



Elwood Bridges (St. Kilda Street Bridge), 2020

This image, (one of four handmade photographs), was made during the recent Melbourne lockdown.

The Covid-19 lockdown in Melbourne restricted our movement to one hour of daily exercise within a 5 km radius of home. It was an all too brief moment away from news channels. I spent time wandering the Elster creek close to home. The creek flows into the Elwood Canal before emptying into Port Phillip Bay.

This reflective series of four prints were made with a large format 4x5 pinhole camera. I'm currently fixated with the Van Dyke Brown printing process. The results are quite lovely, very tactile and reflect the handmade nature and uniqueness of traditional photography.

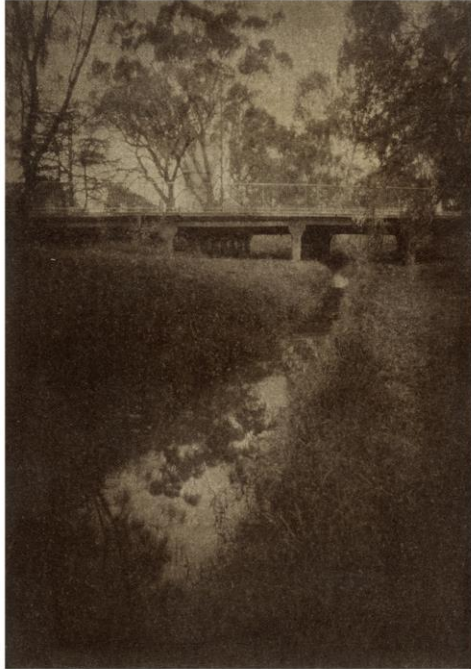
"I turn my back on the street scape with its clutter that distracts and instead focus on this beautiful natural corridor that cuts across this residential suburb connecting inland creek to sea. Almost primordial if you squint, a languid passage of water with timeless reflections. The thoroughfare of shrieking cockatoo's and small wading birds... and bridges like lost monuments stumbled on in some far away jungle"

These prints were made by hand using the 19th century, Van Dyke Brown printing process which does not require a light tight darkroom nor complex equipment.

A combination of traditional film photography and digital techniques allowed for a digital negative to be made from the exposed film. The digital negative was then contact printed for the final print.

In a digital age where granular sharpness is often the benchmark, these images present an older artisanal practice, one that celebrates authenticity. One where paper is coated by hand with a light sensitive emulsion, where prints are finished with varnish and bees wax and the finished work is presented as a tactile object behind a finely crafted picture frame.

Mat Hughes. Photographic Artist



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Van Dyke Brown print
finished with Gum Arabic and bee's wax

Arches 300gsm cotton rag
Image area 165x230mm
Pinhole camera image with 4x5 film

view the full series: mathughesimages.com