



WENDY
BEDNARZ



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FO RE WORD

In times of political strife, it is more important than ever that art be a bridge between cultures, and that we look for ways to connect rather than separate. That is exactly what *The Palimpsest Series* does – it leaves a space for all of us to become part of our world's rich cultural narrative.

For a traveler in a foreign land, there is always a magical moment when the unfamiliar becomes familiar, and the unusual is understood.

The Palimpsest Series embodies that magical moment within a brilliant re-interpretation of the artist's process of discovery. From a tumbled chaos of colors and blurs, emerges the clarity of shared humanity. Wendy Bednarz blends multiple photographic styles to evoke an acute sense of disorientation, while also showing us razor-sharp glimpses of reality.

Within these painterly blurs, the faces that we see clearly appear to be frozen in time – revealing what life is like at that exact moment. These are quiet moments of real connection between the viewer and the viewed.

I first met Wendy when I was en route to a new place, to Singapore, for a new adventure. She had been there for a year and *I was the traveler in an unfamiliar land*, immersed in a tumbled chaos of colors and blurs. And within that chaos, two things stood out with crystal clarity. Wendy's piercing blue eyes and her probing intellect.

As I began to collaborate with Wendy on both film and screenwriting projects, I was thrilled to discover her to be an artist with an intense and articulate vision. She takes a deep, analytical gaze at life, and she has a profound longing for unique experiences. This thirst for discovery fuels her love of cultural exploration and is always reflected in her work.

Wendy Bednarz is understanding through seeing. Her real-life experience is captured wonderfully within each breathtaking photographic canvas. And to a fellow traveler, this soulful series is a perfect portrait of how all of us, each in our own ways, travel through life.

–Bill Tunnicliffe, Filmmaker.



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THE PALIMPSEST SERIES

The word “palimpsest” derives from the Latin *palimpsestus*, which itself derives from the Ancient Greek παλιψηστος (*palimpsēstos*, “again scraped.”) The term is often used today to describe writing materials – papyrus, vellum, paper – that have been reused. The original writing may have been scraped away, but its traces still appear, giving the new writing a layered quality. The new text seems unable to contain the meanings evoked by the older text.

Magnetic fields of opposing charges – movement against static, a dusty palate, a neon splash, tension and release, the *Palimpsest* photographs are densely layered and inhabit spaces between abstraction and figuration. Obscured elements are as significant as those that are embellished. Collectively, the photographs are a ‘reconstructed memory’ that metaphysically collapses time into a single moment. Through visual clues that include haunting figures, the meaning of each image emerges slowly and experientially, inviting the viewer to engage their own unconscious memories and complete the narrative; there being as many possibilities as there are viewers.

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The impetus for the *Palimpsest* photographic series sprang from a trip to Sri Lanka with my daughter, Esmé, who was then five years old. Before Esmé was born, I would travel fluidly, easily, but with a young child, things changed and I could not access the countries that we visited as deeply as I desired. Instead, from train or bus, I watched landscapes come into view and disappear before my eyes. To pass the time, I made up stories about the people, flashing before our eyes, imagining, as much as I could, what it would be like to live in *their skin*, so different from my own. *Is their happiness measured the same as mine? What are their dreams?*

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“Magnetic fields of opposing charges ... movement against static, a dusty palate, a neon splash, tension and release.”

The impetus for the Palimpsest photographic series sprang from a trip to Sri Lanka with my daughter, Estée, who was then five years old. Before Estée was born, I would travel fluidly, easily, but with a young child, things changed and I could not access the countries that we visited as deeply as I desired. Instead, from train or bus, I watched landscapes come into view and disappear before my eyes. To pass the time, I made up stories about the people, flashing before our eyes, imagining as much as I could, what it would be like to live in their skin, so different from my own. Is their happiness measured the same as mine? What are their dreams?

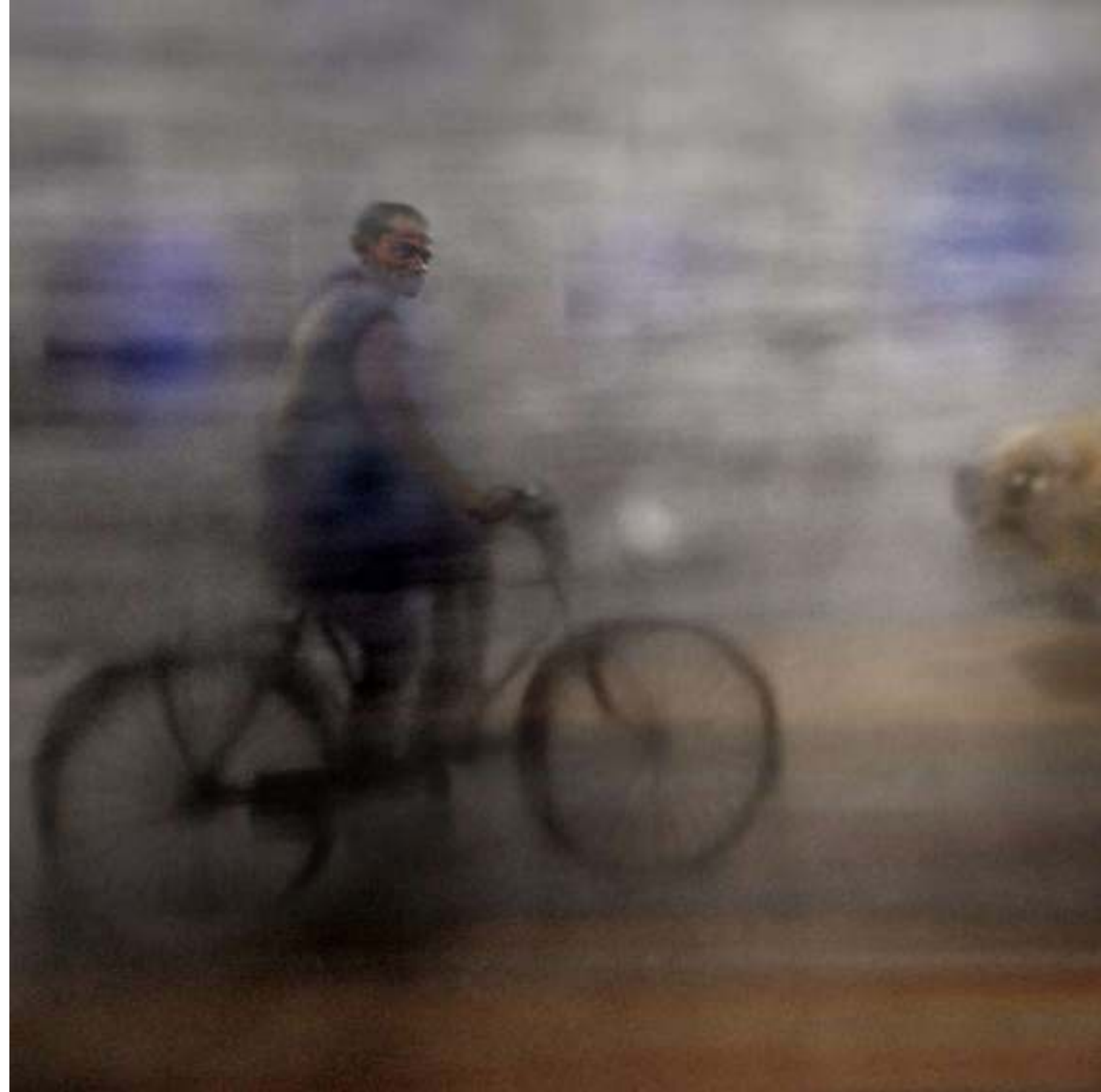
On this particular trip to Sri Lanka, our bus window was affixed with antiquated plastic tint that was peeling from the wear of wind and rain, creating striations in the plastic. I pressed my lens against the window and started photographing. The resulting images were painterly, as if strokes of color and light had revealed a spirit that could not be seen by the naked eye. Later, in our hotel room, I gazed at the images, my imagination ablaze and I began to construct narratives, a mixing of imagination and memory. The next day I returned, by foot, to the places where I had photographed these initial images and captured details, in separate images, that I would later composite into my first *Palimpsest* photographs.

As our travels continued, the experimentation began. Without the uniquely-tinted bus window, *how would I continue to make my Palimpsest images?* I scratched, scraped and sand-papered an array of plastics and glass plates until I crafted a filter that reproduced the Sri Lanka bus window. I carried this distressed filter wherever we traveled, pressing it against my camera lens with one hand while depressing the camera's button with the other hand and quickly discovered that only under the right lighting conditions, with the exact spectrum of colors, was I able to recreate the haunting images that had first attracted me to my *Palimpsest* process.

Each *Palimpsest* photograph is a compressed memory, my version of *Chinese Whispers* in which by retelling stories that I do not fully understand, I change information and rationalize according to my own beliefs, biases and cultural background. This act, in which I visually reconstruct a memory, suggests the absence of information and the need to fill in the blanks to make sense of what I've seen. The recalling of a past experience is not a neutral act as reflected in the work. It changes my role in making the photographs from observer to participant. Memories and fantasies are intertwined, crossing over and interfering with each other, becoming enhanced and distorted with each recollection as I selectively composite each *Palimpsest* image to reflect my version of the truth, as if changing the lyrics to a well-known song.

As a New Yorker, I've always been enthralled with the urban walls onto which city dwellers wheat-paste a succession of posters, inadvertently creating beautiful canvases. Sometimes the posters are partially scraped off the walls but other times they are left intact and pasted over, forming thick palimpsests almost like abstract or encaustic paintings. The posters that remain become textured from the rain and mud and their colors run and fade, similar to my *Palimpsest* photographs.

By layering images, I immerse myself in the possibilities of photography as writing. Images appear to be a kind of writing over the earlier writing of the images beneath them. Each photograph is *written upon* with images that themselves are often multi-layered themselves due to the initial visual abstraction.



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I print large-scale, in a cinematic style, to create an immersive experience. The images are intentionally grainy. Each grain is a particle of truth, an atom or a molecule ready to explode. The horizontal lines and scratches across the surface of each image create a sense of movement that reflects my own transience as I migrate through rural and urban landscapes, photographing. They are those elusive, denuding visual elements that actively engage with the image. Invisible tears don't exist, they're subjects, implying a psychological relationship that is both vexed and polarizing, similar to early 20th-century paintings in which the subjects simultaneously acknowledge and reject each other.

By juxtaposing elements, for example, a watering can and a woman who is standing rigid with her face obscured and only her vacant eyes revealing the truth, the image is busy. If, instead, I include a woman looking away, the woman's expression conveys warning. This mental phenomenon is known in filmmaking as the *Heisenberg Effect*, the conscious and subconscious responses of viewers as they witness a collision of images to elicit different meanings, emotions, and experiences – all of which begin to create a story.

In *Palimpsest*, the stories that I tell are seen through photographic images with remarkable optical intensity. All the photographs are faceted and layered to create depth, using the Diasec process and their glass surfaces are designed to provide a very specific experience – as if you're looking out from a car or bus window. The *Palimpsest Series* invites viewers to see themselves within the textures of landscapes and then it deliberately breaks this spell with shards of photographic realism.

This is the first time *The Palimpsest Series* is being exhibited in its entirety and with the *Palimpsest* soundscape. It's meant that this exhibition debut in Abu Dhabi will be the cultural, simultaneously embraces international influences and local tradition. Here, like the *Palimpsest Series* photographs, traces of tradition turn through layers of contemporary perception to form an ineluctable palimpsest.

ARTIST STATEMENT BY

WENDY BUDNANT

On this particular trip to Sri Lanka, our bus window was affixed with antiquated plastic tint that was peeling from the wear of wind and rain, creating striations in the plastic. I pressed my lens against the window and started photographing. The resulting images were painterly, as if strokes of color and light had revealed a spirit that could not be seen by the naked eye. Later, in our hotel room I gazed at the images, my imagination ablaze and I began to construct narratives, a mixing of imagination and memory. The next day I returned, by foot, to the places where I had photographed these initial images and captured details, in separate images, that I would later composite into my first *Palimpsest* photographs.

As our travels continued, the experimentation began. Without the uniquely tinted bus window, *how would I continue to make my Palimpsest images?* I scratched, scraped and sand-papered an array of plastics and glass plates until I crafted a filter that reproduced the Sri Lanka bus window. I carried this distressed filter wherever we traveled, pressing it against my camera lens with one hand while depressing the camera's button with the other hand and quickly discovered that only under the right lighting conditions, with the exact spectrum of colors, was I able to recreate the haunting images that had first attracted me to my *Palimpsest* process.

Each *Palimpsest* photograph is a compressed memory, my version of *Chinese Whispers* in which by retelling stories that I do not fully understand, I change information and rationalize according to my own beliefs, biases and cultural background. This act, in which I visually reconstruct a memory, suggests the absence of information and the need to fill in the blanks to make sense of what I've seen. The recalling of a past experience is not a neutral act as reflected in the work. It changes my role in making the photographs from observer to participant. Memories and fantasies are intertwined, crossing over and interfering with each other, becoming enhanced and distorted with each recollection as I selectively composite each *Palimpsest* image to reflect my version of the truth, as if changing the lyrics to a well-known song.

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By layering images, I immerse myself in the possibilities of photography as writing. Images appear to be a kind of writing over the earlier writing of the images beneath them. Each photograph is *written upon* with images that themselves are often multi-layered themselves due to the initial visual abstraction.

I print large-scale, in a cinematic style, to create an immersive experience. The images are intentionally grainy. Each grain is a particle of truth, an atom or a molecule ready to explode. The horizontal lines and scratches across the surface of each image create a sense of movement that reflects my own transience as I migrate through rural and urban landscapes, photographing. They also impose distance, demanding viewers to actively engage with the image. Invisible tension-lines exist between subjects, implying a psychological relationship that is at once vexed and polarizing, similar to early David Hockney paintings in which his subjects simultaneously acknowledge and reject each other.

By juxtaposing elements, for example a watering can and a woman who is standing rigid with her face obscured and only her vacant eyes revealed, I suggest the woman is thirsty. If, instead, I include a man looking away, the woman's expression conveys yearning. This mental phenomenon is known in filmmaking as the Kuleshov Effect, the conscious and subconscious response by viewers as they connect a collision of images to elicit different meanings, emotions, and experiences – all of which begin to create a story.

In *Palimpsest*, the stories that I tell are seen through photographic images with remarkable optical intensity. All the photographs are face mounted onto acrylic sheets, using the Diasec process and their glassy surfaces are designed to provide a very specific experience – as if the viewer is looking out from a car or bus window. The *Palimpsest Series* invites viewers to lose themselves within the textured dreamscapes and then it deliberately breaks this spell with shards of photographic realism.

This is the first time *The Palimpsest Series* is being exhibited in its entirety and with the *Palimpsest Soundscape*. It is apt that this exhibition debut in Abu Dhabi where the culture simultaneously embraces international influences and local tradition. Here, like *The Palimpsest Series* photographs, traces of tradition burn through layers of contemporary perception to form an indelible palimpsest.

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By juxtaposing elements, for example, placing a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand, I create a sense of mystery and intrigue. I include a variety of elements, such as a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand. I include a variety of elements, such as a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand. I include a variety of elements, such as a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand, or a woman's face obscured by a hand.

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NEW YORK

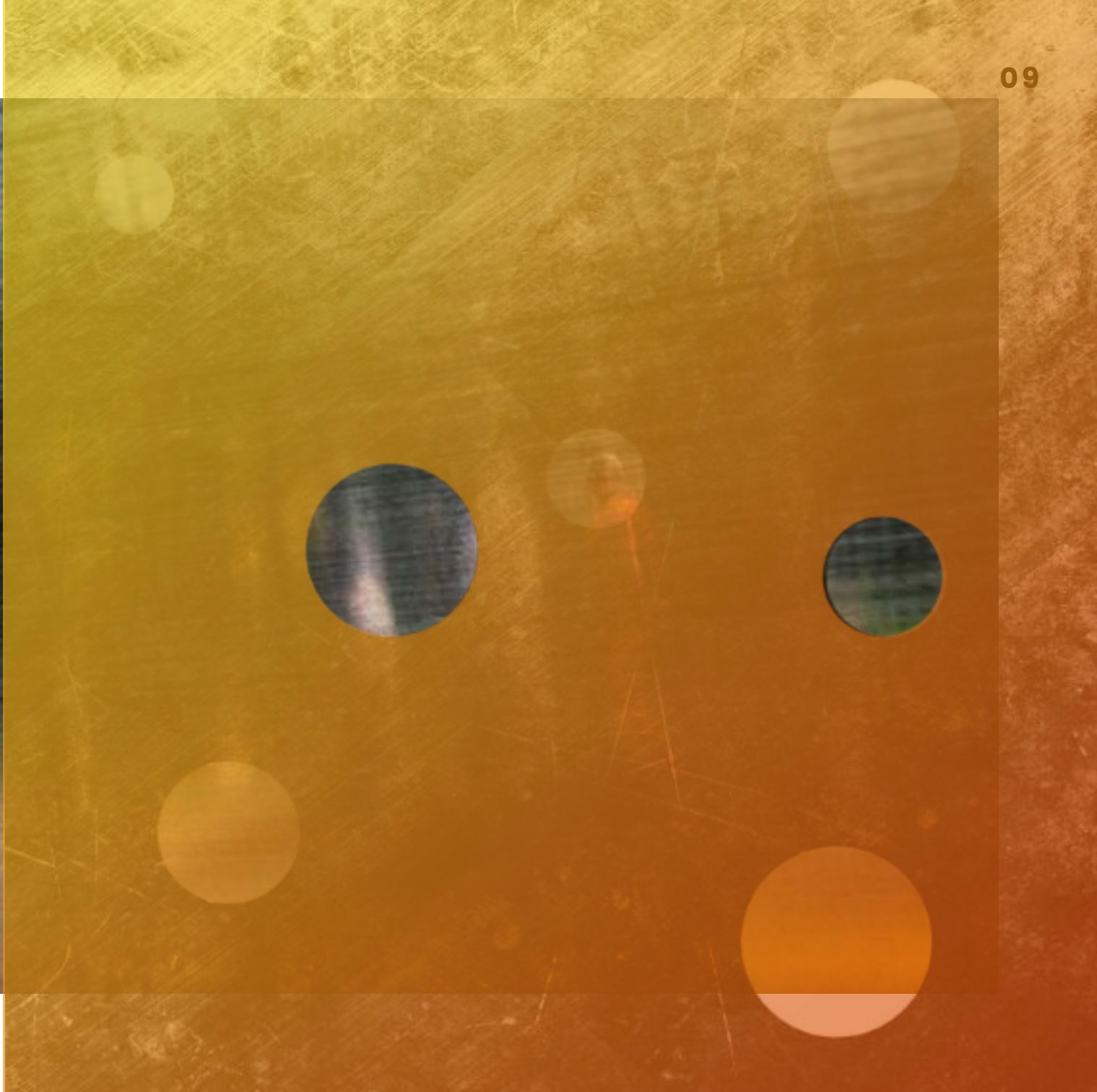
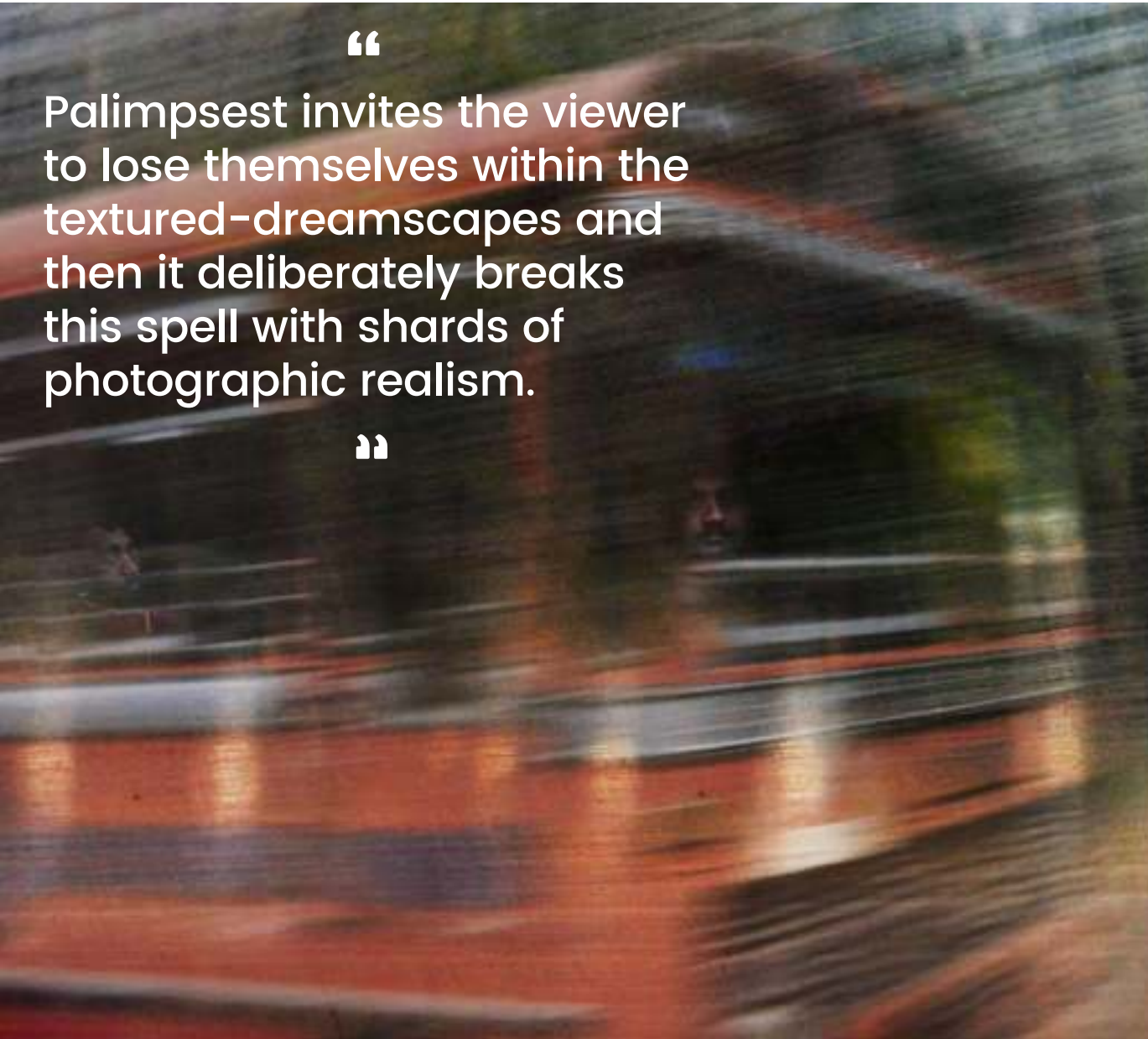




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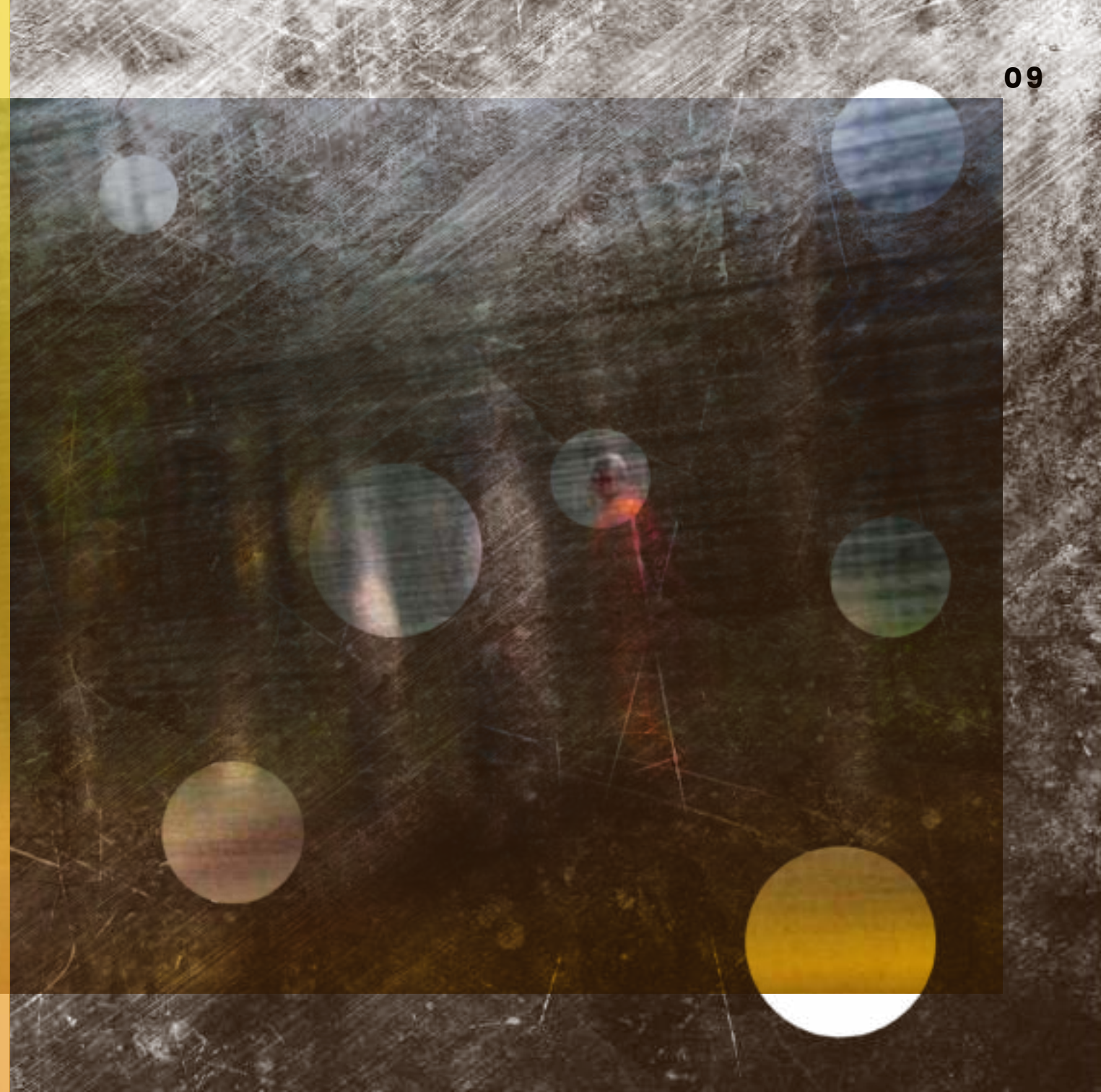
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SOUND SCAPE

The Palimpsest soundscape invites the listener to create their own narrative by connecting disparate sounds; the possibilities are as limitless as the listener's imagination. Tuk-Tuks, spinning bicycle wheels, rainstorms, cows, synthesized drones, processed spoken word, Indian chanting and advertising jingles are a few of the one-hundred-eighty-three sonic-threads that are sourced from the countries I travelled while photographing the Palimpsest series, Sri Lanka, India and Myanmar. These sonic-threads are woven together to *suggest* a narrative rather than explicitly tell a cohesive story. In dialogue with the Palimpsest photographs, that are also layered, the sonic-threads wax and wane into a dreamy anthropophony. A chanting overlay rises and falls, establishing a feeling of yearning and suspense. Executed by sound designer Garreth Chan, the Palimpsest soundscape simultaneously bridges and muddles barriers between sound, noise and music - making it as effective as any instrumental scoring could be.

Sound Designer
Garreth Chan

Vocalists
Archita Arun
Shreya Shreeraman

Contributors (Audio Clips)
Doovaraha Maheswarasarma
Sree Jyothish
Rema Augusta Erdosain
Shivani Mishra
Zain Mustafa
Keith Anto
Ruth Ghidey
Diya Gupta

A reoccurring motif of footsteps anchors the acoustic experience to my personal journey in making the photographs. I include conversations with my daughter, Esmé, who is currently ten years old, but who has been traveling with me before she learned to walk. Esmé has witnessed every photograph included in the Palimpsest series, often urging me to 'move on' but mostly resigned to her mother's photographic obsession. I am certain that my interactions with the people I meet and photograph through my travels is shaped by her presence. "Jupiter, Mars, Venus...", Esmé names off the planets as if imbuing the soundscape with a cosmic force. Esmé names off the planets as we bounce along on a bumpy Jeep ride, imbuing our soundscape with its own particular cosmic force.

When I frame each photograph, my mind quiets and my senses are heightened so that I become acutely aware of my surroundings; the textures, the smells, the tastes and the sounds. Every sound is exaggerated, including my own breathing. Then, as I depress the shutter-release button, the sounds fade into the background, until there is silence and I all I hear is the click of the camera.



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Sound Designer
Ganith Chan

Palimpsest
by Ganith Chan
Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar
Photographer
Mehmet Emin Ciftci
New York, United States
See Jyoti's
Bhama, Gustaf Prossitt,
Sri Lanka, India
with music
by Ganith Chan
Ruth Chan
Singapore



A recurring motif of footsteps anchors the acoustic experience to my personal journey in making the photographs. I include conversations with my daughter, Esme, who is currently ten years old, but who has been traveling with me before she learned to walk. Esme has witnessed every photograph included in the Palimpsest series, often judging me to have or not mostly resigned to her mother's photographic obsession. I am certain that my interactions with the people I meet and photograph shaped my beliefs as shown in the presence of complex words, such as some of those in the photos, the importance of roads, the world, cosmology. Esme homes off the bicycles as we bounce along on a bumpy Jeep ride through our soundscape with its own particular gravity force.

When I am ready to photograph, my mind and all of my senses are heightened so that I become a tally of my surroundings: the textures, the smells, the light and the sounds. Every sound is exaggerated including my own breath. Then, as I depress the shutter release, the sound fades into the background until there is silence and all I need is the click of the camera.

BY MENDY BEYNA



CAPE

The Palimpsest soundscape invites the listener to create their own narrative by connecting disparate sounds; the possibilities are as limitless as the listener's imagination. Tuk-Tuks, spinning bicycle wheels, rainstorms, cows, synthesized drones, processed spoken word, Indian chanting and advertising jingles are a few of the one-hundred-eighty-three sonic-threads that are sourced from the countries I travelled while photographing the Palimpsest series, Sri Lanka, India and Myanmar. These sonic-threads are woven together to *suggest* a narrative rather than explicitly tell a cohesive story. In dialogue with the Palimpsest photographs, that are also layered, the sonic-threads wax and wane into a dreamy anthropophony. A chanting overlay rises and falls, establishing a feeling of yearning and suspense. Executed by sound designer Garreth Chan, the Palimpsest soundscape simultaneously bridges and muddles barriers between sound, noise and music – making it as effective as any instrumental scoring could be.

Sound Designer
Garreth Chan

Vocalists
Archita Arun
Shreya Shreeraman

Contributors (Audio Clips)
Doovaraha Maheswarasarma
Sree Jyothish
Rema Augusta Erdosain
Shivani Mishra
Zain Mustafa
Keith Anto
Ruth Ghidey
Diya Gupta

A reoccurring motif of footsteps anchors the acoustic experience to my personal journey in making the photographs. I include conversations with my daughter, Esmé, who is currently ten years old, but who has been traveling with me before she learned to walk. Esmé has witnessed every photograph included in the Palimpsest series, often urging me to 'move on' but mostly resigned to her mother's photographic obsession. I am certain that my interactions with the people I meet and photograph through my travels is shaped by her presence. "Jupiter, Mars, Venus...", Esmé names off the planets as if imbuing the soundscape with a cosmic force. Esmé names off the planets as we bounce along on a bumpy Jeep ride, imbuing our soundscape with its own particular cosmic force.

When I frame each photograph, my mind quiets and my senses are heightened so that I become acutely aware of my surroundings: the textures, the smells, the tastes and the sounds. Every sound is exaggerated, including my own breathing. Then, as I depress the shutter-release button, the sounds fade into the background, until there is silence and I all I hear is the click of the camera.



SOUND SCAPE

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