

# Soil.Worth.Gobbling

Research project

▀ Our relationship with the countryside.

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I will be looking at the benefits to health and wellbeing that can be achieved as a result of engaging in a state of mindfulness (Crane), also known as optimal experience or flow (Csikszentmihalyi) through photographic practice. I intend to follow a series of *derive*'s (Debord) inspired by the random approaches used by John Baldessari (Kelsey) and Duncan Woolridge. I will roll dice to determine direction's to follow at junctions and will also be logging the positions I take photographs by using What3Words. Although Barthes describes how text can become "parasitic" to an image, giving the image a specific meaning that is only actualized by the presence of the text, I will be using the What3Words locations as titles for my images. They will add a playful addition to the images as the words can produce new visual connotations for the photographs, as well as putting the images in context with the location they were taken.

Garry Winogrand said 'Photography is not about the thing photographed. It is about how that thing looks photographed.' This is often true in landscape photography as often photographs look more interesting than the subject actually was itself. I will mainly use a 50mm equivalent lens as this is the closest focal length to how the eye sees, but will be using composition, aperture and post production editing to control the outcome of the image and make it more 'immersive' for the viewer.

## Images from my Derives



Fig1. Paul Williams, deals.tickling.glow, 2021





Fig 2. Paul Williams, `encloses.data.label`, 2021





Fig 3. Paul Williams, blink.turkeys.bracing, 2021





Fig 4. Paul Williams, tinsel.should.hung,2021





Fig 5. Paul Williams, [beyond.songbook.fighters](#), 2021





Fig 6. Paul Williams, progress.hurry.motivator,2021





Fig 7. Paul Williams, dolls.hotels.walkway, 2021





Fig 8. Paul Williams, satin.braved.grub,2021





Fig 9. Paul Williams, *evolution.befitting.glossed*, 2021





Fig 10. Paul Williams, [botanists.achieving.basin](#), 2021



In the relation between the photograph and words, the photograph begs for an interpretation, and the words usually supply it (Berger and Mohr, 1989). With the preceding images, the words give a precise location to where the photographs were taken, but also due to their randomness give an ambiguity to the image rather than an interpretation. This enhanced ambiguity, aided by the words, gives the photograph a unique means of expression.



‘Time is the shape of an old oak as the winds caress and sculpt the bark, defining hardship and beauty.’ (Beth Moon)

‘Getting photographs is not the most important thing. For me it's the act of photographing. It's enlightening, therapeutic and satisfying, because the very process forces me to connect with the world.’ (Michael Kenna)

Inspired by the images and words of Moon and Kenna I have set out to photograph some of the great oak trees around Milland. I have edited the photographs to produce a more sculptural aesthetic to the images. I am pleased with the results and am going to build on this series which I will call ‘Quercus’, which is Latin for ‘Oak’.



Fig 11. Beth Moon, Queen Elizabeth Oak.



Fig 12. Michael Kenna, Daimyo Oak Forest, Hokkaido, Japan. 2018





Fig 13. Paul Williams, *fidgeting.forgotten.fairway*, 2021





Fig 14. Paul Williams, [quietest.toads.rental](https://quietest.toads.rental), 2021





Fig 15. Paul Williams, *pace.scream.happier*, 2021



# Typology

‘The photographic typology has the ability to reshape perception, heighten and focus attention, and transform everyday objects into a thing of art.’ (Davis, 2017).

The reasons to create a photographic typology would be to either create a connection between subjects that share no obvious visual relationship, or to compare and highlight differences and/or similarities between subjects that do share a visual relationship. Context frames the work. If creating a visual relationship was the intention, the context will then provide further confirmation. The factors in the diagram (below right) can be used to assess possible intention and enhance interpretation. (Davis, 2017)

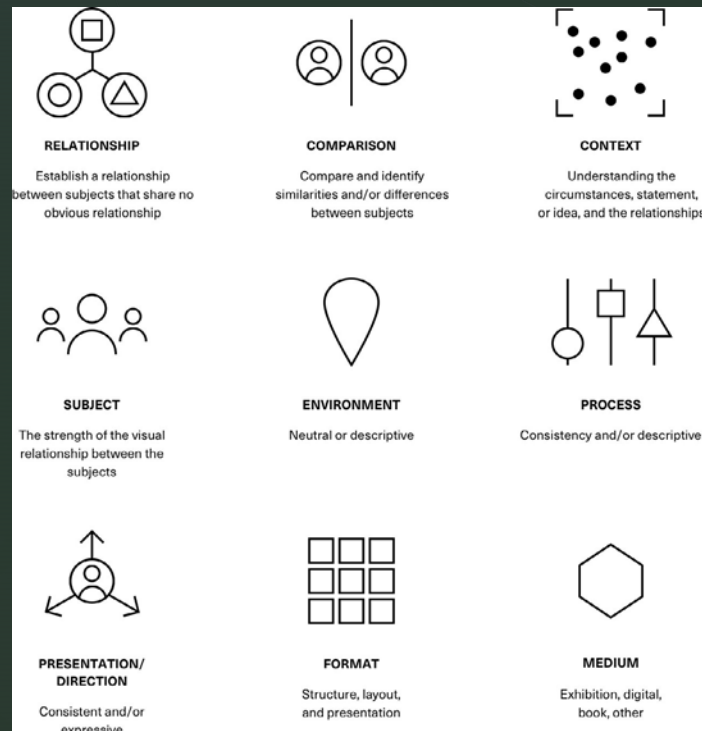


Fig 16. Paul Davis, 2017.



Fig 17. Olafur Eliasson, Spring Puddle Series, 2004.



On the top of the posts on a fence I have seen on one of my 'derives' nature has made its mark in the way of rot, moss, lichen, fungi growth etc to the degree that although the posts are similar, each is very unique and original in it's own right, but more impactful when put together as a series.

As a typology this works as the subjects have a strong consistency as they are all the ends of fence posts. The environment they were photographed is the same, all taken at f1.4 to blur the background. The process shows consistent framing and lighting and the presentation is a geometrically designed arrangement.



Fig 18. Paul Williams, 48 Posts, 2021



For my next typology photoshoot I wanted to capture detail from each of 42 oak trees which line the edge of Fernhurst road that I often pass on my 'derives'.

This typology works as there is a strong consistency as all the images are close ups of oak trees. The environment they were photographed is the same, and the process shows consistent framing and lighting with the presentation showing a geometrically designed arrangement.



Fig 19. Paul Williams, 42 Oaks, 2021



## Pinhole Images

William Arnold explores the concept of the role played by the photograph in documenting time and change 'The photographs do not depict events, rather the conditions of light and time in which events took place'.

In her pinhole image series 'Night 2 1996', Chrystel Lebas comments that 'the intense darkness of these images focuses on starless nights, into which we may sink without any sense of distance, any sense of time, a night when time seems to have stopped. In this obscurity, the viewer loses all sense of reality, the sense of vision diminishes and, in reverse, the sense of touch and hearing intensify.'



Fig 20. William Arnold, Tin-can Firmament: North 50° 37' 22", East -04° 64' 34" (30/09/12 - 12/01/13).



Fig 21. Chrystel Lebas, Night 2 - Cornwall 2 - 1998



I created my own pinhole camera from, an old coffee tin which I then sprayed matt black so it would be inconspicuous when left outdoors. I am using Harman Direct Positive 5x4 paper so that I can achieve a unique positive print without having to create a film negative first.

Like Arnold and Lebas, I wanted to use light and time together to produce an ethereal image that documented the passing of time throughout day and night, but without the need to capture events or detail of what passed through the location during this process.

This was my first attempt from a 21-hour exposure, from 12:30p.m until 9:30 the following morning. Exposure is very much guesswork due to light conditions varying so much over that time period. Due to the scene being lit from above by the sun and moon, the top of image is overexposed and the trees bleed out into a soft vignette giving a dreamy aesthetic to the resulting image.

The pinhole camera was placed on the ground which has captured a lot of detail of the woodland floor but has missed a small stream in the foreground. For my next attempt I will position the camera higher by tying it to a tree.





Fig 22. Paul Williams, hypocrite.bitter.monk,2021



# List of Figures

- Fig 1. Paul Williams, deals.tickling.glow, 2021
- Fig 2. Paul Williams, encloses.data.label, 2021
- Fig 3. Paul Williams, blink.turkeys.bracing, 2021
- Fig 4. Paul Williams, tinsel.should.hung,2021
- Fig 5. Paul Williams, beyond.songbook.fighters,2021
- Fig 6. Paul Williams, progress.hurry.motivator,2021
- Fig 7. Paul Williams, dolls.hotels.walkway,2021
- Fig 8. Paul Williams, satin.braved.grub,2021
- Fig 9. Paul Williams, evolution.befitting.glossed,2021
- Fig 10. Paul Williams,botanists.achieving.basin,2021
- Fig 11. Beth Moon, Queen Elizabeth Oak. Available at: <https://bethmoon.com/portraits-of-time/>
- Fi 12. Michael Kenna, Daimyo Oak Forest, Hokkaido, Japan. 2018. Available at: <https://www.michaelkenna.com/gallery2.php?id=11>
- Fig 13. Paul Williams, fidgeting.forgotten.fairway,2021
- Fig 14. Paul Williams, quietest.toads.rental,2021
- Fig 15. Paul Williams, pace.scream.happier,2021





- Fig 16. Paul Davis, 2017.
- Fig 17. Olafur Eliasson, Spring Puddle Series, 2004
- Fig 18. Paul Williams, 48 Posts, 2021
- Fig 19. Paul Williams, 42 Oaks, 2021
- Fig 20. William Arnold, Tin-can Firmament: North 50° 37' 22", East -04° 64' 34" (30/09/12 - 12/01/13).
- Fig 21. Chrystel Lebas, Night 2 - Cornwall 2 – 1998
- Fig 22. Paul Williams, hypocrite.bitter.monk, 2021



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