



Setting the Scene

The Stories Within the Land

By Kevin O'Brien

Volume One

Artist Statement

My work is titled "Setting the Scene". Through photographic images of the landscape and nature, including a wide variety of subjects and locations across Cork and Kerry, I share with you the hidden stories in these places. I believe that the sites we visit and wander into has something to share with us.

For years I've had a fascination with the natural environment. Every place is unique, no two places are the same. I wish to highlight how we can communicate and appreciate the natural distinctiveness that is around us. I am influenced by artists such as Turner, Friedrich, and Adams. I look towards the sublime and also quieter moments that are to be found in natural settings.

When it comes to capturing the work, I tend to "Shoot First, Ask Questions Later". I capture whatever catches my eye, it may be the whole image or a small fraction of it. Overtime the story begins to reveal itself. One print could be based on the human psyche, one might be a representation of current events, while another may have a more spiritual meaning behind it. Another factor to take in is the print itself. The size and positioning of each print have been carefully considered to maximise its full potential. Overall personally, seeing this world in a new light can be beneficial for all viewers.

The Bustling City

Seeing this cluster of shamrocks illuminated by a nearby street light in my estate one word came to mind, 'Progress'. In the beginning, this bit of soil would have been nothing, but overtime, it has grown and developed into this cluster we know today.

I see this as an example of every major in the world. It started out as nothing and has grown into this ever-growing civilization. A Utopia if you will.



16.1 x 9.8 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper

Breaking Out from Normality

I spotted this group of daffodils sprouting in amongst some gravel and its was intriguing to see such an odd mixture.

In a way, the daffodils amongst the gravel gave a sense of society. The daffodils represent ourselves whilst the gravel is a representation of the wider world. the gravel is very flat and consistent, meaning that the people of the wide world are quite ordinary. As for the daffodil, and the other greenery, it goes far beyond the ordinary.

This feeling of going beyond ordinary is a great way to say that it's okay to be different from the world. You don't have to conform to society. Just be your own person.



18.5 x 11 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper

Going Above and Beyond

You may think that these little stems growing on a rock is going to be similar to the daffodils in the gravel. While I may agree with this suggestion, I must disagree.

Seeing the many stems at the top of a wall it made me think of the thrill seekers, the daredevils in this world. I saw this as a representation of these types of people. It's as if a group went on an expedition to the top of a treacherous mountain.

These people say to the world that anything is possible. To follow your goals and dreams and never give no matter what.



16.1 x 9.8 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper

From the Depths...

This scene of the roots coming out of the ground has a more horror setting then the rest of the images. It looks like there's a demon's hand or claws is reaching out to the surface world attempting to take you, the viewer, down to the deepest depths known to man.

The angle of the image was taken into account as it enhances that horror element as if you looking at it, lying down on the ground.



16.1 x 8.5 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper



16.1 x 9.8 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper

The Worlds Gone Sideways

In my back garden, there is this lone step in the grass, sticking out like a sore thumb. Noticing the moss on the top and front of the step it gave me a sense of just all out chaos.

This image may bring negativity to those who believe that the Earth is flat. The moss resembles that of a jungle biome such as the Amazon Rainforest. The jungle appears to be falling off the edge of the world. This image almost represents the current state of this world we live in. Protests, riots, countries on the brink of war. This world is in a constant ever changing and ever evolving cycle.



16.1 x 11 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper

Death's Warm Embrace

This image of a discarded flower on a half-frozen bed of grass made me think of the symbolism of death. The flower stands as a being who has accepted its faith of death and awaits the great beyond. No hesitation. No resistance.

I used the coldness in the frost to symbolize death because when all things come to an everything turns cold. Also, I use a play on words with the words "Warm Embrace", because nothing warm about frost. However, it does surround us and embrace us when our time draws near the end.

They Left Me

I can't help but feel the impression I get from this lone tree in the field that sense of loneliness.

It's not because this tree is alone, there are more trees on the hills in the background. But for some reason I feel as if this single tree is a representation to those who have unfortunately drifted away from their friend groups. Whether it was on good terms, bad terms or maybe you just don't spend as much time with them as you used to, it's a part of life that people in your life will come and go. Friends, family, significant others, it's how life works.



22.6 x 16 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper



23 x 14.9 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper

Mass Graveyard

Seeing these Silver Birch trees made me see the beauty in tragedy. For reasons unknown seeing all these trees reminded me of the memorial cemeteries in Normandy, France.

I suppose it's the white tree bark. It stands out like a sore thumb in the relatively dark image. It's shining on those who gave their lives in the fight for freedom across the beaches in Northern France. It's heart-wrenching to know what these soldiers did for the countries that it makes you think. Without them the world we know may be different than to what it is now.



18.8 x 16.1 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper

Infestation

Seeing the moss on this rock, it's hard to deny that this image has some relation to the present day capturing that sense of fear we face every day.

The moss on the rock acts like some sort of deadly disease, or perhaps an alien parasite. It is taking over the host, the rock, at an alarming speed and it is unknown for how long it will last or if there's a known cure.

Oppression

The nature of this story is rather dark in contrast to the image itself. You have the reeds in the river going along with the current. But who's to say that the reeds want to go in that direction?

I saw the current forcing the reeds to go in a certain direction as an act of brutality and oppression. It's sad because reeds had lost their freedom of choice and free will against this current. They had no choice but to go with it. Isn't that just sad all together?



23 x 14.1 In. Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Paper



23.7 x 23.7 In. Inkjet Print on Epson Premium Luster Paper

Protecting Them from Danger

These leaves may look uninteresting at first glance but then you notice the piece of bird poo on the left side of the image on the leaf and all of a sudden, the image comes to life.

I saw the bird poo and for some reason, it made me think of my brother. Not that he's a piece of bird poo, but because he has always been there for me and the amount of times he has looked out for me is unbelievable. Like this leaf, it's looking out for its brothers and sisters. This leaf is taking the poo so that it's brothers and sister may succeed.

I'm not saying that my brother is a failure. What I am saying is that he wants me to succeed just this leaf and its brothers and sisters.



33.1 x 23.4 In. Inkjet Print on Epson Premium Luster Paper

Still Standing

In a field, there was these bits of straw in amongst the grass that I saw had some potential.

I saw the straw as the less fortunate against the privileged grass. Even though their lives may be more difficult, they show that they are not giving up so easily. There are here to stay.

They may get the short stick in life, but it's not about what you have, it's what you do with what you've been given. And these straws show the true strength from within to stay alive and continue fighting for what is theirs.

Mental Breakdown

Looking at the textures and patterns of this jagged cliff face the only words can think of was “Mental Health”.

The unpredictability of the shapes and directions of the rocks give the impression that its mental state is on the brink of mental breakdown. Going from the top to the bottom of the cliff gives off the impression of which stages this mental state is in currently and maybe it's reasoning as well.

Issues regarding our mental state tend to go unnoticed. At least this gives an impression of what kind of mental state a person may be going through.



33.1 x 23.4 In. Inkjet Print on Epson Premium Luster Paper



Standing Out from the Crowd

At one of the nearby walkways in my village, there is this lake and on is this Silver Birch tree that sticks out like a sore thumb amongst this green and gold.

We all tend to try and stand out from everyone we come into contact with. We try to be different with our looks, our interests, our likes and our dislikes. This image is based on the overall appearance we present to the world.



46.8 x 33.1 In. Inkjet Print on Epson Premium Luster Paper

A Gentle Soul

In a field, I stumbled across this feather in some tall grass, and the contrast between the two brought out the beauty in both.

The grass represents the violence in both human beings and the larger world. Then you see this feather. It comes along and acts as a polar opposite. It is a more calming and a more peaceful agent, showing us there is more to this world, more to people than just violence. No matter how bad things get in the world there will be that little shed of beauty and dignity in all of us. There is unity between both the physical and spiritual.



42.2 x 15.7 In. Inkjet Print on Epson Premium Luster Paper

Rise and Fall

At the Kerry Cliffs, I saw the curve in the grass as the main focus of the image. It starts on the left making it to the top and as you move through the image it starts to head straight down then gradually starts to climb back up again at the right side of the image.

In life, we tend to rise and fall in nearly every aspect. Socially, financially and even mentally. That was the main thought process with this image. Even though your lives may be down they will rise back up in due time.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a field of tall, green grass. The grass blades are long and thin, with some showing signs of being cut or broken. In the lower right foreground, a small, white, irregularly shaped object, possibly a piece of paper or a small animal, is visible among the grass. The overall lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting during the day.

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Volume Two Coming Soon