

穿越日常的凝思

Nicholas Hughes的鏡頭哲學

Nicholas 的鏡頭捕捉的並非是形體或光影，而是一種安棲於精神之中的哲學觀點。他的系列作品多半耗費數年完成。透過鏡頭對日常生活物件、場景的凝視，他試圖擴大並深化感官的印象、駁抗已經被膨脹媒體麻痺的視覺慣性。

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· Edge (Verse II) #19 - 2005



Nicholas Hughes

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Nicholas 在 1963 年生於英國利物浦，儘管青年時期就開始攝影，但是他直到 2002 年才在倫敦的傳播學院完成正式的攝影教育。1998 年的時候他開始實現以攝影維生的夢想。早年時期就對環境主義產生極大興趣，因為深覺大自然的脆弱與人類破壞的強度，因此開始拍攝地景。

曾在 2007 年於英國的 Photographers' Gallery 舉辦個人展、2006 年以“Earth”系列參加休士頓的 Fotofest 雙年展，以及 2005 年以“Landscape”系列作在南韓首爾參加第五屆國際攝影展，作品備受國際矚目。他總是在拍他當下所處的空間，不管是倫敦市中心、英格蘭西南的康瓦爾、英國的海岸線，瑞士或者德國。作品曾刊登在如 Next Level、Hotshoe International、以及 the Photographer 中。

Nicholas Hughes was born in Liverpool (GB) in 1963. Although beginning to make photographs in his youth, it was not until completing a formal photographic education through a Master of Arts degree at the London College of Communication in 2002, preceded by a first class Bachelor of Arts degree in 1998 that he realised his vocation as a photographic artist.

Hughes became interested in environmentalism at an early age and seeing how the natural world suffered at

the expense of corporate profit led him into fundraising for an environmental pressure group. Increasing awareness of the fragility and preciousness of nature drew him to the landscape. His work has gained increasing international recognition through recent selection as the featured artist in a solo show at the Photographers' Gallery in London (2007) and as an exhibitor at 'Earth' The Houston biennial Fotofest in 2006 as well as in 'Landscape', the 5th International Photo Festival in Seoul (South Korea) 2005. Currently his work is included in the Victoria and Albert museum's contemporary selection for the Histories of Photography exhibit in London from 2009-10. His work has also been seen at the world's major photographic art fairs in Los Angeles, New York and Paris.

The Solo Exhibition of Nicholas Hughes - "Field"
Place: The Photographers' Gallery, London.
Date: Nov 3rd - Dec 13th

用鏡頭打開意義框限

作為一個環境主義者，Hughes 的作品環繞著自然與人之間關係的視覺再現。他所拍攝的大部分地景作品都試圖將人存在的符號排除，專注捕捉安棲於精神之中的景觀。因此，鏡頭的意義對 Hughes 來說並非是框限住視野，而是恰好相反，是為了把景觀做為印象擴大、達到沉默的凝思層次，使那印象與觀者之間產生共鳴。因此，之於他，攝像並非是為了捕捉或固著影像的意義，反而是使之模糊曖昧。

dpi : As a photographer, you express the scenes reflected in your eyes as well as in your mind. What's the scene you would like the viewers to catch in your pictures?

Nicholas : There is a variation around a theme within my work - essentially I am searching for visual representation of the human relationship to nature. The majority of my landscape work purposely seeks to exclude any signs of our existence, preferring instead to concentrate on that which resides in the psyche. You could say that I wish to make an impression wider than the framed image itself - something that resonates with the viewer - Ideally work that will engage a level of contemplation - of silence. There is a level of ambiguity rather than too fixed a meaning.

以哀悼的凝視 聆聽黑暗中微小聲音

在“In Darkness Visible”的 Verse I 系列中，他試圖建構一個由積累記憶與樹木幽魂所構成的森林，目的是為了對抗媒體帶來的那種感官麻醉現象。他花了兩個冬天反覆到倫敦的中央公園去，完成這批作品，將裝飾性的田園風貌轉換一種修補「文明之中的自然感」的野地。這些作品提供了一種對人們心靈深處的哀悼。他認為我們在心中其實已經不自覺地把原始叢林視為一種失落的心靈家園，而透過鏡頭裡那些哀悼的凝視，這系列的作品可以作為一種視覺性的田園牧歌，讓我們得以重新召喚、再生出那些失落的感官與心靈。現代社會中的紛擾讓他覺得很難沉靜下來，然而在固定的定位點上等待鏡頭中的光線再現出那種紛擾慾望變換的時刻，於他而言是安定自己感官的最佳方式。

而在 Verse II 中，攝影鏡頭的框限隔絕了噪音帶來的分心，儘管在鏡頭中捕捉的仍然是那些充滿困境的人生時刻，那些懸而未決、衝突、陷阱、改變的可能性。在觀察那種深層的、旋繞的渾沌時，人們會對那些一閃而過、毫無防備的脆弱瞬間印象深刻。在面對到這個力量時，我們就能在安全的黑暗中看見溫柔希望的光。Hughes 說，一個可以把那種旋繞、混亂的速度減緩下來的人，就可以聽見在黑暗中仍然可見得的、沉靜之中的微小聲音。

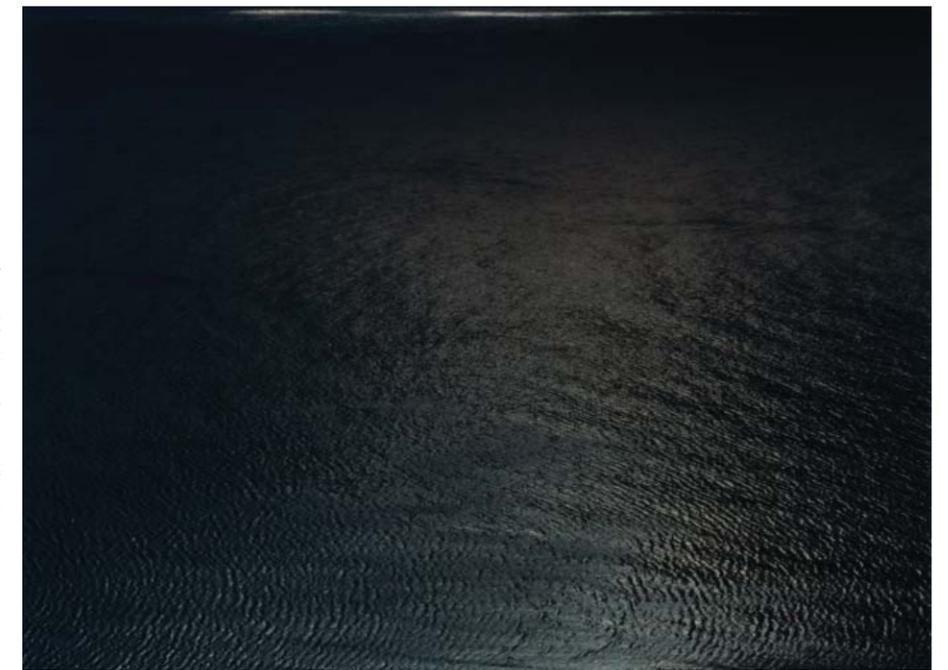
dpi : In the collection of "In Darkness Visible" especially the Verse I, despite contrast between the dark and the misty light, your works still capture an incredible sense of stillness. Would you please talk about this series of works? What inspired you to do such a theme?

Nicholas : In reaction to media led sensory anaesthetisation, and worn by the inadequacy of late political rhetoric, my intention in Verse I was to construct a forest from accumulated memory and the ghosts of trees. The city park offers an escape valve - a window leading the weary city dweller to reconstructed, consumable nature. Having spent a period of two winters' visiting a central London park this

work inverts the decorative Arcadian layout in an attempt to restore a sense of the natural in this cultivated, somewhat synthetic city 'wilderness'.

Through these works my aim was to provide an emotive and atmospheric lament for that deeply ingrained aspect of the human psyche, our deeply held association with the primeval forest as spiritual home, which is lost, but may, in contemplating these visual idylls be exhumed. These works act as a plaintiff call for that which can be regenerated. During this period I was going through a good deal of change in my life in which stillness was hard to find. Resolving to spend endless days waiting in a familiar vantage point for moments of light to reflect this desire was a good way to settle my senses.

In Verse II the framing of the camera helped to reduce the 'noise' of distraction whilst still portraying the swirling wild morass of life, indecision, strife, entrapment and the possibility of change. The observation of deep swirling chaos with shafts of enlightenment impresses one with a disarming sense of frailty. In the face of this awesome power we are left nurturing a tender hope for light within the ensuing darkness. One recognises the possibility of slowing down, and discovers the still small voice of calm that in the darkness may yet be visible.



· In Darkness Visible #1 (Verse II) 2006



· In Darkness Visible (Verse I) #11 - 2007



· In Darkness Visible (Verse I) #10 - 2007



極簡的視線邊緣

“Edge” 這系列的作品則比較早期，因此顯現出了他生涯興趣演化的系列作品：它是一個起點，從這系列開始，Hughes 開始建立在固定地域空間進行攝影的工作模式——在這系列中，他反覆去了一個與童年印象中很相似的海邊。並且，他把在“Immaterial”系列中展現的那種極簡派風格用來轉化“Edge”這系列作品中的戶外環境處理，延展了情緒與色彩之間的關係。“Edge”這個名稱是挪用自 19 世紀英國地景畫家 William Turner 說過的「遺忘的邊緣」一詞。這系列作品是把視線定著在海岸的邊緣，凝視遠方的地平線。那感覺就像在凝視著羅馬神話不朽的盡頭，在那裡，美麗依然存在，而它與我們的未來交會在遺忘的邊緣。長久以來象徵著心靈歸處的海，在那碎岩污染著的、被破壞的視野邊界上，產生了 Turner 所說的那種遺忘的浪漫概念。



· Edge (Verse II) #12 - 2005



· Edge (Verse I) #29 - 2003



· Edge (Verse I) #14 - 2002

dpi: “Edge” is totally different. In this series, you have again made a lot of ocean based imagery but on this occasion the surface of the water is bright and light as opposed to that of “In Darkness Visible.” What is the concept behind this series and what is the work about?

Nicholas: Looking back at earlier work it is easier to determine progress made and how interests have evolved – on one level in retrospect I see within this work (Edge Verse I) a start-point to my interest of working within a strictly defined location. Here I have continuously revisited a beach familiar from childhood where aspects of minimalism learnt through my ‘Immaterial’ studies have been translated to an outdoor environment and I have also stretched my creative response to aspects of colour in relation to emotion. The title of ‘Edge’ refers to the 19thC British landscape painter William Turner’s concern with depicting ‘The edge of oblivion.’

Whilst this work takes its place at the edge of shores or contemplates the distant horizon, there is a feeling that there is a limit to the perpetuation of the Romantic myth. Whilst beauty still exists, its future and ours may be on the verge of oblivion. The ocean, a traditional provider of mental release, is contaminated by detritus, which destroys our vision and thereby the Romantic notions of Turner’s oblivion.



· Immaterial #15 - 2001



· Immaterial #63 - 2002



· Immaterial #5 - 2002

日常生活物件的非物質化

而談到“Immaterial”這系列作品，Hughes 說這系列作品原來一開始的目的是觀察西方家飾中的窗簾，它們的功能原來是阻絕光線，但漸漸變成掛在那兒、捕捉了朦朧光影的景象。他曾經在一個高樓中住了兩年，深刻地觀察城市中那些難以預測的光線：後來他開始在作品中捕捉週遭環境的光線，像是從高牆灑落下來的光，或者是早晨第一道穿透窗簾纖維投過來的微光。他發現這些光線像極了那兩年他在高樓中所觀察的城市光線，那種看著天空時感覺到的恍惚感。因此他透過拍攝窗簾與光，捕捉這個來自日常生活高度的凝視，展開在那光景中被展示出來的更寬廣的世界。

“Immaterial”這個名稱指的是排除消費主義與物質財富，致力於追求精神層次上那些對我們成長為人更重要的關鍵。因此他試圖透過日常生活中俗常的物品，高密度地捕捉它們、降低那種俗常的普同感，使日常生活世界的樣貌抽象化、哲學化。他認為這個世界太多問題是出於貪求，追求那些非出於必要的消費只會造成讓自己受苦的結果。

dpi : Tell us about the “Immaterial.” What’s the material you use in this series and why do you call it “immaterial”?
Nicholas : The word ‘Immaterial’ refers to a lack of concern with consumerism or material wealth and an engagement with matters more spiritual, more significant to our growth as people. Much of the world’s problems are aspects of greed, those not engaged by the ‘need’ to continuously consume more are suffering the consequences of those that are.

Moving to live in a high rise building for a two-year period had a profound effect upon the manner in which I was able to study the continual vagaries of light across the city. As my vision gradually progressed I grew accustomed to the constant enormity of high-rise vistas and my attentions turned to the play of light upon my more immediate surroundings. Observing that light falling upon the walls and

the morning’s first rays cast upon the subtle folds of curtain fabric, created the same sensory feeling of hypnotic trance like enchantment as I had found whilst looking at the skies above the city or at the sea in earlier studies. For me the elevation of the everyday (in this case domestic interiors) to a platform of contemplation seemed appropriate as the wider world appeared devoid of reason.

Although initially my investigations were of curtains hung to keep out the light in Western homes they gradually became a constructed use of cloth hung in a variety of ambient light conditions. Through the availability of subject matter on an everyday basis I was able to bring a great degree of intensity to the study, leading to a gradually reductive process in common with abstraction from the everyday world of appearances.



· In Darkness Visible\In Darkness Visible (Verse II) #6 - 2007



· In Darkness Visible 3 (Verse II) 2006

用影像「消化」一個地點

對他來說，基本的工作模式是讓一系列的影像隨著地點自行演化，所以一系列的作品經常會花去他好幾年的時間。作品系列本身可能會記錄下一個地景物理狀態的改變，但同時這作品系列的概念與他作為創作者、回應這些改變的心境也同樣隨之發展。因此，他是隨著時間、季節的變化在「吸收、消化」一個地點。透過這樣持續的觀察可以跨過他自己本身的思維位置，進入這個地點，然後透過實驗讓這些素材演化成新的再現。所以，Hughes 認為他在做的事情並非是單純去紀錄一個存在的光線或形體，而是如何強化這個主題。他認為用鏡頭與暗房，是可以相較於畫家，花更長的過程去處理素材的表現。

Hughes 說自己對於「下一個主題是什麼」這問題總是很焦躁。他手上正在進行的作品會完全地佔據他所有的專注力，因此通常也會是他當下最有興趣的作品。他特別喜歡“In Darkness Visible”的 Verse I，因為這系列對他是一個極大的挑戰，因為那是密度非常高的題材，他投入了許多時間實驗曝光的過程。他認為透過數位革命的力量下去找到新語言是很重要的，同時他提到

或許像 In Darkness Visible 的 Verse I 這樣的用品用比較數位的方式來做會比較容易，不過那無法再演出他想追求的那種更為凝致的影像。

dpi : It seems that each theme in your series of works often took you several years, like “Edge” for 4 years and “In Darkness Visible” for 3 years. How do you develop the themes for your series? Do you have the theme first then take the pictures with the theme, or vice versa?

Nicholas : It is essential for me to let a sequence of images evolve from a location. This may be a consequence of a change in physical location but equally development of a concept and constructing my mental response to an environment. It is significant to absorb a place over time and through seasons. I have my existing concerns, through observation I search for entry points that cross my philosophical stance and through experiment I seek to evolve these in to new representations, the manner in which I now work relies far less on a recording of existing light and shape and is a consequence of how I enforce certain appearances upon my subject matter. With a camera and darkroom this is possibly a longer process than for example a painter.

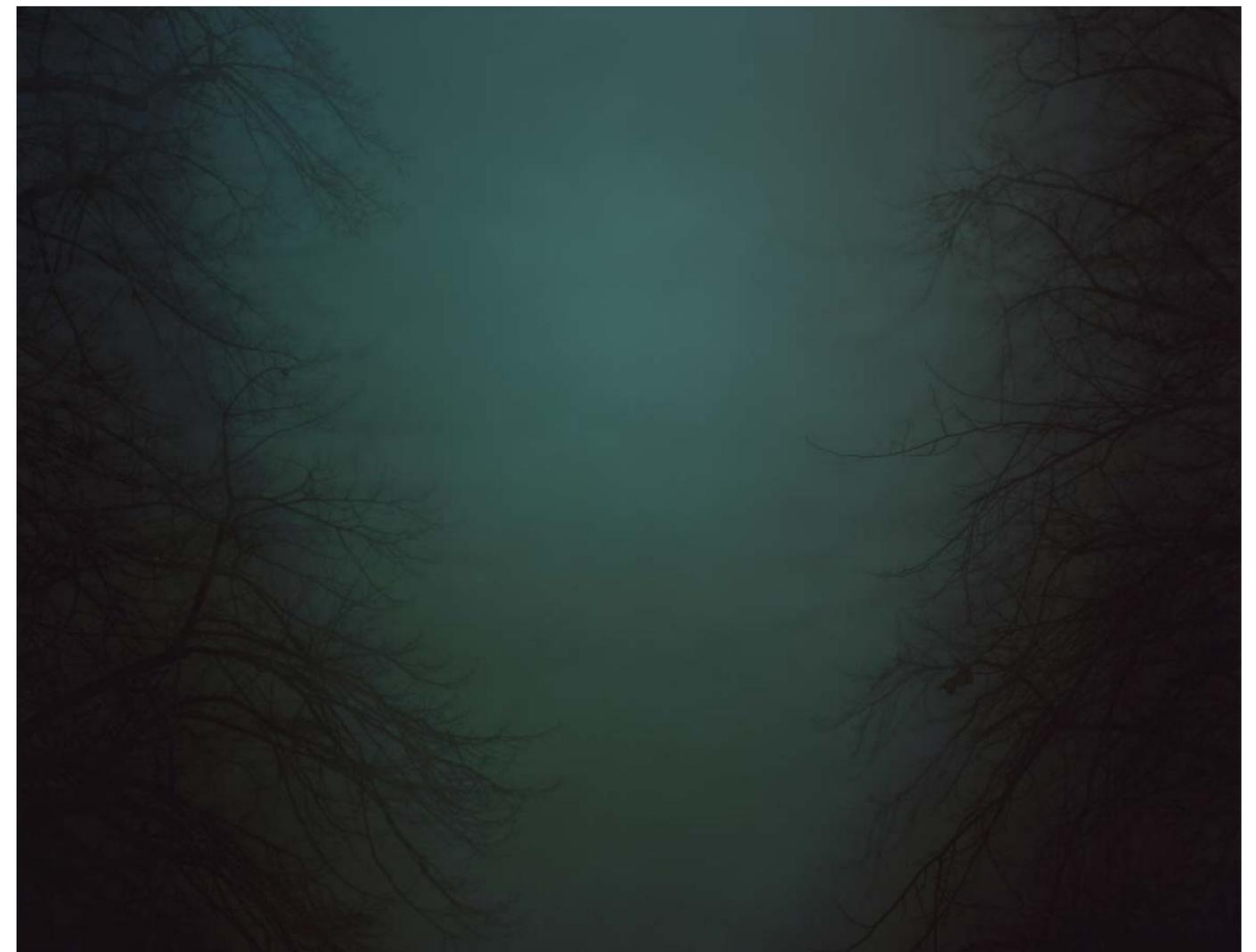
dpi : Which work (or series of works) is your favorite or the most special for you? Would you share the experience with us?

Nicholas : Each series as it evolves is of primary interest

hence my latest works are my preoccupation at present or those yet to come. I often feel restless about what is next....Achievement wise - the first section of In Darkness Visible – Verse I, presented me with the greatest challenge and through that process they occupy a space of special interest to me. This was a very intensive study involving much time and experimentation with exposure. It has been important to me presented with the powers of the digital revolution to find new language within the analogue format. Perhaps producing work as in this series through digital means may have been easier but it would not represent the quieter more disciplined response that I aimed for.



· In Darkness Visible (Verse I) #17 - 2007



· In Darkness Visible (Verse I) #15 - 2007

重返自然，打破麻木的視覺慣性

談到攝影中最困難的部份，Hughes 認為是用一種「轉向觀看者」的方式去訴說。他創作出來的許多影像都在打破觀者的視覺習慣，挖掘現在超飽和的視覺感官經驗所忽略的東西。他說，在一個世界已經可以用衛星來記錄每一英寸土地的世界中，鏡頭的可塑性是必須藉由不去追求更遠、更異國情調的東西，而是反身從自己近身的生活環境開始更細膩地觀察週遭環境才能塑造。在物質文明無止盡地消耗自然這件事情上，人們已經付出感官的貧乏做為代價；他認為美國哲學家梭羅相信「野性是世界得以持存的要件」是很有道理的。人們漸漸透過更多行動科技來把自己跟自然環境隔離開來，只會使他們自己跟現實之間產生更大的隔閡。對 Hughes 而言，他對那種只是把自然放進展示櫃中或者只是旁觀來對待自然的態度感到生氣，因此透過作品用一種哀悼來回應那些我們極度依賴身心靈上的東西。

dpi : What do you care about the most when you are photographing? And what is the most difficult for you when you are working?

Nicholas : In a world where every inch is already documented or satellite accessible it is important to review that which resides on our doorstep. This reviewing of my immediate surroundings examines the plasticity that can be engaged through the camera, as well as reducing my environmental impact significantly - by not chasing the far off and exotic. American philosopher Henry David Thoreau believed that wildness held the key to the preservation of the world. Our materialistic culture has paid scant regard to the depletion of the natural environment. As we have becoming increasingly disconnected from what is left of our manicured 'natural' spaces I do not believe we have benefited. People seek to alienate themselves from their surroundings through the increased use of mobile technology whilst all the while divorcing them from reality.

Mine is a mournful sensory response to the resources on which we are ultimately dependent both physically and spiritually. I am angry at the sidelining and showcasing of nature. How long before 'Tree Museums' are a reality? The difficulty is saying these things in a manner that does not turn an audience away. There are many images of destroyed habitats that are ignored through over-saturation - it is more challenging for me to create a thoughtful response both in the manner in which I wrestle with analogue processes and through that which I strive to say.



· Field (Verse III) #3 - 2009



· Field (Verse I) #4 - 2008



· Field (Verse I) #1 - 2008



從步行可達的距離開始

Hughes 說，他平常的時間通常要不是在閱讀就是在亂逛——是在大西洋上遨遊而不是在網路上。他最近正在進行的新作是一個叫做“Field”的系列，為了這個主題他已經做了三個系列，特定選擇了一個地點，從倫敦市中心撤到英國的最西邊，並且只在步行可以到達的距離中進行拍攝創作。他說，對當下所在的位置開始進行思考看起來是一個很有用的起點，而且我們也已經習慣棲居在這樣的世界中。因此 Field 是一個象徵，是一個自遠古而來的路徑，描述了我們是從一個森林的棲居者演化到現在這種只據守在平地上的過程。他最近在某處聽到，藝術家必須跟世界區隔來，才能比較好地觀察這個世界。所以接下來他希望可以找一個新的地方去住一陣子或者工作，也許就去遠東吧！

dpi : What do you usually do in your leisure time?

Nicholas : Usually reading or surfing - the Atlantic not the web!

dpi : What have you been working on recently? Or would you please share what you plan next with us?

Nicholas : I am currently completing a new series of work entitled 'Field' - for this series I have refined my approach to the extent that I have made works in this three section (I refer to these as verses) series only within walking distance of the location that I have chosen in which to live specifically for this purpose. I have left the city of London and moved as far west in the UK as I can in order to examine what remains of the natural environment. We have changed so much the manner in which we inhabit the world that it seemed a useful starting point to consider our current position. The field is symbolic of our ancient passage from a forest dwelling species to our current role as land management custodians. Somewhere recently I have read that artists need to be apart from the world in order better to observe it. Next I would like to find somewhere new to live and work - conceivably in the Far East! 

· Field (Verse I) #3 - 2008