



# What Lies Beneath

Niki South

Photography portfolio

## Introduction

Ancient woodlands are complex communities, with trees at their heart; they envelop your senses, encouraging you to slowly absorb what you see and feel, wake your subconscious, and inspire reflection. This body of work is a personal response to a dynamic landscape, both internally and externally.

The photography transforms abstract ideas in the photographer's subconscious into something concrete, via a visual representation of another subject, positing an ancient woodland as a visual metaphor for community.

Though humans provoked the concept of the work, they are not evident in the images. The Photographer's local community often disharmonious and driven by difference, contrasting with the harmonious characteristics of these woodland societies. Inherent qualities like cooperation, support, diversity, resilience, inclusion, networking, mutual exchange, and adaptation, could be beneficially adopted in many human communities.

As an observer of her neighbourhood, well known and accepted for numerous years, the photographer finds in common with others that incomers here are never adopted as local, no matter how long passes or their contribution to the community. This story is common to settings across the world.









What lies here beneath the luminescent selfless sheath, accepting mutual benefit?  
What lies elsewhere beneath community spirit, concealed but festering?



What lies here beneath the willing emerald wrapping, accepting their collective realm?  
What lies elsewhere beneath man's disguised demeanour, civil but deliberately divisive?







## Footnotes



**Diversity:** the fact that very different people or things exist within a group or place



**Interdependent:** related to one another in such a close way that each one needs others in order to exist



**Nourished:** to give a person, animal, or plant, the food and care that they need to survive



**Harmony:** a situation in which people live and work well with other people, or in a way that does not damage things around them



## Artist Statement

I use landscape and documentary photography as mediums for expressing my observations and reflections on communities. 'What Lies Beneath,' a conceptual landscape photographic project, builds on my previous documentary work 'Layers of Truth,' where in my insider-outsider position, I highlighted the issues and various truths arising from 'incomers' relocating and trying to integrate into a small traditional community.

My photographic style is shaped by research on 'affect' (expressing what is in a photographer's mind) versus 'effect' (realism); I photograph in a metaphorical manner. Artistically I am influenced by photographers who create images as metaphors for something beyond the subject photographed, such as Minor White and Alfred Stieglitz; and by writers like John Szarkowski who explore the differences between photographs as mirrors for expression, beside images as windows that share reality.

I find combining the world within my head, with the one in front of me, cathartic. This internal and external passage through the landscape, has helped me to accept and heal some of the wounds that inspired it's beginning.

## Artist Bio

Niki South was born and grew up in Surrey in England. From 1995 she began holidaying in Pembrokeshire in Wales with her husband and two children; this culminated in buying a second home there in 2009 and transitioning to a 'dual centre' life, between the two places.

She is currently completing her BA (Hons) Photography degree with the Open University. Her previous documentary work 'Layers of Truth' was informed by her life as a 'second homer,' observing local issues from afar, when unable to travel to her favourite home by the Covid 19 safety enforcements. In 2019 she relocated there permanently.



## **What Lies beneath**

Link to all images: <https://nikisouth.myportfolio.com/what-lies-within>

Website: <https://nikisouth.myportfolio.com/home>

Instagram: [nikiks\\_photography](https://www.instagram.com/nikiks_photography/)

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