

DDD8, University of Bath, September 15, 2007.

All images on screen at beginning (and end with MS) before going into slide show

CORRIDOR OF UNCERTAINTY

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Bereavement, for me, is being between two states: what has been and what may take place in the future, and the work that I have made mirrors that interstasis.

I was greatly affected by the death of my parents and close friends, but the death of a spouse is overwhelmingly different. I had no map, as I had obviously never been here before. To pick up a camera is not the normal thing to do when confronted by a family tragedy, even if you are a photographer like me. But it was surprisingly the most natural thing for me to do. The image capture has been largely visceral and surprising. I have made still life, close-up and abstract images. Genres that are mostly uncharted territory for me, despite the fact that I have been making *personal* pictures related to my own life and immediate environment for over 30 years.

However one is affected emotionally, the desire to control and put things in order, as you might normally do, remains ingrained. It is no different with my photography where I have tried to sequence and juxtapose images in order to communicate and reflect, to synthesise form and content, to instinctively express and emote. Of course they are informed by the harrowing experience of my wife's fatal illness, but I did not - could not - document her decline directly. I have considered these images individually and collectively and how they interrelate and correlate to reflect the experience. Momentous events register in the mind visually. They are etched into the psyche, so how can they be extracted and given form and equivalency ?

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I believe that my subconscious has been irrevocably altered in some way by this experience and has reacted to certain visual stimuli, which I have distilled through the camera lens in order to make a visual *event* – the still photographic image. Each image, on examination, has become a metaphoric reflection of an unfolding experience rather than a recording of it. The objects in front of the camera are nearly all obvious and recognisable, but the work aims to transcend the framed and captured information, and the sequencing is a reinforcing aid in that process.

My interpretations, and the project, are still evolving, but by contemplating the pictures I have endeavoured to understand and evaluate my working methods almost as if they were being undertaken by someone else. The work has to be subjected to this sort of critical analysis if it is to enter the public domains outside this specialist conference. This is the first ‘draft’ of the first phase of the *Corridor of Uncertainty* project and will be followed by work related to the uncertain and novel world that I have entered without my best friend and constant companion of 42 years.

The great mathematicians of the 19th and 20th centuries, in their search for logical answers and provable certainties, came to the conclusion that there was no such thing as absolute certainty. This uncomfortable and insecure state does, however, leave space for the *uncertainty* of creativity where speculation and chaos is the common currency.

All these images were made after my wife’s death, except for the Polaroid triptych that was created after she appeared to have successfully recovered from her first cancer operation and was almost back to normal.