



Julia Fullerton-Batten - Looking Out from Within

Marion Tande

Julia Fullerton-Batten, ISBN 9781399908726,

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Covid-19 came. Life changed around the world. For ever. Award-winning fine-art photographer Julia Fullerton-Batten felt she couldn't sit around helpless. During her evening permitted exercise, walking around her local neighbourhood, she noticed people looking out of their windows onto a newly desolate world. This was sufficient for her to formulate how she would visually portray the disturbing effect of the Covid-19 lockdown had on people's everyday lives, not only of those in her West London neighbourhood but of millions around the world. Little did she know that she would still be shooting her project over a year later.

Her idea was to photograph her neighbours imprisoned in their homes as they gazed forlornly out of their window onto the surreal, silent and stark world outside. She chose to photograph them during twilight to further enhance the poignancy of their situation and isolation. Julia advertised her idea on social media and in a local newspaper. The response was so large that she was reluctantly forced to be selective in her choice of subjects. She contacted them by phone and email to arrange details of setting, clothing, face mask and agree a date and time. Her subjects were invited to dress up and use props to share their narratives. She also asked them to answer a few informal questions about their lockdown experience, in order to add to the poignancy of their situation and provide a heightened emotional content to their stories.

The result is her series titled Looking out from Within. Fullerton-Batten explains that she has found the most important part of these images to be how they provide a magnifying glass to reflect upon what the pandemic and lockdown meant to us all. The loved ones we lost, the extended isolation from our families and the huge sacrifices that many have made. She was sad to lose one of her sitters shortly after she had photographed him.

These images have won global attention and acclaim, winning numerous awards and have been hung in galleries and at photography exhibitions worldwide. She now brings the project together in a beautifully designed limited-edition artist book, which features full-page images and includes the sitters' personal stories. The volume will provide an insight into the lives of people not only in Julia's part of London, but also the lives of others throughout the world. It provides a record for posterity, holding onto the memories of what we have all been through. Above all, the book is a beautiful yet tangible object, important not only for its historical importance but also for the mesmerising fine-art photography that it contains.

With a forward from Marion Tande, Department of Photography, MOMA NYC

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