



Nº 26

ANSEL ADAMS

“You don’t make a photograph just with a camera. You bring to the act of photography all the pictures you have seen, the books you have read, the music you have heard, the people you have loved.”

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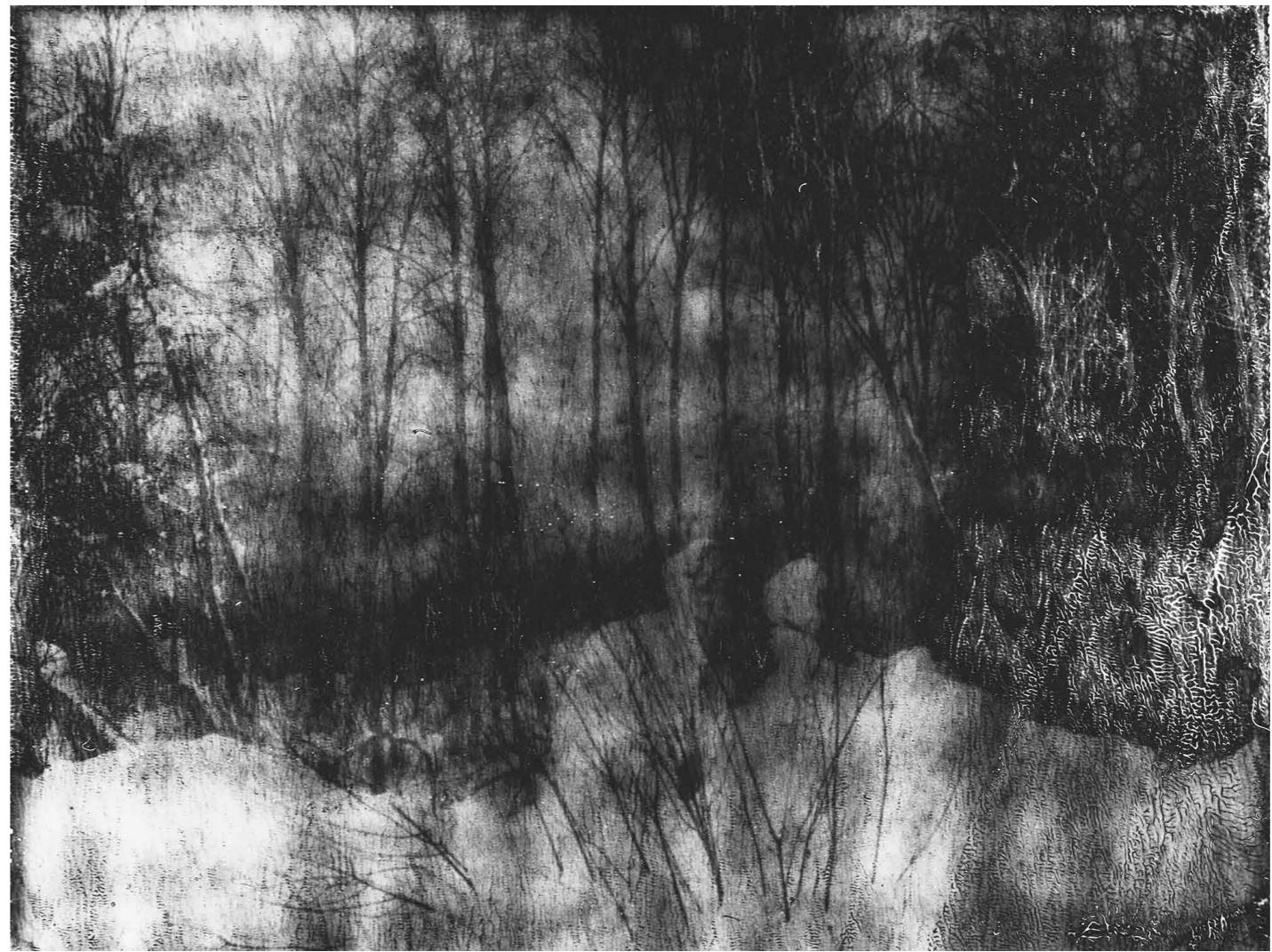
ANNICK LIGTERMOET
De Verontrustende Wereld

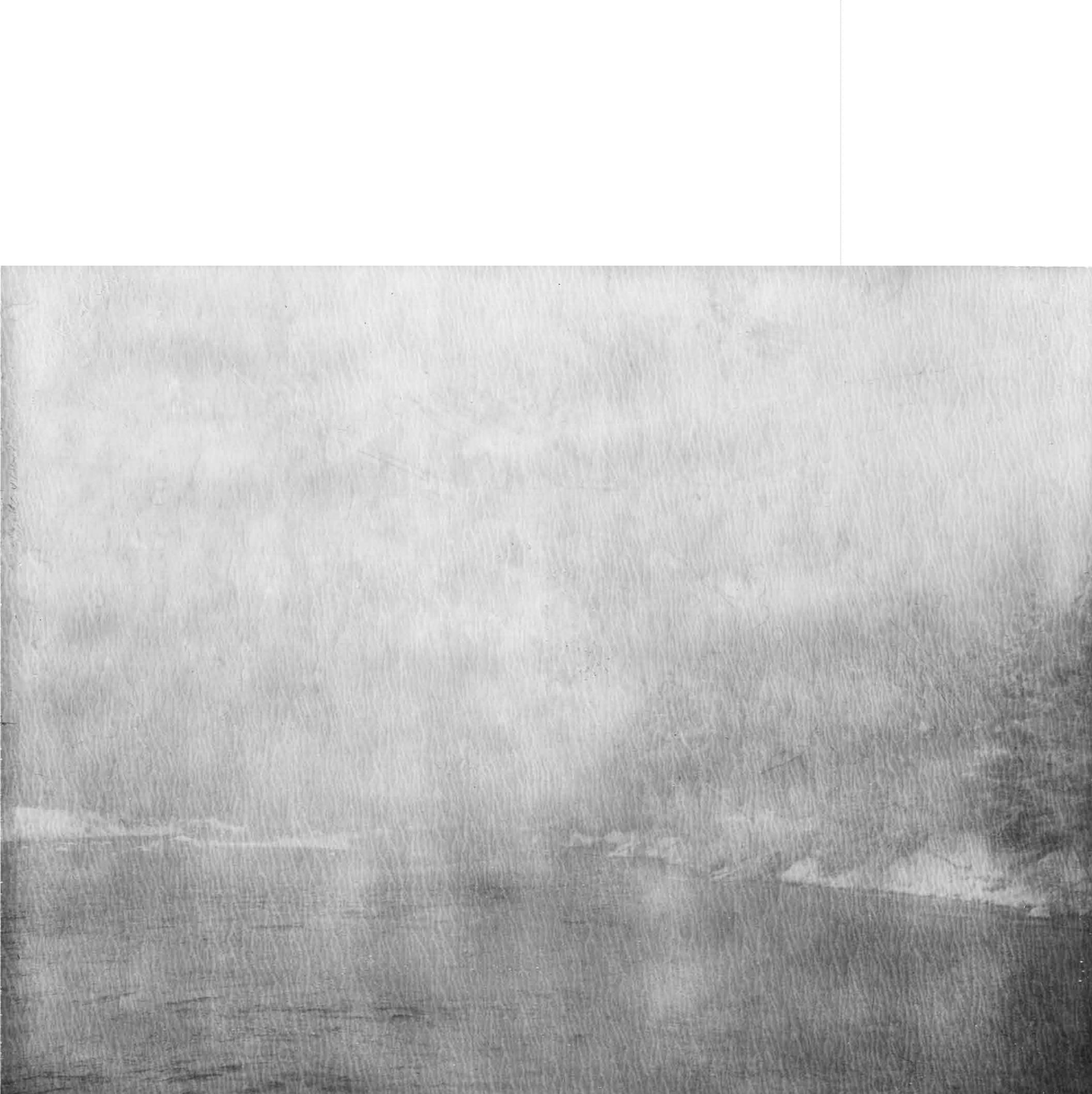
The background of the image is a dark, atmospheric photograph of bare, tangled tree branches silhouetted against a light, cloudy sky.

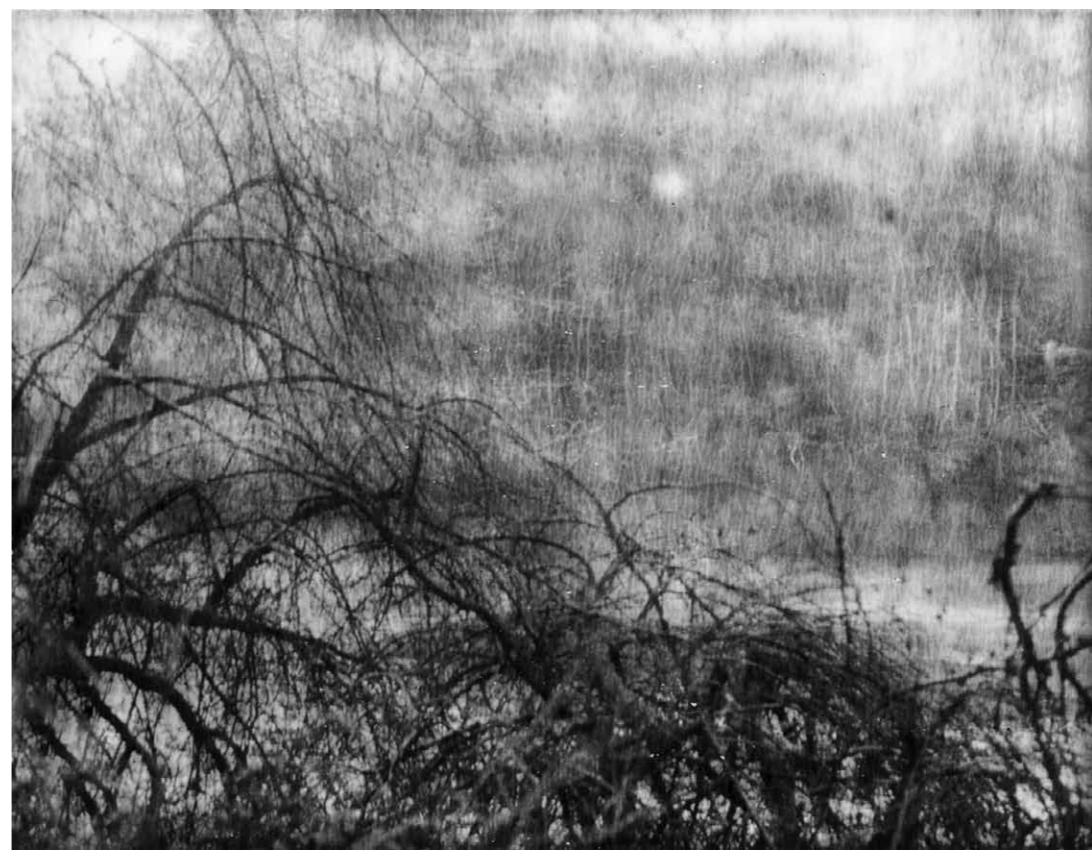
Ester
Vonplon

RUINAULTA

estervonplon.com







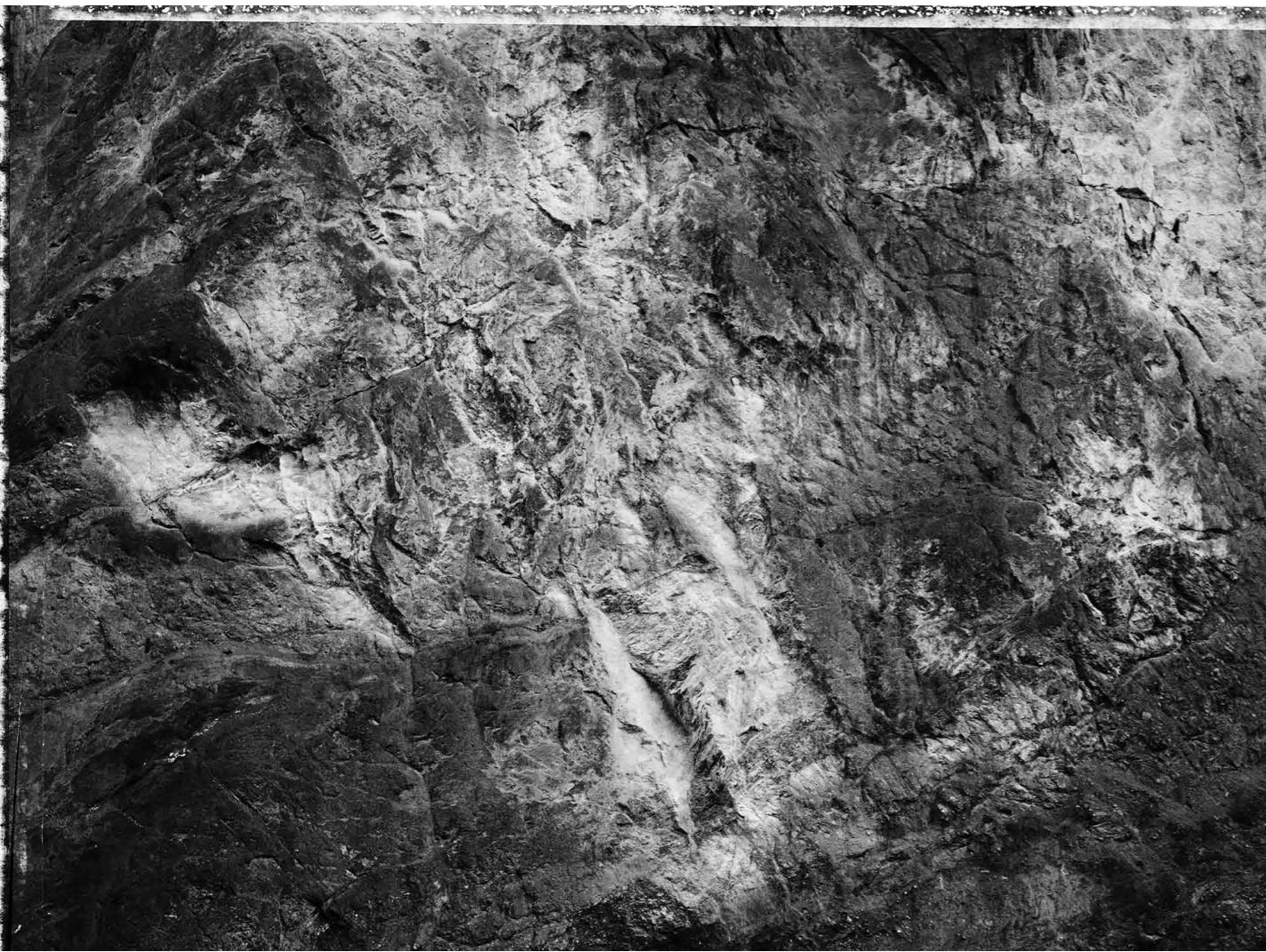


Since 2006 Ester Vonplon has produced series of photographs which appear to come from a different period and are singular in that they efface beings, places, and objects behind accidents, imperfections, and use effects such as differing grains, soft focusing, monochromatic veils, and sharp contrasts.

Technique is nevertheless of little importance to Ester Vonplon, who uses an intuitive approach. The effects obtained are not explicitly sought after; they are the result of chance and circumstance. They only interest the artist if they enable her – as when using different formats and operating modes within a given series - to express emotions and feelings as faithfully as possible.

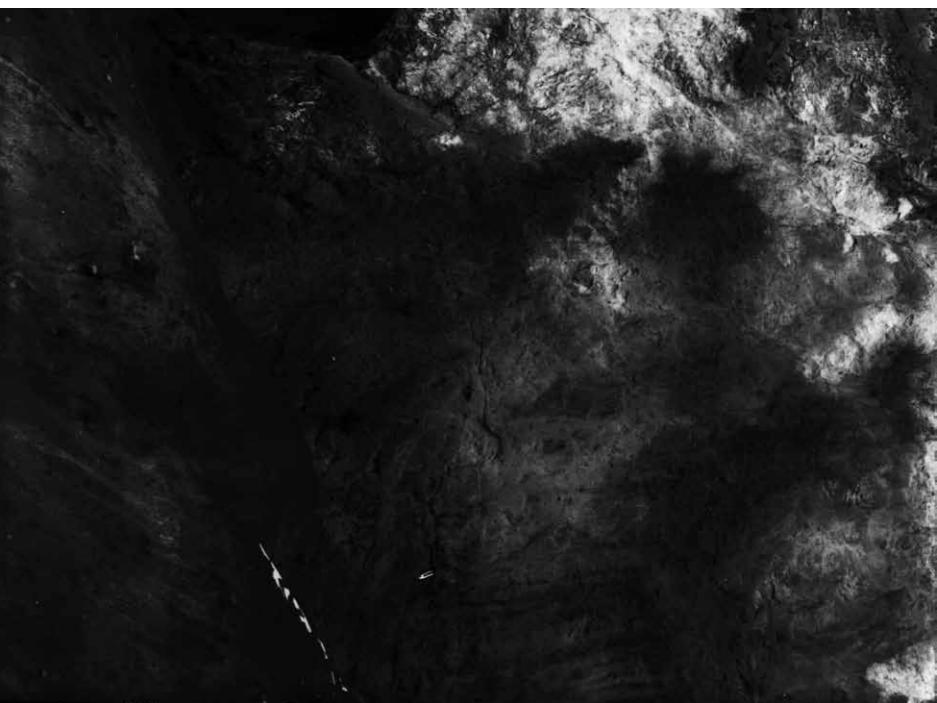
Ester Vonplon's photographs are infused with a deep, subdued melancholy. The artist privileges the highly charged atmospheres conveyed by pictures of rain, snow, and fog. She is sensitive to a mysterious, primitive quality which she finds in nature. Yet she is not in search of a paradise lost. In her work nature is austere and at times threatening, imposing itself on a humanity evoked by ghostly silhouettes and fragile traces. The motif of the ruin runs across all Ester Vonplon's series. It reveals an acute awareness of the fleetingness of beings and things and an obsession with disappearance.



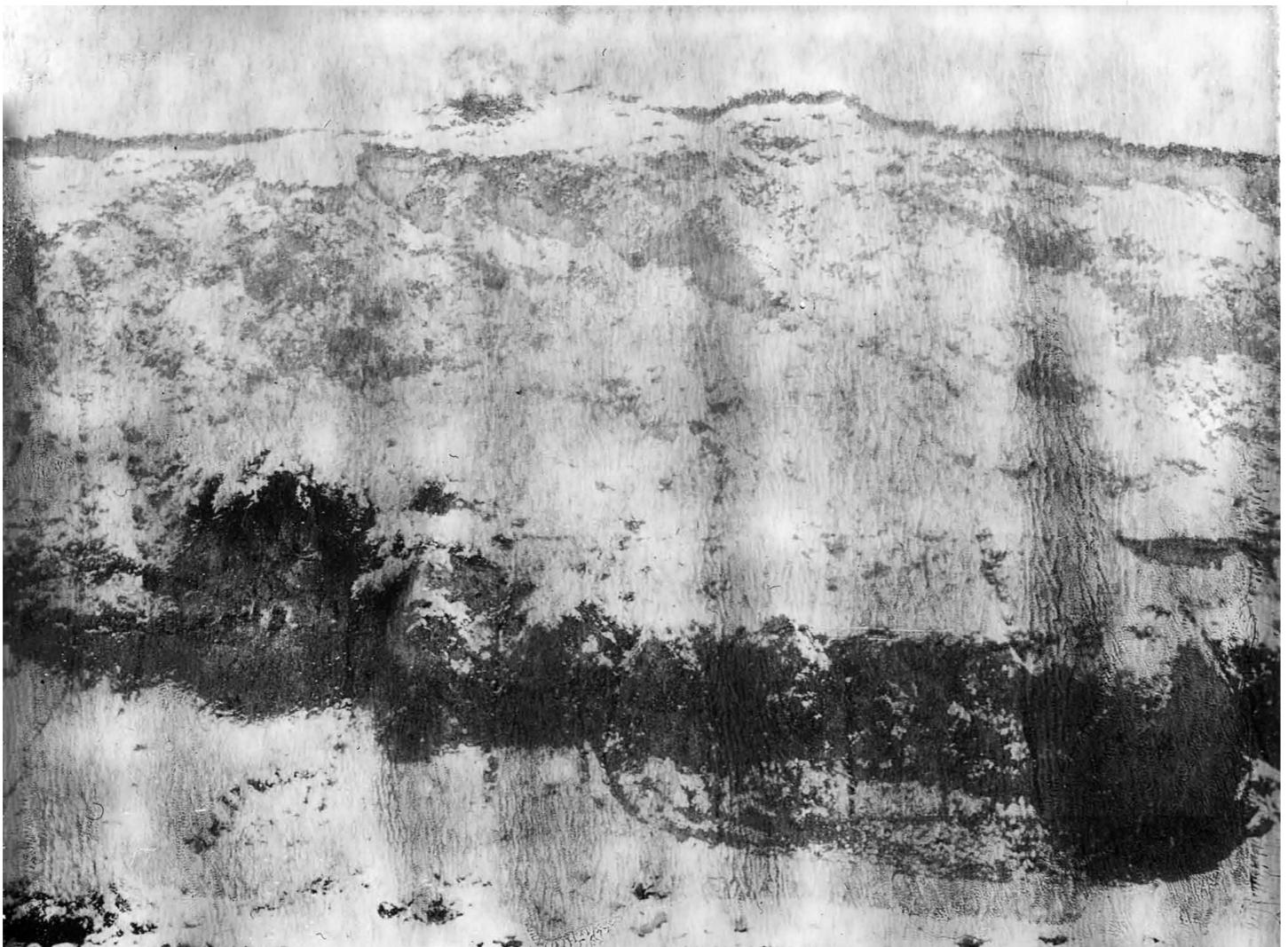




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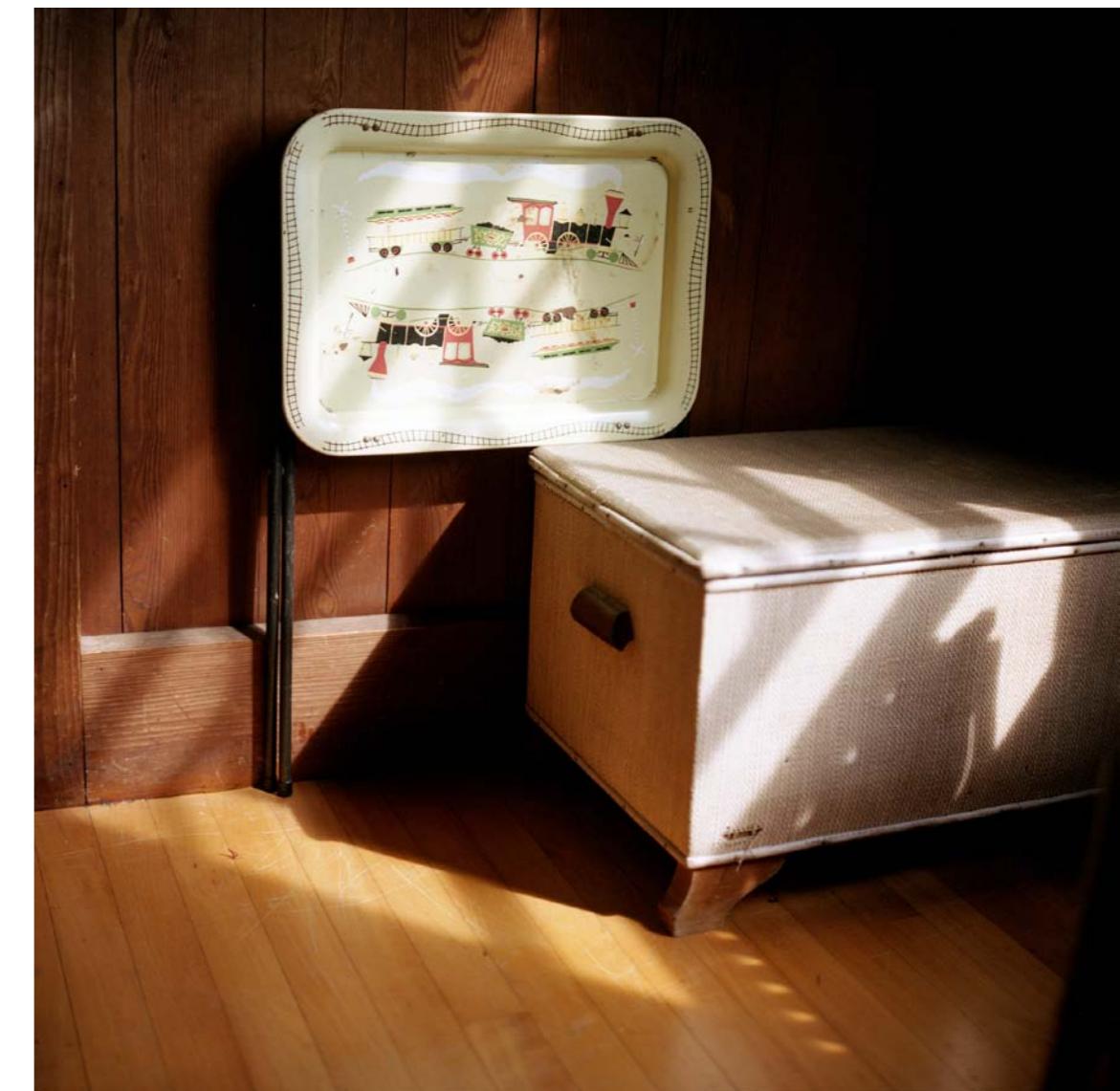
A photograph of a lush green garden. In the foreground, there's a dense cluster of dark green leaves. In the middle ground, a set of light-colored wooden steps leads up towards a red-painted wooden structure, possibly a small pavilion or entrance. The background is filled with more green foliage and trees, creating a sense of depth and seclusion.

PARADISE
IN COLOR

www.alinesmithson.com

Aline
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For many summers, my family and I have travelled to a beautiful lake south of Boston, not far from the Cape, to dip our feet in ancestral waters. My husband's great grandparents built homes on this lake over a century ago, and little has changed since then. For almost two decades, we've packed up our expectations and headed east to layer new memories onto the old.

There is something magical knowing that a hundred years later, we are taking pleasure in the same activities, swimming in the same water, running up and down the same stairways, and enjoying the same vistas from a house that has the traces of each preceding generation.

When I first started to photograph the lake many years ago, I worked exclusively in black and white. The limited palette seemed to echo the ancient family photos that lined the walls and bring sense of history to the work, but recently, when I started working in color, I felt a sense of renewal that brought our activities into the now. No matter how I capture this annual experience, it remains a magical corner of the world that I pack in my heart each time I leave. It is my paradise.







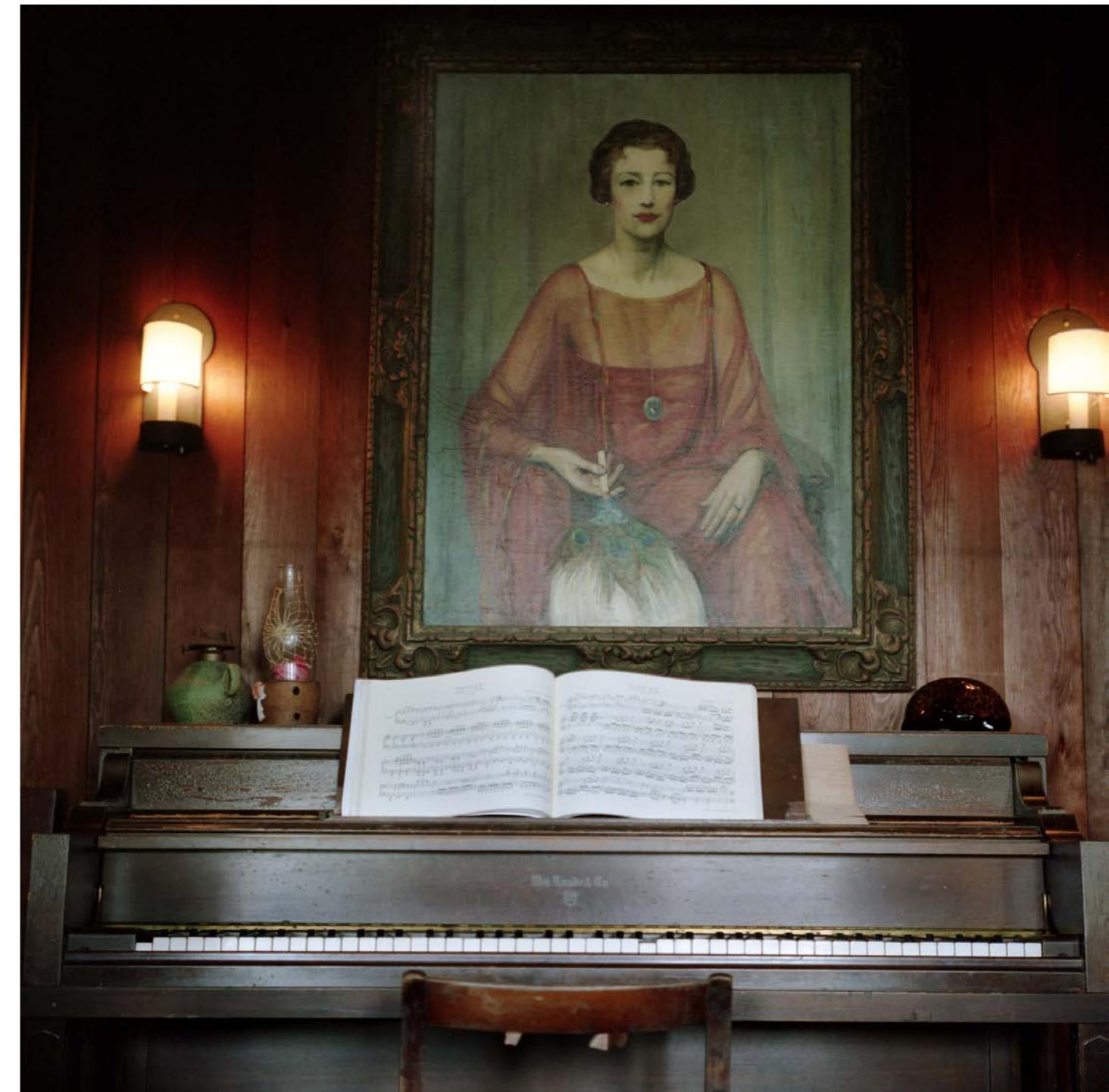




After a career as a New York Fashion Editor and working along side the greats of fashion photography, Aline Smithson discovered the family Rolleiflex. Now represented by galleries in the U.S. and Europe and published throughout the world, Aline continues to create her award-winning photography with humor, compassion, and a 50-year-old camera. She has exhibited widely including solo shows at the Griffin Museum of Photography, the Lishui Festival in China, the Tagomago Gallery in Barcelona and Pairs, and the Wallspace Gallery in Seattle and Santa Barbara. Her work has been featured in numerous publications including PDN (cover), the PDN Photo Annual, Communication Arts Photo Annual, Eyemazing, Soura, Visura, Fraction, Artworks, Lenswork, Shots, Pozytyw, and Silvershotz magazines.

In 2012, she received the Rising Star Award from the Griffin Museum for her writing and teaching. She also received Honorable Mention in Center's 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award. Aline founded and writes the blogzine, Lenscratch, has been the Gallery Editor for Light Leaks Magazine, is a contributing writer for Diffusion, Too Much Chocolate, Lucida, and F Stop Magazines, has written book reviews for photoeye, and has been curating and juroring exhibitions for a number of galleries and on-line magazines. She was a 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 juror for Critical Mass, the 2012 pre juror for Review Santa Fe and is a reviewer at photo fesitvals across the country. Though she was nominated for The Excellence in Photographic Teaching Award in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 (and received honorable mention in 2012) and for The Santa Fe Prize in Photography in 2009 by Center, she considers her children her greatest achievement.









Marianna
Rothen

E.K.T.I.N.

www.mariannarothen.com







E.k.t.i.n. is a series of photographs taken during the making of 'Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere', a film written and directed by Gregory Perano. Shot entirely in the landscape of southern N.S.W. Australia, mostly during the dawn and dusk hours, the photographs chronicle the isolatedness of these landscapes and the characters that inhabit them. Ghostly figures shrouded in mist blur the lines of what is real and the imaginary. Disconnected from a sense of era and location the otherworldly quality of the pictures questions our perception.

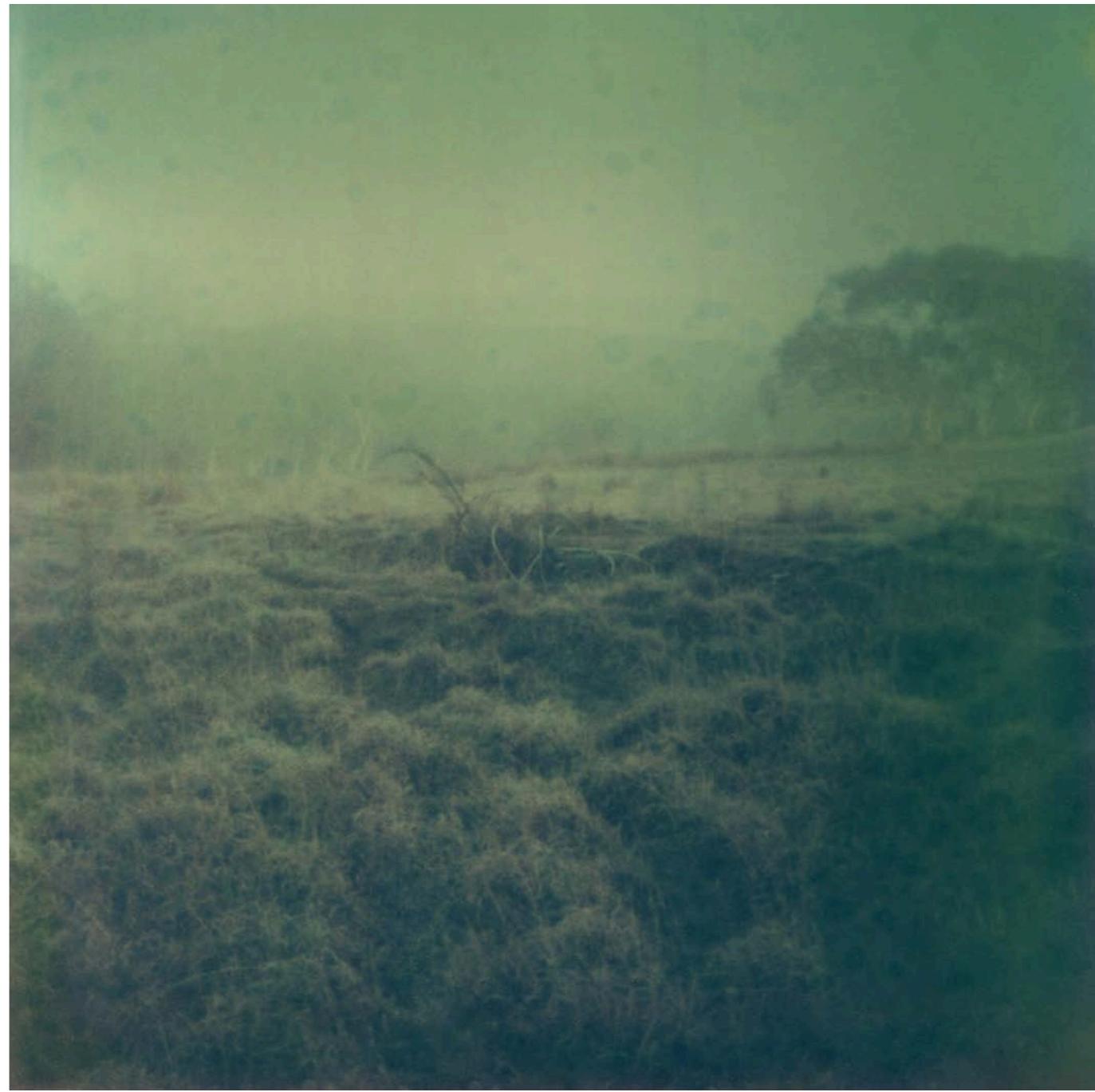
My work uses photography as a fictional story telling device. Women in distress are the heroines of my pictures.

My focus is their emotional disquiet, which to me is the operating temperature of the female persona, the melting point where these gentle creatures reach their mythological climax. They're vulnerable and innocent, yet the fight for identity reciprocates their strength, and the beauty of their despair transcends them to the untouched and iconic.

The women are shot against nature or what modern society has put in its place. These environments are lonely fortresses, charged with histories and incarcerated feelings. Stuck in these lost landscapes, the characters fight their own projection, like reoccurring, recycled apparitions. Alienation from the cultural codex is their only means to survive.









Marianna Rothen was born in 1982 in Canada and lives in New York City. After an introductory photo course in high school, Marianna spent several years traveling, working as a model and documenting the experience through photographs.

Marianna's stills take their cues from classic art house cinema, creating narratives of women that struggle with their identity and power beyond the old images of femininity.

She uses available or film lighting and mixes traditional photographic processes with digital media. Her work has been exhibited in Paris, Sydney, New York and Cologne, most recently at the Kaune, Sudendorf Gallery.



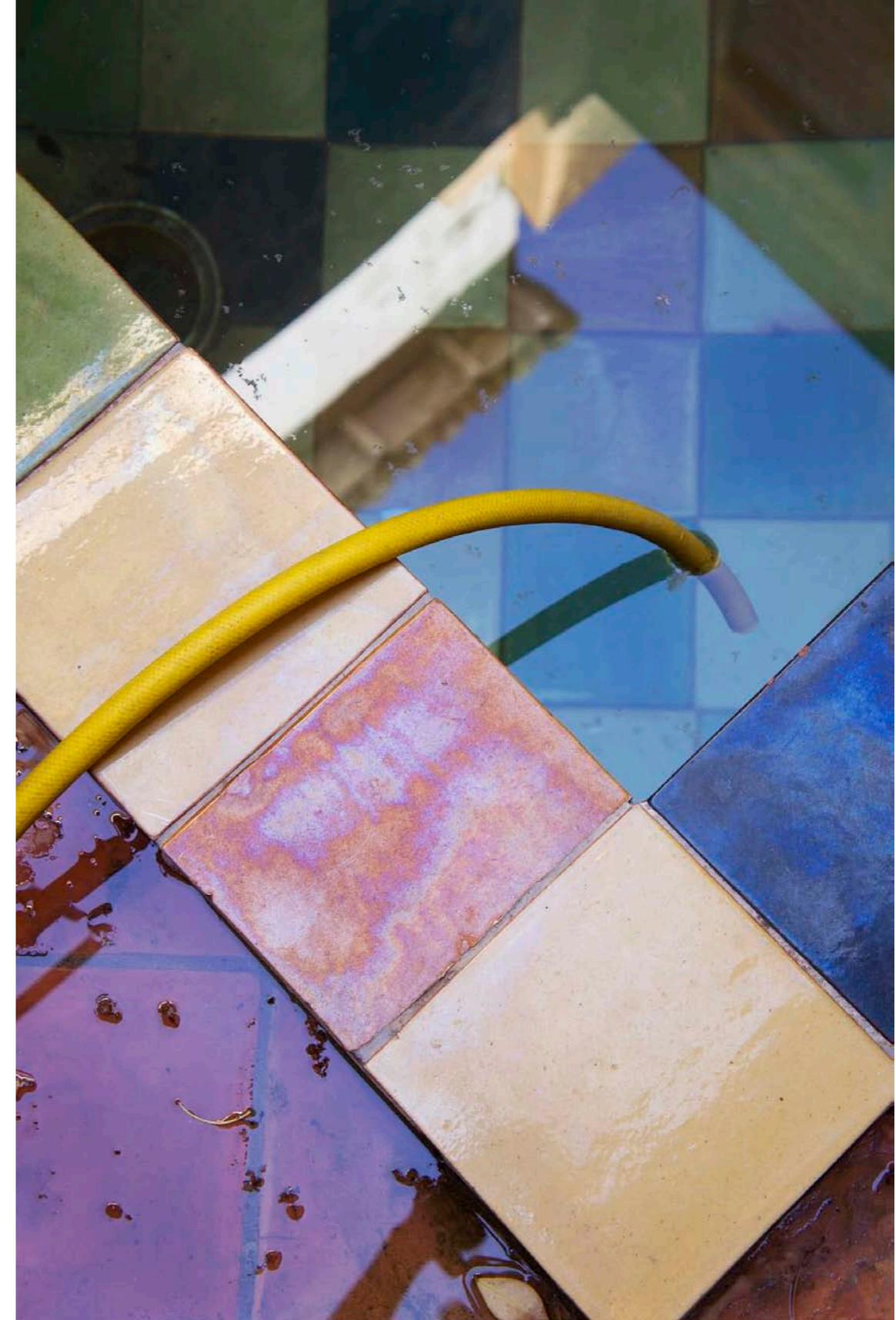
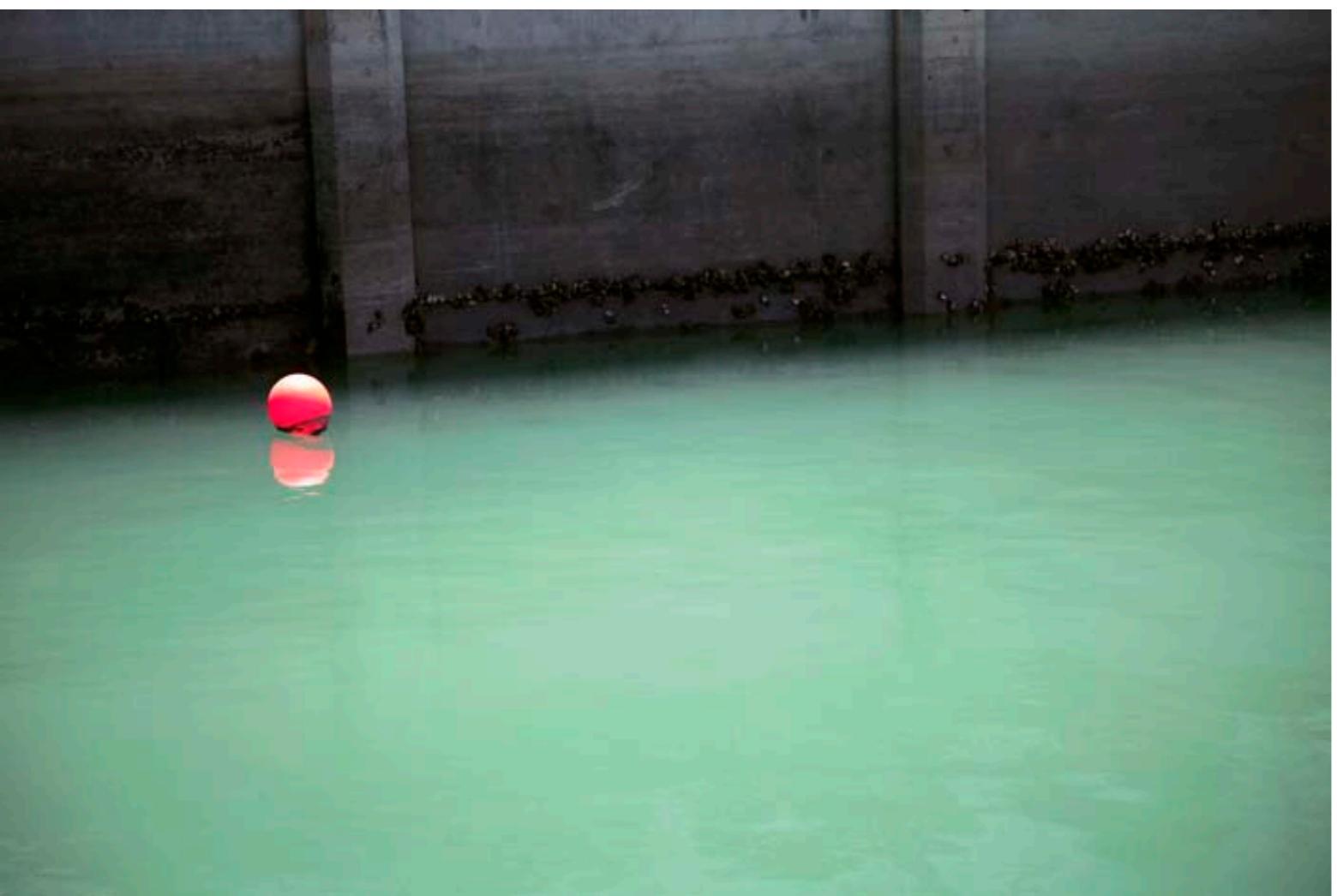




Jessica
Backhaus

ONCE, STILL
AND FOREVER

www.jessicabackhaus.net



Sometimes we take a turn and follow a different melody.

Sometimes we feel lost and start all over again.

Sometimes we feel a deep longing for the unknown and simply take the first step.

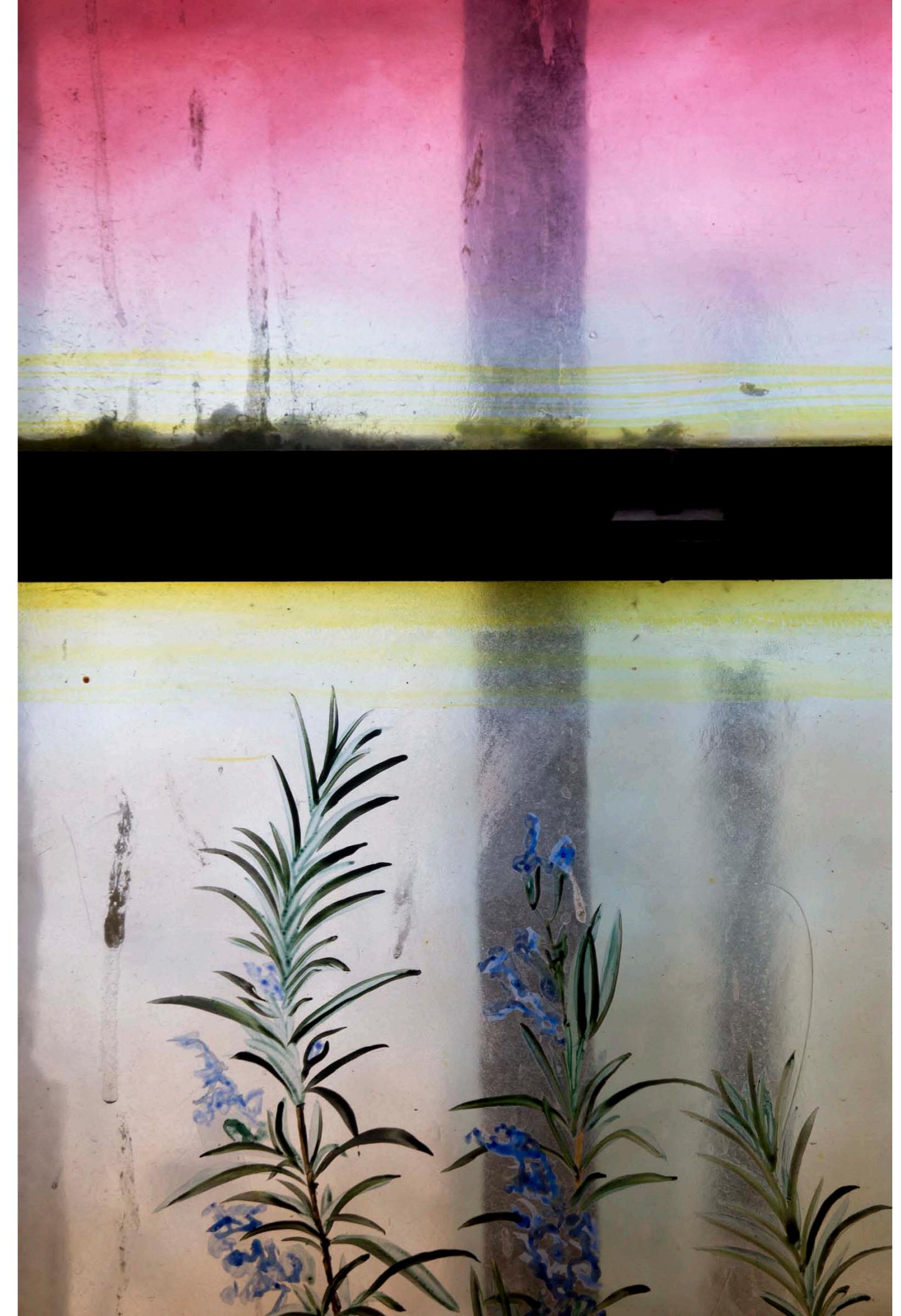
Once, still and forever is a very personal project for me. It deals again with time... past, present and future. It is a project about our human emotions. Emotions that all of us feel or felt at some point in our lives. My photographs are like a mosaic, a puzzle that celebrates the beauty of ordinary moments often ignored, as well as the residue of loves past and memories forgotten. During the last three years my life has changed quite a bit. In 2009 I have left New York after 14 years and have started a new chapter in Berlin. I went back to my European roots. After leaving New York I felt a symphony of emotions. I stood on the edge of my past, took a step towards my present journey and looked with anticipation, uncertainty and curiosity towards my new future.

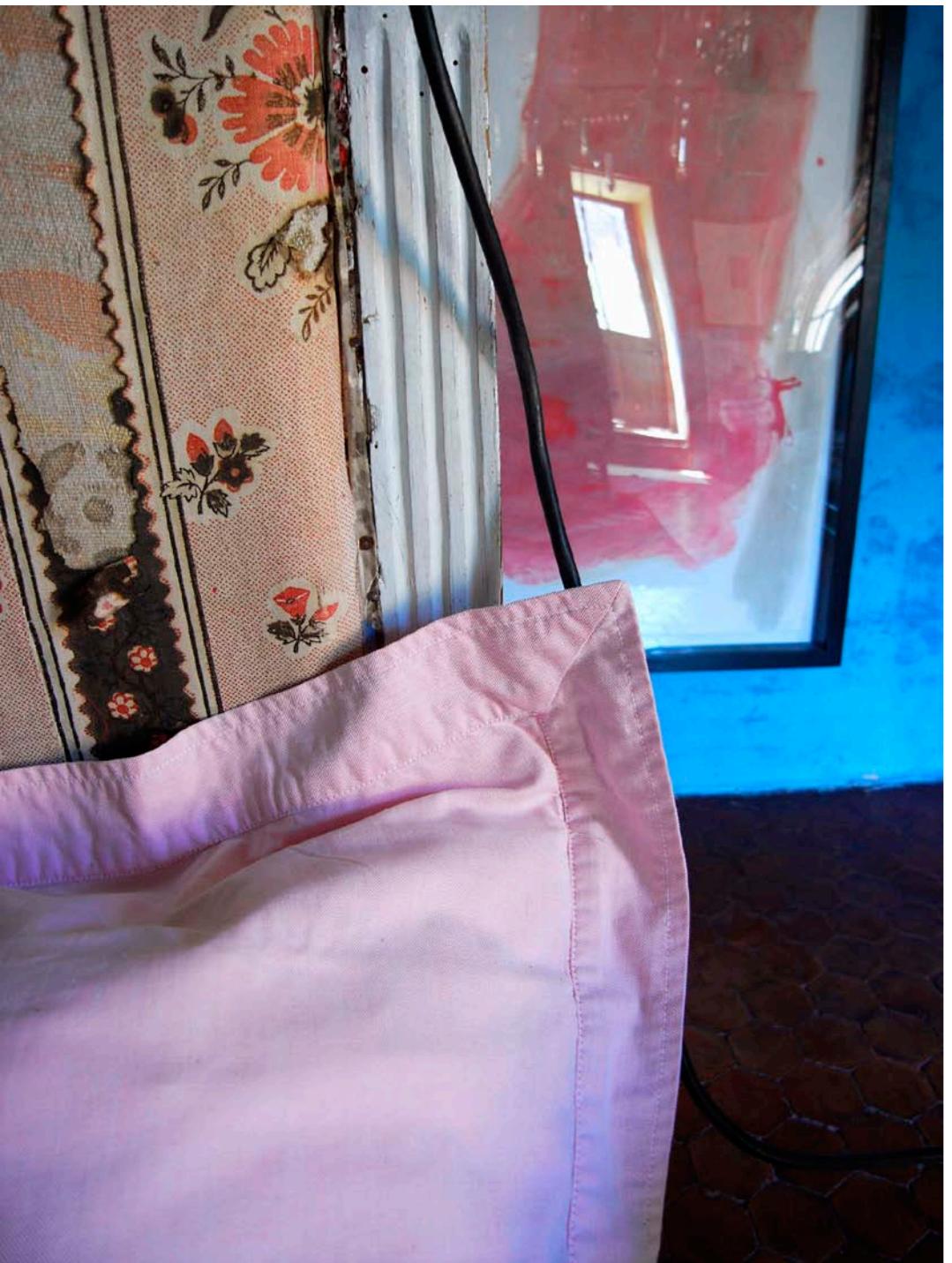
I knew that my life was about to change. I was wondering how far do we travel in a lifetime and how I would react to my own country after being gone for 22 years. Life has various chapters and I believe we have to overcome our own fears and celebrate the challenges. Something inside me was broken and at the same time something was alive. I was in the process of searching for a new life within myself.

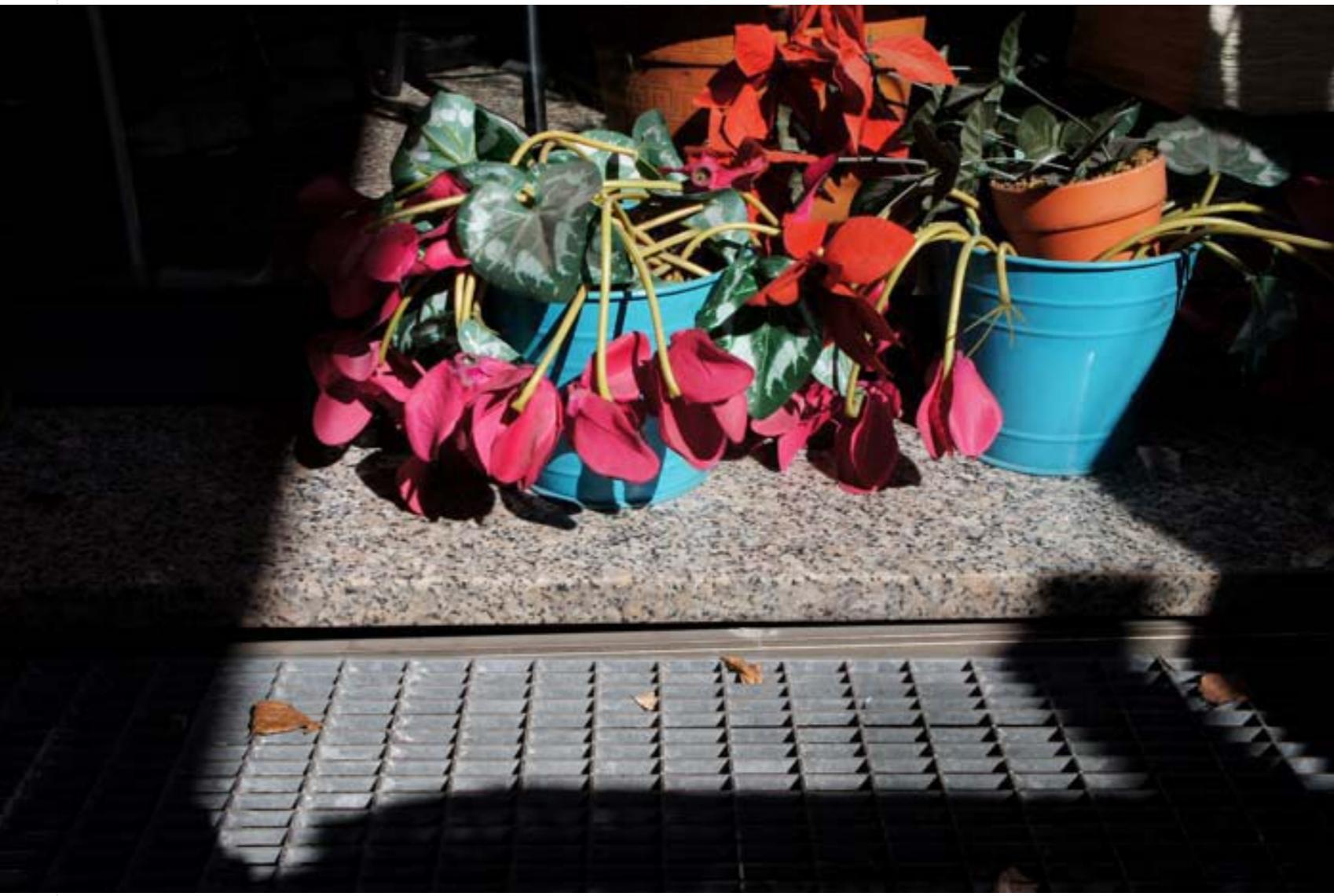
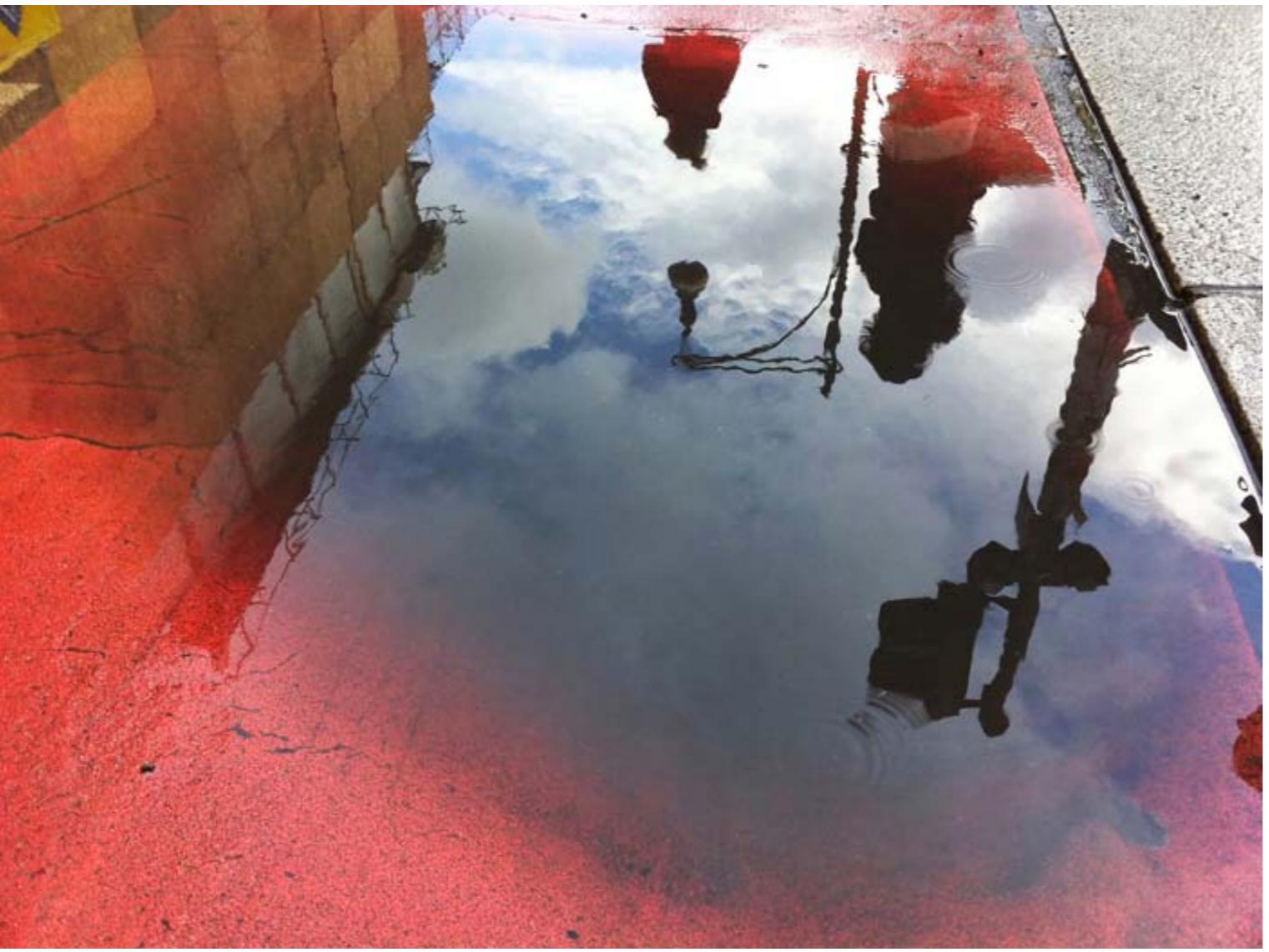
Over the course of the last few years I have experienced pain, loss, grief, loneliness but also wonder, hope, expectations and joy. I learnt that one finds the answers only with time and that difficult times can be as much a gift as happiness.

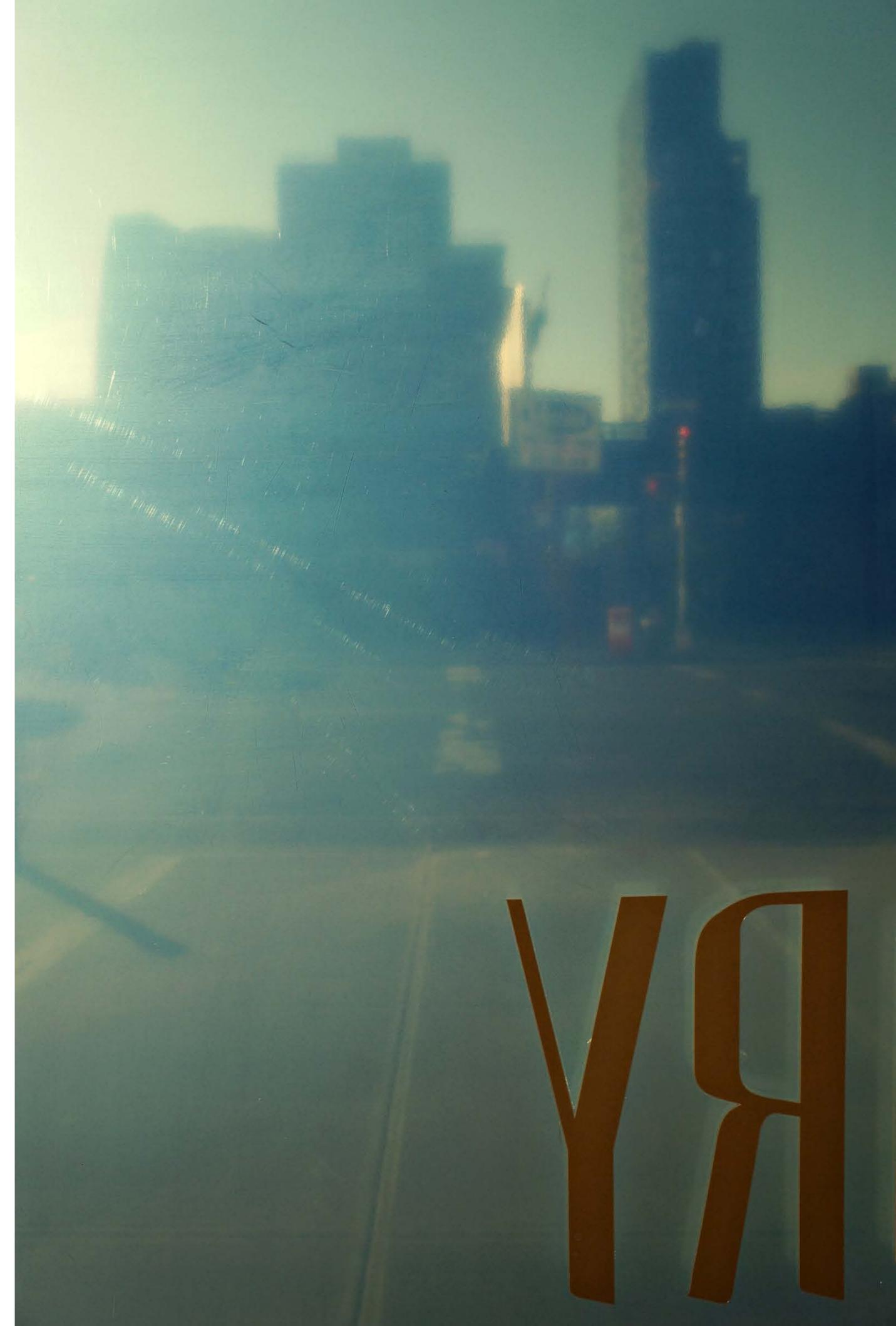
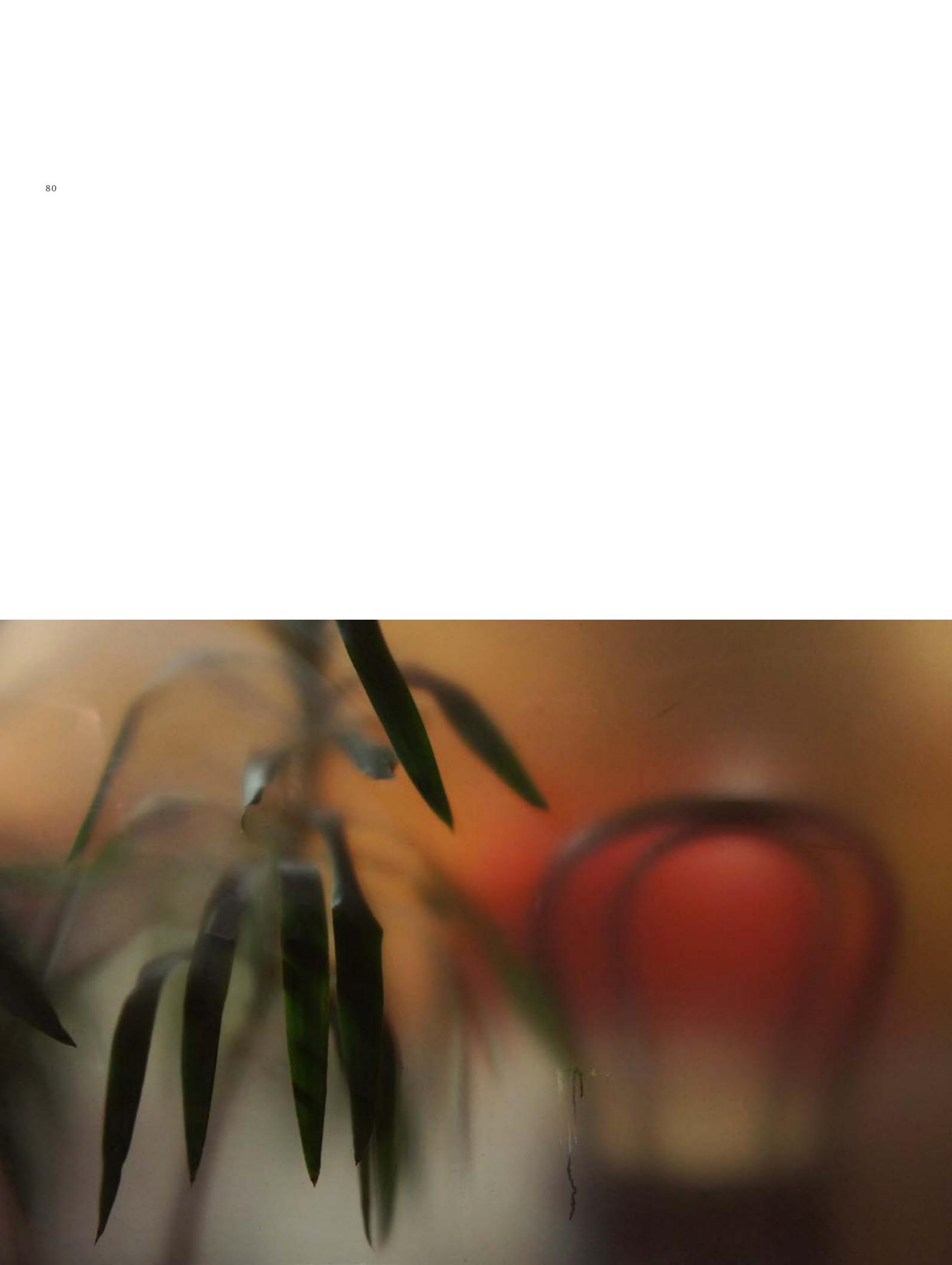
Everything is possible and I am longing for everything.

Jessica Backhaus,
Berlin, June 2012











Jessica Backhaus was born in Cuxhaven, Germany in 1970 and grew up in an artistic family. At the age of sixteen, she moved to Paris, where she later studied photography and visual communications. Here she met Gisele Freund in 1992, who became her mentor. In 1995 her passion for photography drew her to New York, where she assisted photographers, pursued her own projects and lived until 2009.

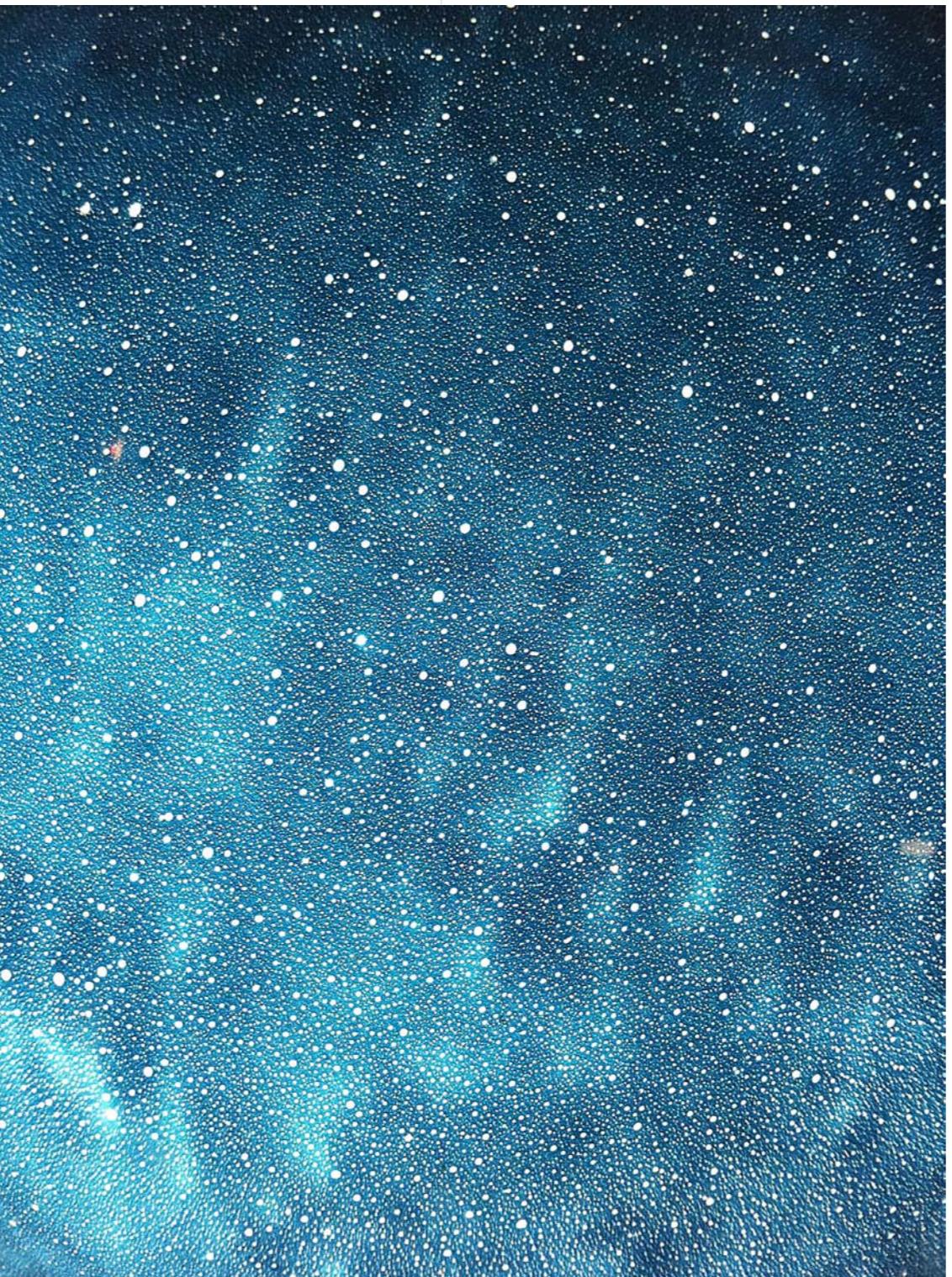
Jessica Backhaus is regarded as one of the most distinguished voices in contemporary photography in Germany today. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including the National Portrait Gallery, London, and the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin. To date, she has six publications to her name; *Jesus and the Cherries*,

2005, *What Still Remains*, 2008, *One Day in November*, 2008 and *I Wanted to See the World*, 2010, *ONE DAY- 10 photographers*, 2010 and *Once, still and forever*, 2012, all published by Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg. Her photographs are in many prominent art collections including Art Collection Deutsche Börse, Germany, ING Art Collection, Belgium, Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA and the Margulies Collection, Miami, USA.

Jessica Backhaus is represented by Robert Morat Galerie in Hamburg and Berlin, Robert Klein Gallery in Boston, Projektraum Knut Osper in Cologne and Stieglitz 19 Gallery in Belgium.

Based in Berlin, Jessica divides her time and life between Europe and the United States.





... It is only important to know that theory is dead, that I came to announce the dictatorship of light and herbs ...

UROS ZUPAN

88

Looking at the photos of Jessica Backhaus, one is reminded of many things. First of all, of oneself, and then also of works from the history of art. Whatever artists have painted over the centuries – details on the window ledge next to a Madonna and child – or later on in still lifes, they noticed it as humans first, and then as artists. Nothing escapes the eye. The only question is how conscious we are of what we perceive. The things we glimpse for a moment vanish again instantly. On other occasions, though, something we have seen remains in memory; we don't know quite where to place it, but this sight takes on a key function because it opens up gateways into various realms of memory, reaching from childhood to the present.

If you live with someone, you both agree on a certain ordering system. Next to this, there is also an order that the other person might regard as disorder. For example, things are left lying around at random so that they can be seen. Otherwise, you would have to search for them, which can be time-consuming.

Jessica Backhaus focuses her ordering gaze on what is random, on things lying and standing around. She thinks in colors.

Source: Uros Zupan, *Immer bleibt das Andere*, Munich 2008, page 8 (English translation by Erica Johnson Debeljak, quoted in *Contemporary Slovenian Poetry: 10 Poets Born Between 1960 and 1969*, Ljubljana, 2008).

She creates sound spaces. The objects are resonating bodies. They activate, structure, orchestrate the sound space.

Jessica Backhaus sees nothing that is out of the ordinary. She doesn't seek it out. That is her strength. She captures what we know, or think we know. Nevertheless, we look closely. For light, shadows, colors and the channel of vision turn things that are familiar to us, or which seem that way, into a memory-enriched finding. This find might contain odors, it might display haptic qualities. Who would dare tear off a sheet hanging off the roll of paper towels on the window ledge that is so suffused with magical, translucent light? (By contrast, there are haloes that are so obtrusive, you would be more than happy to remove them.)

The craftsmen who designed the red-painted ornament of an arrangement of poles did not invent it either. But the way Jessica Backhaus photographs it makes you want to caress it. That, too, is not alien to us: the desire to run our hand over the arches and bends, like the curves of a body.

The broad brush in the raspberry-colored water in a glass looks frozen. As if someone had forgotten it, left it to hibernate for the winter. But something existential sneaks in here: someone has gone away and not come back. (In December 1990, we found ourselves looking at potential artist's studios in Leipzig as part of a grant, ending up in a factory hall. It was a cold, misty morning; pale ceiling lights illuminated a ghostly scene.

Plastic cups were standing on the tables where plastic bags were produced. They were still half-filled with coffee, and there were also personal items left lying around. In the glassed-in supervisor's cabin, framed family photos stood on a ledge. The Vietnamese who worked here must have had only minutes to vacate their workplace forever.)

It's different with the magical order of things: two magnificent ears of strawberry corn, one standing, the other lying on its side, seen from above, on a box with ornamental blue-white décor, look like precious trophies, like artifacts made out of rubies. The answer to a "sacralization" of this sort comes immediately: twelve Pétanque balls are scattered in the sand. Six steel-gray, five brown and one light-colored.

The principle of order and disorder follows that of same and different. Theoretically, Jessica Backhaus could make hundreds of photos like this. But that's not what it's all about. It's about the constellation! Even if the position of the balls betrays no discernible pattern, a configuration still emerges that culminates in a fascination with finality. As if the random dispersion were actually constructed through and through.

The woundwort plant reaching up in glowing yellow from the lower margin of the picture into the almost pitch-black sky has something glassy about it. As with the strawberry corn, the stylization of nature is like an orchestration of gestures that remain forever frozen in time. The history of art once again comes to mind, as when in Renaissance paintings the diaphanously painted flowers seem to emit a sound.

Jessica Backhaus has a gift for solidifying and liquefying. She manages to localize the locationless. Maybe it has something to do with her biography, in which uncertain things are absorbed by certainty. More and more, the viewer is called upon to question what he sees. Although Backhaus exclusively uses the medium of photography, she acts as an artist. Not as an artistic photographer, but as an artist in the traditional sense, sometimes even as a "watercolorist" if one looks at the picture with the light turquoise-blue, slightly blurred background onto which floating leaves in graduated tonalities are "painted" as if with a brush.

Time and again, it is the colors that define a composition. Like in the picture showing bath mats hung over thin ropes to dry. Jessica Backhaus creates such a stringent whole that one might have the impression she experimented for weeks with colors and shapes. When she fine-tunes the size of the photos according to their colors, motif and composition, she likewise acts as an artist, knowing for example just how to bring out a delicate feeling of intimacy.

Jessica Backhaus's discretion is almost proverbial: a continuous understatement, with the result that our associations when looking at her work receive a revitalizing boost. This comes from the way her pictures are different in nature and yet preserve the guise of familiarity, our experience of them thus being at once poetic and informative.

Attesting to this quality is the nighttime image of the moon reflected in the sea. Edvard Munch immediately comes to mind. Many artists have painted this motif. What distinguishes the photo here is the meditative calm it exudes. One more day, and it would have been a full moon. The shimmer of light twists itself layer by layer into and over the sea. – I spoke of color as sound space in the work of Jessica Backhaus. Now, where the darkness of night fills the picture space with a mystical serenity, I think of minimal music, of LaMonte Young, the early Phil Glass, the fluctuating repetition that rocks the listener in a cradle of sound.

Sometimes it takes time to grasp the work of an artist. How often does the attention-grabbing motif stand at the foreground. For Jessica Backhaus, the motif provides an occasion for contemplating the "way of the world," the "order of things" (which disorder makes necessary), for thinking about light and color as generators of life. And there is something else as well, a quiet melancholy that tells us that we cannot change the tides. In other words: that we should follow them instead.

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE AMMANN,
Frankfurt am Main, May 2012

Prof. Dr. Jean-Christophe Ammann was director of the Kunstmuseum Lucerne from 1968–1977, of the Kunsthalle Basel from 1978–1988 and of the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt am Main from 1989–2001. Since 1998 he has been a professor at Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, and he has been responsible since 1999 for the collection of the Deutsche Börse, Eschborn, Frankfurt.





Annick
Ligtermoet

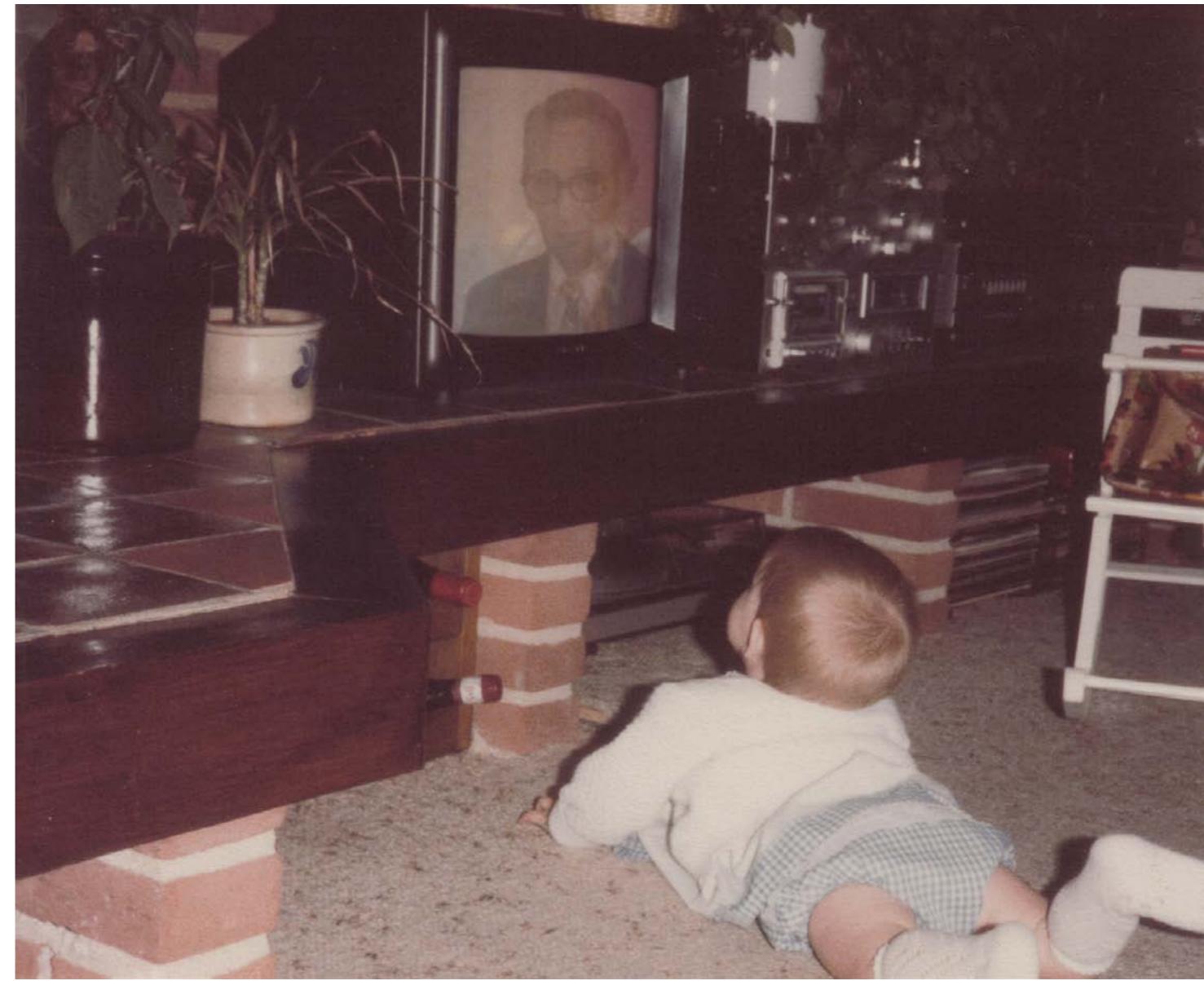
DE VERONTRUSTENDE WERELD

www.annickligtermoet.com



Beste Fan.

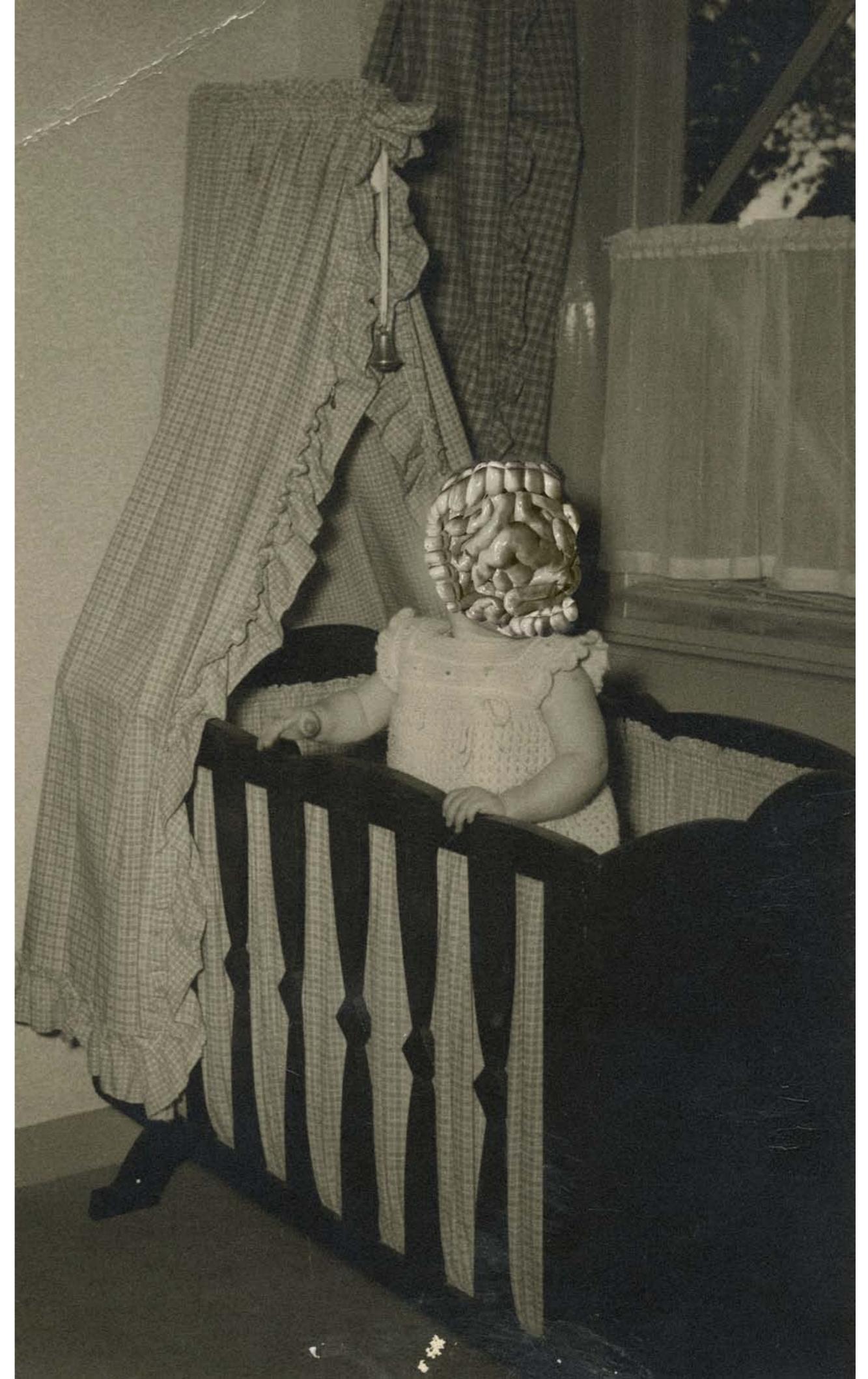
Zoals jullie al geleerd
zult hebben, ben ik gelukkig nog in
het land der levenden. En als die
gedenkuurige vrijdagochtend heb ik heel
wat meegemaakt. Het is een tijd geweest
om nooit te vergeten! Die eerste dag
kregen we door Baarn de hele evacuatie
geschiedenis. Een komp gezicht.
Ook de tweede dag ben ik nog in Baarn
gebleven. Uit zetter van wachten en
posten en voors maar afwachten, alles
onder het oog van de vliegtuigen.
Zondag, (Pinssteren, waarvan we weinig
of niets hebben gemerkt) gingen we
op stap naar het Zuiden. Daar vele
ontzettende zaken liggen dan te land
gekomen in Hoenderberg waar we
op t oogenblik nog liggen in afwachting
van de verdere orders die zullen gebeuren.
Hier vermaanen wij ook het onverwachte
leuke. Het veroorzaakte een geweldige
emotie onder de soldaten en we vielen
elkaar om zou te zeggen om den hals
met plezier dat wij den dans Zoo
ontsprongen zijn. Hoe het verder zal
gaan is nog niet bekend en ik weet
niet of er al kans is dat ik weer eens
in Akkrum kom kijken. Te vertellen
is er nog heel een en ander. En ding
is wel een feit dat slaps iets is wat
bij een oorlog niet voor komt. Van
vrijdagochtend 5 tot Dinsdagavond 10
precies 3 uur.
Hoe hebben jullie het gemaakt? Zoo
dicht bij het vliegveld Bergen? En is
hier nog onder deens genoeg?



Annick Ligtermoet aims to modify daily life according to her interests. She tends not to stay at the same place for long and can often be found in Northern places like Russia and Scandinavia.

Ligtermoet holds a deep fascination for the sublime, mysteries and folklore. Her work is timeless and shows an atmosphere rather than an actual place. Working with different cameras at the same time, she tries to capture reality in as many different ways as possible.

Annick Ligtermoet graduated in 2008 from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. Her work has been internationally exhibited in both solo and group shows.







When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of secondhand truth, objectivity and authenticity

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

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MEMORY AND REALITY IN ANNICK LIGTERMOET'S "DE VERONTRUSTENDE WERELD" (THE UNCANNY WORLD)

It would be hard to imagine a photograph in the twenty-first century that did not raise questions of the "real." The first major art movements that relied on probing this notion, Dada and Surrealism, would be amiss without photography and film as a backbone. These movements overturned our vision of the world by virtue of the camera's reputation as a tool for capturing not mere verisimilitudes of life, but life itself. Now, in the age of digital manipulation, everything from images in popular culture, to family portraits, to reportage, and fine art photography plays with our understanding of place, time, and identity. Photographs occupy the fringes of reality, pulling from a cache of memories, imagination, and the lexicon of human experience in order to render a credible view, or, in the least, a partial truth.

The Dutch photographer, Annick Ligtermoet, questions authenticity and representation within the context of the snapshot photograph as a way to explore ideas about perception and personal histories. In her series *De Verontrustende Wereld* (The Uncanny World), Ligtermoet questions not only the present nature of visual representation, but how we perceive the past, bringing the viewer to the intersection of constructed realities and memory. The pervasive theme that unites the otherwise disparate collection of photographs is the idea of personal memorabilia and personal collections. Ligtermoet presents approximately twenty seemingly authorless photographs together with ten objects that are distinctly not art objects—letters, diaries, vanity mirrors—that create the sense of a found-and-assembled collection of keepsakes and snapshots.

When exhibited, the relationship of the photographs to the mementos below them stresses the connections between our past, our memory, and the thoughts and materials that embed themselves in our consciousness and are endowed with the capacity to change our conception—potentially with the emotive power to construct or drastically rework the way we remember and the reality we experience. Though each object individually may hold no great importance, they each represent a small fraction of the past—an iota of someone's history—just as a photograph emblematises a fleeting moment within an endless expanse of time.

By using a muted, vintage color palette, Ligtermoet's images of families, landscapes, and still lifes take on an ethereal, timeless quality that displace the viewer and create a vague, nostalgic notion of place. There are not recurring characters or places throughout the series that ground a specific narrative. The pictures seem to emphasize instead an atmosphere, much like remembrance, that is rooted somewhere in the mind. Her photographs represent what place can become after time has allowed the mind to assemble a life's worth of recollections—to produce a past that best serves the present at the confluence of memory and reality.

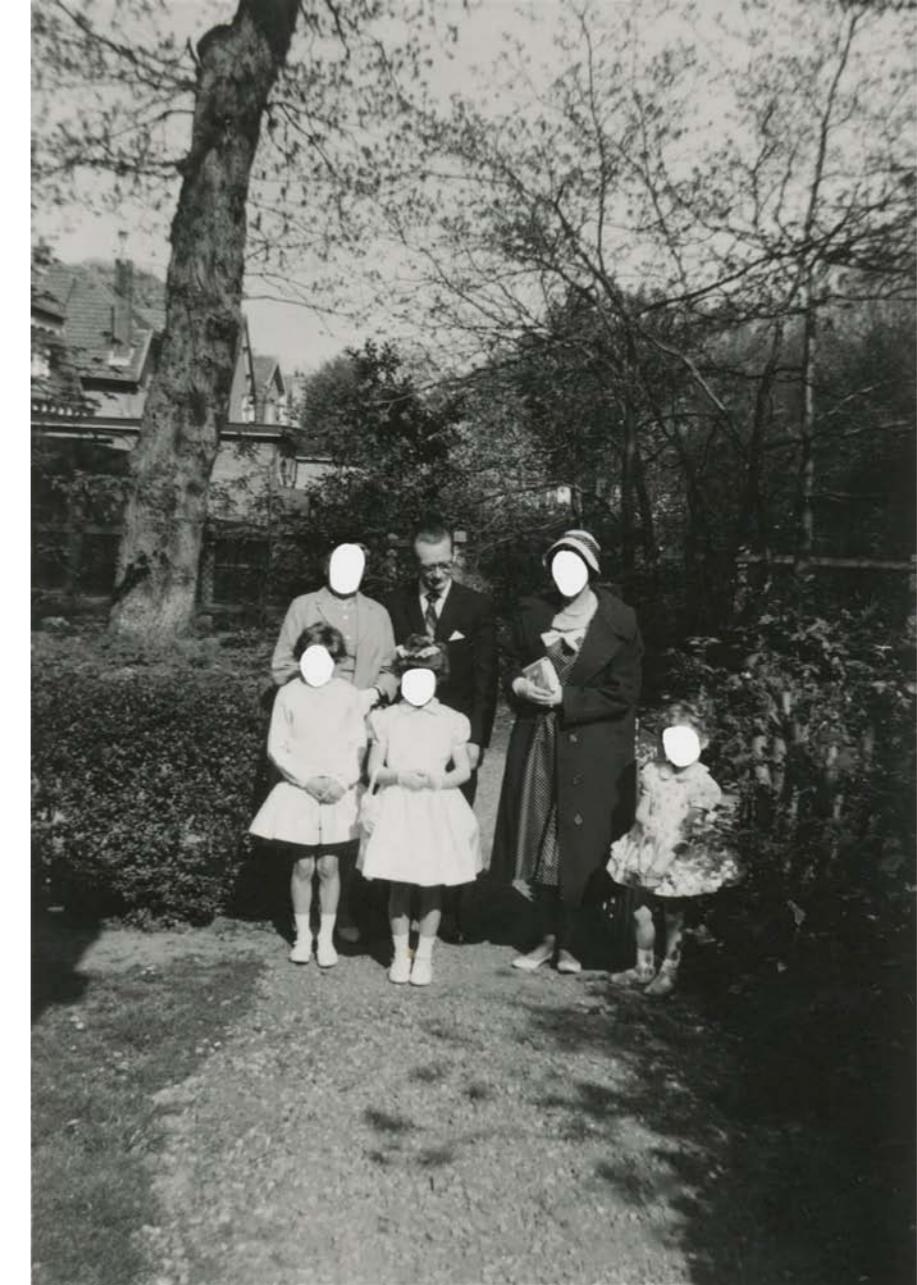
Like flipping through an old family album, this past appears to be absurd and a bit playful, tragic and sentimental, but not entirely true, in the way our own memories fill in gaps with fictions, exaggerate events, or completely forget certain moments entirely. Traditional scenes are exaggerated, becoming strange and provocative moments within a mysterious narrative, while the amateur, album style of the photographs reinforces the familiar, evocative aspects of individual histories. For instance, *Bloeddochter* (Blood Daughter), appears to be any typical snapshot photograph of a small child in a crib; however, Ligtermoet covers the child's head in a pattern of grey loops that look like brain matter.

In the same way that a family story passed down from generation to generation grows into a family legend, these photographs create a sense of a hyperbolic history. Another photograph, *Familie*, shows a family of six dressed up, posing for a picture, conceivably before a celebration. What would otherwise be a happy image of a family gathering is disfigured by white, mask-like ovals over every individual's face. *Verdeding* (Defense) is a picture of an imposing, modern building, what one could assume is a military defense structure in an overgrown field. There is a palpable tension within the photograph as the Foucauldian architecture threatens the natural landscape, while the wild environment itself seems to be growing over the building. These subtle, surrealist elements create an obscure poetic stillness that perhaps attempts to probe elements of a larger cultural history and array of values—propaganda, popular culture as represented by the mainstream media, and the private snapshot's relationship to shared identity.

Ligtermoet's selection of photos and her subsequent manipulations are not unlike tendencies inherent in photographic practice. The archetypal landscape photographer waits for the "magic hour" when the gloaming of the setting sun transforms the world's reality, and in that moment, he freezes the scene's ideal character. In a similar way, Ligtermoet manipulates her images, creating an atmospheric collection of many moments, capturing an instant of clarity among a diverse collection. The very fabrication and reworking of the images represents a looming truth—that our perception, like photography never puts forth an unmitigated reality. Ligtermoet beautifully engineers this vision of consciousness by dissecting the photograph as a document of the past and as a tool of memory, and thrusts us into the riddle of our own lives. She propels us beyond the question of our present to dig deeper into the moments that have brought us to where we are now, reexamining the reality of our individual and cultural past, and the camera's ability to simultaneously obscure and reveal truths about it.

ASHLYN DAVIS

Ashlyn Davis received her BA in Art History from Pratt Institute and loves looking at photographs. She currently lives in Brooklyn and works for Penguin Books. In the fall she will begin her Masters in American Studies at the University of Texas in Austin with a focus on photography and visual culture.







FRONT IMAGE Aline Smithson BACK IMAGE Jessica Backhaus
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