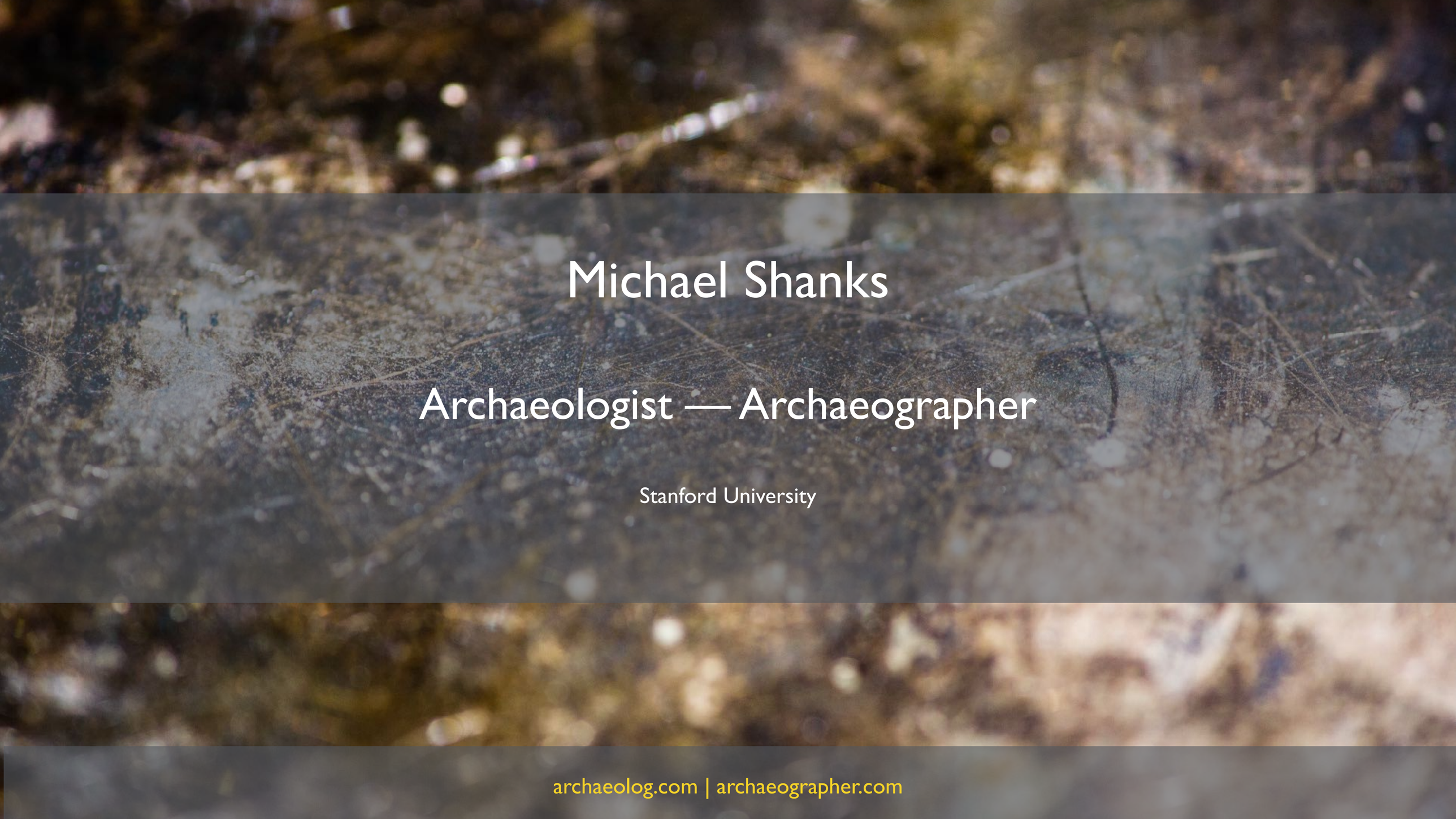


Michael Shanks

Archaeologist — Archaeographer

Stanford University

Studio Michael Shanks Stanford University

Archaeography

An Introduction

Archaeography — Orientation

Archaeography is where the performance of photowork meets an archaeological sensibility.
Archaeography explores the shared practices of archaeology and photography
— working with remains, attending to traces, and composing with absence.

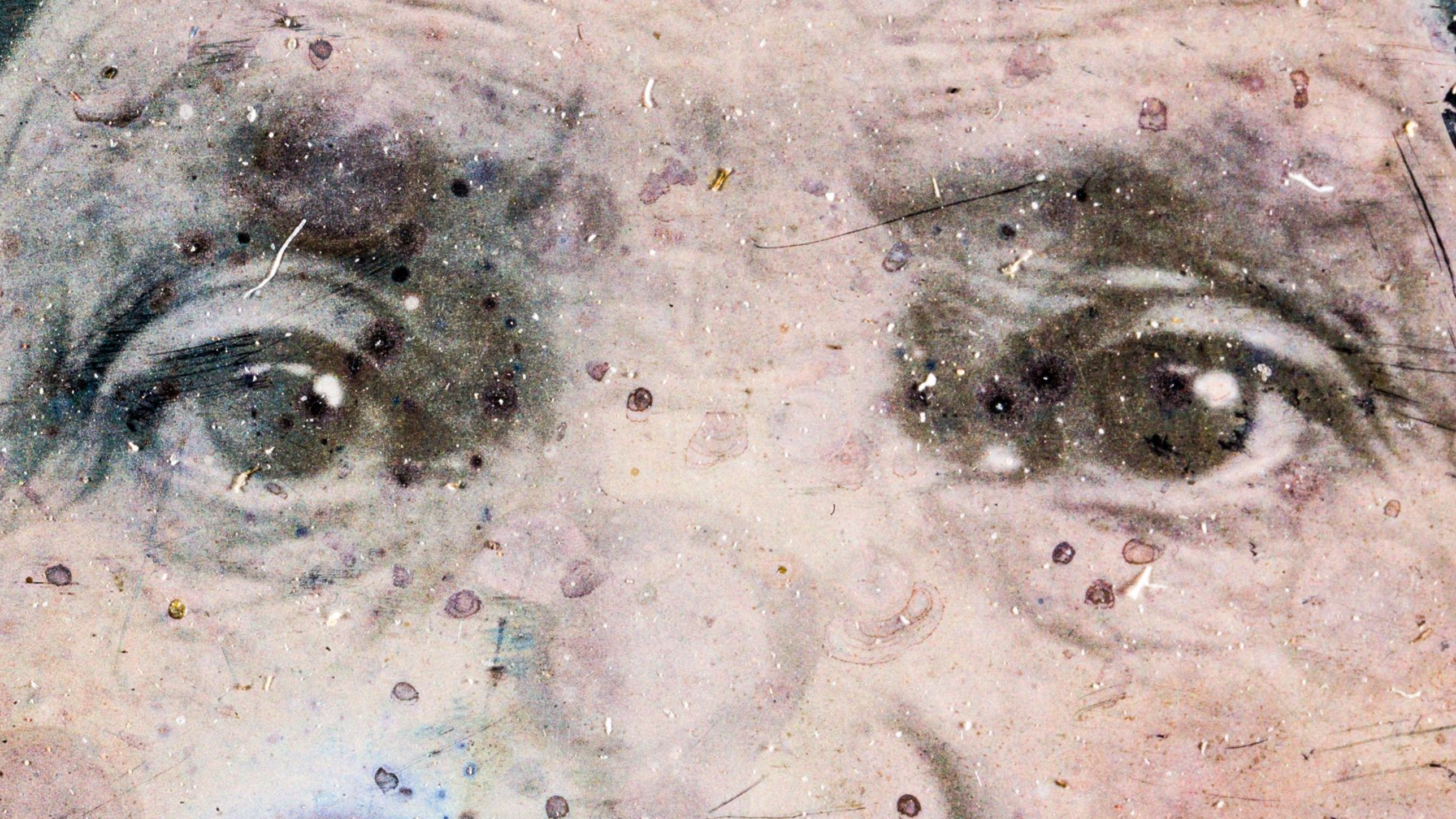
Since the 1970s I have used photowork to explore the archaeological imagination — a way of thinking, seeing, acting that connects past and present through material traces, processes of decay, experiences of loss, and acts of care.
Photography arrests presence; archaeology, like memory, works with what remains.
Archaeography combines these acts — arranging viewer, viewed, and instrument to witness what lingers.

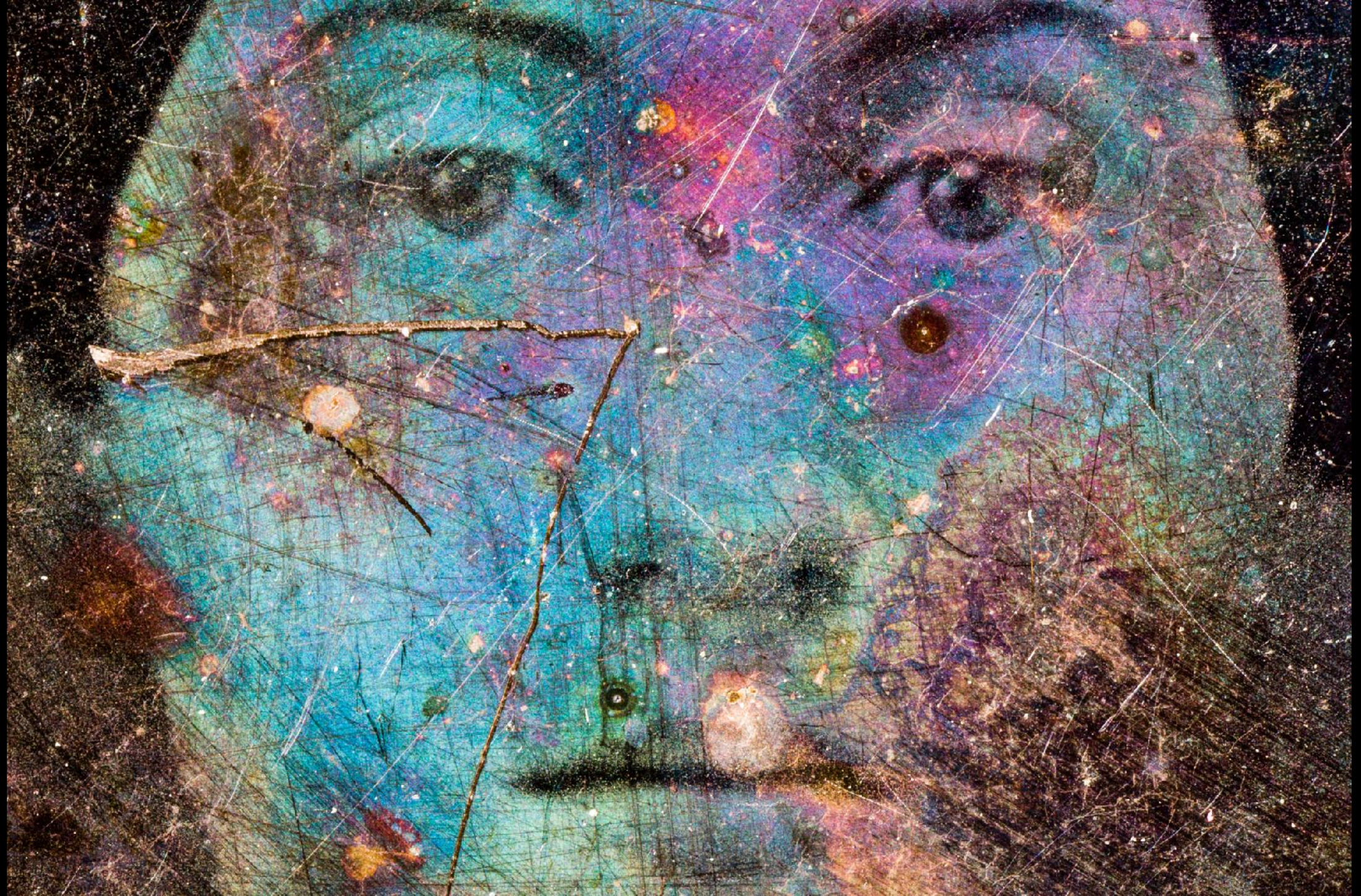
Archaeography is not about illustrating the past, but about mediating and revealing the temporal textures of the present
— picturing marks of temporality through things, places, and memory.

Schedule

1. Archaeography — a Gallery
2. Archaeology and Photowork — Common Features
3. An Archaeographical Sensibility — a Constellation of Concepts
4. Archaeography — a Summary
5. Inspiration
6. Cocreation

1. Archaeography — a Gallery





Ghosts in the Mirror

Daguerreotypes 1845-1860 — oxidized, scratched, discarded. Found on eBay. Rephotographed 2003, 2013, 2023. Series.

#media archaeology #figure-ground #spectral presence #signal-noise #making faces

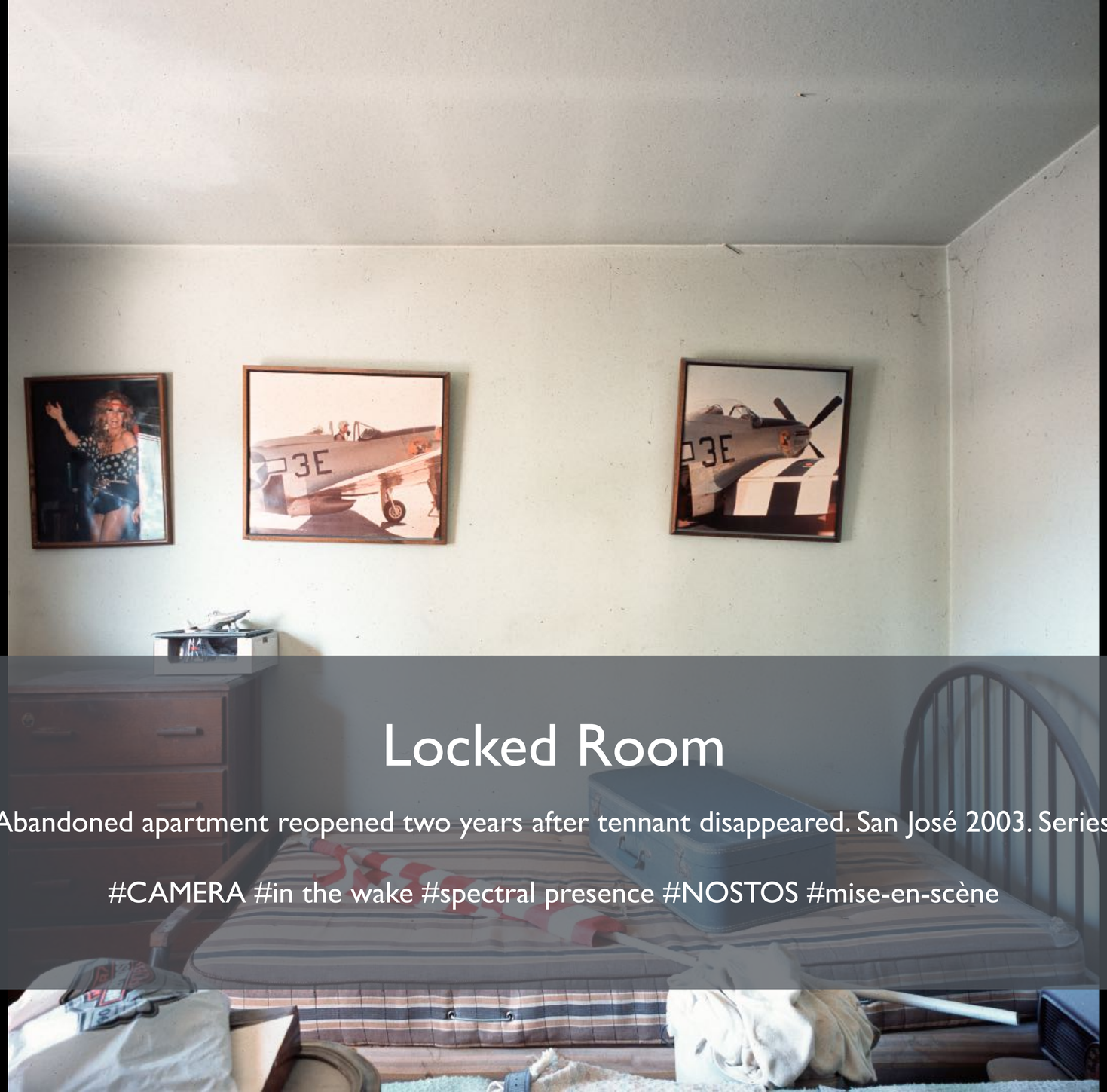
National
VRD210
bounce

WHO WORKS

3E
3E

ROYAL

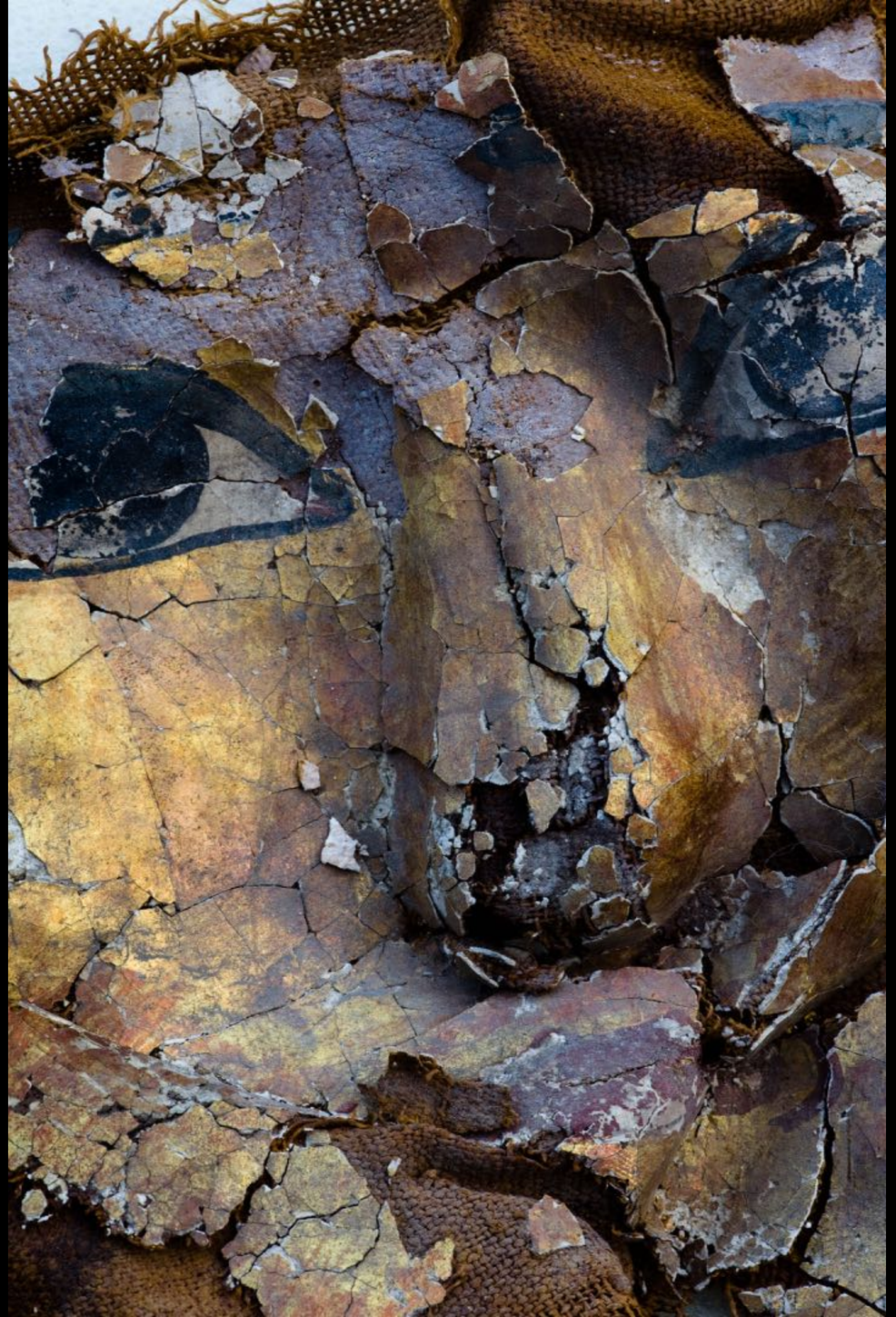
ROYAL

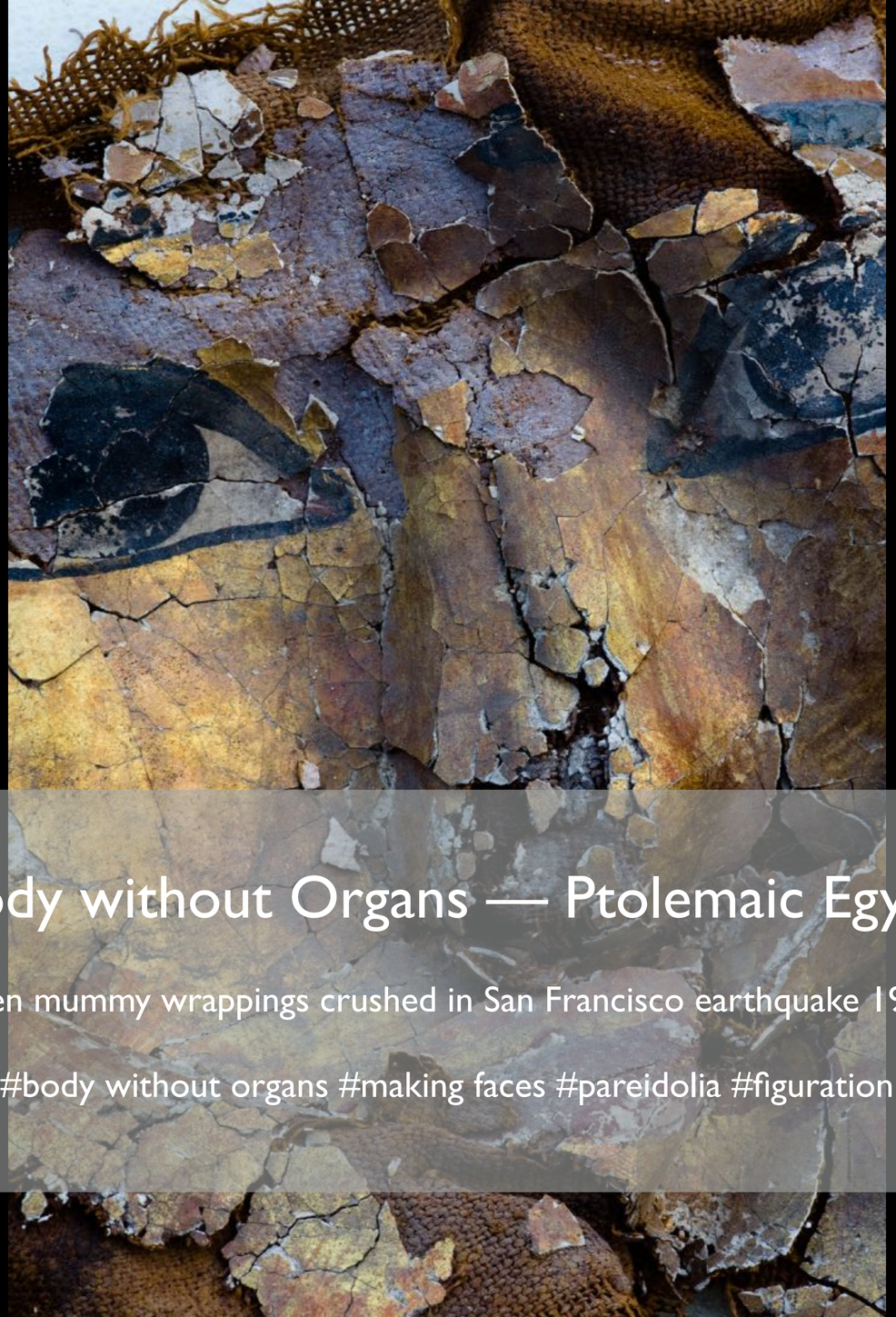


Locked Room

Abandoned apartment reopened two years after tennant disappeared. San José 2003. Series.

#CAMERA #in the wake #spectral presence #NOSTOS #mise-en-scène





Body without Organs — Ptolemaic Egypt

Linen mummy wrappings crushed in San Francisco earthquake 1906.

#body without organs #making faces #pareidolia #figuration

Dun Cow

Five-thousand-year-old rock carvings. Earthworks. Glen, waterfall, and grotto. Routin Linn, Northumberland, England 2003 – 2025. Series.

#prehistory #milieu #spectral geography #GENIVS LOCI #deep time #pagan poetics #visit

Dun Cow — behind the scenes

Five-thousand-year-old rock carvings. Earthworks. Glen, waterfall, and grotto. Routin Linn, Northumberland, England 2003 – 2025. Series.

#prehistory #milieu #spectral geography #GENIVS LOCI #deep time #pagan poetics #visit #epigraphy

This series is about assessing the adequacy of media to engage with a spirit of place — GENIVS LOCI.

The name Routin Linn is attached to the waterfall — "Roughting-Linn, from its noise in its fall after great rains; the word roughting being also used by the borderers, on hearing the lowing and bellowing of cattle" (John Wallis *The Natural History and Antiquities of Northumberland* (1769) 1.25). This makes me think of the tales of the Dun (dull brown) Cow in English folklore (sometimes a beast turned savage, sometimes a divine sign).

Above the fall and rivulet, with its contorted trees and singular stone outcrops, are prehistoric banks and ditches, and a dome of rock that features a remarkable group of earlier rock carvings — cups and rings, hooks and channels. Routin Linn is one of the finest cases of such rock art in the region. Some of the markings on the outcrop have been quarried away (for building stone). Nineteenth century plantings of rhododendra threaten to block access. And, disturbingly, over twenty years of visiting the place I have noticed marked erosion of the carvings.

The picturesque has long connected archaeological ruins and photography. As much as one might be uncomfortable with such an aesthetic, one might stay with the discomfort — laying emphasis upon the absences and gaps, pushing the aesthetic to cope with manifold modes of engagement.

3600

BRETZEL
1900

Fish Magic

Aegina and Thessaloniki 2002 and 2005. Series.

#quiddity #base materialism #pagan poetics

Fish Magic — behind the scenes

Aegina and Thessaloniki 2002 and 2005.

#quiddity #base materialism #pagan poetics

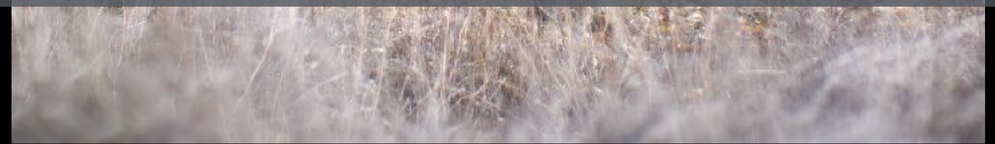
This series is one of several that acknowledge the vital qualities of things that resist assimilation into categories and description ("squid in a packing case in a market"). This base materialism (to use Dubuffet's notion) requires close attention to how things present themselves, as well as what is withheld from our sensing and understanding — the "what-ness" of things, their quiddities.

In archaeology we attend, at base, to such qualities of material surfaces and volumes; in photography the surface emananting from a scene and projected upon focal plane is, at base, an indiscriminate matrix of values of light.

Against Newton — the Limits of Reason

Anderson Valley Northern California. An apple tree left over from a dead farming industry. Photographed 3000+ times 2000 – 2014. Series.

#portrait in echoes #NOSTOS #deep mapping #visiting



Against Newton — the Limits of Reason — behind the scenes

Anderson Valley Northern California. An apple tree left over from a dead farming industry. Photographed 3000+ times 2000 – 2014.

#portrait in echoes #NOSTOS #deep mapping #visiting #spectral geography

The valley might seem to be a quiet stretch of Route 128 with pleasing aspect in the northern Californian sunshine breaking through a morning mist. An archaeological eye takes in remnants of long indigenous inhabitation, arrested in the mid nineteenth century, of boom and bust economies since then — logging, sheep, apples, and now vineyards.

I was regularly spending family time in the Anderson Valley from the early 2000s and always made a point to revisit (NOSTOS — the return) this lone apple tree in the field next to our house.
Before the tree came down in a storm in April 2014 I had accumulated more than 3000 photos.
Every one different, yet the same tree — each attesting to the impossibility of any final statement, representation, capture of the tree.

Ontology always deferred.

(The reference to Newton comes in the wake of William Blake's critique of Isaac Newton's aim to reduce the heterogeneity of the world to formulae of reason. And, of course, Newton's apple — said to have inspired insight into gravity.)

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS
DURHAM AREA
SHOTTON LODGE
UNITY IS STRENGTH
LIBERTY
EQUALITY
Rising bollards

WORKERS UNION
REVOLUTION

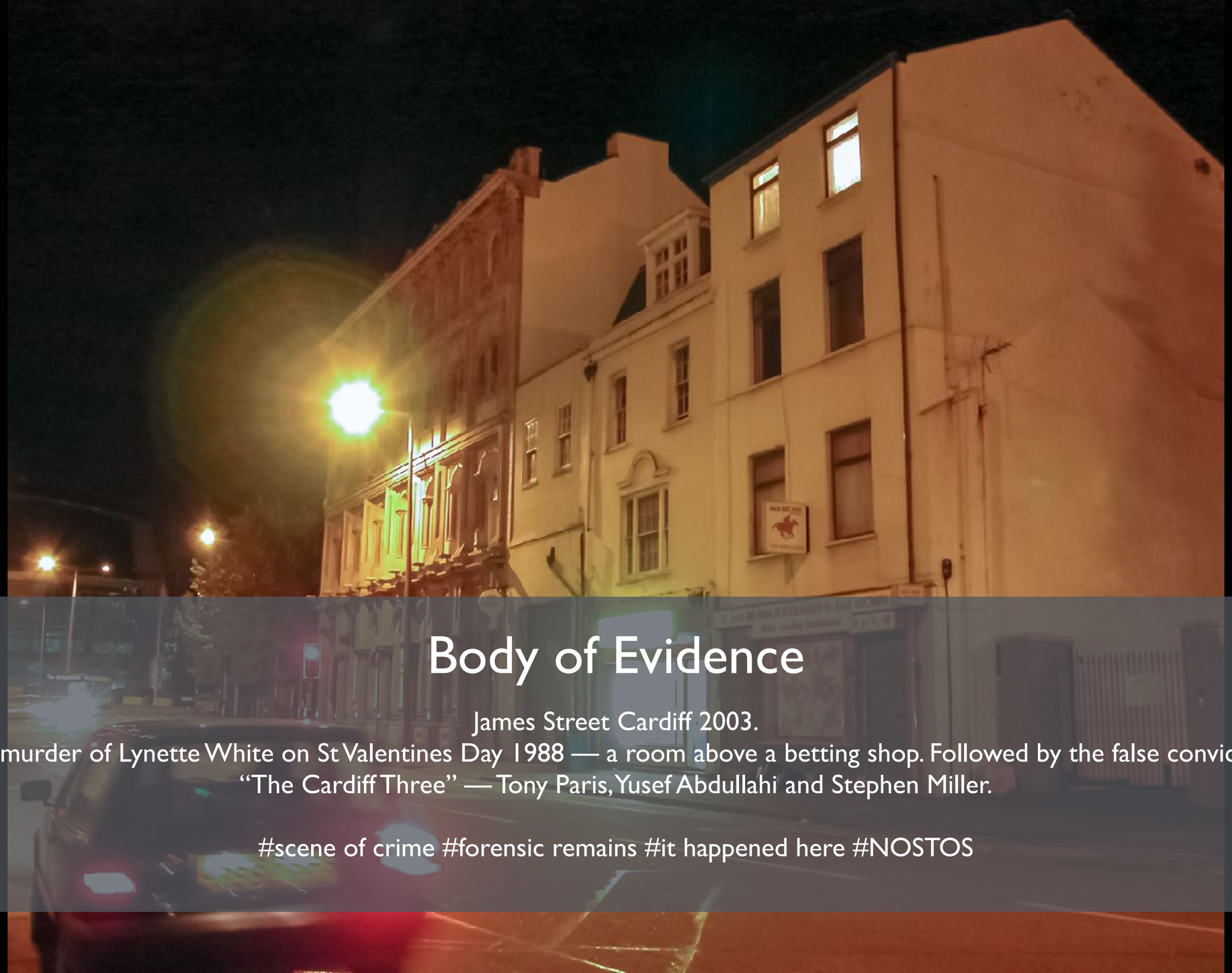
UNION

PEDESTRIAN
ZONE
No vehicles
Except for
loading
4 pm - 10 am
At any
time
DURHAM MINERS' ASSOCIATION

Pitmens' Requiem

Durham Miners' Gala 2011–2012. The annual celebration of mining community and heritage in the North East of England. Most collieries had been shut down by the 1990s. Series.

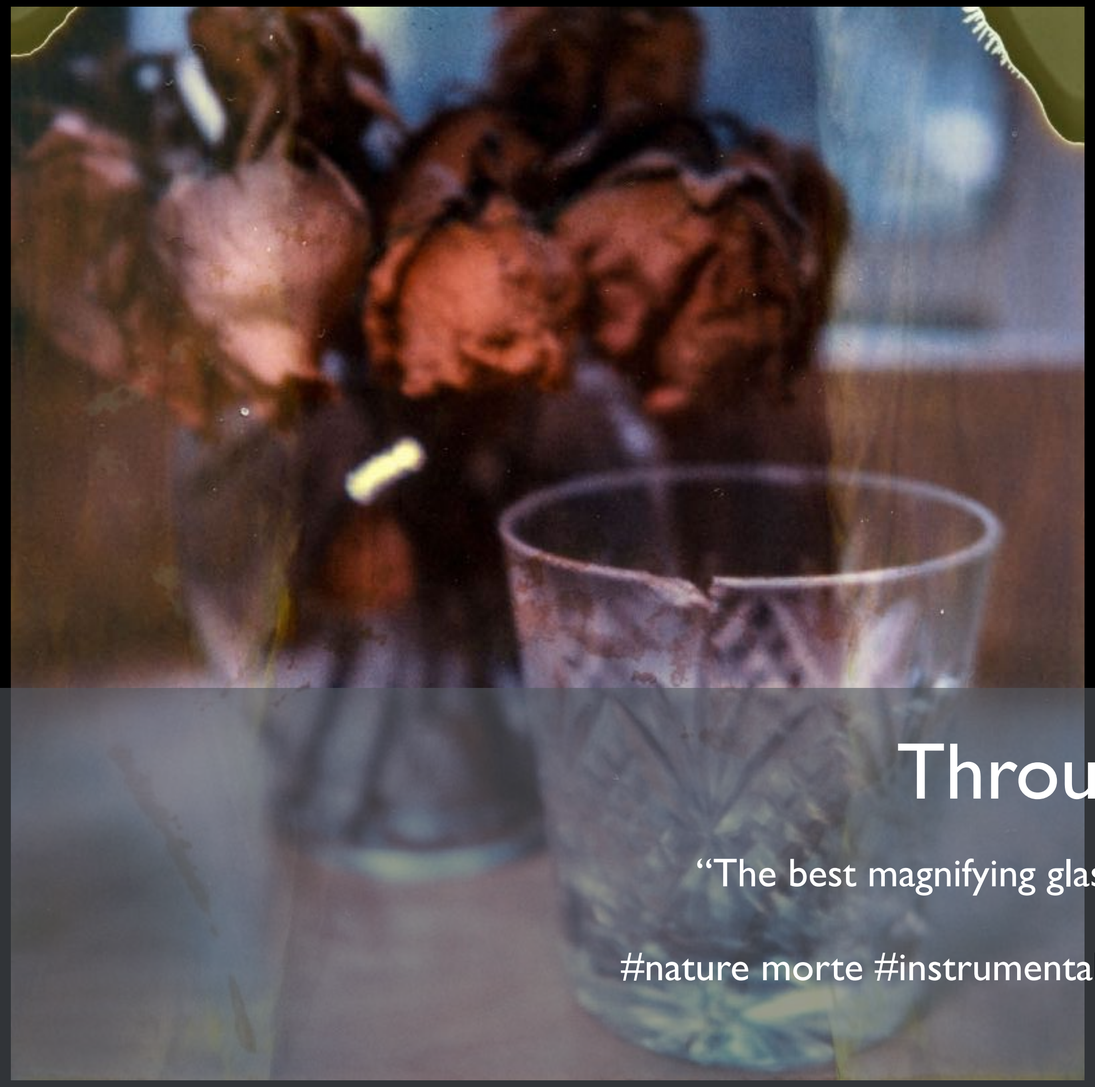
#is this the way we were? #performing remains #portrait in echoes #in the wake



Body of Evidence

James Street Cardiff 2003.
Site of murder of Lynette White on St Valentines Day 1988 — a room above a betting shop. Followed by the false conviction of "The Cardiff Three" — Tony Paris, Yusef Abdullahi and Stephen Miller.

#scene of crime #forensic remains #it happened here #NOSTOS



Through a Glass

"The best magnifying glass is a splinter in the eye." Series.

#nature morte #instrumentality #signal-noise #media materialities

Through a Glass — behind the scenes

"The best magnifying glass is a splinter in the eye."

#nature morte #instrumentality #signal-noise #media materialities

This long and varied series explores *media ecology* — arrangements, systems of mediation, of instruments, materials, resources that deliver media forms such as photographs — extending McLuhan's insight that, so often, the medium is the message. Focus upon instruments and media materialities that are far from transparent windows upon the past.

The archaeographical sensibility is towards memory processes of bringing pasts into presents — the alchemy, with its associated intruments, of transforming pasts into archival forms that anticipate future use, interest, and value.

Northern Fenestrations

Series.

#frames #windows #lattice #chorography

Northern Fenestrations — behind the scenes

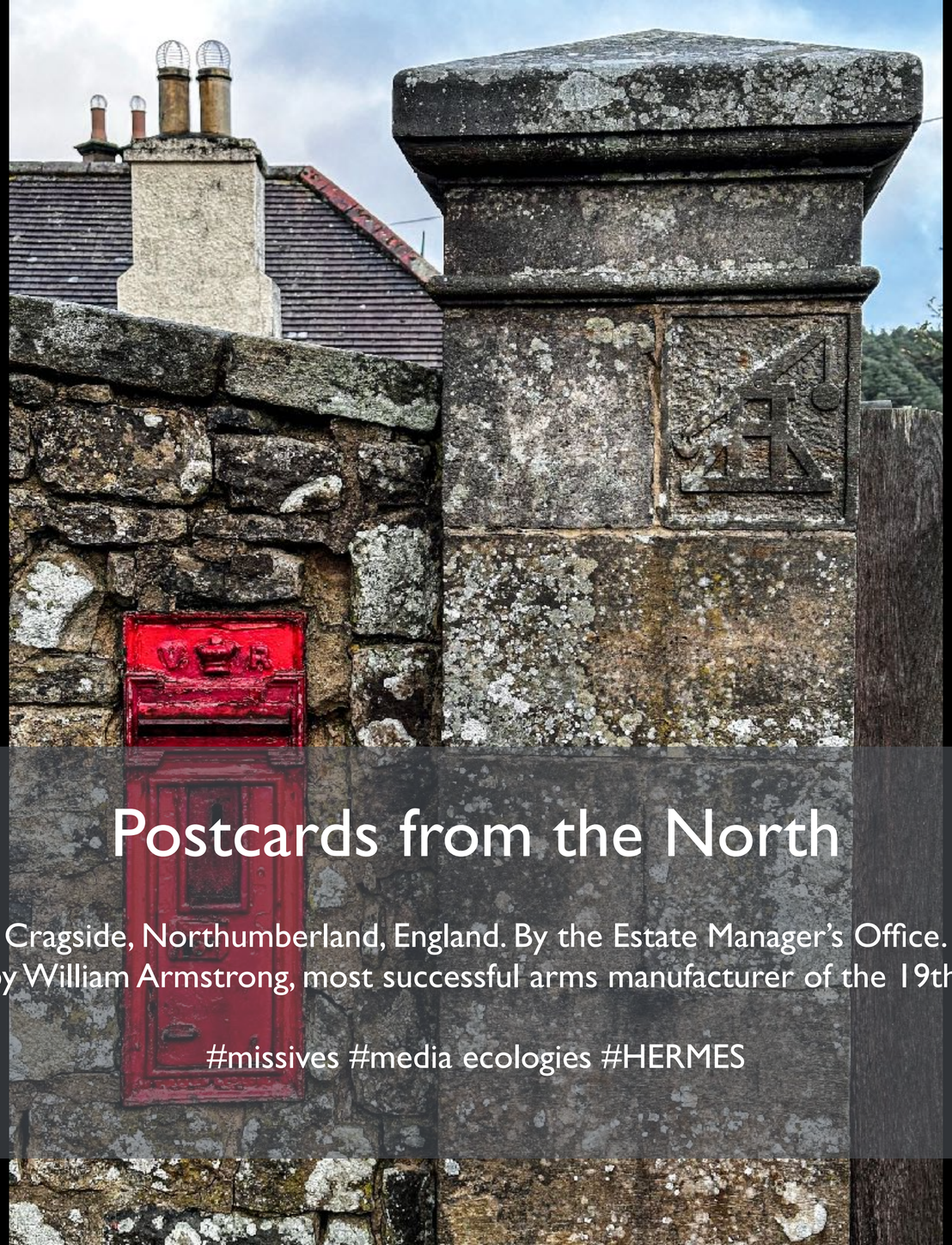
#frames #windows #lattice #chorography

The photographer frames through the viewfinder; the archaeologist lays down measuring grids and gathers into boxes.
An architectural paradigm connects the two.

The archetypal and base form of the archive is a box within which one contains things in relation to others — a table or matrix, rows and columns, scaffold and lattice. Windows as archives on the world — archival worlding.

And one should ask — what lies beyond?

VR



Postcards from the North

Cragside, Northumberland, England. By the Estate Manager's Office.
Owned by William Armstrong, most successful arms manufacturer of the 19th century.

#missives #media ecologies #HERMES

Postcards from the North — behind the scenes

Cragside, Northumberland, England. By the Estate Manager's Office.
Owned by William Armstrong, most successful arms manufacturer of the 19th century.

#missives #media ecologies #Hermes

I have regularly stayed here in my ongoing archaeological survey of the border county of Northumberland. The estate, now in the care of the National Trust, a heritage agency, is haunted by its nineteenth-century owner, William Armstrong — lawyer turned pioneering engineer, turned global arms-manufacturing robber baron.

These haunting origins of a techno-military-industrial complex are witnessed here in the mundanity of the Victorian post box. A slot into a global communications network, connections, entanglements. What sendings and receivings, ink on paper, did it facilitate?
A postbox by a gate into a garden. And on the gatepost is carved the emblem of Armstrong's enterprise
— a trebuchet, an engine of ancient siege warfare.

The archaeological challenge is always to create pathways through such sedimented milieux, such palimpsests. Tracking missives.
The paradigmatic persona of such pathmaking and missives is Hermes.

ERR

Postcards from the Edge

North Northumberland, England 2023.
A new postbox for a nineteenth-century media infrastructure serving a dispersed rural community.

#HERMES #angels #signal-noise #missives

TITANIC

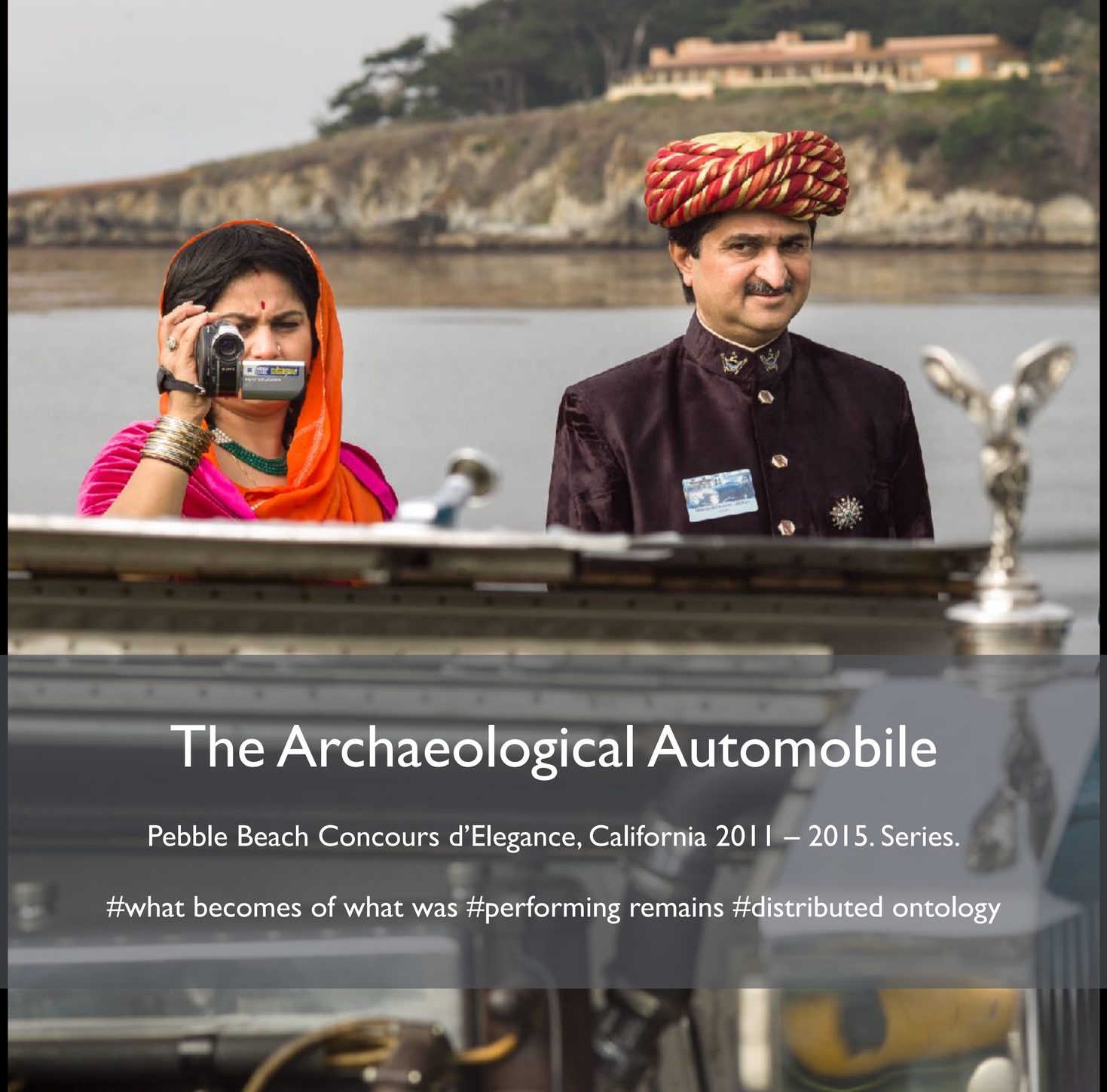
Michael

Diana for Girls 1977
JUDY FOR GIRLS
ANNUAL 1984
THE BIG BOOK OF DINOSAURS
RIDING & PONY CARE
Gulliver's Travels
Treasure Island
Express Yourself in DRAWING
Design in Embroidery
ARMITAGE/WATSON
Barry Manilow
BENNETT'S FABLES
too many eggs
THE BROONS

A Journey round my Father

Alconbury Close, Blyth, Northumberland, England. Series.
Michael Shanks senior, having fallen, was taken from his home of 47 years in May 2024 for a stay in hospital.
He never returned and died in July 2024. This is what remained.

#in small things remembered #eterniday #prehistory #in the wake



The Archaeological Automobile

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, California 2011 – 2015. Series.

#what becomes of what was #performing remains #distributed ontology

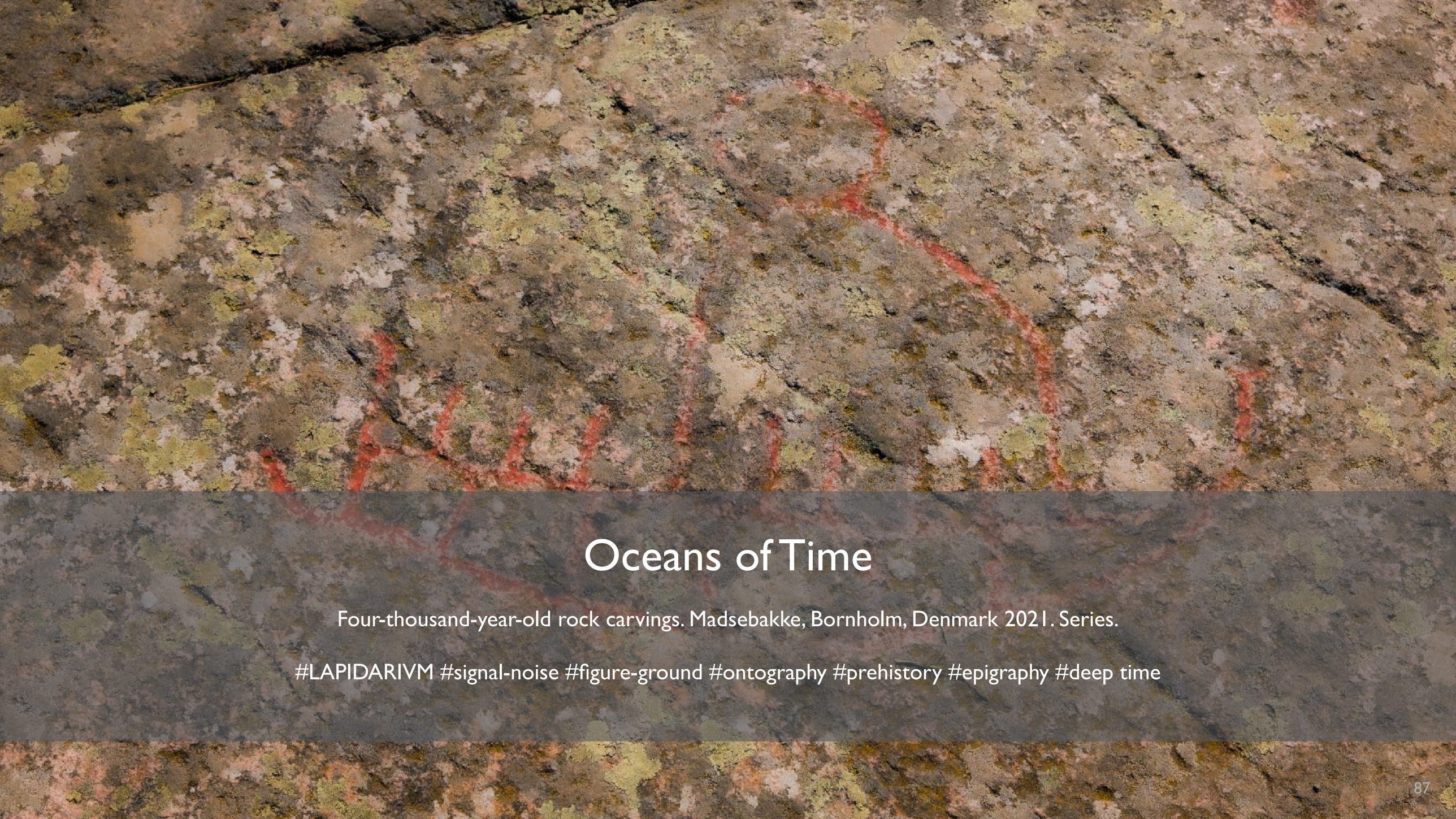
The Archaeological Automobile — behind the scenes

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, California 2011 – 2015.

#what becomes of what was #performing remains #distributed ontology

As a Director of the Revs Program at Stanford (2010–2015), connecting the past, present, and future of the automobile, I was drawn into the world of the car collector. My visits to the premier classic car show at Pebble Beach brought me face-to-face with what might be termed the physiognomy of the automotive past.

Just what *IS* an automobile?
So much more than a motorized box on four wheels! Here we gain glimpses into the lives of re-animated pasts.



Oceans of Time

Four-thousand-year-old rock carvings. Madsebakke, Bornholm, Denmark 2021. Series.

#LAPIDARIVM #signal-noise #figure-ground #ontography #prehistory #epigraphy #deep time

Invisible Labyrinth

Mesolithic blade 7800 BCE being found 2008; John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, Dunstanburgh Castle 1381;
William Turner 1798; Sir Guy the Seeker (Matthew "Monk" Lewis)1809; Bathing House, Howick (Charles Grey — Earl Grey Tea)1832.

#synchronicity #deep mapping #spectral geography #temporal topography

Invisible Labyrinth — behind the scenes

Mesolithic blade 7800 BCE being found 2008; John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, Dunstanburgh Castle 1381;
William Turner 1798; Sir Guy the Seeker (Matthew "Monk" Lewis)1809; Bathing House, Howick (Charles Grey — Earl Grey Tea)1832.

#synchronicity #deep mapping #spectral geography #temporal topography

Living spaces are always labyrinthine, multi-temporal and dynamic entanglements of place-events, persistences, durées (continuities).

Encounters, gatherings of traces and memories, riddle-figures.

Here, Molly and Ben, as they were in 2008, find a lithic fragment of a prehistoric village on a medieval road that runs up the coast to the castle of Dunstanburgh, built by the Dukes of Lancaster, famously painted by William Turner in 1798 and after.
Center ground is the Bathing House, a locale, likely apocryphal, where Charles Grey of Howick first drank the blend of tea named for him in the wake of his political success. Among his many social guests was best-selling author Matthew "Monk" Lewis who likely concocted the story of Knight of the Round Table Sir Guy "The Seeker" who failed to answer a wizard's riddle and was accordingly entombed beneath the castle.

Photograph as synchronicity.

Amelia Pit

The old road connecting Blyth to Shankhouse, past the waste heaps of Amelia Pit, Hartley Main Colliery, closed in 1938, washing coal until the 50s, landscaped in the 1970s, cut off by construction of the freeway Newcastle to Ashington. Round the corner is an oak tree my father climbed as a boy in the 1930s. Northumberland, England 2024.

#what becomes of what was #highways and byways

ITINERARIVM SEPTENTRIONALE — AD FINES

Dere Street Roman road — Chew Green Roman forts and medieval village of Gemelspeth, Upper Coquetdale, Northumberland, England., on the border with Scotland. Series.

#borders #smuggling #chorography #itinerary

ITINERARIVM SEPTENTRIONALE — AD FINES — behind the scenes

Dere Street Roman road — Chew Green Roman forts at the edge of empire, and medieval village of Gemelspeth, Upper Coquetdale, Northumberland, England, on the border with Scotland.

#borders #smuggling #chorography #itinerary #it happened here

"Itinerary. Here, then to there, and onwards to where? In following our loose and malleable itineraries (across a valley, along a road, a river, stretch of coast) we proceeded not efficiently but intensely, not positively or progressively, but disposed towards deviations and detours, interruptions, invitations to stop and consider, gaps and intervals, discontinuities, disorientations. Our itineraries offered little or no access to the reiterated and integrating narratives of these borderlands. Instead we encountered, of course, heterogeneous sequences, in parataxis or katachresis, synchronicities ("did it really happen here?"), anachronisms, anomalies.

Appropriate to itinerary are anecdotes, notes on particulars, observations on fragments, comments on anomalies or surprises, attempts to identify or explain, as well as remarks about emerging patterns of experience ("another skylark!"). And there was always more to explore and say, an ineliminable excess of experience, irreducible to representation, always beyond mimesis. Itinerary provokes singularities of presencing, actualities of encounter and association then-and-now ("we crossed where the old wall had recently been repaired"). Such local particulars and instants resist reduction to date, exceed any encompassing system, remain as lapidary fragments undissolved in narrative solutions.

Itinerary is not, in these ways, about subjective individual experience to be contrasted with rational and objective systematizing. The singular presences point to dialectical concepts of incompleteness and non-identity, dynamic tensions between material actuality and efforts to subsume the surplus into a system. The presences punctuate and dis-orient, upset any course of continual harmonious un-exceptionality."

(Dialectical Images. In Michael Shanks and Mike Pearson, *Theatre/Archaeology: Performing Remains*. Forthcoming.)

Voices on the Wind (Ossian 1792)

Bishop's Palace 684 (site of?). Viking raid 793 (site of?). Holy Island of Lindisfarne 2008.

#in the wake #figure-ground #VT PICTVRA POIESIS

Voices on the Wind (Ossian 1792) — behind the scenes

Bishop's Palace 684 (site of?). Viking raid 793 (site of?). Holy Island of Lindisfarne 2008.

#in the wake #figure-ground #VT PICTVRA POIESIS

Lindisfarne, a tidal island off the coast of Northumberland, just south of the Scottish border, is a storied place, associated with the early years of the Christian church in the north, though there are very few archaeological remains of those times.

One might wonder at the charged relationships between places, stories, ruins, remains
— betweens words, images, artifacts, architectures.

In an eighteenth-century antiquarian imagination James MacPherson conjured up the medieval epic of Ossian from literary fragments, and passed off his fabrication as discovery of a lost past. Goethe and Napoleon loved it.
Walter Scott's and Thomas Percy's reconstructions of border medieval ballads similarly bridged voice and text, past and present.

All three were best selling authors, wizards of invisible voices echoing across the wind through ancient landscapes.
Passing-by. Passing-on.

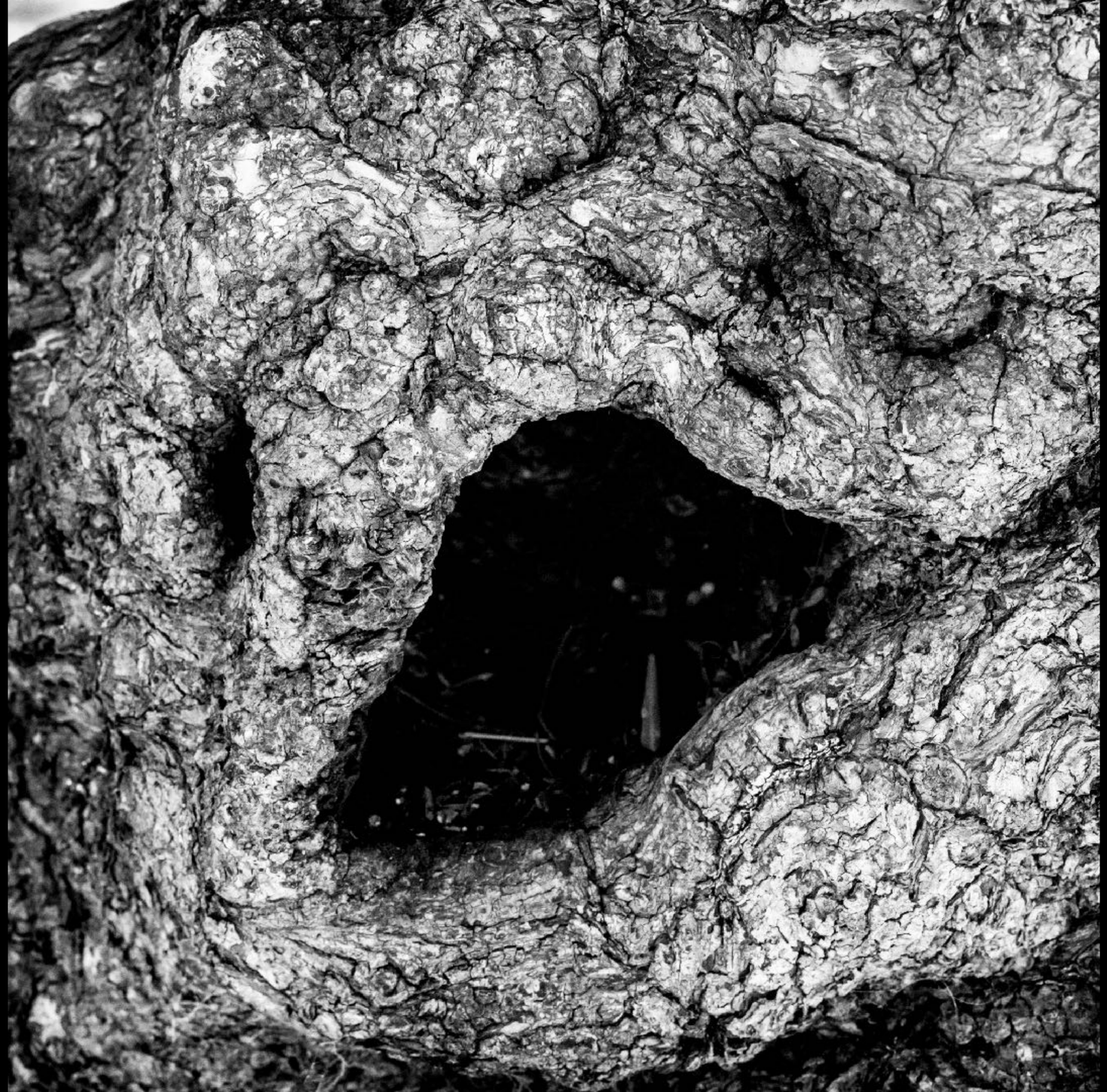
Here once walked and spoke …

PHILIPS
LEARN TO PL
TENNIS
The Obser

Mise-en-Scène

Jolly Fisherman Inn, Craster, Northumberland, England 2007.

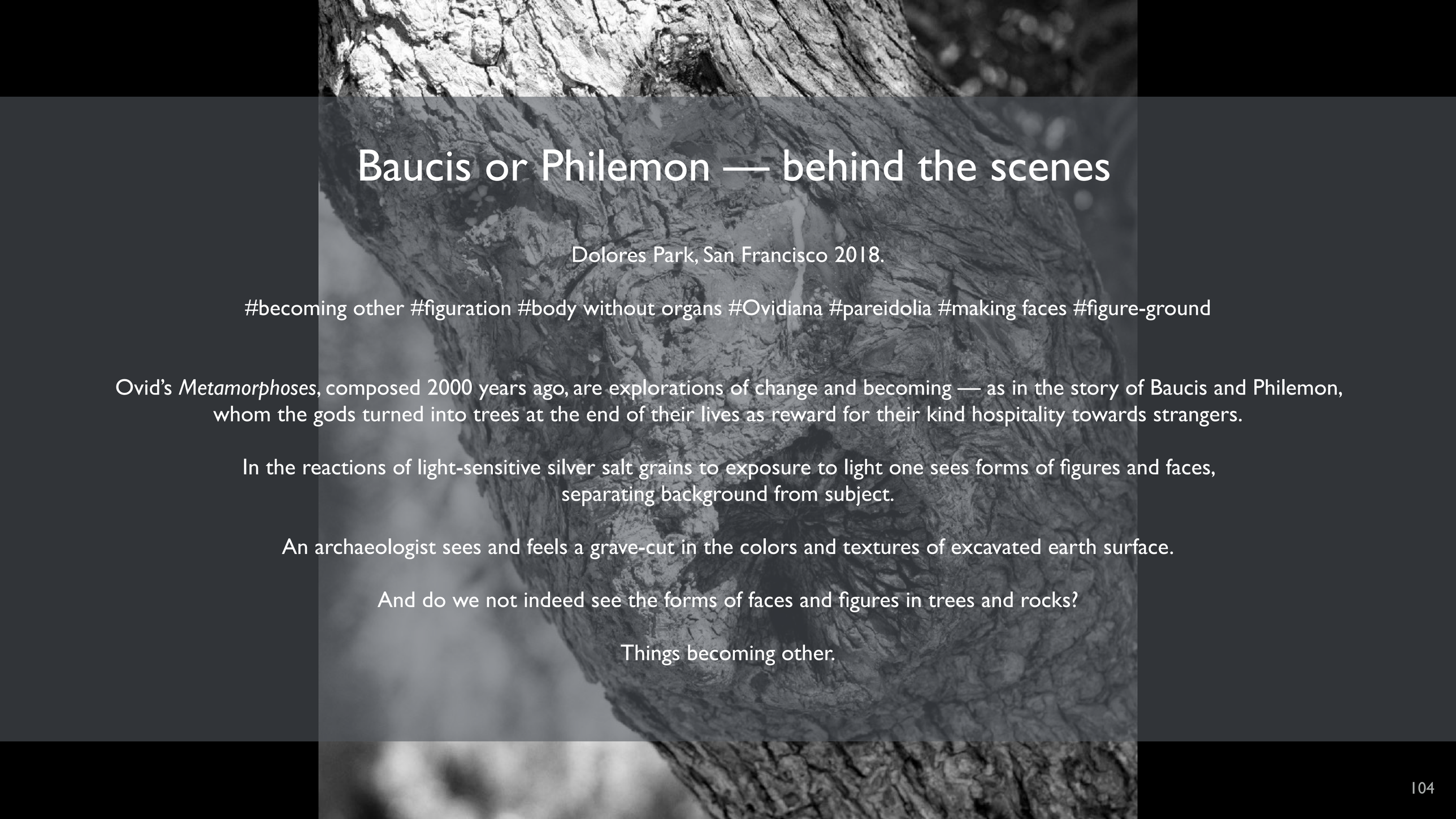
#CAMERA #performing remains



Baucis or Philemon

Dolores Park, San Francisco 2018. Series.

#becoming other #figuration #body without organs #Ovidiana #pareidolia #making faces



Baucis or Philemon — behind the scenes

Dolores Park, San Francisco 2018.

#becoming other #figuration #body without organs #Ovidiana #pareidolia #making faces #figure-ground

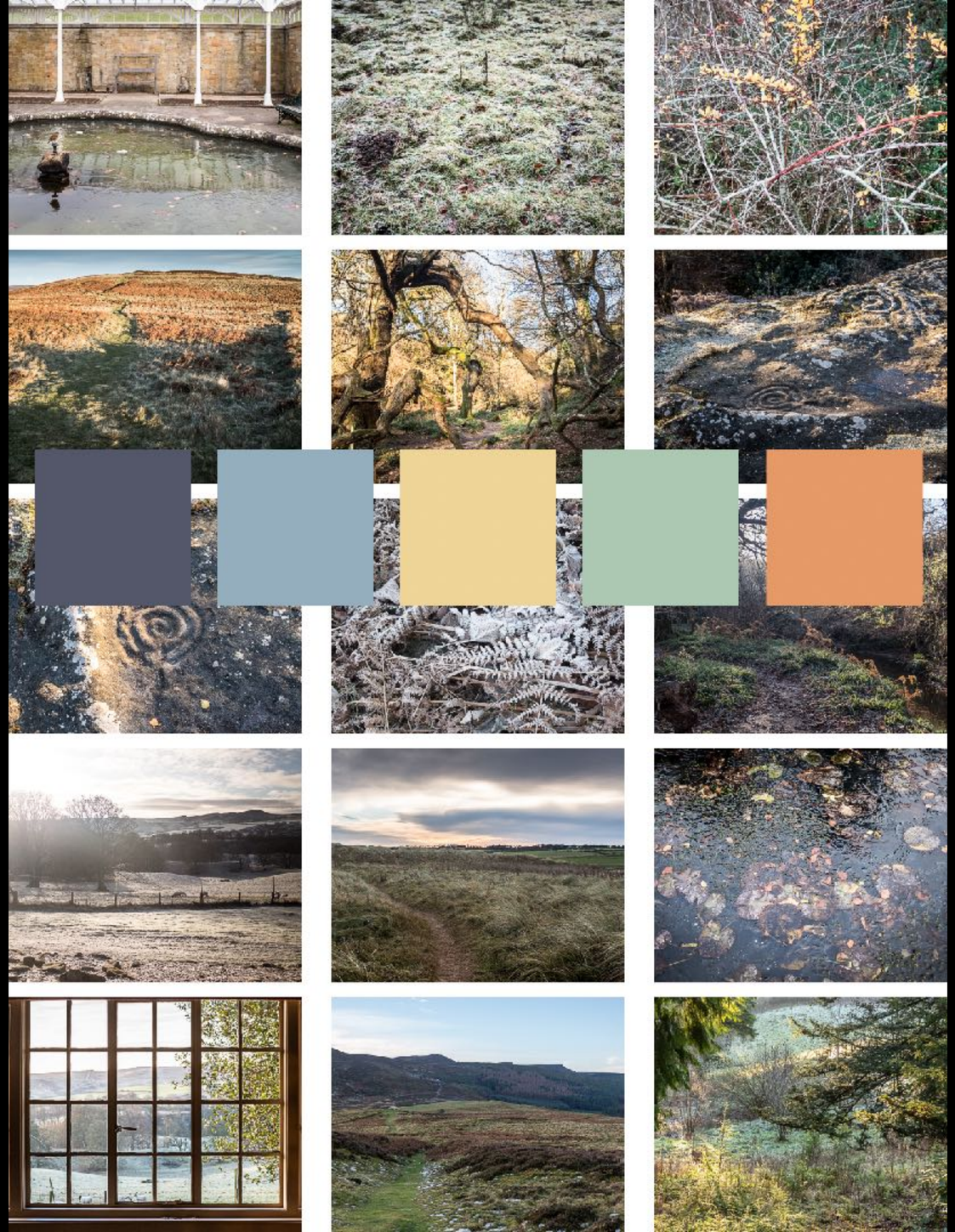
Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, composed 2000 years ago, are explorations of change and becoming — as in the story of Baucis and Philemon, whom the gods turned into trees at the end of their lives as reward for their kind hospitality towards strangers.

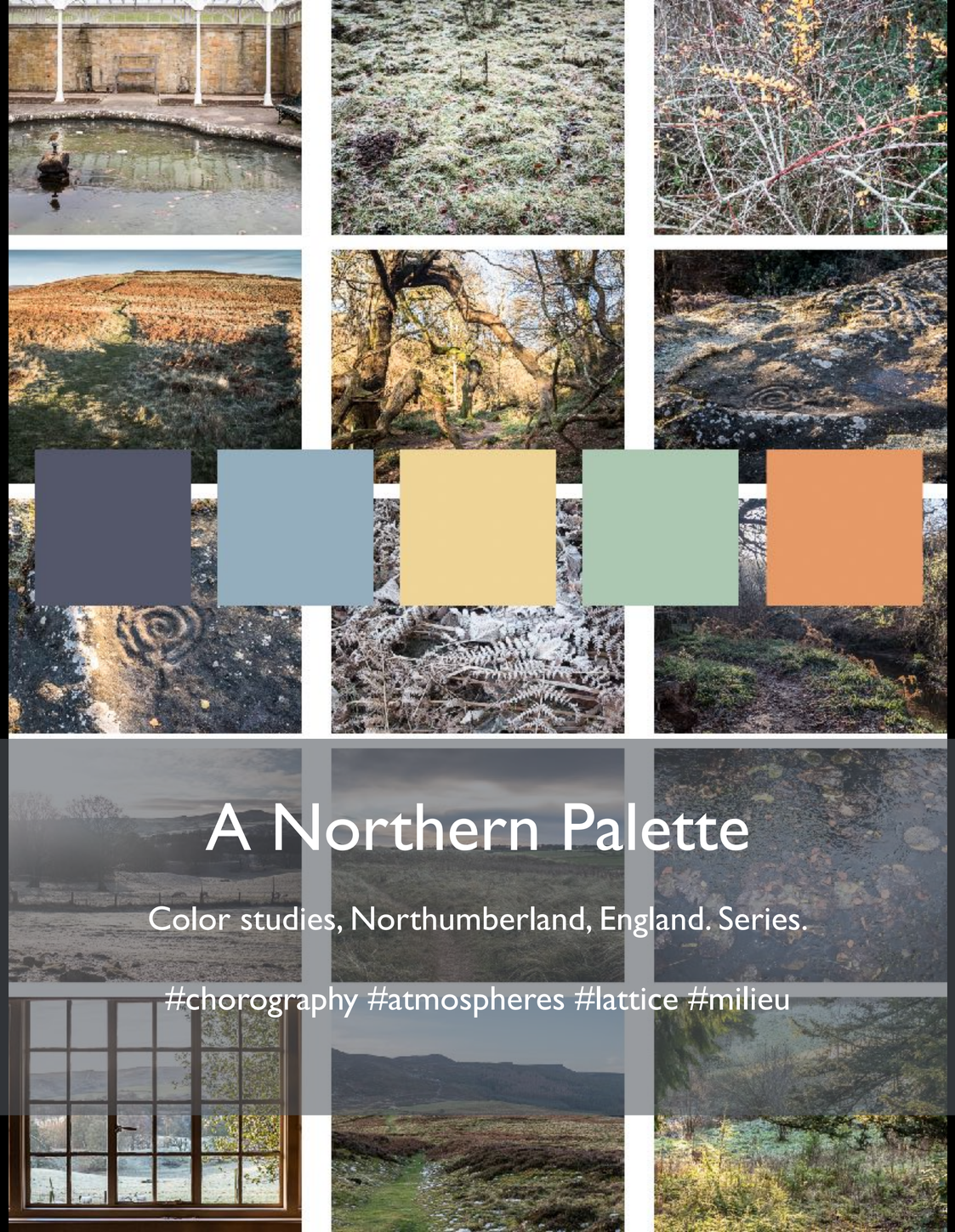
In the reactions of light-sensitive silver salt grains to exposure to light one sees forms of figures and faces, separating background from subject.

An archaeologist sees and feels a grave-cut in the colors and textures of excavated earth surface.

And do we not indeed see the forms of faces and figures in trees and rocks?

Things becoming other.





A Northern Palette

Color studies, Northumberland, England. Series.

#chorography #atmospheres #lattice #milieu

Cloud Studies with Monument

North Sea. After John Constable's cloud studies1821. Series.

#atmospheres #milieu #kairos #figure-ground #in the wake #IRIS #chorography

Cloud Studies with Monument — behind the scenes

North Sea. After John Constable's cloud studies1821. Series.

#atmospheres #milieu #kairos #figure-ground #in the wake #IRIS #chorography

An archaeologist might come upon an unexpected discovery.
A photographer judges when to release a shutter on a moment before the camera.

Kairos is a key in archaeological and photographic engagement and mediation — kairos is actuality, the moment when things come together, in a flash of insight, of past and present, of detail and vista, figure and ground, when things fall into place in a decisive moment. Kairos is a kind of charged atmosphere of fleeting moments, comings-together.

Weather and atmosphere are key to chorography — the de-scription of milieu, of inhabitation, living systems, landscapes, seascapes.

IRIS, rainbow eye, is another divine messenger, mediator. With HERMES every message passes through thresholds, altered, tricked, delayed, misunderstood. With IRIS messages glint, sparkle, vanish; clarity is real, but fleeting, passing quickly on like clouds in northern skies.

In a series of extraordinary sketch studies of cloudy weather painted in 1821, John Constable seized such moments, freezing in paint their evanescence.

Sands of Time

Medieval farm buried in sand dunes in 16th century storms. Lindisfarne, Northumberland, England 2008.

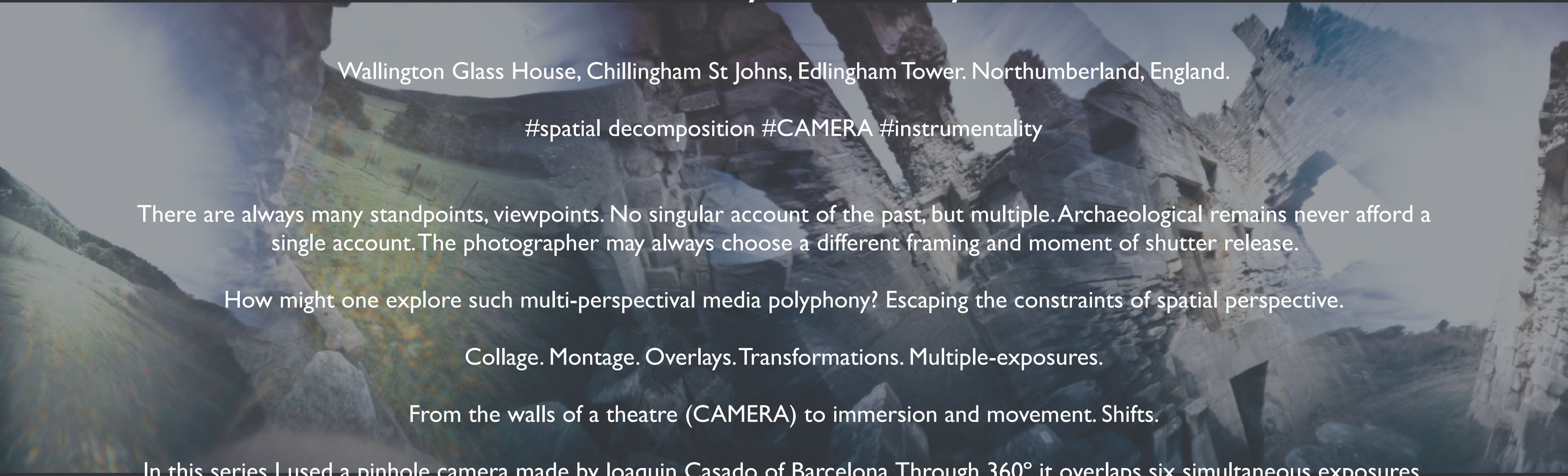
#figure-ground #in the wake

QUOQUO VERSUM — *every which way*

Wallington Glass House, Chillingham St Johns, Edlingham Tower. Northumberland, England. Series.

#spatial decomposition #CAMERA #instrumentality

QUOQUO VERSUM — *every which way* — behind the scenes



Wallington Glass House, Chillingham St Johns, Edlingham Tower. Northumberland, England.

#spatial decomposition #CAMERA #instrumentality

There are always many standpoints, viewpoints. No singular account of the past, but multiple. Archaeological remains never afford a single account. The photographer may always choose a different framing and moment of shutter release.

How might one explore such multi-perspectival media polyphony? Escaping the constraints of spatial perspective.

Collage. Montage. Overlays. Transformations. Multiple-exposures.

From the walls of a theatre (CAMERA) to immersion and movement. Shifts.

In this series I used a pinhole camera made by Joaquin Casado of Barcelona. Through 360° it overlaps six simultaneous exposures.

“Signs are taken for wonders”

Dryburgh Abbey, Scottish Borders 2011. By the grave of Sir Walter Scott.

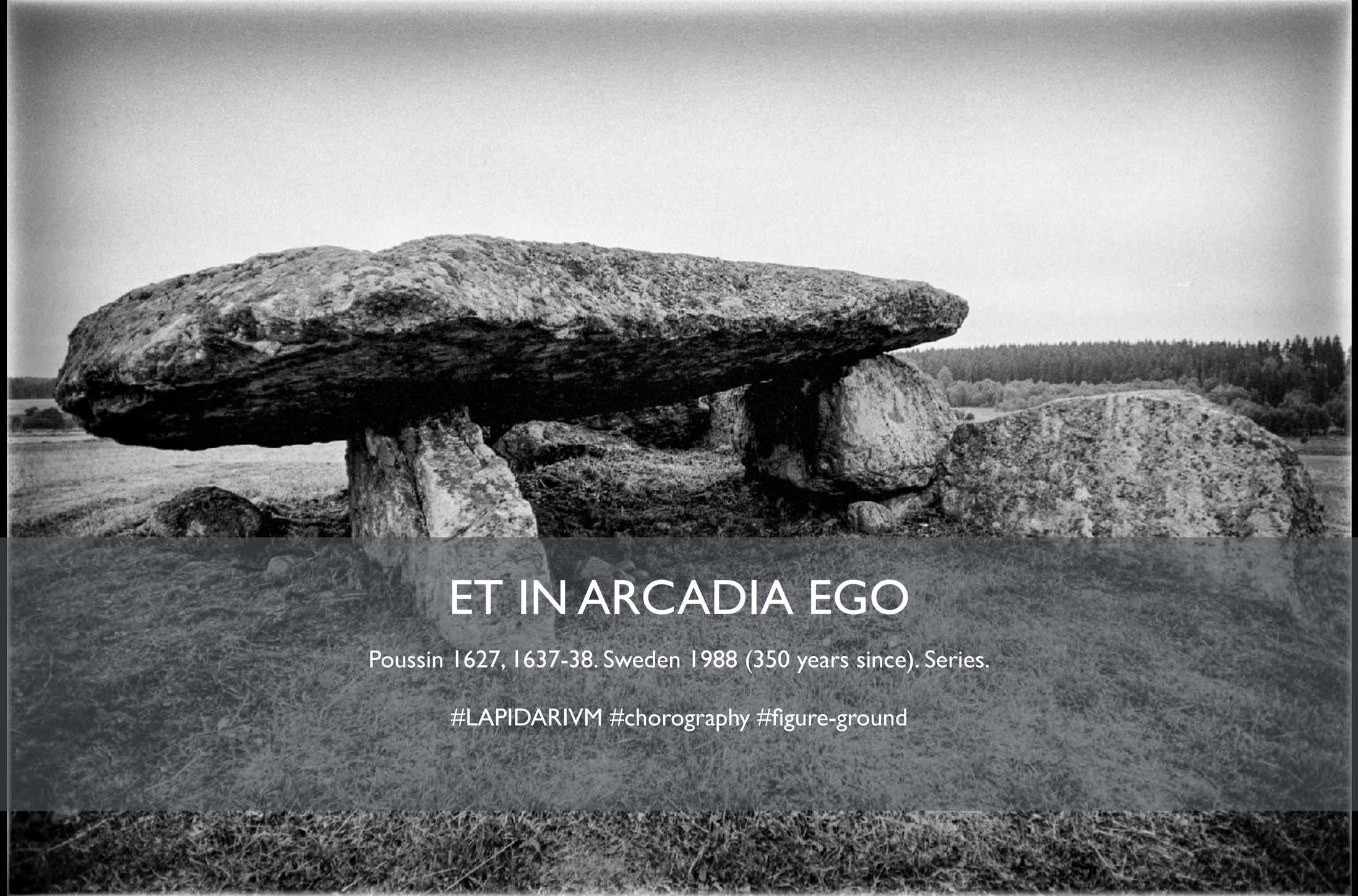
“We would see a sign”:
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
Swaddled with darkness.
T S Eliot, Gerontion, 1920.

#becoming stone #signal-noise #epigraphy

Microlandscape

ITINERARIVM SEPTENTRIONALE — a northern itinerary. Series.

#figure-ground #chorography #haecceity



ET IN ARCADIA EGO

Poussin 1627, 1637-38. Sweden 1988 (350 years since). Series.

#LAPIDARIVM #chorography #figure-ground

ET IN ARCADIA EGO — behind the scenes

Poussin 1627, 1637-38. Sweden 1988 (350 years since).

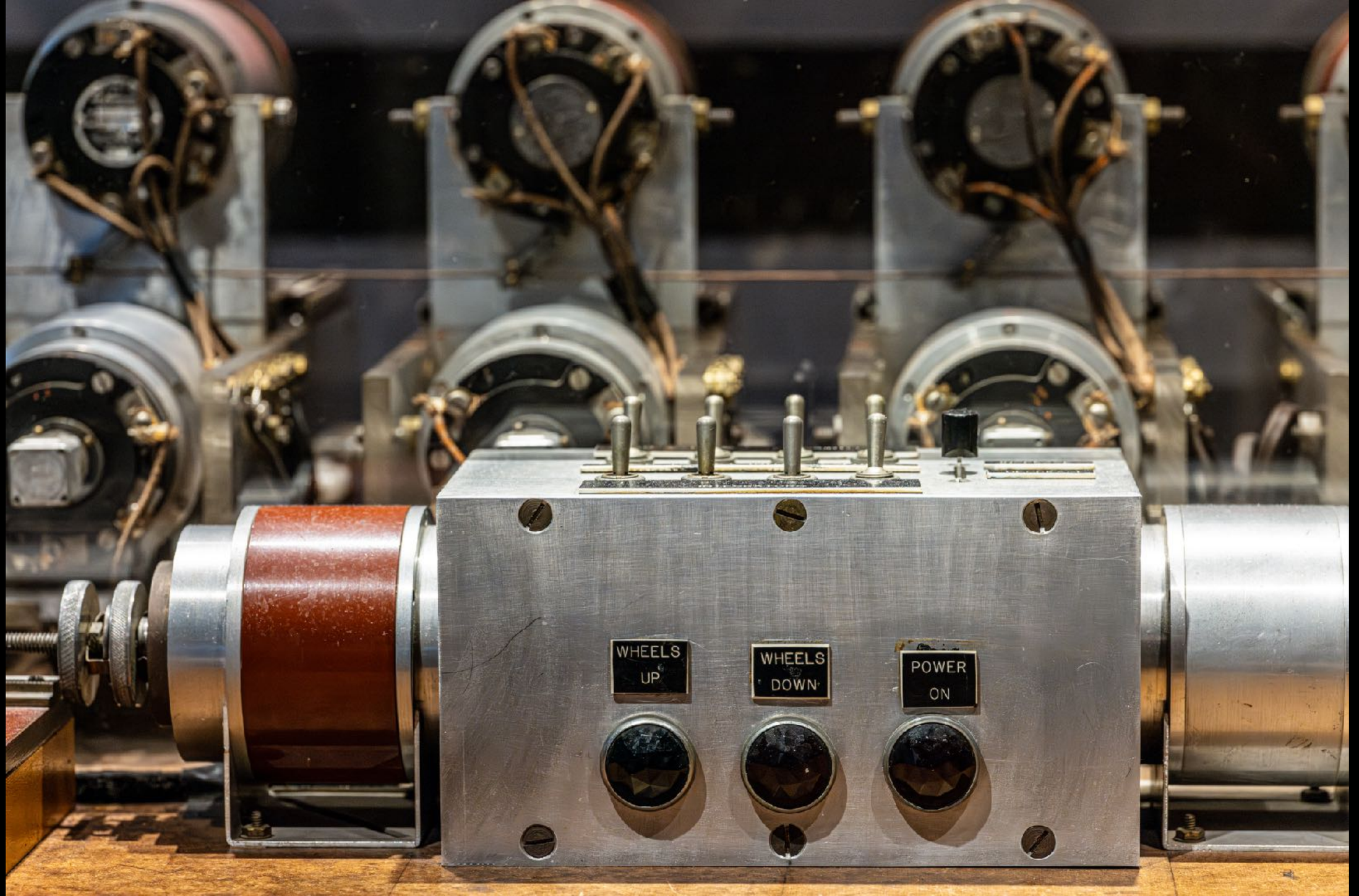
signal-noise #ontography #self-similarity #lattice #epigraphy #forensics

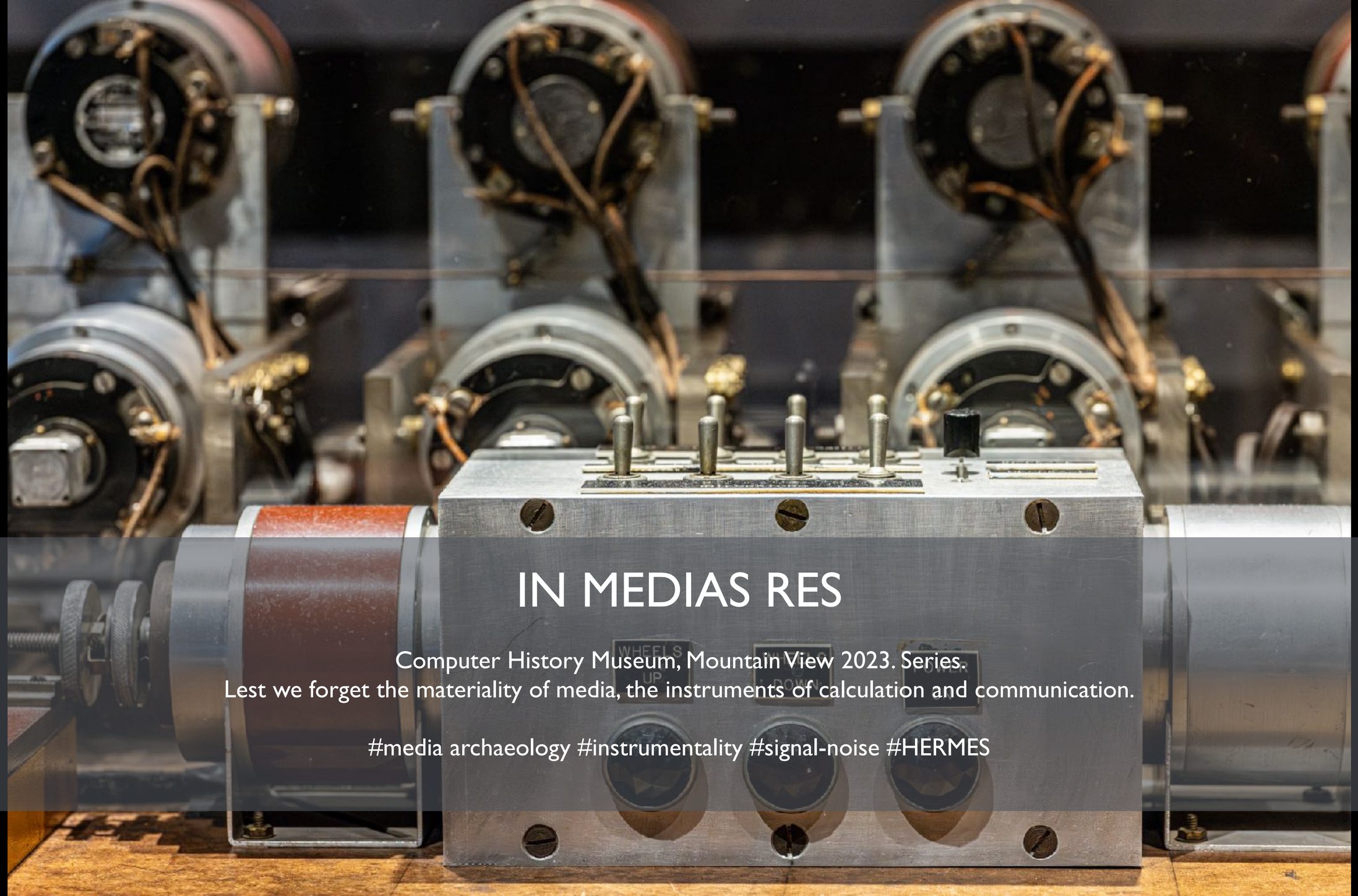
A survey of prehistoric monuments in Sweden in 1988 came, for me, in the wake of a painting that had long fascinated me — Nicolas Poussin's "*Les Bergers d'Arcadie*" — a pastoral encounter with a monument in the landscape. Three shepherds and an overseeing figure inspect an inscription upon a dressed stone structure — ET IN ARCADIA EGO — "even I am/was in Eden".

The whole scenario is a riddle-figure. Who are the figures? Who is the absent "I" (EGO)? Is this a tombstone? If so, where is the conventional address DIS MANIBUS — to the spirits of the dead? Is this a *memento mori*, a reminder that death dwells even in Arcadian Eden? Is this a pedestal missing its statue? And why is this monument set in a rural rather than urban setting?

Is this a celebration or a warning?

I am reminded of Walter Benjamin's famous observation about the street photography of Eugène Atget — empty of people, his photographs resemble those taken by police to document scenes of crime.


WHEELS
UP
WHEELS
DOWN
POWER
ON



IN MEDIAS RES

Computer History Museum, Mountain View 2023. Series.
Lest we forget the materiality of media, the instruments of calculation and communication.

#media archaeology #instrumentality #signal-noise #HERMES

Mare (without Foal)

Prehistoric standing stones, Hadrian's Wall, Northumberland, England.
Part of the series LAPIDARIVM SEPTENTRIONALE.

#becoming stone #figuration #chorography #figure-ground

England Coast Path
England Coast Path

ITINERARIVM SEPTENTRIONALE — Coast

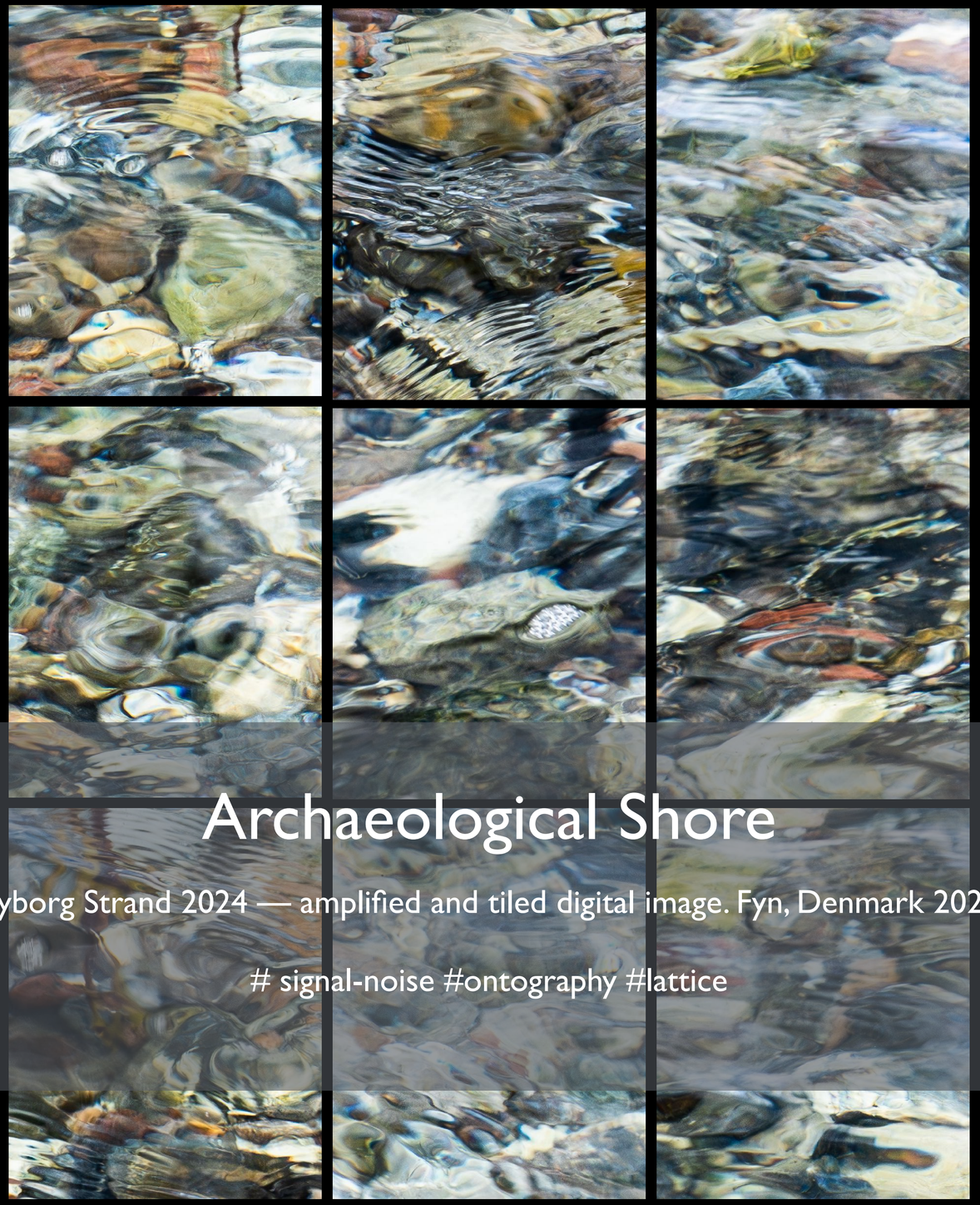
Three transects through a northern border — Northumberland, England. Series.

#NOSTOS #visit #chorography

Stratigraphic Seas

Siccar Point Berwickshire, Scotland, where, in 1788, on a boat trip with John Playfair and Sir James Hall, James Hutton realised that the angular unconformity of horizontal strata laid over vertical pointed to the immense age of the earth — an “abyss of time”.

#deep time #temporal topography #in the wake

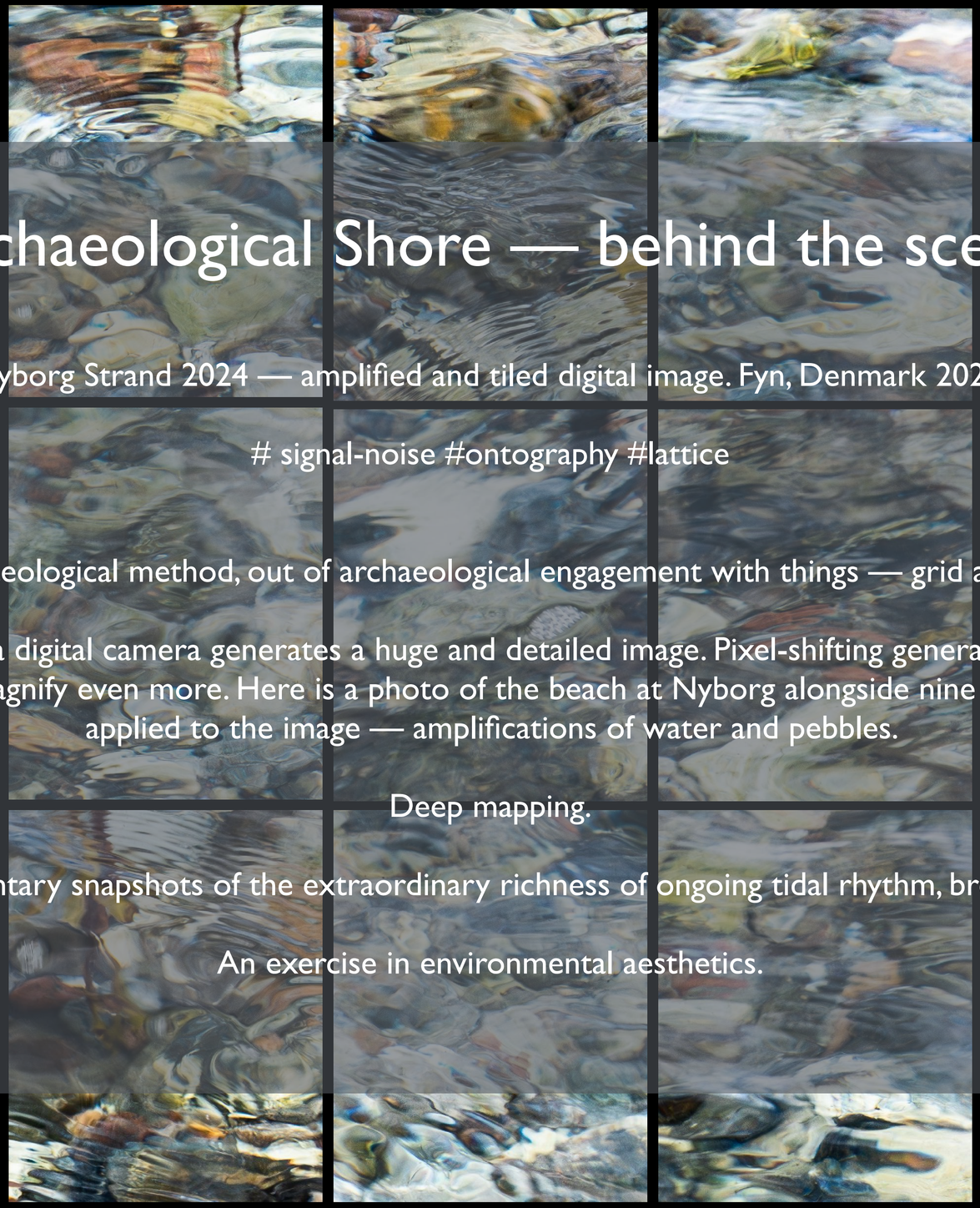


Archaeological Shore

Nyborg Strand 2024 — amplified and tiled digital image. Fyn, Denmark 2024.

signal-noise #ontography #lattice

Archaeological Shore — behind the scenes



Nyborg Strand 2024 — amplified and tiled digital image. Fyn, Denmark 2024.

signal-noise #ontography #lattice

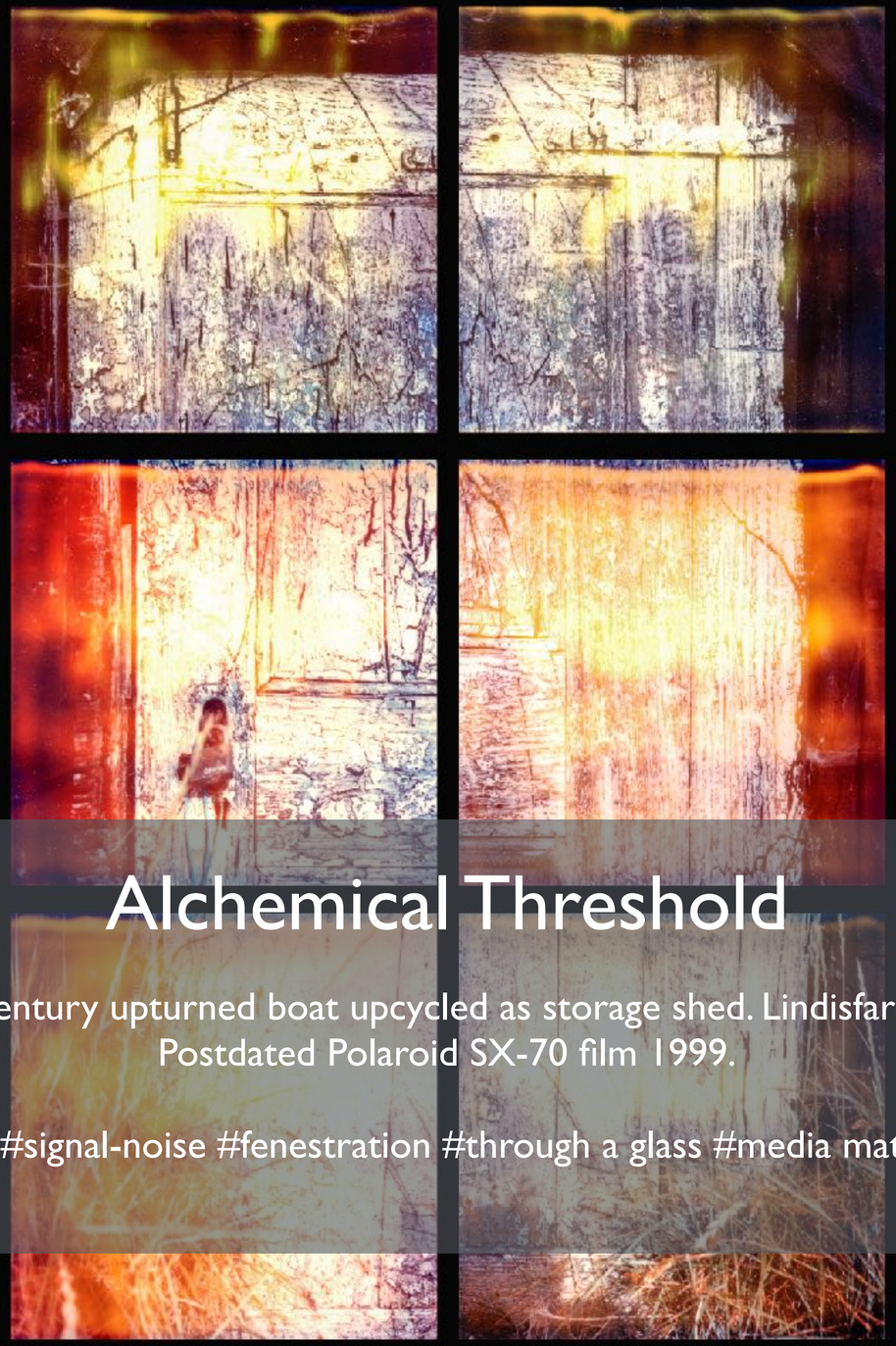
Here's a technique out of archaeological method, out of archaeological engagement with things — grid and amplify, section and magnify.

A 60 megapixel sensor on a digital camera generates a huge and detailed image. Pixel-shifting generates an even larger image. AI assisted enlargement can magnify even more. Here is a photo of the beach at Nyborg alongside nine tiles taken from a 10×8 grid applied to the image — amplifications of water and pebbles.

Deep mapping.

Not fractals, but momentary snapshots of the extraordinary richness of ongoing tidal rhythm, breathing, the noise of life.

An exercise in environmental aesthetics.

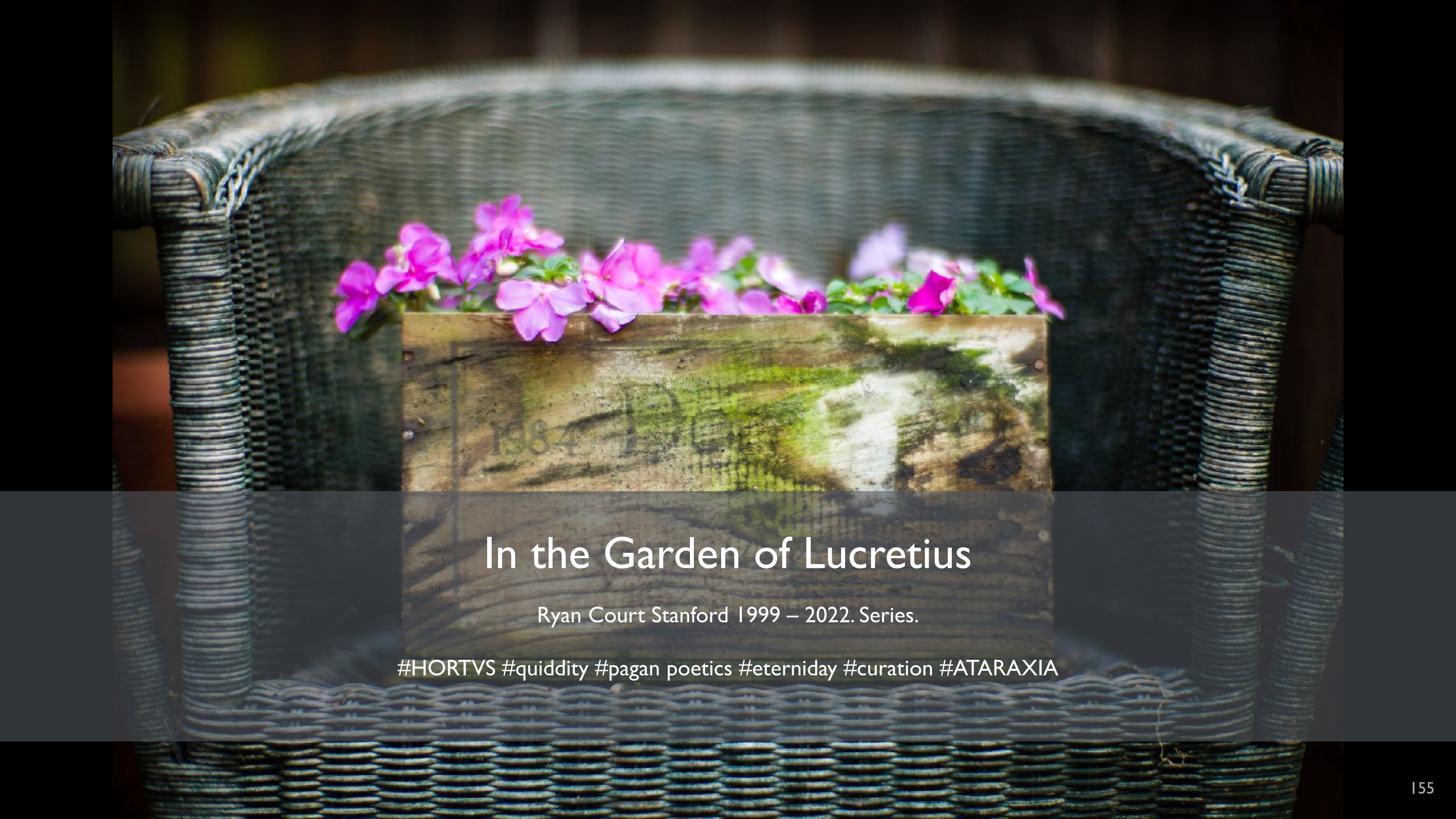


Alchemical Threshold

Old door on nineteenth-century upturned boat upcycled as storage shed. Lindisfarne, Northumberland 2005.
Postdated Polaroid SX-70 film 1999.

#instrumentality #signal-noise #fenestration #through a glass #media materialities #lattice

1984



In the Garden of Lucretius

Ryan Court Stanford 1999 – 2022. Series.

#HORTVS #quiddity #pagan poetics #eterniday #curation #ATARAXIA

In the Garden of Lucretius — behind the scenes

Ryan Court Stanford 1999 – 2022

#HORTVS #quiddity #pagan poetics #eterniday #curation #ATARAXIA

Myths and archetypes populate archaeology and photography.
Genres and scenarios. Characters and plots. Scenographies and dramaturgies.
Implied, made explicit. Familiar, strange. Some grow worn and tired. Others (re)emerge, come to (new) force and vitality.

The archetype of garden (HORTVS), of cultivated transfigured nature, is at the heart of Epicurean philosophy and its concept of ATARAXIA – a state of being in balance, of being one-with-lifeworld, reconciling what are conventionally distinguished as nature and culture. Such reconciliation is fraught the same tension that pervades the serenity of a garden
— the tension between order and entropy.

The archetype is thus a fruitful archaeographical focus — bringing together encounter and framing with temporal performances of curation and decay, material resistances to our efforts to order the world around us.

ΜΟΣΧΑΡΙ
ΓΙΑ ΚΥΜΑ
ΤΟ ΚΙΛΟ 3.70

3'20
320
3 08
5 50
150

ΡΕΤΣΙΝΑΔΙΚΟ
ΜΟΔΙΑΝΟ
Αφοι ΚΑΡΑΣΑΒΒΙΔΗ

Β.ΧΑΛΚΙΑΣ

ΠΑΤΣΑΣ
ΧΑΨ
ΚΡΕΟΠΩΛΕΙΟ
68

PARAGON
Fidel
Fidel
Fidel

ΔΙΚ 434180
ΤΡΙΚΑΛΙΝΑ
ΧΟΡΙΑΤΙΚΑ
ΠΡΑΣΣΑΤΑ
4,90

ΦΑΡΙΑ
ΖΑΧΑΝΙΚΑ
CEYLON TEA
LOVE
12
OUZO

EXIT
ΠΛΑΤΑΡΙΑ
050
ΣΥΚΩΤΙΑ
1,50
ΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΑ
1
ΣΟΥΒΛΑΚΙΑ
350
ΦΙΛΕΤΟ
350

ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΟ

AGORA

Kapani-Modiano market, from the late 15th century, Thessaloniki 2005. Series.

#AGORA #gathering #eterniday #haecceity #quiddity #VRBS ROMA #GENIVS LOCI

AGORA — behind the scenes

Kapani-Modiano market, from the late 15th century, Thessaloniki 2005.

#AGORA #gathering #eterniday #haecceity #quiddity #VRBS ROMA #GENIVS LOCI

In the temporal topography of Rome, VRBS ROMA, the eternal and archetypal city, one finds the forum, the AGORA — place of gathering, connection, transaction, debate, negotiation, decision.

In archaeographical studies one might look to textures, atmospheres, quiddities (qualities of experiences), in a sense of place (GENIVS LOCI), the haecceity (experiences of here-ness) of the AGORA. In such places one finds Joseph Cornell's "eterniday" — the eternal aspect of the merging of past and present in an everyday moment.

Charlie’s Garden

Colwell Bay, Northumberland, England. Charlie, so the story goes, tended a garden on top of the rock in the bay.
Part of the series LAPIDARIVM SEPTENTRIONALE.

#HORTVS #figure-ground #chorography

A Flight of Angels

St Cuthbert's church, Elsdon, Northumberland, England 2017. Series.

#angels #HERMES #becoming stone #making faces

A Flight of Angels— behind the scenes

St Cuthbert's church, Elsdon, Northumberland, England 2017.

#angels #HERMES #becoming stone #making faces

An archaeographical sensibility is attuned to spatial and temporal associations between past, present, and future. Remains and traces, care and conservation, record and transmission.

The archetypal figure who brings annunciation, who cares and connects, is the ANGEL.

The angel is HERMES — one who translates, carries messages, mediates, comes between gods and mortals, guides the dead to the underworld. An embodiment of communication, interference, signal and noise, networked being.

Nature Morte — Angel Face

Found in 1876 at the bottom of Coventina's Well by the Roman fort at Carrawburgh, Hadrian's Wall, Northumberland, England.
Part of the series LAPIDARIVM SEPTENTRIONALE.

#making faces #HERMES #angels #nature morte

Tower in the North

Dunstanburgh, Etal, Northumberland, England 1988. Series.

#TVRRIS #milieu #atmosphere

Tower in the North — behind the scenes

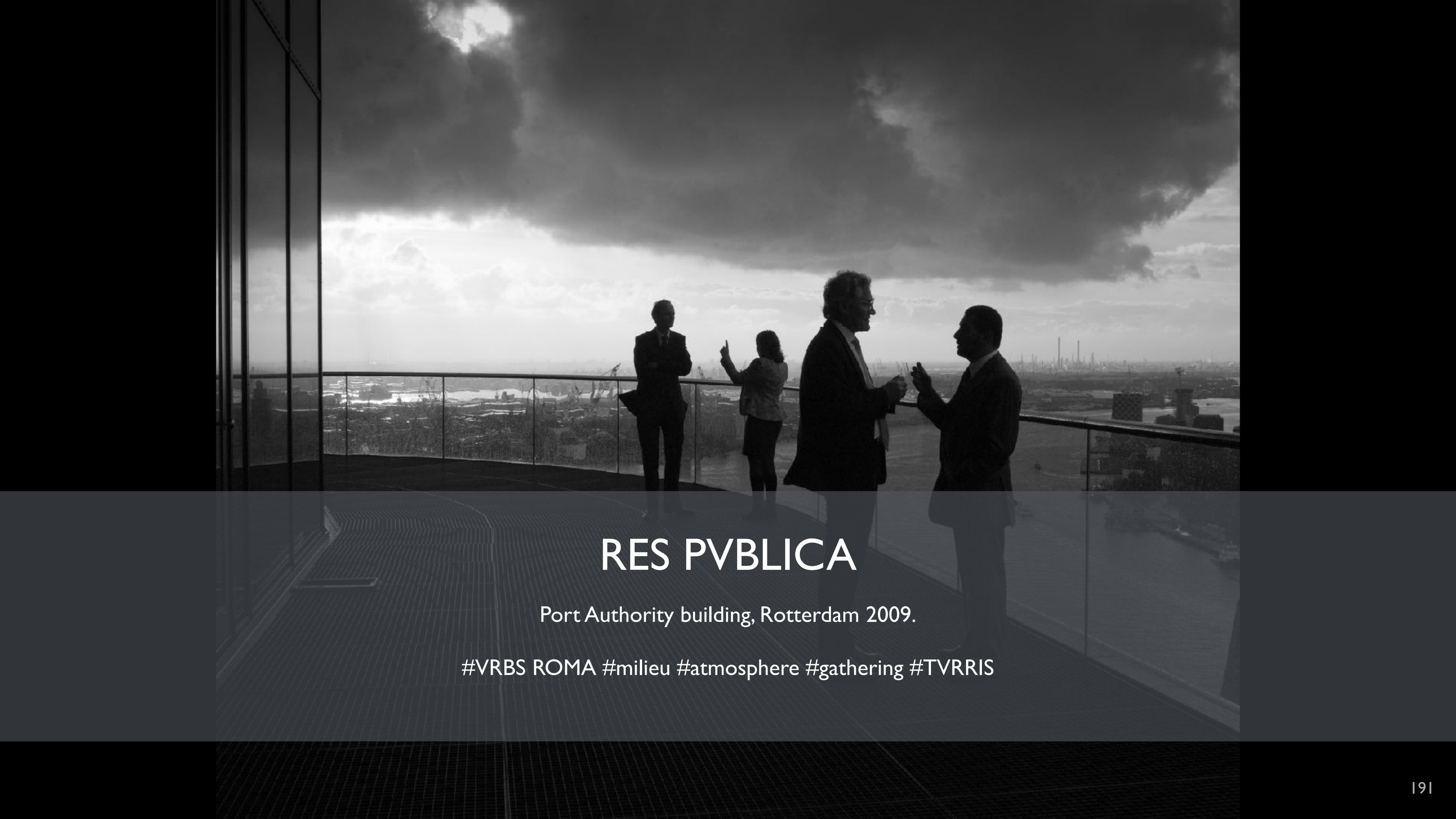
Dunstanburgh, Etal, Northumberland, England 1988.

#TVRRIS #milieu #atmosphere

There emerged in eighteenth-century Europe a distinctively modern aesthetic of ruin, part of an antiquarian and romantic sensibility.

This series aims to question, reconfigure, reanimate the picturesque castle ruin in the terms of an archetype of the tower (TVRRIS).

Formal principles of structure and texture — height, skeletal architecture, perforated planes, exposed stairways, intramural rooms.
Affordances — observing overview, isolating, commanding, reaching, taking flight, falling.
Environment, milieu — vista, connections between land and sky, earthbound mists, soaring clouds.
Associations — Babel, prehistoric standing stones, palace, prison.



RES PVBLICA

Port Authority building, Rotterdam 2009.

#VRBS ROMA #milieu #atmosphere #gathering #TVRRIS

RES PVBLICA — behind the scenes

Rotterdam 2009.

#VRBS ROMA #milieu #atmosphere #gathering #TVRRIS

Street photography and urban archaeology are significant genres in their resepctive fields.

In an archaeographical sensibility one might tune into textures and atmospheres, forms and structures of presence-absence, past-present dynamics in the noise and mess of street and city, in the archetype of the city — Rome, VRBS ROMA.

Crowds. Detritus. Garbage. The figure that stands out. Aspirations to monumentality. Sifting through the debris. Navigating crowds.

Towers, street grids, building works, undergrounds.

And the gathering of the body politic — RES PVBLICA — republic, Leviathan.

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ADVENTVS ROMAM

Lubbock, Texas 2023.

#VRBS ROMA #visit

The Wall in the North

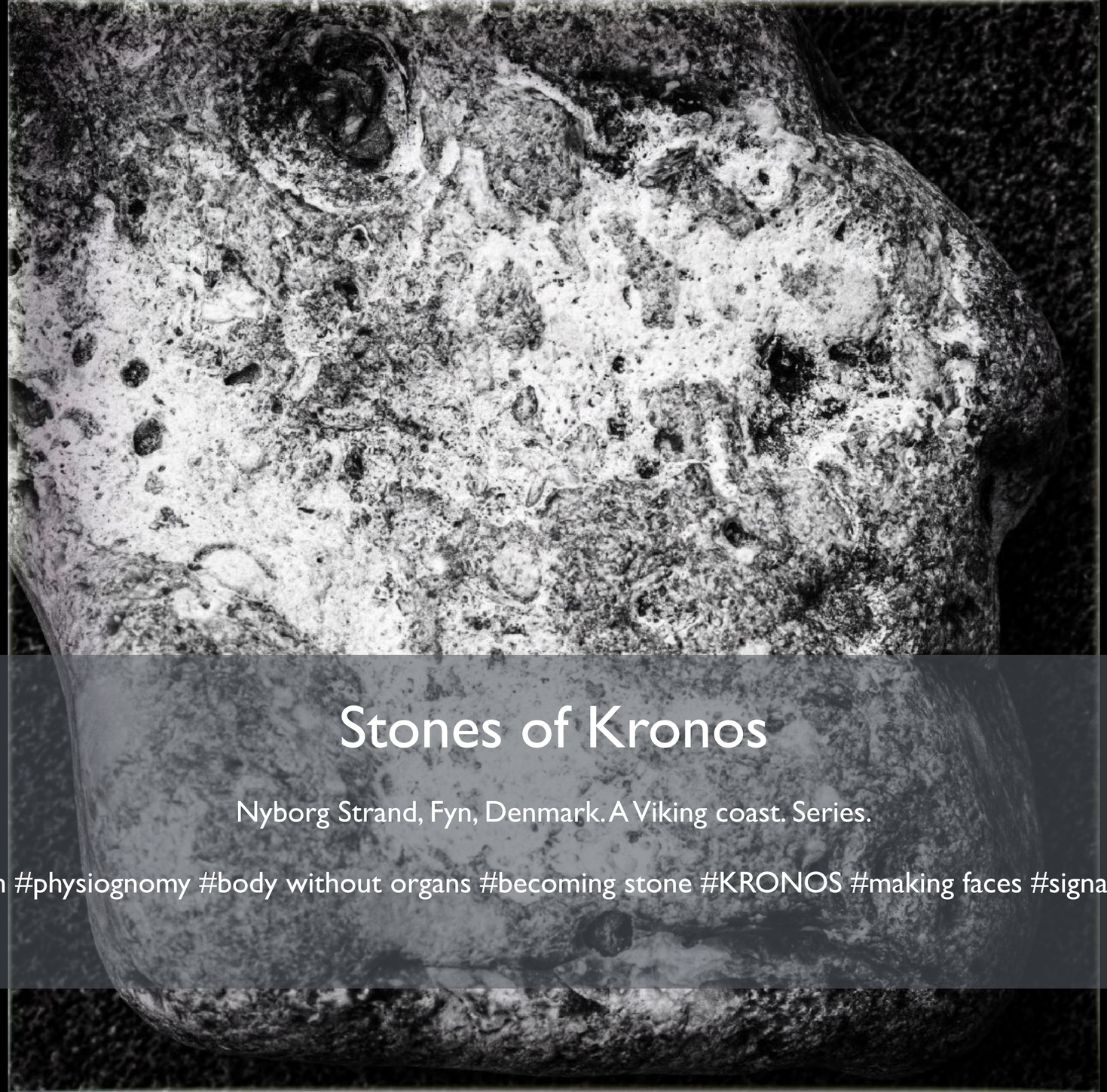
MVRVS ADRIANVS — Hadrian's Wall, Northumberland, England. Series.

#borders #smuggling #VRBS ROMA

So werd ich Todten-Kopff ein Englisch Antlitz seyn

"… so will I, a death's head, become the face of an angel …"
Daniel Casper von Lohenstein, Redender Todten-Kopff Herrn Matthaus Mächners
(The Talking Skull of Herr Mätthaus Machen), 1662

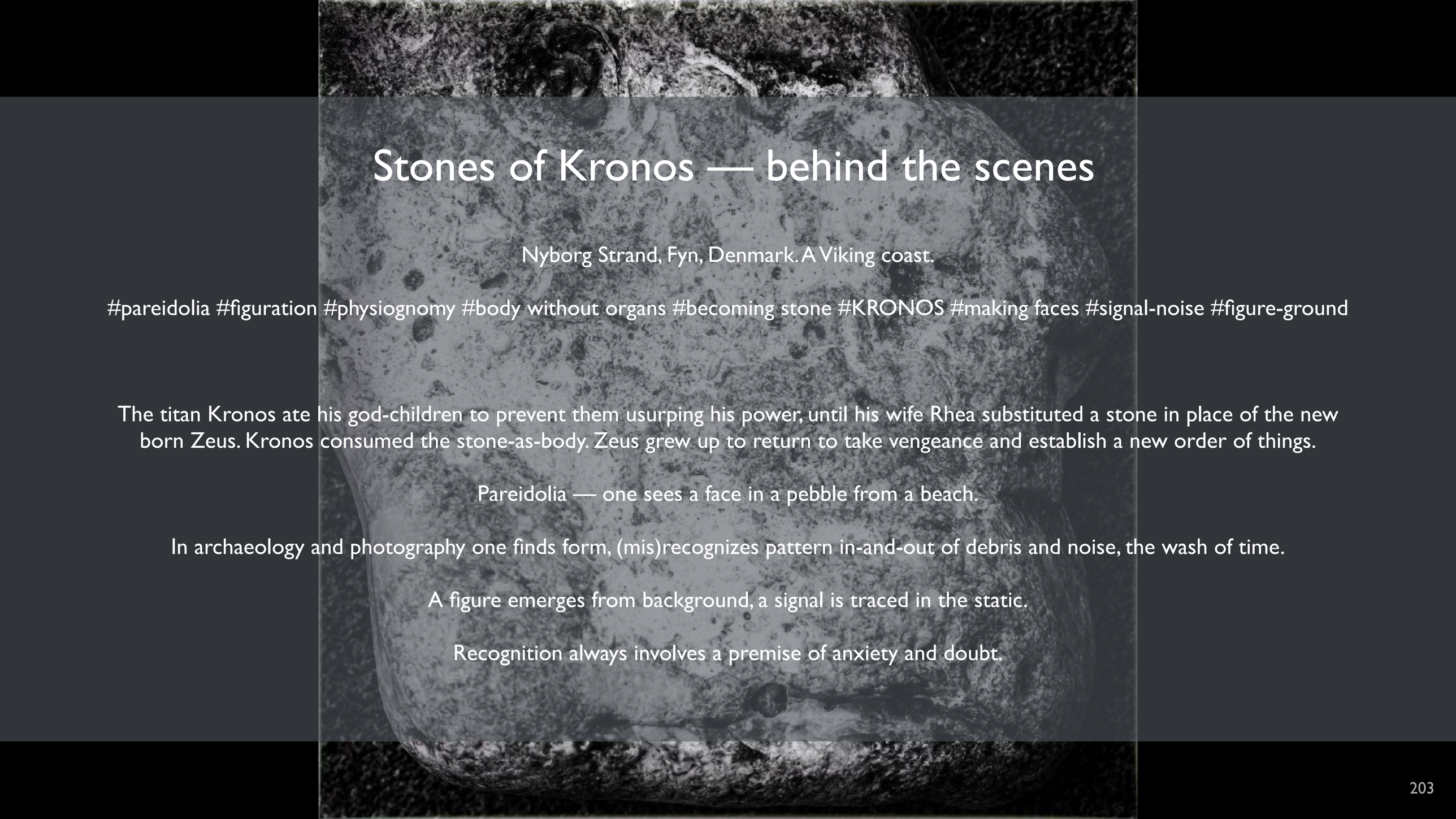
#becoming stone #angels #HERMES #making faces



Stones of Kronos

Nyborg Strand, Fyn, Denmark. A Viking coast. Series.

#pareidolia #figuration #physiognomy #body without organs #becoming stone #KRONOS #making faces #signal-noise #figure-ground



Stones of Kronos — behind the scenes

Nyborg Strand, Fyn, Denmark. A Viking coast.

#pareidolia #figuration #physiognomy #body without organs #becoming stone #KRONOS #making faces #signal-noise #figure-ground

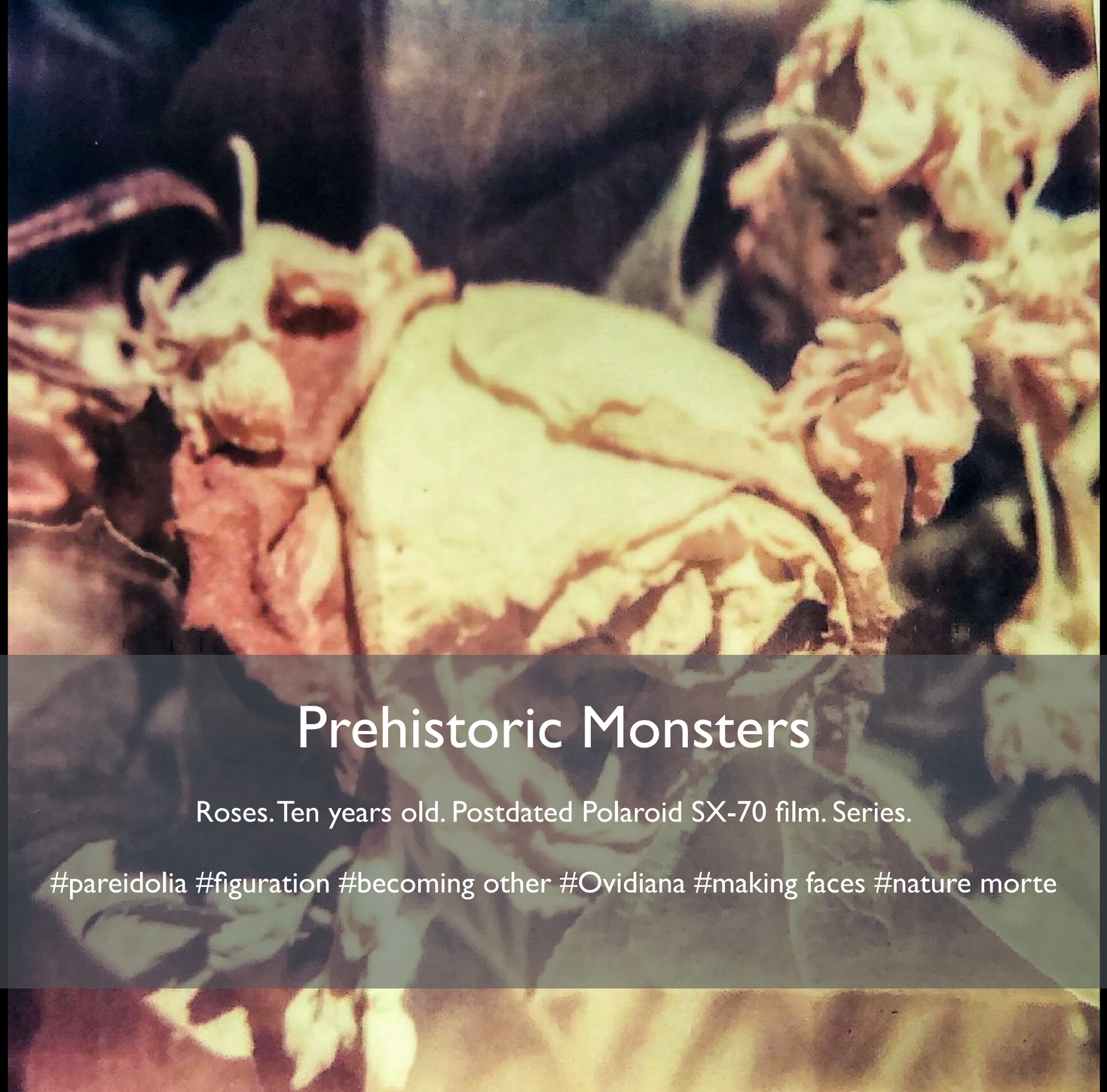
The titan Kronos ate his god-children to prevent them usurping his power, until his wife Rhea substituted a stone in place of the new born Zeus. Kronos consumed the stone-as-body. Zeus grew up to return to take vengeance and establish a new order of things.

Pareidolia — one sees a face in a pebble from a beach.

In archaeology and photography one finds form, (mis)recognizes pattern in-and-out of debris and noise, the wash of time.

A figure emerges from background, a signal is traced in the static.

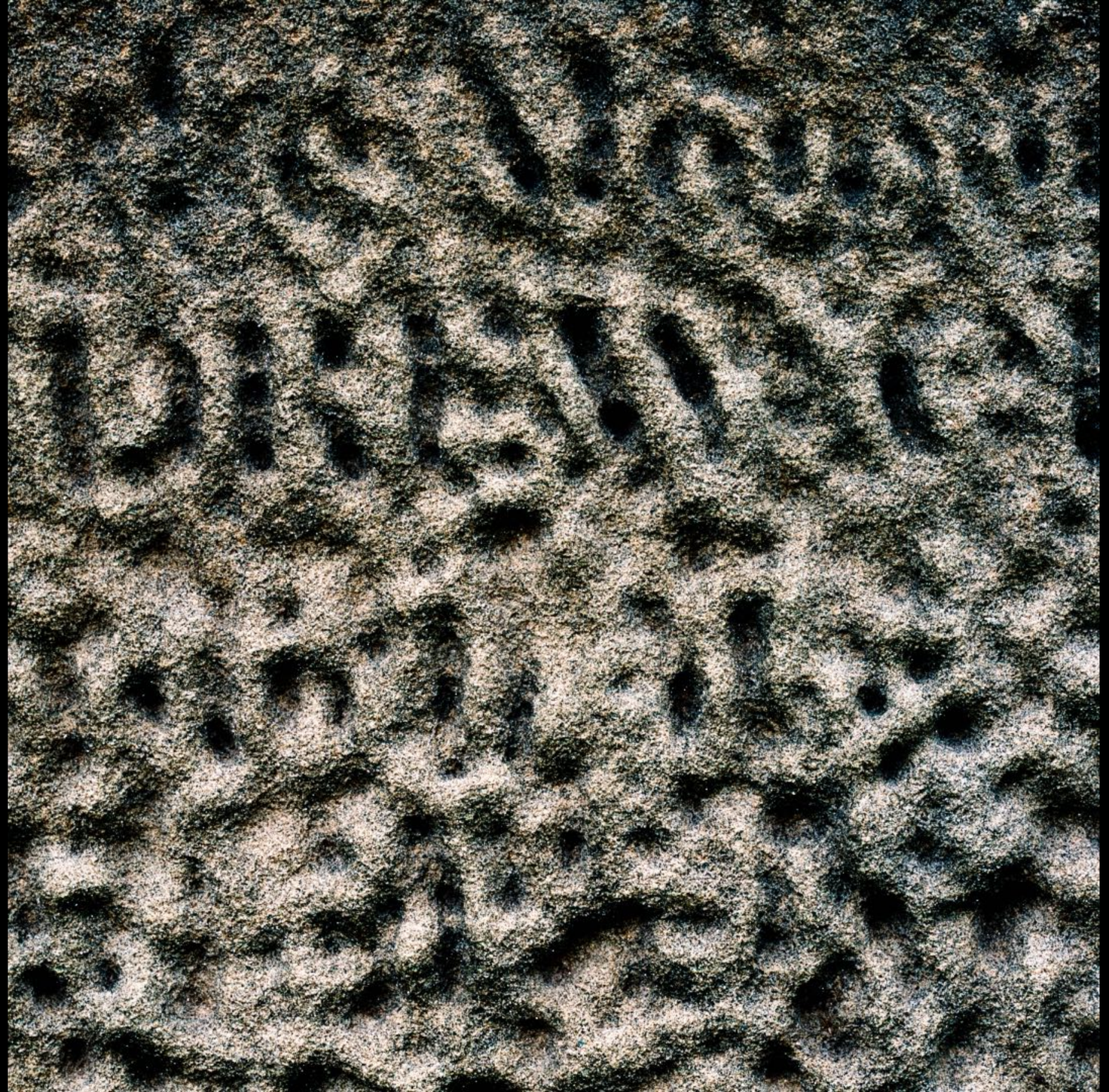
Recognition always involves a premise of anxiety and doubt.

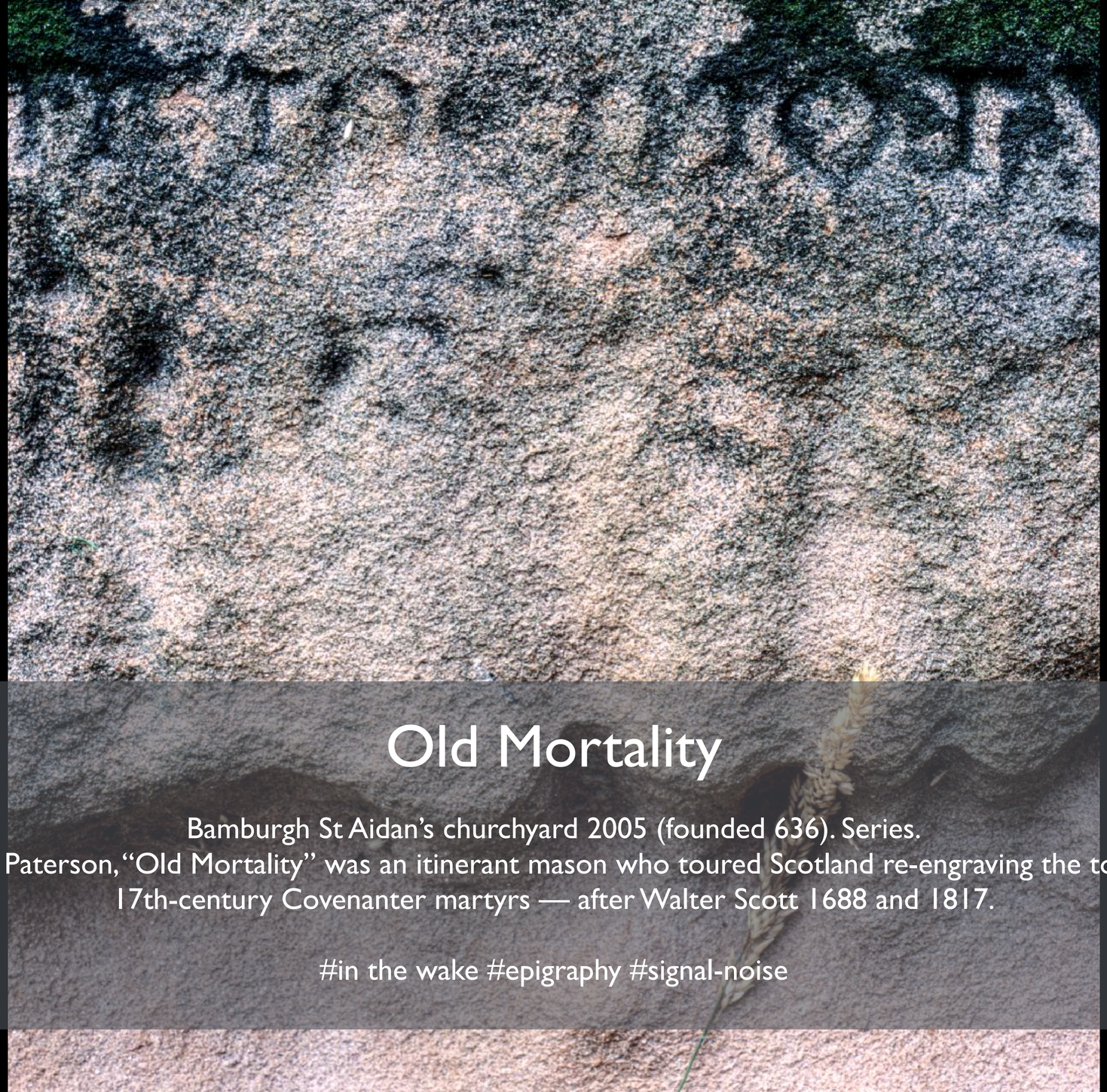


Prehistoric Monsters

Roses. Ten years old. Postdated Polaroid SX-70 film. Series.

#pareidolia #figuration #becoming other #Ovidiana #making faces #nature morte





Old Mortality

Bamburgh St Aidan's churchyard 2005 (founded 636). Series.
Robert Paterson, "Old Mortality" was an itinerant mason who toured Scotland re-engraving the tombs of 17th-century Covenanter martyrs — after Walter Scott 1688 and 1817.

#in the wake #epigraphy #signal-noise

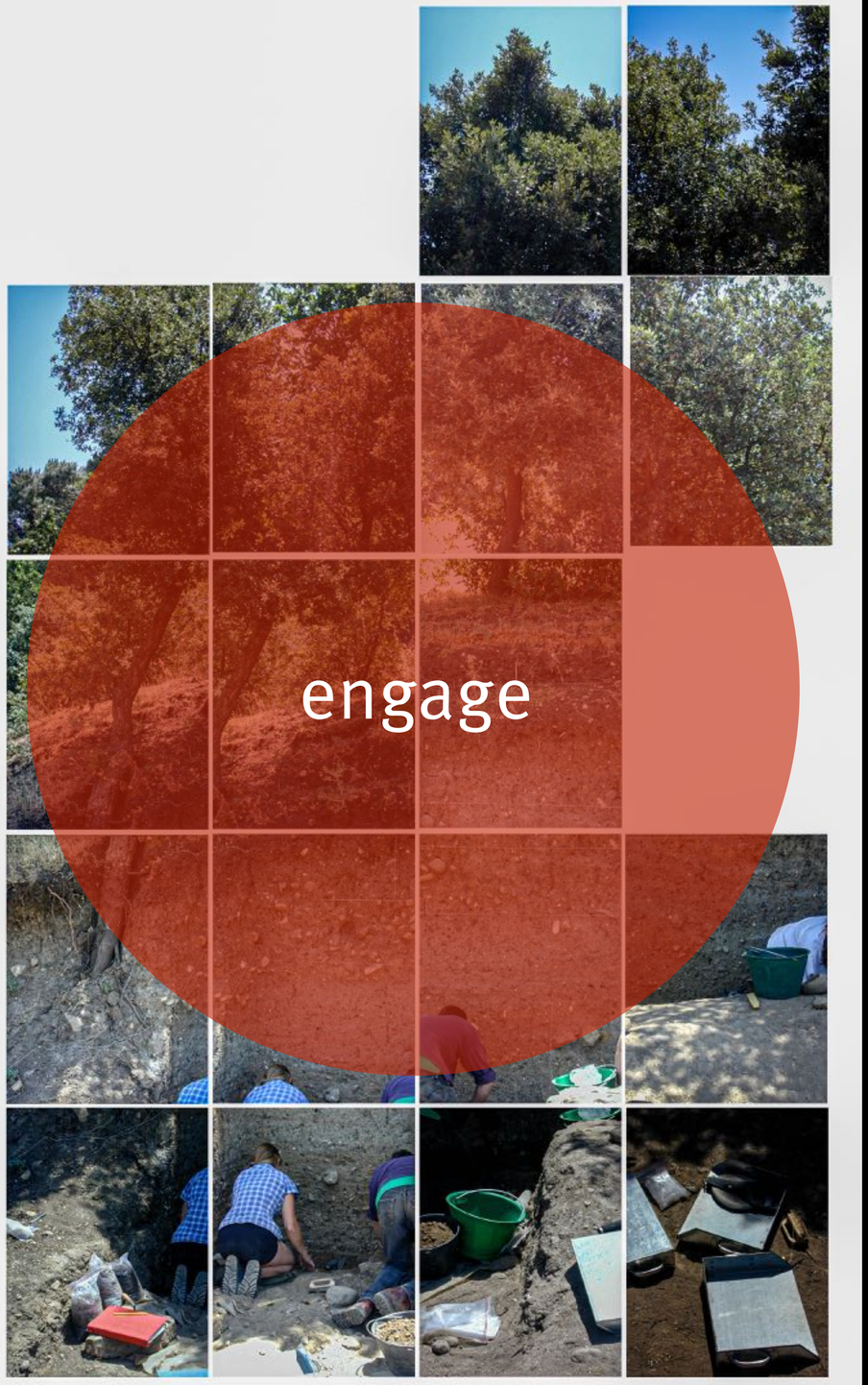
2. Archaeology and Photowork — Common Features

modes of engagement with remains, their arrangement, transformation

within an archaeological *sensibility*

what do archaeologists do? — they work with remains

what is archaeology?


engage

encounter
visit
interrupt
intervene

engage

arrange

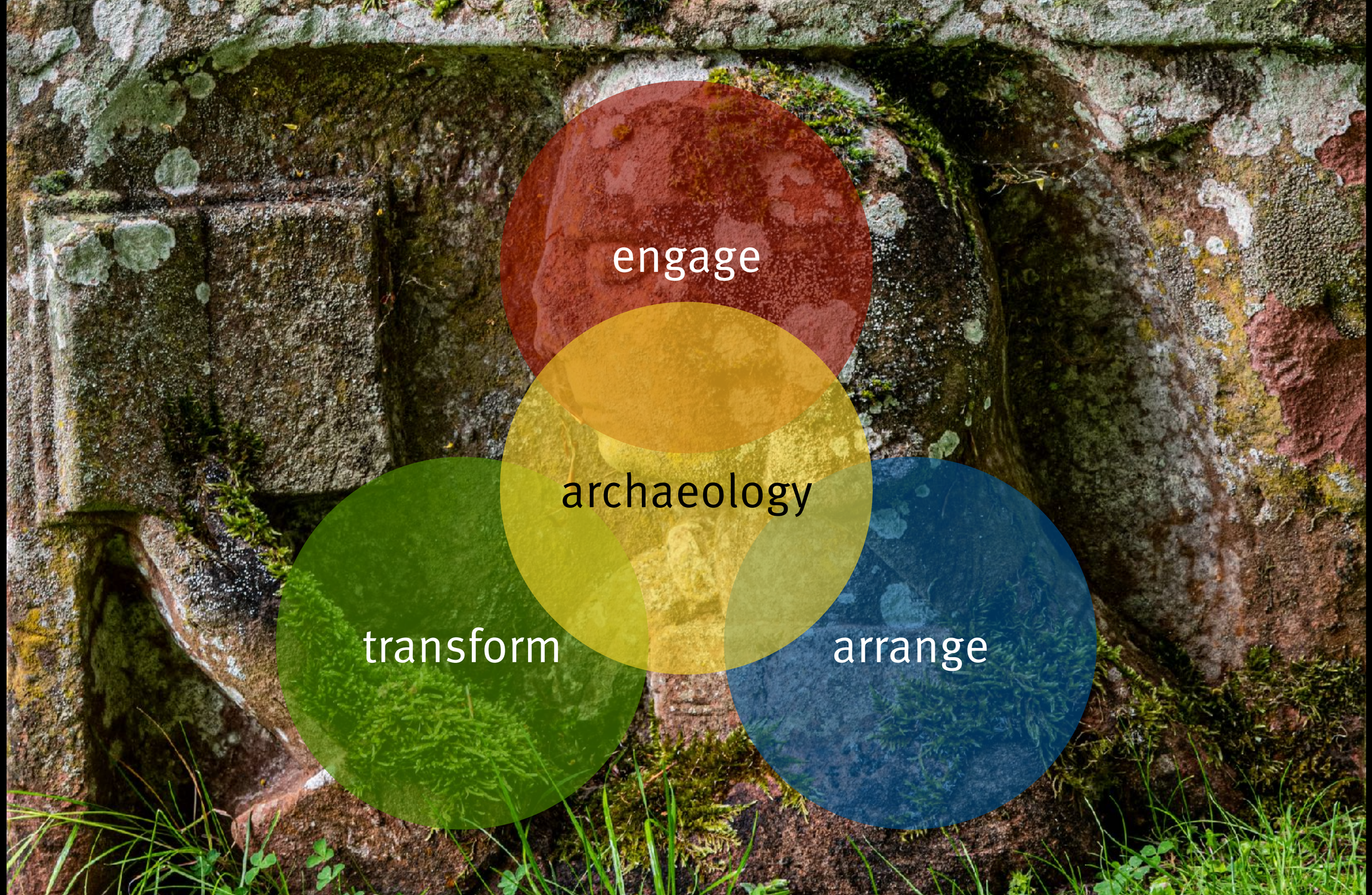
sample
select
gather
assemble
scaffold

arrange

transform

document
conserve
signify
ruin
metamorphosis

transform


engage
archaeology
transform
arrange

modes of engagement, arrangement, transformation

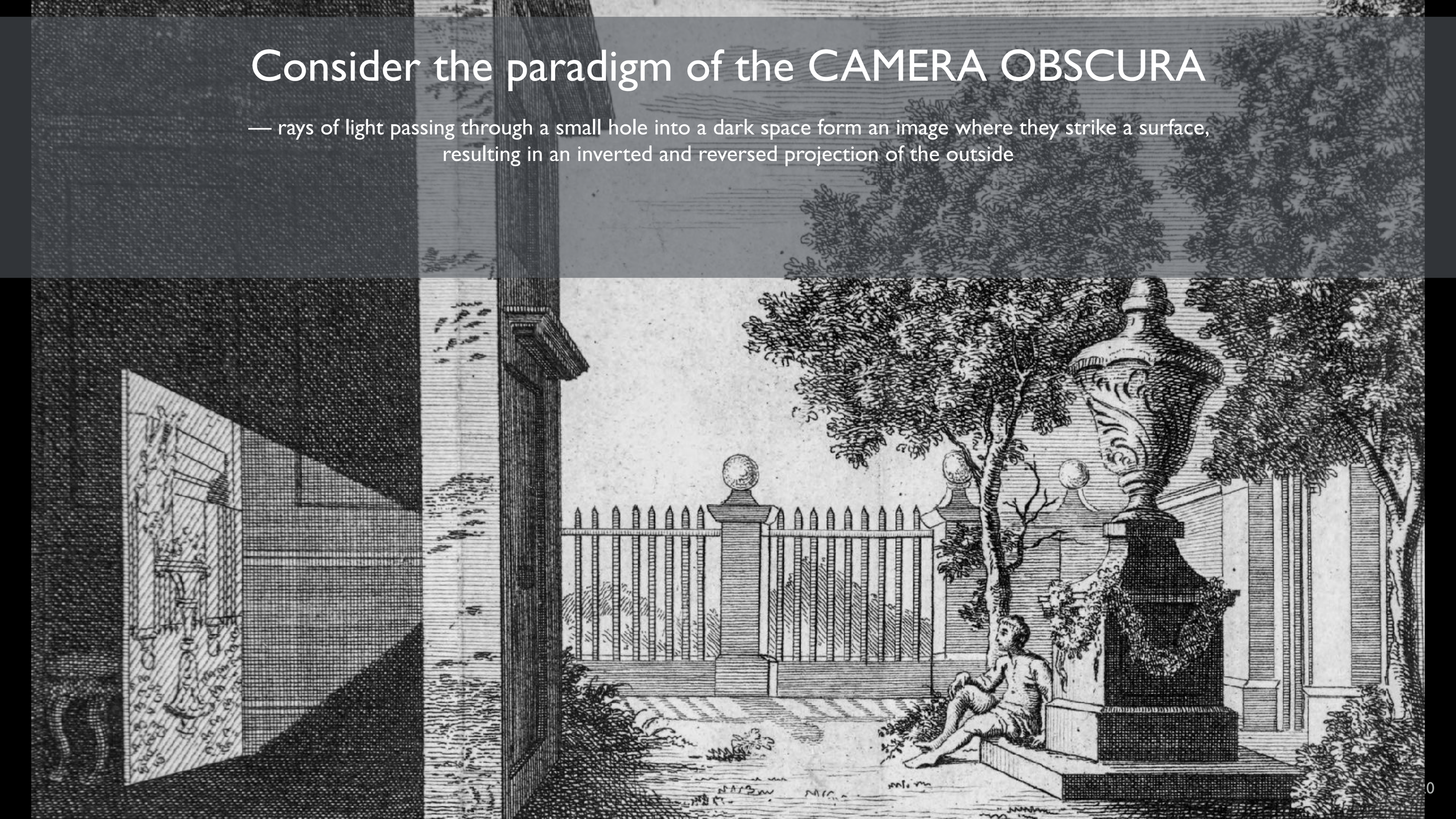
where the camera is a box with a window on the world
a room

(quite literally — CAMERA is Latin for “room”)

what is photography?

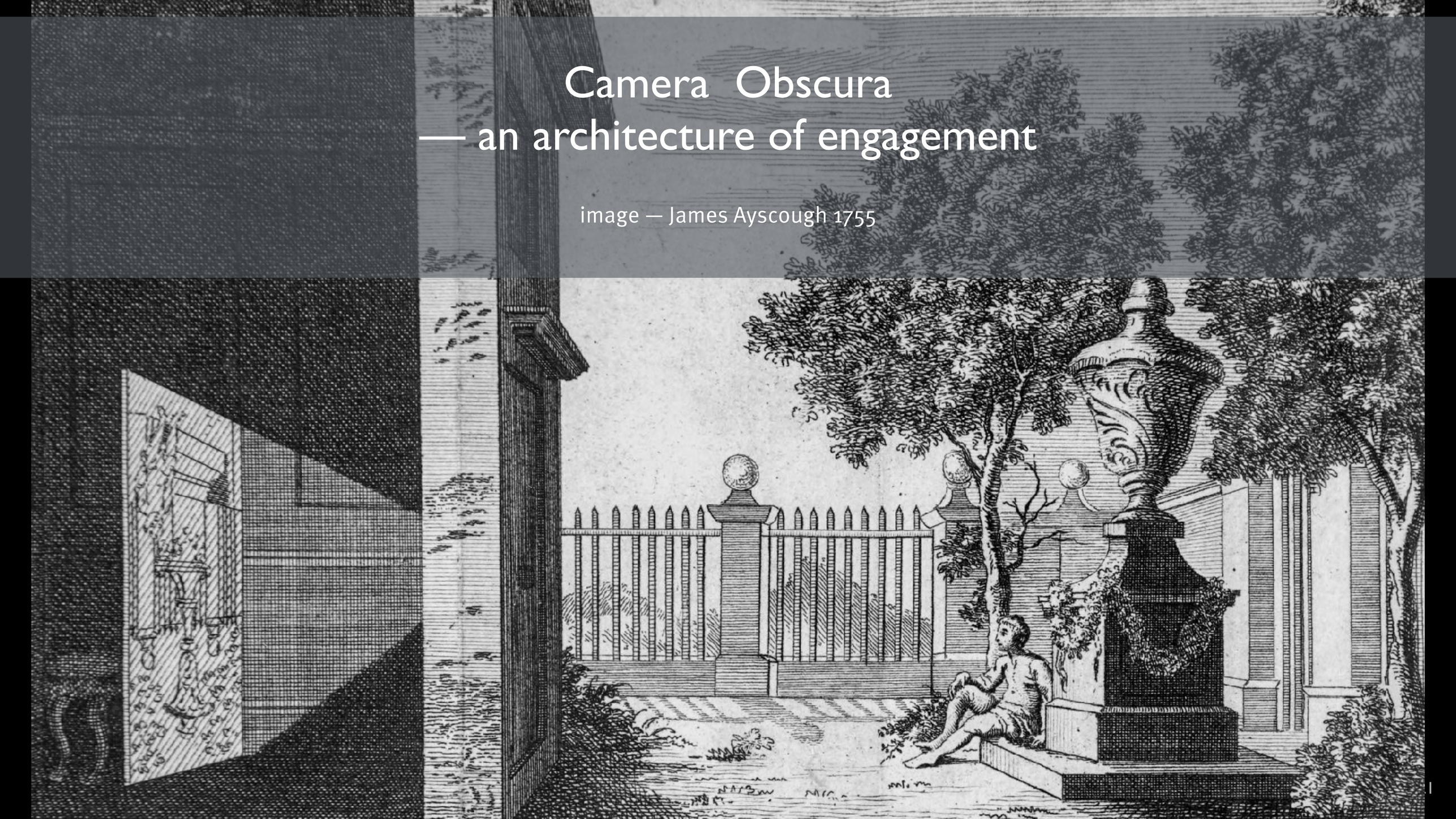
Consider the paradigm of the CAMERA OBSCURA

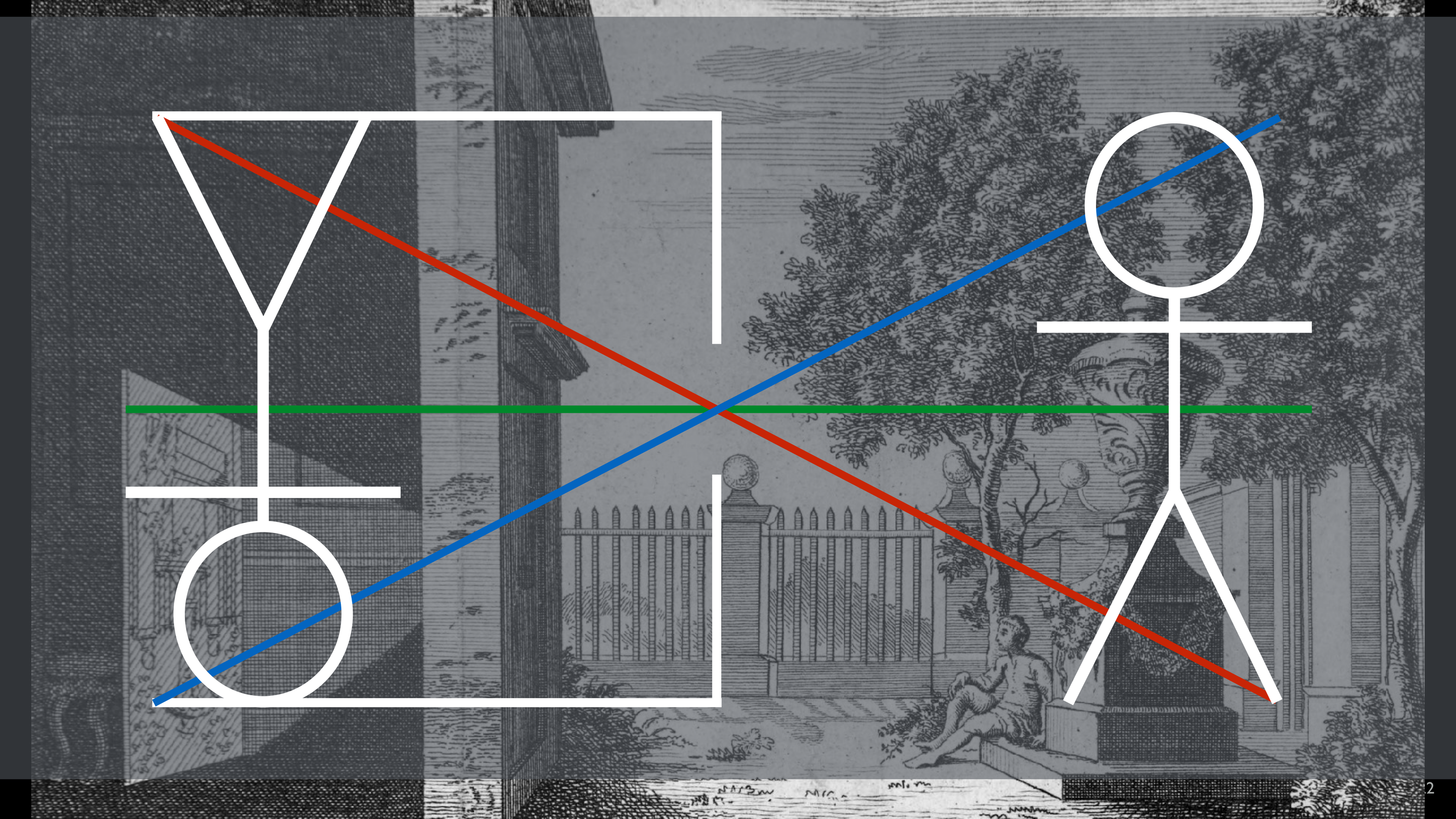
— rays of light passing through a small hole into a dark space form an image where they strike a surface, resulting in an inverted and reversed projection of the outside

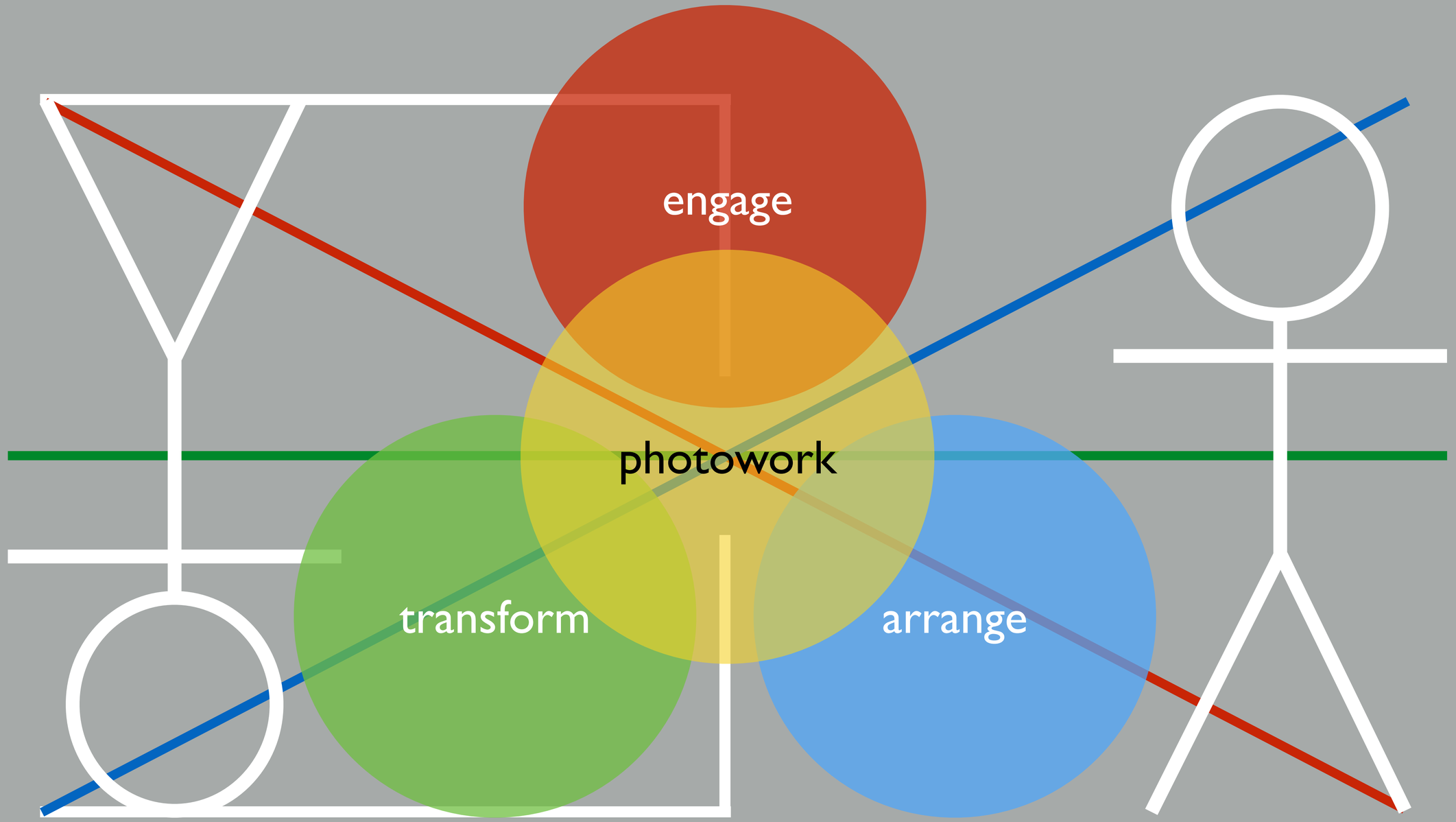


Camera Obscura
— an architecture of engagement

image — James Ayscough 1755





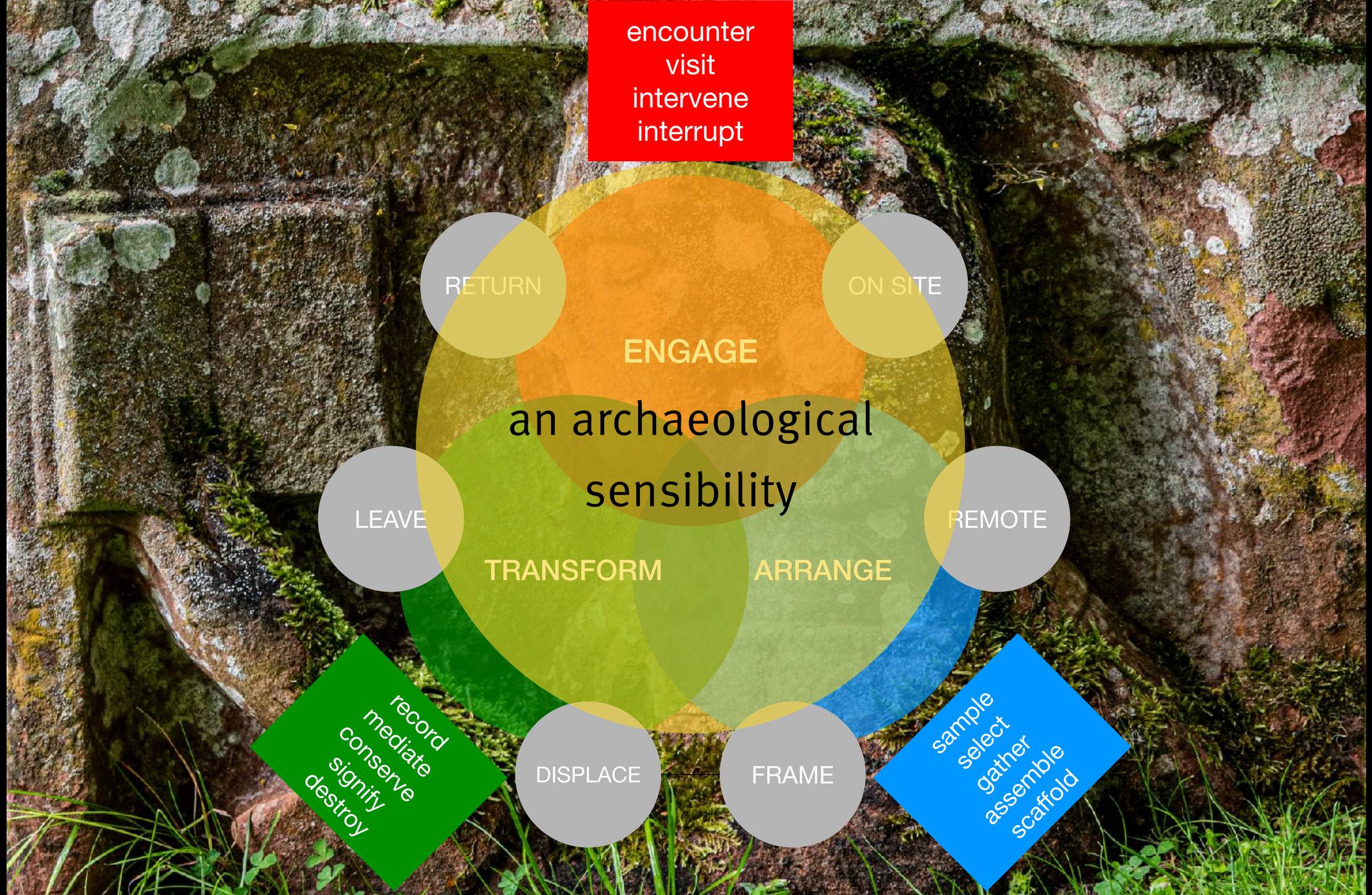

engage
photowork
transform
arrange

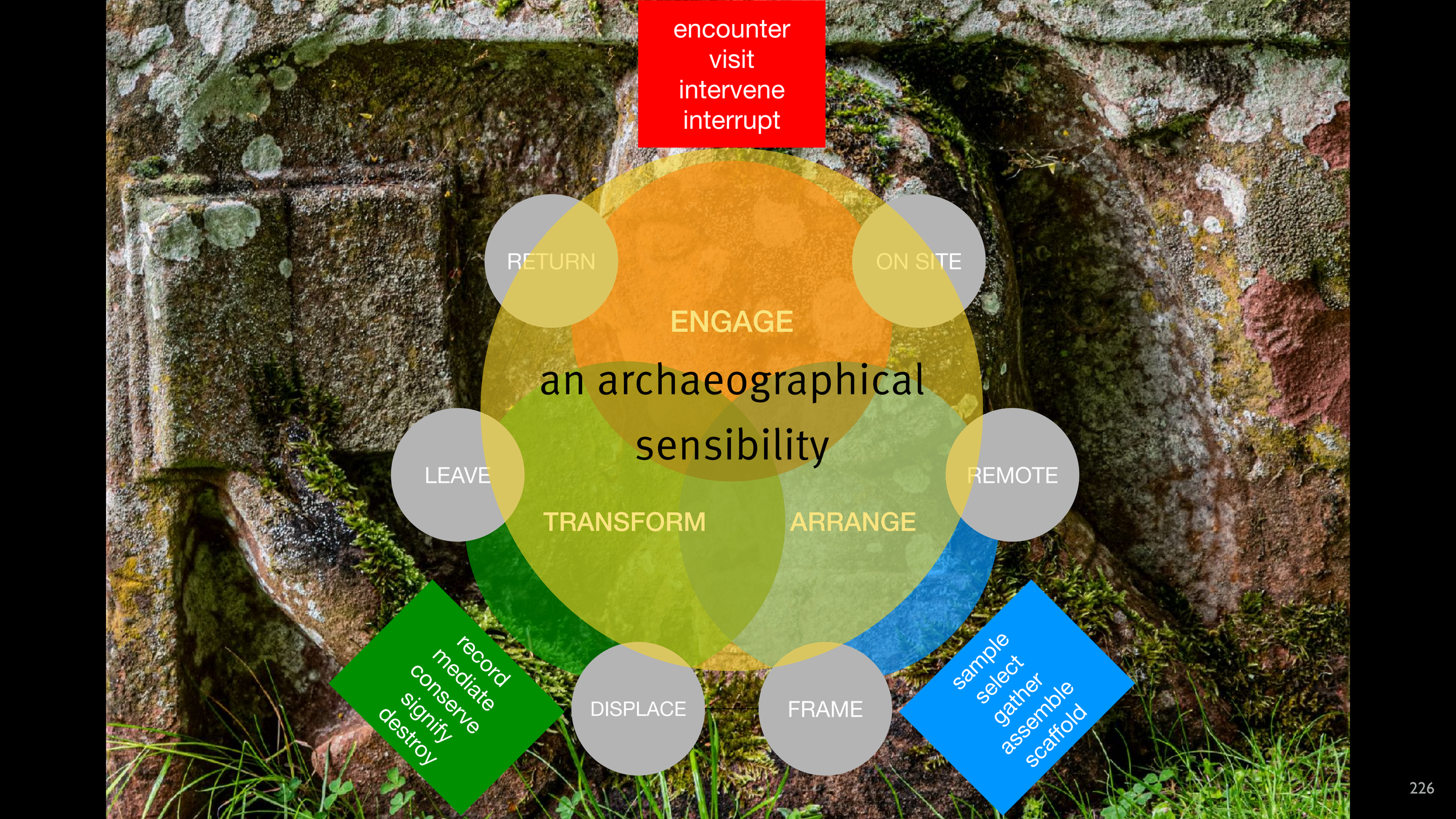
engagement — conjunction of place and event

arrangement — architecture of container, window, exterior

transformation — encounter into image

what is photography?


encounter
visit
intervene
interrupt
RETURN
ON SITE
ENGAGE
an archaeological
sensibility
LEAVE
REMOTE
TRANSFORM
ARRANGE
record
mediate
conserve
signify
destroy
DISPLACE
FRAME
sample
select
gather
assemble
scaffold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LEAVE
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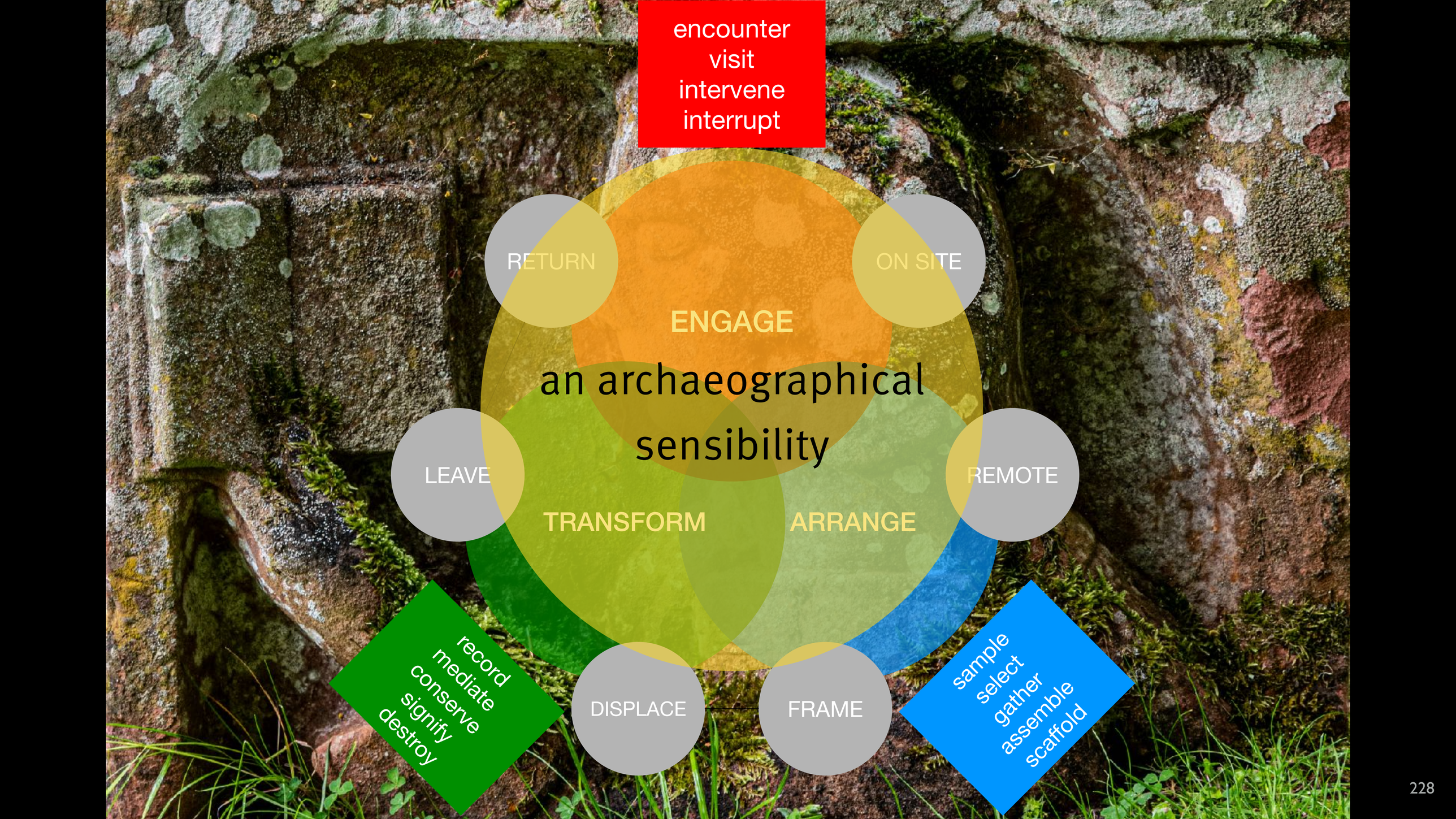
ARRANGE
record
mediate
conserve
signify
destroy
DISPLACE
FRAME
sample
select
gather
assemble
scaffold

expanding the components/aspects of this triangulation of

ENGAGE — ARRANGE — TRANSFORM

3. An Archaeographical Sensibility — a Constellation of Concepts


encounter
visit
intervene
interrupt
RETURN
ON SITE
ENGAGE
an archaeographical
sensibility
LEAVE
REMOTE
TRANSFORM
ARRANGE
record
mediate
conserve
signify
destroy
DISPLACE
FRAME
sample
select
gather
assemble
scaffold

encounter
visit
survey
interrupt
intervene (excavate, and more)
place-event
land-form (landscape)
topology
dwell – inhabit

ENGAGE — features, concepts, tropes

GENIVS LOCI (spirit of place) — haecceities (qualities of here-ness)
atmospheres, weather, color palettes
ambient textures — mood boards and palettes
visits and itineraries — ITINERARIA
deep time (uniformitarianism)
deep mapping and chorography
monument and figure in the landscape (ET IN ARCADIA EGO)
figure ground relationships
base materialism
voices on the wind
quiddities — LAPIDARIA (stone)
stratigraphy and palimpsest
borders and edges — thresholds (LIMES) - vertical and horizontal
leave and return — iteration (NOSTOS)
land, landscape, inhabitation

ENGAGE

sample
select
gather
assemble
scaffold
sort
contain

ARRANGE — features, concepts, tropes

CAMERAE — rooms and “making room”

grids, tables, spreadsheets, containers

RES PVBLICA — body politic

AGORA — FORVM — gatherings in the square

AGER, PAGVS, HORTVS

city — URBS ROMA

TVRRIS — whence to survey things

scenography

mise-en-scène

ichnography

windows — fenestration

grids — cadastration

archives, museums, libraries, collections

sort and categorize

signal-noise

pattern recognition

studios and laboratories

scaffolds and architectures

scenarios

figuration — personae and archetypes

metonymy (attribute for whole) and synecdoche (part for whole)

ARRANGE

document
conserve and preserve
signify
ruin
metamorphosis
entropy
mediate
destroy

TRANSFORM — features, concepts, tropes

“what becomes of what was?” — what remains
ruin and (neg)entropy
processes of preservation and conservation — reconstruction
cultivate
reenact, reincarnate
recycle, upcycle
document — inscribe, visualize
transcribe, quote
signify — encode and decode
mediate (through a glass)
make marks
media materialities (media archaeology)
let go, discard — garbology
mutation
metamorphosis
monsters and hybrids
metaphor and allegory
amplify, reduce
scale and model
alchemy — gold from lead
energetics and ergonomics
Body without Organs (dis-organized shape-shifting corporeality)

TRANSFORM

4. Archaeography — a Summary

— processes and connections

working with what remains

there's no destination — no past that happened in the way that one might suppose it did,
no "there" there to discover and document

interminglings

place/events, ruin memories, pasts-in-the-present, absent presences, things that endure, things that pass away, recyclings and upcyclings,
morbid hauntings, revitalizations, ephemera in deep time, layerings, metamorphoses
"in the wake"

immanence

we are part of what we seek to understand — we do well to look to our instruments and media
"the best magnifying glass is a splinter in the eye"

Archaeography

Archaeography is a hybrid practice at the intersection of photography and archaeology
— where the performance of photowork meets its archaeological sensibility.
It is not the documentation of ruins or artefacts, nor the aestheticization of decay.
Rather, archaeography is a way of working with what remains, of attending to traces, scars, surfaces, and absences,
and of sensing the layered relationships connecting time, matter, and memory.

Archaeology — working with what remains. Photography — arresting presence in the present-past.
Archaeography is the convergence of these dispositions: picturing the archaeological imagination.

Archaeography enacts connections — between past and present, between viewer and viewed, between subject and surface.
It is a choreography of attention and arrangement.
Archaeography is about how certain compositions — of people, places, things, and instruments — can render visible the passage of time, the marks of use and loss,
the lived textures of environments. It is a sensibility and a method: one that foregrounds slowness, care, and uncertainty; one that lingers with entropy, decay, and fragmentation;
one that speculates with traces, exploring tensions between figure and ground, signal and the noise of temporal experience.

What is the archaeological imagination? It is the recognition that the past is not behind us, but embedded in materials, forms, and gestures that endure.
Archaeology is not merely about the past, but about relationships: between archaeologist and remains, between object and context,
between memory and transformation, signal and noise. It is a practice concerned with remainders, with the processes of making and unmaking,
consuming and discarding, and the entropy and ordering at the heart of human experience.

Likewise, photography — especially when approached with archaeological attentiveness — captures more than image. The camera is, quite literally, a room —
CAMERA — a chamber that frames a moment, arranging viewer, viewed, and instrument into a constellation that can be carried into the future.
The photograph becomes a go-between: a present past, a spectral document, a translated trace.

So too with archaeology. Archaeologists work with what remains — coming between, translating, rearranging.
Archaeology re-articulates what is left into something sensible — an inventory, an account, a narrative, a structure of meaning, an indeterminate mess.

Archaeography is therefore both a conceptual lens and a material practice. It explores the interests and procedures shared by archaeology and photography:
working with remains, attending to transformation, and composing with absence. It is photography as memory-work, as critical care, as re-visioning
— a way of picturing not just the past, but the passages of temporality.

Kikuji Kawada (Vortex) — actualities, assemblage (series), quiddities and haecceities
Peter Greenaway (rooms/architectures)(annotations) — VT PICTVRA POIESIS — montage
George Dubuffet — base materialism
Robert Rauschenberg — stratigraphy and collage
William Blake — personal creativity (divine) and mythography
Paul Klee — mythopoiesis
Alice Oswald — poetics
Michael Serres — Hermetic border crossing
Walter Scott — historicity
Sarah Sze — quotidian assemblage
Julie Mehretu — psychogeography
Science Studies (Bruno Latour and Andrew Pickering) — impure pragmatism, cyborgs, experiment and play
Cornelia Parker — metamorphic associations
Bill Brandt — tonality, framing / composition, surreality
David Carson — annotation, text and image
Roloff Beny — tonalities and textures, itinerary / parataxis
Richard Rorty — pragmatist poetics and ontography

5. Inspiration

Connie Svabo — curated hybridities

Gabriella Giannachi — performance studies and the archive

Mike Pearson — theatre/archaeology

Lynn Hershman Leeson — animating the archive

Cliff McLucas — scenography and deep mapping

Bjørnar Olsen — dialectical images and prehistory

Chris Witmore — deep mapping and chorography

Paul Noble — worlds within worlds

Bill Rathje — garbology

Chris Tilley — archaeological theory

Ben Cullen — more-and-less-than-human virality

6. Cocreation

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