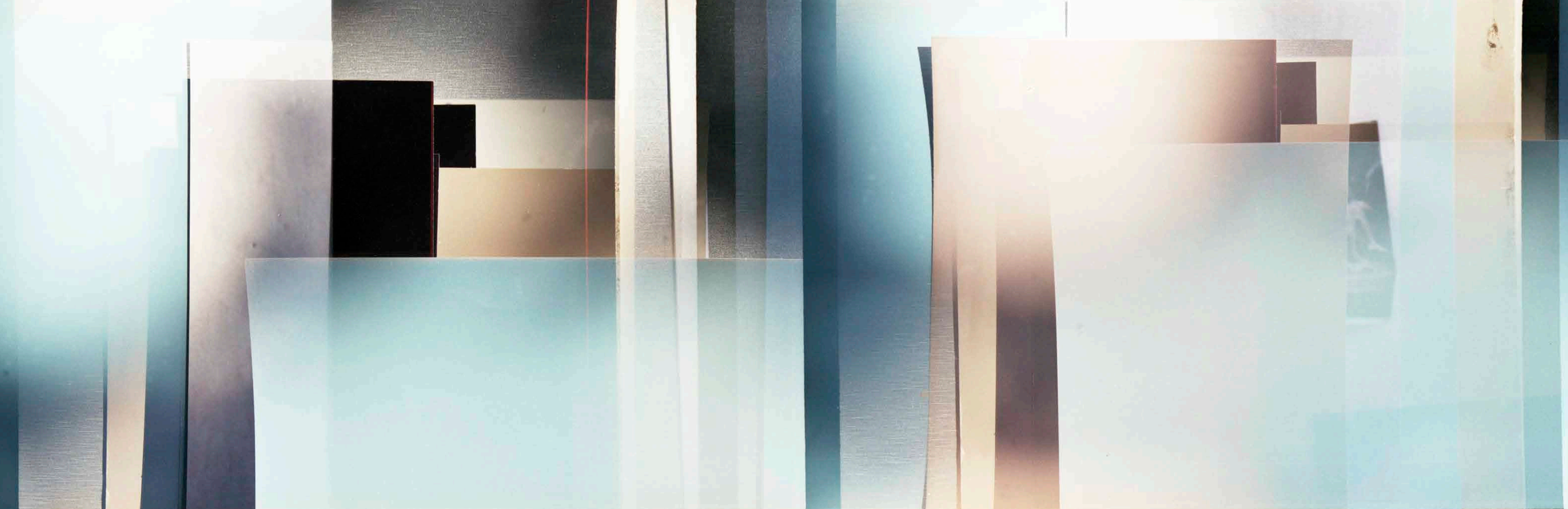




CLOSE SHOT[1]

ONE SECOND FEATURE

1
A close shot is conventionally described as a tight framing of someone's face. They can be used to draw close attention to objects and activities and are often used as cutaways from the main action. In the research this is represented through material most personally close to me as a solo practitioner activating practice within limited time and space available. This inevitably brings a domestic and small scale infrequency to the work, or else it might be generated by an experience of being in a new place on holiday and in a heightened state such as grief.

Although I take photos as part of my practice, I find the singularity of one image difficult. I see in multiples, sequences, juxtapositons, changes of light. I listen as I look. I look and listen more attentively through a viewfinder. I enjoy the immediacy of images brought together from diverse locations and histories and be piled, or lined up, sliding and touching across one another. *One Second Feature* series condenses current analogue and digital images and live experiences into a fixed moment as a continuous 35mm 24 frame photographic negative. Each double exposed uncut film strip around a metre long represents the equivalent of one second of a 35mm feature film.[2] I playfully consider the series to be the beginning of my first feature film. The image content is a kind of diary in which studio ephemera and personal moments are double exposed with reference images, textures and locations with a simultaneous awareness and acuity of decision making. The first was a collaborative exercise *Citizen Eldridge* made by passing a camera back and forth with artist Frances Scott, overshooting each other's frames with shared themes.[3]

Solo outcomes range from a forty-metre-long digital print version,[4] to simple commercially printed 6x4" snapshots taped together.[5] I have used One Second Feature prints in studio experiments with a tracking shot to re-capture them as moving image, doubling the close looking, adding time and movement and shifting the scale.

Working collaboratively and with participants, teaching, and parenting, these bursts of engagement with light, location and increasingly selective content have become valuable re-connections with the act of close looking. Using the camera to buy time and focus, to engage with physicality of framing, cropping, layering... chasing sunlight. The process links to a pleasing past process of arranging 6x4" prints into folders, making concertina folded photo narratives, or creating juxtapositions of personal observations and formal connections as cards for friends. These side shoots of an art practice have

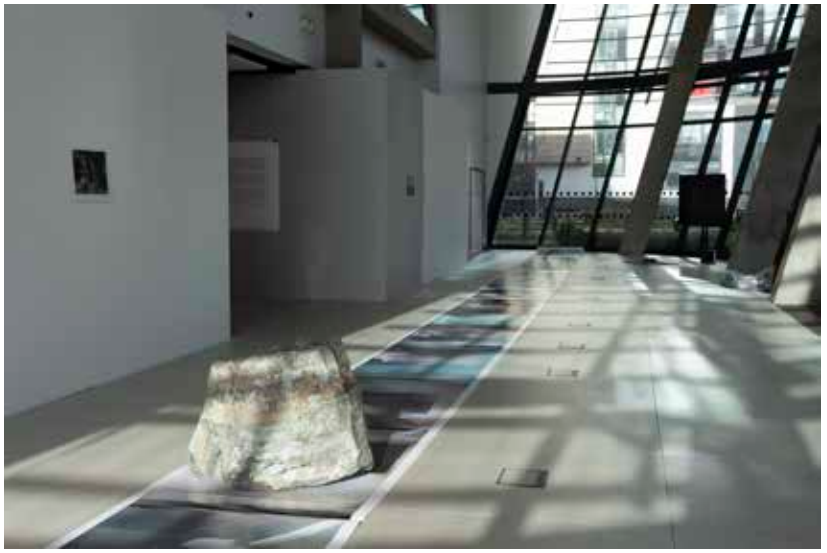
2
Allowing poetic license for adjacent landscape format negatives in this case whereas 35mm moving images would be stacked, each landscape frame above and below each other in a reel.

3
This initial work entitled *Citizen Eldridge* (from an image overlay from the film Citizen Kane and the back of a collection of canvases by artist Giles Eldridge) formed part of an event and publication *Slow Reveal* made in response to a conversation with Leanne Turvey about Frances and my process of supporting one another to make films for the Essex Road commission at Tintype Gallery 2015.

4
The most significant public outcome has been *One Second Feature* as an exhibition of a body of work at The Gallery, De Montfort University in 2019. The exhibition used my fourth exposure as a forty metre long print laid across the floor of the gallery held down with a half-tonne granite rock. This enabled me to explore the image with colleague Sally Doughty, a dancer choreographer, (with a shared interest in performance improvisation and documentation methods) and with students working with artist collaborators. It was shown in the context of my 16mm works *Lost* (2000), *View* (2003), *Seventh Heaven* (2006), *Things that had stories rubbed out* (2010). And new work made with Alice Walton *Elektra* (2019) exhibited on a freestanding flatscreen with *Elektra Publication* both used as a prompt for a workshop with Alice Walton and undergraduate Fine Art students from De Montfort University with postgraduate Art Museum and Gallery Studies students from University of Leicester. Also showing were a found photo from Alice Walton's archive and a darkroom printed black and white C-type print from my *Moulin Rocks* series.

5
I re-looked at *One Second Feature*(six) publicly as part of the event *We are Publication,* Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, in visual dialogue with Monica Rivas Velasquez.

the freedom from a critical voice or commission, with no public responsibility and instead a grateful individual recipient, or wholly private activity, and thus the joyful ease of play. In the face of so many outward demands, this series pulls me back to the essence of a practice, enabling, I hope, a richer interaction when returning to participatory engagement.









Anna Lucas *One Second Feature* 2019
The Gallery, De Montfort University, Leicester.

I weep again. It's one of the hottest days of the year. Behind me a silver foil safety blanket crackles as it moves in the breeze. A heavy fly buzzes around, crashing into the plywood walls, and ring binder files full of photos.
Three roofers are blow torching a flat felt roof. Blue flames adding to the heat. The torch whoosh merging with a continuous rumble of aeroplanes passing every ninety seconds. The neighbour makes a call. I can hear the other person down the phone.
At my desk I pick up a book[1], flick through, alighting on a highlighted quote on a page with the corner folded down.

> Bristling
> None of which metaphorical bristling tells us why the fragment should be so appealing, for writers, or readers. What is the fragment's power of attraction, exactly?

1
Brian Dillon, *Essayism*, (London: Fitzcarraldo 2017) p. 69

It's hard to concentrate with the neighbour's conversation.
The page continues with reference to people and movements, a short-hand I don't follow. Romanticism, Schlegel, Coleridge, Kubla Khan. I see words, not whole sentences.

> Vexing consequence of encroaching
> Divided self is experienced as pain and pleasure
> Further fragments
> Conglomerate
> Aggregate
> Ambiguous shuttle.

I find a passage:

> In the form of the work, the fragmentist announces at every stage that she is a varied and various character, that the self, exquisitely expressed in each instant, must cease to be and start again, endlessly. Except of course that writing not only unfolds in time, it also exists to fill space, so that all its parts, once the whole is achieved, must sit alongside one another in a more or less complex array.

I think of a different life as a florist and sip from a glass of warm fizzy water. It tastes like tears and is the same temperature.
Further away an ambulance siren sounds. I need to go.

> I like the idea of the essay as a kind of conglomerate: an aggregate either of diverse materials or disparate ways of saying the same or similar things.

On my left, a pile of coloured paper and a few images are arranged on the desk. Intermittently I've been photographing these, adding and subtracting pages. The images that have surfaced over a few weeks have formed a relationship I was not expecting or looking for.
Three white bordered postcards, each depicting a single female figure:
A full figure, wearing a draped soft pink fabric and a blue gown. She stands on the moon, surrounded by clouds, looking down and left. She is pale, with slightly pink cheeks and her hands lightly touch in the prayer position in front of her.[2]

2
Diego Velasquez. 1599. The Immaculate Conception, National Gallery, London

The back of a full figure, confidently walking away from the camera, across a road, in a long silk or satin dress. She is watched by a man, in a green shirt, on a motorbike. The top of her head is cropped, but we see she has reddish shoulder length hair. She has strong legs, powerful shoes that are both easy to walk in, but have a heel and feel 'dressed up'. This image is also a postcard, of a hand-tinted photo.[3]

3
Ann Rhoney,.1987. *Silk Dress Coming*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

A portrait in profile, half-length. A woman looks out of the frame, high right, mouth slightly open. She may be surprised, or frightened. She is vulnerable. She also has flushed cheeks, but darker skin than the other figures. She has dark brown hair and eyes. She also has a draped loose white top, and a shawl or wrap around her. She wears a heavy gathered skirt, and may be getting up from the ground, one knee bent forward. She seems to be in a cemetery on a hill.[4]

4
Delacroix, Eugene. 1863. *Jeune Orpheline Au Cimitiere*, Louvre, Paris

Underneath these postcards;
an enlarged photo of a blank sheet of paper hanging on a wall, beneath which is a white crumpled sheet of paper. This crumpled piece resonates with the fabric of the 'jeune orpheline's' shirt, and the clouds behind the Virgin Mary. The colours from marks of paint in the studio where these sheets of paper have been used, connect with the colours in the postcards. Likewise, a collection of black end pages, photo paper, orange tape and sugar paper that has been shuffled on the desktop over a few weeks.

I get up and re-photograph the pile as flickering afternoon light falls across it. The painted clouds behind the Virgin Mary in the Velasquez painting, leap across to form a connection with a crumpled sheet of discarded paper in an art school.

I glance down again. The book I was flicking through is propped under the laptop in front of me. The pages are pressed open and my lower arms are resting on both the metal of the laptop and the softer pages of the open book. The text I write is red, what I read is black.
A fragment like a miniature work of art, has to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and complete in itself like a porcupine.
The writer is quoting Schlegel. At the top of the page the laptop part covers the word Romantic.
Further on the writer tries to work out why the use of a prickly spined animal is analogous to the fragment.
And then I arrive back at 'bristling', where I started.
Proving to myself I am going round in circles.
The blue exposed colour photo paper I have left on the top of the pile of shuffled images is curling in the heat. It's gloss liquid surface slightly sticky to touch.

Sky blue.
It is held in place by a little pebble pocked with holes.
The inverse of a porcupine.

I look back across, left and down

Fracturing
Pulverising
Fragmental
Rocks and shales
Aggregate

Further right. Page 69

Writing
Not only unfolds in time, it also exists to fill a space, so that all its parts, once the whole is achieved, must sit alongside one another in a more or less complex array.

I scroll up to italicise the quotes and realise I have already written this fragment. But it had not fully sunk in. It will not fully sink in until I have read it or rewritten it a hundred times. *Silk Dress Coming* remains clear in my mind. I have returned to it many times too, re-learning the way the light shifts on the dress,

and across to the parked car in the background, the shaded eyes of the man on the bike. Seen the work in textural terms before narrative ones.

The neighbours are having a conversation across the back gardens. The roofers have gone. The planes grumble on. A parrot is shrieking, I need to go. I've spent over an hour with two pages of text, three postcards, some dappled light, and warm fizzy water and taken eight photographs.



Cutaway – *Drowning not waving* 2021

One Second Feature – *Bristling* 2019

