

Special
Edition

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COLLECT ART



Part 1

Abandoned

THERE IS A QUIET POWER IN WHAT HAS BEEN LEFT BEHIND.

CoA



On the cover 'Sunny' by Dagmar Kolatschny

Table of Contents

EDITOR'S MESSAGE 04

ADRIAN JAMES ARPS 05

IRIS MAYNARD 09

TIANHE ZHANG 14

JENNY BATCHELOR 20

BRILEE NEAL 24

EMMA SYWYJ 27

REBECCA SKINNER 30

ANITA MÓKUS 34

E. GABRIEL EDVY 38

JOSH PIERSON 42

46 LUDIVINE MARTINEZ

50 LANA DELAMBRE

54 DAGMAR KOLATSCHNY

58 LADY GABY

62 LAURA CANDET

65 DIANA ZHUK

69 ERIC FONG

73 MATTHEW KENNETH HENDRICKS

77 TIMOTHY YUFIT



COLLECT ART

Editor's message:

An abandoned house with peeling walls, an empty factory reclaimed by nature, a forgotten photograph tucked inside an old book, a neglected object gathering dust—these places and things often speak more profoundly than those still in active use. They exist between presence and absence, carrying traces of lives once lived, memories once cherished, and histories that continue to echo long after their original purpose has faded. In this special edition, we explore Abandoned as a theme that extends far beyond physical spaces, inviting artists to examine absence, transformation, memory, resilience, and the passage of time.

Abandonment is often understood as an ending, yet in art it frequently marks the beginning of something new. When a place is deserted, nature slowly reclaims it. When an object loses its function, it may acquire symbolic significance. When memories begin to fade, they are often preserved through creative expression. Artists have long been drawn to these moments of transition because they reveal the fragile relationship between permanence and impermanence, reminding us that nothing remains unchanged.

The artists featured in this edition approach the theme from remarkably diverse perspectives. Some turn their attention to neglected urban environments, documenting the beauty found within decay and revealing how time transforms even the most ordinary structures into poetic landscapes. Others investigate emotional abandonment—the quiet experience of loss, isolation, separation, or longing that cannot always be seen but is deeply felt. In many works, abandoned objects become powerful metaphors, carrying traces of those who once held them and inviting viewers to imagine the stories they contain.

Beyond physical environments, abandonment also speaks to contemporary social realities. Migration, displacement, changing industries, technological progress, and shifting communities continually reshape the landscapes we inhabit. Entire neighborhoods evolve, traditional crafts disappear, rural villages empty, and familiar spaces acquire new identities. Artists documenting these transformations preserve not only places but also the emotional and cultural significance attached to them. Their work asks important questions: What do we choose to preserve? What do we leave behind? How do memories survive when physical spaces disappear? This edition also reflects upon the quieter forms of abandonment that exist within our personal lives. Forgotten dreams, childhood memories, broken relationships, inherited traditions, abandoned ambitions, and moments that quietly recede into the past all become fertile ground for artistic exploration. Many artists transform these deeply personal experiences into universal narratives that resonate across cultures and generations. Through painting, photography, sculpture, installation, drawing, textile art, and mixed media, they reveal that abandonment is rarely empty—it is often filled with memory, emotion, and possibility.

As viewers, we are naturally drawn to abandoned places because they invite imagination. Without their original occupants, these spaces become open narratives waiting to be completed. We instinctively ask who once lived there, what happened, why they left, and what remains unseen. Artists embrace this ambiguity, allowing absence itself to become a powerful visual language. Rather than providing definitive answers, they encourage contemplation, curiosity, and emotional engagement.

As editors, we believe that Abandoned is not a theme rooted in loss alone. It is equally a meditation on endurance, resilience, and transformation. It reminds us that absence can possess extraordinary presence, that silence can carry powerful meaning, and that forgotten places often reveal truths about ourselves and the societies we build. The artists featured in this volume invite us to reconsider the overlooked, finding beauty where others see decay and possibility where others see emptiness.

As you journey through the pages of this special edition, we encourage you to look beyond crumbling walls, empty rooms, or discarded objects. Notice the stories embedded within textures, the memories contained in light and shadow, and the quiet conversations between past and present. These works remind us that nothing is ever entirely abandoned while it continues to be remembered, reimagined, and transformed through art.

Sometimes what has been left behind has the most important story to tell.

Adrian James ARPS



"I am a retired academic and now a freelance photographer with a wide range of photographic interests. I have been interested in photography for the past 60 years, but it is only since my retirement that I have really been able to spend a significant amount of time making the kind of images that I like. I don't specialise in any particular genre; however, rather, I love to create images of scenes and situations that catch my eye and that sometimes offer an unusual perspective on the everyday, whether this be in landscapes, nature, or street photography."

Warehouse, 2023

An abandoned warehouse beside a railway track in the US - even the window 'repairs' are falling apart, but the patterns, textures, and lines are what made me take the picture.



"Photography is about more than just looking through the lens of a camera - it is also about seeing what might make a good photograph, although views about what is "good" will inevitably vary! The skill of the photographer lies in creating images that allow the viewer to understand the photographer's perspective about the image that has been made and to see things that might otherwise have remained unnoticed."



Bags, 2023

Spotted in the Joshua Tree National Park, the colour of these bags, left by their owners, and the materials they are made of, don't belong in this environment.

Track, 2025

A rusting and now disused truck once used to cart loads of salt from the salt pans in Croatia - lines and landscape



How has your understanding of photography evolved from your early experiences with a camera to your current practice as a freelance photographer?

For many years, I suspect, like many amateur photographers, I saw photography as about taking pictures of family members and family events. However, over the last 10 - 15 years, I have been able to explore the world much more extensively through the lens of my camera, which has altered the way I see what is around me that previously I have either not noticed or that I have taken for granted.

What motivates you to photograph such a diverse range of subjects?

I'm a lazy photographer! - I don't often go out with my camera intending to take a particular image, be it a landscape, an animal or insect, or an event. Rather, if I am on holiday or on a day out, I take my camera to photograph things I see that I find unusual and that catch my attention, an approach that means my images often fall into a range of different photographic genres.

How do curiosity and observation influence the images you choose to create?

For me, photographic curiosity is about seeing things, big or small, differently - from a different angle, perspective, or with different lighting - and that curiosity means that I observe my surroundings with a photographic eye, looking for and seeing things that might otherwise pass unnoticed.

When exploring a familiar environment, what helps you discover a fresh or unexpected perspective?

I try not to take my environment for granted, to look for interesting shapes, textures, and patterns, and to see it as if through the lens of my camera.

How do you decide when a scene is worth photographing, even if it might appear ordinary to others?

I try to look for and see ordinary things, but that can also be made to appear extraordinary by highlighting them, or trying to capture a fleeting moment in time, or focusing closely on them to isolate them from their usual context.

Are there recurring themes or visual elements that connect photography?

Not really - there are the usual photographic conventions (rules?) concerning composition, lighting, etc., but my main concern is to try to capture images that I think others might find interesting.



What role does patience play in capturing the moments and situations that interest you most?

I am ashamed to admit that I am not a patient photographer, so I seldom wait for more than a few minutes to capture a wildlife shot, a break in the clouds, or a person walking through my chosen frame. This is partly because I take most of my photographs when I am with my wife, and although she is patient, she sometimes gets frustrated with me looking around for potential photographs, so I have to be quite quick to capture images of what catches my eye!

How do you encourage viewers to notice details or relationships within an image?

This also comes down to acknowledging the commonly articulated rules of photography in terms of composition, focus, depth-of-field, lighting, etc. - or breaking them if it will increase the impact of an image!

In an age when everyone carries a camera, what do you think distinguishes the photographer's eye from simply taking a picture?

For me, it is about trying to see the world as if through the camera's lens, and trying to capture what the camera can reveal about the often transient and unnoticed.

Looking back on your photographic journey, what continues to inspire you?

The hope that I might learn more and get better at what I do!



Iris Maynard



Iris Maynard is a street and documentary photographer whose work focuses on urban solitude, abandoned spaces, and the emotional traces left within everyday environments. Through quiet observations of forgotten cars, industrial landscapes, empty streets, and fleeting human presence, her photography explores themes of memory, decay, displacement, and resilience.

Her visual language is rooted in atmospheric storytelling, often balancing cinematic darkness with documentary realism. Influenced by post-Soviet urban spaces and the unnoticed poetry of ordinary life, she approaches photography as a way of preserving suspended moments – places and objects caught between disappearance and survival.

Her works have been positively recognized internationally for their strong sense of isolation, emotional tension, and reflection on overlooked urban narratives. Working primarily within street photography and documentary aesthetics, she continues to build long-term visual series centered around abandonment, silence, and the fragile relationship between people and the environments they leave behind.

Lost Metal Souls

Lately, I've been photographing the streets more and more, and whenever I see an abandoned car, I stop and photograph it.

I keep wondering why this vehicle froze in this exact place.

Did the owner leave the city and never return?

Did they lose the ability to drive?

It was it bought by young enthusiasts chasing a broken legend, only to realize the cost of restoring it was greater than the dream itself?

These cars slowly dissolve into the landscape.

Covered by trees, rain, snow, plastic sheets, rust, and time, they begin to look less like machines and more like traces of absent lives.

For me, abandonment is not only about decay.

It is about suspended stories – moments where something once full of movement suddenly became still.



Concrete Light, 2025

Harsh industrial light cuts through an empty yard where machinery and vehicles remain long after human activity has faded.

Boarded Silence, 2025

An abandoned vehicle surrounded by concrete and broken walls, carrying the atmosphere of a place long emptied of purpose.



What first attracted you to photographing urban solitude and abandoned spaces as central themes in your work?

I have always been drawn to themes of urban solitude and abandoned spaces because they carry a quiet sense of nostalgia - sometimes comforting, sometimes melancholic. Through these subjects, I explore traces of past lives, events, and moments that continue to exist long after they have disappeared from everyday view. Forgotten cars, for example, are more than abandoned objects to me. They are silent witnesses that shared years with their owners and now stand as monuments to memory, loss, and human stories. What interests me most is this fragile space between presence and absence, where places and objects continue to hold emotional weight even after the people connected to them are gone.



How do you identify and capture the emotional traces that people leave behind in seemingly empty environments?

Often, I am drawn to small details that suggest a life once lived - a forgotten object, signs of wear, or the way a place has changed over time. I do not try to reconstruct a specific story. Instead, I look for visual clues that allow viewers to imagine their own connection to the people who once occupied these spaces. For me, the emotional trace exists in the tension between what remains and what has already disappeared.

In what ways do post-Soviet urban landscapes influence your visual storytelling and artistic perspective?

I grew up in a post-Soviet environment, and it has deeply influenced my artistic perspective. Even if you never lived through that era, you are surrounded by it every day through architecture, forgotten objects, and abandoned places. This constant presence of a vanished time is what inspires my interest in nostalgia, solitude, and the traces people leave behind.

How do you balance cinematic atmosphere with documentary authenticity in your photographs?

I never stage or direct the scenes I photograph. My images are rooted in real moments found in everyday urban life, while the cinematic atmosphere emerges naturally through light, weather, architecture, and composition. For me, authenticity comes first, and the role of photography is not to create a story but to reveal the stories that already exist around us.

What role does memory play in your exploration of forgotten cars, industrial sites, and deserted streets?

Memory is at the heart of my work. Forgotten cars, industrial sites, and deserted streets preserve traces of the people who once used, inhabited, or passed through them. I am interested in the moment when an object loses its purpose but continues to carry a story, becoming a quiet witness to time, loss, and human experience.

Your work often focuses on places suspended between disappearance and survival. What draws you to these transitional states?

I am drawn to the uncertainty of these places and objects, especially because that uncertainty can last for years. You pass the same abandoned car every day, gradually memorizing every crack, scratch, and sign of decay, until one day it suddenly disappears. Yet the memory remains, and at any moment, you can find yourself thinking about it and feeling nostalgic for a time that has already passed. The same is true for abandoned buildings and other forgotten objects - they become part of our personal landscape long before we realize it.



How do you hope viewers respond to the sense of isolation and emotional tension present in your images?

I hope viewers recognize something familiar within the images. We all carry memories of places, objects, and moments that have disappeared from our lives, yet continue to exist in our minds. If my photographs encourage someone to reflect on those quiet connections, then they have fulfilled their purpose.

What challenges do you face when documenting spaces that are overlooked, abandoned, or in decline?

The greatest challenge is revealing something beyond the surface. Abandoned places and objects can easily be reduced to symbols of decay, but I am more interested in the stories and emotions they carry. My goal is not simply to document what remains, but to create an image that encourages viewers to imagine what existed there before and what memories may still be attached to it.

How does street photography allow you to reveal narratives that might otherwise remain unseen in everyday urban life?

Street photography teaches me to slow down and pay attention. Many of the stories that interest me are not dramatic or obvious - they exist in small details, abandoned objects, and fleeting moments that most people pass by without noticing. Photography allows me to preserve these fragments and give them a chance to be seen again.

As you continue developing long-term series on abandonment and silence, what new questions or stories are you hoping to explore through your photography?

I am interested in exploring how people become attached to places and objects without even realizing it. Many of my future projects will continue to focus on memory, nostalgia, and the traces left behind by human presence. I want to better understand why certain spaces remain with us long after they have disappeared, and how photography can preserve these fragile connections.

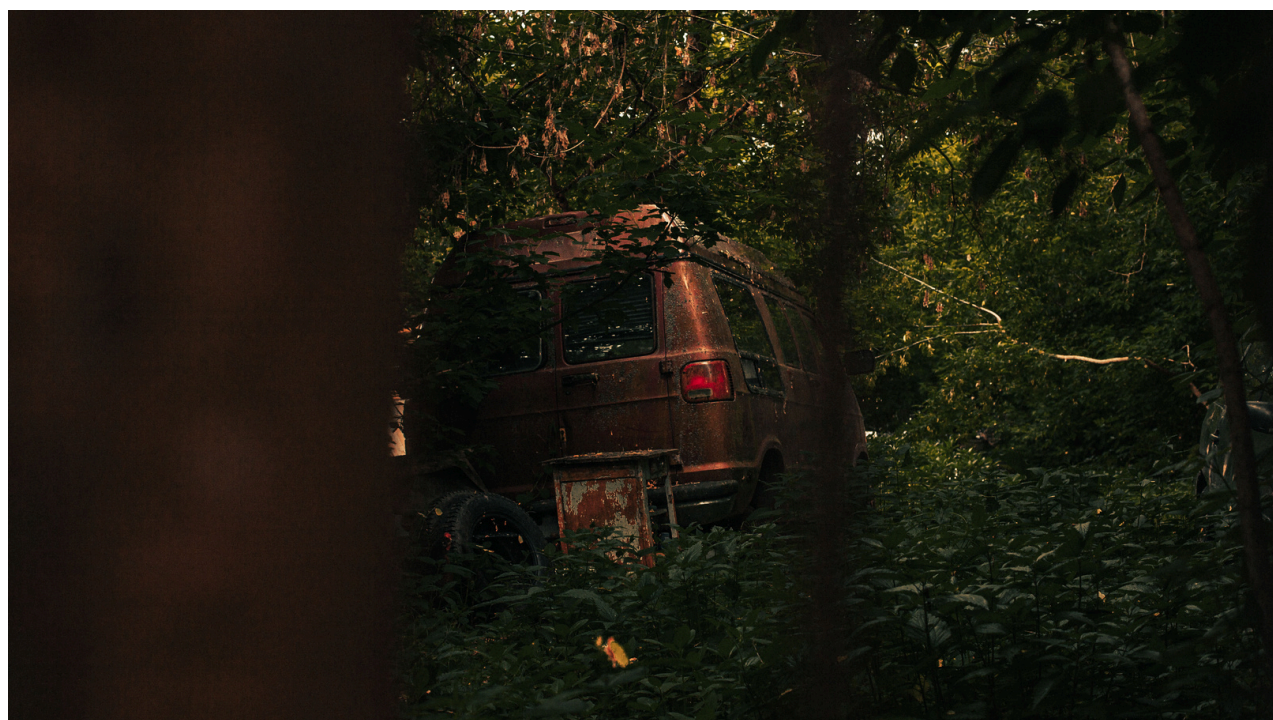


After the Shift, 2025

An Empty industrial scene where the absence of people feels more present than the structures themselves

Hidden in Summer, 2025

Consumed by vegetation, the abandoned van becomes almost indistinguishable from the landscape surrounding it.



Tianhe Zhang



Tianhe Zhang is a multidisciplinary photographer currently based in Beijing, China. Growing up at the foot of suburban mountains, she developed a lasting sensitivity to landscapes shaped by quiet transformation, abandonment, and human intervention.

Her current practice focuses on rural and suburban territories undergoing land acquisition and reconstruction in northern China. Through images of emptied fields, temporary barriers, and residual objects, her work observes landscapes suspended between disappearance and renewal.

Influenced by her background in product design, she approaches photography through restrained composition and careful spatial awareness, balancing documentary observation with subtle surrealism. Her images explore the tension between geometric order and the instability of lived environments.

Working across analogue film and Polaroid photography, she uses each medium to construct distinct relationships with time and memory. While her film photographs tend toward quiet observations of altered landscapes and social traces, her Polaroid works embrace softness, colour shifts, and material fragility, evoking images suspended between documentation and recollection.

Spring Ritual, 2026

This image, *Spring Ritual*, is part of the ongoing project *If Not This Land, Where?*, which explores disappearance, memory, and traces of human presence within a rapidly changing suburban landscape in northern China. An abandoned square brick well emerges quietly from a field of blooming Chinese violet cress, a common wild flower in northern China, appearing as if it were ceremonially preserved. The image reflects the fragile coexistence between decay and renewal: structures once built for everyday communal life remain standing long after their original purpose has faded, gradually absorbed back into the landscape. Through the soft textures and muted colours of analogue film, the work approaches the scene as both document and elegy. The flowers surrounding the well evoke a sense of ritualistic offering or seasonal rebirth, while the empty structure itself becomes a monument to absence, carrying memories of lives, labour, and histories that are no longer fully visible.





There Used To Be Better Days, 2026

Photographed in a rural area undergoing land acquisition and reconstruction in northern China, *There Used To Be Better Days* captures an excavator arm resting silently in an overgrown field. Surrounded by wild plants, utility poles, and distant mountains softened by summer haze, the machine appears suspended between activity and abandonment. No workers are present, and no visible construction is taking place; instead, the landscape exists in a prolonged state of stillness, as though waiting for a future that has been indefinitely delayed.

Rendered through the fragile surface of Polaroid film, the image takes on the quality of a fading memory or an unstable archive. The excavator arm, ordinarily associated with progress and transformation, becomes both an instrument of change and a relic of interruption. Resting across the field like a dormant body, it reflects the uncertain condition of landscapes caught between disappearance and renewal, where traces of the past remain visible even as new futures struggle to emerge.

How has growing up near the suburban mountains of northern China shaped your sensitivity to changing landscapes?

I have lived there for more than twenty years, witnessing not only the cycle of the seasons but also the rapid transformation of my hometown. The place is more like an extension of my own garden. Unlike the city centre, changes in the suburbs can be both obvious and subtle. Over time, I learned to read small signs in the environment: a silver-green haze appearing on the hillsides tells me that the black locust trees are in bloom; the scent of the air can signal an approaching storm before the clouds arrive. Even in spring, the new leaves on a tree can look noticeably different between morning and afternoon. After decades of paying attention to these details, I have developed a habit of looking closely and questioning what I see. At the same time, the physical landscape around me has changed dramatically. Tree-lined roads, orchards, farmland and villages have gradually given way to metro lines, corporate campuses, high-rise buildings and constantly changing commercial developments. These transformations are highly visible, yet they often happen so gradually that they become part of everyday life. This coexistence of seasonal rhythms and urban expansion has deeply influenced my photography. It has made me sensitive to traces of transition: moments where the past and the present, the natural and the built environment, overlap and quietly reshape one another. Those in-between states are at the heart of my work.

What draws you to places undergoing land acquisition, reconstruction, and transformation?

Mainly because of a sense of urgency and responsibility. When I encounter a site undergoing land acquisition, demolition or redevelopment, I never know whether it will still exist a few weeks, months or years later. A familiar building, a field, or even a small corner of a neighbourhood can disappear without notice. Besides, I was born and raised in this region, it is only natural for me to feel a responsibility to document these changes. These landscapes are not anonymous sites to me; they are places where I have spent much of my childhood and youth. As redevelopment progresses, many of the physical traces that connect people to local memories gradually vanish. Photography allows me to preserve and bear witness to those traces before they are lost. I am also drawn to the visual and emotional complexity of these transitional spaces. They often exist in an uncertain state, somewhere between abandonment and renewal. Human presence is still visible through the objects, structures and marks left behind, yet the people themselves have already departed. There is a quiet tension in these landscapes: a sense of waiting, of not yet knowing what will come next. What interests me most is this moment of suspension, when a place exists between its past and its future. Through my work, I try to record and reflect on that fragile condition before it disappears.

Your photographs often capture landscapes suspended between disappearance and renewal. What interests you about these transitional moments?

What interests me most about these transitional moments is the uncertainty. These landscapes exist in a suspended state: their former purpose has ended, but their future has not yet been determined. Everything feels temporary, and the final outcome may arrive at any moment or remain unknown for years. In many of the places I photograph, land has been acquired and left vacant while awaiting redevelopment. During this interval, nature begins to reclaim spaces once shaped by human activity. Wild plants grow through cracks in concrete, abandoned objects become integrated into new ecosystems, and traces of everyday life gradually take on different meanings. I find this process both visually and conceptually compelling. Although these landscapes may eventually be cleared and built over, the changes that occur during this period are not meaningless. On the contrary, they reveal the resilience of natural systems and challenge the idea that value only exists in what is permanent or productive. These sites remind us that transformation is not simply a transition from one fixed state to another. The in-between stage has its own ecology, history, and beauty. My photographs seek to pay attention to that often overlooked period of becoming. While the work is inevitably shaped by my personal memories of these places, it is not simply an act of nostalgia or an elegy for a disappearing past. I am equally interested in what emerges during this uncertain interval and in the unexpected forms of life, adaptation, and possibility that can be found there.

How do residual objects, temporary structures, and traces of human activity contribute to the narratives within your work?

I do not manipulate or rearrange the objects, structures, or traces I encounter to fit a predetermined narrative. Doing so would feel too deliberate for the way I work. I am less interested in imposing my own story onto a place than in paying attention to the stories that are already present. The residual objects and temporary structures that appear in my photographs are important because they reveal how people have interacted with a landscape, even after they have left. They are often modest details, but they carry traces of human presence. Rather than searching for subjects that illustrate a specific concept, I prefer to remain open to what I find. I am drawn to situations where unexpected relationships emerge between objects, plants, architecture, and the surrounding environment. These encounters often feel accidental, yet strangely precise, as though a conversation is taking place between different layers of time. My role is to recognise and record these fleeting moments when disparate elements come together and reveal something about a place in transition.

In what ways has your background in product design influenced your approach to composition, space, and visual balance?

My education in product design has taught me to observe, engage directly with the world around me, and remain curious about how people interact with objects, environments, and systems. Much of the design process begins with looking closely, asking questions, and paying attention to details that might otherwise be overlooked. Those habits continue to shape the way I photograph. I think product design also strengthened my sensitivity to subtle relationships within a scene. Whether designing an object or making a photograph, I am interested in how different elements coexist, how they occupy space, and how small changes can alter the overall experience. This has led me to favour compositions that are structured yet restrained, often emphasising geometry, spatial relationships, and a sense of quiet balance.

Your images often combine documentary observation with subtle surrealism. How do you navigate the boundary between reality and interpretation?

Haha, to be honest, I did not realise my work might be perceived as containing elements of subtle surrealism until other people began pointing it out. I generally think of my photographs as observations of real places rather than attempts to construct fictional scenes. One reason this interpretation may arise is that people rarely occupy the centre of my images. Even when they appear, they are often secondary. By removing direct human presence, I become more interested in the relationships between objects, structures, plants, and their surroundings. I am drawn to moments where these elements seem to enter into an unexpected dialogue with one another, creating small narratives or quiet tensions that feel both familiar and slightly strange. The medium itself also plays a role. I frequently work with Polaroid film, which is famous for its inherent instability and unpredictability. If used thoughtfully, it can produce unusual colour shifts, soft transitions, and dreamlike atmospheres. Chemical imperfections and film defects sometimes become part of the image as well, adding visual elements that were not entirely under my control. For me, the boundary between reality and interpretation is not something I consciously construct. The places I photograph are real, and the situations I encounter are unstaged. What interests me is how careful framing, attention, and the material qualities of the photographic process can reveal aspects of reality that might otherwise go unnoticed. If a photograph feels slightly surreal, it is often because reality itself can be stranger, more poetic, and more ambiguous than we expect.

What differences emerge in your creative process when working with analogue film compared to Polaroid photography?

Working with analogue film and Polaroid photography involves different ways of thinking and making decisions in the field. When shooting analogue film, I tend to focus more on observation, timing and composition. The medium feels relatively stable and predictable, allowing me to concentrate on the relationships between objects, space and light. There is still an element of uncertainty, but I generally have a clearer sense of how the final image will appear. Polaroid requires a different mindset. In addition to composition, I have to consider how environmental factors such as temperature and lighting conditions may affect the image. If those conditions are likely to have too great an impact on the result, I may choose not to use Polaroid for a particular scene. The difference between what appears in the viewfinder and what ultimately appears on the print also requires me to frame images differently.

Perhaps the biggest difference is my attitude towards unpredictability. With analogue film, uncertainty mostly reveals itself after the image has been developed. With Polaroid, it becomes part of the photographic process itself. Colour shifts, chemical imperfections and other unexpected effects can influence the final image in ways that cannot be fully controlled. Rather than resisting this, I try to work with it and remain open to surprise.

How does the material fragility of Polaroid photography contribute to your exploration?

The material fragility of Polaroid photography is an important part of why I choose to work with it. When used thoughtfully, Polaroid can produce images that feel delicate, soft and slightly dreamlike. There is a quiet, almost pastoral quality to the medium that resonates with the emotional atmosphere I am trying to convey.

Many of your photographs explore the tension between geometric order and unstable environments. What does this contrast reveal about contemporary landscapes?

That is not something I consciously set out to explore, but it is an interesting observation. Looking back at my work, I can see why this contrast might appear. I am often drawn to places where different forces overlap: planned development and spontaneous growth, human intervention and natural processes, permanence and impermanence. Geometric structures such as fences, roads, buildings, or temporary constructions frequently appear in my photographs because they are part of how people attempt to organise and control space. At the same time, the environments I photograph are often in a state of transition, where those systems of order are being altered, abandoned, or reclaimed. What interests me is not necessarily the opposition between order and instability, but the way they coexist. A rigid structure may be overtaken by vegetation; an abandoned site may develop its own unexpected ecology; a carefully planned landscape may evolve in ways that nobody anticipated.



As rural and suburban spaces continue to evolve, what stories or questions are you hoping to preserve through your photography?

As these rural and suburban spaces continue to evolve, I hope to preserve not only their physical appearance but also the emotions attached to them. My photographs are shaped by affection, tenderness, melancholy, restraint and, at times, a sense of helplessness. They are my way of acknowledging that these places existed, that they were lived in, remembered and experienced in particular ways before they disappeared or changed beyond recognition. I also hope the work can offer a personal interpretation of these landscapes. Photography cannot stop transformation, but it can bear witness to what was once there and how it was seen. In that sense, the images become a record not only of a place but also of a way of looking. At the same time, the project raises questions rather than providing answers.

As redevelopment continues, I find myself wondering whether there might be alternative ways of imagining progress. Must renewal always begin with complete erasure? What happens to the cultural memory of a place when its physical traces are removed? Are there aspects of local histories, everyday lives, and ecological relationships that deserve to be carried forward, even as landscapes change? I do not seek to romanticise the past or reject change altogether. However, I am interested in creating space for reflection. Beneath the quietness of these photographs lies a concern about what is lost when transformation is measured only in terms of replacement and growth. If the work contains a form of resistance, it is a restrained one: an insistence that these places, and the lives connected to them, are all worthy of being remembered.

Transitional Ground, 2026



Jenny Batchelor



"In my practice, I find it cathartic to use photography as a way of expressing abstract emotions or concepts. This often leads me to create work that steers away from clear-cut narratives and morals. I have always been more interested in conceptual photography and art in general. One major inspiration of mine is that of Bernard Tschumi's 1977 series "Advertisements for Architecture," which uses text and images in a way that blends abstract concepts like eroticism and desire with the tangible, everyday reality of physical buildings and cities. Finding art like this pulled at strings in me I had never been able to articulate, so I turned to photography to help me express them visually. In the past, I have used photography to investigate my feelings of nostalgia towards my hometown as well as ties I have with specific people in my life, whether that be a mutual love of the same genre of music or a reflection on a shared childhood."

Divine Machinery

A piece of fine-art work exploring the niche aesthetic subgenre of the same name. In practice, this aesthetic is often used to make an analogy between Biblical Creation mythology and humanity's harnessing of technology; however, in my project, I have used it to evoke broader speculations on the nature of consciousness, humanism, and empathy. The series makes a visual comparison between three key themes –usually seen as being opposites – which presents them as being harmonious with each other rather than adversarial. By combining biological, spiritual, and mechanical imagery, I hope to have created a piece of work that rejects a human-centric view of sentience and intelligence. By using diaphonized and taxidermized animals in this project, I have attempted to find beauty and respect in death.

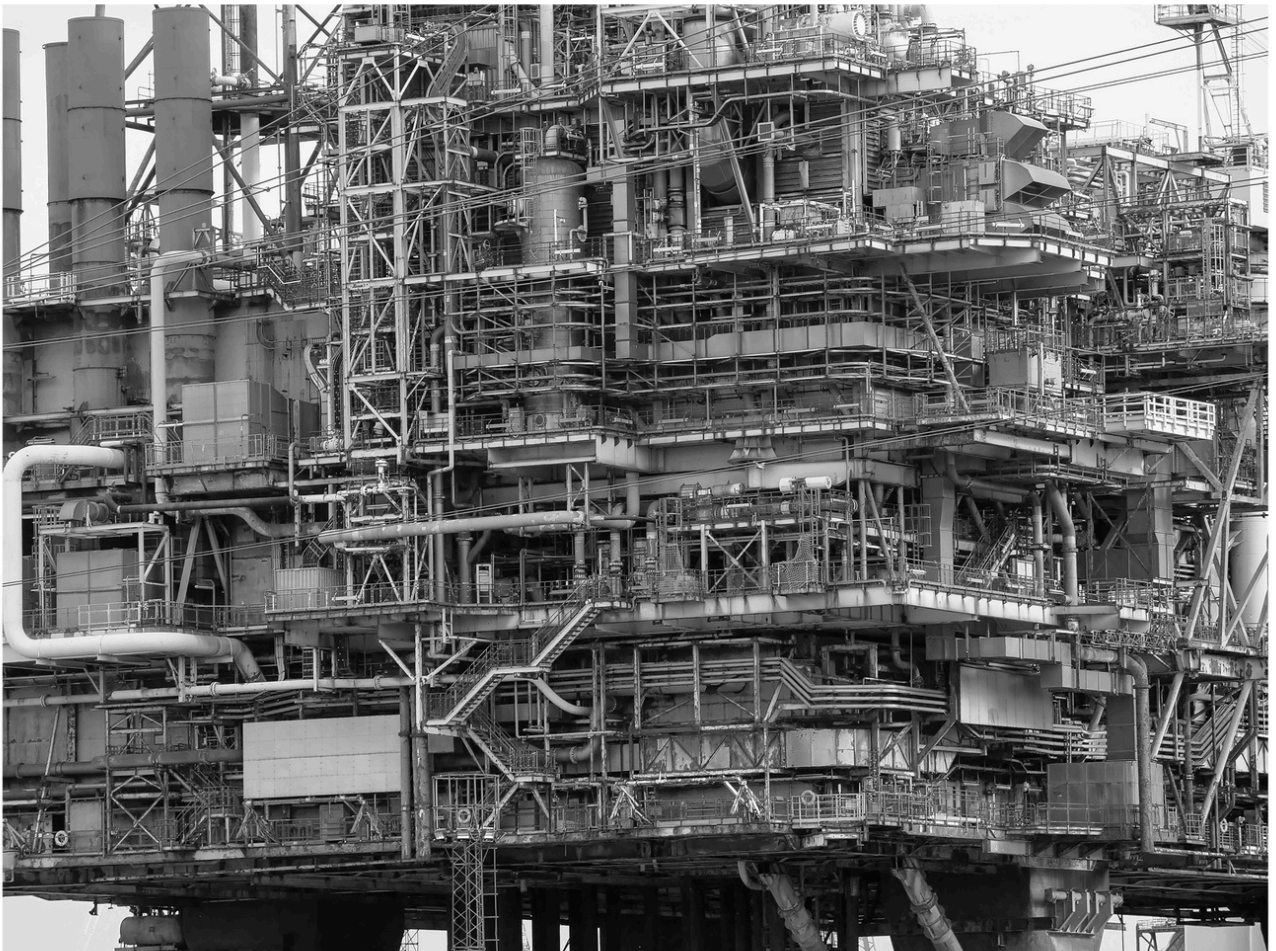
A dilapidated and rusting oil rig, Hartlepool, UK.





Rust

An abandoned industrial park, Hartlepool, UK



You describe photography as a way of expressing abstract emotions and ideas. What draws you to conceptual approaches rather than narrative-based storytelling?

It's definitely a personal bias. I have always enjoyed books, films, and stories that are light on plot and heavy on emotional exploration and character development, so this has bled over into my work. In my experience, having to conform to a linear narrative somewhat limits the ability to get at the heart of the philosophical concepts that I hang my practice on.

How has Bernard Tschumi's Advertisements for Architecture influenced the way you combine imagery and meaning in your work?

Advertisements for Architecture plays with recognisable semiotics in such a fascinating way that it opened my eyes to how easily information can be conveyed with so little. Font type and word placement are a kind of art in themselves, and in finding Bernard Tschumi's work, I began to see imagery, text, and meaning as almost indistinguishable from each other.

What first attracted you to the concept of "Divine Machinery" as a framework for exploring consciousness, technology, and existence?

Honestly, my first attraction to it was because of its beauty. Divine machinery as an aesthetic goes back to medieval artwork of automata, and it's fascinating to see how it has developed alongside technology without losing its inherent philosophy.

Your work challenges the idea that biological, spiritual, and mechanical systems are opposites. What connections do you see between these seemingly separate realms?

All three contain networks that pass information through each other. There is also a huge sense of intangibility between them, so much of the communication that happens through these networks is bodiless – being done through incorporeal signals and instinct. At this level, they are incredibly similar.

How does Divine Machinery question conventional human-centered ideas of intelligence and sentience?

Finding comparisons between the way we as humans experience sentience and intelligence and how these other networks do allows us to lower ourselves from the pedestal we have placed our species on. Maybe we are not the miraculous zenith of creation we think, but simply another kind of consciousness, one that is no more or less advanced than the thousands of others that exist in the universe.

What role does ambiguity play in your practice, and how important is it that viewers arrive at their own interpretations?

I feel that if I explain my intent too rigidly within my work, then it's almost not worth making in the first place, so ambiguity is very important in my practice. I value emotional impact more than anything, and I think if the viewer finds some personal resonance in my work, even if it's tangential to my intent, then the emotional impact will be greater than simply reading what I want them to think and feel.

By incorporating diaphonized and taxidermized animals, you engage directly with themes of life and death. What significance do these materials hold within the project?

Collecting bones and fossils and other curios that are left over when an animal dies has always been an instinctual interest for me, even when I was very little. I think it's an expression of respect and empathy for me. Seeing beauty and worth in these little relics is powerful in a world where life is deified, death is feared, and decay is the opposite of beauty.

How do you balance intellectual concepts such as humanism and consciousness with the emotional impact of visual imagery?

I think those two different aspects of creating work – the visual and the conceptual – have a more symbiotic relationship that will naturally feed into each other if the research is there! Personally, I try not to explain my intent too heavily within the work itself and allow it to just exist almost as a living "organism" that balances itself.

Your earlier work explored nostalgia, place, and personal relationships. How do these personal concerns connect to the broader philosophical themes present in Divine Machinery?

I believe that even big philosophical concepts have their roots in the minutiae of everyday life. Divine Machinery, at its heart, is about empathy, understanding, and collectivism, which are all themes that are present in my previous, less broad work.

What questions do you hope viewers leave with after experiencing the series, particularly regarding the relationship between humanity, technology, and the natural world?

Really, I hope viewers go away questioning the ways that we as a species understand ourselves as a monolith of intelligence and sentience that could never be toppled, and wonder if there may be a more harmonious way to view our relationship with the rest of the universe.

Mould growing on a living plant.

An abandoned industrial park, Hartlepool, UK





Brilee Neal



Brilee Neal is a 24-year-old metal artist and photographer. She is from Smithville, Tennessee, home of the Appalachian Center for Craft. She is working towards a bachelor's degree in fine arts at Tennessee Tech University. Her concentration is in metal, with a focus on small metal fabrication and jewelry making. She was a recipient of both the Bacchanal Art Scholarship and the Windgate Art and Craft Scholarship in 2025. When she is not working in the studio at the Appalachian Center for Craft, she spends her free time exploring and photographing rural areas in Tennessee.

Abandoned (Series), 2024-2025

"I often think about the last time I will be in a building, the last time I will see someone, the last house I will live in. I think about the lasting effects I will have on these things. I started exploring abandoned places in my teenage years. When I felt I wasn't welcome anywhere, I could explore an abandoned house. I could sit for hours going through old belongings and crafting stories of people who once lived there. I imagined someone a hundred years in the future doing the same to my house and my things."





Emma Sywyj



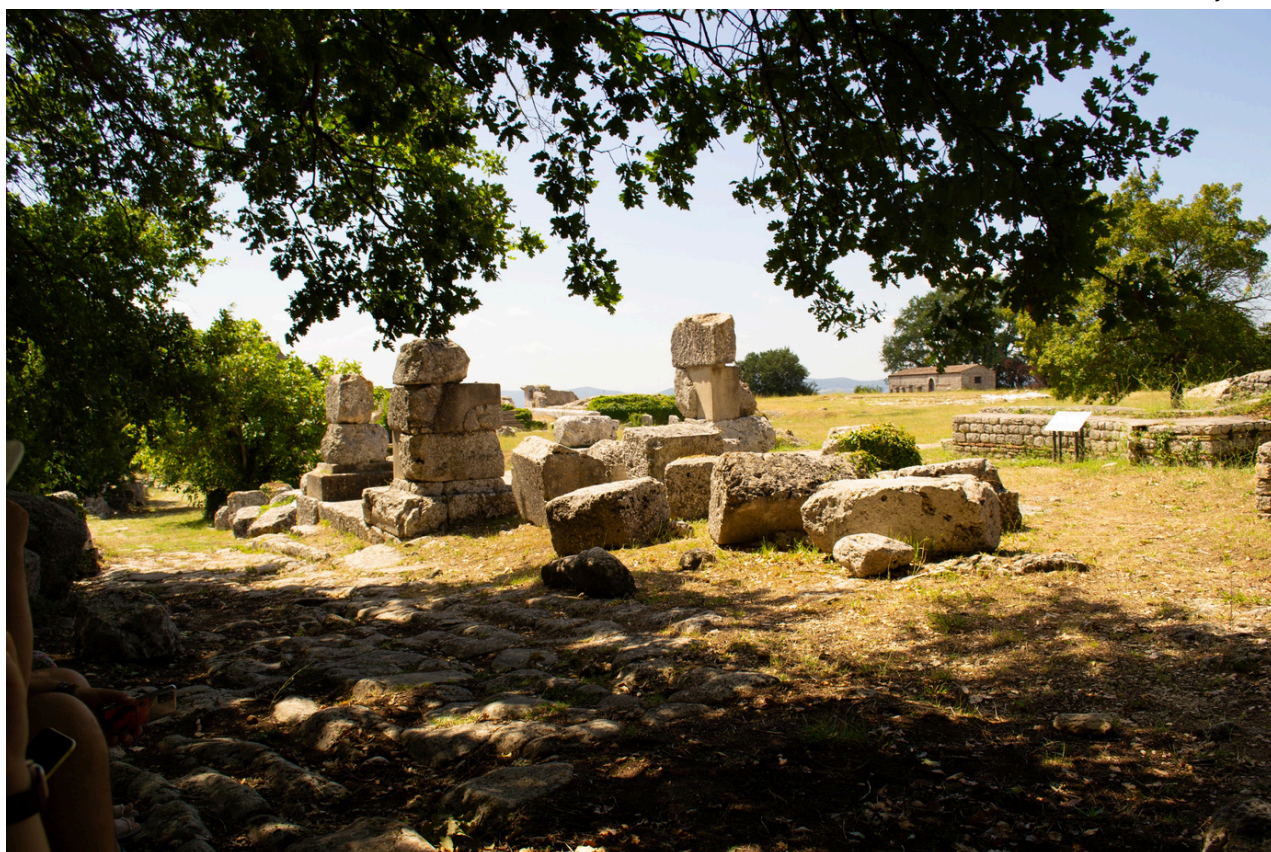
Emma Sywyj is an award-winning artist and photographer who has been creating art for 20 years, 5 of those years she was based in London whilst studying photography at the Camberwell College of Arts at the UAL. From there, she received a BA Honours in Photography & a Foundation Diploma in Art & Design. She has exhibited her artwork internationally in the US in New York, LA, Art Basel Miami & San Francisco, as well as in Europe in Athens and Budapest. She has also exhibited nationally in the UK and London. She has been published in several art magazines in the UK and internationally and exhibited her video artwork in galleries & film festivals around the world.

Crate & Hills, 2006



"My artwork aims to capture and show life at its most vibrant & exciting. The photographs I take encourage people to see the intricacies & beauty beyond the everyday. My artwork is often centred around my immediate environment and cultural identity. I also celebrate culture in all its varied forms all over the world. I have photographed Europe & Asia, capturing these countries and cultures as I experience them. My work encourages viewers to feel awe and joy in the traveller's quest, and the rewards that experiencing other cultures can bring, whilst developing my own cultural identity through photography."

Stones, Italy, 2024



What first inspired you to use photography as a tool for seeing the world differently?

I first started photographing locations like the coastal town of Whitby in the UK, and focusing on scenes that stood out to me. Then the more I travelled, the more I wanted to document the process of travel and experiencing other cultures.

Having exhibited internationally across Europe and the United States, how have different cultural contexts influenced the way audiences engage with your work?

I think audiences outside of China, in Europe and the USA, may find the work that I made in China and Malaysia interesting. Maybe find some similarities in their own cultures, but also see the differences in Asian cultures. My work might read as intimate and introspective in the USA and differently in other parts of the world. These photographic series could open up horizons for some audiences, maybe inspiring people to travel to Asia.

Travel appears to be central to your practice. How do you balance documenting a place authentically while filtering it through your own personal experience and perspective?

I think you have to be present when travelling and doing work like this. When you live in the moment, soaking in your environment, especially when it's a new environment, you can really see a country. Whenever you take photographs, your own experience and perspective will affect the photographs themselves. But when I travel and photograph my experience, it is important for me that I grow and develop by experiencing that culture. The photographs are a documentation of that journey.

How has exploring other cultures shaped your understanding of your own cultural background?

By travelling to Malaysia, China, and Italy, I was able to connect with my roots and understand my family's culture. Through eating the local food, seeing the cities and countryside in these countries, I was able to see the differences between Asian and European cultures. But when I travelled in Italy, visiting my family as well, I was able to see how different Italian culture is from the UK.



You describe your work as capturing life at its most vibrant and exciting. What visual or emotional qualities signal to you that a moment is worth preserving?

I am drawn to strong composition and bright colours. If those two are present, I will take a photograph. If I feel that a photograph is going to engage an audience and show the journey I am on, I will also take a photograph.

Many contemporary photographic practices focus on critique or social commentary, whereas your work emphasizes awe, beauty, and joy. What role do these emotions play in your artistic vision?

I feel that these emotions create a sense of stillness in my work and empathy. Even though my work is about awe, beauty, and joy, it is not about the spectacle; it is about how the everyday can be beautiful.

How do you train yourself to remain curious and attentive to moments that others might overlook?

When I travel, I take in my surroundings and savour every moment of being in a new city, countryside, or country. I stay curious throughout the entire trip without needing to make a conscious effort.

How do different media allow you to tell different kinds of stories?

Each medium gives a different temporal, emotional, and spatial vocabulary. Photography freezes a moment, and video allows me to use found footage and create a moving image about different subjects outside of the themes of my photography. Exhibitions allow me to build an environment and exhibit alongside other artists looking at a similar theme. When my video work and photography are shown at film festivals, it becomes part of a public conversation.

Do you see travel primarily as a physical journey, a creative journey, or a process of self-discovery?

I see travel as all three of those things. My work evolves during a trip, and I develop during a trip. I enjoy the process of travel, for example, just something as simple as being on a flight. I think putting yourself in different environments is important for self-discovery.

After two decades of artistic practice, what has remained constant in your work?

One of the main shifts in my practice is that I'm working digitally now, whereas much of my earlier work was made using analogue processes. There is a difference between these mediums and I'm currently considering returning to analogue for some projects. What remains constant is that I continue to look for strong composition, vivid colour, and moments of the uncanny within the everyday.

Rebecca Skinner



Rebecca Skinner photographs abandoned spaces throughout the United States. She is a modern-day urban explorer seeking unique, neglected structures and desolate places. Her subject matter includes images of large open spaces and details such as peeling paint and rust. Texture, color, and light play an important part in her image making, and she is attracted to the beauty of these places as well as the forgotten history. Time is of the essence as some locations have since been demolished or restored, while others remain frozen in time. Danger is often present, whether it be from rotten floors, hazardous materials, or unexpected inhabitants. Skinner never goes into these places alone, and she is strongly invested in leaving no trace. Working with a tripod and natural light, she does not stage her photographs — there is already a story to be told without making any adjustments. Skinner is the owner/ director of Fountain Street Gallery, based in Boston, and a graduate of Rhode Island School of Design.

"I have spent over a decade photographing abandoned structures. Abandoned locations can be found in any demographic, but are most prevalent in areas that were once thriving. Whether people left due to closing factories, loss of tourism, home foreclosure, or natural disaster, the sense of struggle and loss is clear. I photograph throughout the United States. I belong to a group of like-minded photographers that I travel with and am inspired by. Each location has a story to tell. I hope to immerse the viewer in the scene, intertwining the viewer and the location into a single narrative of nostalgia and respect for the suspended moment. I portray these facilities not only as a preserved instance of a forgotten time, but as the summation of the place's history and beauty. The locations I photograph are often dangerous, whether it be rotten floors or asbestos (requiring a respirator). I never go to these places alone, and feel strongly about leaving a location as I found it. I do not stage my photographs — there is a story to be told, and I do not want to affect it. I used natural light and a tripod for the images in this project.





Exist, 2022



Empty, 2018

The Palace, 2018



What first drew you to abandoned spaces, and what continues to fascinate you about them after more than a decade of exploration?

I began photographing abandoned spaces in the early 90s. I was drawn to them by a combination of curiosity, the beauty of the country in North Carolina (where I moved at 17 after growing up just south of Boston), and my interest in architecture. I returned to the subject around 2010, when my daily life was especially busy and chaotic with young children. Exploring abandoned spaces became my quiet place where I had to think only about what was in front of my lens. These places continue to pique my curiosity and hold my interest. I enjoy the hunt of finding my locations, the excitement of gaining access, and the search for subject matter within each location. It is always an adventure.

Your photographs often balance beauty and decay. What attracts you to the aesthetic qualities of places that have been neglected or forgotten?

I am awe-struck by what is left. Often, it feels as though people simply walked away, leaving the structure and its contents frozen in time. I am fascinated by the way buildings deteriorate and by the aging of everyday objects. Worn fabric of a curtain or an old sofa can be beautiful.

How do you decide which locations to document?

I am interested in documenting all types of abandoned locations and always have a map filled with sites to visit and potentially explore. If a structure is too far gone, locked up tight, or clearly posted with no trespassing signs, I will move on to the next location. Over the years, I have explored so many places, and there are a lot that have been amazing to photograph. Sometimes a site is special in a way, and I feel more connected to it. It is difficult to explain. It may be the scale and vastness of a place, or it could be something simple like the beauty found in peeling paint, faded wallpaper, and worn fabrics. I am also fascinated by the way nature reclaims some of these places.

You describe abandoned buildings as carrying stories of struggle, loss, and change. How do you uncover and interpret those histories through photography?

Every location I visit has a story. The history is already there, embedded in the building, its contents, and the signs of a time gone by. My photographs capture small pieces of the story. I am not trying to create a narrative so much as document what remains and allow viewers to draw their own connections. Through my photographs, I hope to preserve fragments of these places and the traces of the people who once occupied them.

Texture, colour, and natural light play a significant role in your images. How do these visual elements contribute to the atmosphere and narrative of a photograph?

I often focus on textures such as peeling paint, worn fabric, and deteriorating paper because, to me, they represent the essence of beauty in decay. I have always been drawn to color, whether it is bold and vibrant or soft and subtle. Color often helps shape the mood of an image. At the same time, some photographs are better suited to black and white, where texture, contrast, and atmosphere become the primary focus. My love of horror occasionally influences the way I see and photograph these spaces. Direct or harsh light can create a dramatic, eerie mood, while softer light can evoke a sense of quiet beauty and nostalgia. I am drawn to both.

Many of the places you photograph are at risk of demolition, restoration, or further deterioration. How does this sense of urgency influence your work?

There is always a chance that a location will be gone before I have the opportunity to photograph it. That happens often enough that I have learned to accept that some explores simply are not meant to be. However, if I learn that a significant location is scheduled for restoration or demolition, I will make every effort to visit it as soon as possible.

You are committed to not staging scenes or altering locations. Why is authenticity so important to your documentary approach?

I know it seems odd, but for me, it is out of respect for the location, the people who were once there, and the story that already exists. I do not want to create a story. I want to document a place as is, preserving it in an honest and unaltered way.

How do you balance curiosity, safety, and respect for the sites you visit?

Safety is always a priority, although I admit it can be swayed by curiosity. I know what I do is dangerous. Over the years, I have learned a lot about safety from fellow explorers, and growing up on a farm, my father taught me a lot about how buildings and structures are constructed. Even with that knowledge and experience, I have been injured. Respect for the locations I visit is also important. I would be embarrassed to be confronted by a property owner, and on the occasions when that has happened, it has reinforced the importance of being mindful of the spaces I enter. My approach has always been to leave a location exactly as I find it.

Your photographs invite viewers into spaces frozen in time. What emotions or reflections do you hope people experience when engaging with these images?

I have found that most people are interested in my work and find it fascinating. Others are left feeling uncomfortable, and I think that is perfectly valid. In general, I do not set out to provoke a specific emotional response. I prefer to present what is there and allow viewers to form their own interpretations. That said, when I participate in an exhibition with a specific theme, I may select work that supports that direction. I have taken part in several darker-themed exhibits and tend to reserve my more unsettling images for those.

Do you see your work primarily as historical documentation, artistic interpretation, or a combination of both? How do these roles intersect in your practice?

I absolutely see my work as both historical documentation and artistic expression. While I primarily use my photographs for exhibitions, they also serve as records of places that may no longer exist. Many of the locations I have photographed have since been demolished, restored, or lost to further deterioration, which makes documenting them even more important. The historical and artistic aspects of my work are closely connected. I am drawn to the history of these places and the stories they hold, but I also photograph them in a way that emphasizes their beauty, atmosphere, and character. The structures I photograph, especially factories, are reminders of a past that is steadily disappearing. Many of today's buildings lack the architectural character and craftsmanship found in earlier eras, which makes preserving these spaces through photography all the more meaningful to me.



Anita Mókus



Anita Mókus is a Hungarian-based photographer working with both black-and-white and color photography. Her practice focuses on atmosphere, spatial observation, and the subtle relationship between presence and absence within everyday environments.

She is particularly interested in quiet visual details, urban fragments, reflections, and overlooked objects that reveal traces of human experience. Her images often combine minimal composition with an observational and contemplative approach, balancing documentary sensitivity with a more conceptual visual language.

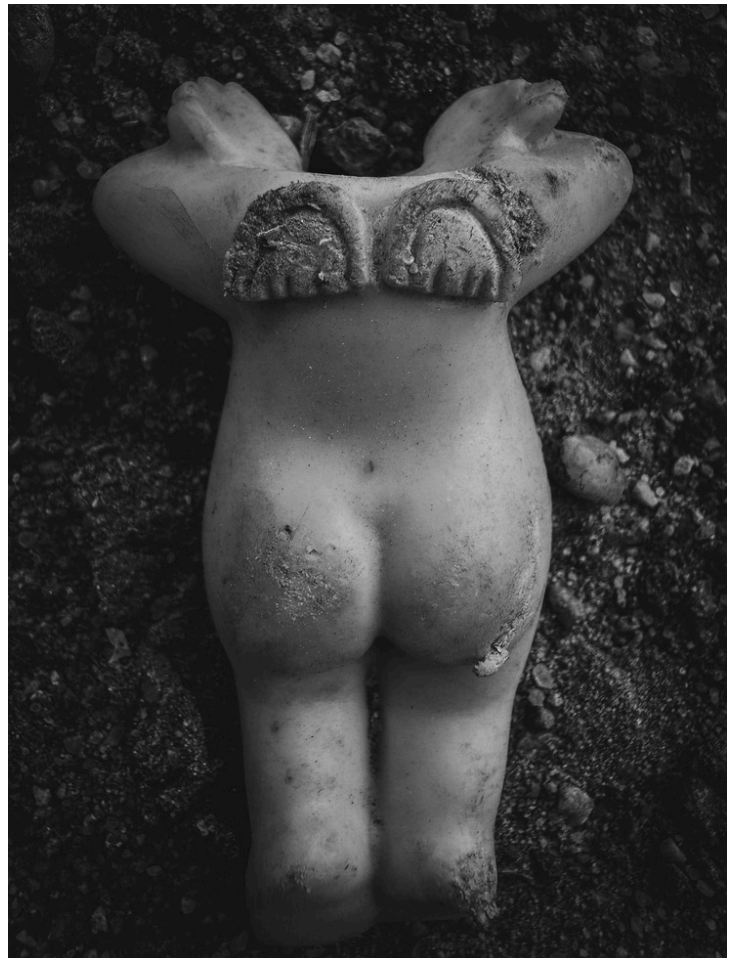
Her work has been recognized in both national and international contexts. She received third place in the European Climate Pact Photography Competition, and her work was exhibited at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels as part of the "Together in Action 2025" program. She has also participated in the Budapest Photo Festival and other curated exhibitions, including international online showcases.

Traces of Absence

Left Behind, 2026

Traces of Absence explores abandonment as a lingering condition rather than a single event. The series focuses on spaces where human presence has withdrawn, leaving behind fragments, reflections, and silent structures that resist clear interpretation. Rather than documenting decay, the work examines the quiet aftermath of departure — a moment where function dissolves, and meaning becomes unstable. Through obstructed views, fractured surfaces, and transitional interiors, the images reflect a disrupted way of seeing shaped by distance, memory, and time.

Human presence appears only indirectly, through subtle traces and residual objects. These elements do not form a fixed narrative, but instead position absence as an active force that reshapes both space and perception. The series approaches abandonment not only as loss, but as transformation — a shift from use to memory, from presence to trace — inviting the viewer to engage with what remains and reconsider what it means for something to be left behind.



What first inspired you to explore abandonment as an ongoing condition rather than a single moment of departure?

For me, abandonment has never been a closed event, but rather a lingering condition. In these spaces, something of what once existed can still be sensed, while absence itself continues to shape them. This coexistence of presence and disappearance became the starting point for the series.

How do you identify spaces that embody the tension between what was once present and what has now disappeared?

I live in a small town in Hungary, and I have been drawn to abandoned places since childhood. I often sought out old farmsteads, and even today, I encounter these spaces during my walks and travels. What interests me is not only the condition of the buildings, but also the lives, stories, and human experiences that were once connected to them.

In *Traces of Absence*, reflections, fragments, and obstructed views play a significant role. What do these visual interruptions represent for you?

Reflections and fractured surfaces suggest to me that a place can never be fully known. We only ever see fragments, while much of its past remains hidden from view. This uncertainty is an important part of how I experience and photograph these spaces.

How does memory influence the way you photograph spaces that have been altered, neglected, or abandoned?

When I visit these places, I often imagine what life might have been like there in the past. What interests me is not documentation alone, but the stories and possibilities that can be sensed within the space. In this way, memory and imagination become part of the photographic process.

How do you approach transforming physical spaces into emotional and psychological landscapes?

I am less interested in the fact of decay itself than in the atmosphere and emotional resonance these places carry. Through composition, light, and the careful selection of details, I try to transform physical locations into more personal and internal experiences. As a result, the images evoke feelings and associations rather than simply documenting reality.



What role does ambiguity play in your images, and why is it important that viewers are not given a fixed narrative?

Ambiguity is a central element of my work. I do not want the images to be tied to a single story, because I find it more meaningful when viewers can bring their own memories and thoughts into what they see. This openness creates space for personal interpretation.

How do the traces left behind by human activity continue to shape a space after its original function has been lost?

For me, an abandoned building is not a closed story, but a meeting point of multiple layers of history. I am interested in who originally used these spaces, but also in who may have discovered them later and what new traces they left behind. The space becomes a carrier of constantly evolving layers of memory. I feel that each period adds something to its meaning, even long after its original purpose has disappeared.

In what ways does the series challenge conventional ideas about absence, loss, and abandonment?

The series does not view abandonment solely as a form of loss. Instead, it presents it as a process of transformation that can generate new meanings and unexpected forms of beauty. For me, these places speak not only about what has disappeared, but also about what remains possible.

How do light, atmosphere, and spatial composition help convey the sense of transition from presence to memory?

Light, atmosphere, and spatial composition help emphasize the uncertain state that exists between presence and absence. I often seek viewpoints that do not reveal everything at once, leaving room for imagination and interpretation. Together, these elements create a timeless, memory-like atmosphere.

Fractured Reflection of the Barracks, 2026

Photographed through a broken mirror, the abandoned barracks appear fragmented and unstable. The cracked surface distorts the space, merging memory and reality into a fractured vision.



What do you hope viewers discover when engaging with *Traces of Absence*?

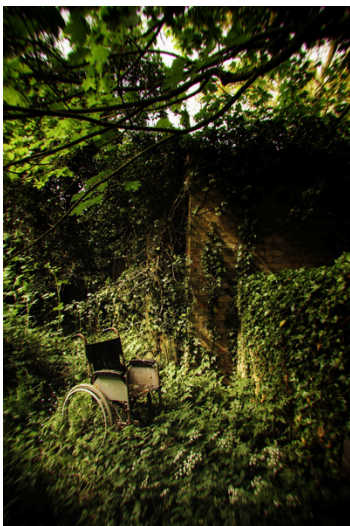
I hope the images encourage viewers to imagine their own stories behind these spaces. I would like them to reflect on who may have passed through them, what stories these walls might hold, and what has happened to them since. If the photographs inspire an inner journey or a personal “film” in the viewer’s mind, then they have achieved their purpose. I am interested in the point where a real place becomes a memory, and memory, in turn, becomes a personal inner landscape.



E. Gabriel Edvy



E. Gabriel Edvy is a London-based multi-media artist whose work focuses on the materialisation of the ephemeral and metaphysical. Utilising a multidisciplinary approach which combines the elements of science, sound, photography, film, chemistry, analog/digital methods, and physical art, her process is methodical whilst embracing unpredictability, and hovers in the tension between control and chance.



E. Gabriel Edvy's series "The Abandonments" focuses on derelict man-made structures that have outlived their usefulness and been left to decay, the remains existing in a liminal state of memory serving as a reminder of the impermanence of all things.

"God's Waiting Room" sits within "The Abandonments" series and is a collection of images of an abandoned English care home, whose title and theme play with the ideas of religion, humanity, loss, and time.

What first drew you to abandoned structures as subjects, and what do they reveal about the passage of time?

I've always been intrigued by abandoned places; they feel very secretive and mysterious, and are often quite ominous and unsettling. There's something in the juxtaposition of human ambition and the quiet and inevitable reclaiming of nature, which prompts reflection on the impermanence of human endeavours. Many that I've photographed were once used for military purposes, which were themselves unknown to the public, so there's also an aspect of archaeology about it, uncovering their uses and intent retroactively. They all hold stories, have their own personalities and feelings, which is sometimes a challenge to capture.

In *The Abandonments*, derelict buildings exist in a liminal state between memory and disappearance. What fascinates you about these transitional spaces?

There's something hauntological about them; they're discarded and sometimes unfulfilled ideas. The human element has vanished, and they've become ghosts, which I think is the very definition of the space between memory and disappearance. They're places that are lost but not yet gone completely—they feel unresolved and sit on the threshold of what is past and what persists in the present.

How did the abandoned care home featured in *God's Waiting Room* shape your thinking about loss, aging, and human presence?

*The care home is often the last place where we sit with our mortality. The decay and abandonment of the building felt like the deterioration of the body and the frequent desertion of the ill or elderly, particularly in the West. It's also a strange space, a bit like the *Mary Celeste*. It's been left in a rush, the accoutrements of life dropped suddenly, which plays with the psychology of relational disappearance or "ghosting"—leaving us suspended between the memory of connection and the reality of loss. The series explores our expectations and assumptions of aging, death, the afterlife, and what is left, both on a personal and a larger scale. The human element persists, but the support systems are collapsing, which also echoes what we are living through globally right now.*

The title *God's Waiting Room* carries both religious and social associations. What meanings were you hoping to evoke through it?

It's also a dark joke...care homes are often (crassly) referred to as "God's Waiting Room" because they're where people are waiting to die. But here the people are long gone, and the waiting room itself is disintegrating. What were they waiting for? Did they abandon the room, or did the owner of the room abandon them? Have the inhabitants of this place left behind the accoutrements of age and ascended to another plane, or did they wait so long that they crumbled into dust? There are a lot of ideas going on with it under the surface.



How do you approach photographing spaces that were once filled with human activity but now stand empty?

Some places are researched before photographing and may be in a state of managed decline. Others, like God's Waiting Room, are stumbled across and are truly ephemeral—they are rapidly changing and may not exist tomorrow. Every space has its own personality and its own feel, which will inform how I shoot it, which medium I use, the lens choice, and the techniques employed.

Your work explores the materialisation of the ephemeral and metaphysical. How do photography and mixed-media practices help you make the intangible visible?

My work is varied, sometimes using more complex techniques like electrophotography, mathematics, analogue electrical signals, organics, or experimental exposure and printing techniques. Sometimes, like with The Abandonments, it's about trying to convey a feel or vibe of a place in a way that leans into experimentation without letting it take over the subject and narrative.

Chance and unpredictability are important elements of your process. How do you balance these qualities with methodical planning?

The creation of my art starts with an idea I want to explore. It may be vague, I may not know what I'm going to find or discover, or what the process is going to be, and often I end up somewhere I didn't think I'd go. It starts with a plan, as in "I will do x-y-z", but I like to allow myself the space to experiment and for unexpected results to naturally occur. This series was the ultimate in on-site unpredictability as I had no idea what I'd find or how I'd react when I stepped into the space.

In what ways do science, chemistry, and experimental processes influence the conceptual foundations of your work?

It varies; sometimes the process informs the concept, and sometimes it's the other way around. Some work naturally has a process to it, and other work must search a little to find its voice. It's all about thinking about things a little sideways, trying to capture the ephemeral or abstract in a physical form, or presenting ideas differently.





What role does memory play in the way viewers engage with abandoned environments and forgotten places?

Psychologically, we transform abandoned environments into emotional spaces, and often their original purpose informs that too. As they lack the active human element, our brains will try to fill the void and allow us to project our own experiences, feelings, traumas, memories, and fears onto them. They're easy to feel a little lost in, which challenges our sense of control and certainty but also invites self-reflection.

Through God's Waiting Room, what reflections do you hope audiences have about impermanence, mortality, and the traces we leave behind?

I hope the audience will find their own meanings in the photos because the series operates on different levels and proposes divergent angles and questions. There are a lot of possibilities, and ultimately, it's up to the viewer to decide what they see.



he Abandonments
God's Waiting Room

Josh Pierson



Josh Pierson is a self-taught photographer. Josh began photographing in 2019 while finishing school. Much of the work he has created since then has remained unseen, forming a quiet and deeply personal archive. Alongside his artistic practice, he works as an engineer in a factory, where the constant mechanical rhythm and industrial noise stand in stark contrast to the stillness he seeks through photography. For Josh, making photographs offers a necessary pause—a space to step away from the monotony of daily work and engage with the world through observation, reflection, and quiet contemplation.



There is this perpetual grind of tearing down and building new around here. You never know when it's the last time you will see something before it's gone and never the same again. They will waste all this shit before long. They tore down the Kroger, too. They crushed up the parking lot and hauled off the pebbles in big trucks. Then they built a new Kroger in the exact same lot. The place I once knew is dissolving. It just plays into the idea I can't get out of my head. The one where I leave without any thought of coming back. To leave and never return. There is a peace to being completely alone. Not a single god damned person knows where to find me. Myself included.





You describe photography as a break from the constant noise of factory work. What does the act of taking photographs provide that your daily environment cannot?

Taking photos can act as an opportunity for me to create my own little universe. It allows me to get into a completely different headspace and forget about everything else that's happening for a while.



How has your experience as an engineer influenced the way you observe and compose images?

My interest in photography started as I was finishing up school. My studies allowed me to understand the camera as a machine and made me feel confident I could figure out how to expose an image. My interest quickly evolved until I was thinking about photography in a completely different way. My work in engineering requires a narrow focus and effort. Taking photos is like a freedom from that for me. Later in the darkroom, the engineering side of me probably came back into the picture. I could continue experimenting forever.

Much of your work has remained unshared. What has kept these photographs private, and what does sharing them now mean to you?

I was never consciously hiding anything; I just wanted to articulate what I wanted to say and then figure out how to say it first. I took pictures for a few years until I started to make ones that were remotely interesting to me, which was only recently.

What subjects or moments are you most drawn to when you pick up your camera?

When I look back at the photos that I typically like the most, I usually barely remember taking them. When I am out walking around, I typically use whatever is around as a mirror for what's in my head, and I sort of space out. Sometimes I may look back at a picture from months prior, and it strikes me as interesting. I might go back to that place again or use it as inspiration to make something new.

How do you navigate the relationship between routine, work, and creativity in your daily life?

Mostly, I would say I don't navigate it that well, or at least not in a way that anyone should look to learn from. Usually, either routine, work, or creativity doesn't get the proper attention. I find inspiration from my wife, and this reminds me of our life together. She is also an artist and engineer. We both alternate between being wrapped up in our jobs and getting totally lost in our art stuff.

Does photography serve as a form of escape, reflection, or something else entirely?

I think I was always searching for escapism. But I could escape in many ways without a camera. For me, I'm just enjoying creating something. It feels like I'm getting something off my chest, and it gives me something to tinker with endlessly. The whole experience has led me to appreciate a lot more things I didn't notice before.



What role does silence play in your photography?

Silence is great, but the drone is nice too. I really like the white noise of the highway, wind in the leaves, rain on the concrete, cicadas. That stuff clears up the mind.

How has your way of seeing the world changed?

Quite a lot has changed since then. But I am still in complete awe of the world, and seeing it is still rad. In this way, it has not changed at all.

Are there recurring themes or emotions that emerge in your images, even unintentionally?

I've been exploring some small towns around where I grew up and where I live now. All these places are growing, and things are changing. I feel like I'm taking pictures of it right as it morphs into something new and different. It's hard to describe, but some of the photos feel like memories.

What do you hope people might understand about your perspective?

I would hate to ruin any organic, individual understandings by saying what I think should be understood. Understanding my head is something that I am still grappling with myself. I certainly wouldn't want to put that on anyone else. I hope the photos say what I can't articulate.



Ludivine MARTINEZ



Ludivine Martinez is a French documentary artist and photographer based in the South of France. She studied Visual Arts at Aix-Marseille University and developed a socially engaged practice through photography and video. Her work focuses on contemporary social and environmental issues, exploring themes such as exile, gender-based violence, social invisibility, and ecological crises. Using a documentary and human-centered approach, her practice seeks to raise awareness and encourage reflection on justice, vulnerability, and collective responsibility.

For several years, Ludivine Martinez has developed a socially engaged photographic practice focused on contemporary social and environmental issues. Through photography and video, she gives voice to the invisible and sheds light on realities often ignored or silenced, including exile, street harassment, femicide, and ecological crises.

Her documentary work, rooted in listening, empathy, and respect for the people she photographs, seeks to foster collective awareness and encourage reflection on injustice and exclusion. Through intimate and human-centered narratives, her practice advocates for a more just, compassionate, and equitable world.

Tant que je ne suis pas mort (As Long As I Am Not Dead),

2024 - ongoing

This project is part of an intimate long-term documentary photography practice. It documents the life of my partner, who has been diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a brain tumor, through images created within the continuity of everyday life, in hospitals as well as in spaces of recovery and convalescence. Photography becomes a tool of presence, attention, and memory in the face of a constantly shifting reality.

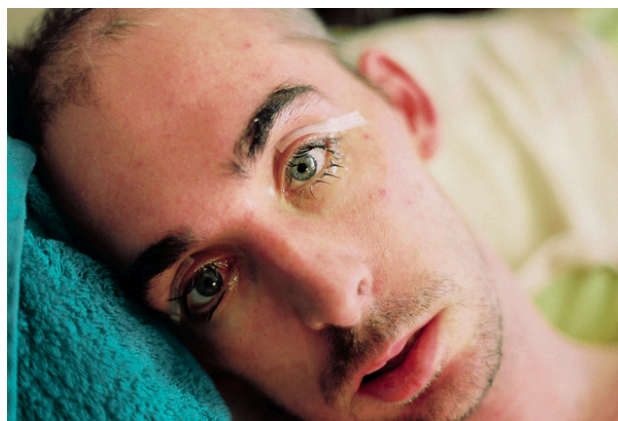
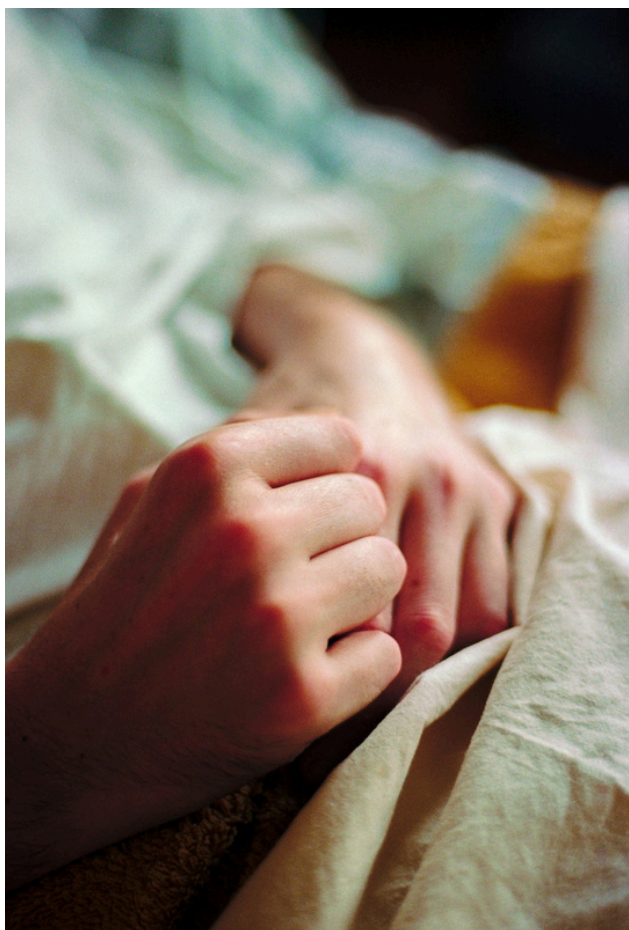
Over time, illness has transformed gestures, rhythms, movement, and more broadly, the way daily life is inhabited. Photographing became a way of remaining close to these transformations and preserving traces of changes that are sometimes almost imperceptible.

The series explores the experience of a body shaped by illness, medical care, and dependency. It seeks to reveal what unfolds in the interstices: exhaustion, waiting, fragility, but also gestures of support, silent presences, and forms of tenderness that persist despite everything.

Through close framings oscillating between color and black-and-white imagery, the work moves between documentary and sensory approaches, becoming almost tactile. The images sometimes create the impression that the viewer could physically touch the skin, fabrics, and surfaces they depict. The body appears fragmented: hands, gazes, medical devices, as though identity itself were being reconfigured through the experience of illness.

This series relates to the theme "Abandoned" through the gradual deterioration of the body, the loss of autonomy, and the sense of isolation generated by illness. It also reflects a constant confrontation with absence, uncertainty, and the possibility of disappearance, within a daily life suspended between presence and erasure.

The images explore what remains when familiar points of reference begin to dissolve: the fragility of human connections, dependency, the fear of losing the other, but also the gestures of care, tenderness, and support that persist despite everything. Through this physical and emotional proximity, the project seeks not simply to depict illness but to convey how it transforms our relationship to the body, caregiving, intimacy, and vulnerability.



Tant que je ne suis pas mort (As Long As I Am Not Dead),





Tant que je ne suis pas mort (As Long As I Am Not Dead),



What first drew you to documentary photography as a means of exploring social and environmental issues?

I have always felt the need to help others and to bear witness to what I see around me. Early on, I realised that photography could make invisible realities visible and draw attention to issues that are often ignored. Documentary photography became a way for me to engage with the world and share stories that deserve to be seen.

Your work often focuses on people and experiences that remain overlooked or unheard. How do you approach making the invisible visible through photography?

I am interested in stories that often go unnoticed and in people who are pushed to the margins. I don't want to speak for them, but rather create images that allow their experiences to be seen. What matters most to me is showing people as they are, with dignity and complexity.

Themes such as exile, gender-based violence, and social exclusion require great sensitivity. How do you build trust with the individuals and communities you photograph?

Trust takes time, and I try to approach people with honesty, respect, and openness. I always explain why I am there and what I am doing. For me, photography starts with a human connection.

What role do listening and empathy play in your documentary process?

They are at the heart of my work. Listening helps me understand what cannot always be seen, and empathy allows me to approach each story with care. Without them, the work would lose its meaning.

How do you balance the responsibility of documenting difficult realities with the need to preserve dignity and agency for your subjects?

I always try to keep a respectful distance and avoid any form of voyeurism. Even when dealing with illness, violence, or vulnerability, I want to show people as more than what they are going through. Preserving dignity is essential to my practice.

Photography can raise awareness, but can it also create change? What impact do you hope your work has on audiences and society?

I believe photography can change the way we look at certain realities. It can challenge indifference and encourage people to question their assumptions. If my work helps create empathy and understanding, then it has already achieved something meaningful.

How does working across both photography and video influence the way you tell stories and communicate complex social issues?

Photography allows me to capture a moment, while video extends it through movement. I see them as complementary tools that help me tell stories in different ways. Together, they create a richer and more immersive experience.

Many of your projects address injustice and vulnerability. What motivates you to continue engaging with these challenging subjects?

I feel a responsibility to document realities that are often overlooked. What keeps me going are the people I meet and the trust they place in me. I am constantly inspired by their strength, resilience, and ability to keep moving forward despite difficult circumstances.

How do environmental crises and social issues intersect within your artistic practice?

To me, environmental crises are also human crises. They often affect the most vulnerable people first and reveal existing inequalities. I am interested in how these larger issues shape everyday lives, relationships, and communities.

What conversations or reflections do you hope viewers take away after experiencing your work?

I hope my work encourages people to look differently at realities they may not usually pay attention to. If it sparks empathy, questions, or meaningful conversations, then I feel I have done the job. Photography, for me, is above all a way of creating dialogue.

Lana Delambre



Lana Delambre is an artist and educator based in Manchester, UK. She holds a BA (Hons) in Photography from the University of Huddersfield and a Master's degree from Manchester Metropolitan University. Through her photographic practice, she explores the culture, history, and identity of places by documenting everyday life, architecture, landscapes, social inequalities, people, and local customs across diverse regions. Delambre's work seeks to look beyond the surface of each location, revealing both cultural distinctions and the shared experiences that connect people across geographical boundaries. At a time when understanding and acceptance of difference are increasingly challenged, her photography emphasizes the importance of documenting diverse communities while highlighting the common threads of humanity that unite us.



Islands of Offering

Traces the lifecycle of Canang Sari, small, daily offerings made in Bali as part of a ritual practice that maintains balance between the spiritual and material worlds. Constructed from organic materials such as flowers, leaves, fruit, and incense, these arrangements are placed within the landscape and left to weather, disperse, and decay. The Canang Sari becomes a point of intersection between ritual and material, human action and environmental response. In photographing these offerings at different stages of their existence, the series explores how meaning is continuously negotiated through change.

As the offerings shift with the wind, light, water, and human movement, their meaning becomes unstable. Elements scatter, collapse, or merge back into the environment, blurring distinctions between gesture and residue, intention and accident. Through this process, the work reflects on impermanence not as loss, but as an active and generative condition.



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Your work often explores both cultural difference and shared human experience. How does *Islands of Offering* embody this balance?

The Canang Sari are culturally distinct objects, carrying meanings embedded in local traditions, cosmologies, and daily acts of devotion. At the same time, they address experiences that are widely shared. Such as care, gratitude, mortality, and the desire to find a connection between ourselves and forces larger than us.

What first drew you to the Canang Sari ritual, and why did you feel compelled to document it through photography?

What initially attracted me was the way the offerings were woven into everyday life. They appeared everywhere, in temples, on the beach, at doorways, beside roads, creating a visible rhythm of devotion throughout the landscape. I was struck by their beauty, but also by their Impermanence. These carefully constructed objects are made with the knowledge that they will quickly be altered by weather, animals, and human activity.

How do you approach photographing a spiritual practice while respecting its cultural and religious significance?

Respect begins with observation and listening. Rather than treating the ritual as a spectacle or exotic subject, I approached it as a participant observer, spending time understanding its role within daily life and the values it embodies. My intention was not to explain or interpret the practice on behalf of the community, but to engage with aspects of it that resonated with broader questions I was already exploring in my work. Visually, I focused on the material presence of the offerings and their interactions with the environment, allowing the photographs to reflect the ritual's rhythms without attempting to reduce its spiritual complexity to a single narrative.

The series follows the offerings through different stages of transformation. What did you discover by observing their complete lifecycle?

Following the offerings from their placement through to their gradual dispersal revealed how meaning is not fixed at a single moment. The ritual does not end when the offering is placed; it continues as the object enters into a dialogue with its surroundings. Flowers fade, leaves dry, fruit decays, and elements are carried away by wildlife, wind, or water. What interested me was how these changes did not diminish the significance of the offering. Instead, they became part of its existence.

How does the changing physical form of the Canang Sari affect the meanings viewers might attach?

The shifting form of the offerings creates a movement between recognition and ambiguity. At first, they are clearly intentional objects, carefully composed and culturally legible. As they weather and disperse, they become less easily defined. Viewers may begin to read them differently, as traces, remnants, debris, or fragments absorbed into the landscape. That instability of interpretation is important to the work because it reflects the way meaning itself is constantly negotiated. The images invite viewers to consider how value and significance change as objects move through time.

In your work, impermanence is presented as a generative force rather than a form of loss. What interests you about this perspective?

I am interested in the idea that change produces new forms of meaning rather than simply erasing what came before. Much of contemporary culture tends to frame impermanence in terms of disappearance or decline, but many philosophical and spiritual traditions understand it as a condition of renewal and transformation. In this series, the offerings do not simply vanish. They enter into new relationships with their environment, becoming part of larger ecological and material cycles. It opens a space for thinking about change not as an ending, but as a process through which new possibilities emerge.

How do environmental elements such as wind, rain, light, and human movement become collaborators in the creation of the work?

These forces are active participants in both the ritual's unfolding and the photographs themselves. Wind scatters petals, rain alters textures and colours, light shifts the atmosphere of a scene, and human and animal movement displaces or reshapes the offerings.

Rather than resisting these interventions, I embraced them as part of the work's subject matter. The environment becomes a collaborator, continually transforming the visual and conceptual form of the offerings in ways that could not be fully predicted or controlled.

Your photography often looks beneath the surface of places and cultures. What deeper insights did Bali's ritual landscape reveal to you?

One of the most striking aspects of Bali's ritual landscape is the way spiritual practice is embedded within ordinary daily activity. The sacred is not separated from the everyday but integrated into it. The presence of offerings throughout public and private spaces creates a constant negotiation between material and spiritual worlds. This revealed a different way of understanding a place, not simply as geography or architecture, but as a network of relationships involving people, beliefs, objects, and environments. It highlighted how cultural practices shape the way a landscape is experienced and understood.

How does the tension between intention and chance influence both the ritual itself and your photographic interpretation of it?

The ritual begins with deliberate acts of making and placement, but once the offering enters the world, its future is uncertain. Chance inevitably becomes part of the process. Weather, animals, and human activity all influence what happens next. I found a parallel in photography itself. While composition and observation involve intention, the medium is also highly responsive to contingency. Unexpected moments, shifting conditions, and unforeseen juxtapositions often shape the final image. The series explores this shared tension, suggesting that meaning emerges through the interaction of purposeful action and unpredictable change.

What conversations do you hope Islands of Offering might inspire about spirituality, cultural understanding, and our relationship with change?

I hope the work encourages viewers to think about spirituality not only as a matter of belief, but as a way of relating to the world through attention, care, and acknowledgement of interconnection. I also hope it fosters curiosity about cultural practices without reducing them to symbols or stereotypes. More broadly, the series invites reflection on how we understand change. If the work opens a space for considering how transformation connects us to a place and to the environment, then it has achieved something meaningful.



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Dagmar Kolatschny



Dagmar Kolatschny studied educational science, psychology, and sociology at the FU Berlin. She studied photography at the Ostkreuzschule Berlin. In 2013, she completed the MFA programme in photography at the Hartford Art School, USA. From 2012 to 2016, she was a member of the exp12 collective. She works in the fields of graphic design and photography and teaches at Photocentrum Kreuzberg.

"I like working with images. Either by taking photos myself or by dealing with found images. In my work, I am guided less by themes than by the images themselves. In the dialogue between me and the images, something third, something new, emerges. The new is what interests me and what I want to show and share.

For me, artistic work is a personal and intimate process. The results are not loud and big, but rather quiet and reserved. Artist books are an ideal medium for ensuring this intimate access and for enabling a personal experience.

I see my photographic work as visual research. I try to explore places or topics, to discover and develop new perspectives, and to make them visible to myself and others.

Exploring the possibilities of photography and experimenting with different techniques is also part of my visual research. I am fascinated by the analogue as well as the digital and the transformation in both directions.

Photography is a way of coming into personal contact with the world, of setting a focus, whether it is when taking the photographs themselves or when publishing and sharing the work. My pictures are both an invitation to reflect on the world and on the medium of photography."

Sunny (2014)

"Sunny" is an examination of sunlight and how it manifests itself in our daily life experiences. It is about the extraordinary in the everyday, about fleeting moments captured in banal, dusty areas of Berlin. And about colors and shapes, experience and perception. "Sunny" was published in 2014 by Peperoni Books, Berlin

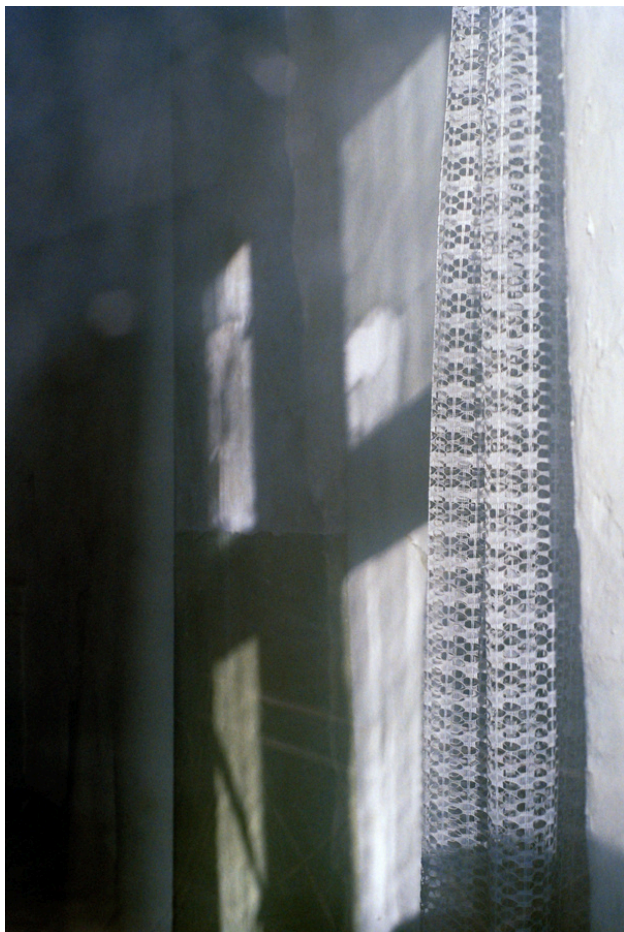
Hannes Wanderer (publisher, Peperoni Books) about „Sunny“:

The facades are dirty gray, windows are dust-blinded and splintered, the staircase needs a new paint, rooms are empty, chairs have toppled or stand unused in the corner, and outdoors the weeds grow. Berlin. But Dagmar Kolatschny does not present a broken city. She enters the spaces and interspaces, the chipped remaining gaps, the cracked edges, collects impressions, makes astonishing discoveries everywhere, and takes pictures. Images that you can not invent or plan. You can only expect, sense, and experience them. The moments come unexpectedly, are transient, not permanent. Therefore, they are so precious. And without the light of the sun, they would not exist – the moments and the colors, our vision and the images.

Most of the photographs I took from 2011 to 2013 were in neglected areas of Berlin, where I live, with an analogue 35mm camera.

The idea of the title and the subject of the book came up very lately, when I had already taken most of the images. When I found the quote (A. Döblin, Berlin Alexanderplatz), which is also cited in the book, this was like a missing link that allowed me to bring the project to an end.

To feel the sun, light, and warmth is such a banal and ordinary experience, but at the same time, the idea of the sun as the center of the solar system is just inconceivable and intangible. We have to live with this contradiction, but in the end, it's just the experience of light, shadow, color, and shape that remains perceptible. With my work, I tried to make these thoughts or experiences visible.





Your practice moves between creating your own photographs and working with found images. What attracts you to the dialogue between these two approaches?

I haven't combined these two approaches so far; I usually do one or the other. In both cases, it's about creating images and a visual language. A colleague recently said about my work, "You enjoy creating images." At first glance, that might seem obvious for a photographer. But despite how self-evident it may seem, I felt that this comment truly understood me.

You describe your work as emerging from a conversation. How do you recognize when an image is leading you toward something new?

When an image strikes a chord within me. It's not an intellectual process. It's more like sound.

The idea of "something third" arising between yourself and the image is central to your statement. Could you explain how this transformation takes place in your creative process?

I want my work to be exciting and inspiring for me. I like to let the images guide me. Most of the time, I don't know in advance where the journey will lead. It's like a dialogue with the images;

You refer to your artistic practice as an intimate and personal process. How do you maintain that sense of intimacy when sharing your work with an audience?

On the one hand, there is this quiet, intimate process that is essential to my creative work. Even in street photography, I tend to keep to myself. On the other hand, there is a need to engage in dialogue through my work. Otherwise, it somehow doesn't make sense to me. That's why the artist's book is such a fitting way to present my work, as it can also be experienced in a quiet, intimate setting.

What kinds of discoveries are you hoping to make when exploring a place or a subject?

To me, it's particularly exciting when the outcome isn't clear from the start. In the end, the photographic technique, the (film) material, the subject, and the setting all come together to create something new – something I can then develop further.

Having worked extensively with both analogue and digital processes, what interests you most about the movement and transformation between these two worlds?

Digitizing old, found photographs or negatives often opens up whole new worlds when viewed on a screen. It gives the image a different quality. I find this process very interesting, and it never ceases to surprise me. On the other hand, to me, a photograph is only a photograph once it has been printed. The digital version is more of an idea. So many aspects of our lives now take place in the digital realm. Photography is a great way to experience what makes the difference between the digital and the tangible world – and of appreciating just how precious a beautiful print can be.

Experimentation appears to be a significant part of your practice. How do technical experiments influence the conceptual development of your projects?

Technique plays a major role. As soon as you use a different camera, for example, the process changes, as does the end result. That's what makes photography so exciting. And that's also why I don't want to limit myself to a particular genre or technique.

What questions about the photographic medium continue to fascinate you?

There are so many theories and ideas about what a photograph can be: a trace, a capture of time, an illusion, evidence, a visual code – but no matter how we try to explain it, there is always something mysterious about it. I find it fascinating that photography can be discovered from a new angle time and again, yet this mystery is never fully unravelled.

Throughout your career as an artist, educator, designer, and photographer, how has your understanding of photography as a way of connecting with the world evolved?

There are so many theories and ideas about what a photograph can be: a trace, a capture of time, an illusion, evidence, a visual code – but no matter how we try to explain it, there is always something mysterious about it. I find it fascinating that photography can be discovered from a new angle time and again, yet this mystery is never fully unravelled.



Lady Gaby

Abandoned chair on the frozen River Spree, 2021

Gaby Bila-Günther, aka Lady Gaby is an Australian, Berlin-based creative educator and workshop facilitator, spoken word & performance & visual artist, labelled 'the Peaches of spoken word and performance art' in Berlin, 'oddly poetic' & 'flamboyant, upbeat' by The Age, Melbourne, "Story teller extraordinaire by The Melbourne Times, 'A true artist ahead of Berlin' by journalist Nadja Sayej, the Mae West of slams by Kaput magazin and 'provocative' by The Pill in Prague. She is a regular performance artist & writer on Berlin's scene, one of Berlin's 10 best spoken word poets to look out for in 2018.

Her provocative work expresses her daily life, encounters with others, and her surroundings. Gaby, dressed in purple and green, takes the microphone and with her words takes over everybody's souls. Words of truth, love, society, anger, and values. Eyes of life!

Lady Gaby is at the heart of English-language poetry in Berlin; her distinct voice has made her a favourite at poetry events. With poems about the Arbeitsamt (job office) to poems about feminism, her poetry is sharp, seductive, and enticingly personal.' 'Lady Gaby turns her spoken words into an interactive, in- your-face performance accompanied by beats, projections, and costumes. 'Sexy and Powerful show'!



I care, I dare, I provoke, I am not the girl next door. I'm just myself. I follow my own mind, my own desires. I am the society's nag, can't put me in boxes, and I am not easily impressed or seduced with flowers, never-ending promises, and broken dreams.

I am not afraid to push my artistic boundaries, and my performances speak about the world around me and how I can change it. My words and artistic concepts will alter your brain and impress your mind enough. I prefer to focus on changing the world and the environment around me by promoting feminism, a non-racist society, social justice, queer politics, as well as anarchism, layered by feelings and actions, as well as words of tolerance, confidence, and positive actions.

My installations deal with objects I find and use daily. I transform their meanings and aesthetics to represent memories, tell stories, and redefine their use in site-specific environments. My works are very much influenced by my surrounding environment, and I use its resources in order to mark my artistic presence.

You describe yourself as "not the girl next door" and someone who cannot be placed in boxes. How does this refusal of categorisation shape your artistic identity?

I am a punk artist, and I believe that I'm unique and want to stay that way in my work and my identity as a female visual and performance artist. I develop my own style that defines me as an individual who cannot be categorised or marketed for someone else's benefits. I guess that makes me a rebel who doesn't compromise to suit others.

What draws you to creating immersive and multidisciplinary experiences?

Combining all those elements brings a new dimension to the performances and heightens the audience's senses in every way. I like the audience to participate in the performance, to feel it, to be immersed and put on the spot as well as in their faces, confront them, make them watch and listen, and not just absorb what's happening around them. As a migrant, I've always felt invisible, but through my performances, I am present and demand attention.

How do provocation and humour function as tools for addressing issues in your work?

Provocation works better layered by humour; otherwise, it can make people angry, and they stop listening to your work. My artistic issues are serious; however, my delivery is cheeky, playful, immersive, and often shocking, and I don't want to be dismissed as an angry woman only...I'm a funny person daily, so why should my work be any different?. People tend to understand and pay more attention if they can laugh and see the humour and sarcasm within social and political messages

Many of your performances take place in public spaces and unconventional locations. What possibilities do these environments offer that traditional galleries do not?

Performing in places I don't belong in pushes my artistic boundaries and gives me visibility. I want to bring art and performance to places where you least expect it. I once performed inside male public toilets, next to urinals, and brought spoken word to people who might not access it in traditional spaces. The experience gave me such gratification, and I felt on top of the world, seeing myself as an artistic activist, bringing art and spoken word to common people where they least expect it.

You often transform everyday household and feminine objects into artworks. What interests you about reimagining the meanings attached to these materials?

For centuries, women's roles and tools have been associated with household duties: in the kitchen, cleaning, scrubbing, and cooking, as well as making up and dressing up for special events. I wanted to transform the roles of these objects and turn them into artistic tools as well as noise weapons. Give these feminine objects new meanings other than their traditional usage.

How do specific places and communities influence the stories you tell?

I'm very influenced by my surroundings and environment. I like people's stories that I hear around me daily. I notice street art, graffiti, and down-and-out people who are marginalised and judged. I want to give all those elements a voice and presence, so others become aware of the social and political stances that the media ignores ...my environment is my inspiration.

As both an artist and organiser of cultural events, how do you see the relationship between creative practice and community-building?

Very much linked and necessary...through art we can build strong communities, give them a sense of belonging and power. We can educate them, give them tools to be creative that increase their sense of belonging and confidence. Giving new and young artists a stage to perform on for the first time is important for their development and practise...culture is identity and power.

Your performances are often described as provocative, personal, and empowering. What role does vulnerability play in your artistic process?

It plays a great deal as I belong to vulnerable groups as a woman, migrant with queer sensibilities...I need to feel empowered, and that begins with strengthening my vulnerabilities, not ignoring them, but overcoming them. I do that through the process in my art and performances. That way, I get over many negative things that could hold my self-expression back. The process is always hard work, but the artistic journey is invaluable for self esteem and growth.

How do memory, identity, and migration inform your work, having lived in Romania, Australia, and Germany?

My experiences in all these different systems and cultures define me and my work. I draw my creativity from these experiences; some painful memories made me write my best poems. Motions of displacement and longing for a place that I can call home and where I'm comfortable, drive my artistic thirst and make me display them in my creative work. I bring them alive and share them with others who feel the same.

You have said that you want your words and artistic concepts to "alter your brain and impress your mind wide enough." What kind of change or reflection do you hope audiences experience after encountering your work?

I hope that people ponder the social and political issues I present in my work. I encourage people to be themselves, like I am, and make their own path when they feel like they don't belong, as I do. I want to change the world's pain and problems through happy energies, creativity, individuality, and communal love. I'm preaching utopian dreams rather than an Orwellian existence. Because I have lived through a dictatorship, I push for love and tolerance rather than racism and fascism.



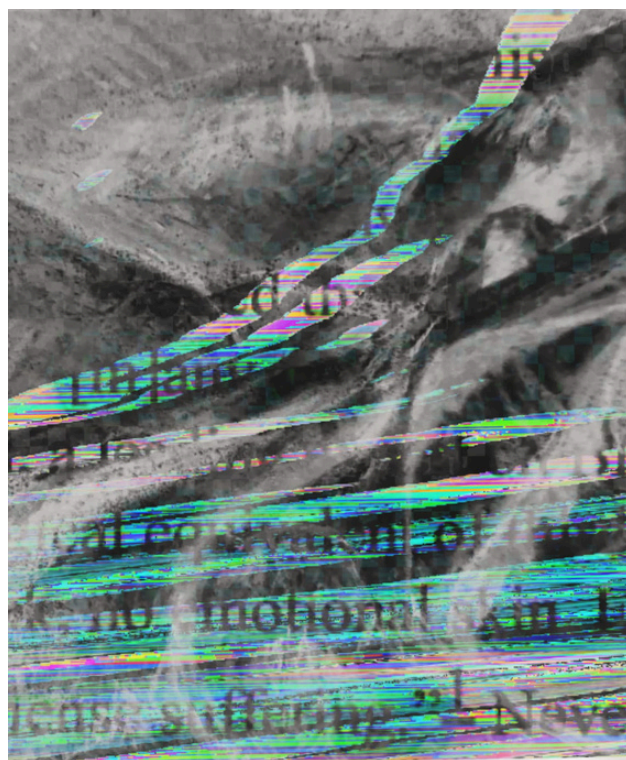
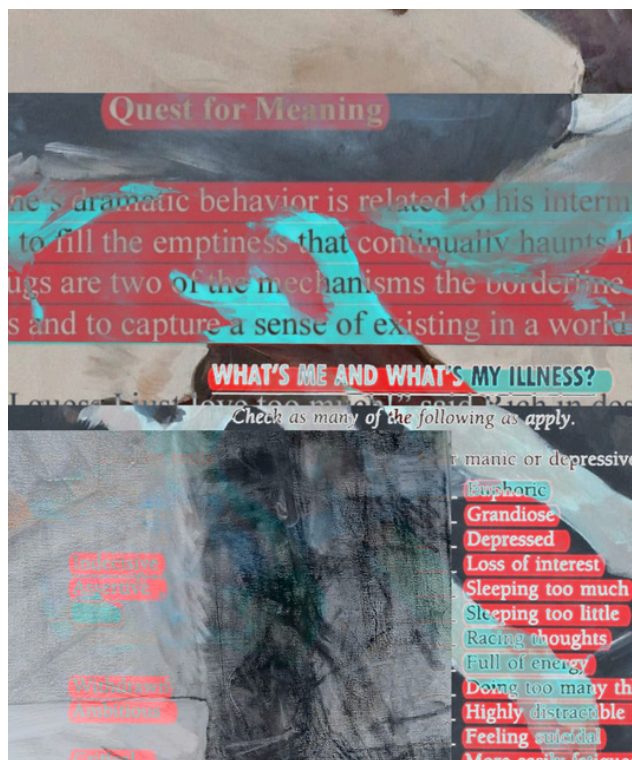
ARTIC
Analogue, collage, 29x21cm,
2024

This collage deals with the
neglected landscape

Laura Candet

From a place I already forgot, 2026





"Working with the defragmentation of cultural and personal identities, my exploration focuses on the complex relationships between society, identity, abuse, and mental health. In a world dominated by a rapid rise in extremism, the artist creates a difficult study of the population's response to political events."

"Working on my new personal exhibition regarding rising femicides in Romania and all over the world, I explore the leading causes of hate crimes against women and young girls. Meditating on the ill-intended use of religion in the uprising of femicides, my art explores violence in religion towards women. The verses of women being killed because they "know" men isn't just a coincidence, but a rather horrible way of saying that a woman loses her value by not being a virgin."

Born in 1999 and raised in Bacau, Romania, Laura Candet is currently exploring the alarming increase in femicide in Romania and around the world. Experiencing the gender gap firsthand, her visual art conveys the frustration and powerful emotions felt during these turbulent times. With significant achievements in the artistic and academic fields, Laura Candet combines theoretical and practical study for a good artistic representation of her subjects. The artist has won multiple awards since the beginning of her artistic career, including the L.S.R.S. Awards for Academic Excellence Abroad, Palace of Parliament (2024); Grand Prize - Union of Plastic Artists of Romania (2023); Merit Award, Margareta of Romania Royal Foundation (2022), and Excellence Award, Student Gala, Iasi (2019). Along with her ongoing doctoral studies and multiple awards and participation in international exhibitions, the artist has also been recognized by the Margareta of Romania Royal Foundation through its "Young Talents" scholarship and international projects in collaboration with the Palace of Culture in Iasi, scholarships at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice and Verona, and artistic residencies, including the European Artistic Residency in Barcelona and Paris. The game anticipates rebirth and spiritual unity, the goat often being made of traditional blankets with archaic patterns and wood, symbolizing the ephemeral, but also traditions passed down from generation to generation.

How has the cultural landscape shaped the way you approach identity in your work?

Growing up in the post-communist era of Romania in the early 2000s really impacted my art and my views on childhood. Identity can be shaped by multiple factors, and the cultural identity of today is really shaped by the childhood of many visual artists of today. In perspective, what truly impacted my art growing up in those particular challenging times for a child.

Having worked across both traditional media like oil painting and New Media art, how do you decide which medium best represents your current ideas and themes?

As a contemporary visual artist, I see mediums as only tools with which I explore ideas and concepts. I don't think I am tied to any medium, but constantly challenging boundaries of art. Mixing and matching mediums is only the beginning of creating art.

You've worked with various institutions through creative camps and production camps across Europe. How has this exposure influenced your creative process and the narratives in your work?

I believe that these projects and camps don't provide the exposure people assume they do, but they challenge you to become a better artist, a better creator, and person. It's important to know people from your field, and this can create multiple opportunities further down the line, but what it truly does is expand your knowledge.

How have recognitions impacted your perspective on Romanian art's place in the global art scene?

For me, it is truly amazing how community can impact the art scene and how we can grow if we are recognized for our hard work. It is an honor for me to be selected to represent my country and my field, and I think it all started when I truly believed that my job was not to just create paintings but to nurture souls. In the global scene, I see Romanian artists such as Adrian Ghenie and Dan Perjovschi who make a difference and inspire a lot of Romanian artists to push for a better place in the art world.

How did the setting of Venice influence you?

Truly, Venice for me was a completely transformative experience. I was studying there at the Academy of Fine Arts in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, making it only a city of ghosts and memories. From a beloved city known for its tourism, to not a single soul in sight for

months at a time. This really struck me, and I saw Venice as something I believe no one will ever see again. This project you're referring to depicts the struggles I have studying in a foreign country and how much I truly missed home.

What inspired you to combine generative art with traditional painting?

I am terribly grateful for so many opportunities that exist in the Romanian art scene, and that I can also create them myself. This collaboration with the Painting Department from the National University of Arts George Enescu is very important to me because it impacts the view that students have of their art. Pushing boundaries and creating new perspectives is the core of visual art, and by doing this, we challenge concepts, ideas, etc..

Could you share some examples of how you visually depict fragmented identities?

I think the best way to describe this defragmentation is not how I depict it, but how the viewer has no choice but to try to piece together fragments to create coherent images. Thus, I believe this is also how we form our identity, constantly grasping new notions, hoping to create a whole piece.

Bones and stones
Digital collage,
32x24m, 2026

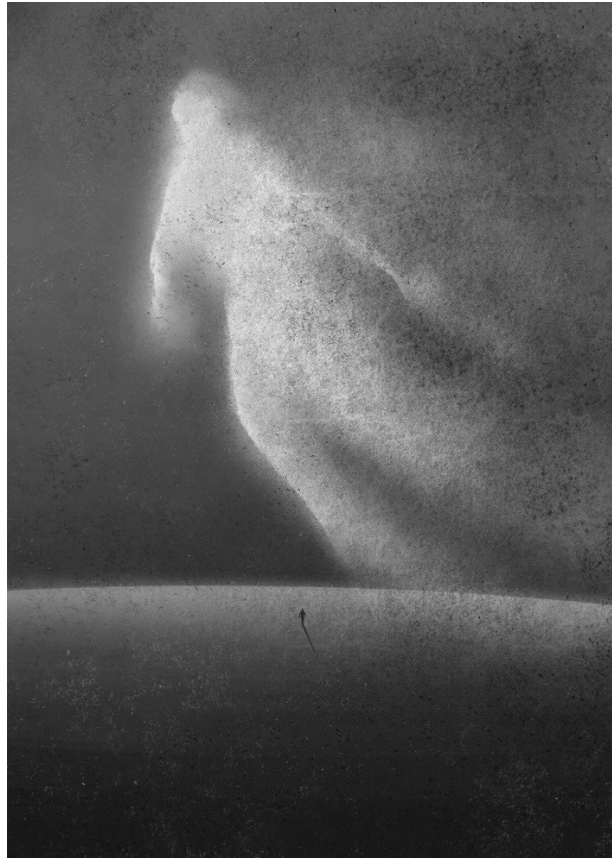


Diana Zhuk



Diana Zhuk is a Ukrainian artist and illustrator whose practice bridges the tactile sensitivity of traditional painting with the immediacy of digital art. After many years of working with acrylic on canvas, she transitioned to digital illustration, where her imagery quickly found resonance with a broad audience. Her work explores themes of inner light, emotional presence, tenderness, and the quiet poetry of everyday life. Diana's portfolio includes more than 400 works, ranging from personal illustrations to commissioned book and album covers, as well as limited-edition prints. Through a calm and contemplative visual language, she creates images that invite reflection and emotional connection. Living and working in Ukraine, her artistic perspective has been deeply shaped by experiences of uncertainty, resilience, and hope. By sharing both her finished works and creative process online, Diana has cultivated a growing international community drawn to the intimacy and sincerity of her art.

"Thematically, my work reflects the human condition: vulnerability, tenderness, longing, and the search for beauty within uncertain realities. Living and working in Ukraine during a time of war has inevitably influenced my perspective, bringing greater urgency and emotional depth to my practice. At the same time, my work remains centred on hope and the enduring presence of inner light even in difficult circumstances. My portfolio now includes over 400 works, from standalone illustrations to commissioned book and music cover art. Through both traditional and digital approaches, I seek to create spaces of emotional connection where viewers can pause, reflect, and feel gently seen."



Glow of the Soul - Digital Art, A3, 2024



Without you - Digital Art, A3, 2024

After many years of painting with acrylics, what inspired your transition into digital illustration, and how has it expanded your creative possibilities?

My transition to digital illustration happened during a very difficult period in Ukraine in 2023, when constant attacks on civilian infrastructure caused long blackouts, and everyday life changed completely. Painting with acrylics became almost impossible under those conditions, so I began experimenting with digital illustration. What started as a necessity gradually expanded my creative possibilities, allowing me to work more intuitively, reach a wider audience, and build a more immediate emotional connection with people through my art.

Your work often explores themes of tenderness, vulnerability, and inner light. What draws you to these emotional qualities?

I am drawn to tenderness and vulnerability because they reveal something deeply human and honest. In my works, hope can exist together with fear or pain. I believe people carry an inner ability to continue loving, feeling, and sharing warmth even during difficult times, and this resilience is what inspires me most. Through my illustrations, I try to reflect the fragile balance between sorrow and beauty that shapes our lives.

How has living and working in Ukraine influenced the stories and emotions that emerge in your artwork?

The experience Ukrainians are living through today has deeply and fundamentally changed all of us. I realize that I am no longer the same person I was before 2022. I see and feel the world differently, I am inspired by different things, and even my dreams and sense of hope have taken on a new meaning and form. These inner changes naturally emerge in my artwork through its emotions, imagery, and atmosphere. Perhaps it is precisely because of this shared experience that my work resonates so strongly with many Ukrainians.

Despite themes of uncertainty and hardship, your work consistently conveys hope. Why is hope such an important element in your artistic practice?

Hope is essential to my artistic practice because it is what allows people to keep moving forward, believing, and enduring even in the most difficult moments. When I work with this theme, I enter a very calm and reflective inner state, almost like a form of meditation, and through it I also restore something within myself. If my work helps someone feel a little less alone or gives them even a small sense of faith, then it already has meaning for me.

How do you balance personal experience with universal emotions when creating images that resonate with a wide audience?

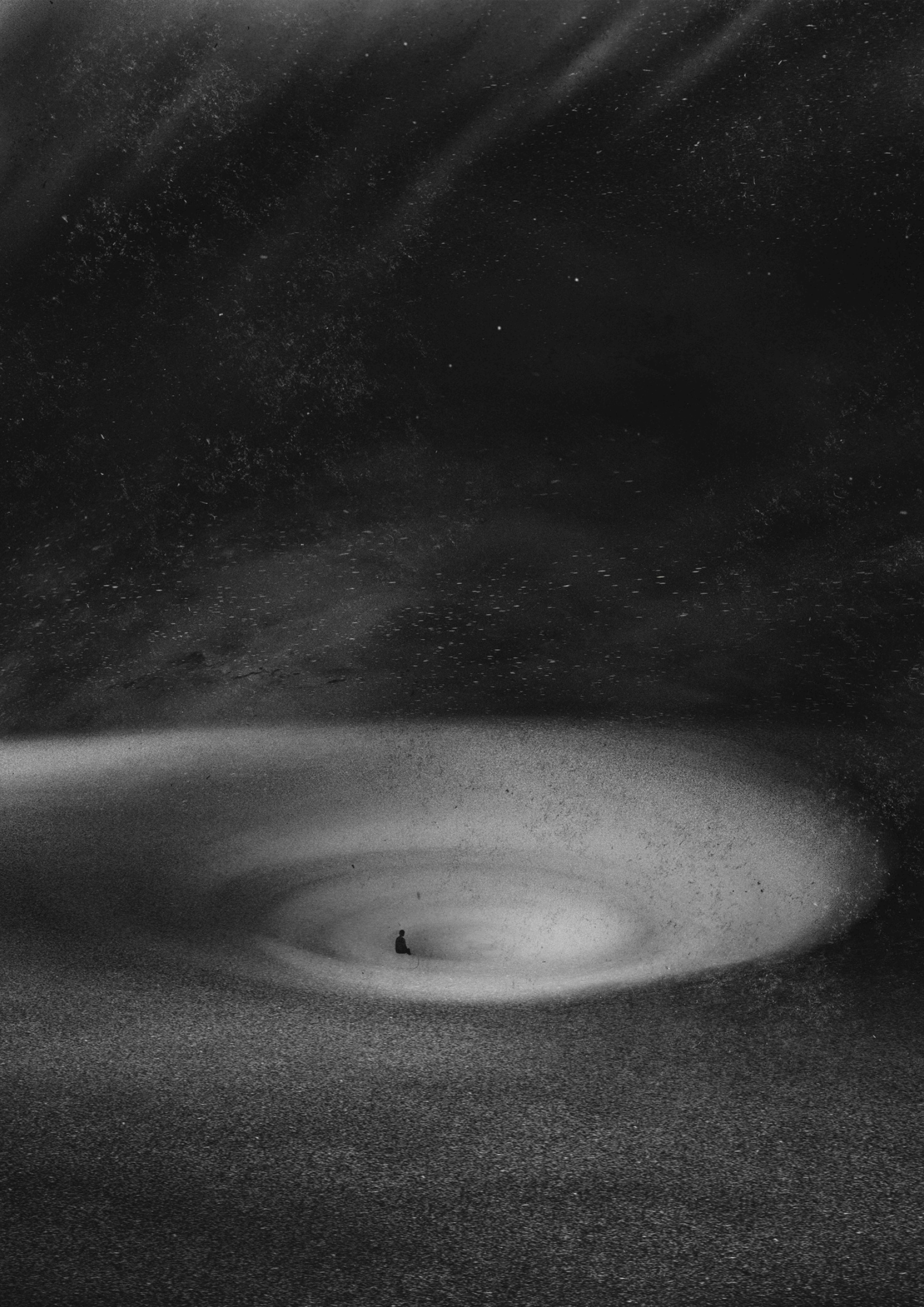
To be honest, I never create my work while thinking about how it will be perceived by others or whether it will resonate with a wide audience. Some people may connect with my illustrations strongly, while others may feel distant from them or feel nothing at all, and I think that is completely natural. For me, sincerity is more important than trying to create a universal reaction.

Your illustrations often feel calm and contemplative. What role does stillness play in your creative process?

Stillness plays an important role in my creative process, although it does not always mean silence. I usually work while listening to music, which helps me disconnect from everyday noise and enter a more focused emotional state. It can be anything from trip-hop to metal, depending on my mood. Music creates a kind of inner space where images begin to form more intuitively and naturally. When I create commissioned cover art for musicians, I always listen to their music while working, because it helps me better understand the atmosphere and emotion behind the project.

What differences do you experience when creating personal works compared to commissioned projects such as book and album covers?

In commissioned work, there is often already a story, atmosphere, or emotional direction given to me, which can make the starting point clearer, but at the same time, it becomes a challenge to truly connect with another person's vision and inner state. I enjoy this process of trying to be emotionally in tune with someone else and translating their feelings into visual form. It is always very meaningful to me when a client says that I captured exactly the emotion they imagined.



Through your art, you aim to create spaces where viewers feel "gently seen." What does emotional connection mean to you as an artist?

For me, emotional connection in art happens when a person recognizes a feeling, memory, or part of themselves, even if they cannot fully explain why. Once, I shared a post where I explained the meanings behind several of my works, and although many people found it interesting, I also realized how important it is to leave space for individual interpretation. I do not want to dictate what a viewer should feel or understand, because every person sees art through their own emotional perspective. If someone looks at my work and feels less alone for a moment, that connection becomes very meaningful to me as an artist.

How has sharing your creative process online shaped your relationship with your audience and your understanding of your own work?

Since I began actively sharing my work online, I have received countless sincere messages: text, voice recordings, and even videos from people describing how my illustrations helped them reconnect with emotions they had suppressed for a long time. Some told me the work allowed them to grieve, remember someone they lost, let go of pain, or simply feel calmer and understood. These conversations deeply changed my understanding of what art can do emotionally and how personal images can become meaningful to others in unexpected ways. In moments when I doubt myself or feel emotionally exhausted, these messages give me the strength to continue creating and not give up.

In times of uncertainty, what do you believe art can offer that other forms of communication cannot?

In moments of uncertainty, people are often too overwhelmed for explanations, but art can still reach them emotionally and create a sense of connection. It can make people feel seen and understood without needing explanations or direct language. For me, art is a quiet way of saying, "I see you, I am with you, we are going through this together."

Without Us - Digital Art, A3, 2024



Goodbye - Digital Art, A3, 2024



Eric Fong



Eric Fong is a multidisciplinary artist based in London, and his practice is driven by a keen interest in the juncture between art, medicine, and health, informed by his experience as a former medical doctor. Fong holds an MA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths College, and has exhibited across the UK and internationally, including Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York; Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest; Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh; and Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London. One of his works is in the Arts Council England Collection. Fong's current work is based on extensive research into an archive of Victorian mental asylums in Surrey, UK. It explores issues surrounding mental health, abandonment, and gender equality.

Apparitions, 2024

'Apparitions' is a short film comprises a haunting journey through an abandoned cemetery, where thousands of pauper patients, mostly women, from five nearby mental asylums were buried. It is now a derelict and overgrown site, where all grave markers have been removed, except one. The footage is overlaid with words drawn from the medical case notes of those buried there. It seeks to give voice to those who were voiceless, and to serve as a requiem to the long forgotten.





How has your background as a medical doctor shaped the way you approach art and storytelling?

My experience as a doctor gave me a keen interest in issues relating to the body and physical and mental health. However, as an artist, my approach is empathic and collaborative, rather than being clinical or dispassionate.

What first drew you to the archives of Victorian mental asylums, and what did you discover during your research?

I came across the archive of Victorian mental asylums at Surrey History Centre (SHC) more than a decade ago, when I was working with a different archive nearby. The SHC archive contains thousands of glass plate negatives of striking portraits of pauper patients who were treated in five Victorian asylums in Epsom, as well as their medical case notes. They haunted me for over a decade and inspired this body of work.

How do you navigate the intersection of historical fact, memory, and artistic interpretation in your work?

The portraits and medical notes in the archive contain fragmented histories of the patients. To me, it is important to respond to them in an empathic way and to present the work in a nuanced, non-didactic manner.

Why was it important for you to focus on the experiences of the pauper patients, particularly women, who were buried in the abandoned cemetery?

During my research, I was struck by the amount of abandonment some of the pauper patients suffered - when alive, some of them were abandoned by their families. Then their medical records were abandoned after the asylums were closed, before being rescued by the archivist at SHC. After they were buried in the cemetery, their graves were abandoned, and their headstones were removed. In addition, I noticed that over 70% of the patients were female, so there was a disproportionately large number of women. I therefore felt compelled to bring their stories to light.

In Apparitions, how does the combination of moving image and archival text contribute to giving voice to those who were forgotten?

The words in the film were drawn from the medical case notes of those buried there. They offer a glimpse into what was known about mental illness and attitudes towards pauper patients in Victorian times. The moving image highlights the derelict and overgrown state of the cemetery caused by the abandonment. The diaphanous, disembodied dress in the film, recreated in the style of standard-issue asylum dresses, alludes to the multitude of women buried there. Together with the abstract soprano voice, these elements seek to break the silence and give voice to those who were long forgotten.

What emotions or reflections do you hope viewers experience as they journey through the overgrown cemetery in the film?

I hope that viewers will respond empathically, reimagine the patients' experiences, and reflect on the treatment of people with mental illness, both then and now.

How do themes of abandonment and remembrance influence your broader artistic practice?

The themes that inform my artistic practice vary from project to project, depending on the subject. The themes of abandonment and remembrance are specific to this project about Victorian Asylums. In addition to Apparitions, it includes Asylum Portraits, a series of cyanotype portraits which offer a form of memorialisation and remembrance, and Asylum Needlework, which explores another facet of life in Victorian asylums, namely needlework as a form of 'moral therapy'.

What challenges arise when creating artwork that engages with sensitive histories of mental health and institutional care?

The challenge when using sensitive medical archive material is finding a balance between issues around permission, privacy, and consent on one hand, and witnessing, giving voice, destigmatisation, and memorialisation on the other. In my view, keeping their stories in the archive and away from the public risks perpetuating the secrecy and shame around mental illness. I therefore felt compelled to tell the patients' stories and reclaim their humanity and dignity sensitively and respectfully.

What does a cemetery represent to you personally?

To me, it is a place that contains the remains of thousands of people with unique lived experiences, many untold. During my research, I have come to know the life stories of some of them, so it is a place full of history, imbued with sadness. However, because it is now overgrown with trees, brambles, and ivy, it is also a celebration of nature's ability to rewild and reclaim a once man-made territory.

In bringing these hidden stories to light, what conversations about mental health, gender equality, and historical injustice do you hope to encourage today?

Although there have been significant changes since the Victorian era, stigma surrounding mental health and neurodiversity still exists in contemporary society. Mental Health Foundation UK reports that 'nearly nine out of ten people with mental health problems say that stigma and discrimination hurt their lives.' In addition, inequality between institutions and individuals, and between genders, still exists today. By revisiting the spectre of psychiatric treatment in the past, I hope to encourage conversations about these issues, past and present.

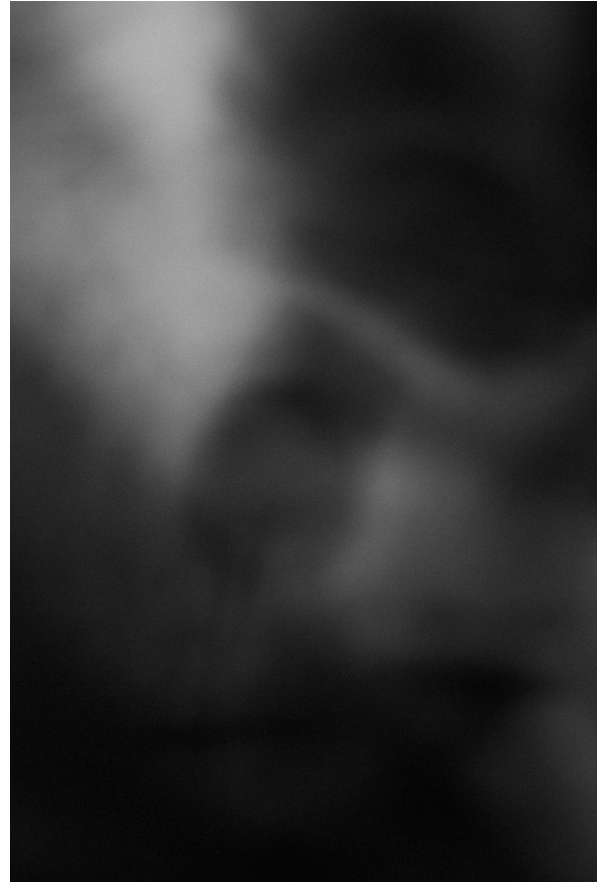


Matthew Kenneth Hendricks



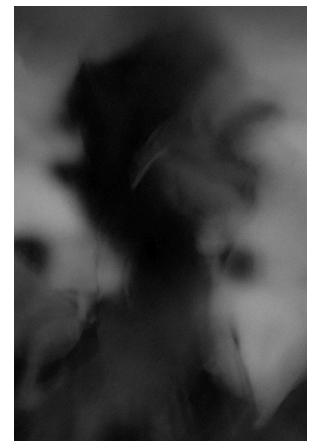
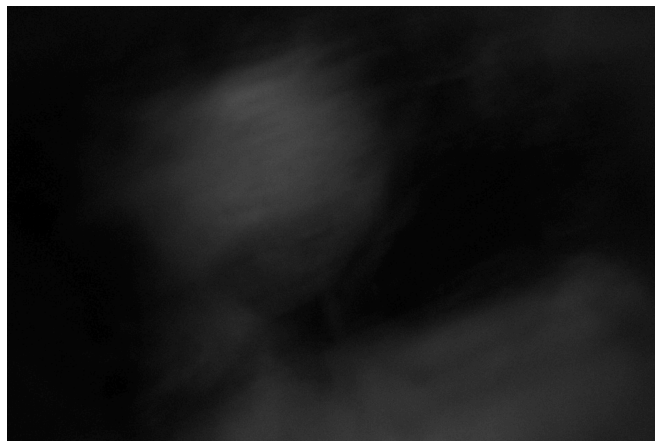
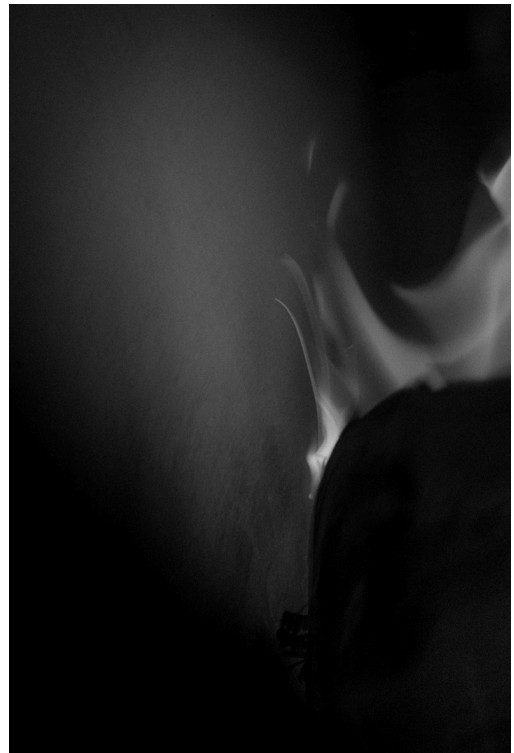
Matthew Kenneth Hendricks, PhD (b. 1994) is a self-taught visual artist based in Cape Town, South Africa. A Coloured South African and part of the country's "born-free" generation, his perspective is shaped by post-apartheid social and economic shifts, and by an ongoing search for belonging within them. His work moves between photography and digital collage, combining personal images with found and archival material. Through this process, he explores identity, memory, displacement, imagination, and the emotional tension of trying to locate oneself in a changing world. His practice is intuitive and experimental, using fragmentation and recombination as a way to make sense of personal and collective experience.

Mori'ah I & II, 2025-2026



"I often feel out of place, within the world and within image-making itself. I work through that feeling using instinct, disruption, and transformation. My practice moves between photography, digital image-making, and collage-like processes, using both personal and found material. Some images are left as they are, while others are obscured, fragmented, and recombined through an intuitive process. I am interested in what happens when unrelated images, memories, symbols, and visual languages are brought into conversation with one another. Even when the work is not formally collage, my practice is shaped by a collage-like way of thinking: taking fragments from the world around me and reworking them into something more personal, uncertain, and emotionally honest. The work comes from wanting to express something, as well as a curiosity to experiment and follow where the image leads. At its core, it is about putting pieces together, bringing different elements into relation, and seeing what begins to form."

Mori'ah IV, V, VIII & X, 2025-2026



As a member of South Africa's "born-free" generation, how has growing up in the post-apartheid era shaped your understanding of identity and belonging?

It has confused. I should feel a strong sense of belonging in South Africa as I have lived my entire life without the shadow of Apartheid, yet in many spaces in South Africa it's clear I don't belong. For me, and so many other people of colour in South Africa, the negative legacy of Apartheid lingers in everyday interactions with those born in Apartheid, but also those who are born-free like me. In these interactions, it feels as if Apartheid has been 'expunged' from law, but Apartheid lives on in beliefs and values expressed subtly and not so subtly by South Africans. Apartheid's tendrils run deeply and continue to infect South African society. This leads to confusion. In a country where I should feel I belong, why do I feel 'other'd' so often? I believe these and many other questions relating to identity and belonging come through in my art.

Your work combines personal photographs with found and archival imagery. What interests you about bringing these different visual histories into conversation?

In my more recent collage work, I have become interested in the idea of "remixing to reveal." I think both the photographs we take and the images we are drawn to say something about who we are. The things we find beautiful, interesting, or ugly are not random but a reflection of who we are. So remixing it all together just felt like it gave me the ability to say something more honest or truthful about myself.

You describe your practice as a response to feeling “out of place.” How does image-making help you navigate or understand that experience?

I have often felt out of place and forced into a box of who I should be based on my racial identity. Image-making has helped me reveal who I am to myself without the expectations from others – less filtered by who I should be through their lens.

Fragmentation and recombination play a central role in your work. What can broken or disrupted images reveal that complete images cannot?

Have you ever been through a really difficult time, or seen someone else go through one, and in a moment of pure anger, grief, or frustration, felt that, for a moment, you caught a glimpse of who they really are beneath it all? That is how I feel about broken or disrupted images. Because they are broken and less polished, they feel more honest to me.

Even when a work is not technically a collage, you describe your approach as collage-like. How does this way of thinking influence your creative decisions?

For me, a collage-like approach means a positive kind of creative recklessness. You are willing to cut, destroy, and recombine with disregard for expectations of what should be and what once was. This is a route for me to create something more emotionally honest. In the images shown in this issue, both in my process of creating them and in the editing, I adopted this belief. The final image was the one that felt most emotionally honest, and rules about what a photograph or image should be were disregarded as much as possible.

Your process is highly intuitive and experimental. How do you know when an image has reached a point of resolution, or do you prefer to leave some uncertainty intact?

When looking at an image sparks some sort of emotion in me, that is usually a sign that it has reached a point of resolution. It's an instinctive feeling that the image has said all it has to say. I do not feel uncertainty in that moment; instead, there is a sense of clarity.

Memory, displacement, and imagination frequently appear in your practice. How do these themes intersect within a single image?

For me, imagination, memory, and displacement are inseparable. By moving away from literal reality, I create a form of displacement both from the external world and, at times, from myself. That distance allows me to engage with memory more honestly. Imagination becomes a tool for exploring memories and for reflecting on the sense of belonging, uncertainty, and displacement that often accompany them.

As a self-taught artist, how has learning outside formal art education influenced the freedom or direction of your practice?

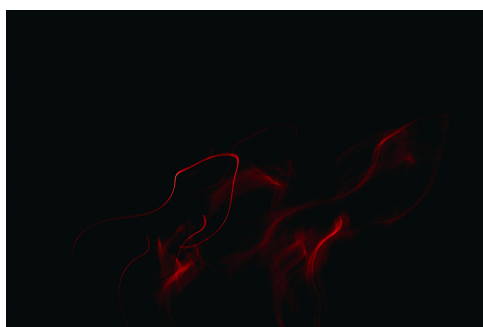
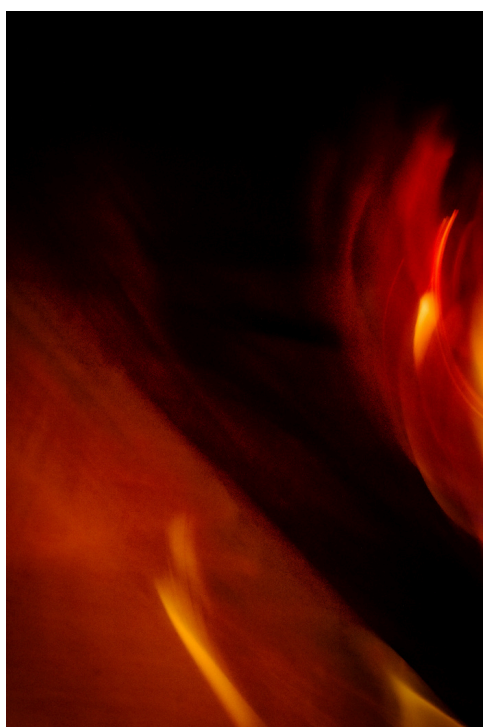
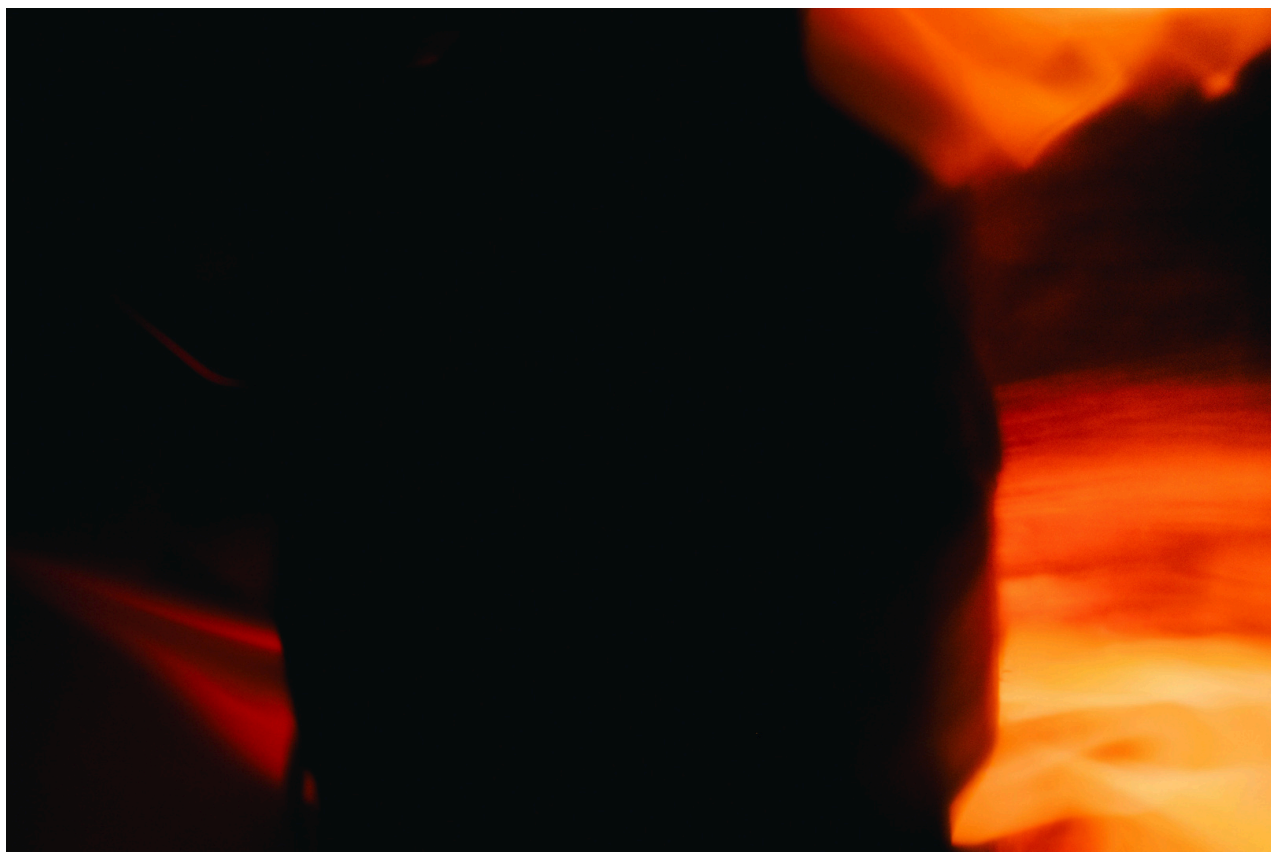
It has made me a bit of a rebel. It has created some distance between me and the art world. It has at times made me feel like I don't belong in the art world, which is an extension of my feelings around not belonging in South Africa. This frees me and allows me to create art that subverts expectations. In my practice, I feel like the less I know about the rules, the better. I wish I could forget some rules about photography I have learned.

Your work often brings together unrelated images, symbols, and visual languages. What role does surprise or unexpected connection play in the creation of meaning?

I think surprise allows me to get out of my own way. When I know exactly what an image is supposed to mean, I tend to judge it too quickly or force it into a predetermined direction. Unexpected connections between images create space for something less controlled to emerge. Many of the meanings in my work are discovered rather than planned. By combining fragments that do not obviously belong together, I can arrive at ideas, emotions, or questions that I could not have anticipated. Those discoveries often feel more honest because they emerge through the process itself rather than being imposed from the beginning.

At its core, your practice seems concerned with assembling fragments into new forms. What do you hope viewers discover about themselves or their own experiences through these reconstructed visual worlds?

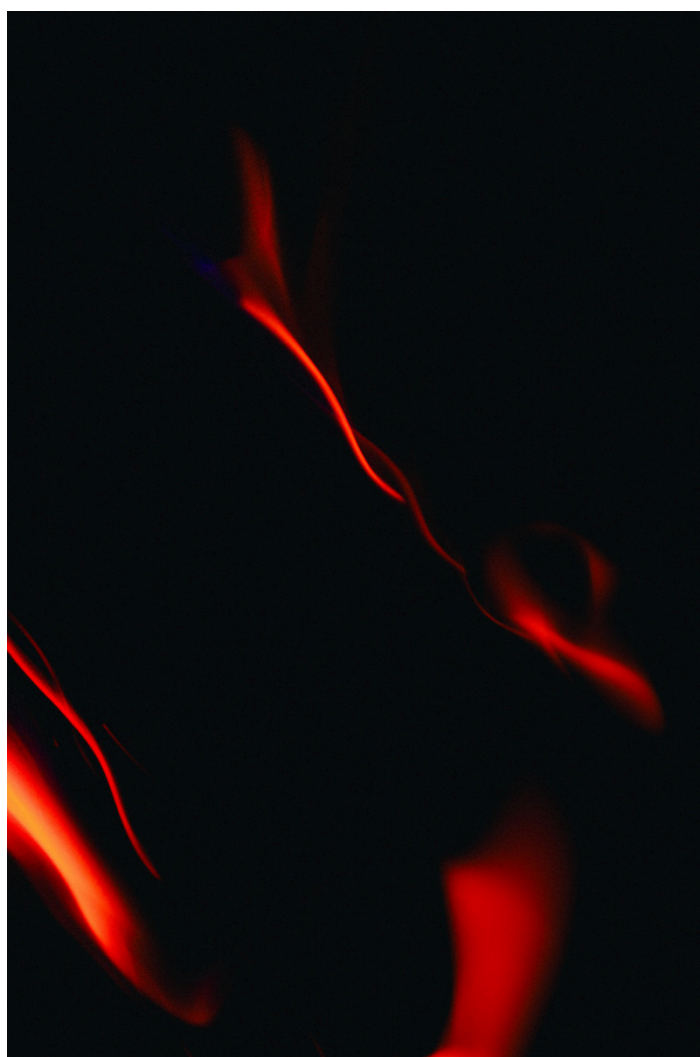
I want the work to make people feel something. Not necessarily a specific thing, but something real. We spend so much of our lives thinking, explaining, and keeping ourselves contained. I hope these imagined worlds create a space where people can reconnect with what they have been carrying all along.



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Timothy Yufit



Timothy Yufit is a London-based multidisciplinary designer & artist working across interactive media, digital archives, moving image, and spatial experiences. His practice focuses on overlooked objects, urban traces, and hidden histories within everyday environments. Through research, mapping, 3D scanning, coding, film, photography, and installation, he transforms social, historical, and cultural narratives into public-facing experiences that audiences can actively explore. His recent projects include Racks, an interactive archive documenting abandoned and dismantled bicycles across London, and In Place, a digital and physical archive of displaced headstones in London parks and gardens. His work has been shown across exhibitions in the UK and developed through cultural contexts, including the V&A Museum and the British Museum Young Digital Cohort Residency. His practice is driven by the question of how neglected objects and places can still speak, record, and carry meaning.

"My work often begins with objects that seem ignored, abandoned, or pushed to the edge of attention. I am interested in what remains after something loses its original function, and how traces of use, ownership, and memory can still be read through material presence. For this submission, I am presenting two projects that approach abandonment from different angles."

In Place

Digital and physical archive, photography, mapping, printed stamp collections, and an interactive website, variable sizes, 2025

A digital and physical archive documenting displaced 19th-century headstones embedded in London parks and gardens. Many of these sites were once graveyards before being transformed into public spaces, leaving behind fragments of burial grounds that now sit quietly within everyday urban life. The project explores what happens when objects of memory lose their original context. These headstones no longer function fully as memorials, yet they still carry names, dates, inscriptions, erosion, and traces of lives once present. Through photography, mapping, written documentation, and printed stamp collections, In Place treats them as historical and emotional artefacts rather than overlooked pieces of stone. The archive invites audiences to look closely at what remains when remembrance is displaced. It considers absence, decay, and transformation, while questioning how the city absorbs its own history. Rather than presenting these headstones as forgotten relics, the project reveals them as quiet witnesses to London's changing relationship with death, memory, public space, and preservation.





Your work often begins with overlooked objects and urban traces. What draws you to things that exist at the edges of public attention?

These objects carry entire systems inside them: cultural, social, historical, emotional. They may look ordinary or forgotten, but once you start looking closely, they reveal how the city and society operate, how people behave, what they choose to preserve, and what it allows to disappear. I think my role as a designer is like being a middleman between these objects and the public. I take what has been ignored and create a structure where people can stop, look, and understand why it matters.

In Place focuses on displaced headstones that have lost their original context. What does this displacement reveal about collective memory and urban change?

For me, the displaced headstones reveal how the city constantly rewrites itself, sometimes very violently and sometimes very quietly. These objects were once direct signals of burial, memory, family, and grief, but many of them no longer function in that way because the graves they marked were removed, the churchyards changed, and the city continued to develop. They became stuck between their original purpose and their current condition as fragments inside parks and public spaces. That displacement shows how collective memory is not always preserved carefully; sometimes it is reused, flattened, walked over, or simply left behind.

How do research, mapping, and digital technologies help you uncover hidden stories within everyday environments?

Research, mapping, and digital tools allow me to turn scattered observations into something more accessible and connected. A single abandoned bike or displaced headstone can seem random, but when you map them, archive them, scan them, and place them into a system, patterns and narratives begin to appear. These methods allow me to communicate quite complex material in a way that people can understand visually and emotionally. For me, the project objective is achieved when someone begins to notice these objects in real life after seeing my work.

In Racks, abandoned bicycles occupy a state between ownership and neglect. What fascinated you about this condition of urban limbo?

What interested me is that these bicycles are not fully “dead”, but they are also no longer properly alive as functional objects. Many of them still carry signs of their former owners: stickers, colours, modifications, marks, small traces of care. But at the same time, they are left tied to racks, slowly dismantled by thieves, weathered, and absorbed by the city. That in-between limbo state felt very important to me, because it shows an object suspended between use, memory, abandonment, and disappearance.

How do the bicycles in Racks challenge our understanding and belonging within the city?

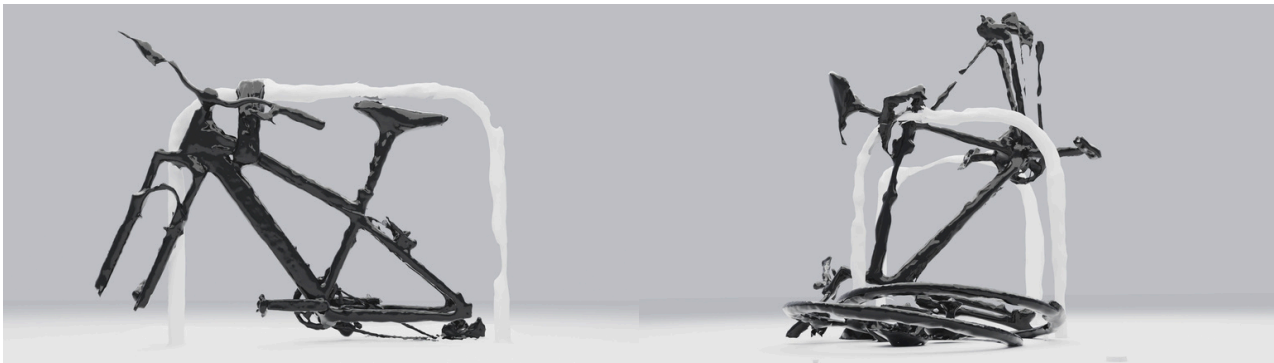
A bicycle can serve someone for years, taking them through the city every day, like a loyal companion. But the moment it breaks, loses value, or becomes inconvenient, it can be abandoned very quickly. There is no ritual for these objects, no proper ending, no moment where their service is acknowledged. They are just left there, still present, but no longer cared for, which makes me question how value in the city is often based only on usefulness.

Racks

Interactive digital archive/installation, mapping, photography, web design, and moving image, variable size, 2026

A digital archive of abandoned and dismantled bicycles on the streets of four London boroughs. All of them once belonged to someone, sometimes for years. Some still carry stickers and traces of former ownership. But after being scavenged for parts by thieves, they have been neglected and continue to linger on the streets, tied to racks, slowly being dismantled further. The council cannot remove them because they are still considered private property, yet they no longer have a clear owner. These bicycles exist in a kind of limbo state, neither fully “alive” nor “dead.” The project documents them—their real-time location, condition, and presence—along with videos capturing their ongoing agony in the city’s urban environment.





Racks 2 & 4

Both projects document objects that have outlived their intended function. What can these remnants teach us about the lives and histories connected to them?

I think an object does not stop having meaning when its function collapses. In some ways, that is when another kind of meaning begins, because you start seeing the traces of use, care, damage, time, and neglect. The bicycles and headstones both point back to human lives, even when those people are no longer visible. They show that objects can continue to carry memory after they have stopped doing the job they were originally made for.

Your practice combines archival methods with public engagement. How important is audience participation in activating these hidden narratives?

Audience participation is very important because I do not want the audience to feel closed off or distant. I use archiving as a way to gather repeated patterns, but also as a way to invite people to explore the material in their own order. Each bike and each headstone has its own specific condition, location, and story, so the audience needs space to move through it and make connections themselves. I am interested in archives not only as storage, but as unique experiences that can change how people see the city afterwards.

How do you balance factual documentation with the emotional and symbolic dimensions of the objects you archive?

I usually begin with factual documentation: location, condition, photographs, scans, maps, and history. But I do not want the work to stay only factual, because these objects also carry emotional and symbolic weight. The facts give the project structure and credibility, while the visual language allows me to push the feeling of what these objects represent. The balance is important: if it is only emotional, it becomes vague; if it is only factual, people may not feel why they should care.

Across your work, absence often becomes as significant as presence. How do you approach representing what is no longer there?

*I work with things that are physically present, but socially absent. They are still in the city, but they have been absorbed into the urban environment so deeply that people stop seeing them. In *In Place*, the red color was inspired by thermal vision in military goggles, because the headstones carry traces of body, memory, and human presence, and it also brings your attention to the headstones right away. In *Racks*, I enlarged the bicycles and placed them above the city almost like strange alien monuments, because I wanted to reverse their usual condition of being ignored, small, broken, and pushed to the side.*

What do you hope viewers reconsider about memory, ownership, preservation, and the overlooked histories embedded within the urban landscape after engaging with your projects?

I hope viewers slow down and reconsider the city as something full of hidden histories, not just a space they move through quickly. We are constantly distracted by phones, routines, work, and movement, so many meaningful things become invisible even when they are right in front of us. Through my projects, I give overlooked objects a second level of attention, a second life. I want people to leave with a stronger sense that memory, ownership, and neglect are not abstract ideas; they are embedded in the streets, parks, racks, surfaces, and places around us.

