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**Cover**  
From the series Road of Bones  
© Jacob Aue Sobol

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Colin Finlay started his career in magazine publishing, managing the flagship titles of The Design Council and The Stage newspaper. He was then appointed a director at Getty Images where he specialised in promoting their archival photography collections, including the Hulton Archive and Time & Life Pictures. As Head of Image Resources at The Natural History Museum, London, he was involved in all aspects of image production and management within the Museum and was responsible for the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. He is currently Director of Strategic Development at Avalon.

Barry W. Hughes



Barry W. Hughes is a photographer, writer and editor. Since establishing the online platform SMBHmag in 2009, he has authored many features with leading contemporary photographers for international publications. He has delivered lectures and reviewed portfolios for a number of universities, festivals and institutions, while also working professionally in cultural communications.

Elizabeth Murphy



Elizabeth Murphy is an artist and curator based in Glasgow. She graduated from the MFA postgraduate programme at The Glasgow School of Art and is a previous director of The Royal Standard in Liverpool. She was recently granted a research award by LUX Scotland to produce a film work with Adam Lewis-Jacob based on cultural and psychological hauntings. Elizabeth has also curated exhibitions for The Arts Council Collection and as part of Liverpool Biennial and Glasgow International's partner programme.

Pablo Uribe



Pablo Uribe is a Colombian-American poet and translator born and raised in Los Angeles. He is a graduate of Deep Springs College and is currently studying Education and Comparative Literature at Yale College in New Haven, CT.

LINA SCHEYNIUS

# ME

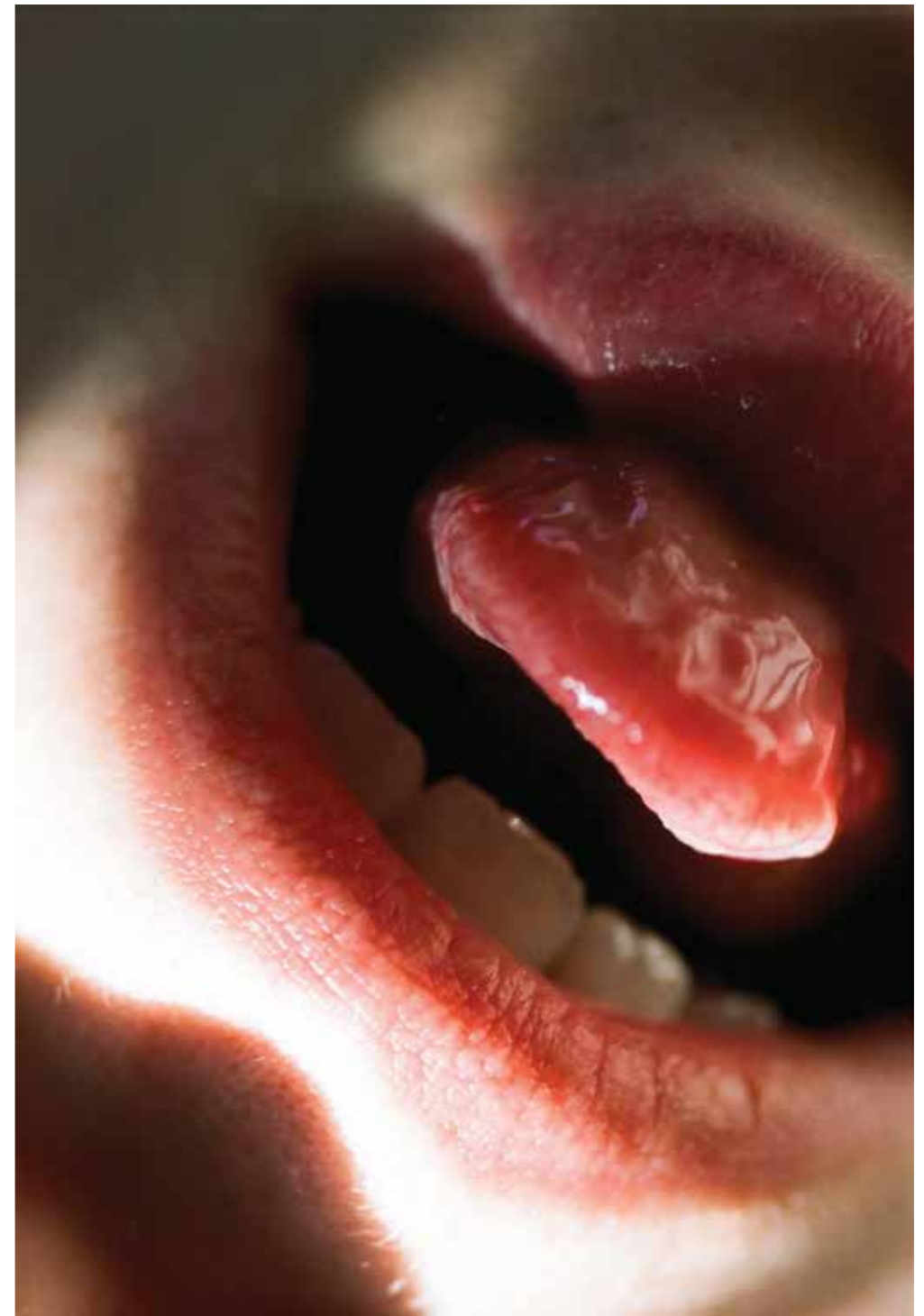
B. 1981

All images © Lina Scheynius (Courtesy Christophe Guye Galerie)











LINA SCHEYNIUS

# NATURE AS INSTINCT DESIRE AND

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# ROMANCE



**I was asked to write an essay about collecting the young, the new. But what is new, and in terms of practise, what is young? I could only settle on emerging, in both developing works and artists. New to you, new to me, not new to themselves. A new hope, and a new voice.**

**Words by  
Elizabeth Murphy**



© Lina Scheynius

We are descending into a world where the ability of an image to pretend and perform is being manipulated to greater extremes. The news has disintegrated beyond the usual biases into often blanket falseness. We hold in our hand filters for days, weeks of endless generated content. Whatever this is, whatever lightness this brings, it's dishonest. We are all photographers now. Not an original comment, and one that could suggest the degeneration of the medium's power. However, this new position has also created a space where quietened voices can speak with a new tone and command. It might be useful to edit the comment slightly, we can all take photographs now — at least, a large privileged set of us can. But does that necessarily mean we are all photographers? Taking is a straightforward action — I take my clothes off, I take a dog for a walk, I take a photograph. What then elevates this action into the active? Awareness and desire? The want to make this action a communication and move from taking photographs to making photographs. This is becoming more complex as we edge toward a new world of saturation with voluminous content generated by multiple toilsome voices.

We learn through stories, through myth and through looking at patterns in the actions of ourselves and others. This is what we need photography for, to highlight and stretch this moment — open it up and expose it. Someone needs to take control of the process. By collecting and supporting new artists we give them the power to initiate a command of this position using the fuels of capitalism to make our escape, even if only shortly and indirectly.

Owning the physical object is key here. Pixels on a screen are not the object. The object ages in a way that the conversations around it do. It appears from a fixed moment in time and always carries that reference in the trace of its making. The permanence of the printed form is stubborn and romantic providing a counter for the ongoing flippancy of social media imagery.

Dan Shea's recent series exposes the specific gap between the creation of the desired and the object of desire outlasting its maker. The architectural flirtation between wants and design. Mapping immediate movement over an outlived future, the concrete frameworks he photographs, paused in their construction, become stages for different scenarios — real, imagined, something in-between — to play out.

How can we clarify our positions within cities if the landscape changes on the whim of markets and ideologies? Our daily lives become more prescribed in habitation but the complex design is created to fit into a demanded need, one of its inhabitants.

"To me, the most salient thing about observing architecture is that it is situated between two important time scales, human and geological. It therefore becomes an interesting way to observe embedded ideologies (i.e. neoliberalism) and cultural specificities of a moment (i.e. a nostalgia for the industrial veneer) across a time period whose shelf life is longer than human beings, but reflects, explicitly, their desires and self image." (Daniel Shea, 2017)

Shea talks in his work of the impact of gentrification, a position that often sees artists becoming the problem to their own solution. I find this evident in a lot of his images; there is a layering of narrative places on top of the architectural form. A blunt impact, opening up of this flat faceless space and shifting both light and focus away from the dominant structure into the clawing of the personal. The struggling voice of the singular and the sense of determination in generating a relationship with a space that has the potential to forget and outlive you prevails. The images feel intimate, this intimacy being the one thing that seems safe from value within the market discussed in the work. Construction and its processes and textures reoccur, leading me back to ideas of touch and making. Valued skill exploded on a vast scale as a response to capital and commercial need. Still, to do this we need people that understand foundations, we need a material that can survive weight and we need a texture that can marry these things together. A combination of nature and nurture. There is also a time pressure inherent in these images coupled with the impounding force of machine labour. Shea speaks of places of de-industrialisation and of a move away from the ethics of modernist architecture and sociality. We are being moved towards a neoliberal approach to place making, he suggests.

The images seem to ask what will this offer us as spaces not only to live, but also as spaces to make and to be. As space becomes more and more privatised, what happens to the social, and more importantly, the personal? How will this impact any developing conversations inherent in these places?

Shea's work observes this rate of development, as we watch this endless progression into the future, we stand aside forgotten apart from the small way we can antagonise or reference, always pointing out ways the brain can draw connections between sites, cities, people and material in a way algorithms cannot. Abstract thought and all the probability it provides may be becoming our biggest power, giving us the ability to mythologise our way into being, and live with more independence in these new already imagined lifestyles.

## “The permanence of the printed form is stubborn and romantic providing a counter for the on-going flippancy of social media imagery.”

In Mårten Lange’s photo book *Chicxulub*, the camera is used as a device to frame a time past, presenting the idea of a space long before it was cognitive. *Chicxulub* refers to an area in the Gulf of Mexico where a 10 km crater of the same name was created by a comet or asteroid. The comet that formed the crater, if Lange and a wealth of scientists are to be believed, is the one that removed the dinosaurs from the earth we now inhabit. The book is free of text except the title, and Lange admits that he demands a very active audience, relying on them to Google the title, and in doing so developing their own theories on the book’s content.

“Part of the impetus for the book was my desire to make contact with a lost world. The crater is half a mile underground now, so there are no obvious visual traces left of the impact. The question for me was this: ‘How can I make a story about something that is so far in the past, something invisible, beyond the reach of photographic observation?’” (Mårten Lange, 2016, Interview with Isabella Scott for Studio International.)

Lange uses the camera to document the not there, the trace of an impact long gone. In a sense he is photographing the haunting of an event, the monument of myth. Nature is ravenous and ungracious with its approach to history. He picks back over this using photography to make the viewer dig down into the fossils of these events, events that seem incomprehensible now. We live in a society where the near past and near future trap us in a vista. It is becoming slowly more and more difficult to imagine a time we weren’t present and we will no longer be present.

In Lange’s work I find the constant return to the compromised monument, either explicitly through architecture, often rendered disregarded and functionless, or in nature, a bird soaring heroic but alone, like the comet itself — awesome but destructive. Ants who master complicated and taxing feats every day but are at their best anonymous. His work contains a desolation, which seems like it can speak to a part of many whilst also providing an alien othering, of research never touched by most.

The image I keep returning to in *Chicxulub* is *Pyramid*, a portrait of a set of steps that go to nowhere. An active pursuit for intangible gains. I keep returning to it as I feel like there is something on the tip of my tongue, a question I need to ask or a thought I need to raise that might make me understand how I feel about the comet, but I can never quite get there. The image is haunted by something other than these steps, a relic to the untouchable. It makes me think of Stone Tape Theory, how through this image the steps are saying something to me that I don’t have the capacity to understand. The first

triumph perhaps, of humans after nature took the dinosaurs back to oblivion, hangs in this image. Mythology often provides romance, seduces you into a situation, a story.

“I think the inexpressible is always there, close to the surface.” (Mårten Lange, 2016, Interview with Isabella Scott for Studio International.) This grip on nature, and the appearance of tacit understanding through material also is often present in Lina Scheynius’s work. Through her practise she presents intimacy as the most honest of forms and actions. Nature as instinct, desire and romance.

Each image has a bold sensitivity, which opens up the subject with a rawness that is generous and exposing. The images act like gifts given through the camera. The photographs allow us to feel every texture, many have a warm sexuality that feels like breath.

Scheynius shot her first photographs with a camera given as a gift at the age of 10, and the work she is producing now feels like a story told by a narrator whose first language is to speak through film, instead of words. They are images understated in both delivery and in reading — ever present is a sincerity that advocates their richness.

Instinct reoccurs for me here, the autonomy of the autobiographical. I feel Scheynius’s hand in everything and I find it empowering. I see through her images someone that is defining their own heritage in a way that is unapologetic, a woman taking an honest view of her sex and sexuality. There is also an understanding of the temporal, the fleeting and the luxury that is afforded to us, the viewer, in being granted access to these moments.

*Me in France Summer 2016* is a definitive work that unlocks this for me. We see Scheynius seeing us. It’s a dominant look, one that commands me to know her and I want to do so. It’s a refreshing approach; the light exposes an understanding smile. Once somebody told me I made flirtatious artwork and I was (I now think wrongly) offended. In this situation there is such power in Scheynius flirting with me and I can’t move past it, like a road block. There is another block in this image though, it becomes clear there is a pane of glass between us and it creates a distance, between the subject and myself. Like the distance between my brain and a photograph I could hold in my hand, or framed on the gallery wall. Reflected in this distance is time, in the form of nature, softening with its temporality between me and the person staring at me, frozen forever. The image holds in this division of space two environments, and as the viewer I orbit around them both. This is an intimate but closed circuit, where time flexibly



© Mårten Lange



© Daniel Sheen

## “We put our investment and our hope in these makers who are trying to talk about the world as it is to them and to us.”

mirrors its position from the actual to the imagined. All the while reality stares out from the centre, holding me in its gaze. She holds in her hands what seems to be the knowledge to capture everything between us.

Photography for me allows the privilege to bounce around in time, in a way that still feels very real. Even in an illusionary context, it creates a space I believe and I trust. The format of the bookwork is a time warping construction in and of itself, and one used by all three artists. I find it becoming a more personal and appropriate format, given the conversation held within of tactility and realness. A manifestation in the real, a fragment of the real. Bookworks provide a seclusion from the noise of day to day narratives. Through this format the work is granted timelessness, where it can speak into the future. It also grants the curation of these images a permanence, which will not be afforded in any other way. A lasting control over the series' interrelated parts, moving from one, to the next and to the next.

Everyday image takers are looking to new photographers to re-describe the world they have already documented, to take it out of their control and replay the ethereal and other new that surrounds us. We want to bring back the mystical, to disconnect us from the too-real.

I think here would be a good point to break. It's difficult to hide an argument you want to platform, and perhaps it's better to speak honestly, and to take energy from work that inspires you to do so.

We currently occupy a space where clouding is the norm, fake news and information is used like dazzling camouflage. We should not use words carelessly anymore. We need to support young artists, through collections and representation, and we need to do this with all the responsibility we can muster.

University is becoming an experience which is over expensive or underwhelming — or both, so what can a collector base provide to an emerging artist, in place of this societal failure? A collector has the potential to allow artists the financial stability to access training, materials, skills and equipment. To not work 3 unsustainable jobs, but to still sustain a practise. All this goes without saying. But what is perhaps underrated is the emotional support or platforming that the investment of a stranger does. It puts scaffolding around the merging and developing identity of the artist and support in this sense is invaluable. The enduring feeling of strength one can get by being trusted by another is rare. Also being in a collection provides validity for the works and a structure for them to speak within, new artists need their work

to be afforded this position. To have a place to rub up against older or more established practises.

It's hard to know why one would collect, as the reasons fold into other reasons, investment dissolves into trauma and reverts back to emotional need. There can be no understating the complexity of this. However we can look at this as a collection of history, of narrative of a time we cannot describe through our own words alone. Collecting is a broad sphere, a large sprawling personal utopia, and I know within this there is another conversation to have about market and investment. I am not saying this isn't valid. But if you collect for emotional need, then you have to listen with emotional need. My main concern is trying to generate an understanding that within collections we need accurate representation, especially for younger artists.

We need to archive our current situation honestly and in all its forms, its glory and its failure. Therefore we have to provide holistic unbiased representation, we need to remove imbalance and classifications. We need to step over privilege, removing historic prejudice and provide a new system to hear from every artist we can with skilled and critical dialogue. Through collecting young artists correctly we can forgo privilege. But we need to realign the ideal. This is harder work but it's more rewarding, and it requires everyone to work harder — researchers, curators, gallerists and collectors. What is value if the work isn't worth anything?

We need to speak in and of our time, we need collections to agitate and participate in history. Here I find no distinction between public and private. Private collections have the luxury of autonomy, but the trappings of investment. Speak to work that speaks to you, to your past self and your future unknown but do it with open eyes and open conscience.

So how do we respond to this moment? We put our investment and our hope in these makers who are trying to talk about the world as it is to them and to us.

We have to collect the worst of our actions, the best of our actions. Our actions at their most intimate and at their most global. We need to see this time represented by the people that will speak for it next. This is why we should buy the young, the developing, the ones who will teach us through their stories and their myths, as they are our own. They are important, and we have to support that and give them strength to keep carving out the difference between image-takers and photographers.

Hope is a form of planning  
— Gloria Steinberg

# PHOTO LONDON

18–21 May 2017  
Somerset House, London

## Through their Lens — Talks 2017

### Wednesday 17

**Dr Brian May and  
Denis Pellerin**

**The Royal  
Photographic  
Society Presents:  
Paul Graham**

**Prix Pictet  
2017 winner**

### Thursday 18

**Loa Haagen Pictet and  
Anne-Marie Beckmann,  
Jane Morris**

**Jack Davison and  
Kathy Ryan**

**Taryn Simon and  
James Lingwood**

**Adam Fuss and  
Antony Gormley**

**Diana Markosian and  
Rebecca McClelland**

**Ken Loach and  
Joss Barratt,  
Neil Norman**

**Eamonn Doyle  
and Sean O'Hagan**

**Newsha Tavakolian  
and Vali Mahlouji**

### Friday 19

**Juergen Teller  
and Adrian Searle**

**Bruce Davidson  
and Shoair Mavlian**

**Mark Neville and  
David Company**

**Penelope Umbrico  
and Francis Hodgson**

**Thomas Demand  
and Tobia Bezzola**

**David Hurn and  
Martin Parr**

**FT Weekend  
Presents:  
Diana Matar and  
Aaron Schuman**

**William Klein  
and David Company**

### Saturday 20

**Dan Holdsworth  
and Alistair Robinson**

**Roger Ballen  
and Mark Lubell**

**Tom Hunter,  
Rut Brees Luxemburg  
and Bruno Ceschel,  
William A Ewing**

**Carolyn Drake  
and Rena Effendi**

**FT Weekend Presents:  
Stephen Gill**

**Isaac Julien  
and Clara Kim**

**Daniel Berekulak  
and David Furst**

### Sunday 21

**Thaddaeus Ropac,  
Sylvain Levy**

**Gastón Ugalde and  
Sophia de Maduro**

**Mat Collishaw  
and Dr James Hyman**

**Terence Donovan  
(panel)**

**Hélène Binet  
and Valeria Carullo**



**Desert Island Pics:  
Susan Meiselas**

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