

The

PHOENIX

est. 1887



A Cancer Diagnosis

AN INCANDESCENT PASSION SHOCKS THE EVENING



*An incandescent passion shocks the evening
With outbreaks of flame from silent corners;
Flame that weaves its ancient spell alone
On a loom spinning cotton from a stone.
And when the mind is stoned,
Walls collapse, skies erupt rich in stars and garlands,
Falling comets mocking the nightly silence
As if the kingdom of birds recalled its voice
From the praises of the first moulting
Whose echoes were drowned long ago.
The wooded mirth of these late hours
Aspires for some reason to outlive
The ruddy wounds of the inglorious sun
That will simply never bleed.
Its shadow is an unwanted guest
Invading unguarded feasts on tomorrow's tables
In the guise of the harpies from the fables
Of Apollodorus or some other teller of tales.
On the month of rain and laughter,
This uneasy structure claims the streets of cities
Dashing supersonic as it gives way with a thud
That echoes long along the highway.
"Striking a merry note; is it worth it?",
Mused a bard on a lonesome bench,
Hoping that morals of the times
Would not condemn his sigh as sedition.*

POEM BY EVANGELOS VENIERIS
PAINTING BY ELIZABETH RIACH

Captive by shadowed x-ray and festering tongue,
hear my humble cry:

Why me?

O cruel Sea,
why consume me in this ravening crevasse?
Tears.

Drowning darkness, you incoherent sky
yet faces conform to guidelines.

Break these bonds that bind me to burden;
Burn this caravan of despair
And menacing hues of murky ebb
And flowing struggle within
this surviving ghost
whose beauty can be seen
Only with the old eyes of delusion

Hope, dangling

now slender shifted.
Spirits listlessly lifted.

Take this Sea,
for today is a gift!

Clasping the sterile snatches of life;
cultivating serenity

I will pull through.

Tears,
Weary march for monotony, certainty, stability
And without struggle
Left at the door of infinity
where He will welcome my adoration
and He will give me another and another
And I will live.

Diya Kapila



I only like your body

I only like your body when
it is on my windowsill,
naked,
reflecting winter sun.

I only like my apartment when
the electricity of your trembling spine
illuminates it,
scattering burning diamonds
of passion
onto the Persian carpet
and bare peeling walls.

The stirrings of a waking city,
are of no interest to me, unless
you hide somewhere
among the faceless crowd, walking along
its streets of broken asphalt, diluting
the drone of cars
with the melodic tumble
of your existence.

The day is worth living only if you
cut short the rise and fall of its sun,
leaving me,
with you,
in a state of eternal timelessness.
But
do not read this poem, love,
with a mocking smile because
I only like your lips when
they
are kissing
mine.

- Elizaveta Tchebaniouk

I4

From then the pressure starts to rise,
By the sudden catch of her eyes,
And standing here I will declare,
That I would take you anywhere

The world's awash with misery,
So something's just not right with me,
In a sense it's no surprise,
Blackened hair and big blue eyes,

Between the Spar and Easyvets,
That's where I plan to hedge my bets,
I know I risk playing the fool,
But oh, "young love can be so cruel"

So I say that my heart is racing,
She asks why and I start pacing,
But there's no need for metaphors,
If you've heard it all before

- Charles Dodgson



Illustrations Elizabeth Riach



Eoghan Totten

Photo: Rishi De-Kayne

Clio from a Height

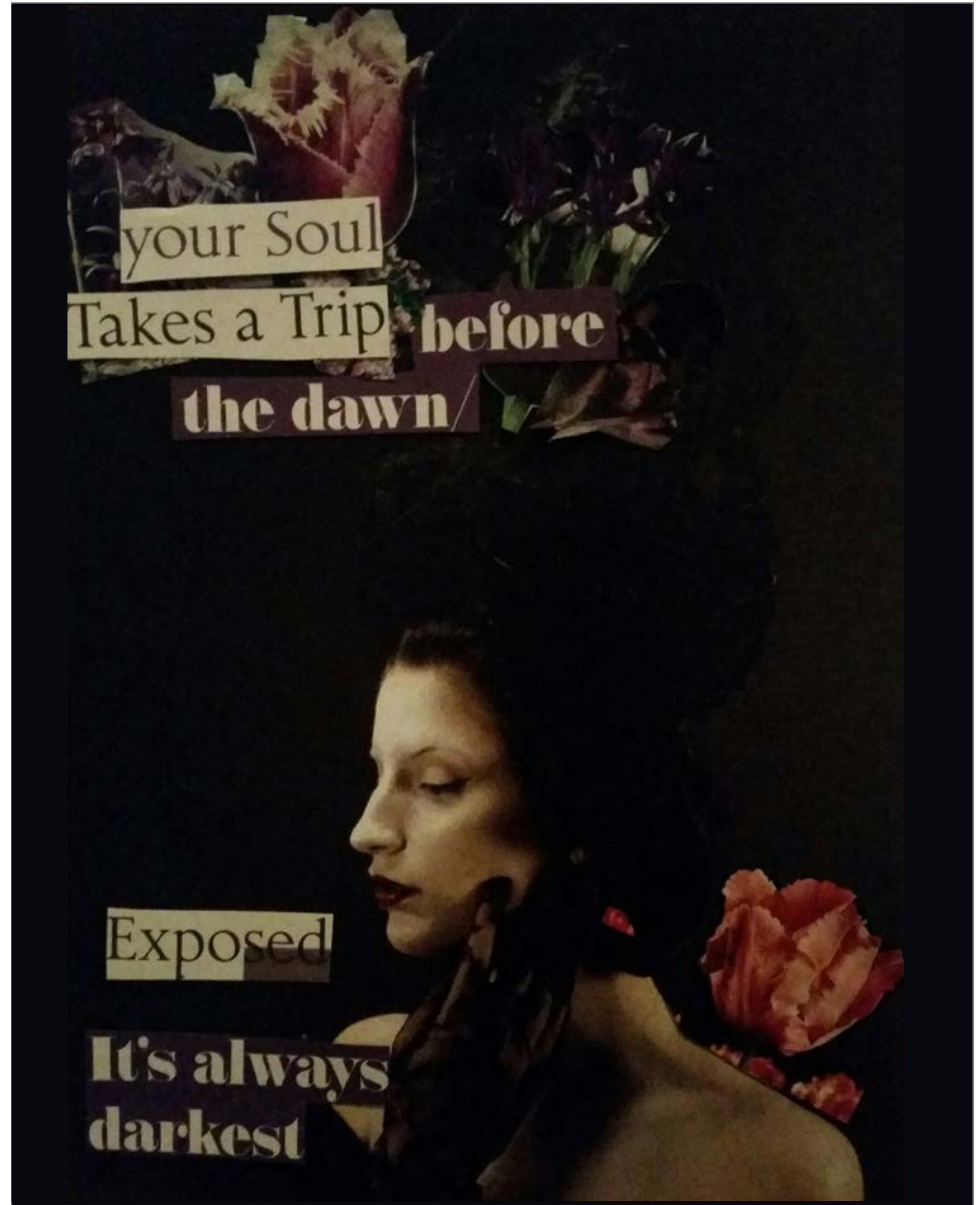
She was waiting for me as I cut straight
 Across the flank of Slieve Thomas, the slate
 Scree slipping beneath my feet, with thick gorse
 Billowing knee high, beckoning my course
 Toward the quarry. *Clio*, proclaimer,
 Muse of landscaped litanies, confined, furred
 Beneath the ebb of things. Hands on knees, I
 Forged uphill, one final push, azure skies
 Merging with the flecked earth, passed the wooden
 Fence that splayed the fields. The deep horizon
 Unfurled, cascaded down four hundred feet
 To the town below with its well-worn streets
 Snaking like rivulets, rimmed in shadows
 Cast by the mountains in the dusk. Hollows
 In the peak face formed firm green tree furrows
 To roll like waves, mirrored the sea bellows
 Below.

Cerulean pantheon, truth
 In liquid form, kissing the coast, a proof
 Of the divine, ethereal harmony
 Summed up by things in themselves. History
 Was wrought, moulded, shaped in this bay, its arc
 Curving concave to Saint John's Point, a mark
 Made by the lighthouse, enveloped in haze.
 Gold sands give its line a glistening glaze.
 Clipped windmills, just visible, ten miles off,
 Rotating sentinels, stared up towards
 Me, forming a mesh between land and sea,
 Sealing *Clio's* proclamation. I freed

My gaze, retraced my steps, my mind at peace,
 Aware of the subtle *Eunomia*.

Wise Harbours

Jutting into azure seas, wise harbours
 Viewed all. Phoenician galleons, Viking
 Raids, economy to tyranny, waxed,
 Waned, to come again. Varnished wooden hulls
 Splintered on sharp, fixed stone, before striking
 Out to sea again, whisking crews of friend
 Or foe on rancorous winds, their whistle
 Over squat port walls of no consequence.
 Attached to land, they keep their distance like
 Overseers of good and evil, subtle
 Sentinels, guardians of fishermen.
 Horde, catch, whatever we berthed, they never
 Judged.



Collage: Elizaveta Tchebaniouk

Still Life

There's nothing left
but silence,
so,
that's all I will
talk about.
Words
slowly have died
killed by my
carelessness.
A few shifty sounds
try to peer out
behind the heads
of people,
but as soon as possible
they run away scared
by the dark depth
of the silence of the Gods.
Soft stars,
summoned suddenly,
stare stranded
without a move,
without a sound,
as the soul slowly
slides
outside sanity.
Tonight,
nature is still.



Poetry: Giovanni Bettinelli

Photography: Yuebi Yang

I am
an intersection
of dreams,
bent words,
free hallucinations,
nonsensical
meanings,
meaningless
purposes
holographic
confusion,
illusion
of myself,
attempt
of love,
selfish
obsession,
a seeing blind,
but,
most of all,
I am convulsive
desire
of freedom.
This is me,
emperor
of my shade.

Self-Portrait

My mother is a schizophrenic

My mother is a schizophrenic

*She has this little black bag,
The zip is sewn tight and
There's staples along it.*

*Each night, in the meagre candle light I watch as her
Confident mad fingers pick them out,
To check her identity is still in there.*

*I call it the mad bag.
I looked in it one day
In grave anticipation to find
A blue wrinkled plastic bag,
Tied at a knot.*

Pick. Pick.

*I had to rip at it,
A mad woman's knot is impossible.
Underneath, another plastic bag,
Green this time; smelled like crushed
Brazil nuts and paracetamol.*

Two knots.

*A few plastic bags later,
There lay a schizophrenic, naked:
Heaps of skimpy torn papers with her name on it,
A scanty picture of her, she looks almost normal;*

*The rest I am not sure,
I heard her mad footsteps up the stairs,
In a hurry I clumsily stuffed her
Identity in her bag intact with her
smug looking knots.*

Now she keeps her mad bag as an extra hand and a pillow.

- Kristjana Xhuxhi

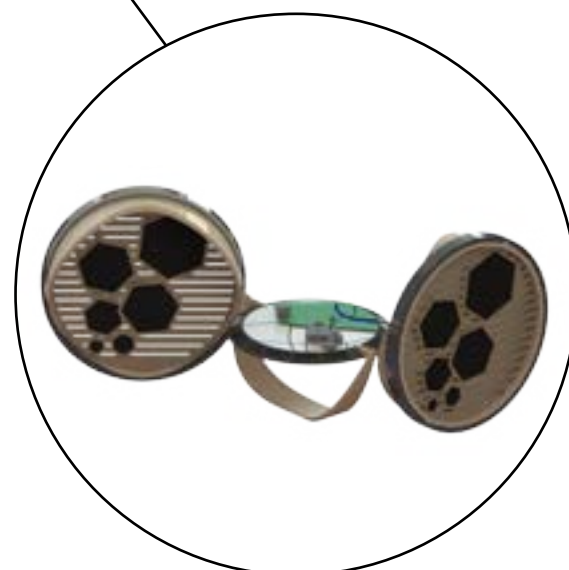
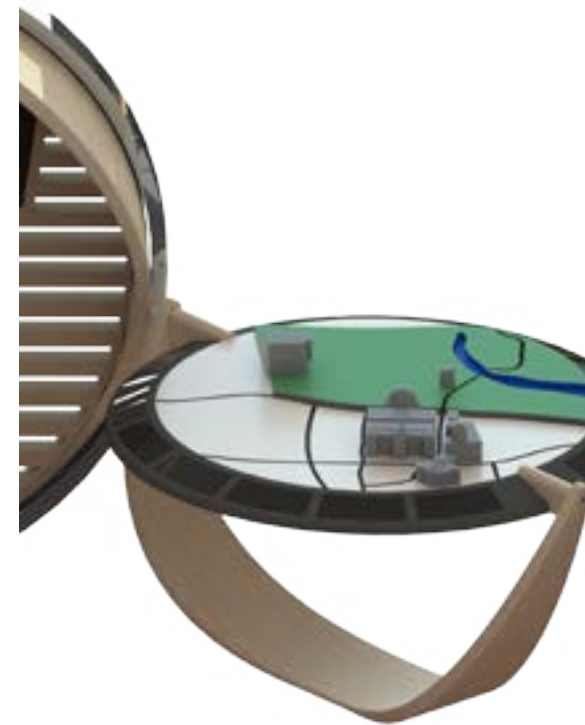
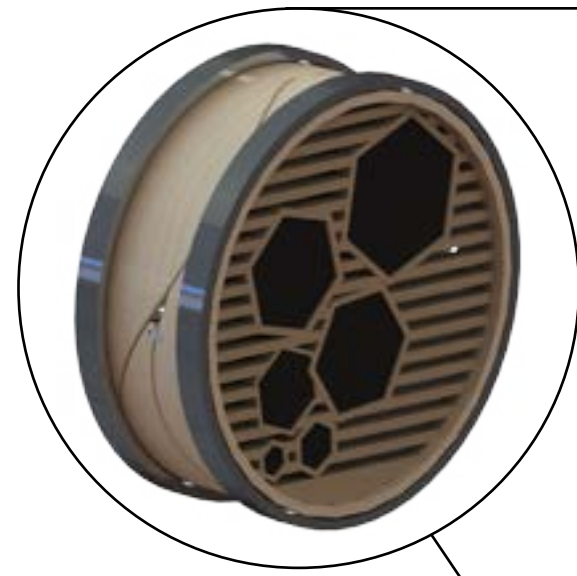
Revolution

"This intriguing object gathers visitors together, leaving them informed and ready to experience what South Kensington has to offer."

The revolutionary concept embodies intrigue with its attention grabbing outer shell concealing the inner spectacle. Its elegant and striking shape evokes intrigue in passers by, their curiosity encouraging them to congregate around the enigmatic piece and discover its features. Information about current exhibitions or events, along with entry costs for local attractions, will be displayed on the largest screen at the top, allowing those who glance at the unit from afar to be informed. This is complemented by the slatted hexagonal sides, which also feature interactive touch-screens.

The outside of the stand consists of a hubless wheel that allows the operator to roll the stand from storage to its intended point, before opening out and revealing the focus of the structure: the stunning three-dimensional map, allowing visitors can truly immerse themselves within South Kensington. Coloured lights show the user directions to attractions from the stand's location, alongside queuing times for different exhibitions. The unit's motion is transformed into an art form, making its movement as memorable as its form.

The design team are third and fourth year Mechanical Engineering students, who took the Design, Art, and Creativity Module. The whole structure is made from sustainably sourced wood and polished aluminium, allowing it to fit in with the architecture currently on Exhibition Road. In total, the design process took nine weeks, including time spent carrying out research into visitor needs, investigating the material choices, and creating a prototype; the students said that that most challenging part of the process was creating a design that satisfied all the needs identified during the research, whilst also making a product that complemented the historical area.



**Doug Andersen, Annabel Felton,
Alex Harrison, Ellis Hudson,
Michael McCree**

JUMP



Photography by Marc Emmanuelli
Poem by Omar Hafiz

His previously lively eyes, sink back into their sockets
His once emotive, gesturing hands fall deep into his pockets

Slotting his ID card through the sliding doors
To a slight beep, signalling the end of his chores

His voice, hoarse from the empty laughter with his friends
Lies still with them as it always does when his shift ends

As he turns his collar up against the cold
His brain clunks into neutral, just put on hold

He is shoved and jostled, a mere slave to the crowd
His body now meek, where it, just seconds ago, was so loud

He is unreserved in his company, in that small group who care
All else seems unfathomable, others would strip him bare

The words extrovert and introvert are thrown around so defiantly
He plays the role for his friends and to the rest he acts silently

The bleak grey faces of the crowd scowl through a smokescreen
He feels naked, as if in his worst dream.
They seem to silently say with a furrow of a brow
So, where is your audience now?





A photograph of a landscape is not an action shot, but by having birds or people jumping in the shot, I think it becomes a still moment in a timeless setting. I try to freeze time as much as possible in my images, to create something which we can't picture with our own eyes and memory. For this particular series I was lucky to be able to travel

with great friends to quite exceptional places around Europe, and work around this paradox of capturing timelessness at a very fast shutter speed. These pictures are very far from perfect, but I hope to one day be a photographer who can very easily spot potential for creating something artistic and eventually be completely detached from the technical side of photography.



Journies

Duncan Lomax

Space, and an individual's relationship and response to it, is the main concern of my artwork: how different environments have influence over the direction we walk or the way we feel, the sound our footsteps make on different materials, the way light and shadow attract or repel us. My photography is a record of a personal journey through different environments. Through the medium I hope to visualise the fleeting glance or the sudden movement on the periphery of one's vision, a momentary flash unique to each of us.



By moving through a space and not allowing myself to pause or formally compose the work, the act of photography becomes a performance art, an inhabitation of and journey through, a particular environment. I employ long exposures, allowing the movement of the camera, and the path we trace to be contained in a single image. Viewing the photographs as artworks in their own right has been a relatively recent development – for myself they serve primarily as sketches, inspiration and a basis for sculptures and

prints, which, until I moved the US on exchange, were the main focuses of my art. I am now exploring the idea of repeating a random movement, building rigs which shake or move the camera through space in a seemingly random way, yet one that can be repeated multiple times. I enjoy the juxtaposition between the transience of the artwork's creation and the purposes that photography has traditionally held within our society: to record, to document, and to keep for posterity.





Cycling

Yuebi Yang



Since the Beijing Olympics, Britain has fallen in love with cycling, and when the games came to London the enormous crowds along the race route proved that cycling could be a spectator sport. These photographs capture some of the races that I've been to over the last few years and in particular document the highs (and lows) of my brother Max and some other youth riders at Velo Club Londres (VCL).

Since Max took up cycling competitively, I have always described my family as a 'cycling family'. Although it may not always seem like it, cycling is a team sport. Despite my brother being incredibly talented, it's not quite enough to warrant a professional support team, and so instead my mum, stepdad, sometimes even my girlfriend and I fill in as the bike mechanic, directeur sportif, nutritionist, chef, driver - the list goes on.

Max has just turned 15 and every week he balances studying for his GCSEs (and being a teenager) with at least 8 hours on the bike and over 100 kilometres of training and/or racing. My time spent with my brother and the rest of the club has allowed me to witness some incredibly competitive racing and also get to know some of the most mature and focussed individuals I've ever come across.

My brother's involvement in the sport is a big commitment, not just for him but for the whole family. Of course seeing my brother set new personal bests, hit targets, and win races is rewarding, but most of all it is witnessing his passion, determination, and drive to become better which makes it worthwhile. I only hope that the photographs are able to capture and convey this.



White, Red, and Yellow



by Chanon Wongsatayanont

There is only the white of the windowless room and the red of the rash.

Drip.



Drip.

That's all I can see. White and red. Even the skin that's uninfected is pale, translucent. The room, even the very air – sterile. The table and chair; the floor and ceiling; the bed with hidden motors that prop it up; the stiff clothes that scratch at my skin; the silent mechanism that takes away my waste; the one that seals shut the handleless door. All white.

Except for the rash.

Drip.

The crimson pool creeps, imperceptible, malignant. It began with a smudge on my right forearm, as small as an insect bite but not irritating. Then it became a wide patch, like a bad scald but neither puffy nor painful. Now, my entire arm is red; red with this birthmark that I was not born with.

The strange thing is that it doesn't hurt. It only... crawls from time to time.

My hair always stands on end and my sweat runs cold. I can't see what it is. No movement. No lumps. No ripples. Just the feeling that there are things under my skin, writhing, slithering; it's the worst when I am sleeping, for I always have to wake and scream.

Drip.

There's no one there to ask: I'd stood up and shouted into the empty room, crying and begging for answers until my throat was dry; I'd pounded on the door until my fists ached. And the white camera in the corner just watches, unblinking.

Drip.

Usually, the crawling lasts for minutes...or perhaps an hour. It lingered for half a day once, or what seemed like that; I hardly know what a day is anymore. There are no clocks, no windows, no books, no pens. They don't even give me daily meals, for it is the needle in my arm that keeps me alive. Suspended in this white limbo, only my red skin and the drops of vital solution mark the passage of time.

Drip.

How long have I been here?

Drip.

How long will I be here?

Drip.



Drip.

The doctors imprisoned me. A long time ago, a fading dream, I approached them for a cure but they instead consigned me to rot in this white hell, alone.

Drip.

I haven't seen a human face since; the closest I came was my warped reflection on the lens of the camera – a stranger with sagging skin, a red smear climbing up where his neck met his shoulder. I used to get up to look at him, but now I fear that I would no longer recognise the face. I sometimes speak aloud in this silent room so I can hear my own voice. The echo has little to say, however, so I stopped that too.

My only true company is the crawling and pulsing on my arm, my neck.

Drip.

Why? Why would they do this to me?

Drip.



Drip.

I know why. I remember the look on the doctors' faces after they ran their tests; I remember their fear when they held me down and forced an injection into my arm. Anaesthetics. I woke up here, the drip embedded in my vein.

Drip.

Isolation.

Drip.

There is nothing I can do. The world is deaf to my pleas. I can only wait.

Drip.



Drip.

I have waited for long enough and yet sleep still does not come. The day continues without end, and night is but a wistful memory. The white electric light pierces through my shut eyes, etching its terrifying gaze onto my eyelids. I hide behind my thin pillow and bury my face in the hard bed for moments of suffocating solace. I may sleep then, but how can I truly know when nothing changes in this world, except the swelling red sea?

How long now? Days, weeks, months?

Drip.

Or years? What is time? A long unending river where there is no tributary or estuary on its course.

Drip.

A minute, an hour, a day, I must have slept. I slept! I think I remember the sweet darkness, I think I wasn't thinking anymore. But I remember beyond doubt the crawl that came to me in my sleep, the trembling of my arm, the squirming on my cheek and chest. It woke me up...but that meant I was sleeping. Blessed sleep.

Anything other than this white and red room.

Drip.



Thump.

A new sound. I heard it in the latest crawl. **Thump, thump, thump**, from my right ear, matching the beating of my heart. Like a drum, it resounds and vibrates within my skull. But then

as the slithering across my face stops, so does the noise. I know it will come again though, with the next crawl.

Please come again.

Drip.



Drip.

Stop this. No more of this emptiness. I want to feel something. Anything. I rejoice when the crawl takes another part of me.

Drip.

The crawl would come, then it would leave. But it will come back. And we will be one again.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

Fight against it.

Drip.



Illustrations Jingjie Cheng

Please fight against it.

Drip.

The drip, the drip! There it is, on my left arm. Pull it out. Pull it out now. So I do and feel a prick. Warm liquid flows out, and I am waking up.

Drip.

Get out of bed. Roll out onto the floor if I must.

I'm trying to. My feet touch the cold, cold floor, but my poor skinny legs buckle under me and I fall hard. Pain. I feel pain, hot on my jaw and cheekbone.

Drip.

The door. To the door.

So I crawl. Laboriously and awkwardly, as if my muscles forgot how to move. Sprawl after sprawl, my arms and legs flail, dragging me closer to the door. Behind me, a long red smear on the white floor.

Drip.

I'm here. The door. Feebly, I lift up my hand. So many protruding bones, it looks misshapen and claw-like. And the door slides open.

Yellow.

They're all in yellow. Three of them. Rubbery yellow with blank black screens for faces. One scoops me up into their arms like I weighed nothing at all, while the other two tower over me. They silently look at me for a moment.

I stare into the featureless face, and see a skull wrapped in skin, jaw hanging open, eyes rolling loosely in their sockets.

Drip.

The door closes and they start to my bed. "No..." I can only croak; I want to cry until my throat is torn.

One puts me on the bed, another puts the drip into my arm, and the third wipes my desperate red trail from the floor, putting any trace of it in a sealed canister on his belt. Then the three begin tying me to the bed with straps; My hands, my legs and my chest.

They look at each other and walk out of the room, the door opening, and closing behind them.

A short moment later, the crawl returns.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.



The straps are tight, and the restraint presses down against my ribs and lungs. But that doesn't matter.

My red face is smiling.



FLUX

by Emmie de Falbe

There's a brief period of nervousness just before it hits. Like the first timid flame creeping along kindling, sparks flicker in your stomach and begin to inch up your spinal cord, crackling at your synapses with increasing fervour. The outside world fades away and sounds become muffled as you retreat into your head. It's only a matter of minutes until the flames catch, the chemicals ignite your neurons, consuming your mind and body in an inferno of euphoria – but right now you're poised on this precipice, the tipping point between normality and ecstasy. There's no going back now.

"I feel unbelievable!" I could hardly hear Sophia over the pulsing music, and she stared at me with wide, unblinking eyes, her teeth mashing furiously.

"I KNOW" I mouthed back, my words swallowed by the roar. The crowd undulated around us, the mass united by rhythm into one organism, palpitating with the freedom of youth. We came to escape. We came to take risks, to cut loose from our predictable peers, to expand our minds with the bass reverberating in our skulls and our skin assimilating strangers' sweat. It was glorious.

Rowan's voice emerged from the thundering bassline. "We need to find Henry and

Lucy." The two of us followed him, weaving through the mob. My eyes started to roll back, vibrating and resonating in my head. Through stop-motion vision I stumbled to the toilets, barged into a cubicle and threw up violently. My own reflection mesmerised me. I was a ventriloquist's doll, with chalky white skin, pupils like big black suns and a jaw I seemed completely unable to control. Time became elastic as I admired the person looking back at me. I examined each flaw in detail, overwhelmed by their beauty.

By the time I got back to the others the familiar stabs of angst were beginning. They'd found Henry and Lucy in the smoking area, him compulsively stroking her hair. They were a close couple when sober, but on a night like this they were completely inseparable. As the pangs of anxiety became unbearable I told Sophia I couldn't stay. She assembled the others and ushered us all out.

That night we all went back to Henry's flat and slept fitfully in the same bed, the five of us a tangle of limbs, jerking ourselves awake as the residual chemicals left our system. Over the next few months this became a ritual; we stayed awake, trying to cling onto the night, only to face the same despair when it slipped away from us. One morning I found Sophia scrunched up in bed, wrung out by misery. She revealed that her boyfriend hit

her, showed me where he'd ripped her hair out of her scalp. This surprised me; we had always assumed that her bruises were a result of the kinks she was so eager to talk about.

"I know it's bad, but I love him. I don't know what to do." Her watery eyes and streaming nose revolted me.

"Darling, blow your nose, I've got a shit-ton of coke we can put up it."

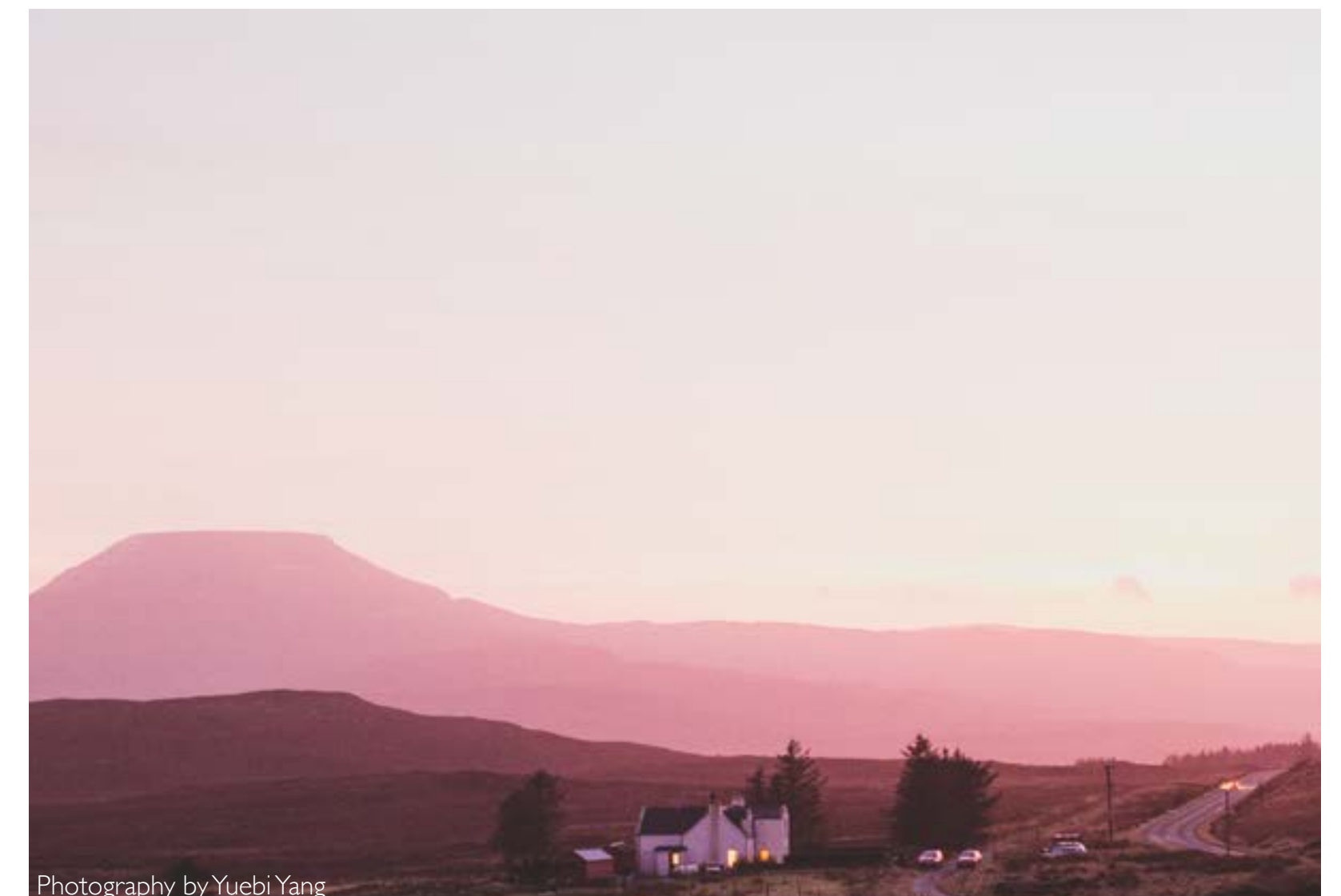
We spent the afternoon coked out of our minds, dressing up and applying ridiculous makeup in her room. By the evening the others, along with her boyfriend, had joined us. We danced frenziedly, savages in fur coats and dark lipstick. We were champagne; effervescent and glamorous, yet only a few hours later flat and sour. Our diamonds were the beads of sweat sparkling on sallow skin, our pearls purchased for ten-pounds-a-pop on street corners. The peaks and troughs of our existence were ruthless, but we were no longer interested in tepid contentment. We lived for the exquisite lows and excruciating highs, bored with the mushed up beige pulp of reality. I lined my eyes so heavily it was impossible to tell where the makeup ended and the dark circles began, wore lipstick in a crimson to match the blood that trickled frequently from my nose.

That summer I started seeing psychologists. I reeled out my most shocking anecdotes

and was delighted to receive three different diagnoses; depression, bipolar, BPD, which I tucked away in my deck of personality traits to be played at my discretion. Irritated that my parents didn't seem concerned, I made tiny nicks at my wrist which I eventually deemed too pathetic to flaunt. The only recognition came in a flippant comment made by my mother: "Darling, have you lost some weight?" A few days later, I accidentally wrote off her Mercedes.

Despite spending the summer apart, on returning in the new term nothing had changed. I relished in hearing the scandalous rumours circulating; that we were some deviant polyamorous fivesome, gossip we both laughed at and played up to. I befriended some textbook try-hards from my course just for the hilarity of their gasps at my tales, and smirked inwardly at how easily they were shocked. They clung to my every word like disciples, begging me to take them out and show them how to really party, to which I obliged. The others' disdain could not have been more apparent, but they'd heard all my stories by now. I saw a little less of them, but talked of them constantly, entertaining my little tribe of protégés.

When Rowan killed himself it really was serendipitous. I'd just about run out of stories, and everyone knows misery looks good on me.



Photography by Yuebi Yang

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The Phoenix will return next term. Email your ideas and/or finished pieces to phoenix@imperial.ac.uk

