

Alun Kirby

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Personal Statement

Alun Kirby began in monochrome photography, moving into cameraless photography and exploration of the cyanotype process around 15 years ago. He became a full-time artist in early 2017.

Alun's work addresses memory; specifically, it responds to and investigates historical and contemporary philosophical and psychological theories of memory and self, through visual imagery.

His work primarily uses the [cyanotype](#) cameraless photogram process. This technique, dating from the 1840s, is itself a memory of the birth of photography. There are no negatives, no copies; each piece is a unique interpretation, an imprinted memory made physical.

Like our understanding of memory, Alun's use of cyanotype process is reconstructive rather than reproductive, and captures experience, as does memory, rather than individual moments. This is seen particularly clearly in the [metamorphogram](#) series.

Alun's work in memory is externalized introspection; 'Who am I?' 'Why am I me?' 'Why do I do / like / behave as I do?' Alun's [background in scientific research](#) led to studying the work of philosophers and scientists examining the relationship between memory, self and imagination. This research provides the foundation for visual interpretation.

Alun is currently exploring memory and self through work with [local dementia action](#) groups and the people they support.

The works themselves are often melancholic; whether figurative or abstract, they hold a sense of space, of peace and stillness. These qualities reflect the long, thoughtful processes involved in their creation.

Particularly strong influences include the haiku of Issa Kobayashi, the poems of Ezra Pound, the music of Charles Mingus, the photographs of Harry Callahan, and the approach to life and art of each of these people.

Alun's work is held in private collections from Sweden to Australia, and many places in between.

Exhibitions / Events

- 2017 Sept – Nov: Artist in Residence, York Explore Library Archive
- 2017 Aug 25th – Sept 28th 'These Things Evolve Slowly', solo exhibition, New Schoolhouse Gallery, York
<http://alunkirby.com/exhibitions/small-things-must-evolve-slowly/>
- 2017 10th Aug – 30th Sept. 'AIR Open 2017', AIR Gallery, Manchester
- 2017 July: Contributing artist, ASMbly Lab, Leeds
- 2017 April: York Open Studios
- 2016 April: York Open Studios
- 2015 Sept; The Balancing Act, York Steiner School, York
Second iteration, in which I again curated, produced and exhibited. Media included wearables, sculpture, video, painting, photography and ceramics.
- 2015 Aug / Sept; Great North Art Show, Ripon Cathedral
- 2014 Sept; The Balancing Act, York Steiner School, York
Acting as everything from curator, producer, publicist, and exhibitor to handyman, I brought together 6 artists, including myself in a 'pop-up' gallery within a local school. The exhibition attracted over 400 visitors in 2 days.
- 1999 I Love Dogs / I Love Dogs Too, Space Gallery, London
I sought and obtained financial support from Canary Wharf Ltd for this self-curated and self-produced exhibition of hand-printed monochrome photographs. The two complementary exhibits examined the changing face of the Isle of Dogs as a result of the rapid development of Canary Wharf. Please visit <http://alunkirby.com/memory/i-love-dogs/> for more information.

Between 1999 and 2014 I spent several years in Sweden, returned to the UK, had children, and continued to photograph throughout.

Other

- 2017 Sept; Guest speaker, British Origami Society 50th Anniversary Convention
- 2017 Aug / Sept; Lectures in support of current exhibition
- 2017 May; 'Pint of Science' Creative Reactions guest speaker on Photographic Memory
- 2017 March; Guest speaker for Yorkshire Art & Design Teachers Regional Network
- 2016 May; 'Pint of Science' Creative Reactions guest speaker on Photography in the Iron Age
- 2016 November; Guest speaker, York Camera Club

I have taught cyanotype processes to children as young as 5 and adults as old as 85, through school outreach and commercial workshops.

I spent over 20 years as a research scientist. Running my own research programmes provided me with extremely well-developed financial, time, and project management skills. Moreover, the role necessitated a self-directed working model dependent on self-motivation and complete commitment allied to a drive for the very highest quality results.

I have already used my experience in research when putting on successful exhibitions, and I am now intent on fully utilizing these skills to further my artistic development.

Education and Prior Employment

Ph.D. Immunology (U. of London)

B.Sc. (Hons) Immunology

Feb 2017 - Artist

2015 – 2017 Head of Research Student Administration (University of York)

2011 – 2015 Bursar (York Steiner School)

1992 – 2011 Research Immunologist (London / Sweden / York)