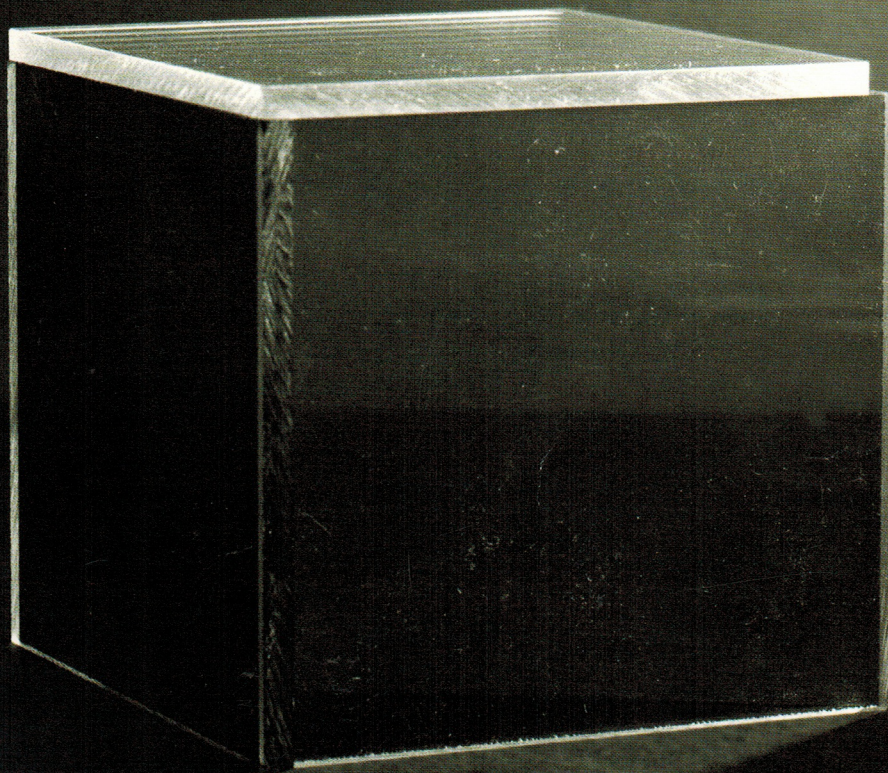


# SOURCE

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC REVIEW  
WINTER 2014 ISSUE 77 £6

The Photograph Recoded





that she can explicate post-structural aesthetics. Tormey applies the critical discourse of Derrida, Foucault, and Kristeva to a selection of photographs, predominantly made in the 1990s, that she describes as realist since they 'reference the world directly'.

Divided into eight chapters, the book is in two parts. In the first two chapters Tormey provides an overview of how photographs have been understood in relation to aesthetic theory up to the changes brought about by conceptual art. It is from this point that Tormey introduces post-structuralist aesthetics. The remaining six chapters seemingly outline different types of photography but actually take the reader through different aspects of post-structural thinking. The emphasis is upon photographs rather than photographers as Tormey attempts to unravel the complexities of Derrida *et al.* Acting as an intermediary between theory and practice, Tormey demonstrates how word and image can be in discourse.

Throughout the book Tormey inserts descriptive passages, italicised so that the change of voice is noted. Positioning herself between reading and looking Tormey's subjective responses lie between her academic text and the photographs. The effect is that the book seems to speak in three voices: the academic, the figural, and the subjective, that equate to the writer, the photograph, and the viewer/reader. In this exchange the photograph becomes interactive and what we can see conditions what can be said.

*Stephen Clarke*

### **At Impersonal Distance**

*Almost There*, Aleix Plademunt

Shifting effortlessly between fragments of personal paraphernalia and geological and cosmological vistas, Aleix Plademunt's *Almost There* spans the intimate to the ineffable. Through a series of monochromatic prints – a snapshot of his father as a young man, a microscopic image of blood cells, expansive

views of the night sky and the solar system – the artist scales up and down his subject matter to its most extreme particularities. Like a photographic counterpart to Terence Malick, whose recent cinematic works have also stretched from the prosaic to the transcendental, *Almost There* seeks out the affinities between individual, everyday experience and the awesome impersonality of vast spatial and temporal distances.

Needless to say, there is something deeply alienating about Plademunt's images, a sense of cold indifference that pertains to the far reaches of the galaxy as much as to a close-up view of a snake or insect. Likewise, his photographs of desolate semi-rural towns or wintry landscapes are devoid of any human presence, and, in this respect, they reiterate an overwhelming sense of wonder and awe towards one's surroundings. Who were these distant predecessors who slowly, incrementally, carved settlements out of such inhospitable terrain?

*Christopher Clarke*

### **Failed Communication**

*Some Things You Should Have Told Me*, Harvey Bengé

Individually, photographs can fail to tell us what we want to know. Even when they portray simple observations their meaning can be elusive. It is this open-ended reading of photographs that pervades Harvey Bengé's images brought together in his most recent photobook. Bengé, a New Zealand based photographer, has made photobooks since 1993. It is a format he favours as he considers the construction of narrative a central part of his practice.

The book's title teases the viewer, suggesting that someone has kept the photographer in the dark, but it is the reader who is left to piece together a narrative. The book opens and closes with messages that cannot be received: on the front cover a hand written note is illegible because of water damage; on the back cover a hand clutches a



telephone receiver in a portrait of a young woman. Is she the person who should have told me something? As we try to unconsciously between London, New York and intimacy suggest a lack of objects, cracked and metaphors for the final end of the book a young woman leaving the story and

This is a book about with its accusatory tone isolated incidents. Do people is hinted at the telephone receiver or remains unplugged, blindfolded, is unable to turn their backs on us. The photographs and his offers a possible explanation of singular moments that they fail to possess

*Stephen Clarke*

*From Some Things You Should Have Told Me*, Harvey Bengé