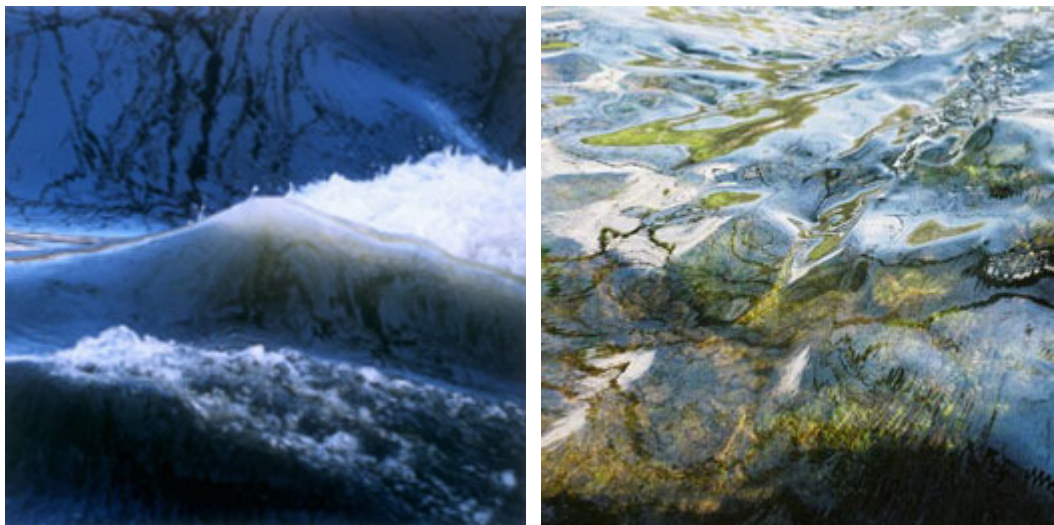




EXhibition

"Making art is an everyday activity for me, a way of being, of doing and of seeing. My work varies from transient to heavily worked. I draw, paint, work with clay, plasticene and found objects. And I take a great many photographs.



"I took up photography as a means of getting out of games at school. Taking O-Level and then A-Level photography at the local college meant spending an hour each way on the bus, missing lunch on the way there and not getting home 'til seven in the evening. The courses were a mixture of theory, practice and history and were a compelling alternative to playing hockey for an hour and a half in the afternoon. I subsequently went to art college to study textiles and worked as a knitwear designer, graphic designer and art college tutor before training as an Art Psychotherapist.

"I find the two activities of being an artist and an Art Psychotherapist inextricably intertwined. I'm the therapist I am because I'm an artist. I'm the artist I am because I'm a therapist. Sometimes people think that 'art' and 'therapy' are mutually exclusive: that a work or process must 'belong' to one or the other. For me, they are interdependent modes of creativity.

"Art Psychotherapy is a 'boundary dwelling' activity. Sometimes it feels like being stateless in the hinterlands between the nations of Art, Medicine, Social Action, and never quite achieving citizenship of any of them. Art Psychotherapy dwells across other boundaries: inside and outside, material and metaphor, word and images....

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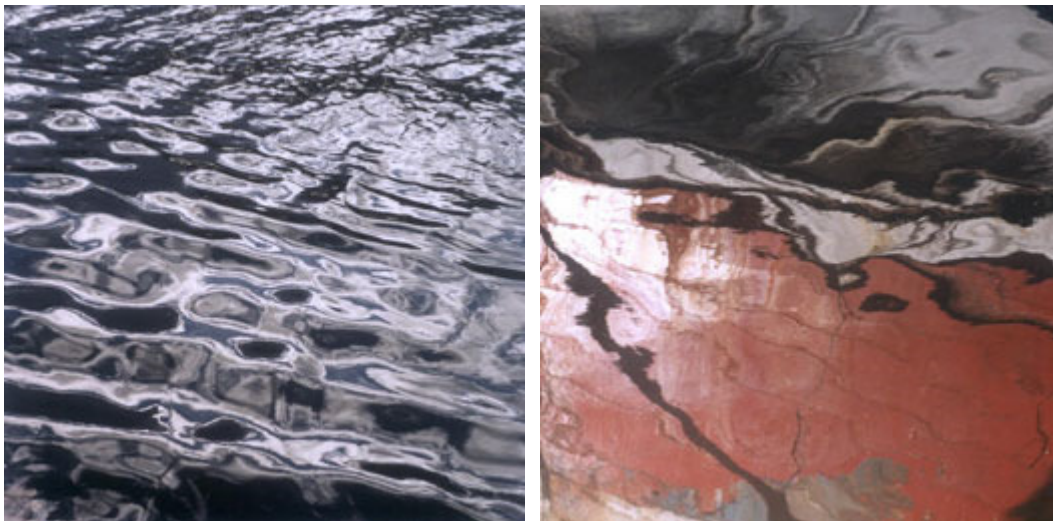
"So it's not surprising that my work is an exploration and an expression, (perhaps most of my work has been), of a 'space between'. The 'liminal' threshold of water's skin is one of the spaces which I find endlessly fascinating."



EXEhibition

The exhibition from which these images are taken has been shown by Exeter Healthcare Arts at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, and at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. The EXEhibition was supported by Exeter Arts Council, and by Boots the Chemist.

A PDF, available from the 'documents' page of this site contains the 'EXEhibition' text, including a brief history of the River Exe and its role in shaping the city; notes on the flood relief channel and the work of the Environment Agency as well as some thoughts on the symbolism and metaphorical place of rivers.



These photographs, and hundreds more besides, have been taken along the two mile stretch of the River Exe from just beyond St David's station to Trews Weir is a very 'tamed' river. If it were not St Thomas would still be prone to major floods. The River in this section is contained from its determined course by the

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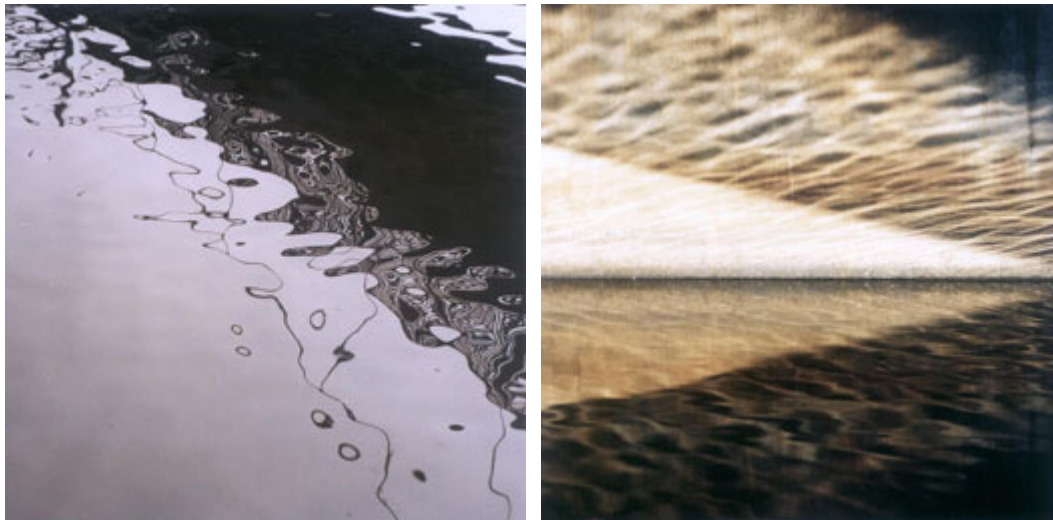
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concrete of the flood channel and lacks the wildness of its beginnings on Exmoor or its end in the estuary. However this 'domesticated' Exe still gives the city an extraordinary and ever changing richness. Its surface is constantly changing; the river is never static. Current, light, depth, shallows and wind produce tiny environmental shifts, lasting only a few seconds.

Travelling betwixt and between, a time of neither one thing nor another, is a condition for change. Human transformations like marriage, divorce, birth, death, illness and breakdown all demand toleration of the liminal space. Surviving and growing through them demands the same toleration of the anxiety of 'not knowing' as an artist needs.

As a psychotherapist I work with the implications of change, with distress and disturbance. This is precisely mirrored by my fascination as artist with surges of current, intense changes in illumination, trails left by water birds and boats, reflections, ripples and eddies of the river. Both places can open up glimpses into astonishing worlds in the course of their respective journeys.



Technical notes:

The images are all straight, unadulterated 35 mm photographs taken under natural lighting conditions. The photographs are taken with a handheld Pentax K1000 camera which I bought in 1976. It is an entirely manual SLR camera with a 50 mm lens and a Vivitar skylight filter. I do not use a telephoto or zoom lens. All the photographs are printed directly from the negatives with absolutely no manipulation.

My current 'rules' mean all these photographs have been taken from the bank, from bridges or occasionally standing in the river with my wellies on when the water level is low .

While these images have all been taken on rectangular format 35mm film they were taken with a square composition in mind and cropped after printing.. As a student I had a brief encounter with a very expensive Rolliflex camera which

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used two and a quarter inch square format film. It left me with a lasting affection for square images.