

In 2009 I was commissioned by Fresh Arts with funding from Fresh Arts, North Bristol Trust and Carillion to record the 5 year build of the new Southmead hospital in my home town of Bristol, the place where generations of Bristolians have celebrated 'arrivals' and mourned 'departures' to and from our world.

A lot happens over 2000 days. The result is a selection of exposures of the old coming down and the new going up every day over the past five years.



5 years of 6 month exposures by
Justin Quinnell
 Southmead Hospital Concourse
 Southmead Rd, Westbury-on-Trym Bristol BS10 5NB
 May 4th - September 23rd

[In memory of the great Gregg Kemp. July 4, 1947 – February 7, 2016](#)
[An old guy who made beautiful stuff!](#)



December 2010 - June 2011



June 2012 - December 2012
 (The beauty of water damage)



The only can of cider exhibited in any hospital in the world!



Three week exposure of old incinerator chimney and negative
 21-7-2010 - 13-8-2010

Original negative in position

Same negative after three days

Fading negative number 1

The exhibition consists of:

12 x 6 month exposure images from June 2009 - July 2015

The original negatives of these images (which will fade within a few days)

A selection of the cameras used (including some destroyed by seagulls)

Images of the cameras in situ

Information on the photographic process involved:



June 2013 - December 2013

Initially I hoped to do several 5 year duration exposures. Technically (without the funds to create a nitrogen filled camera!) this is tricky! Previous attempts at 1 year exposures had resulted in the gelatine based emulsion being eaten by mould. To counter this, I used glass clip frames and even varnish covering the emulsion as a 'mould deterrent'. The cameras were then fixed in a weather proof wooden 'cage' at a site looking south (towards the sun) where the new hospital would be built and where the cameras could, in theory, stay un-moved for 5 years.



5 year exposure cameras in position



5 year exposure cameras on their backs 6 months later!

After 6 months the 'camera blocks' were found on their backs. Luckily I had positioned several other cameras around the area so the exhibition began its 5 year evolution. Every equinox, Dec 20th or June 20th, old cameras were replaced with new ones. Midsummer to midwinter to midsummer.

The resulting images show a continuous exposure in 6 month exposures over five years. A record of the Sun over the hospital every day from June 2010 to July 2015.

The images in the exhibition are accompanied by their negatives which, due to the unfixed nature of the technique, will fade and disappear forever after a few days. This is the same thing that occurred with the very first photographs, the process Humphrey Davy and Thomas Wedgwood invented in Bristol in 1802. The impermanence of these images meant they could only be viewed by candle light.

Impermanence of time is integral to Southmead hospital where 'arrivals' and 'departures' for people of Bristol result in emotional times which affect everyone and are embraced by the people who work at Southmead with care to all who require it.



Positioning Cameras



Chrissy adjusting buzzard



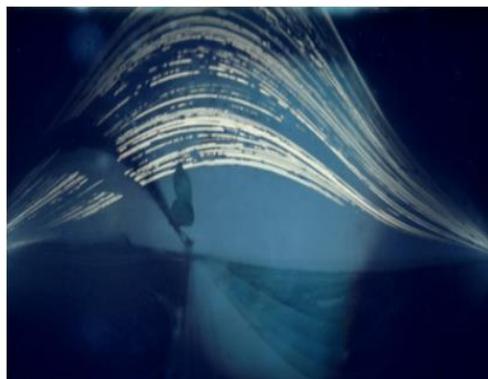
Camera in position



Severn Bridge view



Camera (post seagull attack!)



Buzzard 'Seagull Deterrent' on roof
December 2013 - June 2014



Camera and fallen buzzard

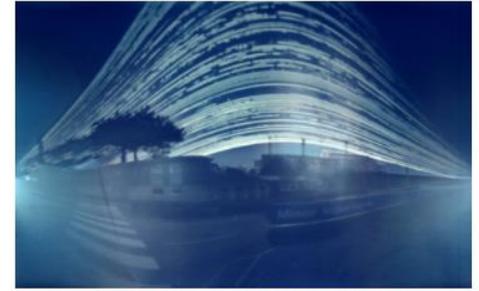
Unsurprisingly a pinhole photography project doesn't rank as a significant priority in a £430 million build of a hospital! Even with this taken into account I was still allowed onto the roof and to position cameras in places others fear to tread.



June 2010 - September 2010



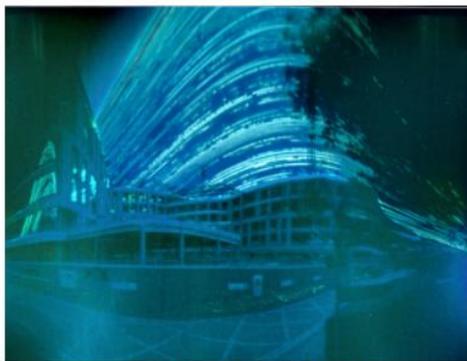
June 2011 - December 2011



June 2011 - December 2011

Difficulties:

Cameras being blown over, attacked by seagulls, thrown away as potential terrorist threat, being stolen by drunks, falling off vehicles and seeing the cameras carefully positioned 6 months before, now lying beneath a huge pile of bricks!



June 2011 - December 2011



June 2011 - December 2011



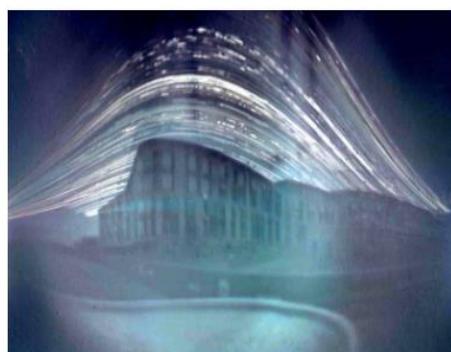
June 2012 - December 2012

Failed ideas:

On or under a crane, on a wind vane, dangling cans on string to be blown with the wind. Starting exposures from a date of birth till the date of death.



December 2011 - June 2012



June 2012 - December 2012



December 2012 - June 2013

Successful ideas:

Camera on vehicles, using a syringe to make a pinhole, imaging through a cross shape hole, incorporating a nurses watch to show time, positioning cameras under benches and on roofs etc. (Not that these survived!)



December 2012 - June 2013
(Mould fun!)



June 2013 - December 2013
(View from a tree)



December 2013 - December 2014
(1 year exposure)



December 2014 - June 2015
(Section of 360 degree image)



Installed Camera



Photographer in action!

1/30th of a second - three kittens in a basket isn't really my thing. Not knowing what will happen is one of the reasons we are alive and the main reason I took up pinhole photography 25 years ago.

How to take a 6 month exposure image

Most of the cameras were made from beer cans containing a sheet of light sensitive photographic paper. These were cable tied high up pointing south towards the sun. (The 'correct' height is 'higher than a drunk can reach on another person's shoulders!').

After 6 months the cameras are taken down and the image which appears on the photographic paper is scanned on a computer scanner. The original negative is kept in a light tight box to prevent it fading.

The digital image is then inverted into a positive and printed.