



# SUPERMASSIVEBLACKHOLE

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## SMBHMAG | SUPERMASSIVEBLACKHOLE ONLINE PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE

Established in 2009, SuperMassiveBlackHole is dedicated to contemporary photography and the photographic imagery resulting from the time-based processes found in many interdisciplinary art practices today. It is available to download for free as a PDF three times a year.

*Time, Space, Light & Gravity are what drive SuperMassiveBlackHole*

Edited and published by Barry W Hughes

## GRAVITATE



Cover image: Nicolai Howalt

## ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY

One can act deliberately yet the events which follow can then continue in an unforeseen direction all depending on the changing circumstances – in some cases circumstances which only exist temporarily because of this specific run of motions. An intentional gesture at one point in time can mean something altogether different at another point in time, the results of which being completely unintentional to those set out at the beginning. So an accident itself is never a single thing, it is a culmination of things, but the result is always singular.

An accident can be seen as relinquishing blame for a particular action, or to put it another way it eliminates the idea of blame entirely from the result of a particular action. It is a grey area and as such it is best described through example.

In recent times there has been a push in the Irish media and elsewhere, to discontinue using the term “accident” when reporting on road fatalities in particular. For a very long time Ireland suffered from a disproportionate number of fatalities on its roads, most of which were put down to excessive speed and/or alcohol consumption causing impaired judgement that ultimately led to loss of life. It would be easy to single out alcohol for blame and introduce a zero-tolerance policy but better judgement was exercised. The term “accident” was scrutinised and the conclusion was that alcohol could not be attributed sole blame – there were a number of factors including driver experience and education, speed regulation, higher visibility both of the roads and of police on patrol as well as punishments for those caught driving dangerously. Reports on “accidents” became reports on “incidents” as blame was wholeheartedly re-ascribed to those causing the danger. There are no accidents, only unintended victims.

The works in this issue use photography in various ways to communicate this idea of the intentional and unintentional. While some, such as our Focus artist Nicolai Howalt express a very literal sense of the word, others such as Enda O'Donoghue express both a literal and figurative sense. O'Donoghue's broken camera images of New York buildings might appear to be simple graphic abstractions illustrating the demise of an inanimate object, but there is a much more sinister side to this. Those buildings look like they, or the person taking the photographs are falling into a deathly black. And while the camera itself was dying, this becomes a metaphor for those poor souls who chose to jump from the burning twin towers of 9/11. Once again there is obscurity resulting from intended and unintended circumstances. Inevitably this dissonance leads to something else – emergency ●

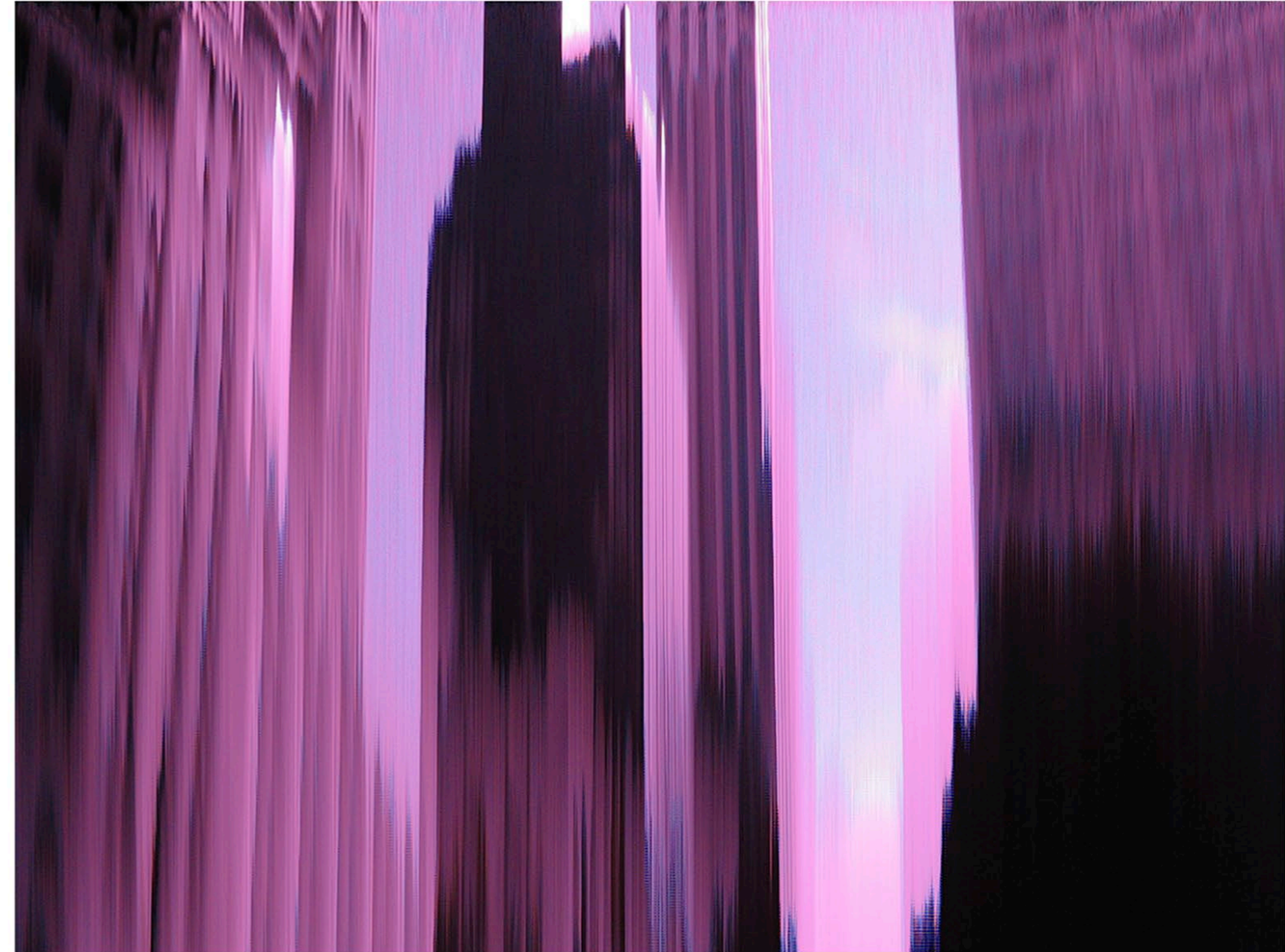
# ENDA O'DONOGHUE

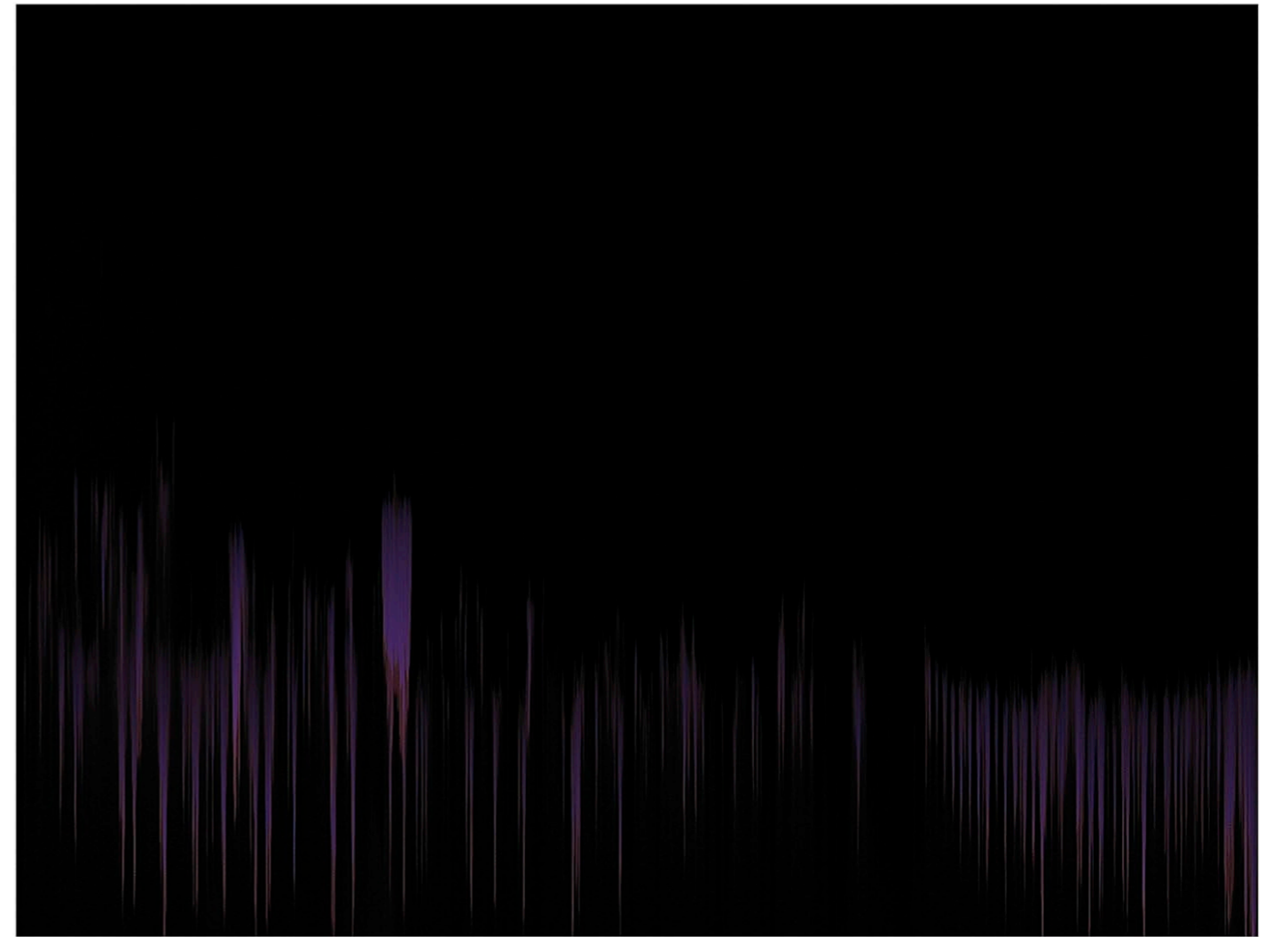
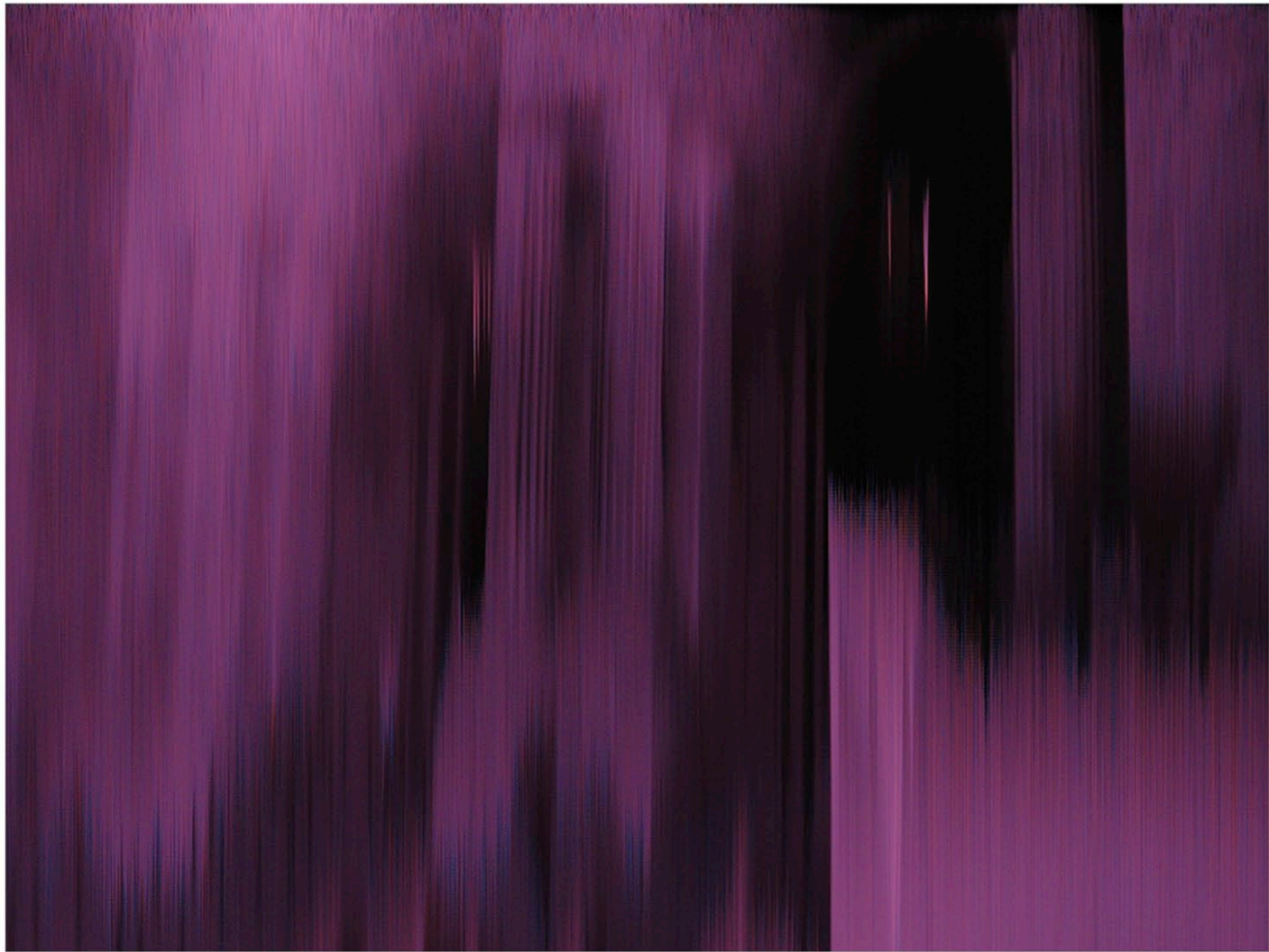
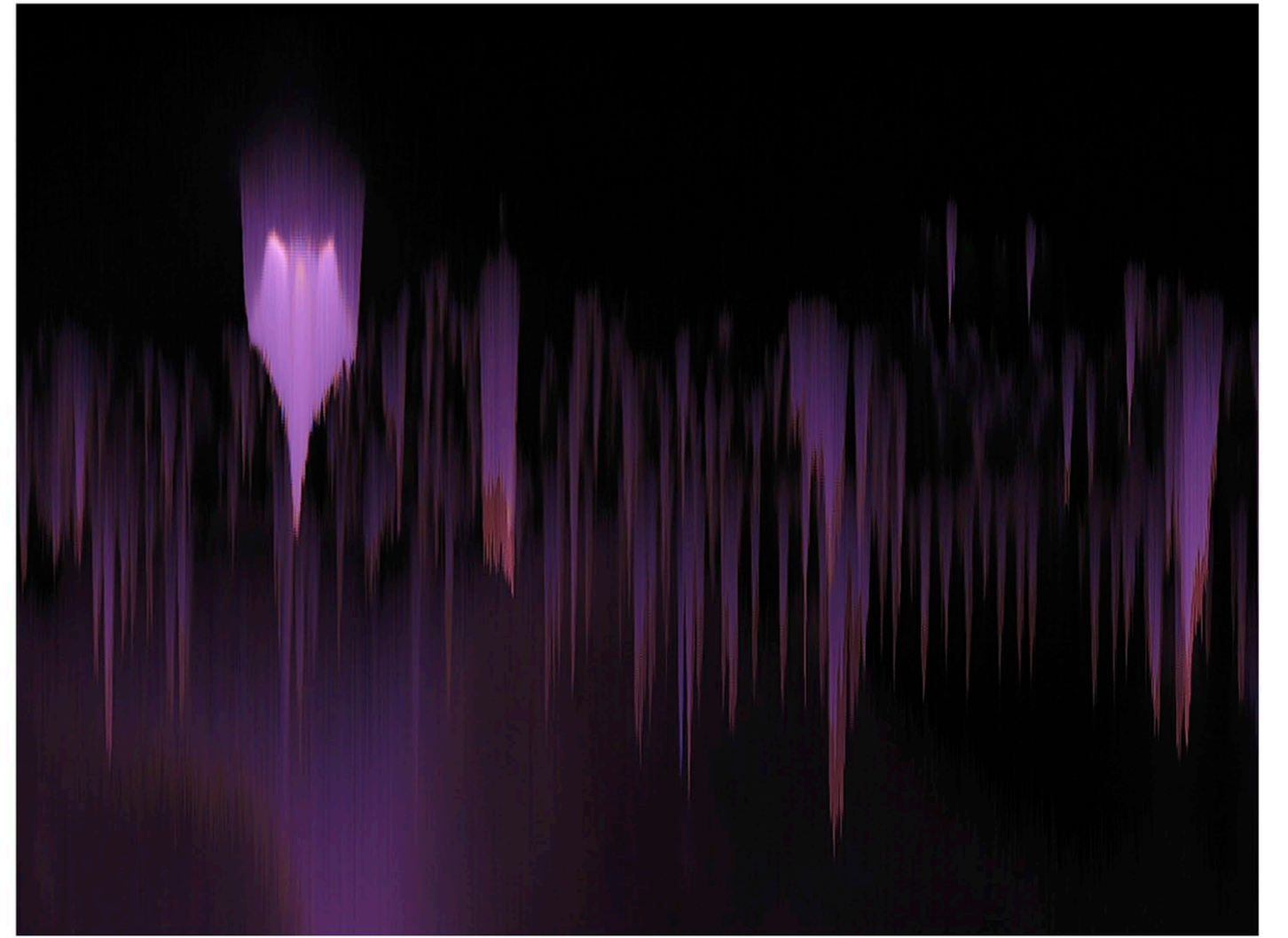


## New York - Broken Camera Series

The last normal shot taken was in Grand Central Station, I was on my way back to Queens where I was staying. I don't know what happened, maybe it hit off something, maybe I actually dropped it, I don't remember. Maybe it was just old, it must have been at least 4 years old by then, maybe even 5. Later that evening while watching the view of the skyline from across the river I discovered the fault and nothing I tried would fix it. After that everything came out either completely blank or almost totally distorted.

[endaodonoghue.com](http://endaodonoghue.com)





# MAX COLSON



## Hide and Seek

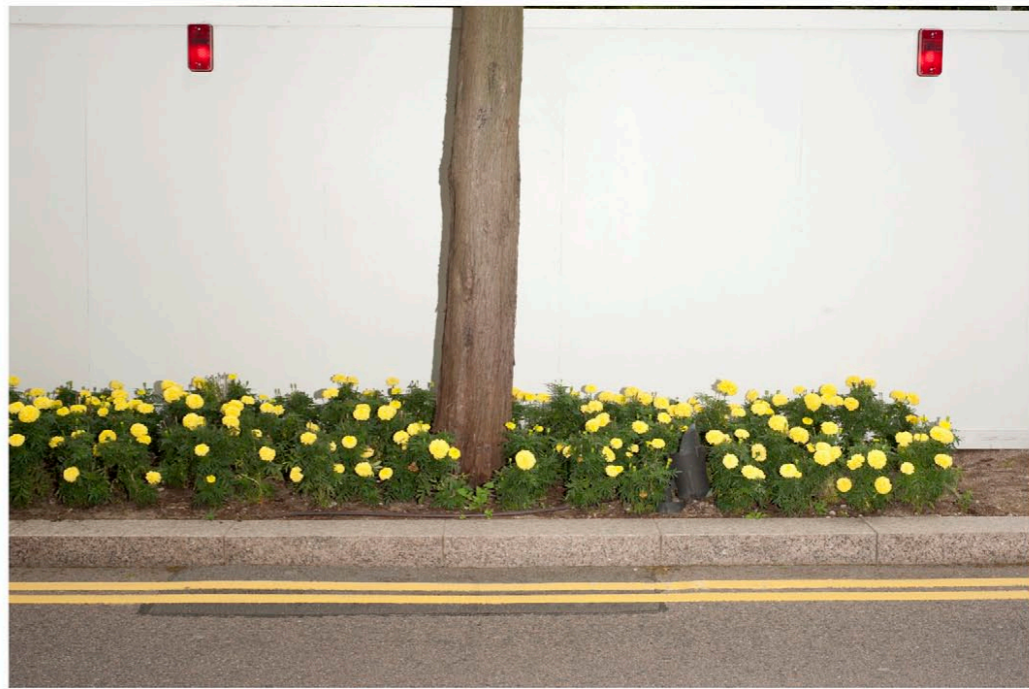
*Hide and Seek* is an - ongoing - extraordinary documentary photography project created by my alter ego, the amateur photojournalist Adam Walker-Smith.

Instigated by his discovery of the landscape design programme Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Walker-Smith realised that high security public spaces in London, which typically present themselves as being free and open, actually covertly guide behaviour through landscape design and monitor human activities through extensive surveillance infrastructure. The reason that these things are not often observed is because they are carefully hidden and softened by the strategic deployment of vegetation. This illuminating finding led to what could only be described as Walker-Smith's intense scepticism as to the 'innocence' of all plant life in these spaces. His resulting photographs dramatically illuminate what he sees as the 'suspect' plants of securitised urban spaces (so-called for posing as 'innocent' decoration whilst actually being hidden parts of the security apparatus).

Essentially, *Hide and Seek* is the product of a photojournalist on high alert; the work of a mind highly sensitive to the hidden nature of the urban environment and the more sinister aspects of security design that might be concealed from him. However, implicit in this is also the question of whether Walker-Smith's extreme sensitivity has distorted the way he sees the environment around him; does his photographic state of emergency reveal as much as he suggests?

maxcolson.com





*Circular Hedge Design; Natural Surveillance; Tree Plot Growth Container; Roadside Arrangement*

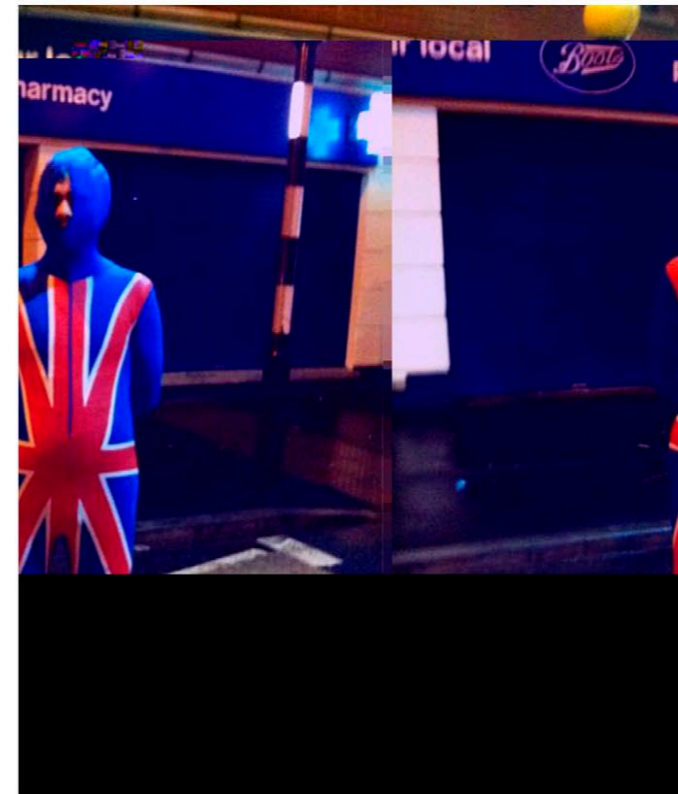
# PAUL MOORE



#fleg

This work is from a larger series entitled *#fleg* which deals with the 'flag protest' that besieged Belfast's cultural, political and social identity during the winter of 2012/13. The work is made up from animated gifs, images and movie files which are normally shown on smart phones, computer tablets or within web browsers. During the time of the protests in Belfast and using online sources such as Twitter, originally as a way to find locally sourced information of what was happening around me by searching hash tags like #fleg. This led me to source 'virtual found objects' i.e images and text which I then composited and compressed. I exploited the nature of digital file compression to highlight the corruption and ambiguity of information whilst in some way trying to draw artistic awareness to the situation. This to me mirrored the corruption of the information being dissipated on the streets, the corrupt views of the communities that were involved and the political structure that exists within these communities and the media coverage that is relayed to us in general.





#fleg\_S8z89GnPWH 1; #fleg\_BPAybriCIAAJ2iu; #fleg\_BPAkCJzCUAA7ldK  
#fleg\_A-PE9OeCYAAgUCt; #fleg\_A-qJ1TOCAAAXntl



# LUÍS RAMOS

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112 - Emergency

During four months I followed several medical emergency teams from INEM (National Institute of Medical Emergency - the emergency services associated with dialing 112 in Europe) in Lisbon and also in the Algarve.

The outstanding humanitarian aid given by these volunteers, doctors and nurses is remarkable. These teams deal with people who are, most of the times, in despair, overwhelmed with sickness and death. It was one of the hardest and intense works I have ever done, with which I intend to homage the people who dedicate their lives helping their equals.

[luisramos.net](http://luisramos.net)





# CINDY MORRISSEY



## Volunteer

Established in 1821, the Irish Coast Guard directly operates 49 rescue teams with over 900 volunteers around Ireland. These volunteers dedicate their time to training and callouts, and respond to incidents on land, cliffs, or sea – may it be a search or missing fishermen, injured hikers along the cliffs, or swimmers surprised by the pull of the tide.

Wittgenstein once suggested that “we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and powerful”. And so, in images, the work of rescue teams is oftentimes rendered to the all-too-familiar.

*Volunteer* follows the Irish Coast Guard around the country and shines a light on the most striking element of rescue work - the individual.

*Volunteer* is as much a reminder of our potential as individuals to make a difference in our community as it is an intimate portrayal of a humanity which deserves renewed visibility and engagement.

[ceemorrissey.ie](http://ceemorrissey.ie)





*Dermot Kilkee; Dollymount; Whitewater Brook  
Colin PSNI; The Castle, County Clare*

# ADRIAN SAMSON



Encounters

[adriansamson.com](http://adriansamson.com)





# SCOTT TYPALDOS



## Butterflies, Chapter 2

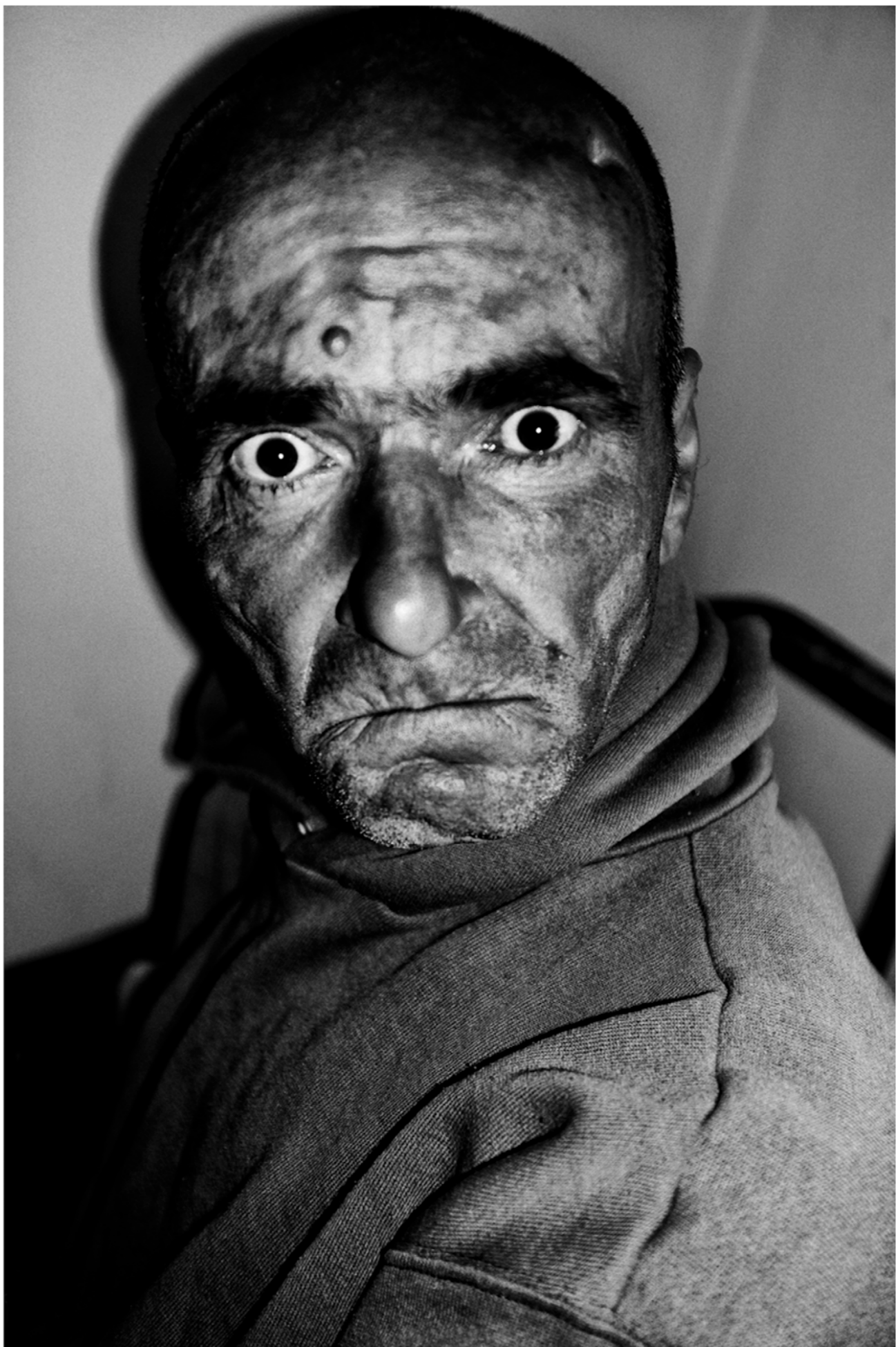
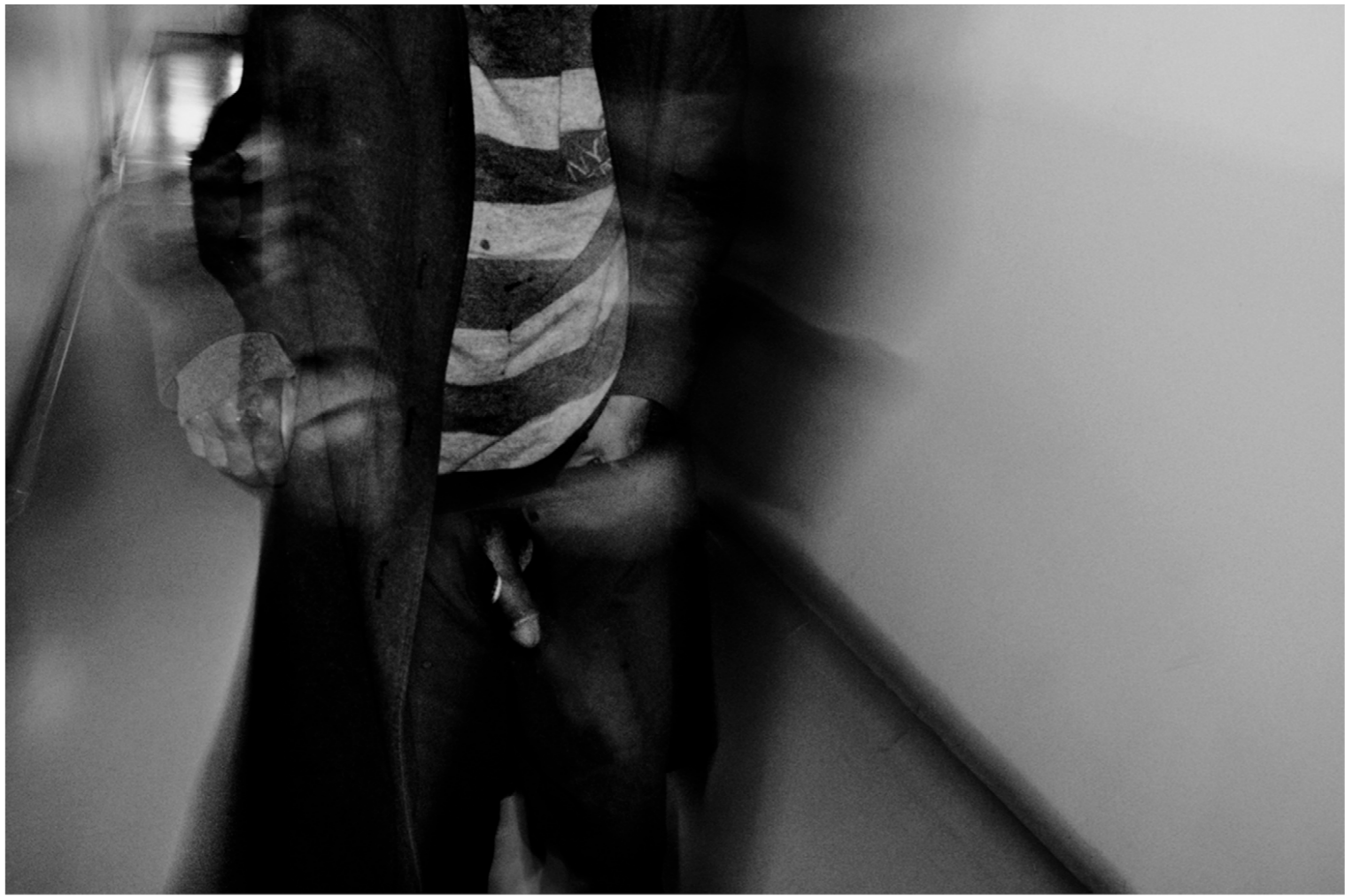
### BUTTERFLIES

In Ancient Greece, drifting souls were often represented by butterflies symbols. This was a direct link to Psyche, the soul goddess, who was similarly depicted with delicate lepidoptera wings. When looking for a title for my work on the mental condition, I wanted a word that elevated the individuals I had met above the stale socially created traumas and stigmatizations which had ruined their lives. The word "Butterflies" soon imposed itself as an image of a delicate but radiant state of being. A description of freedom constantly terrorized by the outside world and an unstable condition made splittable by a misplaced caress. This soul vulnerability constantly immersed in fear became my main obsession while photographing the men and women waiting in institutions or healing centers.

### CHAPTER 2

Before the Kosovo war (1998-1999) the Štimlje psychiatric institute was financed by the Serbian government and mostly inhabited by patients from Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia. After the power change, the new Albanian dominated government financially abandoned the place leaving the infrastructures in decay and the patients from minority ethnic groups without care. The patients, who are for the most part severe psychotics, are left roaming in the institution's walls and garden with limited hygienic or medical care. The building's inside walls and sanitary conditions are dilapidated. The staff is next to invisible, underpaid and under-trained, not willing or ready to cope with the very challenging job of caring for people in such extreme states. The place's only psychiatrist shows up for a few hours each week in order to solve administrative problems, seldom meeting patients. The only fix constantly distributed are meals and cigarettes which patients regularly fight each other for. It can be argued that the institution, the caretakers, the politics behind the place's management are generating or increasing the patients' symptoms. In such a domain, where time and space have uncertain values, all attempts to link are made without compromises. The mind's interior (its anxiety, apparitions and ruminations) is telling its ordeal in the open space. The camera was inserted in between the ever vague and fluctuating border separating sanity from insanity.







# MARTA ZGIERSKA

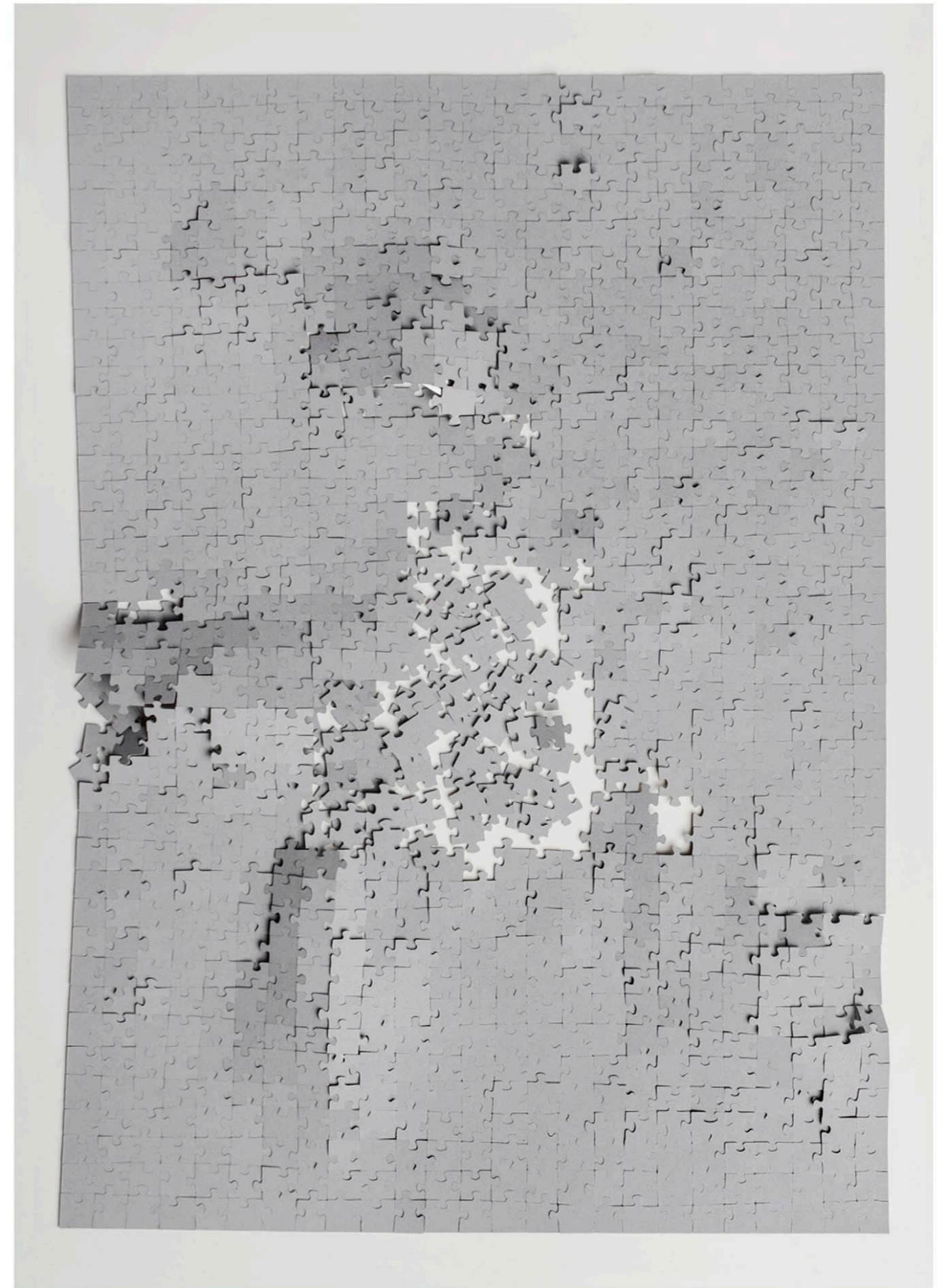


## Post

In February 2013 I had serious car accident. The time after this occurrence is a big throwback; while asleep, fears returned. This series is a mirror of my anxiety.

People generally have some fears in common - you can choose or add your own.

[martazgierska.com](http://martazgierska.com)





## DARREN CAMPION

## Paul Graham: Everything Happens Once

Darren Campion is a writer on photography, with occasional digressions into contemporary art and related topics. Since 2009 he has maintained *The Incoherent Light*, which is a blog dedicated to exploring various perspectives on photography. He is a frequent contributor to several publications (digital or otherwise), most notably *Super Massive Black Hole*, *Of the Afternoon* and *Paper Journal*, where he has a regular series of features. Initially engaged with making pictures, his attention is now focused on expanding the discussion around the medium. He currently works at the Gallery of Photography in Dublin.



**Paul** Graham seems to have long been fascinated by the social (and photographic) texture of those moments in which not much at all appears to happen. A pioneer of the medium in England, working with colour at a time when it was seen as unworthy of serious consideration, especially in light of Graham's more "engaged" subjects (such as the welfare offices in *Beyond Caring*). He has, in Europe and Japan, but especially since moving to America, entered into an increasingly nuanced study of the extended photographic series, but his work has always remained crucially grounded in an understanding of the medium as a gauge of social forces and his own acute attentiveness to life as it is being lived. Although coming from within the documentary tradition, Graham is a photographer who has done much to complicate the assumptions that surround exactly what that is – even without rejecting them outright, the most trenchant focus of his recent work has been to question the prevalent and historical terms by which we encounter the photograph.

A key technique in Graham's work has been to dramatise those incidental moments of visual perception that otherwise go unremarked in the flow of time and to find inside of those a certain sociological resonance. This has reached a peak in recent years, but it begins in earnest with *A Shimmer of Possibility* which he worked on from 2004 until 2006, over the course of several trips around the United States. The road-trip is a key strategy in photographic history and as such signals Graham's wider rhetorical intentions, which, for all their subtlety, are firmly subordinated to the practice of photography itself, a quicksilver illumination of the visual as the measure of an individual human consciousness, alive to the world and its possibilities. The conceptual underpinning of the project is never at odds with his making of it, rather the pictures are inseparable from the ideas that give form to his photographic approach – depending, as he does, on a structural conceit, Graham embodies a rare unity between "traditional" modes of picture-making and more recent, self-conscious uses of photographic media.



Both in exhibition and its published incarnations *A Shimmer of Possibility* exists as numerous sets of images arranged thematically around a given scene. What these “clusters” explore is Graham’s apprehension of that moment and the ways in which he attempts to deconstruct it photographically. He maps out the experience in visual terms and each grouping has a distinct rhythm, its own sense of duration and poise. Nothing really happens in these pictures, but everything that does has an extended significance – familiar contours are opened out into a new complexity, where even the smallest gesture shines with an unexpected depth. For example, in the series that describes little more than a man having a cigarette beside a grey-painted wall there is, in one frame, a heart-stopping curl of smoke ascending just above his head and which soon disappears into nothing – this is something only made visible (that is, made to exist) by the conditions of photography as a medium. These pictures are experiments in the phenomenon of sight itself; the world is present in them as both a surface and a series of discrete events, tenuously held within an improvised structure.



The way in which he groups the work together is intended to expose how he has seen, in photographic terms – the only hierarchy is that of visual circumstance and his encounter with it through photography. In that sense the real subject of these pictures must be the photographer himself, who is, of course, never seen, but who is everywhere present, as the fulcrum around which the contingency of a particular scene is understood to revolve,



a still point of attention in the endless flux of time. The groupings of the images co-opt those strategies used by the photographer in making them and so we come to occupy that position as well, entering into the process itself, tracing the route of his decisions as they unfolded – the medium is here a kind of perceptual conduit, mysterious transcriptions of experience in which otherwise impossible forms of seeing occur in the stasis of a single frame. But Graham also returns the complication of narrative to these scenes, if only by the centrality of his own role as a perceiving subject.

There is, at the same time, some considerable artistic risk involved in this approach, not least in the fact that photography is essentially a way of editing how we encounter the world. This is not to suggest, of course, that Graham did not edit the work presented here, rather that, on the contrary, his whole rationale in structuring this project is to make literal the forces that shape the ways in which we “see” photographically and so his edits are a reflection of this. He is obliged to account for those weakness or failures of the medium that are by now well-known, its tendency to flatten all potential meanings into a single, admittedly dense, instant. Graham treads a high-wire between poles of resolution and incoherence, a balance which he is not always successful in preserving. So while it is gratifying to see such an acute visual intelligence at work in each of these photographic clusters, the most effective pictures tend to suffer under the weight of those images that undoubtedly complete the process, but are of less significance visually.



Furthermore, and although it is important to realise that “America” is not the main subject that Graham is taking on here, his portrait of it is, in social and economic terms, emphatically narrow. He would – no doubt, rightly – disavow any claim made on his photography for a documentary role, but this sustained attention to those parts of society that we might readily identify (on the basis of his pictures) as being disadvantaged, means there must be some other intent at work here, because, if Graham wishes to say something about an endemic state of economic disparity, he offers no standard of comparison. We must conclude, then, that what he is addressing here is the tradition of “concerned” photography itself and the ways in which it has constructed an implicit, voyeuristic notion of otherness. In this regard, a shimmer of possibility is a work of unstinting complexity, one that rewards careful and patient viewing. Graham is deeply attuned to the medium and its turbulent history, as well as the immense potential that remains to be explored in how a photographic image can make visible unsuspected dimensions of reality ●



Images:

*Beyond Caring, 1984-85.* ©Paul Graham Archive

*A Shimmer of Possibility, 2004-2006 (San Francisco/Las Vegas 2006)* ©Paul Graham Archive

*A Shimmer of Possibility, 2004-2006 (New Orleans, 2005).* Courtesy of the artist and Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London. Installation at The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 2012.



FOCUS

NICOLAI HOWALT

Car Crash Studies



*"After the commonplaces of everyday life, with their muffled dramas, all my organic expertise for dealing with physical injury had long been blunted or forgotten. The crash was the only real experience I had been through for years"*

J.G. Ballard

Car Crash Studies, a thought provoking photographic study of cars that have been involved in severe and potentially fatal accidents. The series moves between documentation and abstraction. While the car crash studies are typographical in nature, seeming in some instances to be closer to sterile accident report photographs, the subject matter most obviously begs the viewer to confront the human fear of trauma and death.

Several of the images are vividly abstract and look more like landscapes than slashed up metal. Collided bodyworks, dents and cracks in varnish appear as highly enlarged details in the monumental works. These 'color plains' become the ultimate instance of beauty created from suffering, pain and destruction.

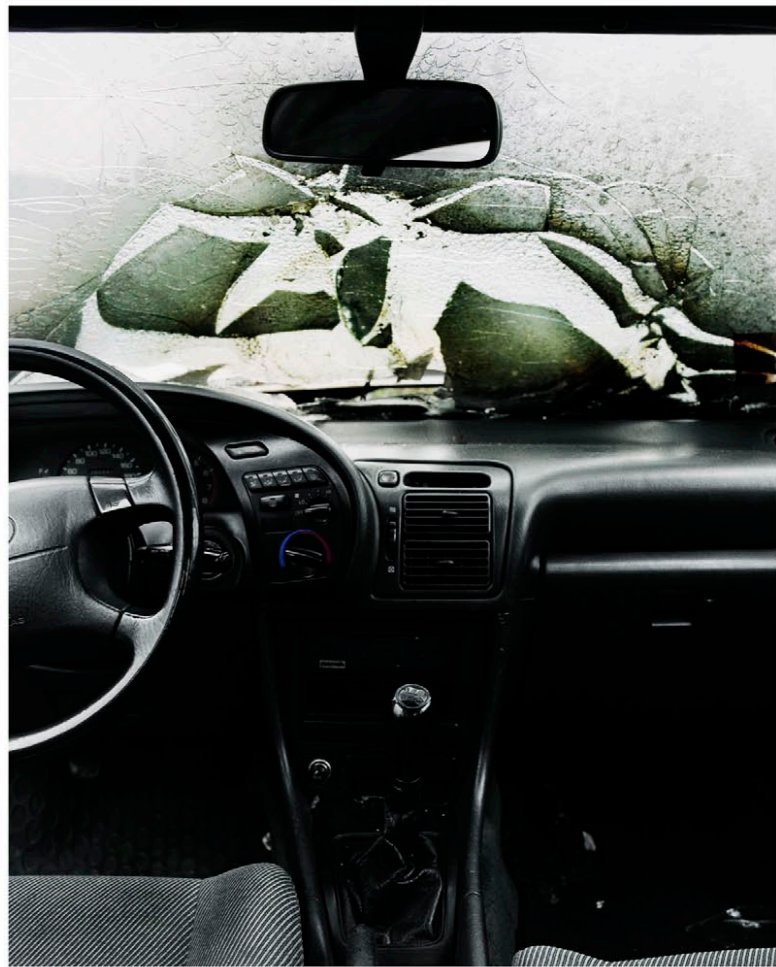
Although Car Crash Studies is specifically based on cars that have been involved in accidents, Howalt's works rather attempt to portray an abstract, mental state, namely the duality we feel in relation to accidents or catastrophes when experienced from a distance - as spectators.

















BIOGRAPHY

Nicolai Howalt was born in Copenhagen and graduated from Denmark's Photographic Art School Fatamorgana in 1992 and his work has documentary references, operating at the intersection of conceptual photography and installation.

Nicolai Howalt has had solo exhibitions at Esbjerg Kunstmuseum; Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York; Martin Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen and Center for Fotografi, Stockholm among others. He has also exhibited at Statens Museum for Kunst, ARoS and Skagens Museum in Denmark, and in Korea, China, USA, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, France, Finland, England, Hungary and Turkey.

In 2001 Nicolai Howalt published the book 3x1 with Gyldendal Publishers. Boxer was published in 2003 by ArtPeople and 78 Boxers is published by Hjørring in 2011. He has received a series of grants from the Hasselblad Foundation, The Danish Ministry of Culture, The Danish Arts Foundation and The Danish Arts Council.

Nicolai Howalt is represented in numerous public collections, including The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; MUSAC, Spain, Maison Européenne de Photographie, France, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, USA, La Casa Encendida, Spain, Fondation Neuflyze Vie, France, Art Foundation Majorca, Spain, Hiscox Art Project, USA. And in Denmark, The National Museum of Photography, The Danish Arts Foundation, Skagen Museum, Nykredit and Museet for Fotokunst, Brandts.

Nicolai Howalt also has a long-term collaboration with the Danish artist Trine Søndergaard. They have published books including How To Hunt, with ArtPeople in 2005 and Hatje Cantz in 2010, TreeZone and Dying Birds with Hassla Books in 2009 & 2010. They have exhibited together in Sweden, Germany, Spain, France, Canada, Finland, USA, China and Korea. Their collaborative works have received awards including the Special Jury Prize at Paris Photo 2006 and The Niels Wessel Bagge's Foundation for the Arts Award in 2008.

Nicolai Howalt is a member of Kunstnersamfundet and The Danish Association of Visual Artists. He is represented by Martin Asbæk Gallery in Copenhagen and Bruce Silverstein Gallery in New York.

[nicolaihowalt.com](http://nicolaihowalt.com)



Foto  
Book  
Festival  
dummy  
award  
'14

**The Fotobookfestival Kassel** invites photographers to present their so-far unpublished photobooks to an international public and to eminent experts. In 2014 the best 50 books selected by a pre-jury will be exhibited at international photo events in Athens, Cologne, Dublin, Madrid, Milano, Oslo, Paris, Rome, Paraty and Sao Paulo. From these 50 titles, 3 winners will be chosen by an international jury of experts at the PhotoBookMuseum Cologne in September.

The winner of the **First Prize** will be given the opportunity to realize their dummy as a »real« book in cooperation with our production partner, k-books, Germany, and will be reported on in the magazine European Photography. The First Prize also includes, apart from the book production, the presentation of the photobook-work during the next Fotobookfestival in Kassel in 2015. **The Second Prize** is a book production voucher valued at € 500; the **Third Prize** is a voucher valued at € 300 given by our partner, k-books.

Registration closes on (new!) **15 May 2014**. The latest arrival date for the dummies is also 15 May 2014.

**Entries can only be registered online.**



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