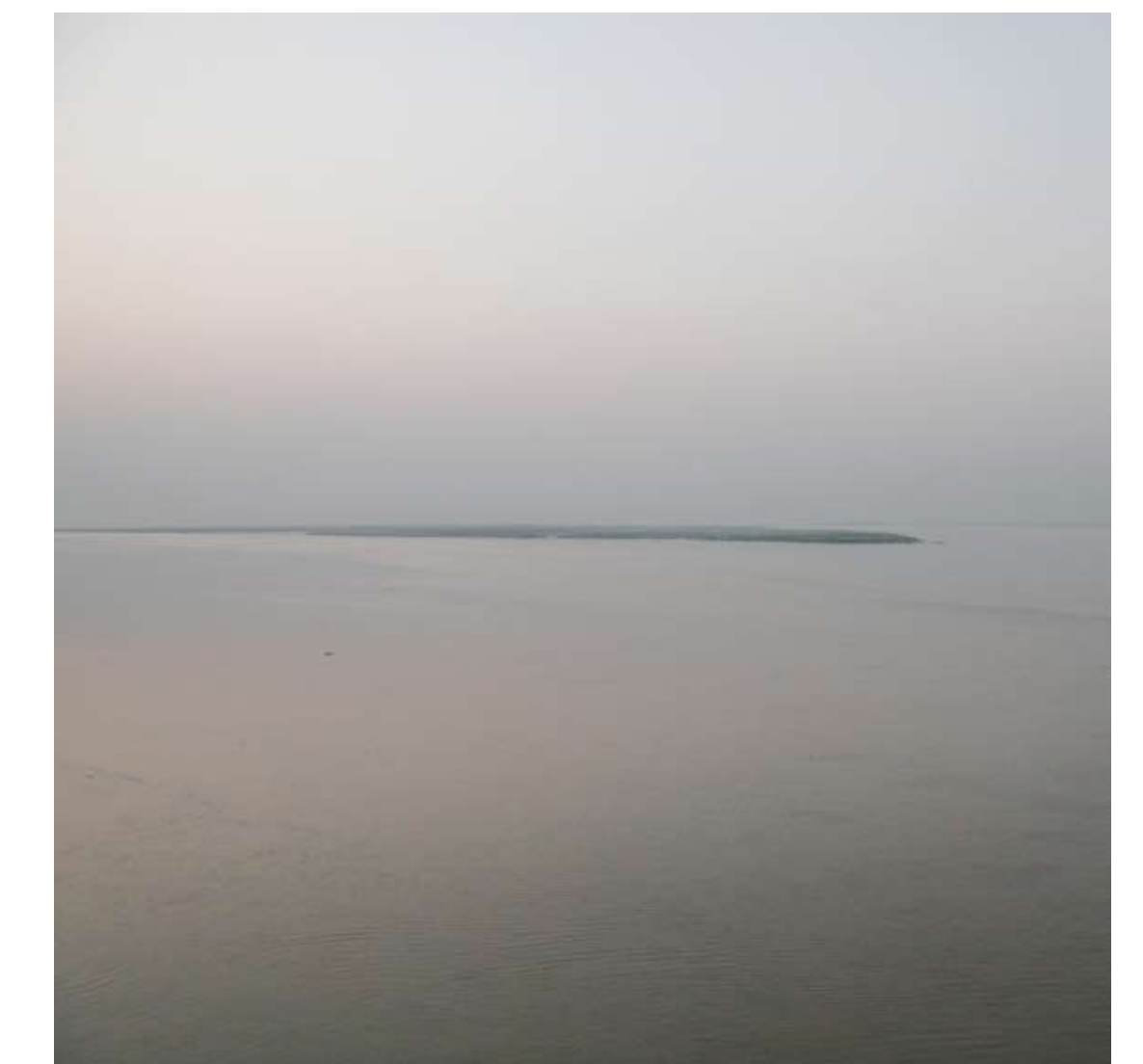
As I spent more and more time in Bihar photographing and interviewing those suffering from blindness, I felt increasingly removed and isolated from outside influences. There emerged a

personal and very real need in me to understand my own journey in response to photographing those living without sight. My work became my diary as I traveled and worked in the region.

I responded directly to photographing those suffering in darkness by making images of wide open spaces and long empty views. I found myself drawn to changes in light and atmosphere, photographing shadows and dark spaces leading to light.

Portraits of individuals in their homes and villages combined with landscapes and still lives of every day objects in interior spaces came together to create a narrative. Protectors of Sight captures the people, moments and metaphors of cataract blindness in one of the worst affected places in the world.

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SUKEY PARNELL

Much of my work is involved in rites of passage of women. I am concerned with beauty, the “feminine”, the gaze of modern society and the journey of age. I saw my mother, a TV star in the fifties and much photographed in her youth, almost completely disappear from the photograph in her middle years and it made me wonder – do women choose invisibility or is it thrust upon them? How do women navigate their ageing appearance in a society that privileges youth? A society governed by what feminist commentator, Kathleen Woodward, terms “the youthful structure of the gaze” (2006). I am continuously struck by how much is at stake in the portrait image and photographic session; a transaction at once banal, ubiquitous and so deeply charged. I am concerned with how to represent the complexity, diversity and quietnesses of my subjects, how to bring out other ideas of “worthy of view”. To question the privileges and norms of “feminine” beauty as synonymous with youthful sexuality. I don’t want to deny youth its beauty—I want to extend the categories, find other aesthetics that are not youth relative without denying the unavoidable conflicts inherent in growing old—the conflicts I feel inside myself about ageing and the dance of appearances. I don’t see myself as removed from the dialogue but a part of it, exploring the conflicts and schism that I experience from being visually caught up in the world, as an onlooker and as a participant. The difficulty with expressing and creating beauty in images that are not easily dismissable or objectified. The double-entanglement of the “feminine”. My work is a conversation with myself as well as with the women I photograph and the viewers of the pictures.

Women of an Uncertain Age, made for my MA, is a series of portraits accompanied by my sitters’ texts. In this work, I explored the uncertain gaze of the deadpan as a visual trope to suspend dismissal and normative readings, and the interplay of text and image – the difference between what we say and what we show of ourselves – and the impact of this kind of ‘double writing’ upon the viewer. My current PhD research deepens an exploration into the transaction of the photographic portrait, the missing ‘positive’ image of the older woman and the circumstances of her disappearance.

www.sukeyparnell.com



JON CARDWELL

Gold: Contemporary Gold mining Colorado

Since the current economic crisis, poverty and unemployment in Colorado has soared. As in other places across the globe, there has been a sharp resurgence in gold mining as a source of income in the state. This ‘gold rush’ is reminiscent of the Great Depression of 1929, when people supported themselves in the same way, extracting more gold from the ground than in the whole of the first gold rush of the late 1850’s.

With the price of gold now at a record level per ounce, it’s clear that people are investing in gold as a commodity seemingly impervious to the turbulence of the international markets. With no sign of demand slowing it seems that the new gold rush in Colorado and through out the world is only set to grow in strength.

The following series of portraits and landscapes were taken between June 2010 – August 2011 in Colorado, the aim being to capture a phenomenon that is both starkly contemporary and reminiscent of the mythic Wild West.

www.joncardwell.com

MICK WILLIAMSON

The Photo-Diaries of Mick Williamson
The documentary camera of Mick Williamson turns its eye to the everyday, looking at personal experience. This is most definitely not heroic photography of the 'exotic other', once so beloved by intrepid documentary photographers and photojournalists; his is a quiet approach, both in its taking and its making. Williamson imbues the everyday with value and interest but more than that, the photographs become transcendent works, like poetry, grasping at the essence of existence.

In this issue of Uncertain States, Williamson's work has been selected on the basis of sequences, groups of images shot consecutively, which reflect his interest in movement and change, but this is not how they are always seen; sometimes they are projections or large scale images and sometimes

tiny prints, presented floating in small frames of variable content and groupings. However, what many of these photographs have in common, at least those that have been selected, is a strong sense of the transformative nature of light, making the ordinary, extraordinary. Whilst most of the shooting takes place within a busy everyday schedule, the photographs offer an opportunity for stillness and evaluation and indeed there is a meditative quality to the work where the intense quality of light surpasses the photographed subject, converting it into a metaphor. The snatched, seemingly irrelevant manner of taking the photographs belies the fact that the printed images appear as small revelations.

Williamson works everyday, never without his Olympus half-frame camera, which has almost

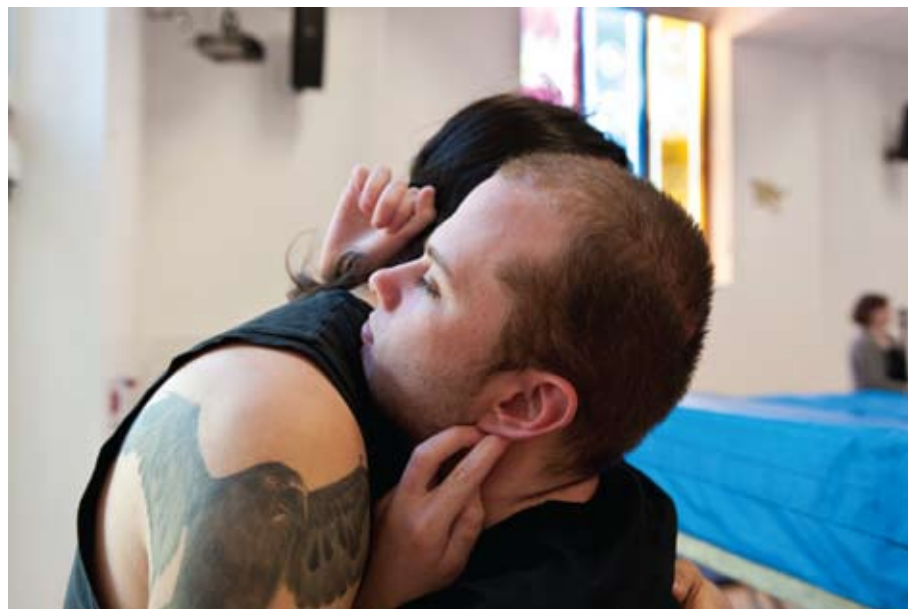
become an extension of his body; he senses and feels the photographs, rarely looking through the viewfinder, he is now so in tune with this small machine. Over the years, since the 1970s, he has gradually built up an immense body of work; initially shooting 1-2 films a week and treating this camera only as a notebook, this practice has evolved into his métier and he is now shooting 2-3 films a day. Williamson doesn't know how many images the archive contains, but there must be well over a million, which of course raises the question, how does one deal with this volume of work and how might the images be seen?

One may also consider what the motivation is behind such an obsessive practice? The photographs certainly describe the life of a man as he commutes to work, enjoys his family, friends

and travel; in as much he may be seen as a social documentarian and maybe these images represent affirmation of his existence. Essentially, he is a collector of memories, of lost moments and of the ephemeral, which may be what draws him to the light, itself in constant motion, effecting continuous change, something intangible now trapped in silver gelatin. This action of light upon the object reminds us that the ordinary is wonderful; maybe these images are a reflection of desire and the self-portrait of an unassuming man as he recognises the potential of the world.

www.mickwilliamson.com





KAYTE BRIMACOMBE

A World Apart
 In the last two decades there has been a steady increase in the prevalence of autism globally. Some people talk of this as an epidemic, with statistics estimating as many as 1 in 88 people are affected. Many people now know, at least indirectly, of someone with an autism spectrum disorder. The rise in autism diagnosis affects everyone as the education and social care budget runs into billions. The cause of autism is still unknown and there is no cure. Autism is an "invisible" condition and can be difficult for "neurotypical" people to understand.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, severely affected people often do not develop any speech and need

24 hour specialist care. At the other end of the spectrum are people with Asperger syndrome, some may live independently but still have difficulty with social communication.

I am a documentary photographer and mother of 3, my eldest who is 16, is severely autistic. I have had a unique insight into the "parallel universe of autism" and am genuinely fascinated by how people with autism experience the world. Being autistic has been described as like arriving on an alien planet. The world is often confusing and overwhelming for those with the condition and anxiety levels are high. They may need to retreat into their own "space" to cope. I am intrigued by how this translates visually and how their

individual personalities come through. Making a real connection with people with autism can be a very difficult but I hope to show how beautiful those moments can be.

This series of photographs are part of a long term project about teenagers with complex learning difficulties including autism, they were taken at Macintyre, a residential School in Wingrave, Buckinghamshire.

www.kaytebrimacombe.com



PATRICK HOGAN

About a year ago, I moved from an urban area to live in an isolated part of rural Ireland. I went there to be alone and to make new work.

Without any concept in mind, I began to take pictures of my surroundings. I found myself drawn to places where others had existed mostly on their own, away from community and society. I found abandoned homes in the mountains, photographing rooms where people had lived and died on their own. I documented these interiors largely as I found them, often experiencing a reality in contradiction to romantic ideals of solitude and escapism.

The resulting, open-ended series combines documentary images with carefully planned pictures, blending reality with fiction to present a psychological story of poverty and reclusiveness often at odds with literary and romanticised ideals regarding solitude.

Through this series, I hope to encourage contemplation about both the human desire and the human ability to be alone and outside the reach of modern society.

www.patrickhogan.ie



Credit: Patrick Hogan



THE UNCERTAIN STATES FIRST TUESDAY TALKS

JULIO ETCHART

'THE INCESSANT ADVENTURE OF DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY'

Venue: Upstairs at The Cat & Mutton, 76 Broadway Market, London E8 4QJ

Date: Tuesday 5th June, 7.30 PM

Followed by Launch Party Uncertain States /10

Uncertain States is a lens-based artist co-operative who are passionate to create and promote visual imagery. In this volatile global climate the work reflects some of our current concerns and challenges how perception is formed in our society on issues as diverse as politics, religion, and personal identity. For your on-line copy, visit www.uncertainstates.com or e-mail info@uncertainstates.com for a hard copy.

We welcome submissions from lens-based artists for further publication. For all enquiries please contact info@uncertainstates.com

Follow us on Twitter [@UncertainStates](https://twitter.com/UncertainStates)

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