

## **The Photographs**

Along the walls of the larger left-hand end of the gallery there are a series of framed black and white photographs which have been installed on a series of shallow oak picture shelves, so the frames, instead of hanging flat on the walls, lean back slightly.

This was intentional in allowing the framed photographs to have a more physical presence than when they are hung flat to the walls. The picture shelves are made from light oak and are each either 2 metres long or 1.5 metres long and each holds a sequence of two or three of the framed photographs.

There is a sense of pacing and composition to the hanging of the shelf sequences, which stretch the full lengths of the long gallery walls. This extension of the horizontal line through the modularity of the shelves is intended to highlight the length of walls in the larger end of the gallery space, and to be experienced through linear movement. I imagine children running along its full length.

The small groupings of the framed photographs leant on the picture shelves are sequenced in a repetitive yet tidal rhythm – using sequences of alternating close-up photographs of a fig tree and a pair of hands holding various natural objects. I will describe the photographs in more detail later.

Within music, composition with a repetitive yet tidal rhythm, often utilizes, 'ostinati', a term which means the repetition, or repetition with slight

variation, of musical phrases or patterns, and can create a soothing, hypnotic, or "wave-like" effect.

Within the pastoral landscape form of the exhibition, the works described thus far are all expressed through organic curved shapes and forms. The composition of the restrained horizontal line of the picture shelves, in contrast, might function as the equivalent of a horizon line, and the photographs expressing a space beyond their flat picture plane, their 'views'.

### **Fig Series note**

This series of five close-up black and white photographs under the canopy of my fig tree in high summer are closely aligned and similar in many ways to each other visually, with slight shifts in distance and perspective across the series. They could easily be extended imaginatively like gliding ones hand across water as a series of images or sensations.

### **Fig. 1**

A landscape-format black and white photograph of a pair of ripe figs hanging from a branch under the canopy of a fig tree. It is late summer, when figs ripen and the leaves are in full bloom. We are under the canopy looking up slightly at the low hanging fruit.

The image is very tonal, all shades of grey, the only white being light dappling the edge of a leaf and touching the side of one of the figs.

The photograph is cropped quite tightly so only about half a dozen fig leaves fill the frame. The hanging figs are just to the left of centre in the middle of the image. Only the figs and the leaf to the left of them is in focus.

Beyond, the other leaves are very softly rendered, their shapes a mid-grey against the lighter grey of the spaces between them.

## **Fig. 2**

A 30 x 35 cm framed portrait-format black and white archival digital photograph of a single ripe fig hanging from a branch under the shade of the canopy of a fig tree. It is late summer, when figs ripen and the large leaves are in full bloom. We are under the canopy looking up slightly at the low hanging fruit. The frame profile is made from tulipwood which is pale yet sturdy and has been lightly waxed. An 8cm white border surrounds the photograph. The framed work is 48 x 53 x 3 cm in size.

The photograph is cropped quite tightly under the canopy, so only about half a dozen fig leaves fill the frame. The hanging fig is in the middle, slightly above the centre of the image. The fig, its twig-like branch and three or four fig leaves flat to the plane of the photograph are in focus. A few other perspectively smaller leaves in the background are softly rendered in the image, more like soft charcoal drawings, their shapes a mid-grey against the lighter grey of the spaces between them.

The image is very soft and tonal, all shades of grey, the bottom left corner of the image being distinctly darker than the middle of the right-hand side, where there is a lighter, almost white area where daylight beyond the shade of the canopy is bright and visible in a loosely star-like shape between the distinct shapes of the fig leaves. Getting into botanical terminology here is beneficial to further define this ‘loosely star-like shape’. The Lamina, or Leaf Blade, is the broad, flat, green part of the leaf which is generally called the leaf. Fig leaf lobes are the 3 to 5 deep segments into which the lamina is typically divided, and which give the leaf its characteristic shape. Sinuses are the indentations or spaces between the lobes. So, to conclude, daylight beyond the shade of the canopy is bright and visible in a loosely star-like shape created by the spaces between the sinus’s of three fig leaves.

### **Fig Tree (2001) (Amwell Street), 2014**

A black and white photograph framed in a plexiglass box frame. It is portrait format and is 120cm by 150cm. The photograph depicts a fig tree in full leaf bloom in high summer and is mainly in many shades of grey. The bottom right-hand corner is very dark, almost black and the shadiest part. The top left-hand corner reveals light bursting through the leaves and is the lightest part. The majority of the image is taken up with the distinctly shaped, large, five-fingered fig leaves which hang from branches. There are about 100 leaves filling most of the frame. We don’t see any branches underneath due to the fullness of the leaves in bloom. There are various perspectives of the leaves, some lying quite flat to the image plane, others we represented from various angles, so the mind can wander across the many leaves’ different shapes and forms quite freely, like small waves. The image is

mood in a soulful way, calm and eternal by way of nature of the subject and the large scale of the print. Standing close to the photograph, once may imagine being very close by a fig tree in warm summer air.

### **Cucumber Hand (I), (II),(III) (2014)**

Three black and white portrait format photographs which are 36 x 42 cm in individual frames with a 10cm soft-white mount on all sides and a glazed, light oak, narrow discreet frame. The image is in shades of grey with no blacks or whites. The photographs are identical apart from one element which changes, and which becomes the subject which I will introduce shortly. The photographs are each of a male hand whose fingers are holding a slim, approximately 18cm-long cucumber vertically in the centre of the image. The image is printed so the hand is life-sized in the image. The hand holding a cucumber takes up most of the centre and the focus of the image. Across the three photographs, the cucumber is switched for a similar but different cucumber. The arm which recedes into the distance on the middle of left-hand side of the image, where we also see the side of the man's shoulder, wearing a short-sleeved white t-shirt. The primary background is the floor beyond, indicated only, as it is in very soft focused, and a small portion of lighter whiteish wall to the left, receding into the distance where it meets the floor at the top right-hand corner of the image. The floor is a mid-grey and is the darkest part of the image. The black and white print brings the qualities of the cucumber in each image and the body into closer equivalence. The image is quite tender as the man's fingers hold the cucumbers gently between his fingertips.

### **Walnut, Hand (2014)**

A black and white portrait format photograph which is 26 x 31 cm in a frame with a 10cm soft-white mount on all sides and a glazed, light oak, narrow discreet frame. The photograph is of a male hand palm up with two walnuts on the palm and is printed so the hand is life-sized in the image. The hand takes up most of the centre and the focus of the image. Beyond and around the hand are the arm which recedes into the distance at the top middle of the image, but the primary background is and a bent leg wearing jeans on the thigh which the forearm is resting. The black and white print brings the qualities of the walnuts and the body into closer equivalence.

### **Flat stone, hand**

A black and white portrait format photograph which is 33x27cm in a frame with a 10cm soft white mount on all sides and a glazed, light wood, narrow discreet frame. The photograph is of a male hand palm up with a flat stone laid on the palm and is printed so the hand is life-sized in the image. The hand takes up most of the centre and the focus of the image. Beyond and around the hand are the arm which recedes into the distance and a bent leg in jeans on which the forearm is resting. The black and white print brings the qualities of the flat stone and the body into closer equivalence.

### **Hole, Hands (I)**

A black and white portrait format photograph which is 33 x 36.8 cm in a frame with a 10cm soft white mount on all sides and a glazed, light wood, narrow discreet frame. The photograph is a tightly cropped close-up of a

male torso whose hands are holding a rounded pebble with a hole in the top of it. One hand holds the pebble between the thumb and fingers from below, the other hand is positioned above, fingers bent, apart from the little finger, or pinky, the tip of which pressed lightly into the hole in the pebble. The hands and forearms are the main focus of the image. The man wears a dark t-shirt, which is almost black and fills the upper half of the image, The lower half of the image shows the man's crotch and thighs wearing mid-grey denim jeans. The black and white print brings the qualities of the stone and the body into closer equivalence.

### **Hole, Hands (II)**

A black and white portrait format photograph which is 33 x 36.8 cm in a frame with a 10cm soft white mount on all sides and a glazed, light wood, narrow discreet frame. 'Hole, Hands (II)' is almost identical to 'Hole, Hands (I)', apart from the addition of a bare child's arm which has appeared down the right-hand side of the image. The toddler's hand is placed on the forearm of the man, on the arm which holds the pebble. The toddler's arm is small and chubby, with a dimple at the elbow. The photograph is a tightly cropped close-up of a male torso whose hands are holding a rounded pebble with a hole in the top of it. One hand holds the pebble between the thumb and fingers from below, the other hand is positioned above, fingers bent, apart from the little finger, or pinky, the tip of which pressed lightly into the hole in the pebble. The hands and forearms are the main focus of the image. The man wears a dark t-shirt, which is almost black and fills the upper half of the image, The lower half of the image shows the man's crotch and thighs wearing mid-grey denim jeans. The black and white print brings

the qualities of the stone and the body into closer equivalence. The small movement between ‘Hole, Hands (I)’ and ‘Hole, Hands (II)’ reminds one of the life that is occurring all around one; in this instance, that a toddler was present all along.