

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

T THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

Sharma, Meara, "Eight Photographers' Pictures From Isolation," *The New York Times Style Magazine*, April 29, 2020

Eight Photographers' Pictures From Isolation

Joel Meyerowitz, Renée Cox, Asako Narahashi and more share visual diaries of the present moment.



In the recent weeks and months, the photographers whose work is shown here have captured moments of connection and self-reflection, as well as evidence of the enduring power of nature. Clockwise from top left: Renée Cox; Richard Mosse; Wayne Lawrence; © Asako Narahashi; Domingo Milella; © Hitoshi Fugo, courtesy of Miyako Yoshinaga Gallery; © Joel Meyerowitz, courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery; Alec Soth

By Meara Sharma
April 29, 2020

“Like a high-strung racehorse who needs extra weight in her saddle pad, I like a handicap and relish the aesthetic challenge posed by the limitations of the ordinary,” writes the photographer Sally Mann in her memoir, “[Hold Still](#)” (2015). In our stilled, stalled time, her words ring especially true. Here we all are, burdened by untold fears, forced to make do, to essentialize, to improvise. And also, within all of this, to open our eyes and attend to new possibilities.

Of course, attention is the linchpin of image-making, and so I asked a number of photographers, many of whom typically derive inspiration from the wider world, how they are approaching this newfound intimacy with the ordinary, and to share what they have invented within it. Some relayed mystical encounters with nature and the animal world: Domingo Milella discovered ancient symbols on the rugged outskirts of Bari, Italy; [Richard Mosse](#) communed with the craggy topography of the Burren landscape in Ireland; [Asako Narahashi](#), in Japan, found solace alongside a rescued cat. On the Caribbean island of St. Kitts, [Wayne Lawrence](#) embraced proximity to family and the lush surroundings, while in wintry Minnesota, [Alec Soth](#) gave in to distance by chronicling his neighborhood through a pair of binoculars, capturing the feeling of being at once near and far, sheltered and susceptible.

Others have found ongoing projects imbued with fresh relevance. For his series “Chance and Necessity,” Hitoshi Fugo captured the drama and beauty of everyday mishaps in his Tokyo kitchen. On the beaches of Long Island, [Renée Cox](#) considered the multiplicity of the self in this moment of collective inwardness. So, too, did [Joel Meyerowitz](#), who began a daily ritual of self-portraiture at the start of the year, and for whom the act of facing oneself honestly is a kind of celebration.

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

Indeed, the wide-ranging images here acknowledge but don't limit themselves to melancholy; rather, they hold intrigue, affirmation and even delight, reminding us that, as Meyerowitz says, photography is a hopeful art form, an act of "saying yes," of staying awake to the world — which, as the pandemic continues to push us into retreat, is as vital a task as ever.

Quotes have been edited and condensed.

Richard Mosse

Pictures taken in the Burren National Park, Ireland



"Mullaghmore I." Richard Mosse

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

I have always thought that wandering through the hills and the fractured limestone strata of the Burren landscape feels something like mapping the striations of one's own mind. This is a land of texture, and it often takes some concentration on the ground in front of you not to trip up or fall into any of the "clints" or "grikes," the furrowed delineations created by millions of years of rain erosion. One must remain focused on each step and absorbed in the present moment. This helps distill the mind. As a photographer and as a walker, I see this landscape inwardly, as an expression of layers of thought that become especially evident after prolonged periods of isolation. I tried to capture that in this mini-series, as it has been important to me. Isolation, I've found, can be centering.



"Mullaghmore II." Richard Mosse

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

One of the photos shows a rag tree, which is an ancient practice in Ireland that descends from pagan times. It is a kind of shamanic site where people come to be healed. Those with illness and ailments will make a pilgrimage to the site, bringing some old rag or memento that represents their sickness and tie it to the rag tree. Doing so is said to heal the malady, if not physically then in some spiritual way. When Christianity arrived in Ireland in the Dark Ages, the church appropriated this practice, and so these sites have survived and are still popular. The spring bubbling from the rocks beneath this tree is considered a source of holy water — it's known locally as a holy well — and there are some glass mugs hanging from nails for believers to use to drink from the purifying stream. I have visited this rag tree for many years but have never seen it so heavily strewn with rags and other tokens.



"Mullaghmore III." Richard Mosse

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

I think this moment may be the death of analog photography. And of course, the art world was always very interpersonal, relational. It was about showing up to talks, openings, visiting museums, experiencing the work in person. All that seems like a memory now, replaced by the digital. This truly has locked us, at least for now, into viewing photography on social media and online. It will take a lot to return to the emphasis there was, until recently, on showing up in person, on giving the work the space to breathe. One could argue that this has the potential to democratize photography, but remember that each time you upload an image to social media, you're giving away the rights to a massive corporation. It's incredibly important for us, as humans, to show up and be present in order to create society. That's dangerous to do now, and also currently illegal for many people, so I feel nervous about what we stand to lose, particularly in regard to human rights and liberal democracy.



Mullaghmore IV Richard Mosse

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com



"Rag Tree." Richard Mosse