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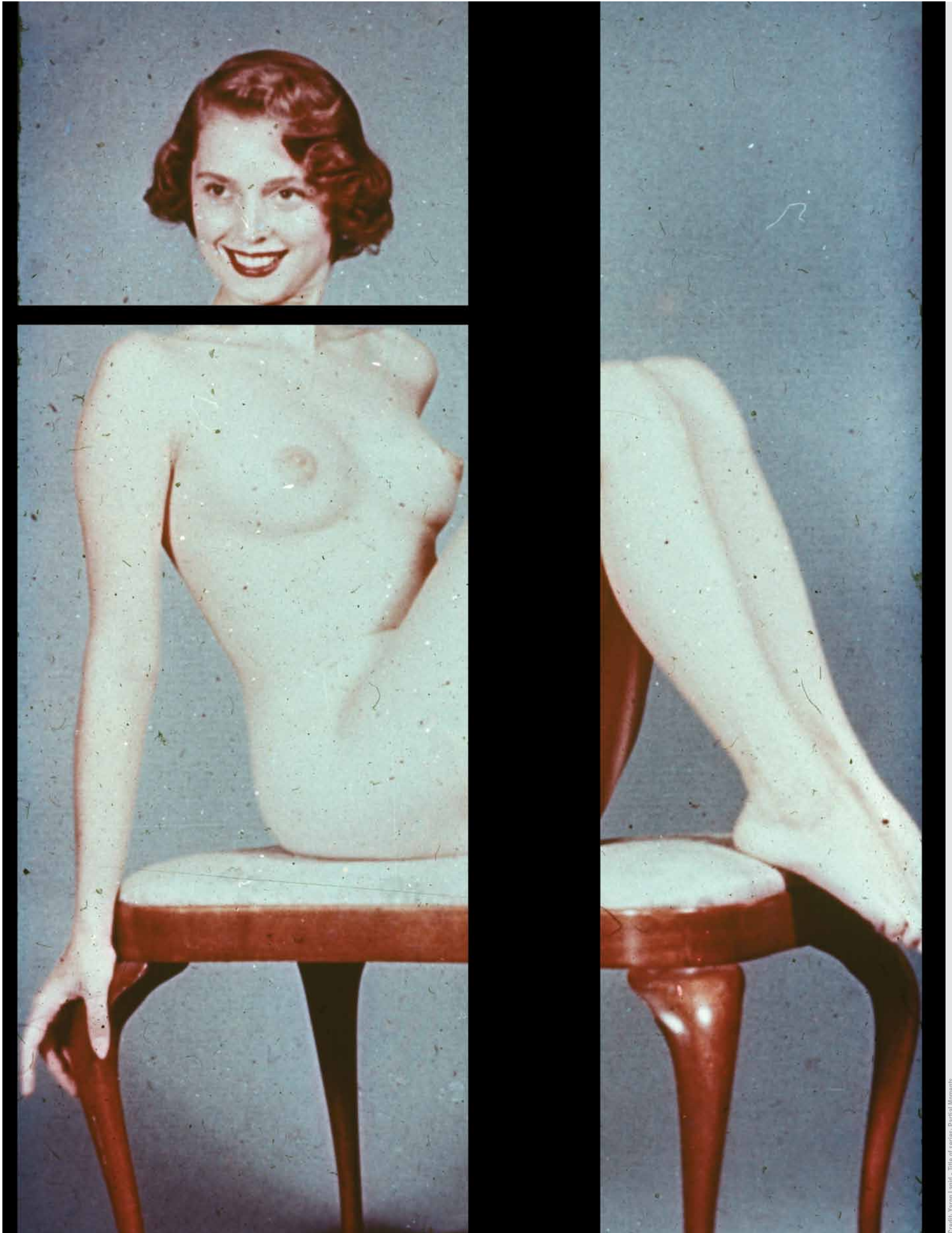
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# UNCERTAIN STATES /13



Credit: Yaron Lapid - Title of series: Partial Moments



(IMAGE ON COVER)

## YARON LAPID

Yaron Lapid's newest series brutally removes material from the focal areas of found photographs. It is mostly heads that have been blacked out, leaving the viewer with decapitated bodies and backgrounds to decipher, almost as if the faces have been struck out by a totalitarian regime. The photographs depict a Britain of the 1960s and 70s that seems both very close, evoking strong memories, and also a distant place that we vaguely recollect from childhood or perhaps from work by photographers such as Martin Parr (*The Cost of Living* springs to mind). Whilst Parr's work presents British society in a direct manner that some consider cruel, Lapid encourages the viewer to examine each scene for small clues. As a result, Lapid's re-presentation of these moments can be both touching and disturbing for the memories that it triggers in the viewer. The original purpose of the photographs, each one carefully posed and considered, has been lost to us, and so we are given the freedom to invent a new narrative for this distant world.

However, for Lapid, who came to the UK in 2005, these photographs do not evoke nostalgia but rather a fascination with the history of this alien country that has become his home. Analysing the minutiae of the image, which become so much more significant with the removal of important detail, allows Lapid into the psyche of our national past – in this case the world of the comfortable middle classes. The gestures and settings convey so much information about British mores, and, although the images seem distant to us, it takes an outsider such as Lapid to suggest that very little has changed here apart from the fashion. The images that Lapid has chosen have a gentle humour – the man casually lounging behind the cricketing girls or the way that the Dalmatian's coat mirrors the women's floral dresses, which in turn blend into the rose bushes behind. The work also has a formal visual strength that is a testament to hours spent pouring over found material. Each photograph has been rescued from oblivion through Lapid's intervention.

Lapid was surprised at the availability of photograph albums that he found in car boot sales and junk shops in Britain. This raises the question as to why people discard personal possessions and whether this reflects a change in British society and its family structures. Have such family photographs become materially and emotionally worthless? Lapid suggests that it is not as common to find such personal ephemera so available in the public domain in his native Israel.

Girl 15 [cover image] is from a related body of work. It is one of a cache of erotic photographs of Asian and European girls which may have been made in an ex-British colony such as Hong Kong. Here, Lapid has fractured the image aggressively so that the girl appears to be squeezed into a series of boxes. The viewer is encouraged to look at her more closely and to appreciate her forced smile and uncomfortable pose. However, the banal objectification of the woman is insignificant when compared to its contemporary equivalent in post-feminist society. Lapid draws the viewer's attention away from the woman's flesh towards the making of the image, and the marks on the print serve to emphasise the found nature of the underlying work.

Lapid's interventions are the last in a series of layers through which we perceive these complex and intriguing images. Sitters, photographers, family members, dealers and finally the artist have all played their part.

Katy Barron is a freelance curator and writer, working mostly with contemporary photography.

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



# INSPIRING NARRATIVES

KAREN FALCONER

Photographs, paintings, even frozen mental images are often the launch point for fiction writers, catapulting them from their own reality into a whole potential other world. The process is almost the antithesis of Cartier Bresson's notion of the photographer capturing 'fleeting reality'. Contrarily, it's about unlocking that 'decisive moment', revealing its secrets, making explicit its narrative potentials, as if developing those transitory fantasies that float through a viewer's mind when they stall in front of a picture in a gallery or on a page. It may echo something the photographer had in mind when taking or painting the picture. It may be something entirely new.

In a world full of ads, graphic novels, magazines, mixed media, where text and image intertwine, it is hardly conceivable that 100 years ago the two were considered separate domains; that poets, writers and artists, like Apollinaire, Breton or Picasso who brought the two together, were considered avant-garde.

As a writer, I'm interested in the creative process. Not how image or text influence each other when appearing simultaneously as in photo-journalism or advertising, but how the product of one person's imagination, one person's subjective take on reality, can be such effective fuel for another's.

Writers are constantly looking for something to inspire their narrative journey. It may be an actual or invented incident, like 9/11, the source of numerous fictions; or the merging of two disparate ideas – an old press cutting and a funeral, as in Ian Rankin's latest novel, *Standing in Another Man's Grave*. For some, it is a photograph or painting – the direct product of someone else's imagination.

Author Don DeLillo used a single photographic image of a dusty man walking away from 9/11 as inspiration for his novel, *Falling Man*. (Incidentally, *The Falling Man* is the title of AP photographer Richard Drew's haunting image of the same event.) 'Something in this photograph just hit me,' De Lillo said. 'There were more dramatic photographs; I don't know why it was this one. About a day after seeing it, it occurred to me: the briefcase was not his. This is what inspired me to write the novel. To find out whose briefcase he was carrying.' Pondering an image and letting questions flow - 'what happened?' 'What might have happened?' 'Who are they? Where do they come from? What occurred before/afterwards?' Etc - is fertile ground for the imagination.

Posing questions and discovering 'answers' lies at the heart of fiction - for writers and readers. Why is she dreaming she visited Manderley again (Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*)? Why is the clock striking thirteen (George Orwell's 1984)? How does Hale know someone's out to kill him (Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock*)?

Perhaps it is the way photographs do something similar in non-verbalised form that makes them so useful as writers' stimuli. For just as a novel sets up implicit questions, so a fascinating photograph implies, suggests, raises possibilities. It states nothing, or very little. Often, as I pause over an image, I wonder if this is what Diane Arbus meant when she said: a good photograph is one that keeps you looking. Confronted with her strange cacophony of portraits (or the moments framed by Cartier Bresson) who doesn't muse about the lives of those who inhabit them?

'I always have the feeling with photographs,' wrote the writer W G Sebald, 'that they exert a pull on the viewer and in this entirely amazing (ungeheure) manner draw him out, so to speak, from the real world into an unreal world, that is the world of which one doesn't exactly know how it is constituted but of which one senses that it is there... each image interrogates us, speaks to us, calls to us.'

Sebald's words may not say anything revolutionary but they resonate with me as a writer, journalist and nowadays teacher of creative writing.

Photographs naturally do what every creative writing teacher urges: to show, not tell. In landscapes, viewers see the location, the trees, buildings, dereliction; in portraits, they see the lines, the off-kilter eyes, the tension in the arms, the discomfort in the pose; they sense the row that has just happened or about to happen; they feel its emotion. When writing, you need to effectively convey images from your head, with sufficient detail to lead the reader into an imaginary world, endowed with emotion, creating the illusion of its reality for the story's duration.

Without visual prompts, fledgling writers often state rather than show the drama of a situation. Using photographic prompts reliably helps even the least good writer improve: for example, a photographic prompt shows a picture of a broken cup on the floor; the writer, instead of simply stating that someone is angry, seizes on the image and shows their character flinging their mother's best china cup across the

room – and the reader is drawn into the scene. Barthes' classic *Image, Music, Text*, examining the symbiotic relationship between text and image, describes the written word as making something from the photograph 'explicit', 'amplifying a set of connotations already given...'. Barthes is focusing on photojournalism, where, he acknowledges, adding a caption can alter the entire meaning of a picture. But a similar process is at play when visuals prompt a creative piece.

In my experience, it's an image's capacity to simultaneously show, suggest and conceal that makes them so useful in enabling the imagination to roam. Enough detail to hint at a story but not confine it.

Creative writing exercises are often about 'opening the box': writing from landscape cards helps create a sense of place; writing from (unknown) portraits helps evoke character. The images influence what is written, the characters placed in the landscape, the way they behave. When exploring particular aspects of writing, I ask people to write freely using a photograph as stimulus. It's like daydreaming with a pen in hand; or standing in front of a picture in a gallery a little longer - long enough to sense and explore the picture's 'secret'. Invariably, such 'free associations' produce something unexpected.

But how does it work? What are people amplifying? What are they connecting with?

When I saw David George's series, *Shadows of Doubt*, I immediately thought the photographs would be excellent writing stimuli. The un-peopled locations instantly brought narratives to mind. How much of this, I wondered, was because the accompanying text said the photographs were of Hitchcock's East End? Were these words impacting on the photographic message itself, as both Barthes and John Berger acknowledge it can?

I was in the perfect position to find out. I handed out a copy of a few of the photographs to some members of my writing group, and asked them to choose one and write for 5-10 minutes. I gave no other information. The first thing those writing did was to place someone in the scene: every 'character's' dilemma was predicated by details from the photographic environment – dark, outposts of light, mystery, hazardous materials, shadowy, rivers, falling, death, nothing, numbness. Even without the supplementary text, the photographs' underlying emotions were clear.

'My first thoughts were all dark,' one person said. Another: 'being an unknown quantity made it intriguing, the added dark areas created atmosphere and increased the potential of what I could write.'

Such short writing exercises are not sufficient to produce developed narratives or even the best prose, but they allow a freedom we rarely afford ourselves: to let the hand and mind roam almost unconsciously, drawing instinctively on the symbolism which permeates our culture, its associated narratives and emotions. (Later, musings may be harnessed and structured in to something more substantial.) Possibly, it's a similar chain of association that influences the photographer composing the picture, but filtered again through another imagination, another subjectivity.

The contents of our own mental 'box', supplementing and interpreting the cultural, or, as Jung saw it, the archetypal 'products of the collective conscious', mean that even before an identical image (or identical plot outline) we all create something different. Much as we take from the picture before us, we bring too. For example, filling emotionless scripts with our own feelings, as I observed as an accidental finding when researching *Telling Tales*, my Psychology Masters' dissertation examining writing processes in children. The story one little boy created from a wordless cartoon strip brought a sadness I'd not considered. (In the therapeutic domain, someone's interpretation of an ambiguous picture often serves to establish state of mind.) As Berger puts it: 'Although every image embodies a way of seeing, our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing.'

Each of us carries with us exposures we can draw on creatively. It's a question of accessing them. Photographs (even the most careless) help unlock them without you realising it. The image presents something external that kindles associations, stirs memories, and releases the writer from the tramlines of their own mind. To what degree, I wonder, does the process work the other way?

Karen Falconer is a writer, journalist and editor. Among other hats, she is currently teaching creative writing at London's Groucho Club and developing a therapeutic writing programme.

\* Searching for Sebald: Photography after W G Sebald', ICI Press, 2007



## In the Shadows

I know this place. For the last six months, it has been my home. Standing out here, smoking in the rain, I have run my hand over every dent in its metal rails. I know the routines of everyone in those distant flats. You see the reddish glow on the second floor? That's from a bare bulb hanging from old Mrs Beeson's roof behind her faded pink curtains. She's lived there since before the war, born, bred and shortly to die. I went there once. Each morning she pushes her shopping trolley down to the local Spa. Seven o'clock prompt she's there. Same time as I grab my Times on the way to work. She buys apples and carrots and potatoes in ones and twos. Her back bends like a crook. It is the weight of years, stuck on her lonesome in the flat.

'How are you, Mrs Beeson?' I say, for I know her name.

'Fine, fine in fact,' she always replies and cranes her head up from her steeped neck to show her delicate smile.

One morning she wasn't there. No, Mr Ragheed said, she hadn't been in. Nor yesterday. Number 44, she lived.

I bought her order, a tin of Heinz vegetable soup, a loaf of bread and a bunch of flowers, and headed between the imposing buildings along alleys dark even in daytime.

The old doors were open. I pressed the container lift but it didn't come. I wandered up the stairs, each one a large enough stride for even a young man. I knocked on number 44 and called her name.

'Mrs Beeson,' I said, and knocked again. A muffled voice, old and buried, crept under the door. I couldn't hear what it was saying. I turned the knob. It opened. I walked in. A cat lunged at my feet, back arched, led me to her room. She was lying there, the landline crashed to the floor, too frail to bend and pick it up.

After that day, her daughter, a woman as large as her mum is small, moved in to take charge. I still watch the flat often, just to make sure. She reminds me of my nan.

Why am I telling you this? My head hurts and I need to get to my door. But instead I stand here, an owl in deepest night, absorbing the noisy silence of a city that never takes 20 winks: the squawk of cars and assault of sirens, the swerving of the River Thames continuing its daily debris sweep; the haphazard screams of drunken happiness or assault. This is my world, the place I feel and feed when the City Gherkins and Shards and trading floors dim their lights and let me free.

I am at home here, out where the shadows are disturbed by light. Inside, in my place on the first floor, a mere 10 metres away, the lights are on. I know she's there. I saw her nude contour framed in the blind-less window. She has no shame. Does not care if strange men hang out below and watch her breasts ripple as she walks, pert baubles on a Christmas tree.

She does not know I'm here. I'm meant to be working away. Up North, she thinks, until tomorrow. But it's Friday today. Party night and they say, when the cat's away the mice do play. I know that happens. Experience taught me. Australian Josie, the sad bitch, who ran all the way from home and

landed up with me. The nice guy with the nice City job that she decided she'd take for a ride. No one cared who she was or where she went.

That night I had my first fag in three years. I'd got home early. Saw him take her through the unvelled window. Stood in the cold until I saw him leave.

Mrs Beeson's daughter was very helpful. 'Thank you very much,' she said. 'I could do with the extra cash.'

I've never seen my flat quite so clean, tables, mirrors, floors shining.

'You can be my cleaner, if you'd like,' I'd said. 'Once a week. £30.'

'Thank you,' she said. 'You're a real godsend. Whatever would we do without you?'

I often think of her when I'm standing here looking over the rails into the abyss.

They say: if it happens once it doesn't necessarily happen again. But how can you be sure? That's why I'm back here 24-hours early standing smoking in the cold December night. I cup my hands round the tip of my cigarette, like they do in films, hunting for warmth.

I wonder if she'll look out. See a coated man loitering with intent. But the window stares back bare. What does she do so late at night when she's undressed but not asleep? Perhaps there's someone with her too. Another Josie.

Hostile attribution bias, my therapist calls it. Seeing bad where none exists. I try to think of it his way, a benign reason for displaying her naked wares: she's scared of the dark; needs the light to keep her safe.

It is not happening twice, I reassure myself. My therapist is right. Mrs Beeson's daughter's job will be sedate as usual in morning.

I fling my fag over the iron railings and walk into the light, back in love and confident as a bloated cock. My leather-soled shoes tap on the stone stairs. I brush my hand through my hair. It falls in gentle waves. I put my key in the front door. I am calm.

Then I hear. What do I hear? Squeals of laughter over deeper chuckles. A male voice with Australian-sounding vowels. Too close to be the television. I smell her favourite lavender essence creeping beneath the door, settling over cooked and petrifying garlic. Surely, waif-like, she doesn't spend Friday evening cooking for herself?

My fingers tense, I turn the key and thrust open the door. I'm just making sure. Something crashes on my head, hard. The Australian towers over me as I fall.

'This time it's your turn.'

A boot stamps on my stomach. My breath drowns.

'From Josie's brother, James.'

Image Credit:  
David George

# ELAINE VERRIER

## Memory Bank

Memory Bank is a place to preserve important photographic memories that, due to the passage of time, may otherwise become lost or forgotten.

I began this body of work by looking at the relationship between old family photographs and the recollections they generated. My Memory Bank work explored the boundaries that existed between forgetting and remembering.

Having studied my own family history I came to realise the importance of the preservation of family ties, stories and memories. Elderly relatives may be less able or incapable of recalling important or past events that photographs portraying family members and relationships once evoked. Bad or undesirable memories may be changed or disguised, providing plausible alternatives in which a person could perpetuate and ultimately believe, despite any glaring disparity. Family memories become hazy over decades so when they are lost it can be forever, hence establishing the preservative importance of my work.

Starting from a personal perspective with family members my project developed into a participatory activity involving the collaboration with an older generation group. I commenced my relationship with the group by asking them initially to have their portraits taken. Following this I requested them to select some of their family photographs that conjured up significant personal memories and which they wanted to have remembered on a website developed especially for this purpose. The older generation were selected for this project due to the greater passage of time that this age group possessed and the significant likelihood that their memories may have become distorted or even totally lost. Hence the necessity to preserve such memories before they become irretrievably forgotten.

Once participating members had selected their photographs, I scanned, enlarged and reprinted them so that the copies could be written on. I gave no instructions as to the colours of pen to be used, the positioning of text or the amount to be written. Once this activity had been completed I rescanned these pictures and added them to the memory bank website. These would be a permanent copy of the original photograph and a reminder of the memory that the image provoked. The recorded recollections are the raw unchallenged versions.

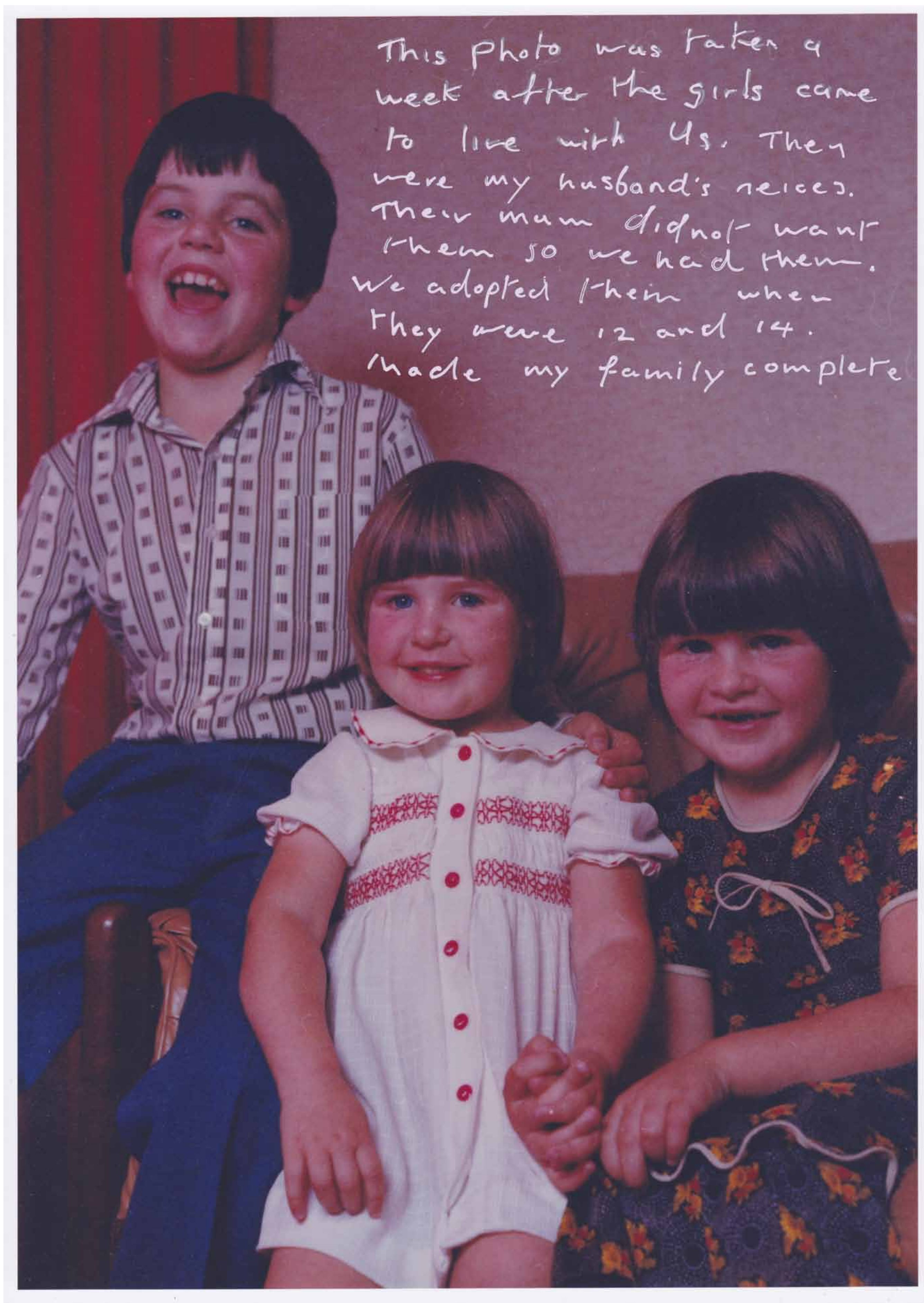
The Memory Bank website was therefore to become a memory archive and a means not only to preserve the submitted pictures but also to maintain the narratives behind those photographs.

I was fascinated to see how sometimes the written memories were quite unrelated to the image that instigated them and, as a consequence, may have been true or false. These images therefore offer multiple layers of interpretation and meaning.

My work is a way of examining how both memory recall and memory loss can produce imperfect representation, investigating how, over time, once-accurate memories can fade, become distorted, reinterpreted and displaced.

This project can be viewed at:  
[www.elaineverriermemorybank.com](http://www.elaineverriermemorybank.com)





# FIONA YARON-FIELD

## Up Close

These are extracts from my book 'Up Close', which describes my relationship with my daughter Ophir who has Downs syndrome. When Ophir was born I quite naturally photographed her and as I had always done, continued to write in my notebooks thoughts and feelings on the everyday. As my life now centred around the home, so did my photography.

The images and written words are captured, although separately, in the moment. Putting these moments together is a form of sequencing, each one a fragment of a wider picture. In this work the image and text do not necessarily relate to the same physical time and their link is ambiguous. This was often how I experienced events. The 'here and now' that I was observing was very different from the internal dialogue that may have raged in me. These were often tied up with my own current fears and childhood memories. The image is my observation, it is the 'what is' she is just a child in her life' getting on with the ordinary experience of growing up. The text represents my struggle to stay connected to myself. What distorts my perception is, I believe, a result not only of social conditioning but of my own childhood

experiences. Consequently this creates text that is sometimes about Ophir's childhood and sometimes about mine. Writing, like photography, helped me understand this experience. If the camera helped me see Ophir then the writing helped me see myself.

I was motivated to make the work public both as an artist and a mother of a child with Downs syndrome. I do have some need to expose the myths and stereotypes about Downs Syndrome that are deeply engraved in society's consciousness. It would be naïve of me to think they do not affect my daughter. I wanted to show that I am just an ordinary mother in a relationship with her daughter and as much as I believe we all pass through similar feelings, developmental stages, worries and joys etc I also wanted to express the difference and how living with a disability heightens everyday experiences.

For copies of 'Up Close', a mother's view (Bunker Hill Publishing)

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Lovable: from the moment of birth this word follows us around like a consolation prize; to be labeled 'lovable' and also 'not desirable' is a strange contradiction.



Tongue in, hand out, shirt down, hurry up, chew, don't gulp.  
Can you hear me? Stay focused, concentrate. Don't fiddle.  
Stop copying. Be yourself!



Half way up the stairs or maybe I was going down. I sit, suddenly so tired of going up and down and getting ready. Curling my legs up and resting my head on to my arms I feel my heartbeat against the stairs; it's soothing. I did this as a child. Then I would shut my eyes, often falling asleep in this place that was neither up nor down. Now I am listening. Down I hear Noa chatting to herself in her imaginative world. Up, Ophir has her music loudly playing. Yet there is a quiet harmony and I am reminded that I am not a sleeping child but a listening mother.

I want to dream the wildest and the most ordinary dreams for my child. I want to allow myself to imagine that she can do or be anything she wishes for. Just like my mother dreamt for me. I'm so frightened of her (my disappointments) like dreaming will create longing that can't be fulfilled.



It's a summer's day. Ophir and I are driving along in the car, windows down, music loud. She looks over to me "Mummy" she says "When I'm a grown-up, I want to be a mummy just like you. I'd drive my car and have my baby in a car seat in the back"

Is that such a wild dream, I wonder?



## GABRIELA FABROWSKA

**Its hard to be down when you are up**  
*'His elevation ... puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.'*  
 Michel de Certeau – "Walking in the City" from "The Practice of Everyday Life"

In *It Is Hard To Be Down When You Are Up* Fabrowska reflects on the individual meaning of freedom. Central to the work is a sense of grotesque futility of chasing freedom, defined as a Romantic cliché: lack of bounds and responsibilities.

The images show spatial allegories of contradictory states, oscillating between the claustrophobic safety of home and the vertiginous

freedom of a rooftop. Fabrowska uses a dialogue between genres to introduce the protagonist and follows his oneiric journey, showing the contemplative stillness of concrete landscapes and nervous tension of portraits.

Restraint and claustrophobia, delivered through a domestic set-up, allude to the obligations resulting from belonging to the social structures. In this world, living in a city means being surrounded, and freedom equals solitude and elevation. Unlike in the pictorial tradition, the protagonist is absent from the landscape. He tries to escape and break free, but all we see is the un-heroic figure, trapped in the ordinary locations, caught in the awkward moments. His stumped efforts undermine the paths of the whole enterprise and comment on its inadequacy

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





# VICTORIA COSTER

## Tales of Transience... 'Behind the Veil'

I only ever intended to be away for a year, but it's true what they say, that time waits for no man!... And so it passed, the journey continued and whenever I returned to all that was familiar, the faces I knew, the places that once held me, the son I once carried in my womb, I knew that whatever I was searching for had not yet been found.

I continued to photograph, trying to capture the ephemeral, the camera became not only the essential divide between me and the environment, the space to make sense of all that self is, it became the catalyst, forcing the never ending questions to knock even harder on the door of the mind, 'who is the author of this narrative?' 'Is she fact or fiction?' and 'The Knower, what is it that she knows?'

'Tales of Transience' is a body work still in progress. *Behind the Veil* forms a chapter, a series of images and writings produced from behind various mosquito nets over a period of several months, periods of time where I could do nothing other than observe the world from a constantly shifting perspective, a perspective that was being re-shaped by the Indian philosophy that I had come to study.

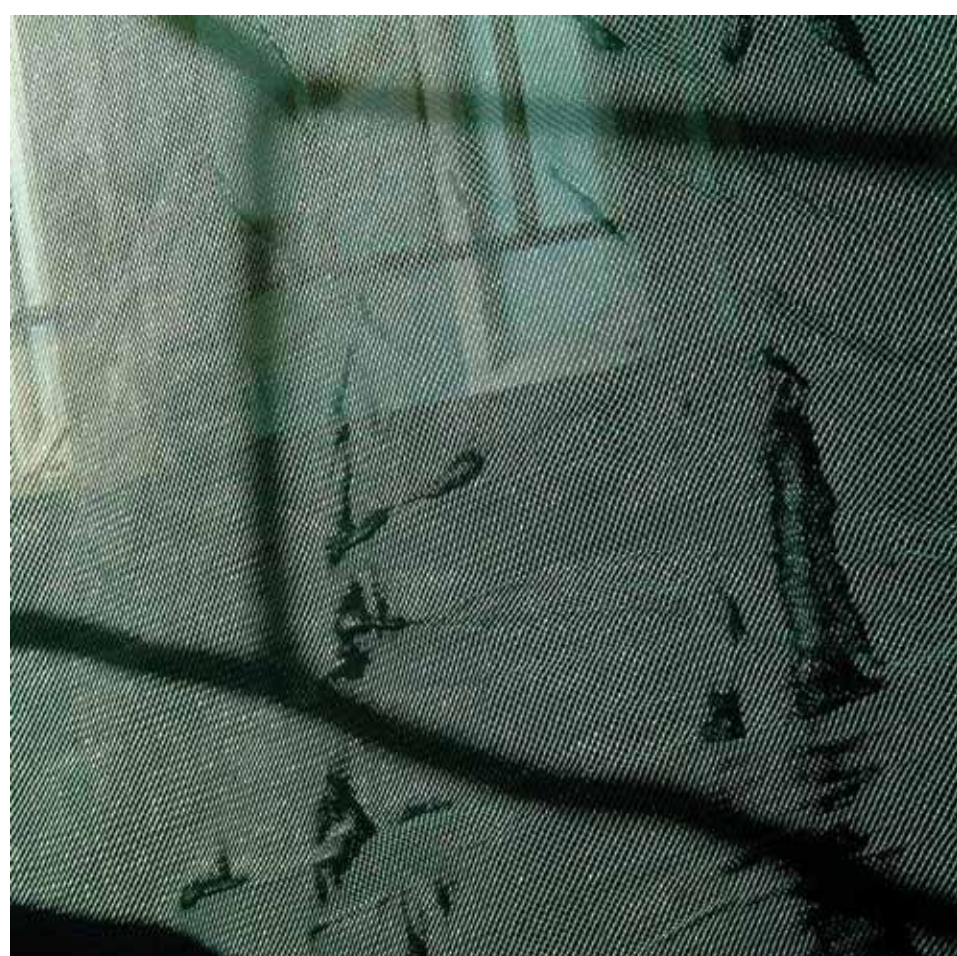
With the objectivity that the passing of time brings, the photographs have become quiet meditations, the story I tell of a woman who once existed yet no longer is. As Freud states in his essay on Transience 'what is painful may none the less be true'.

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www.talesoftransience.wordpress.com



Something that isn't there

fragments



Where do you reside in  
this that is her





## KYLER ZELENY

**Landscapes**  
Landscapes offers uncanny views of urban and rural landscapes. The series was shot using a modified point and shoot film camera with no post-production work. The relevance of the series is open to individual interpretation.

[www.kylerzeleny.com](http://www.kylerzeleny.com)



**Magdalena Strzelczak:**  
Where did you take these pictures?

**Kyler Zeleny:**  
These photos were taken in numerous locations: London (buildings), Istanbul (birds), and Canada (power lines that look like crosses). They are part of a larger series.

**MS**  
Were you editing the images later?

**KZ**  
They are all double exposures, done in camera with no editing. There is of course manipulation but it is "low-tech" lens manipulation.

**MS**  
The composition is so central...

**KZ**  
Yes, the structure of the photographs break from the classic rule of 3rds most associated with landscape photography. The images are a sort of anti-landscape...a pseudo landscape.

**MS**  
So in those pictures you are intentionally misusing the canon of photography, the rules of proportions, position, balance. Why?

**KZ**  
Because the canon hasn't changed since its inauguration with photography, and before the

medium ever existed it took from landscape painting basically the same set of principles.

**MS**  
Perhaps the canon hasn't changed but there are contemporary artists working on both fronts with and against the canon. How come you are choosing the latter?

**KZ**  
I like the idea of subverting tradition. I do not think there are any projects that can claim to be formulated and executed in a vacuum. All work in some way addresses its predecessors. You can either extend that tradition or attempt to change it. I would rather try to change it.

**MS**  
But why?

**KZ**  
It aligns with my values in photographic practice—film technology that only uses in camera manipulation. Which is an interesting thing, I am using a method which works against tradition but utilises a 'traditional' approach. The landscape images are really just a playful interpretation of a subject matter that in my opinion has been 'dry-minded'.

**MS**  
Dry-minded? Do you mean boring?

**KZ**  
I do not think landscape is inherently boring, I just think it has been played out... I like doing the double exposures because it is an approach to landscape different from the canon...Topics can be boring, but that does not mean they are not good. If it is boring enough it might just touch the fringe of being magical... that is like a lot of Eggleston's work... Photographing democratically.

**MS**  
Could you elaborate?

**KZ**  
Martin Parr photographed tourists, what one might think of as a very boring subject matter, but it was brilliant. Another photographer followed an Asian tourist around a botanic garden and just photographed him... That was beautiful... But when you think about it its a pretty lame topic... The tourist... I personally love watching tourists, but maybe it is because these photographers have aroused an interest in me for tourist watching, I would be a liar if I said I had not photographed a tourist as a result of their work.

**MS**  
So what makes the photographer "good enough"?

**KZ**  
There is a special breed of practitioners who have the ability to make any topic interesting (in theory). I believe Martin Parr belongs to that cohort, he can photograph tourists and it is

wonderful, he photographed a town in Oregon called Boring and it was brilliant. He can do this because not only is he technically astute but he is also offering us something new, the same as what Adams did decades earlier, he offered a new way of seeing and I think that is what is so important, what makes the photographer "good enough in his time" ... Originality.

**MS**  
What is 'new' in the landscapes you are offering?

**KZ**  
There is nothing grand about these images, they do not attempt to flip landscape photography on its head, although it does playfully flip landscape photography on its head in each image... It's just a new way of understanding a very old concept... It is there to help us think about landscape, and space (of the landscape and the frame). I now see these landscape photographs as a stepping stone to a new project that deals with the local and foreign.

**MS**  
Your pictures have a surreal uncanny quality. They look dream-like but not in the heroic, fantasy-like way. They seem to belong to a much darker dream. Something your subconscious might fabricate after reading about non-renewable resources and watching a Hitchcock film straight before bed. Is this dystopian feeling at all intentional?

**KZ**  
The way I understand traditional landscape photography is that it is overly realist, too idyllic for my tastes and perhaps this is where some of the bore I associate with the genre originates. Ansel Adams, particularly his Yosemite work, is praised high and far... Now I just find it overly dry, as Ronald Barthes would say it "does not prick us". Adams' understanding of his craft and determinism is admirable; his images are simply boring to me. So I wanted to extend a narrative of landscape that was surreal and dark natured. The triptych, and the other images from the series, mess with the visual literacy we all learn about landscape. They aspire to create confusion and anxiety as to what exactly we are looking at.

**MS**  
And what are we looking at?

**KZ**  
Landscapes. Images of Landscapes.

**MS**  
Real or imagined?

**KZ**  
These are urban and rural landscapes, in Canada, Hungary, the United Kingdom, and yet we don't get that from the images. We have issues placing where they belong because we lack references, as I mentioned before, we lack the visual literacy to make sense of them and we have issues placing them into categories, real or imagined.

# ELLEN NOLAN

## Previous Personality

'Previous Personality' explores my relationship with my mother as she recedes into dementia. I started photographing my mother and myself when she stopped recognising me as her daughter. The documentation lasted for three years, exploring a journey of reversal and erosion. The title 'Previous Personality' is derived from a section in the form I had to fill out for my mother, upon admission to her institution.

There is a strangeness of being inherent in this condition, an altered state where the family member shifts into another being, whilst retaining the physical appearance of their former selves.

Photographically, I tried to reflect this state by creating images that are simultaneously uncomfortable and aesthetically pleasing. This mirrored the interior and exterior conflict of the illness.

My clothes were used as a visual reminder that whilst I had the freedom of personal expression, members of staff now chose my mother's wardrobe, brought from a generic clothing company that visited the home on a monthly basis. I never got used to seeing my mother in these clothes, and together with her growing sense of alienation within her 'home', they came to visually represent her loss of self.

What remains when almost everything is stripped away? A silent negotiation took place through emotional and physical intimacy. Few words were exchanged, except repeated utterings of love and the remembering of who I am and who she was.

Photography as a medium seemed to serve the situation well. It was a record to capture my dying mother, a means to examine our state, and perhaps to create an alternative family album.

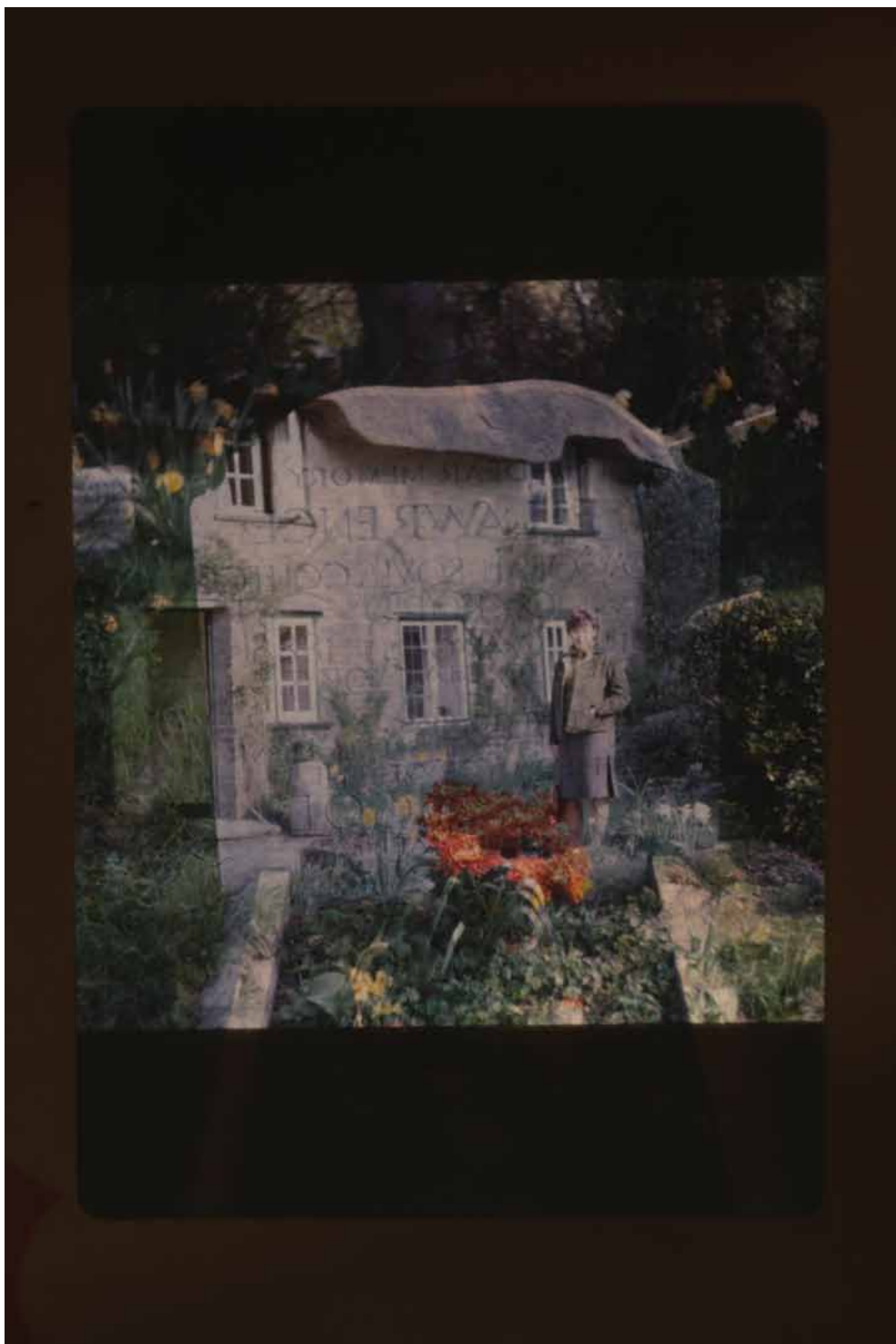
Photography also seemed to fit the muteness of illness and ageing.

The decision to include myself followed my concerns with the objectification of my mother. I felt that by joining the frame, I would challenge my position and my safety as a photographer in order to further explore my role as a daughter and my relationship with my mother at this time.

[www.ellenolan.com](http://www.ellenolan.com)







## SUKEY PARNELL

### Intercession

I have always been entranced by the purely positive image: the photographic transparency. How it radiantly shimmers with jewel-like saturation when light is poured through it, miniature worlds. I had a Pollock's Toy Theatre when I was a child. Behind its miniature proscenium, I could slide layers of scenery, characters and a backdrop. My grandfather, an electrical engineer and keen amateur photographer, completed my theatrical illusion by making me a tiny lighting rig complete with a large black dimmer switch. It was a wonder. I enacted my small dramas in my make believe world, illuminated in full colour.

These images came out of another play in my studio with my lightbox one day. I was clearing my office and had emptied some old family slides onto my lightbox. Many had faded with time

and some had fallen together and were overlaid, one on top of one another. I decided to look at them like this. Through my eyeglass two rather ordinary slides of a wood coalesced into a minute garden of Eden. In another pairing my dead mother appeared as a young woman framed by a tombstone. These were scenes from before I was born but they seemed to take on a new life on my lightbox with shimmering uncanny resonances and hidden depths.

I reached for my camera. But the sense of depth, of being able to see detail through the spaces between the two images, of a distinctness that somehow held together, was impossible to completely recreate. These will be unique artefacts. The photographs you see only point at an image from long ago yet to be revealed.

[www.sukeyparnell.com](http://www.sukeyparnell.com)





## OSCAR PAR-ASIEGO

### Anamnesis

Anamnesis consists of 5 portraits. It is to say the formal portrait is abstracted in this set, leaving only its silhouette, keeping, of course, technique and framing. We could even define it as an offscreen, where the essential element is missing but it is automatically created in the observer's mind, making complete sense out of what he is seeing.

It could be said that they are environmental portraits, because of the use of landscape as a resort, but, unlike the landscape, they instead define the person who is inside it. In this set, the people portrayed are the ones who have had a special importance in the artist's life during his time in the South American city of Buenos Aires, in Argentina. Through these landscapes, the artist talks about the person, conveying his personal view about each of the models. This is not what identifies each person's character, but the representation through a landscape of what these people meant for the artist. The personality of that person is reflected in a mirror: the mirror of the artist. Once again, Óscar Parasiego uses photography as a mechanism through which he can know, in a more comprehensive way, people, and therefore know himself better.

In this set the background and the figure are exchanged - the figure becomes the background and the background the figure - which is why the neutrality of the background of the images leaves the viewer so powerfully absorbed in the picture contained in the silhouette. Because of this, from an artistic point of view, the artist tries to give depth to the images to convey the real feeling and non-fictional presence in that particular scene.

Text: Marta Pérez

My starting point is the impossibility to portray something in a true way and by utilizing this notion I attempt to delve further in the subject of identity. In my work I try to make visible this deficit. This has led me to explore different resources which exceed the strictly photographic. In the series Anamnesis the impression of the person/personality is suggested through the landscapes inside their silhouettes. In another series Light Beatings I use the element of light, a beam keeps the portrayed anonymous. This element represents the communication of anxiety. Both series were shown in a recent solo exhibition 'Faceless'. I have never believed that the eyes are the window to the soul.

[www.oscarparasiego.com](http://www.oscarparasiego.com)





Credit: Oscar Parasiego

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