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ENTROPY

SPRING 2025



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Entropy, in its scientific sense, is a measure of disorder, the inevitable descent of a system into chaos. It turns into a poetic lens through which we see the erratic, the shifting, and the unraveling in the setting of photography. This problem is centered on entropy as transition rather than collapse: the disintegration of rigid structures, the conflict between decay and permanence, and the beautiful instability that inspires creativity. By their very nature, photographs are temporary. They capture a moment in a world that is always changing. However, what occurs if the movement is evoked by the image itself? When subject, composition, and context tend to dissolve instead of clarify? Upon reviewing submissions, we saw that a large number of photographers were embracing abstraction, resisting resolutions, and leaning into imperfection as a way to deal with entropy

in both their subjects and their photographic process. Entropy therefore turns into a theme as well as a tool. We highlight photographers who are aware of this breakdown. Each faces a fundamental question: What does it mean to frame a moment in a world when everything is on the verge of disorder? The paradox of photography is that it gives the impression that we have power over motionless objects. However, as these photographs demonstrate, entropy appears even in silence. It rearranges, erases, and blurs. And there's a sort of truth in it.

- Elleah Gipson, Editor-in-Chief

ISO Magazine is a student-run publication based out of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Since 2008, our rotating staff has worked to explore contemporary themes in photography and image culture. We place the work of emerging photographers in conversation with that of established artists, as well as write critically and creatively on photography.

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DON'T LOOK AT ME**

FEATURED ARTIST

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AND PRESENCE OF THE BERLIN WALL**

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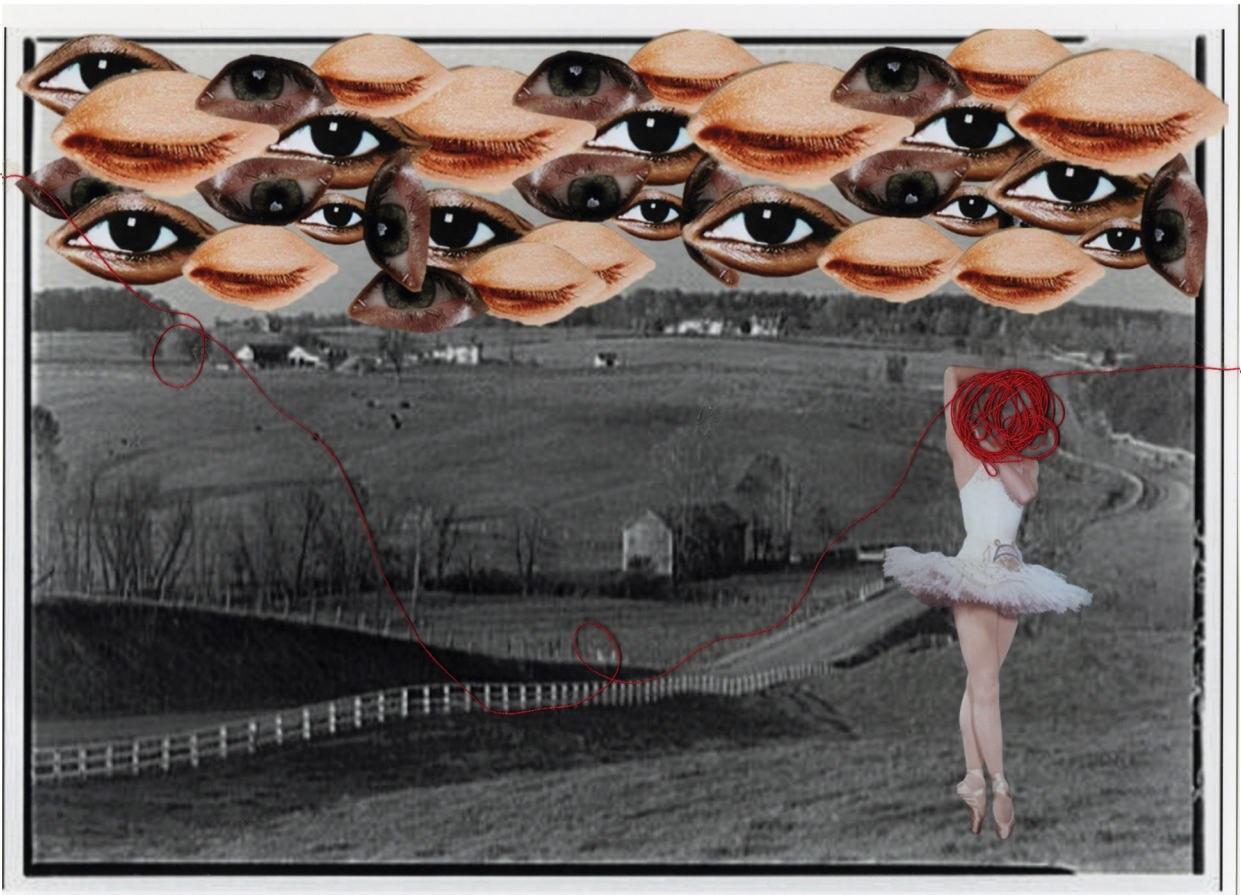
FEATURED ARTIST

**WALTER CRUMP: MEMORIES OF
MACHINES**

THE GALLERY: ENTROPY

FLÂNEUSE: DON'T LOOK AT ME

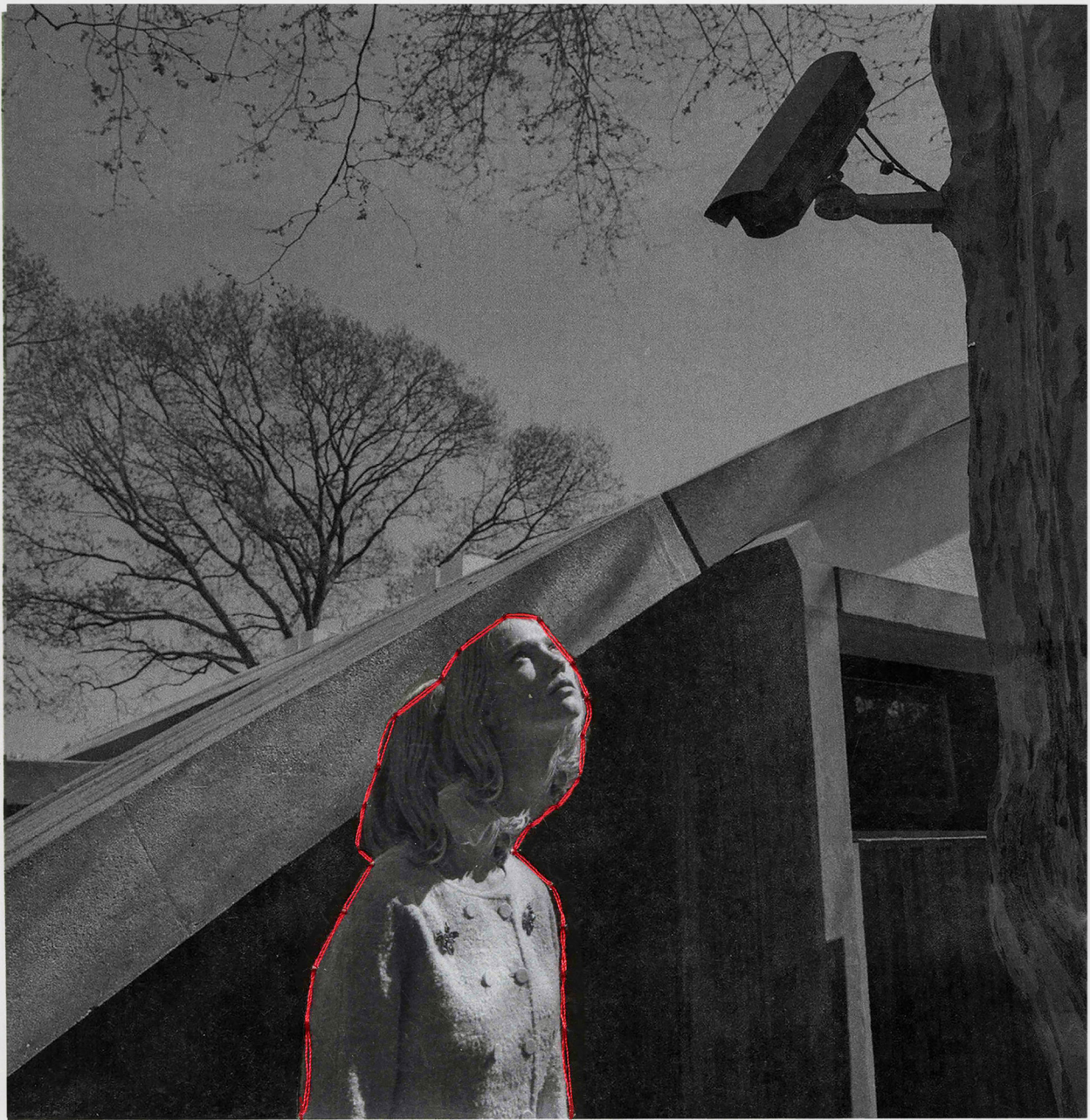
Ashley Cho



In *Flâneuse: Don't Look at Me*, Ashley Cho encapsulates women's experience in public spaces around the concept of the flâneuse, representing the reality that being observed often overshadows the desire to observe. The flâneuse, a French term referring to the flaneur, a traditionally male figure who observes society while strolling around the city, represents the societal pressures and disruption of freedom placed on women. Through digital collaging

transformed into Polaroid emulsions, Cho challenges this power imbalance, exploring how mass media shapes women's image and ingrains narrow, unrealistic beauty standards harmful to women. The layered, delicate quality of the Polaroid emulsions and the symbolic red thread evoke a sense of instability, mirroring how societal pressures create a fragmented, chaotic experience for women navigating public spaces. The breakdown of boundaries

between autonomy and control, or public and private spheres, reflects a notion of entropy that expresses how rigid societal norms gradually dissolve women's freedom and agency into a more unpredictable, unstable experience. Cho utilizes a blend of vintage and modern imagery, provoking reflections on how outdated ideals placed on women's bodies continue to shape perceptions of beauty and the objectification of women through media.



Jacket, LORO PIANA, \$7,150.
Jean Schlumberger brooches,
TIFFANY & CO.



The red thread, a key motif symbolizing the intersection of domesticity, labor, and visibility, represents the traditional role of sewing in women's lives, reflecting the unacknowledged and undervalued efforts historically expected of women. This labor-intensive practice allows for criticism of the invisibility of such contributions while emphasizing their importance in society. Ultimately, Cho's work utilizes the flâneuse as a symbol of reclaiming agency and female power, representing how women often long to be the observer, or the flâneur, but instead find themselves being observed in a male-dominated society.







THE ABSENCE AND PRESENCE OF THE BERLIN WALL

Gesche Würfel

In *The Absence and Presence of the Berlin Wall*, artist and urban planner Gesche Würfel examines what remains, both physically and emotionally, of the structure that once divided Berlin. Exhibited at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in 2022, the project follows the entire 160-kilometer Berlin Wall Trail, where Würfel stopped every 2.8 kilometers, one for each year the Wall stood, to photograph what now exists. The images stand out for their stillness. There are no dramatic ruins or prominent landmarks, just ordinary places: sidewalks, fences, trees, and patches of construction. Würfel's photos suggest that history doesn't always announce itself, but sometimes lingers quietly in the shape of a street or in the absence of something that was never built. The Wall may be gone, but its presence continues to shape the landscape.

Würfel also turned to archival research and oral histories, spending time reviewing the records of the East German secret police and speaking with individuals whose lives had been shaped by the divide, including political prisoners, guest workers, artists, and others. These accounts fill in the gaps left by the images and add depth to the project's emotional landscape. In *New Landscapes*, Würfel removed the Wall and its buffer zones from old surveillance photographs. What remains are strange and empty spaces, quiet and frozen. These altered images open space for imagining what Berlin might have become without the divide. Rather than looking back with nostalgia, Würfel's work invites viewers to consider how the past remains embedded in the present, often subtly, but never entirely gone.

Text by Anissa Islas







DICK AND ELLEN

Jacob Levine

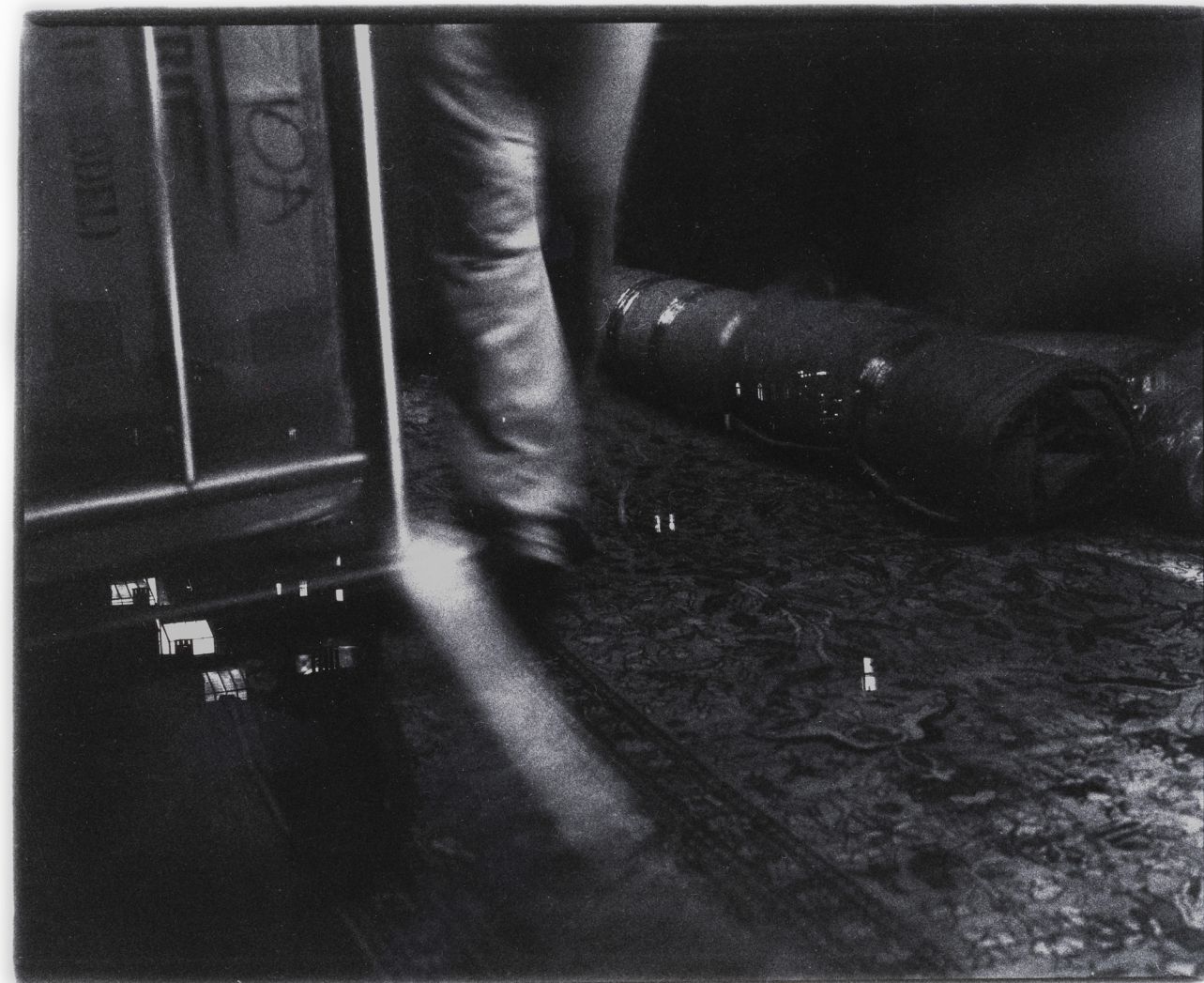
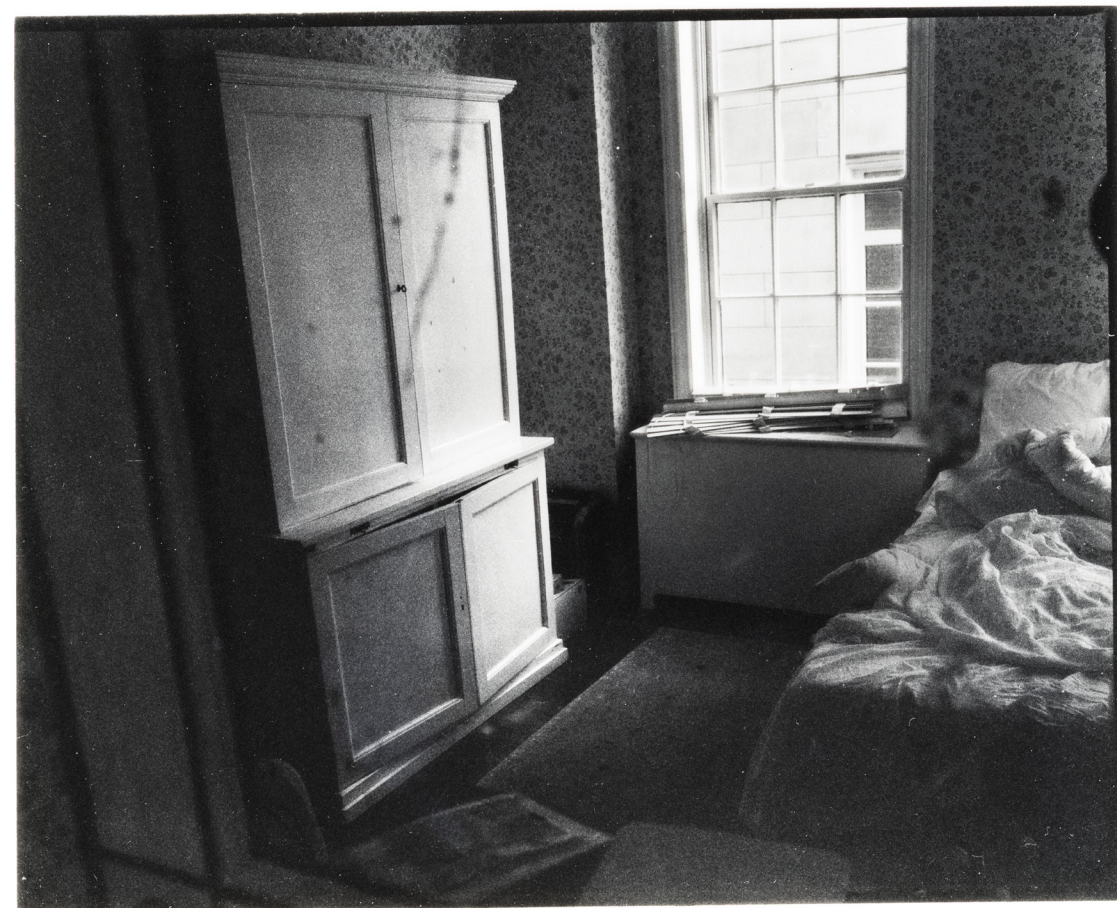


Jake Levine's *Dick and Ellen* explores subtle representations of fragmented memory, constructing a visual language shaped by, and in tribute to the artist's late grandparents. Levine's close relationship with his grandparents influenced his early interests; they nurtured his first interactions with art and shaped the way he would come to interpret the world around him. However, it wasn't until after his grandfather's passing and witnessing his grandmother's battle with early-onset Alzheimer's that these influences began to crystallize. In times when Levine would visit his grandmother, the intense energy she once held throughout his childhood was no longer present, prompting him to utilize the medium of photography to explore this unfamiliar space nestled between nostalgia and mourning. What began as a documentary school project evolved into a long-extended attempt to mirror the sensations of living alongside someone whose identity was no longer fixed, but fading.

Levine's experimental approaches in both his photographic and technical processes intentionally restructure the images, inviting distortion and obscurity to reflect surreal depictions of time and memory. Levine uses techniques such as shooting through multiple reflective surfaces while later pushing their exposures when developing and rephotographing negatives to achieve subtle grain, contributing to the sense of memories gradually decaying over time. While the images may appear dark or unsettling, they are meant to capture a perceptual truth — how his grandmother's world may have appeared amid her Alzheimer's, and Levine's internal reckoning with her fading identity. *Dick and Ellen* embraces themes of erosion, catching moments between presence and absence, while preserving the memory of those we love and who came before.

Text by Betania Solomon







MAMAN ET MOI

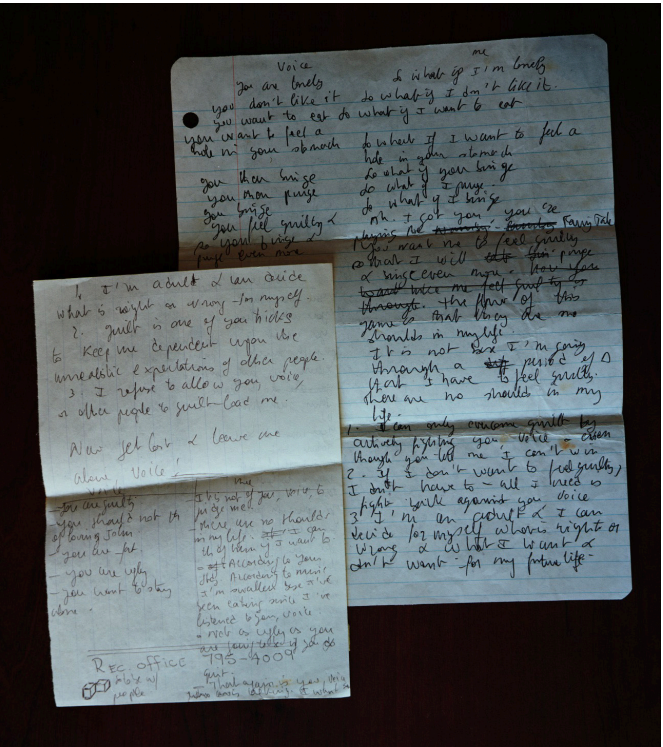
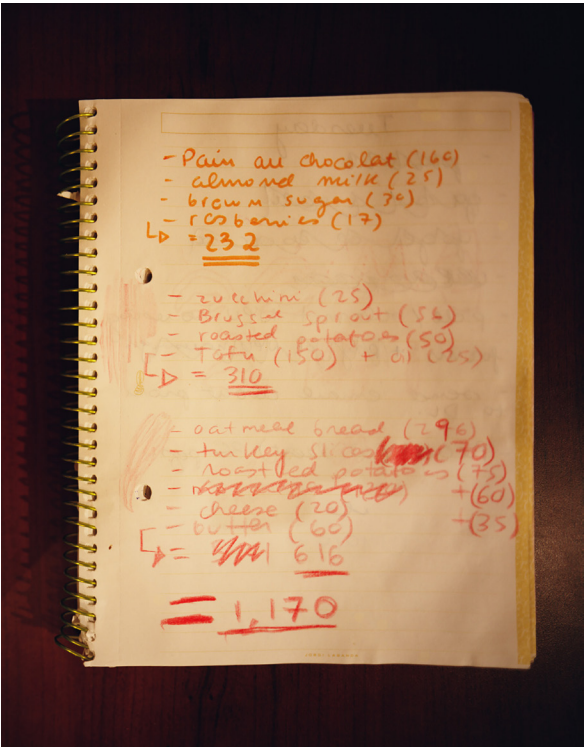
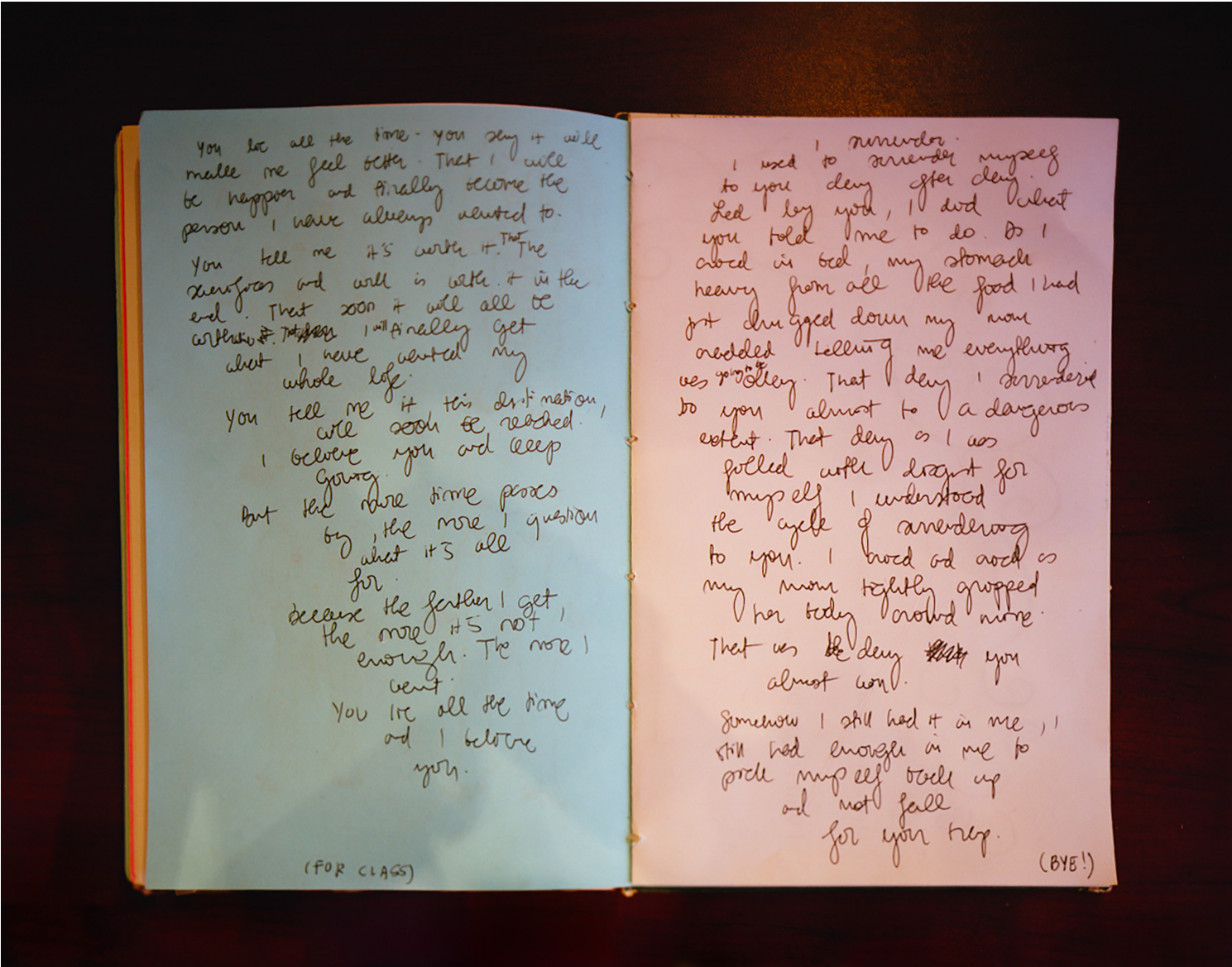
Julie Benatar

Bathed in pale light, clothed in sheer white dresses, legs crossed and arms outstretched, two women become one. Julie Benatar takes the center, closely confronting the lens in an overexposed haze and framed by two images of her mother, eyes closed and body curled. While the three studio portraits lie at the focal point of the artist's installation, the narrative is in the margins. Reading the subjects' side-by-side diary entries and confusing their faces in double-exposed family archives, we merge their stories into one. The mother and daughter pair, in each of their experiences with eating disorders, reflect one another. In her thesis series, *Maman et Moi*, Benatar represents a generational desire for a distorted inner peace, and, through the creation of the collection, an aim to make sense of these struggles.

Meticulous lists—written in green ink or orange pencil on notebook paper—tally meals, measurements, and calories. Beside them, lengthy letters are addressed to an unnamed recipient, that being the quiet force behind these restrictive habits. Discussing these entries, Benatar writes, “While my mother’s documents depict her struggle to quiet ‘the voice,’ mine display a rigorous documentation of what I consumed on a daily basis.” While “highlighting the ways in which [their] relationship with [their] bodies intertwined,” Benatar also portrays their distinctions—even her use of color saturation speaks to the pair’s differences, with the images of her mother’s letters coated in much cooler tones than her own. However, what they share most is a looming sense of entropy—not only a disorder of the body, but of the mind—and an attempt to exert control over both.

Benatar, referencing the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizes the common desire to control our “immediate environment [when] our bigger environment seem[s] like it [is] collapsing.” With this, she describes her and her mother’s eating disorders as chaotic ways of obtaining “peace and comfort,” despite how unhealthy. Entropic in nature, the images represent a gradual decline into a state of tumult, with extreme bodily restriction. However, the series is itself a disruption—in its thoughtful depiction of familial struggle, it “makes a mark” in the media’s traditional, inauthentic portrayals of eating disorders and breaks “the silence that comes with [it]” (Benatar). Looking at once-private snapshots pulled from family photo albums and intimate portraits from Benatar and her mother’s shared childhood home, we move seamlessly between chaos and comfort, recognizing the blurry lines between inner peace and the illusion of it—a distorted version that the artist herself once indulged. Her raw documentations allow for an empathetic gaze into a problem too often silenced by a “flawed and broken” (Benatar) society or kept hidden in private journals. Using relatability and empathy, Benatar disrupts entropy’s ongoing cycle while acknowledging how we all “do the best we can [to] soothe ourselves” amidst imminent collapse.

Text by Siena Bergamo



26/10/87 10:30 pm
V 112 me.

you are fat	do what if I'm fat
you feel bad	do what if I feel bad.
you eat	do what if I eat.
you eat even	do what if I eat even
more	more

you feel guilty 44: You're playing the
heavy rule. You want me to
feel ~~to~~ like I should be
feeling guilty because I
eat more & I drink more
than I usually do.
The flow is that there are
no standards or controls. There
are no standards ~~to~~ feeling.

- cereal 1 1/2 cups
 - Wee table [1]
 - Strawberry [83]
 - blueberry (20)
 - oat meal [1/2 cup]

$75 + 60 + 82$
 $+ 20 + 50$
 $\Rightarrow = 237$

- apple [1]
 - pb crust butter [1 tbsp] = 228
 - fat cookie [1]

$48 + 105 + 70$

- rice [1/2 cup]
 - chicken sausage [37g]
 - roasted potato [56g] + 50g
 - ~~broccoli~~ (15)
 - salad
 - coconut (110)
 $102 + 50 + 101 + 100$
 $\Rightarrow = 363$

- pasta (30)
 - tomato sauce [133]
 - to mato sauce (50)
 - parmesan cheese (50)
 $30 + 100 + 100$

- almond meal [1/2] 15
 - chocolate orange [2 tbsp] 160
 - egg [77g] 204
 - butter 83
 - apricot jam [1 tsp + 1 tsp] 67
 - blueberry (24) 4
 - baking (2) 8

$8 = 413$

- potato: 116 [13g]
 - roasted sweet potato [109g] 16
 - 6 seed [35g] 43
 - butter (20)
 $+ 120 = 406$

681 left

Steger-Darby 6th June, 1952

dear Bob,
Finally, I am able to put you & to let
you know exactly what I think of you.
and your way of putting me down.
First, I ~~also~~ recognize that I am
going to miss you & your negative influence.
Indeed, even if ~~you~~ ^{you are} ~~are~~ negative &
put me down, you have always been
next to me. However, now, I don't need
you anymore because I am getting
stronger & self-sufficient every day &
Furthermore, evil is by my side.
I do want to let you know what I
think of you because it is going to
give me even more freedom. You are
a real sucker, you enjoy yourself only
in making me unhappy, you find your
pleasure in using my energy. ~~and~~ As soon

Voice	me	Voice	me
06/25/82	Arndt.	07/03/82	
you are fat	I'm fat anyway	you are bad	I am not
you are quiet	to give sh. to anybody	you are stupid	I'm not
if thinking of John	I can get gain	you can't learn too fast	I can
you can't wait	weight I still lost	to go out	I want to go out
to leave California	nursing I'm making	John can't wait	he wants to wait
to see your friends	what happens, even	to see you	mean, this is my
I don't	leave California I	friends	to see you only
you are very	I can't wait for	you are tired	to see you
fat - you're so	4 days	you're tired	you're tired
of your thies are fat	I'm not fat	you're tired	you're tired
you are a d	of it John I had	you're tired	you're tired
& depressed	John I still love	you're tired	you're tired
	him after having	you're tired	you're tired
	changed 2 lbs	you're tired	you're tired
	ok to the hallway	you're tired	you're tired
	multitasking style	you're tired	you're tired
	are not dead	you're tired	you're tired
	my life I mean	you're tired	you're tired
	about a car	you're tired	you're tired
	decide I can decide	you're tired	you're tired
	for myself what's right	you're tired	you're tired
	& wrong for my	you're tired	you're tired
	It's ok to depend	you're tired	you're tired
	on people who don't	you're tired	you're tired
	getting depressed	you're tired	you're tired
	that I'm not fat	you're tired	you're tired
	that I'm not fat	you're tired	you're tired





LA FIRES

Monty Hamm



Monty Hamm has always captured the raw beauty of the world around him, but when the Palisades fires consumed his home, his work took on an unforeseen intimacy. The flames destroyed over 973 structures and claimed at least 12 lives, leaving behind a landscape of ash and absence. No longer a mere observer, Hamm found himself within the very story he was documenting. His camera became a means of processing the chaos, a way to find meaning. His images are not just a record of loss; they are a meditation on entropy.

Entropy, the slow dissolution of assembly into disorder, manifests itself powerfully in fire. It dismantles buildings, warps memories, and redraws familiar spaces into the unrecognizable. Hamm's use of color mirrors this transformation. Photos taken before and during the active burning are in vivid color to blend the familiar in the flames in a way that almost strips the forms of meaning. However, photos of the aftermath are in black and white.



A recurring motif is the American flag. In one image, it's a fragile emblem engulfed in smoke. In another, it clings to an alleyway fence, surrounded by ruin yet defiantly present. For Hamm, the flag is not a symbol of patriotism but instead a stark reminder of resilience amid ruin.

Hamm's work resists the idea that destruction is purely loss. In the days after the fire, he saw new patterns emerge: small gestures of kindness, neighbors helping one another, and first responders in action. His photography searches for these moments, highlighting the ways people adapt and rebuild. "I have unearthed multitudes within myself that were clandestine before," he reflects, articulating the way that entropy does not just dismantle, it reveals. It would be a mistake to sweep aside the lessons of this tragedy in the rush to rebuild, he said. The disorder left in fire's wake is not empty; it is charged with history and memory, borne with the potential for reconfiguration.



More broadly, Hamm's work situates entropy within the larger forces of climate change and human consequence. Wildfires, once a natural cycle of renewal, now burn with abnormal frequency. His photographs do not moralize, but they insist we pay attention, see the fragility of structures we take for granted, and consider what might emerge in their absence.

Text by Samantha Hirohishi



GHOST IMAGES

Tyler Mitchell

Tyler Mitchell's *Ghost Images* honors memory through its refracted depictions of absence and presence. The deterioration of memory is manipulated through the image's presentational and experimental forms. Mitchell uses the images to refract a sense of intangibility through experimental practices in presentation by printing the images onto mirrors and fabric. The fabric prints hang loosely, catching light and movement, which allows the images to wrinkle and echo the fragility of memory itself. On the other hand, the images printed on mirrors create a doubled viewing experience where the image becomes both a reflection and an apparition of history. *Ghost Images* linger on the question of the visibility of Black legacies and its interconnectivity with landscape and space. Each element introduces a subtle undoing of certainty and positions the collection as an archive that seeks to become rather than simply being. Once thought to be a fixed truth, the image becomes a living surface sensitive to time and its environment. Positioning *Ghost Images* as a visual archive in becoming rather than being. A form of resistance which embraces a visual language that trusts what remains, what is fading, and what is forgotten.

Text by Gabrielle Thandiwe Bates











MEMORIES OF MACHINES

Walter Crump



Trapped in unmovable time remain the creations of humankind's past. Neglected and unused, these once-necessary objects fade into obscurity. Walter Crump's photographic work reveals both the disintegration of form and the unforgiving nature of forgetfulness. In his series featuring obsolete machinery, Crump captures more than time worn images—he constructs machines without a purpose. These haunting remnants of deep inventions explore the fragile boundary between function and failure, inviting viewers to confront the inevitable entropy in all creations, including ourselves.

When finished with an image, he dismantles his still life setups of found industrial components in order to create new, intimate semi architectural/machine like compositions from the industrial debris. The influence of

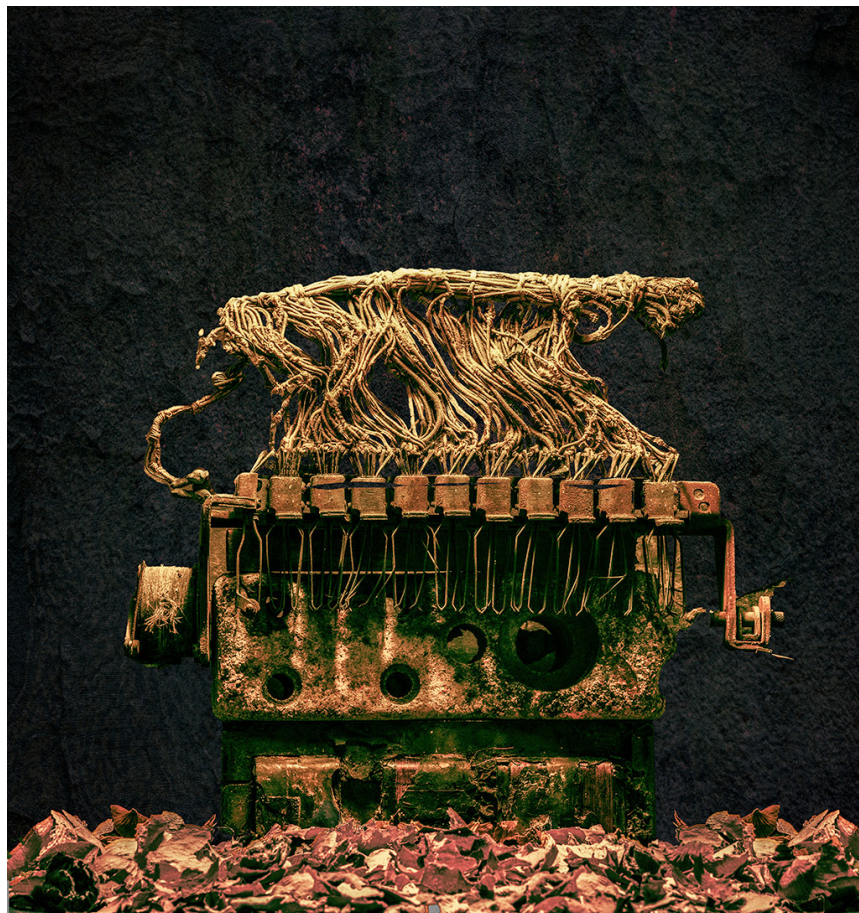
classical still life painters like Walter Murch, Jean Chardin and Giorgio Morandi inspired Crump's own personal interpretation of the genre. As he states, "I began to explore, photographically, my own particular brand of still life. Instead of daily objects... I began to photograph the mechanical and electronic detritus of our culture. Over the years, I have collected and photographed objects discarded from the fading industrial world—fragments of defunct mechanisms, mangled circuit boards, worn gears, and tangled, rusting whackmadoos." The mechanical objects he captures reflect the human condition in both structure and vulnerability. His work does not glorify machinery for its utility but rather mourns its decline—using it as an ambiguous metaphor for memory, loss, and mortality.

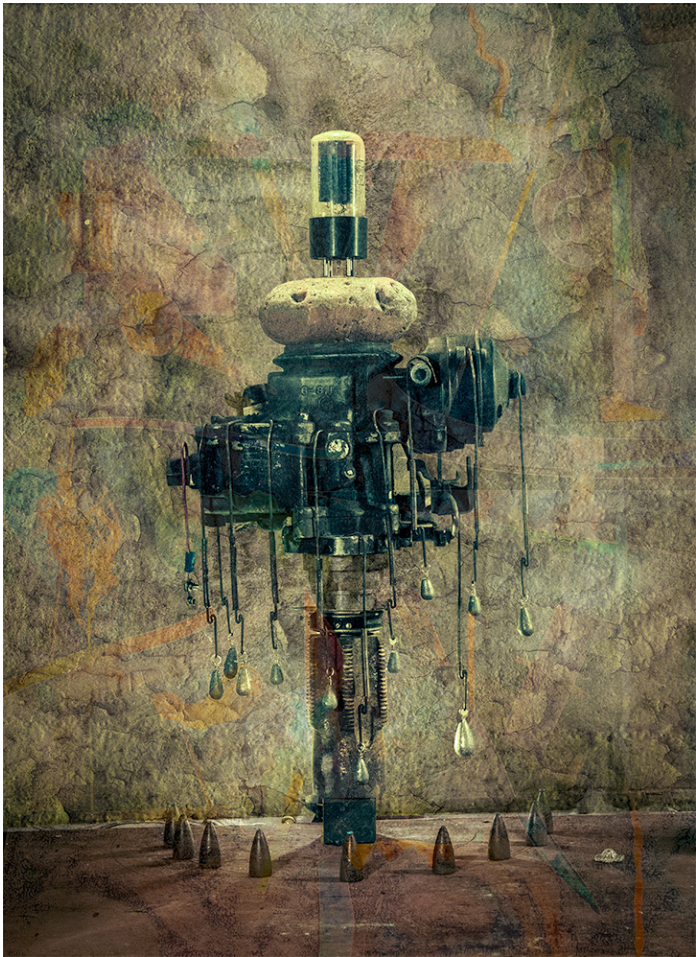
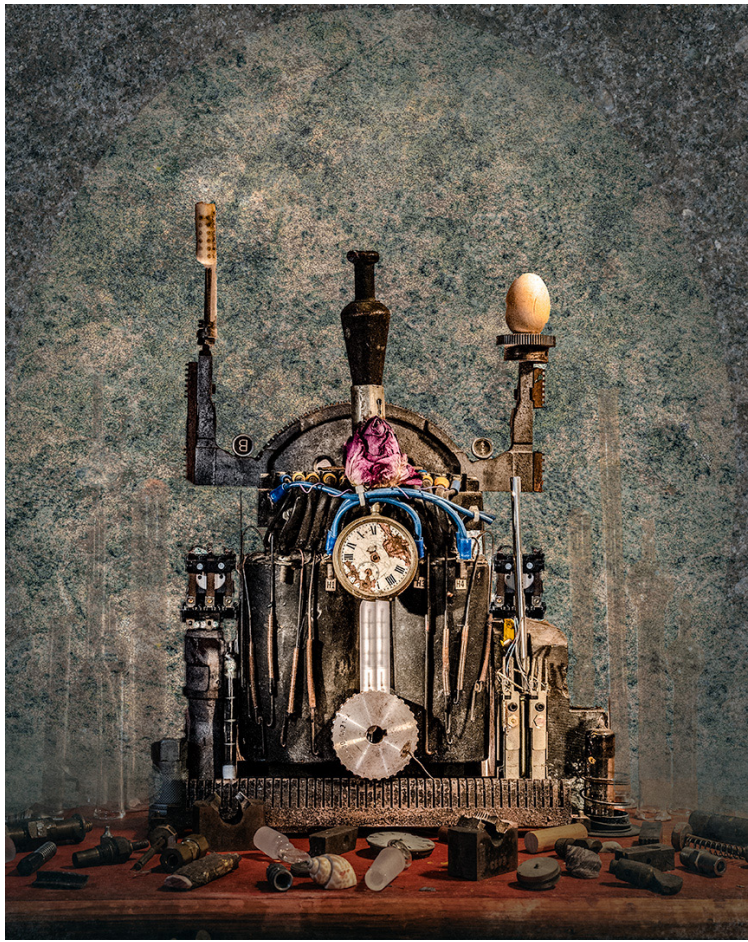
His images depict mechanical forms not as pristine relics of industrial prowess, but as decaying, surreal apparitions. Through compositional fragmentation, layering, and subtle manipulation, Crump takes simplicity and repurposes it into unsettling complex visual meditations. Many of Crump's compositions blur the line between man and machine, evoking a tension between the human and the mechanic. These objects are positioned in humanoid ways, evoking pareidolia—the phenomenon in which viewers recognize humanity in non-human things. In these images, the camera itself often becomes a subject, an ironic reversal where the toll of vision is turned inward and examined.

Crump's use of experimental printing methods, digital layering, and chemical alterations breaks the traditional clarity of photography. Foggy edges, ghostly overlays, and unpredictable textures communicate the perishing of value before the viewer's eyes—as the photos, like recollections themselves, fade away. The emotional residue of forgotten progress lingers in these compositions. In these creations, we hear echoes of past intentions and unfulfilled futures. These photographs challenge us to consider the objects we leave behind, not just physically but in the broader scope of lingering emotion and psychological landscapes.

In a culture increasingly obsessed with the new and convenient, Crump turns our gaze towards the discarded detritus to remind us that the fog of decay also holds beauty, mystery, and meaning.

Text by Jayde Belser













Randazzo's
Seafood

Tap to pay
preferred
VISA

ZAGAT
2012/13
Randazzo's Seafood

200
GLOVES
Kirkland

CAS
WEIGHT TOTAL PRICE
CAS

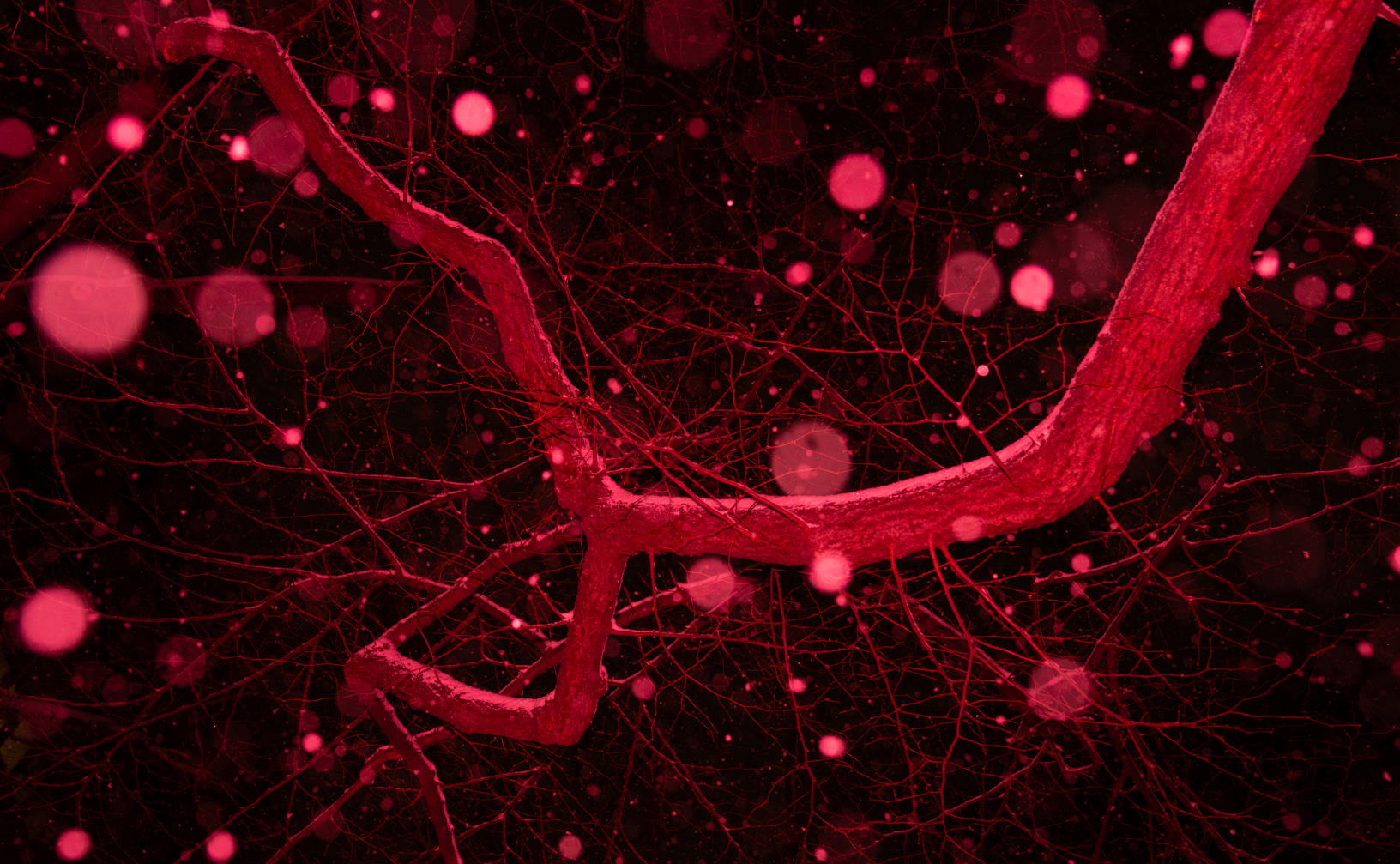
DON'T
THE TWO
the only thing
better than
being ITALIAN
is
being SICILIAN

Instead of
electric cars, I
think we
should bring
back the
electric chair. It
would solve
more
problems.

We need to quit
looking for
intelligent life
on Mars and
look to see if
there is any
intelligent life
in Washington
D.C.

OCTOBER 2022

























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