

Contemporary Photography

A collection of the best of new Contemporary Photography from the UK and around the world



Issue 96
November 2025


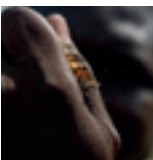





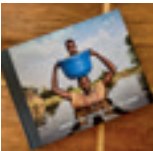



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Front Cover
© Mark Tamer

This page
© Karolina Maria Dudek

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Contemporary Photography

Contemporary Group ethos - Photography that conveys ideas, stimulates thought and encourages interpretation; photographs ‘about’ rather than ‘of’.

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Text should be in Microsoft Word. Images are preferred in TIFF format, although high quality JPEGs are also acceptable. Images should be at least 2500 pixels on the longest edge. For other formats or to discuss reproduction, please contact the Editor. Large image files may be supplied on disk or memory stick, or by use of on-line file transfer services, such as WeTransfer or Dropbox. Unless requested, disks and memory sticks will not be returned.

Deadline for the May 2026 issue is 1 March 2026.

Editorial

Senses, and the emotions they give rise to, can be difficult for photographers to communicate. This is not because of the limitations of the visual medium; after all, painters have been doing it for centuries. But we often treat photography as essentially about what is in front of the camera, detached from the observer/photographer.

The photographers contributing to this issue of RPS Contemporary Photography have not necessarily set out to convey senses, but nevertheless that is what they have done. We, the viewers, react in our own way, depending on our personal experience. For example, we are all familiar with the texture of concrete; although Rolf Kraehenbuehl (our own journal layout editor) draws explicit attention to the texture as he photographed it, his overlying scratches encourage us to think of how concrete feels under our own fingertips. Skander Khlif’s images from Tunisia convey a timeless sense of “a quiet resilience required to adapt”, but also, through the presence of sand in every image, allow us to feel the grit blown on our faces by the wind, and between our fingers. In a similar way Camille Lemoine invites us to lie in the heather with bare skin, and get a sense of the land she knows so well. The House of Camerina, as revealed by Carol Olerud is an intimate space diffused through by the personalities of the family that live there. Lucas Foglia’s images from the migration route of the Painted Lady butterfly conjure up, to me, the faint sound of fragile wings fluttering on a silent hilltop.

The other three contributors are more inward looking: physiologically so in Karolina Maria Dudek’s work on body fluids – specifically female fluids – placing them, as she writes “at the heart of human existence”. Mark Tamer suffers from chronic migraines, as his brain over-interprets sensory inputs; his diptychs are an attempt to make sense of his condition, and express something of the beauty he finds in his quiet moments. Anastasia Potekhina’s complex self portraits surround herself with images of herself; by making them ‘public’ she inserts us, the viewer, between her outer and inner self, between sensor and sensed.

A welcome to Rolf Kraehenbuehl who has taken over as layout editor for the journal from Christine Pinnington. I owe Christine immense thanks for her work in recent years to clarify and refresh the look of the journal.

Paul Ashley ARPS, Editor

Reflections

Anastasia Potekhina FRPS

"For love is an affair between a reflection and its object."
Joseph Brodsky, "Watermark"

For me, creativity is a reflection of myself: exploring vulnerability, accepting my nature, and discovering what makes us unique. When I look at myself in reflection, I study my face, my body, the lines and curves, observing the geometry of my movements. By placing myself into space, I feel harmony not only visually but also inside, because I become part of the surrounding world.

From childhood we are taught to be the same as everyone else, but then, throughout our lives, we try to find our differences and show our individuality. It is important to find in reflections what makes us different, not what makes us the same. This is how a personal creative language is born.

What is the difference between a self-portrait and a selfie? For me, a self-portrait is about finding connections between the image and the environment. It always holds a dialogue: me and space, me and reflection, me and light. These connections create depth, give the image its character, and open a personal vision to the viewer. A selfie often stays on the surface, but a self-portrait goes further - it becomes a way to tell about yourself through interaction with the world.

I create my photographs in a single shot, without overlays. What matters to me is the natural layering that comes from light, glass, and reflections. These visual layers become a metaphor for inner depth, because in every reflection I discover new sides of myself.

When I make a photograph, I never insert a direct personal story. I want to leave space for the viewer to find their own echoes in the image - something that resonates with their feelings and experience. Art is not an exact copy of reality, but its rethinking. The artist creates their own version of reality, and the viewer, meeting it, often discovers new truths - about the world, and about themselves.

Where does my image begin? My eye is always drawn to form and geometry: lines, silhouettes, rhythms of space. This is the starting point. Then I place myself into it, and this is how my self-portrait is born — a balance between the outer and the inner, between reflection and presence.

See: nassavva.com











Down Tower Road

Camille Lemoine

Down Tower Road was made in response to not seeing my experience of living in rural Scotland reflected in photography (especially fashion photography), which typically relies on literal depictions of the landscape, such as farming, landmarks or dramatic vistas, rather than an insight into how it feels to exist there. I wanted to create imagery that communicates the subtle language of the land here and how I feel I have become part of it.

The work is centred on my hometown, Baldernock, a small parish located just outside Glasgow. It feels reserved and shy in nature, mainly made up of moorland and grazing fields. Through practising the act of noticing, these images are devoted to the intricacies of the landscape, often bringing attention to the individuality of each thing, such as the blue before heavy rain, the pheasant feather found on the hill and the distinct way that the light unfolds. I want to highlight that it is our connection to these seemingly insignificant details that, over time, informs our sense of belonging.

Creating this work was a way of translating my own language from the land and discovering new ways of seeing and relating to my home. The dialogue I share with this place is explored through the meeting of body and landscape in both a physical and non-physical sense, at times embodying the feeling of being moved into a different kind of aliveness. I intentionally approach my surroundings from a place of quiet curiosity and care, rather than a place of dominance; mirroring the ways in which I have felt held by this land.

Ultimately, *Down Tower Road* is a slow and detailed meditation on the seemingly smaller moments of living in this part of Scotland; questioning what it means to deeply 'know' a place.

See: www.camillelemoine.com











Where Dust and Water Dream Together

Skander Khlif

Tunisia serves as a microcosm of a world in flux — a place where desert sands advance, water grows scarce, desertification spreads, and rising seas encroach upon its shores. These places and lives, though distinct, are bound by shared challenges: the fragile interplay between nature and humanity, the quiet resilience required to adapt, and the lingering dream of better days.

This series reflects on the deep connections to land and tradition that sustain dignity and resilience, offering a glimpse into a world shaped by environmental transformation and the enduring spirit of those who inhabit it.

See: www.skanderkhlif.com



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Corpus | Delicti

Rolf Kraehenbuehl ARPS

The design of the built environment is often in the hands of a select few. Yet the land users, with little to no agency in the conception, design and making of the wider cultural landscape, are exposed to it and experience it on a daily basis. Questions arise. How does the built environment affect us? How do we experience spaces within that environment? How do space and place interrelate, how do we turn spaces into places which are meaningful to us? How can we react to the built environment and (re)claim space through image-making and mark-making?

The analogue project "Corpus | Delicti" focusses on promenades, sea walls and their artificial surfaces in Wales. Promenades often serve a dual function as sea defences - with increasing importance - and as sites of leisure and psychological recreation. Their construction democratises access to the seaside.

I grew up in a landlocked country, and holidays by the seaside were unfamiliar to me. Even though the seaside and promenades have now become important places to me for exercise, rest and contemplation, without a long-standing biographical connection and therefore free from nostalgia, I examine and experience seaside locations in my own, and maybe different way.

Here I combine my visual exploration of seaside locations with an interest in the evidentiary capabilities of the medium of photography. One feature is the experimentation on how we can use the photographic material to record traces other than light, and what these traces can tell us. I wanted to explore the materiality not only of the medium but also of what is photographed, and how this can be reflected and recorded in the images.

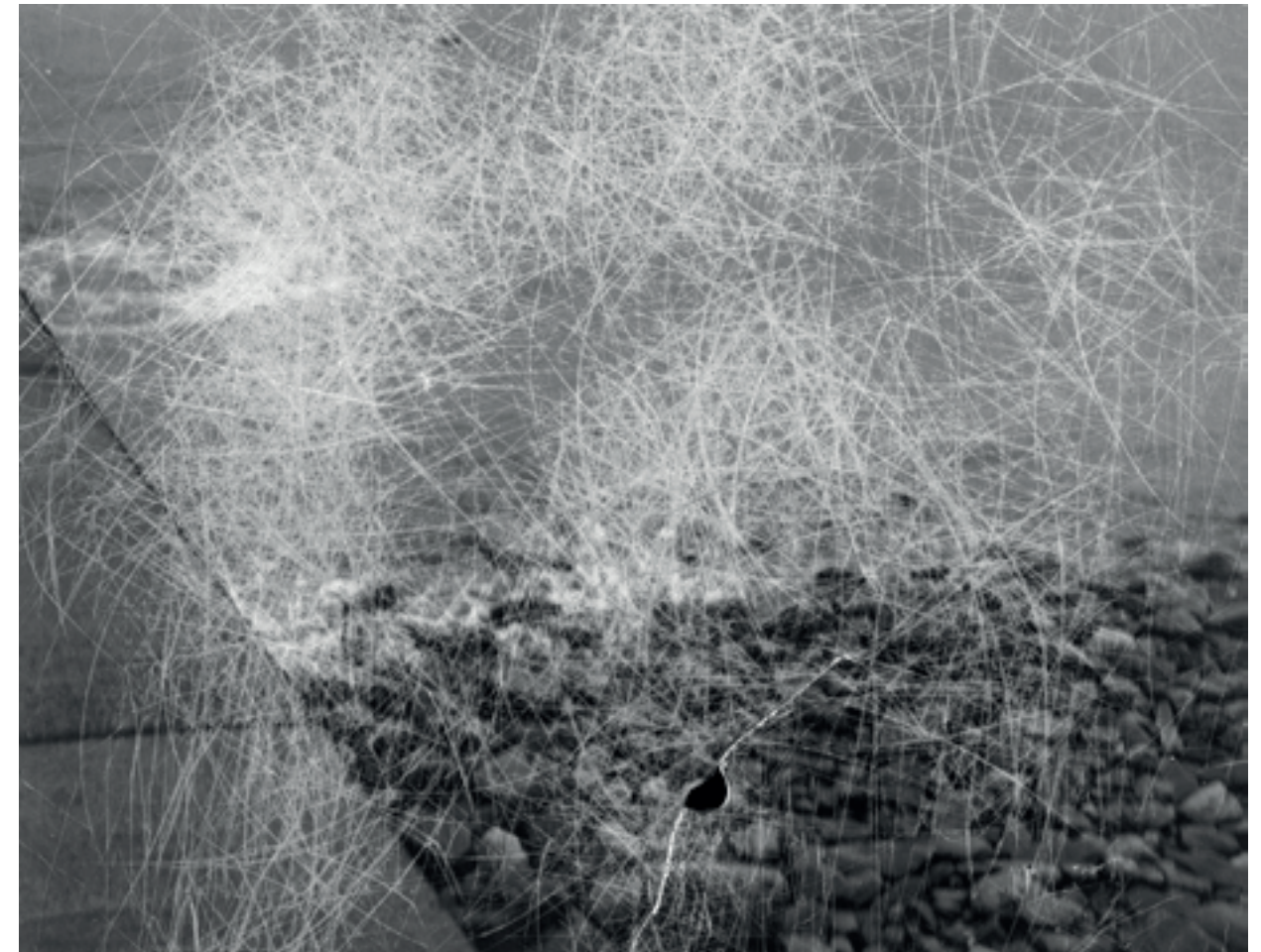
To mark the images with the textures of the surfaces of promenades and sea walls, I returned to the places I photographed, and scratched the developed negatives on their surfaces. In this process of image- and mark-making, the film negative - often considered a mere intermediate and overlooked as an indexical part in the making of photographs - becomes a key element.

The scratches, made as spontaneous gestures, are driven by the subconscious as a creative force. They add new traces on the film beyond those made by light. The marks of the external world - the thing photographed - and an imprint of my inner world while making work, blend into one image. Facts merge with imagination, both mine and the viewer's.

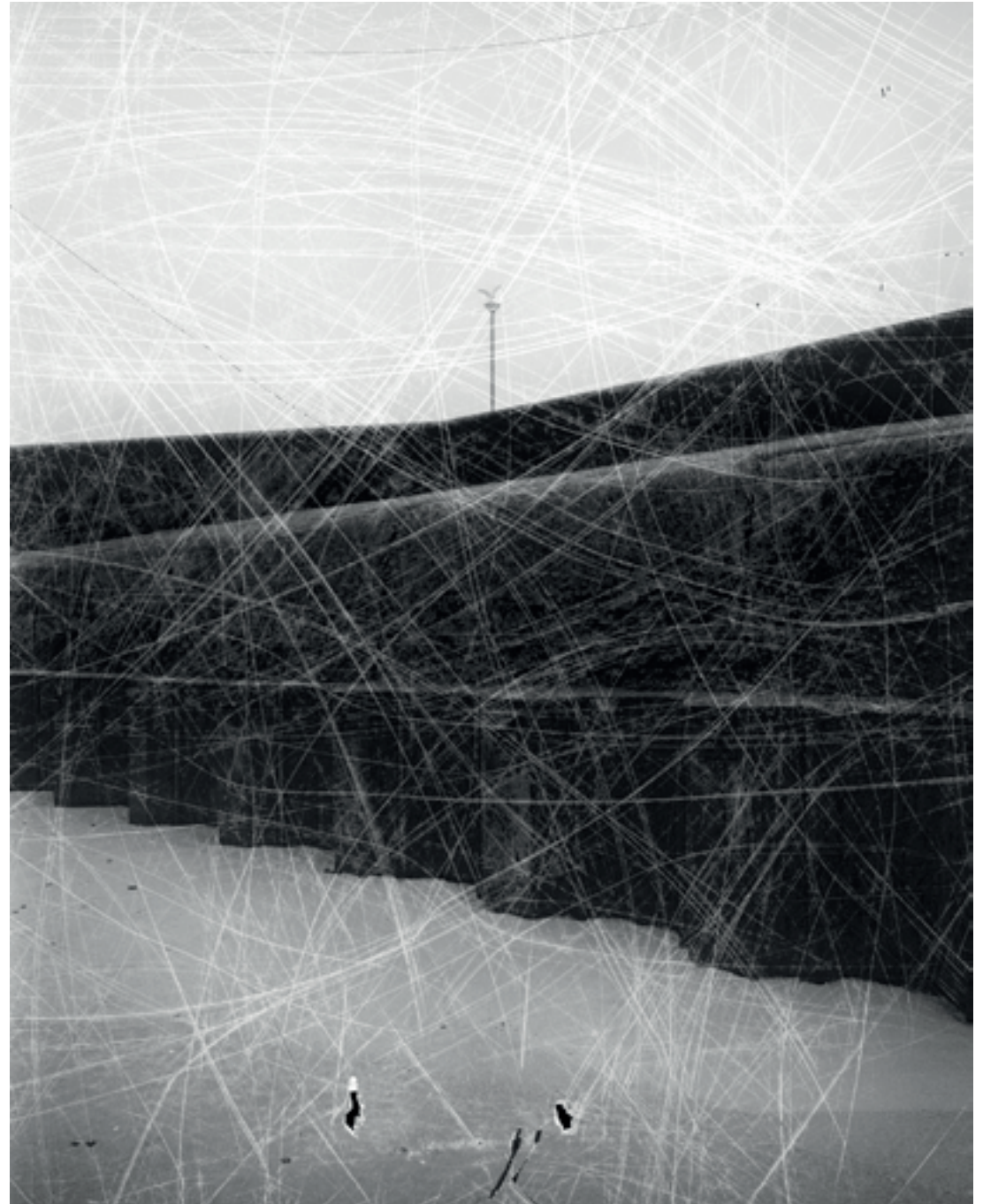
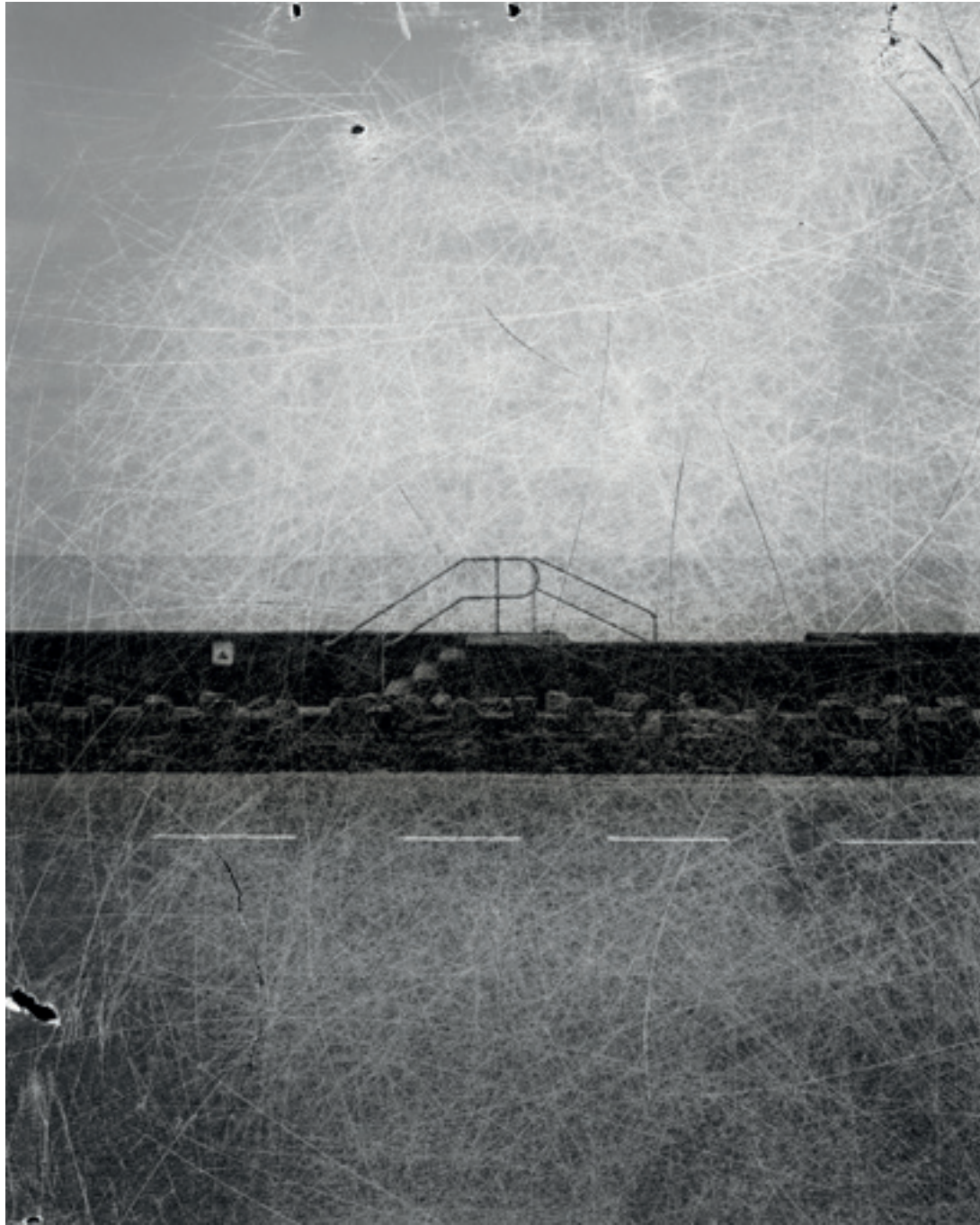
This process confronts the solidity of space, reimagines it, and is an intervention not in the environment itself but in its representation. It mediates my connection with the human-made environment, its components and materials, and uncovers emotional energy. The act of scratching the film negatives, inflicting destruction in order to create, shapes my relationship with the artwork: it requires letting go, taking risks, accepting the loss of images, and embracing chance with unpredictable results.

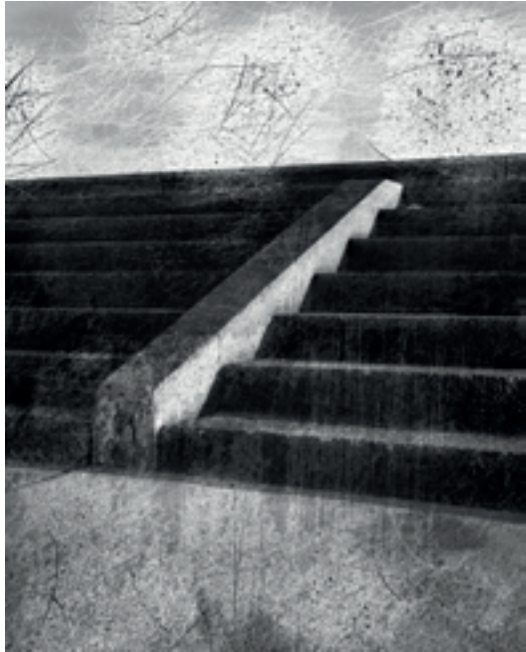
Ultimately, it is the viewers who interpret the images, which are meant to be spaces for them to project their own emotions and meanings.

See: rolfkraehenbuehl.com











Fluids

Karolina Maria Dudek

My ongoing project, *Fluids*, explores the symbolism of bodily fluids and their role in expressing primal impulses and shaping human reactions. By drawing parallels between everyday bodily fluids and the domestic sphere, I reconstruct these emotions through staged scenes that evoke a visceral sense of intimacy and connection. The work delves into feelings such as strength, vulnerability, and unity, challenging social perceptions and encouraging reflection on the often concealed, primal aspects of human experience. Through evocative imagery, *Fluids* aims to ignite dialogue about the deep emotional and corporeal bonds that unites us, emphasising the shared and universal nature of our physical and emotional identities.

This project addresses the psychological and philosophical significance of bodily fluids, particularly blood and menstruation, in relation to human identity and social perception. From a psychological perspective, I see bodily fluids as connected to core aspects of human cognition and emotion, serving as symbols of life, death, and vulnerability. They are often linked to subconscious processes and primal instincts, playing a role in how we experience and understand our bodies.

Philosophically, I find bodily fluids challenge traditional notions of corporeality, purity, and taboo. They raise questions about the boundaries between the individual and society, and emphasise how cultural norms shape our perceptions of bodily functions. The regulation and stigmatisation of bodily fluids reflect social power dynamics — used to reinforce ideas of cleanliness, morality, and control over our bodies. In my work, I explore how societal narratives influence perceptions of bodily fluids, often as symbols of shame or disconnection. I want to investigate the tension between the biological reality of these functions and the societal expectations of hygiene and decorum. This tension underscores the evolving understanding of the body as both a natural organism and a social construct.

At its heart, my work seeks to recognise bodily fluids as fundamental aspects of human existence. I focus on their role in biological processes such as reproduction, health, and mortality, as well as their symbolic significance within cultural and social contexts. My aim is to provide a factual exploration of how bodily fluids function as carriers of biological information and cultural meaning, challenging misconceptions and encouraging a more open acknowledgment of human vulnerability.

See: www.karolinamariadudek.co.uk

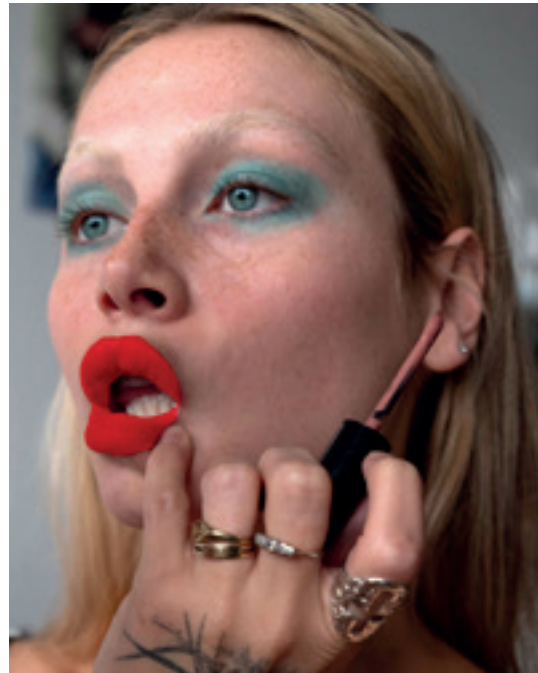
Editor's note: images provided by courtesy of the artist.













Constant Bloom

Lucas Foglia

Constant Bloom follows Painted Lady butterflies on the longest butterfly migration ever discovered. Each year, Painted Lady butterflies travel between Africa, the Middle East, and Europe in search of blooming flowers. They have followed this route for millions of years. Lucas Foglia's photographs trace both the path of the butterflies and the people they encounter, offering an allegory for our delicate, interconnected, and resilient world.

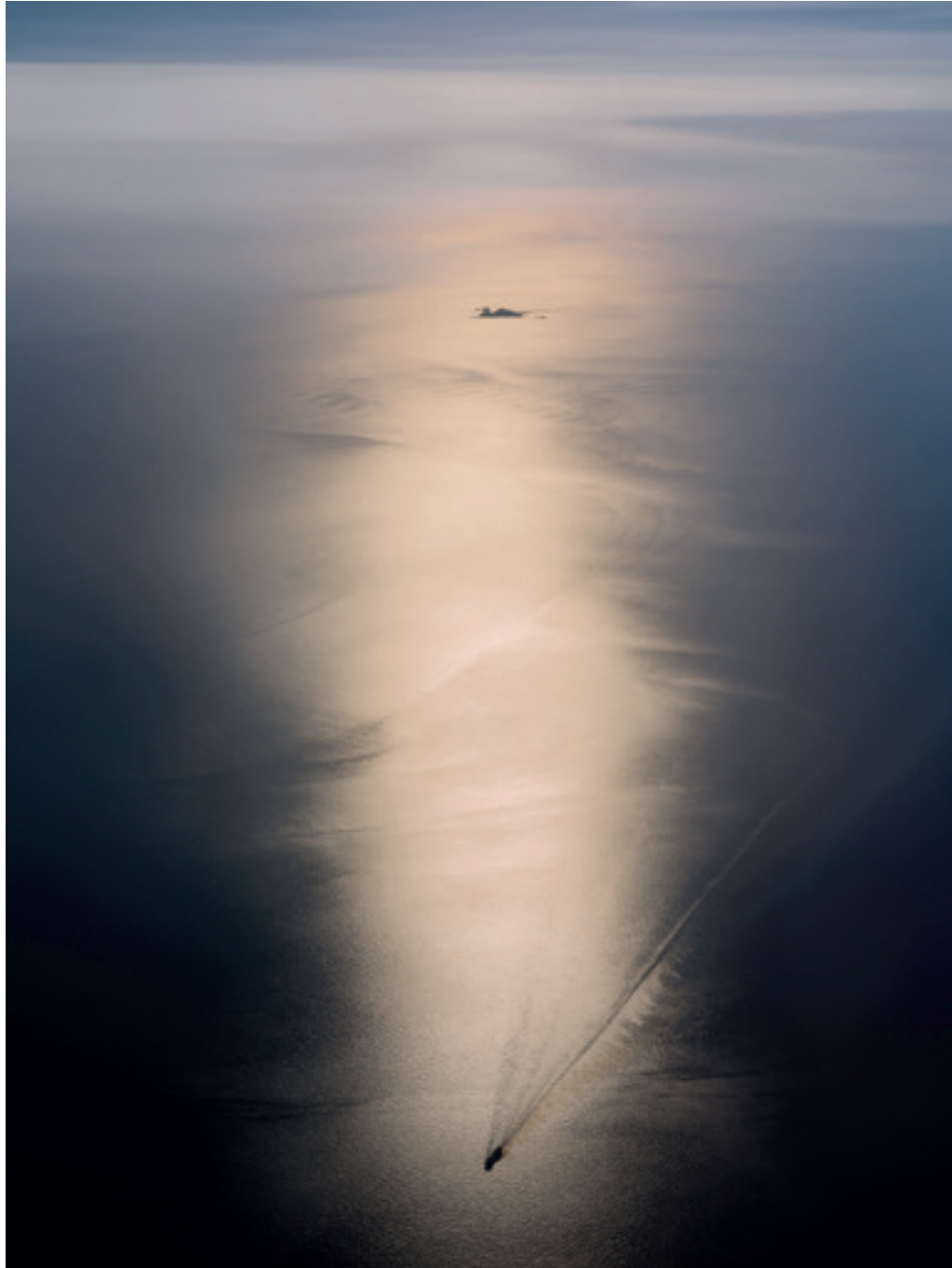
Now, with climate change altering when and where wildflowers bloom, Painted Ladies rely on flowers in our parks, farms, and gardens. As Foglia followed the butterflies from Kenya to Norway, he also met people experiencing unseasonal droughts, floods, or freezes. Many were refugees traveling to Europe along the same route as the Painted Ladies.

In *Constant Bloom*, the longest butterfly migration becomes a metaphor for connection across international borders.

See: www.lucasfoglia.com (including information on Lucas's book *Constant Bloom* from Nazraeli Press)











Casa de Camerina

Carol Olerud FRPS

This photo series is about the living spaces in a Mexican home. Camerina and her husband Florentino live here in Puruándiro, in the state of Michoacán. As it is very warm here, the house has an open style, there are no windows inside, and there is a patio in the centre. It's not a large house. Camerina loves her plants and birds; there is also a duck wandering round.

They raised their family here. It was special for me to be able to take my photos, it gave me the opportunity to see more of the Mexican culture from a close-up perspective. There are a lot of details to see in each photo giving information to the viewer.

The photos were taken late in November, with the Christmas decorations already set up. This was my first time in Mexico - I loved it.

I am about to welcome a Mexican daughter-in-law into my family. I'm glad I have experienced some of her culture, to have met her family and to have travelled in both the Michoacán and the Yucatan regions. There is more to discover and I will go back!

See: carololerud.com









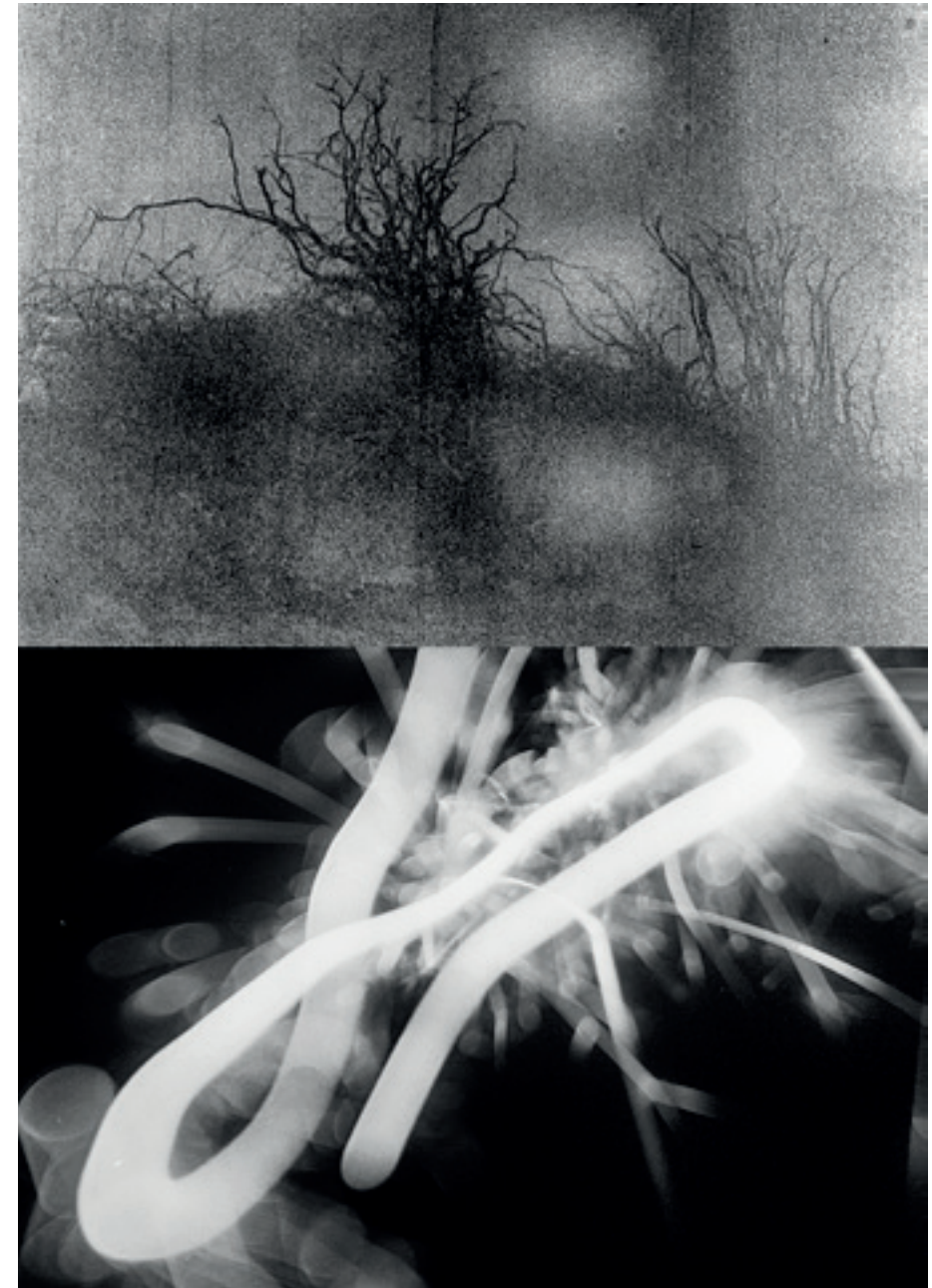
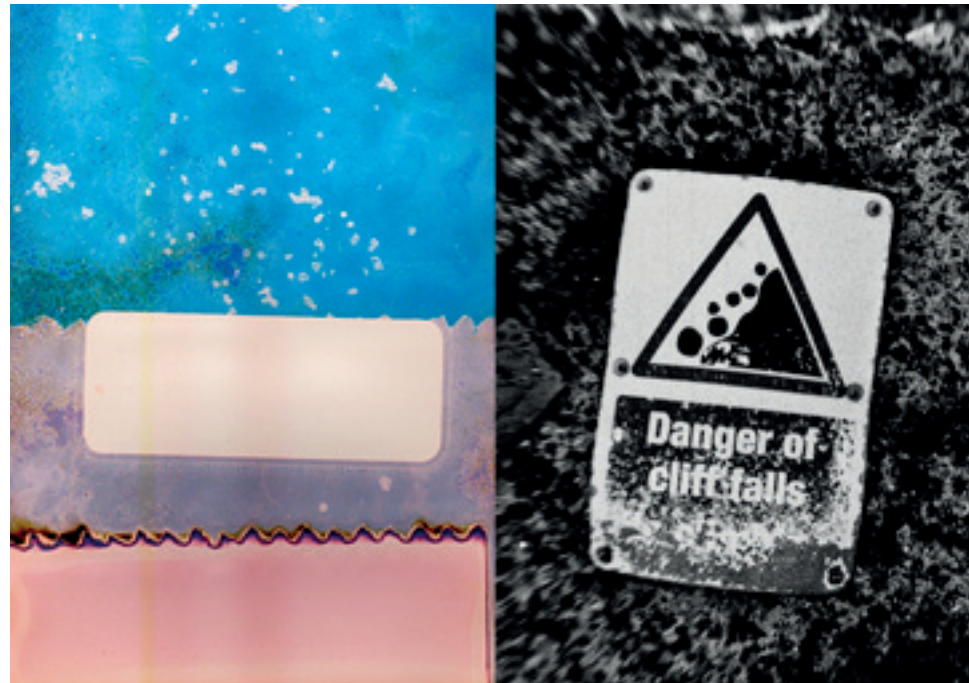


Everything is Wrong

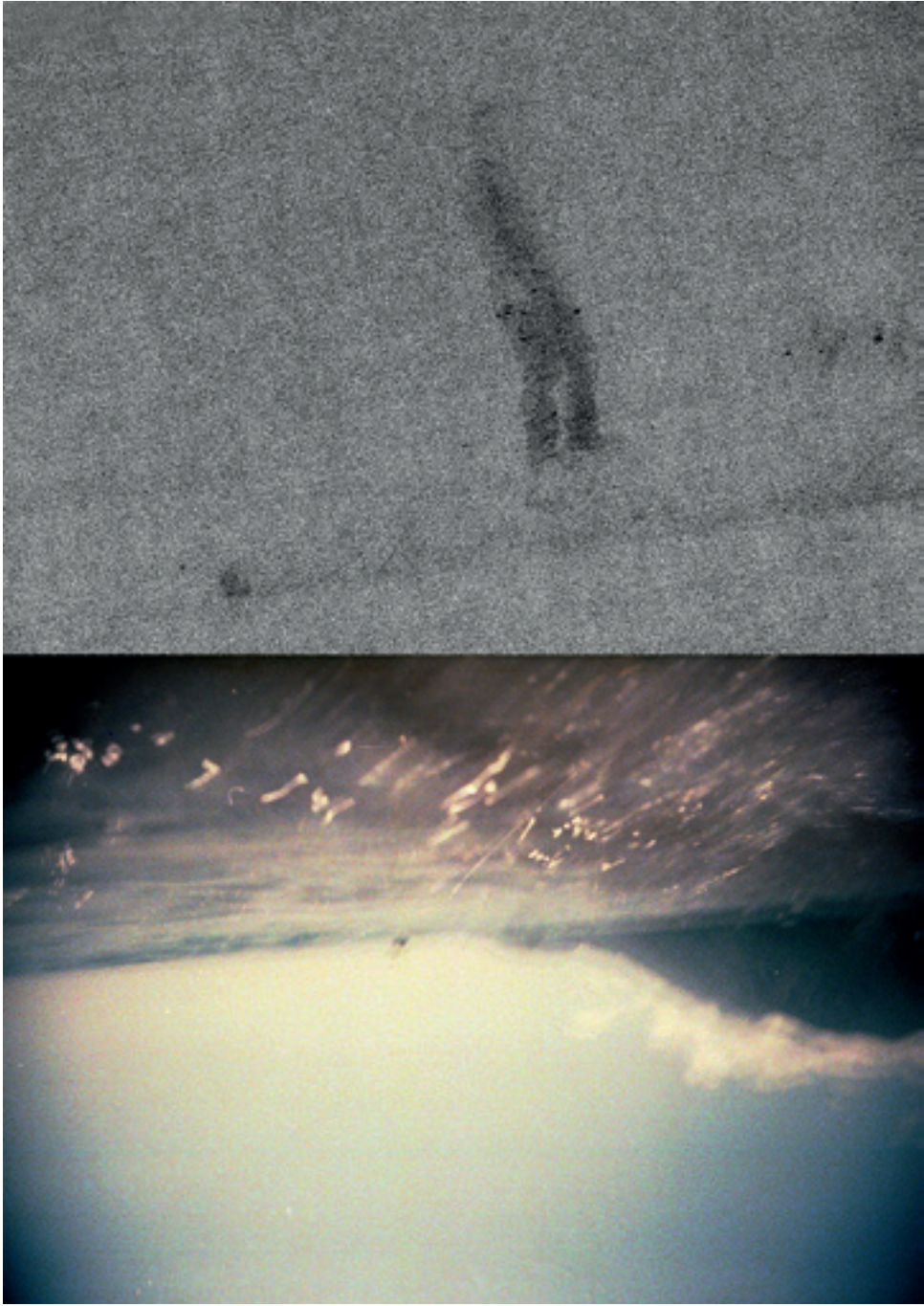
Mark Tamer

For 20 years I have lived with chronic vestibular migraines. My brain over-interprets different sensory inputs; lights are too bright, sounds too loud and movement makes me nauseous. Plus, there's the pain of the headaches and the ever-present brain fog making thinking clearly difficult. There's no off button, so it's how I experience the world now. Essentially, I have faulty wiring within my neuropathic pathways: signals sent via my nerves break down along the way, giving my brain incorrect information to work with. And yet this experience has gifted me ability to slow down, to find beauty in the quiet moments and to appreciate the complexity of the human brain and how it carefully constructs our reality. This project is my attempt to communicate a little of that lived experience.

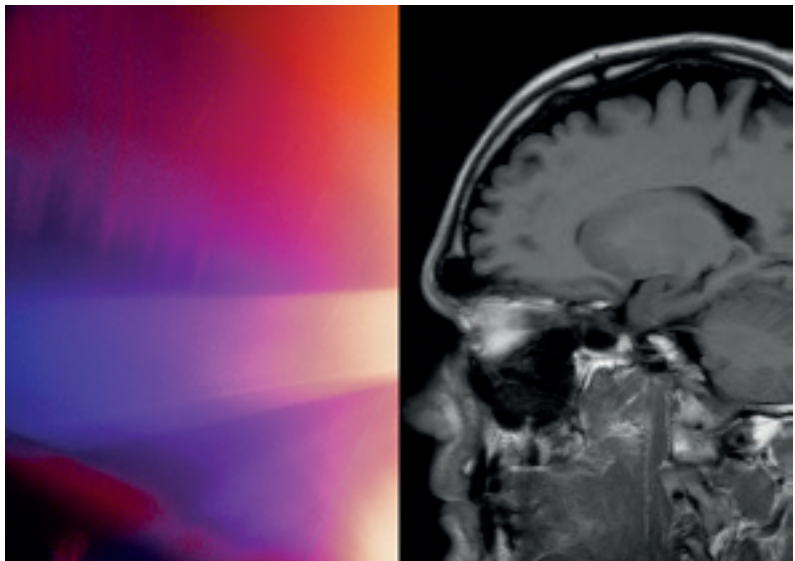
See: www.marktamer.co.uk



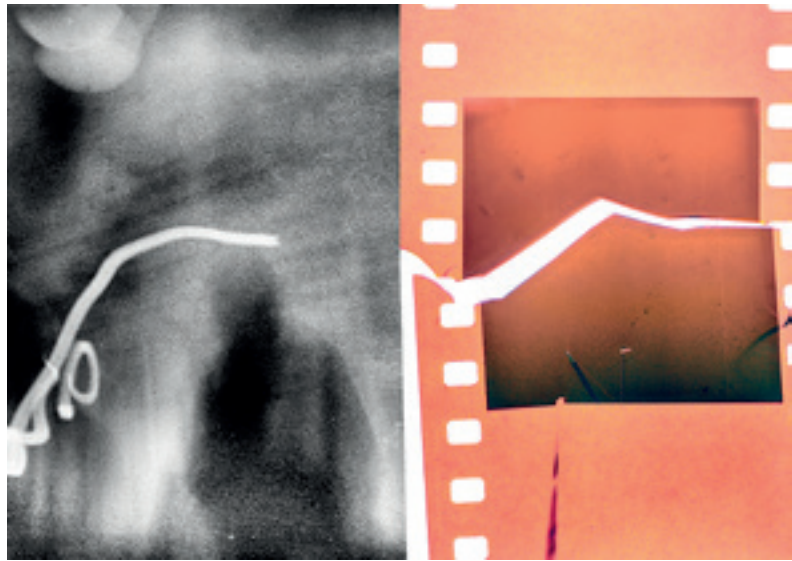




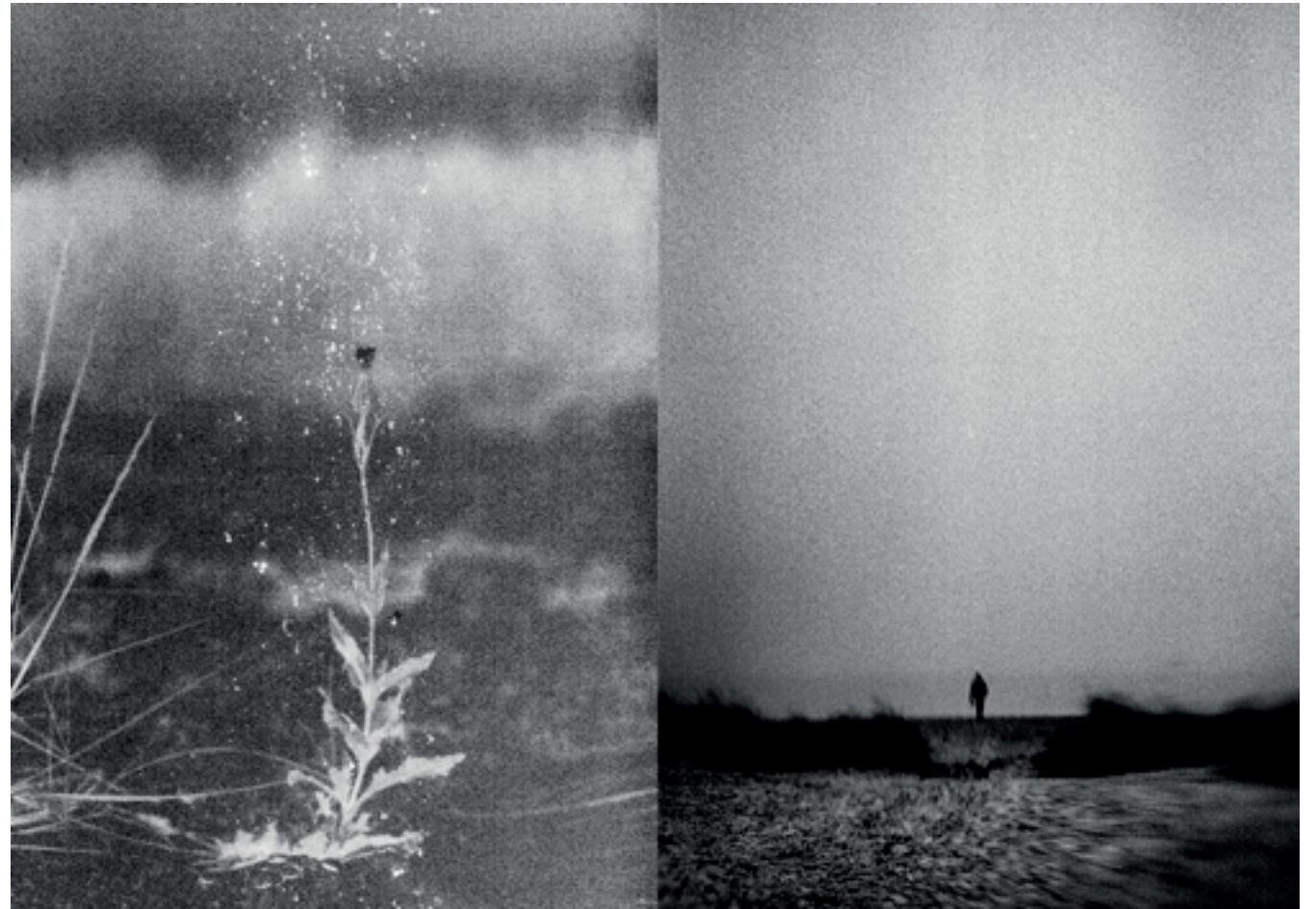
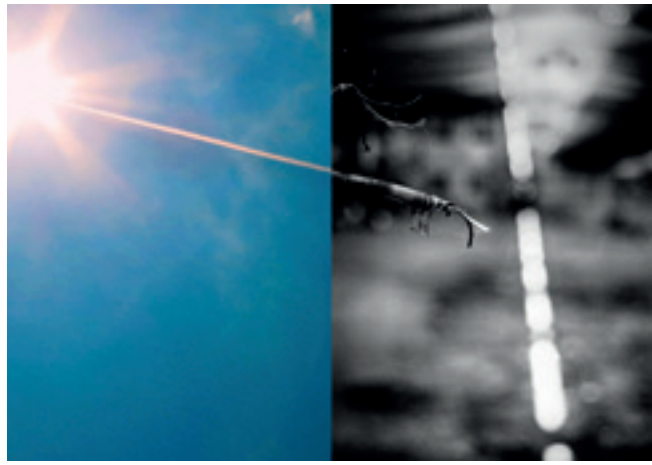
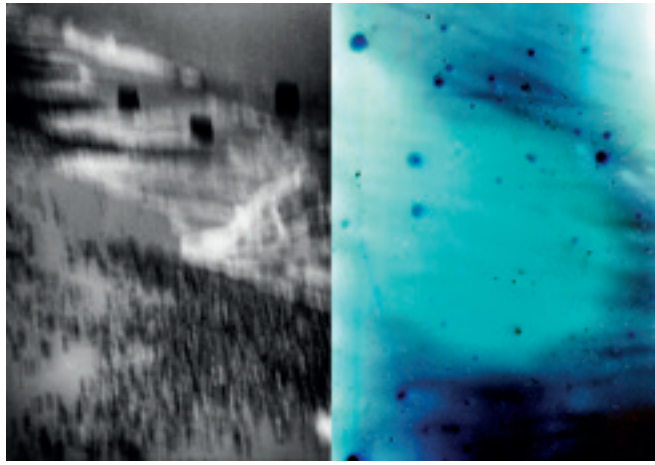




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Unyielding Floods, by Peter Caton

Book review by Alan Cameron ARPS

When I consider the effects of global warming I think of inundation of islands and low lying cities, drought in Africa or intense wild fires in Europe and North America. What I have seldom considered is that changes to rainfall patterns can give rise to continuous inundation of long settled farmland.

Peter Caton's latest photobook is focussed on the dire straights of the people of South Sudan in the face of recurring flooding. Stranded in East Africa in 2020, Peter had been commissioned by the charity Action Against Hunger to cover the effects of the pandemic on the new nation of South Sudan, but that was soon to change.

A new disaster in the shape of huge unremitting floods emerged while Peter was working, and the charity's director asked him to stop what he was doing and go to the centre of the disaster area to cover the effects of the water on the land and its people. That first year created a body of work in its own right, but Peter followed up over a number of visits up until 2024. This continuity of vision is a key strength to the book.

The images show how people who lead subsistence lives can lose everything with a rapidity that leaves no easy room for recovery. Farmers lose their crops and livestock, women their vegetable gardens and the community lose their homes and their few possessions.

Peter's approach is immersive, literally and figuratively. When one of his subjects is up to their neck in water, so is the photographer, his Hasselblad held above the floods. This is not a view from outside, it is the experiences of the people of South Sudan, caused by uncontrolled rises in the levels of the White Nile, which are in turn due to increases in rainfall in the vast catchment area of Lake Victoria.

The strength of the return visits is that they have enabled Peter to show us how disaster can be turned to opportunity. After his second visit one of the elders of the community told him that when he returned the flooded fields would be transformed into rice paddies, and so it proved. Recovery has started as people adapt to floating homes and new crops, but there is still a long way to go.

As we see the controversy surrounding people trying to get to Europe and the UK, books like Unyielding Floods help us understand just how desperate people in afflicted countries are. Climate change is largely driven by the developed world though the effects are most often felt by developing nations, which do not have the ability to deal with the resultant disasters.

I am very pleased to have contributed to the crowd funding of this book enabling Dewi Lewis to publish. The book is available online from the publisher, priced £40.

See: www.petercaton.co.uk



Stories in One Image

Paul Ashley ARPS

Tobacco farmer, Madura Island, Indonesia, 1980. Taken while working on a UK-funded, worthy project to provide water for rice cultivation. The more well-to-do local farmers would have preferred to use both money and water for growing tobacco. I returned to Madura more than 20 years later to find most farmers were actually growing vegetables for urban markets on the mainland. Lesson: don't try to predict the future.



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Group meetings

The Contemporary Group continues to hold meetings online and, where possible in person. Keep an eye on the RPS website, Concept and the group Facebook page for forthcoming events.

Regional meetings

Contemporary East. Meetings are held online on the first Thursday of each month in the afternoons.

Contemporary North. Meetings are held monthly live at Clements Hall, York, and online, on Saturdays. Contact Patricia Ruddle for more information or see the RPS website.

Contemporary South West. Meetings are held regularly, online and in person. Contact Adrian Hough for details.

Contemporary Northwest. Meetings are held both in person and online. Contact Alan Cameron for details.

Contemporary Central. Meetings are held jointly with the Documentary Group on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, online. Contact Steff Hutchinson for more information.

RPS Contemporary Group
rps.org/groups/contemporary

Contemporary Group Events
rps.org/events-listing/



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