

# COMMON GROUND

A photograph of a misty forest with bare trees. The text 'COMMON GROUND' is overlaid at the top. A circular graphic with the number '03' is at the bottom center.

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# *Time Ago:*

Ideas of Myth, Monuments  
& Relics

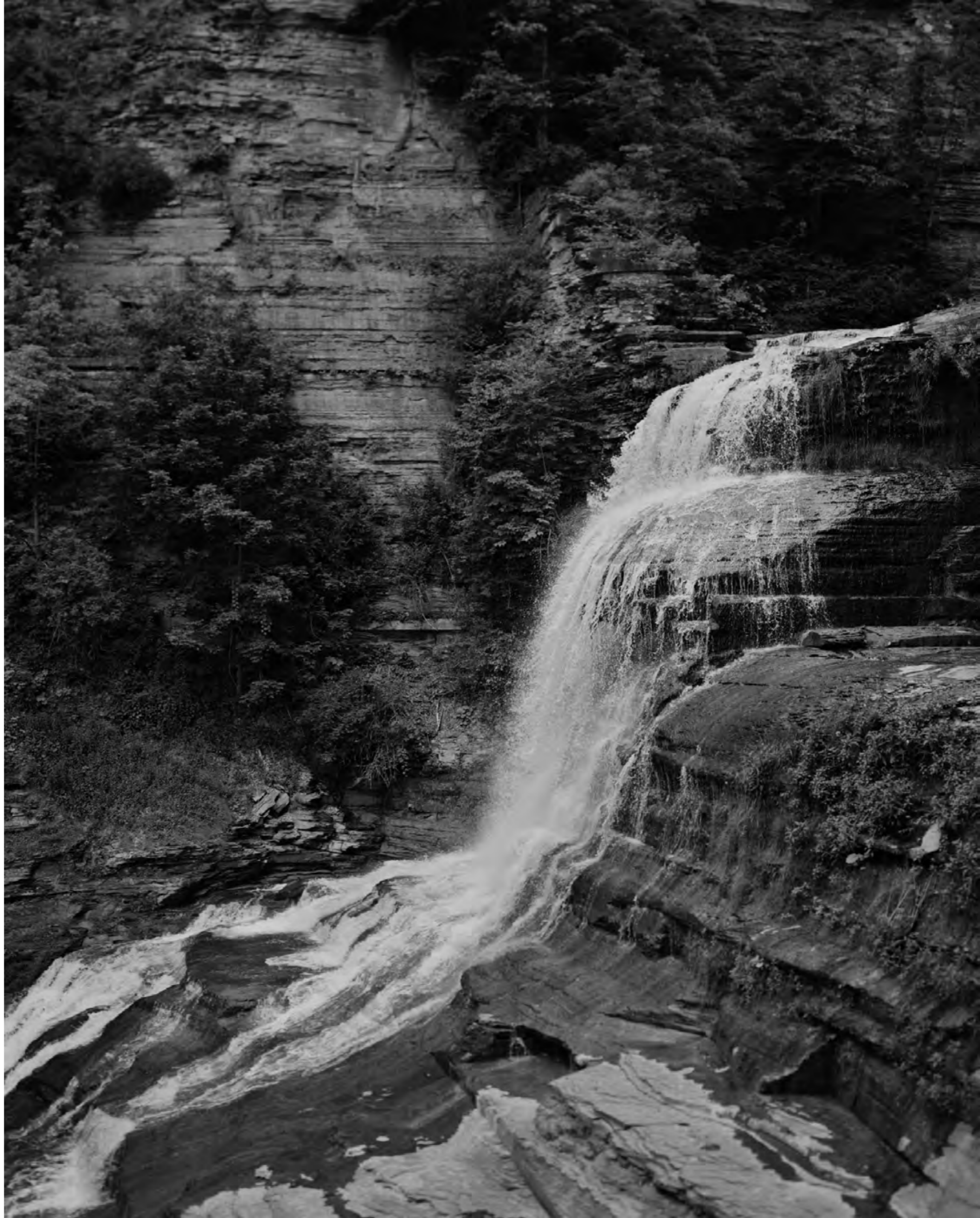
Considering the role of artwork and objects in the passing down of knowledge and stories, Issue Three brings together Australian and international artists who play with ideas of myth, monuments, relics, and inevitably, time. From mystic mountains and mythic creatures, to regional museums and assemblages of domestic objects, *Time Ago* plays with the duality of photography as both narrative and document, deceiver and timekeeper. Issue Three also sees Camille Serisier from Issue One return to interview Jacqui Stockdale, regular contributor Christine McFetridge contemplate the works of Beth Macraid O'Loughlin, Lisa Bryan-Brown write about the cross-disciplinary practice of Kate Beckingham, and Helen Bird interview emerging artist Bridie Gillman. By far the largest Common Ground issue to date, this expanded edition reflects on the role of photography in understanding the inanimate, the historical and the larger than life.



# ESTHER TEICHMANN

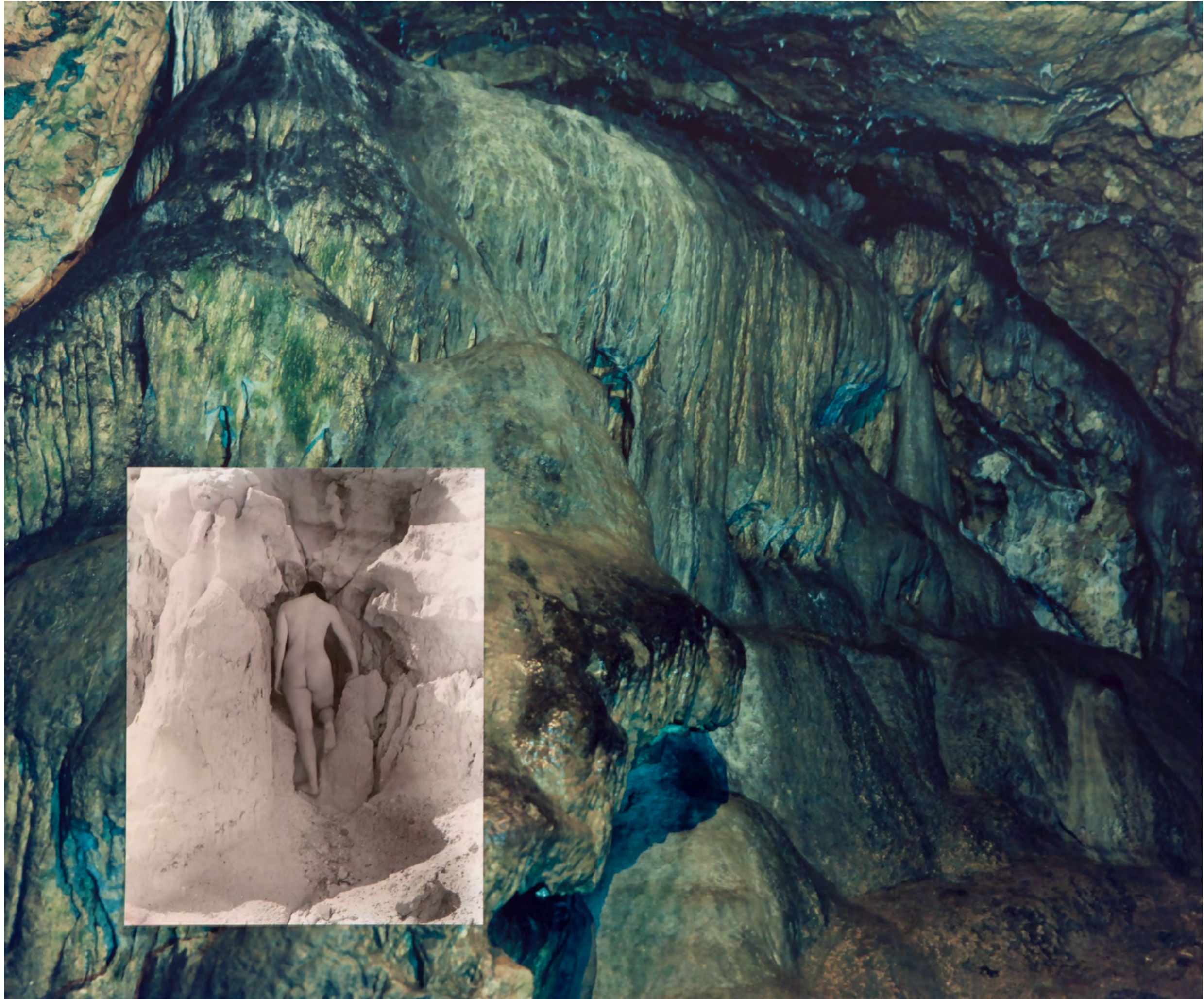
## *Fractal Scars, Salt Water and Tears*

Teichmann's practice combines still and moving image, collage and painting to create alternate worlds, which blur autobiography and fiction. Central to the work lies an exploration of the origins of fantasy and desire and how these are bound to experiences of loss and representation. Both filmic works and photographs of turned away bodies and primordial spaces of enchantment work with the relationships between images, and the narratives these juxtapositions create. Across writing, photographic works and film pieces, we move from real to imagined spaces, exploring the relationship between loss, desire and the imaginary. The photographic medium is worked upon with painting, collage and montage, narrative voice over juxtaposed with moving image. Here, the photographic is loosened from its referent, slipping in and out of darkness, cloaked in inks and bathed in subtle hues of tinted light. The spaces inhabited within the films and images are womb-like liquid spaces of night, moving from beds to swamps and caves, from the mother to the lover in search of a primordial return.











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A giant camera stands on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea. Its blue and yellow exterior echoes the city's fairground nostalgia. She expects it to be shut, but finds a woman wrapped in a blanket behind the box-office entrance. Reciting its history, she takes V through black double doors into the camera's belly. V walks into darkness, eyes adjusting to the change in light whilst the woman describes the apparatus' mechanisms. The lens in the centre of its conical roof focuses the image outdoors onto the mirror, projecting it upon the concave circular dish in the room's middle. By the time the rehearsed explanation is complete, her eyes have adjusted. The eggshell-lacquered projection bowl now holds the most exquisite image. Tiny crystalline waves break silently over jagged cliffs, water droplets spray in minute detail. Its circumference would fit a curled-up body almost exactly. She could sleep here, waves crashing upon skin, dancing across eyelids, covering her with its continual circular motion. She will come back here one day and he will stand behind her. Together they will inhale the image in silence, breath suspended, waiting for that moment when the late afternoon sun hits mute waves, flooding everything inside her in an overexposed glow of too much light.

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V takes him to her room overlooking the cliffs and the sea, surrounded on three sides by a thick jungle garden. The evening light enters in horizontal rays, bamboo clangs softly. When the wind stops, her curtained boat-bed is entirely silent. He sleeps arms outstretched as though crucified, wrists upturned, chest exposed. V watches him, tracing veins on his arms with her eyes, until they disappear beneath flesh. She thinks of the bodies and skins that have been as familiar as his is becoming, the strangeness of intimacy. She remembers the first time he undressed, her breath stuck inside her, gaze falling upon the fractal scar that spread across his chest. It begins at the base of his throat, in that soft indentation between two arteries, glistening a coral pink, like the inside of the seashell she holds to her ear to fall asleep. From this tender point it spreads out and down like the finest of seaweed, fossilized upon him in one violent moment.

She keeps a thicker kind of seaweed in her bathtub, the brackish smell reaching her bed when a breeze moves across the room. She keeps these washed up branches of slippery leather, so as to bathe within their drowned mermaids' embrace. Filling the bath with warm water, V lowers herself into their tentacles as he sleeps oblivious, a few feet away.

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## ESTHER TEICHMANN

Teichmann's practice combines still and moving image, collage and painting to create alternate worlds, which blur autobiography and fiction. Central to the work lies an exploration of the origins of fantasy and desire and how these are bound to experiences of loss and representation. Esther received an MA and PhD from the Royal College of Art and has exhibited and published internationally.

Recent group exhibitions have included *In Appropriation* at the Houston Centre of Photography, *The Constructed View* at the Dong Gang Museum of Photography in South Korea and *Femina* at the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Pavillion Vendome in Paris. Forthcoming solo shows will be held at Reiss-Engelhorn Museum Mannheim in Germany. In 2014 she was the recipient of the Levallois Award and the subsequent exhibition *Fractal Scars, Salt Water and Tears* was shown in Paris and in London.

Her work is featured in important survey publications including *In Our World: New Photography from Britain* edited by Filippo Maggia, *100 New Artists* edited by Francesca Gavin, Laurence King and Phaidon's forthcoming *Looking at Photographs* by David Company. In 2014 Self Publish Be Happy published her work as their Book Club Volume V. In 2012 she was a guest professor at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco and is currently a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Arts London, London College of Communication.

# YVETTE MONAHAN

## *The Time of Dreaming the World Awake*

*The Time of Dreaming the World Awake* is a portrait of a place, a landscape of possibility.

This photographic body of work is based in a small region in Southern France. I was drawn there initially by the story of Bugarach, the 'magic' mountain. Bugarach was somehow connected to a Mayan prophecy which indicated that the world as we know it, would end on December 21st, 2012. The prophecy claimed that this date would mark the beginning of a new era for humanity, a new and sublime future. Bugarach was to be the first bastion of this modern Arcadia.

I felt that the landscape around Bugarach had a palpable charge and I was compelled to continuously return to photograph it throughout 2012. This idea of a new ideal destiny was appealing as it offered a sense of possibility. It allowed an allegorical landscape full of portents to exist, one that was beyond the visual reality.

Nothing happened that December, which was to be expected. Despite this, I realised how important it was for me to believe in the possibility of an idyll, even if it only existed in my mind.

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



















**YVETTE MONAHAN**

Yvette is a Dublin-based Photographer who holds an MFA from the University of Ulster.

Her project *The time of dreaming the world awake* won the Portfolio award at Photolreland in 2013 and has since been exhibited throughout Ireland and in the UK, Finland and France.

This body of work was self-published as a monograph in 2014. The Gallery of Photography in Dublin nominated *The time of dreaming the world awake* for the 2015 Prix Pictet award.

# MYTHOLOGISING MEMORY

BETH MACRAILD O'LOUGHLIN'S *LIGHT, PRESENCE  
AND NARRATIVES OF REMEMBRANCE*

*[These] were all the snapshots which our children would look at someday with wonder, thinking their parents had lived smooth, well-ordered, stabilised-within-the-photo lives and got up proudly in the morning to walk proudly on the sidewalks of life, never dreaming the raggedy madness and riot of their actual lives.<sup>1</sup> - Jack Kerouac*

Holding the blunted edges of an old photograph between thumb and forefinger invariably causes the mind to wander. The passing of time, and the handing down of ownership, has the effect of mythologising characters and landscapes within a frame. Memories alter and muddle; narratives are constructed. The everyday not banal but wonderful. Several years ago, Beth Macraild O'Loughlin discovered a collection of glass plate negatives, portraits, sealed between the walls of a convict-built house in Tasmania. This motivated a consideration of the relationship between the familiar imagery of everyday spaces and photographic artifacts in giving rise to 'contemporary narratives of remembrance'<sup>2</sup>. At a time of image oversaturation, which primarily seeks to depict everyday spaces and routines, being able to communicate via visual language has become important like never before.<sup>3</sup>

Photography is fundamentally linked to memory and remembrance. It is impossible to separate the photographic image from its function as a document that stops time. However, the rapid democratisation and proliferation of photographic imagery as a result of social media has undeniably changed the way we consume and comprehend a photograph. Combining her own series of images entitled *Reflective Fields* with the found negatives, Macraild O'Loughlin's complex and deeply considered inquiry *Light, presence and narratives of remembrance* aims to develop a way of understanding the narrative quality of memory and remembrance by providing 'triggers that are often overlooked at [this] time of unprecedented image saturation.'<sup>4</sup> In engaging her audience with these types of pictures, she calls into question the human condition and, importantly, she asks her viewer to consider the ways in which the past informs the present.

**Essay** by Christine McFetridge  
**Works** by Beth Macraild O'Loughlin

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







The material quality of a photographic print or negative makes the past seem tangible, and provides a direct connection and dialogue between then and now. The capacity of found imagery to incite reverie is described famously by Roland Barthes' experiences searching for his mother's likeness in photographs upon her death: 'I studied the little girl and at last rediscovered my mother... In this little girl's image I saw the kindness which had formed her being immediately and forever.'<sup>5</sup> Found photographs open up worlds. Barthes is able, if only for a moment, to reconcile the memory he has of his mother with the present moment. Though Macrauld O'Loughlin does not seek to specifically encourage us to identify with our familial histories, given that our earliest access to and knowledge of found imagery comprises photographs of this nature, it is difficult not to hold this in consideration in the construction of identity.

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*“The material quality of a photographic print or negative makes the past seem tangible...”*

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Patricia Holland writes of the 'uncertain borderline between fantasy and memory, the tracing of identity and a sense of self back through one's parents and their sense of *themselves*, the opportunity to relive or re-enact the past- these have all been ways in which family photographs have been used to recapture personal history and make sense of everyday lives.'<sup>6</sup> Macrauld O'Loughlin recognises crucially, too, that the experiences of others are applicable to our own; that we inevitably project ourselves onto images that engage our 'cultural consciousness'.<sup>7</sup> They encourage the recognition of self.

To this end, Gaston Bachelard's notion *topoanalysis*, which he defines as 'the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives'<sup>8</sup>, is vital. How we make sense of our everyday lives ties into where collective experience overlaps and a common, universal narrative can be found. A sense of belonging derived from connection to place, in other words. Importantly, Macrauld O'Loughlin employs the use of installation to physically realise her photographic concerns. In a quiet space she

arranges groupings of images, encouraging wide-ranging interpretation into the reading of the work. *The Photographic Artifacts* are exhibited on glass, and presented on shelves at an angle. Light projected through the pane casts the image as a shadow. The physical space is significant in emphasising 'the exploration of relationships to memory and to the production of narratives of remembrance.'<sup>9</sup>

The 'triggers' that Macrauld O'Loughlin employs in her series *Reflective Fields* seek to highlight this. Key indicators and subtle metaphor act as a springboard for contemplative thought and memory. The images are intentionally devoid of figures so that the viewer might project themselves onto the picture plane. They are places of 'defined purpose', familiar to the Australian consciousness—a tennis court and football oval, for instance. These reflective fields could easily have become an obvious critique of the sort of imagery associated with social media—romantic indicators of contemporary life; images Macrauld O'Loughlin identifies as being of 'birds circling against a

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*“Key indicators and subtle metaphor act as a springboard for contemplative thought and memory.”*

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cloudy sky; turbulent oceans; deconstructed food'.<sup>10</sup> However, she imbues her images with historical significance through monochrome and darkroom techniques. These are processes that far outweigh the few years that we've attached ourselves to smart phones and point-and-shoot digital cameras.

Think back to the last time you sat a while with an old printed picture. You might have considered the decision-making process that led to the eventual release of the shutter, the tone of the sitter's voice or even the series of events that led to the print's discovery and subsequent arrival in your possession. With this in mind, could you recall the last image you 'liked' on Instagram? Indeed, what would the sitters' think, in *Photographic Artifacts*, to know their likeness had found an audience in those other than family and friends? In emphasising the ephemeral nature of photographs in our presently image-saturated lives, Macrauld O'Loughlin constructs a mode of inquiry and space that we might use to consider narratives important to our own lives.









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# MAKESHIFT MONUMENTS

BRIDIE GILLMAN USES INSTALLATION AND  
PHOTOGRAPHY TO EXPLORE IDEAS OF HYBRIDITY  
AND THE EVERYDAY

Queensland College of Art graduate, Bridie Gillman adopts a multi-disciplinary approach that combines sculpture, painting, installation and photography to explore the ways materials elicit memory. In her practice Gillman draws upon her background experiences of living in both Australia and Indonesia, with a particular focus on the hybridity that often results from the negotiation of cross-cultural experiences. Gillman has exhibited in various solo and group shows nationally and internationally and has recently completed a residency in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

*Makeshift Monuments*, a recent body of work by Gillman, is an ongoing photographic project that started as a celebration of the everyday. Creating temporary monuments constructed from found objects in Yogyakarta homes, Gillman uses a long and contemplative process, careful selection and a tender flexibility as she creates in and with people's homes and possessions. Colour is used as a key component in the works, triggering memories and drawing parallels. The resulting photographs recall travels and states of being in spaces that exist now only in memories. Through the textures, colours and evocative patterns, Gillman hints at the role of material in articulating experiences of awkwardness, the hesitant, and the unknown, that can so often produce new art forms.

**Interview** by Helen Bird  
**Works** by Bridie Gillman

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





**Helen: Your work engages with both sculpture and photography. Do you feel a stronger affinity with one, or was it a natural progression to balance both in your practice?**

Bridie: I would say it was a natural progression. I've always had a strong interest in photography, and lugged multiple film cameras with me when travelling, but I've always sidelined it as a 'hobby'. I actually majored in painting and drawing in my studies but it was a couple of years ago, when I really started to develop mixed-media/installation work, that I began to incorporate photographs. These were both old family archives and more recent photos I'd taken and became a pretty integral element to my work. As the pieces were often quite abstract the photographs became a tool, like a visual clue, to communicate more information. After positive responses to my photographs I decided to consciously develop and value that side of my practice, which is what I'm trying to do at the moment really. This project *Makeshift Monuments* was my first time exhibiting a photographic series, so it was a bit of a milestone for me!

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*“You need to be very flexible when dealing with different cultures and people’s homes and belongings.”*

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**H: The objects in your *Makeshift Monuments* series are very specific. Can you tell me a bit about the process of selection and construction, and how the monuments came to be?**

B: The objects were made in different peoples' homes in Yogyakarta. So, if it was ok, I'd spot a few things around the home and then play with the objects against a wall until something worked. It was all very intuitive. I'm not going to pretend that there is a specific reason to each object. I think if I had gone in with a specific vision it could not have been fulfilled. You need to be very flexible when dealing with different cultures and people's homes and belongings. As my way of working is quite intuitive and improvised, I know a lot of my decisions come down to colour and aesthetics. Aesthetics! Feels like a dirty word in contemporary art.

However that's not to say that there aren't interesting readings that can be made from each of the 'monuments'. For example, the way the domestic, soft pillow is somewhat forcefully pinned against the wall by

the pipe, and that it reveals *Batik* (a traditional Indonesian cultural object) under the pillowcase, or a contrast that is found between organic and manufactured elements. There is tension and instability and I think that is important. As objects, I feel they hold something different to every viewer. We all bring our own histories to an object so I'm very happy for people to develop their own readings. I also think an element of mystery makes the work more interesting, rather than be told this means this and that means that.

**H: In your work you explore the ways materials can elicit memory and articulate experiences of the unknown. Do you see each monument as being of a specific commemoration, or rather are they each an element of an overall expression?**

B: I see the objects as being an element of a broader expression rather than being tied to specific memories. They really started as a sort of celebration of the everyday. I have always been drawn to the intricacies and colour of household objects in Indonesia. (I'm sure this has a lot to do with my early memories there.) A lot of the objects are throw-away items and I wanted to draw attention to the interest and 'beauty' that they hold. It feels a little cliché but I guess it is linked to these old ideas of 'beauty in the everyday' and 'art is life and life is art'. I call them Monuments because I wanted to give them weight and importance.

**H: *Makeshift Monuments* is an ongoing photographic project that started from your experiences and observations of time in Yogyakarta. Can you tell me about your relationship with Indonesia?**

B: My earliest memories are of living in Jakarta, Indonesia. I lived there with my mum from the age of two till seven. When we came back to Australia I had an Indonesian surname and step-dad, and a weird accent. A lot of the work I have made previously on ideas of 'difference' and 'awkwardness', stemmed from this time. I didn't return to Indonesia for many years but for the last seven years I've gone yearly for 1-3 months. A few years ago I discovered Yogyakarta on the island of Java, a vibrant student city and cultural/arts hub of Indonesia. In 2014 I spent two months making work in a studio there and finished with an exhibition. I think it is a place I will always return to.

**H: Now that you are back in Australia, where do you see your practice going from here?**

B: I am very conscious of not making too much work based on Indonesia. I don't want to overdo it and ruin it for myself. I am taking the 'framework' that I developed from my experiences in Indonesia, that of objects and materials articulating the unknown and awkwardness, and using it as a process to navigate other places. I did this in Hobart in January





2015. I had a week to create an installation with found objects and photographs in response to my initial experiences in Hobart. As I had never been there before there was an element of the unknown but obviously there was also familiarity, being another Australian city. This was an interesting experience as it was the first time I have responded to a place where the differences are not as obvious as say Indonesia.

**H: Contrasting to your previous series of work in which the installation creates an inviting stage for the viewer to wander and interpret, 'Makeshift Monuments' relies entirely on the photograph.**

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*"...there was an element of the unknown but obviously there was also familiarity..."*

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**How has this departure from installation affected your current work?**

B: Well I've in no way said goodbye to sculpture and installation! I think the medium of photography is really important for this work, and maybe that also has to do with the context. I made and exhibited this series in Yogyakarta. There is nothing 'fine art' about these objects but photographing them gives weight and value. It says 'this dusty container is more than just a dusty container – it's worth photographing'. It is all in the way you choose to see. The value that photography gives an object makes it much more impressive than if these objects were simply placed in the gallery. I often use everyday objects in my sculptures, but they are manipulated and contrasted with 'clean surfaces' and fine art materials.

I think I have a very romantic idea that maybe by presenting everyday objects and intricacies in an art context people may start to view their own everyday with more interest. How lovely to be confronted with something of beauty or art when going about your day-to-day activities rather than only at an art gallery. It's all in the way we choose to see. It's not a new idea, but something I've become more and more interested in.





# IZABELA PLUTA

## *Agency of inanimate objects*

*Agency of inanimate objects* investigates the nature of objects that are imbued with temporal obsolescence. *Museum*—an image exhibited as photomural wallpaper from inside a natural history museum—is a reference to Georges Cuvier's 1795 reconstruction of a mammoth to demonstrate his new theory of fossils transforming them from sheer curiosities into traces of life that has been extinct and proof of catastrophic transformations in the history of the earth. This work is life size and depicts a complex web of layers and reflections—glass, mirrors and murals of mountain vistas—that house preserved species or hybrids. The photographic process renders time still echoing the frozen diorama in an ambiguous montage.

Izabela Pluta's works highlight the breadth and eclectic potential of photographic materiality while using allegory to articulate her conceptual inquiry. *Agency of inanimate objects* combines still-life photography with collage and vernacular snapshots of found objects. Pluta's works present a set of formal and psychological associations that frame continual tensions around the irreversible changes that are occurring in the environment, the effects of time and how the photographic image operates as a vehicle for witnessing various states of ruin.















### **IZABELA PLUTA**

Izabela Pluta was born in Warsaw, Poland and migrated to Australia in 1987. She completed her undergraduate studies in fine art at The University of Newcastle (2002) and has a Master of Fine Arts from UNSW Art & Design (2009). Pluta has received a number of national awards and grants including from The Australia Council for the Arts, The Qantas Foundation and The Ian Potter Cultural Trust. In November 2011 she undertook an Academic Research Exchange at the Art and Design Research Institute at the University of Ulster in Belfast. Pluta has undertaken international artist residencies in Paris, Barcelona, Beijing and Western Australia.



# POLIXENI PAPAPETROU

## *The Ghillies*

In *The Ghillies* (2013) I photographed my teenage son wearing ghillie suits or camouflage outfits originally developed for hunting and the military. The project began with his enthusiasm for games where ghillies are worn or simulated online. He wanted to possess a ghillie suit and to be photographed in it. Upon recording his presence in the camouflage, I noticed the most uncanny transformation, as he was still there—my son—but not there: a bush that dissolves into the scenery, a vegetal humanoid shape, an apparition, a hybrid genius, a botanical phantom, an abstraction of human stature, something that comes from nature and makes a claim for our one-ness with nature.

At the same time, remembering that the project takes its point of departure from the military and games, these photographs speak about boys, adolescence and identity and how they might reconcile their inner world with the social demands of the outer world as they navigate the darker continent of the teens. In that awkward evolution of youth, childhood identity recedes and new archetypes emerge for boys: some take on an institutional camouflage and blend in with their surroundings whereas others emerge as individuals. Always in harmony within the environment, my son both blends and retains a strong presence. Though partly submerged in nature, his force as a figure is symbol for his individuality in an increasingly conformist world.

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### **POLIXENI PAPAPETROU**

Polixeni Papapetrou is an Australian photographic artist who explores the relationship between history, contemporary culture and identity. Since 2002 Papapetrou has focused on the themes of childhood identity, memory and otherness. She has held over 50 solo exhibitions and participated in over 100 group exhibitions in Australia, Asia, Europe and the USA. Surveys of her work were held at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney (2011) and Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne (2013). She has exhibited in major international photography festivals in Asia, Europe and Latin America. Her work appears in public, corporate and private collections in Australia, Europe and USA.

# YOUR GRAVITY

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KATE BECKINGHAM WORKS ALONG THE EDGE OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND SCULPTURE, CREATING WORKS THAT PLAY WITH GRAVITY & SPACE, THE MONUMENTAL & THE MUNDANE

There is a profound sense of dislocation present in Kate Beckingham's *Base Camp* installation<sup>1</sup>. Emanating a vague but persistent longing, the suite of photographs and sculptural works are unified by a logic of yearning. *Base Camp* is a complex work that reflects on time and physicality, and Beckingham's nuanced construction of images, objects and space offers up a multiplicity of relationships that slip in and out of association as the variables of their perception change; your focus, your movement, your space.

You know that sensation, when you're drifting asleep and all of a sudden you're plummeting? The rush of relief in finding your body supported by a sturdy piece of furniture, despite your consciousness mere moments ago informing you otherwise, is an extraordinary feeling. It is the relationship between these two sensations, the panic of instability and the comfort of surety, which Beckingham skilfully manipulates to establish the carefully balanced tensions of *Base Camp*.

The suite of confident black and white photographs, tightly framed in no-nonsense pine, are punctuated by tactile sculptural forms, a series of assertive assemblages. Each exploits the symbiotic dichotomy of soft and hard; stretched netting cradles solid marble, dowel supports fabric and cord, rope ties to wood. None of these works fight gravity too much; the suspended droop of *Ring and Net* counters the casual lean of *Flag and Walking sticks*. While their forms suggest usefulness, the practical applications for any of these contraptions beyond that of being looked at in a gallery would be fraught. Interspersed throughout the *Studio Gesture* and *Hold On* images, Beckingham's feeble objects provide a poetic pace to the installation and inform the movement of a viewer through the space.

**Essay** by Lisa Bryan-Brown  
**Works** by Kate Beckingham

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







The images, too, hinge on dichotomy. Beckingham's five *Studio Gesture* photographs depict decisive actions by the artist's dis/embodyed hand and arm. A loop of rope hangs on an elbow, fingers grasp a climbing hold, a wrist leans firmly on a chair. These performed interactions between the (implied) body and the functional objects are also meditations on the influence of gravity - where the sculptural forms submit to its' constant force, the gestures defy it in a passive but definite resistance. Consider the ways you conquer the passive pull of gravity everyday: sitting up, standing, leaning over, reaching out. Consider the moments when gravity defeats you: crash, bang, splat. Oops, ouch.

*Base Camp* is Beckingham's response to a residency she completed in Iceland<sup>2</sup>, simultaneously exploring both her time spent there and the time passed since. Slowly digesting her experiences within this foreign landscape from afar in her Sydney studio, she was drawn particularly to reflect upon her body's incompetence to effectively traverse the unfamiliar Icelandic environments of lava fields, volcanic craters and soft grounds near geothermal sites. Beckingham's practice widely considers

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*“Consider the moments  
when gravity defeats  
you: crash, bang, splat.  
Oops, ouch.”*

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'the status of the body in relation to the image'<sup>3</sup>, and it seems apt that *Base Camp* translates her body's negotiations with the landscape of Iceland into an installation environment which is in turn negotiated by viewers' bodies, in an appealing trinity of mediated experiences.

Her increasingly sculptural approach has steadily evolved from early photographic works that make plain their own construction, to full-blown spatial installation. *Base Camp* is undeniably a pivotal work for the future directions of the artist's playful practice<sup>4</sup>, though her arrival at the edge of contemporary sculpture and photomedia practices is well delineated by the course of her earlier works. These reveal an abiding interest in monumentality and historicism, a nuanced approach to materiality, space and time, and a perpetual sense of uncanny wonderment.

In particular, *Palatine Hill* (2013) signals Beckingham's intuitive approach to installation and her preoccupation with exploring the tension between the image and the object. Through the direct extension of the image plane, *Palatine Hill* bridges the conventions of space and time. The sculptural anchors transform the images into something more akin to portals, parallel universes somehow breached by our own. The modest scale of the images and their relationship to the sculptural elements



enhances the monumental and historical quality of the subject matter, one of the most ancient and mythologised sites in Rome, while the unapologetic materiality conversely undermines this aura.

Oblique references to antiquity and use of archaeological-ish imagery and forms are persistent devices in Beckingham's practice. Marble is a frequently recurring material in both her object and image-based works, loaded with its inherent connotations of grandeur and preciousness, in explicit reference to classical sculpture and architecture. Her floor-based installation *Rebuilding the Roman empire* (2014) is comprised of various small abstract assemblages, scattered poetically in a field of gallery-floor grey. Perched atop small slabs of marble, the myriad objects have an intriguing dualism, as akin to ancient relics as they are to contemporary sculpture, and borrowing freely from the vernacular of both. So how does a work like *Rebuilding the Roman empire* fit into the broad spectrum of contemporary photography? If it does at all, it is as an agitation, but within the context of Beckingham's practice this seemingly contradictory position that asserts object as image and image as object is less irreconcilable.

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*“...the myriad objects  
have an intriguing  
dualism, as akin to  
ancient relics as they  
are to contemporary  
sculpture...”*

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Certainly Beckingham's education and early practice are deeply grounded in the photograph and the craft of image-making. Her point of departure is a material-centric methodology that views images as 'parallel universes that exist alongside our own, but are inaccessible to the body'<sup>3</sup>, an approach to image-making that in fact denies the image of its transportational fiction. In this way Beckingham uses images as a material, treating them as an object to be installed. This approach is perhaps best evidenced in *An infinite number of paths between two points* (2014), an installation<sup>5</sup> of two angled shelves positioned such that the viewer cannot successfully perceive the two image-objects simultaneously. The work is resolved through the viewers' experience of their embodied engagement with the installation, performed in order to reconcile the real and unreal content; two amorphous blobs, one an imaged sculpture and the other a sculpted image. Spot the difference.

This sculptural turn in Beckingham's practice was long foregrounded in her purely image-based works by her persistent return to both







analogue and digital composite photography techniques. In *Venus* (2012), carefully captured exposure intervals allow her to compress time within the pictorial space, folding the passage of Venus into a singularly documented event. Contrastingly, in *Monument* (2013) she embraces a graphic, hyper-edited aesthetic, flattening material into image. Embracing artifice with candour, each of these works exemplifies Beckingham's sculptural approach to image-making, both reflexively flaunting their explicitly constructed nature.

To return to *Base Camp*, both literally and metaphorically, let's reflect upon Beckingham's modus operandi, the spatial installation and its embodied navigation. Her trajectory has consistently moved her towards this mode of practice, culminating in *Base Camp* and expanded upon even further in her recent installation<sup>6</sup> *The Visitor* (2015). To Beckingham, an installation of objects is simply one large composite image that can be negotiated by bodies. The spatial relationships generated by the movement of these bodies are at the crux of her practice; where your experience intersects with your gravity, that is where you'll find the punchline in Beckingham's work.

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#### NOTES

1. Kate Beckingham's *Base Camp* was exhibited by MOP Projects for Galerie pompom from September 17 to October 12, 2014
  2. Kate Beckingham completed a five week residency at SÍM (Samband Íslenskra Myndlistarmanna, The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists) in Reykjavík, Iceland, in October 2013
  3. Quote drawn from Katherine Rooke's *Interview with Kate Beckingham*, Try Hard Magazine issue 6, available at <http://tryhardmagazine.com/interview-kate-beckingham>
  4. Email correspondence with the artist, 21 March 2015
  5. Kate Beckingham's *An infinite number of paths between two points* was installed at Alaska Projects as part of the group exhibition *Negative Capability* from February 5 to 16, 2014
  6. Kate Beckingham's *The Visitor* was installed at ARCHIVE Space as part of the group exhibition *OBSERVATION/MEDIATION* (curated by Katherine Rooke) from February 11 to 28, 2015
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# THE QUIET WILD

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FROM PHOTOGRAPHED TABLEAU VIVANT TO DRAWING, JACQUI STOCKDALE USES HER MANY MEDIUMS TO COMMENT ON CULTURAL IDENTITY, RITUALS & MASQUERADE

Jacqui Stockdale is an interdisciplinary artist based in Melbourne, Australia. Working within the tradition of portraiture, Stockdale uses symbols and artefacts from various cultures to explore shared aspects of the human condition. Stockdale weaves these diverse or interrelating elements, moving between drawing, painting, tableau vivant photography and collage to create visually stunning and evocative works.

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Stockdale pursued painting alongside a parallel interest in cabaret. Over time her passions for fine art and cultural masquerade crept together. She started hanging out with carnie folk, towers of paraphernalia balanced dangerously in her watercolours, masks snuck onto her subjects, and she began travelling to weird and wonderful festivals all over the globe.

Today, after years of travelling, collecting artefacts and honing her craft, Stockdale has settled in Melbourne. Her works have the sophistication and confidence of a practiced professional deeply engaged in a worthwhile and ongoing investigation. Her performers stare down the barrel of the camera with defiance and pride.

Jacqui Stockdale is represented by This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne, Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane, and Olsen/Irwin, Sydney.

**Interview** by Camille Serisier  
**Works** by Jacqui Stockdale

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



**Camille:** In the past you were a cabaret performer, you undertook a self-initiated residency with Circus Oz, and more recently you have visited festivals and dress up carnivals. In all of these formats the connection with the audience is very direct and the performer openly acknowledges the viewer as participant. This contrasts with the format of Opera or Ballet. How has this particular experience of performance influenced the way you frame the connection between audience and performer in your work?

Jacqui: The portrait photographs I make are mostly staged and the human subject appears conscious of their audience, even through the eyes of a mask. The performative element comes in while working directly with the model, leaving the final outcome partly to chance. When I was involved in cabaret, it was a similar process of inventing theatrical, hybrid characters, though I incorporated song and dance and a lot of humour, some shows were based on the Dada movement, employing nonsense and intuition. I can't escape the idea that I am still playing dress ups like I did as a child, however with far more intent on creating a dialogue with the public.

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*"I am no longer an audience member but someone in between. I feel I have slipped into the act itself."*

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Making high energy drawings of performers while they are performing as I have done with Circus Oz and other live acts creates for me an immediate connection between the act and the viewer. I am no longer an audience member but someone in between. I feel I have slipped into the act itself.

**C:** *The Quiet Wild* was a hugely successful and stunning body of work, which grew out of earlier series of tableau vivants such as *Familija* and *Isola Portraits*. How do you feel about these works now? How have they affected your approach to tableaus?

J: Yes, I am still getting to know these portraits. The interpretations don't end once you hang the work. I find new insights from how writers and art critiques see my work or feedback from the audience in general. Yes, the response to *The Quiet Wild* has been particularly strong. Recently



*Jacqui*

BALA de OPUNTIA  
THE QUIET WILD



the photographs and some of my masks were exhibited in Germany at the Villa Museum Rot, *All is a Masquerade - Carnival and Disguise in Art and Culture*. It included some of my favourite artists like Phyllis Galembo and Shonibare and placed me in a context of international artists who were dealing with notions of masquerade, where I felt very comfortable and honoured to be a part of.

Reflecting on *The Quiet Wild* series, I think that I have achieved a fine balance of the many elements that I have been exploring over the years. The large hand painted landscapes backdrops created an immediate atmosphere to imagine in. The models are able to become part of the landscape and more easily transform their character. Sometimes I would play music to add to the mood. Making full length portraits was new to me as was painting directly onto the bodies. I had such a fantastic array of quite powerful masks that I had been collecting for some time and great models that I was keen to work with, it all seemed to come together.

**C: *Super Naturale* was an intricate and complex project that combined various hand made and digital methodologies. How did you negotiate these sometimes contrary ways of making?**

J: *Super Naturale* is my latest series of photographs where I used a combination of materials from the natural world, leaves and flowers with ready made masks to explore the dual forces in human nature. I played with interpretations of the super natural, super heroes, devils, halloween and deities. I worked with natural lighting by constructing make shift studios in my home town of Melbourne, Ubud, Bali, followed by Nashville, USA during Halloween. I decided to abandon the painted backdrop idea for this series as I was travelling abroad to shoot.



Inspired by the enigmatic portraits produced during early studio photography (before colour photography was invented) I was keen to hand colour a suite of black and white photographs. The project took over 18 months to research and photograph and it was not until the very end, say a month before it was to show that my hand painted project was put on hold. I needed more time to investigate the possibilities of digital papers verses the tradition techniques using rag papers as I was not getting the effect I wanted. Luckily, I worked with a very good retoucher who enabled me to produce a digital hand coloured look that I was happy with. I am still curious about hand colouring and want to see it through to the end when the time is right.

**C:** In 2013 you made *Selfie* for the National Portrait Prize at the University of Queensland Art Museum. Viewed alongside the considered physicality of *Super Naturale*, it feels like you are approaching the presentation of your works in a new way, treating each work simultaneously as object, painting and photograph. Can you talk about this tension?

J: The invitation to make a self portrait for such a prestigious award created an opportunity for me to create a 'one off' piece where I could go to town with my self image. I realise there are so many possibilities or versions of the self that you cannot nail it in one image, it is such a transient phenomena. Although I am known mainly for my photographic work, I am very much a hands on painter, drawer, collage maker, hence, I like to describe myself as a 'portraitist'. Photography is an obvious way to bring these elements together.

In *Selfie*, my challenge was to create a self portrait as both a painter and photographer, symbolising the fusion of two major genres in my practice. I very often borrow from history to comment on cultural identity, ritual and masquerade. Here I playfully mimic a photograph

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*"...there are so many possibilities or versions of the self that you cannot nail in one image, it is such a transient phenomena."*

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of the Countess de Castiglione by Pierre-Louis Pierson, *Scherzo di Follia* c.1863–66. She is looking through the portal of a picture frame, whereas I peer through the artist's palette. I designed a sculpture or casing for the illuminated photograph in collaboration with my brother Luke who made the beautifully crafted piece from his workshop in America. So, back to the question, I'm not necessarily approaching the presentation of my work in a new way, rather enjoying the chance to make an individual work for a specific project.





**C: Myths, monuments and relics from various cultures and countries play a large part in your work. The way you weave these different elements together into a cohesive whole is very beautiful. How do you honour and maintain a sensitivity to the various cultures you reference?**

J: Awareness, respect, admiration and curiosity mixed with trial and error. I see it as my role as an artist to investigate, explore, talk to people and question cultural issues that surround and influence my take on the world around me. I recently made a portrait for *Super Naturale*, one of my favourites in fact, that I decided not to show because I came to understand that it could be read as insensitive to a certain cultural group. This was not my intention. I still like this work and want to open it up for discussion before I release it, otherwise I won't learn to push my concepts out of their comfort zone.

**C: You recently undertook an Australia Council residency in Barcelona. How did you find the experience?**

J: The most significant part of the residency for me was being able to get back to basics, like in the early days of being an artist where I lived a far less complex life. During the three months in Barcelona, accompanied by my young son, I made pictures and paper cut outs of people who visited me, I set up photo shoots with kids, talked to locals, practiced my Spanish and had the luxury of not being a typical tourist. I was in call and response mode and it gave my practice a breath of fresh air. The habits of life back home, dealing with the office side of an artist were put on hold. My primary focus was to research local carnivals and fiestas. I am now making a very long continuous drawing that has stemmed from a project that started in Spain. It will be show as a solo exhibition, *Drawing the Labyrinth*, at the Benalla Art Gallery in May this year.

**C: Your new body of work is titled *The Boho*. Can you tell me what it is about?**

J: The Boho will be a new series of photographic portraits where I will be introducing a set of large hand painted backdrops as fold out dioramas that the audience can walk through. This time around, I intend to make costumes, props and masks by hand, using papers and found stuff. Melbourne based, Kate Rohde, a wonderful sculptor, jewellery maker and friend will be my collaborator to help make the works as magical as can be. *The Boho* plans to be 'bushranger meets the

rainbow makers', set in scrubby Victoria where I grew up as a cowgirl horse rider. I'm excited because it has been a long time between shows and although I have only just begun this series I know it will be more wild than quiet.

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*"I was in call and response mode and it gave my practice a breath of fresh air."*

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**C: What do you have planned next? What projects and shows do you have coming up? And how are you feeling about the next phase of making and living?**

J: I am delighted that the Benalla Art Gallery will be showing my work as a survey exhibition in early 2016, therefore much of my energies are going into The Boho series that will be launched at the same time. As a lead up to the survey, the gallery is presenting a solo show of drawings in May. Right now, I'm madly making ink pen portraits after promising over 60 metres of drawing on one long fold out piece of paper. Watch me do it. I'm also looking forward to being the Artist in Residence at Geelong Grammar School in April-May.

Admittedly, it has been a challenging past few years on the domestic front and I have moved studios and homes one too many times. I have finally found more secure ground and though it seems a long time coming I have begun to manifest a big, beautiful rainbow in the sky of art.



# WILMA HURSKAINEN

## *The Woman Who Married a Horse*

When I was a child I dreamt about horses. I only began riding as an adult and gradually horses found their way into my art as well.

I read Finnish and foreign folklore where horses often have a pivotal role. I studied the central images of horses in paintings and sculptures: valiant chargers; trusted pack animals enabling travelling and commerce; sport stars; a donkey in Jerusalem. The references to folklore and art history in my images are tiny fleeting hints.

As a symbol horse defies definitions and limits. It refers to power, unrestrainability, yearning for freedom, sexuality. It also tells us about our longing to control something stronger than ourselves.

I am amazed most of all by the relationship between humans and horses. Communication between two species is possible but it is always limited. We exploit and abuse other species without compunction, horses included. And still: why does a huge and powerful animal consent to obey my requests, apparently understanding yet willing to cooperate? Who is that other creature and, beside it, who am I?















### **WILMA HURSKAINEN**

Wilma Hurskainen, born in 1979, studied photography at Lahti Design Institute and Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland.

She has had several solo exhibitions in Europe and participated in numerous group exhibitions and photography festivals throughout Europe, Russia and Japan.

She has published two monographs: *Growth* (2008, Musta Taide) and *Heiress* (2012, Kerber). Her works are included in the volumes III, IV and V of *Helsinki School* publications (Hatje Cantz). Her works are in the collections of the Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki Art Museum, Danish National Museum of Photography and Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Art.

# SIMONE ROSENBAUER

## *Small Museum*



*Small Museum* investigates the individual encountering of 41 small museums and their caretakers, throughout rural Australia, culminating in a body of collective imagery and conversations. The project crosses Australian States and Territories, mapping and tracing unique collections and archives, attests to both visually and through transcribed interviews, the human imperative to collect, archive, display and sustain objects and information for public consumption. Throughout Australia, *Small Museum* proliferate, when classified and intended for the local community and historical preservation or the commemorating of an event or trauma, particularly in a country such as Australia, where the human diaspora and issues of colonisation are considered and experienced.

















## **SIMONE ROSENBAUER**

Internationally acclaimed photographer Simone Rosenbauer was recently featured in the *reGeneration2: tomorrow's photographers today*. She has been selected and won numerous national and international awards, including the 2014 Josephine Ulrick and Winifred Schubert Photography Prize and the HCP Fellowship Houston Center of Photography (2013 USA).

Her work has been showcased in USA, Europe, Australia, Russia, Asia and Africa at places such as Aperture Gallery (NYC), Expo Chicago (USA), Paris Photo (France), Laurence Miller Gallery (NYC), AIPAD (NYC), Musée d'Elysée (Switzerland), Les Rencontre d'Arles (France), Flash Forward Festival (Canada), Art Miami (USA) and PhotoSpring Festival Beijing (China).

Rosenbauer's work is held in various public and private collections in Australia and overseas. She studied Photography at University of Applied Sciences Dortmund (Germany) where she received her MA in 2006. In 2008 she received the European Endeavour Award from the Australian Government to study for her MFA in photography at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, which she completed in 2010.

She currently works as a sessional Photography lecturer at University of Technology in Sydney, University of New South Wales and University of Newcastle. She is represented by Laurence Miller Gallery in New York.

# Contributors

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## HELEN BIRD

Helen Bird is an artist and writer based in Brisbane, Queensland. She studied Fine Arts at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University and the Sainsbury Centre of Art, University of East Anglia, UK. Bird predominantly works with jewellery, small objects and print media, and has been a participant in the Griffith University Student and Alumni Internship Program.

## LISA BRYAN-BROWN

Lisa Bryan-Brown is a writer and curator based in Brisbane, Queensland. She has published essays for Griffith University Art Gallery (QLD), Spiro Grace Art Rooms (QLD), Sullivan & Strumpf Fine Art (NSW), Freerange Journal (NZ), The Hold Artspace (QLD), FELTspace (SA), Inhouse ARI (QLD), and Addition Gallery (QLD). Her curatorial projects have included *CTRL+SHIFT+SPACE* (2014, Inhouse ARI, co-curated with Nicola Scott and Tara Heffeman), *Common Woman I-IV* (2014, Level ARI, Metro Arts), *Field* (2013, The Hold Artspace) and *Addition #3* (2012, Addition Gallery). She graduated from the Queensland College of Art in 2012 with first class Honours.

## CHRISTINE MCFETRIDGE

Christine McFetridge is a photographer, writer and (sometimes) curator specifically interested in photobooks and Australasian photo-media practice. She graduated from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2012 and is currently based in Melbourne.

[www.cargocollective.com/christinemcfetridge](http://www.cargocollective.com/christinemcfetridge)

## CAMILLE SERISIER

Camille Serisier is an artist based in Brisbane, Australia. Featured in Issue One of Common Ground, Camille has returned to interview one of her favourite artists with whom she shares a passion for painting, performance and tableau vivants.

Trained as a scenic painter for Opera, Theatre and Ballet - Camille's practice centres around her playful tableau vivant photographs, idea drawings, films and interactive installations. Through these ambitious and elaborate works Camille uses the veil of playful absurdity to enact positive social change through storytelling.

Camille is represented by Spiro Grace Art Rooms, Brisbane.

[www.camilleserisier.com](http://www.camilleserisier.com)    [www.sgar.com.au](http://www.sgar.com.au)



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Esther Teichmann, *Untitled* from *Fractal Scars, Salt Water and Tears*, 2014, 10x12 inch fibre print

Esther Teichmann, *Untitled* from *Fractal Scars, Salt Water and Tears*, 2014, 30x40 inch fibre print

Esther Teichmann, *Untitled* from *Fractal Scars, Salt Water and Tears*, 2014, 20x24 inch collage, C-type print and cyanotype

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All images © courtesy of Izabela Pluta, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne and This is No Fantasy.

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# COMMON GROUND

Issue Three

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