

Uncertain States

A Place to Reflect

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I am called upon to speak of an enigmatic concept known as Uncertain States. There was no plan. In the beginning it was a way by which three individuals whose paths had crossed might maintain, or at least not lose something that seemed important to our passion, photography. It is fascinating how we find ways to meet – and also how we might find our own voice, artistic and otherwise, in this meeting (of minds). Finding ways to connect with ourselves and each other. Finding ways to speak of our creative journeys and describe these to the 'other'. As it evolved, with no specific goal in mind, there seemed a sense of importance to let it grow and develop as this place. UCS was more than a broadsheet, it was a movement.

As locus of thought and discussion, it's gravity generally attracted like-minds. Thoughtful, generous and interesting. Concepts within technique. Thoughts within experience. These conditions of sharing having certain attitudes and interests in common and as, importantly difference. Always passionate, heartfelt. What we had was the camera as a tool of discovery alongside the use of the print as conversationalist. Bringing lens-based-art of all genres and disciplines together to see the world. Also, importantly to bring together and reveal relationships between the artist, their work and the viewer of that work. Being accompanied by like-minded people on this journey-in-practice built into a community in conversation. With talks and informal meet-ups and conversations. We encouraged showing work in progress (as if it can only be anything else), as a means by which we might think. These perfect stopping off points to discuss before moving on.

The more we gave, the more we got. It created, in the process of supporting this environment, momentum for all our personal projects. A constant transformation bought about by a type of positive envy, bringing about a continual self-enquiry within a culture of mutual respect. It was an important time for me. Practice within this community was hugely valuable as a place within which to play. I like the way Foucault put it: 'From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art... [we] should relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative activity'. A place to play in their own world, but importantly a world in sight of another.

'Making something of ourselves' is a life-long process and Uncertain States has been very companionable. As a concept it is of course made up of all the constituent parts of the people involved. The commitment and enthusiasm of all who have contributed. To all that dedicated time energy and belief in the project. Artists, creative writers, Open Call judges. The printers. The designer. Those who made. Those who spoke. Those who turned up, thank you. A home from where to pause on the journey, a place to reflect and importantly to speak. It's always been about the making the photograph work to engage in conversation, to allow it to speak of ones way-in-the-world. From whence we came to where we might go. That we might have a place to explain ourselves and the reason for being.