

a beautiful announcement of death

by Alexander James



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Capturing the forgotten alchemy of a medium often considered to serve a purely documentary function, through careful manipulation of water and light and without the use of postproduction techniques, the artist has produced a new series of photographic works that weave a deviant historical thread between the mechanical reproduction of today's image making and the meticulous realism and existential gaze of painters such as Pieter Claesz of the 16th Century Vanitas tradition of painting.

With direct reference to the classical paintings 'Ophelia' (1851–52) by John Everett Millais and 'La Jeune Martyre' (1855) by Paul De La Roche, 'A beautiful announcement of death' takes the tragic story of Hamlet's Ophelia as a central focus, drawing also a comparison with Alexander James' own personal experience of a former lover's suicide.

In James' practice the camera, like the painter's oils, is a tool in which to eternally preserve the bodies of the artist's subjects: at times a collection of inanimate objects held in a purgatory state and at others the bodies of characters inscribed with historical and personal narratives, which the final image forever tells. It is both ironic and telling that water, the very element which for the Greek Philosopher Heraclitus stood as a symbol for the unstoppable mill of time, changing everything in its wake, serves precisely as the functional device through which he achieves the mesmerizing painterly effect of his photographs.

In his new body of work Alexander James is often found in direct dialogue with the painters that have inspired him as he participates in the age-old practice of contextualizing antiquities stories. In 'A beautiful announcement of death' photography emerges as a perplexing aporia, a kind of sorcery which successfully presences the past and yet only brings up ghosts.



Riverbrook with roses
160 * 80 cms





Riverbrook with magnolia
160 * 80 cms



Resting in a bed of dreams
80 * 60 cms



Riverbrook with peony
160 * 80 cms





Riverbrook with violets

160 * 80 cms



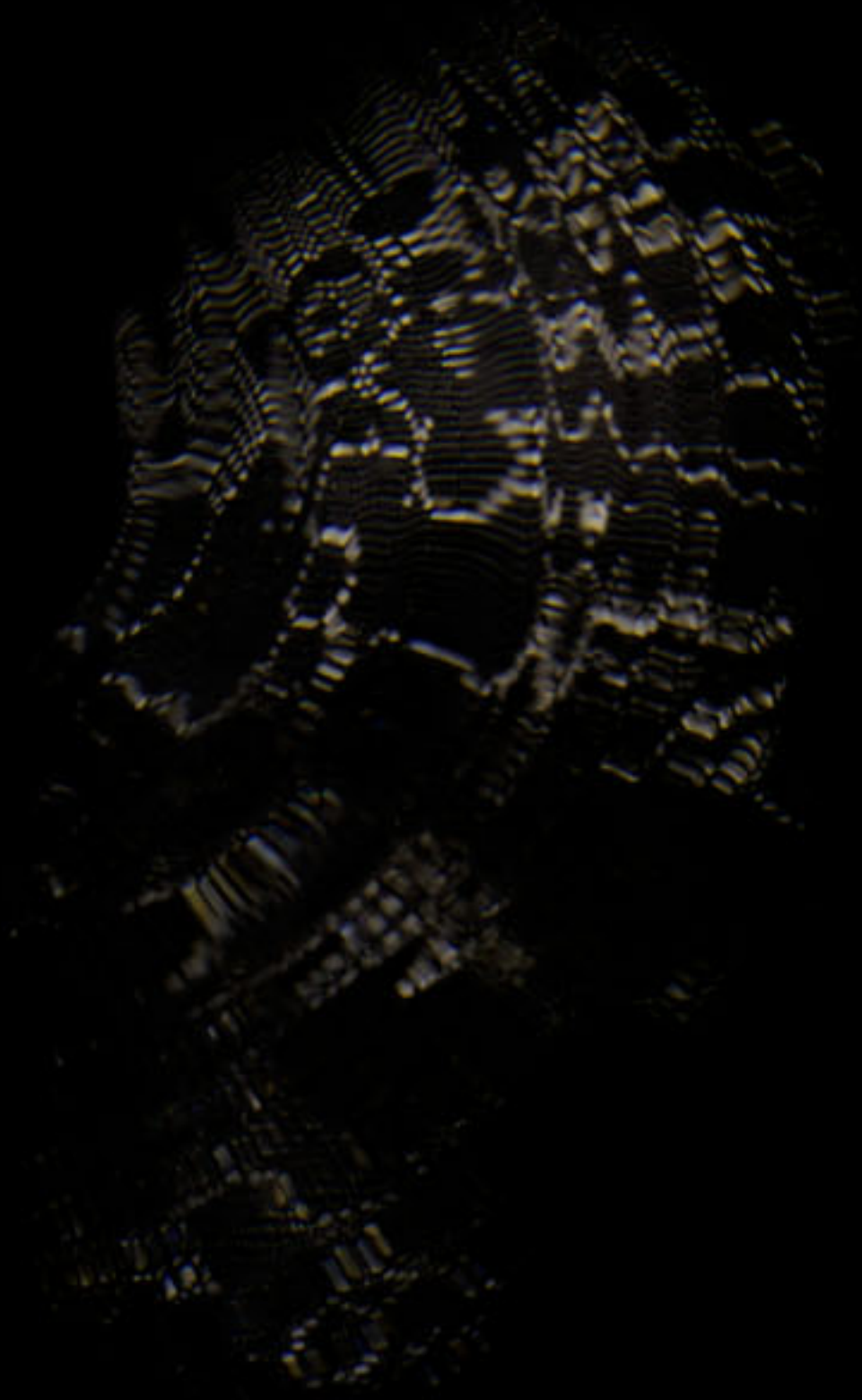
Eternal
80 * 80 cms



Frequency of a crucifixion 1, 2 & 3
30 * 40 cms



Water Crucifixions
30 * 40 cms

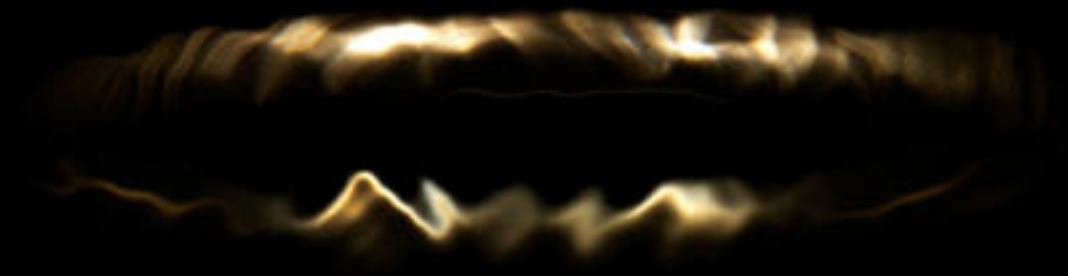


Veiled skull
30 * 40 cms



Veiled skull with flowers

30 * 40 cms



Veiled skull with halo
30 * 40 cms





Alexander James's works are always presented 'as-shot' without post production either traditional or digital. It is this dedication to 'in camera' purity that establishes a predominant focal point for his practice.

The quality of the work and the purity of the process is paramount, distilling elements out with the use of deep blacks; hoping to convey rich layers of meaning in what at first appear deceptively simple images.

EDITIONS

Medium	– C-Type photographic print dry mounted to a 3mm polished aluminum plate, signed with studio stamp verso face mounted with museum grade anti-glare Diasac
Frame	– bespoke hand made frame by Simon Quinn. American walnut 8 x 60 snug recess & slimline sight edge
Ophelia Edition of 2	– 1800 x 1350mm
Riverbrook Edition of 2	– 1600 x 800mm
Floral Halo Edition of 3	– 800 x 600mm
Halo Edition of 3	– 800 x 800mm
Crucifixion Edition of 3	– 300 x 400mm
Skull Edition of 3	– 300 x 400mm
Floral Abstract Edition of 5	– 300 x 300mm

