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matter of time

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Massey University Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand.

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abstract

*matter of time* sets out to examine the temporal and physical conditions of prospective mining sites in Finland and Aotearoa New Zealand to question natural resource use in the context of contemporary landscapes and changing ecologies. Photographic records of the two sites map out microcosms of natural matter in its temporal and physical state of flux, suggesting an intimacy that is not grounded in the traditional representations of a landscape.

Photography and its position in contemporary image culture is investigated in this exegesis through physicality and materiality of the photo object. While seeking analogies between the physical environment and its photographic presence, *matter of time* attempts to challenge the cultural construct that a landscape photograph constitutes through challenging the surface of a photographic print. The objects and installation methodologies continue to question the finality of a photograph and the conditions of its physical presence in installation space by presenting a site that suggests impermanence and navigation through a terrain with multiple trajectories.
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The loud waters
Can petrify wood:
Old oars and posts
Over the years
Harden their grain,
Incarcerate ghosts
Of sap and season.
The shallows lap
And give and take:
Constant ablutions,
Such drowning love
Stun a stake
To stalagmite.
Dead lava,
The cooling star,
Coal and diamond
Or sudden birth
Of burnt meteor
Are too simple,
Without the lure
That relic stored –
A piece of stone
On the shelf at school,
Oatmeal coloured.

Relic of Memory, Seamus Heaney (1969)
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