



Artist features

Edgar Martins



Edgar Martins is an award winning visual artist who works across different media (photography, text, a installation) and who develops long term, socially engaged, public led projects, with a cross-sectoral ap

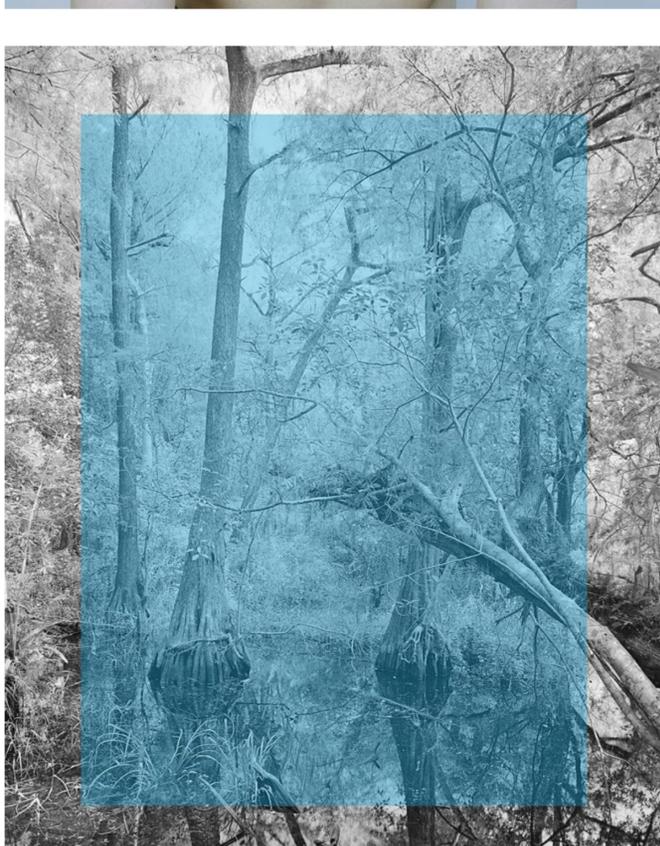
All images Courtesy by the artist

Over the past 15 years his practice has been increasingly rooted in long term projects with what he terms 'hard-to-access' c interested in the techniques of artistic expression these engagements activate and the dialogue they provoke. This has led to collaborations with organisations such as the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, the UK Metropolitan Police Space Agency, BMW, EDP Power Stations, HM Prison Birmingham, etc.

Whilst his work has covered themes as varied as technology, modernity, mobility, death, absence, conflict, incarceration & b it is heavily influenced by subjects such as philosophy, semiotics and psychoanalysis, it is primarily guided by an ontologic the deep rooted anxieties around ethics and aesthetics that inevitably arise when documentary photography and questions intersect.

These intentions collide, overlap and blur in his work, often exposing the fragility of our perceptual/cognitive systems.

Photography, for Martins, is a medium built around conceptual tensions so it offers him a means to bring together irresolv questioning but also challenging the viewers' convictions and expectations in his work.





What Photography & Incarceration have in Common with an Empty Vase is a multifaceted body of work developed from a collaboration between Projects and HM Prison Birmingham (the largest, category B prison in the Midlands, UK), its inmates, their families as well as local organisations and individuals.

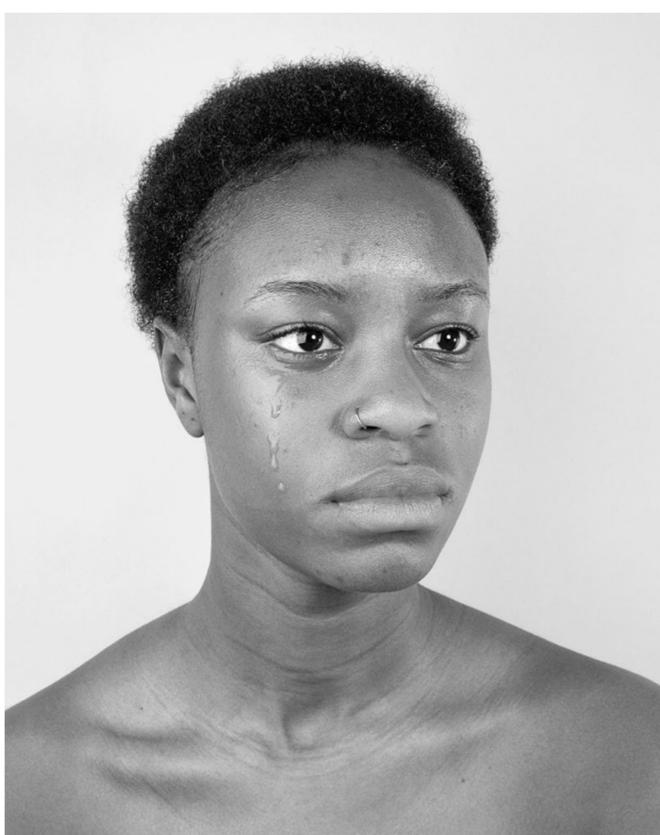
Using the social context of incarceration as a starting point, Martins explores the philosophical concept of absence, and adds a consideration of the status of the photograph when questions of visibility, ethics, aesthetics and documentation intersect.

By productively articulating image and text, new and historical photography, evidence and fiction, Martins' work proposes one deals with the absence of a loved one, brought on by enforced separation. From an ontological perspective it seeks answers to questions: how does one represent a subject that eludes visualization, that is absent or hidden from view? How can documentation in an era of fake news, best acknowledge the imaginative and fictional dimension of our relation to photographs?

By giving a voice to inmates and their families and addressing prison as a set of social relations rather than a mere physical space, the project proposes to rethink and counter the sort of imagery normally associated with incarceration.

The project thus wilfully circumvents images whose sole purpose, Martins argues, is to confirm the already held opinions and ideologies about crime & punishment: violence, drugs, criminality, race – an approach that only serves to reinforce the act of photography itself as apotropaic devices.

This work marks a significant transition in Martins' creative trajectory, signalling a growing inclination towards a broader, interdisciplinary perspective of images.



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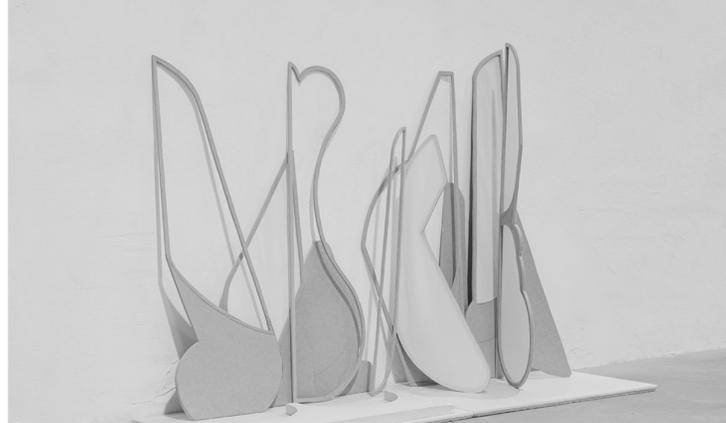
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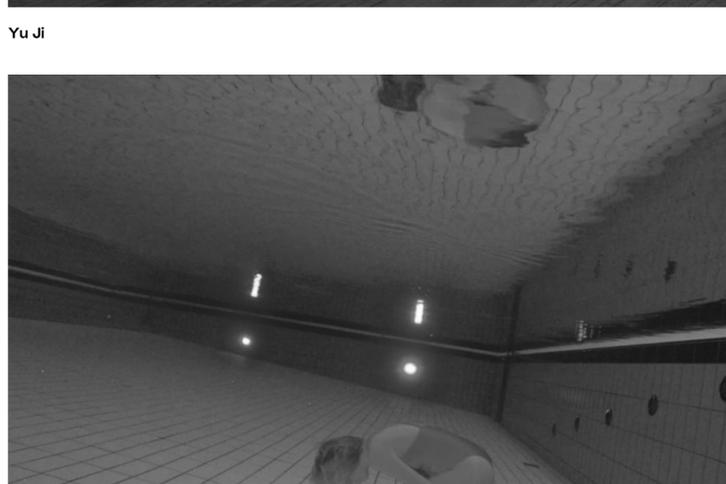
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