

# Mirroring The Deep

At the age of fourteen, I loved art but above all I had a passion for drawing detailed studies of flowers. Then, came the camera and trips across the road to Hampstead Heath to photograph the trees and back to develop and print the images in the family bathroom. This eventually led to a career as a professional photographer but, although I have earned my living mainly as a portrait photographer, capturing everyone from the student to the star, the photography started with flowers and landscapes.

So, it was with this same passion of a fourteen year old that one day, in the late spring a couple of years ago, I gave birth to this project of floating flowers. I had picked up a fallen bract from the handkerchief tree that I loved to visit on Hampstead Heath and on my return home I decided to photograph it against a black background. I had no idea that this would open the door to a whole new adventure. The floating handkerchief has brought me full circle back to my love of flowers that had grown from a childhood heavily influenced by my mother and my grandmother's love of gardens.

The handkerchief led to a tulip then like a snowball, the project gathered momentum but it took time and patience. Now I have a fine collection of floating flowers chosen at random as they came to me always by chance; I never deliberately went out to find them. Some of the blooms were generously given to me by Orlando Hamilton, the distinguished florist, one by my close friend, Charlotte Pilkington, a gardener and artist of exceptional talent and the rest came from my own garden in Notting Hill.

It was only when I observed these studies as a body of work that it slowly dawned on me that they mirrored, in an uncanny way, the deep sea creatures that live at such great depths in the ocean that no daylight can ever penetrate their domain. These creatures that live 1,000 to 5,000 feet below the surface have only recently been discovered and captured on film, some so new and rare that they do not, as yet, have names. This new discovery highlights the urgent need to save the oceans that are under threat from pollution, a subject that is close to my heart. These wonders of nature that feed our souls are under threat from mankind. I can only hope that, in the future, there will still be people like me who can see a glowing sucker octopus in a tulip and a threadfin snailfish in a handkerchief bract and realise that everything in the universe is linked.

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