

From landscape to fine art, Encore photo exhibition stands out

ARTS

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By ROUWEN LIN



Linda Chin's Tasman Lake is part of Encore. Photos: The Print Room

After juggling the experimental in *Twisted Life* (2015), street photography in *Up Your Alley* (2014), and the self-explanatory *It's Still Life* (2013), gallery/studio The Print Room is now showing the photography exhibition *Encore*.

The exhibition is an eclectic showcase of a vast range of styles, including landscape, documentary and fine art photography.

“The idea is to let the photographers keep going with a body of work so they can progress in their skills, and refine their ideas and ability to shoot and print. This is why the show is called *Encore*, because it is an extension of previous shows,” says Paul Gadd, The Print Room director.



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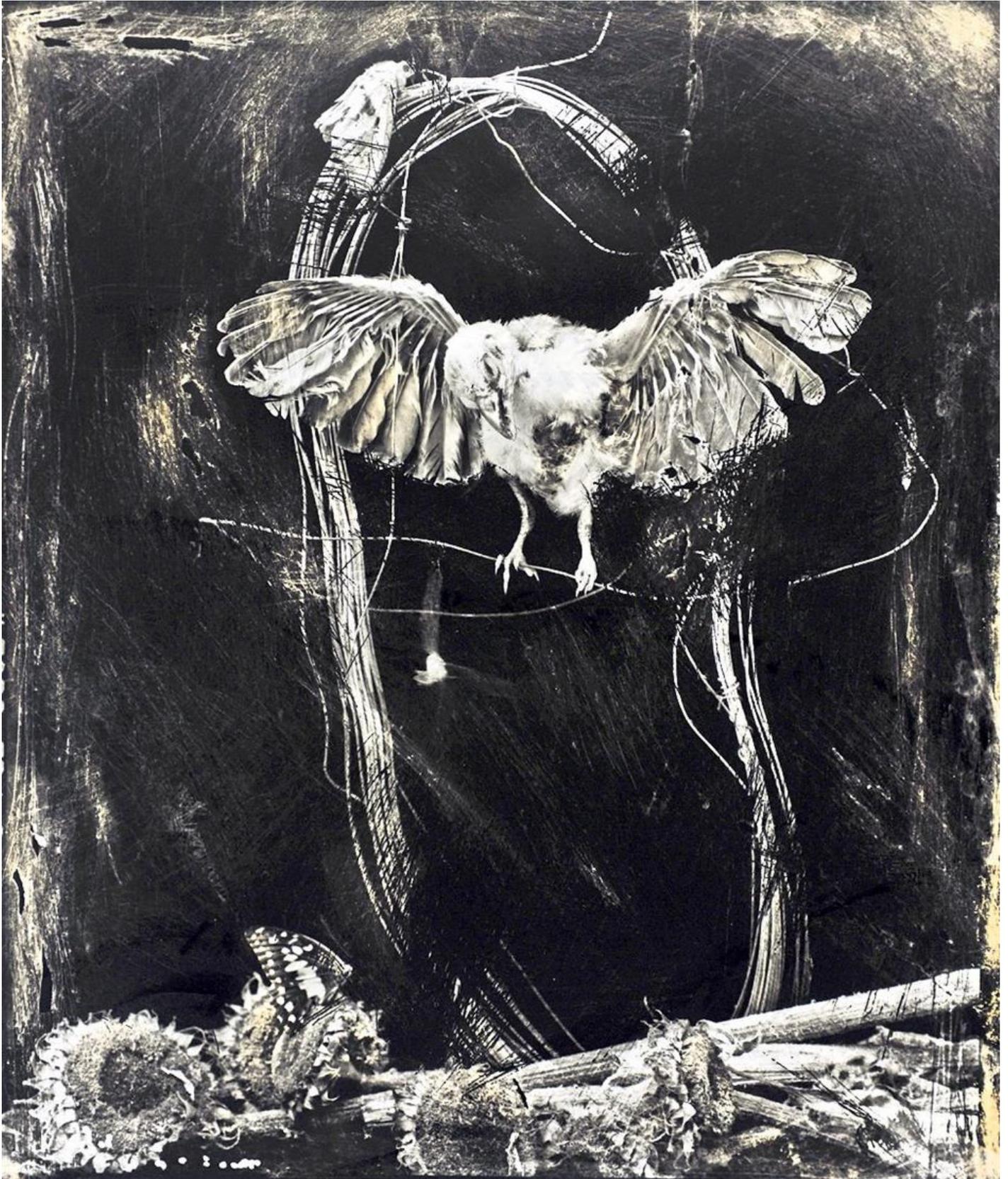


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There are eight photographers, all of them having exhibited at The Print Room before, showing almost 40 works (shot on film) in *Encore*.



Paul Gadd's *Eden* (silver gelatin print on semi matt warm tone fibre paper, 2016).

The photographers are Linda Chin, Shareem Amry, Joanna Wachowiak-finlaison, Wong Shung Yen, Phoebe Wong, Alexia Turges Blum, Lisa Foo and Gadd.



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Shareem has six photographs featured in *Encore*, with four street photography shots taken during a trip to Japan, and two still life.

It was her first trip back to Japan since living there as a teenager, and she was concerned that it wouldn't live up to memory.

And it didn't.

"Tokyo was seedier than I remember and the wild-child spirit of Harajuku was dead and gone. But it still felt like home, and what I tried to photograph was the underlying narrative of Japan that I have always loved, away from the neon lights," says Shareem.



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Alexia Turges Blum's Untitled (silver gelatin print on semi matt warm tone fibre paper, 2017).

The two still life pieces are part of a body of work she has been working on since she started with film photography in 2013, a whole new ball game from street photography.

“You have to be alert to opportunity, to try to read a scene as it unfolds before you, with street photography. With still life, you have to use your imagination to craft the tableau you want to place in front of your lens,” she says.

“But one thing that I’m just starting to glimpse, is that whatever genre of photography you are working in, your gear, discipline, craft and technique can only take you so far. Sometimes your best shots come when you try not to be so in control.”

Wong documents her safari trip in Tanzania in her Savannah Collection, with 20 prints (12 colour, eight black and white) offering a glimpse of life and landscape at the beginning of the long rains in the African Savannah.

“I’ve never been so close to nature, it was a very emotional and educational trip to me. I was there to observe how animals live in the wild and watching them made me think about life and death, the cycle of life, and how the way they live reflects human civilisation and society in many aspects,” she shares.

Chin’s eight photographs in *Encore* are mainly shots of landscapes from her recent travels to Indonesia and New Zealand.

This is an extension of her series in *Twisted Life*, where she combined multiple prints in one photograph, for instance, merging a shot of a flower with the ocean, resulting in a surreal suggestion of a sunset – or sunrise – in full bloom peeking over the horizon.

“I enjoyed doing *Twisted Life* and wanted to challenge myself, to see how far I could expand this portfolio. Taking one photo is straightforward, but combining different prints in one photo offers unexpected outcomes and surprises,” she says.

Chin observes that an unfortunate side effect of photography being so accessible nowadays is forgetting that it can be art.

“The line between a snap and art has been blurred to the point where it no longer exists. This is not what I would call progress,” says Gadd.

Working with film, Gadd explains, teaches respect for composition, light and colour.

“It teaches you discipline and craft, all of which shows in a photograph that has been shot and printed well.

“I think people recognise and respond to that, which is why film photography and the darkroom have endured since the late 1800s,” he says.



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And this is coming from a man who is at home with both, as he shoots with a digital camera for his commercial work.



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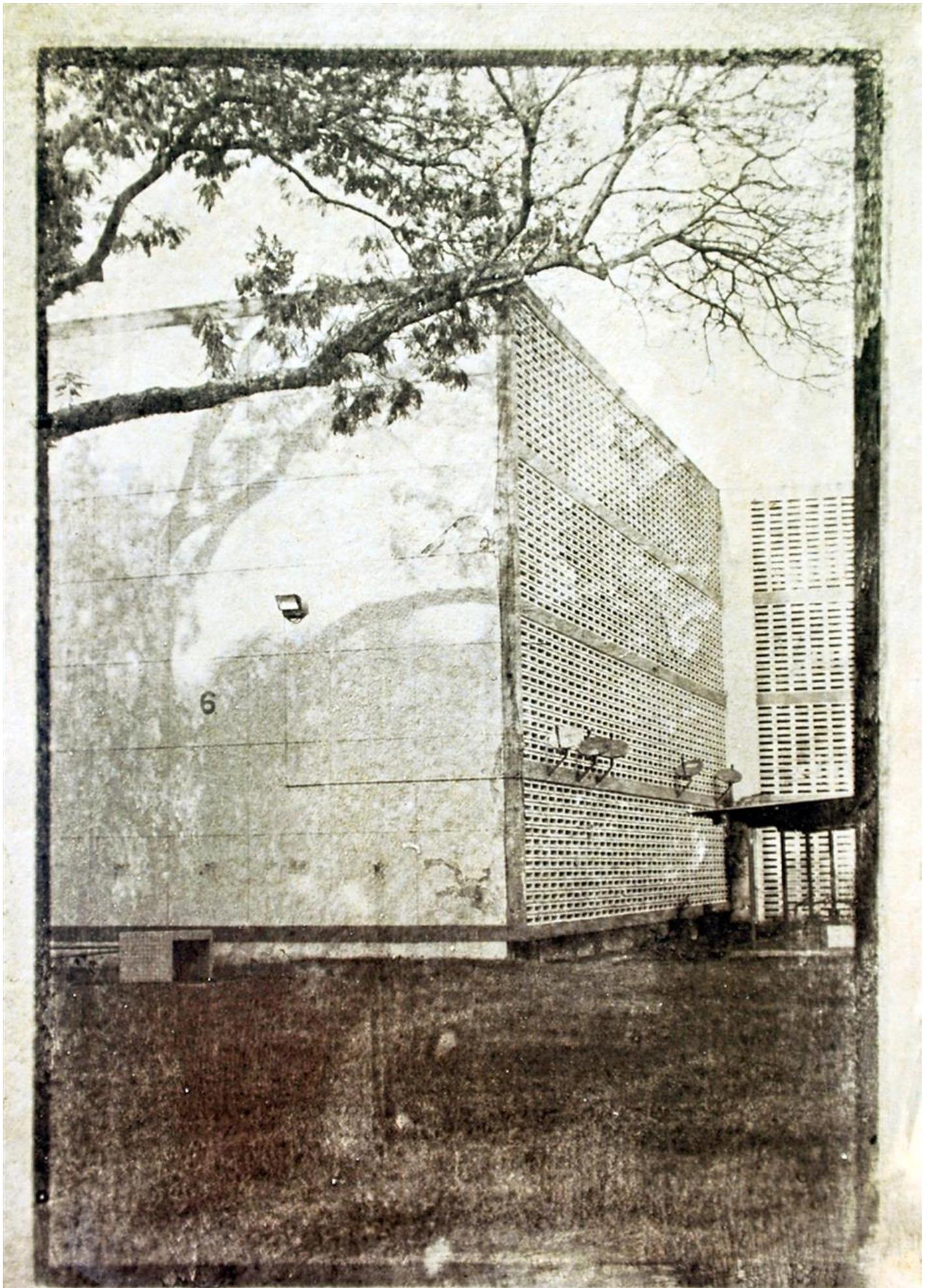
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“I can honestly say that it is much more satisfying to walk out of the darkroom with a print you have spent time working on than sitting to work on an image on a computer until it ends up looking nothing like what you originally shot. We can be generous and call that a form of digital art, but it is not photography,” he states.

There really does seem to be a special something about film photography that appeals to people; as Gadd points out, it is growing in popularity and more people are becoming interested in the process of photography, and not just in photography apps.

“Even Kodak is reintroducing their slide film, which was discontinued a few years back. I think film will always be around on some level,” concludes Gadd.

Encore, with familiar faces behind the lens, is a glimpse into this world.

Encore is on at The Print Room in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, till May 7. For more information, go to theprintroomkl.com or email info@theprintroomkl.com. you can also call 03-7931 2227.

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