

Jerwood Photography Award Veronica Bailey - 2 Willow Road

‘These photographs are part of a series involving magnified bookedges, taken from the library at the National Trust property, 2 Willow Road in Hampstead, London. This modernist house, owned and built originally by Austro-Hungarian architect Ernő Goldfinger in 1939, reflects a treasure trove of 20th century art, history and culture.

The images form an alternative portrait of the private, but now public, lives of Goldfinger and his wife, artist Ursula Blackwell, since their deaths in 1987 and 1991. Their interconnecting careers of architecture and art are revealed in this fascinating amalgam of reading material, which ranges from anthropology to literature, politics and sociology, in fact all aspects of contemporary life. By exposing the edges of the pages of chosen books, one is reminded of the everyday human interaction we have with the written word and the paper on which it is printed.

There is symbolic meaning behind what we choose to read, keep and share with others. As a former Willow Road guide, I was able to piece together traces of history about the Goldfingers through the book’s titles, but it was only through exploration and exposure of the unseen edges that we can discover the assembled paths of knowledge that have been consumed.

My process uses modern digital technology to capture the splayed bookedges. The beauty in the form is clear, with its subtly-defined linear abstraction. A new, non-conventional narrative is formed, reconstructing past relationships and encounters through the ghost traces amongst the bruised paper edges. The titles of the books, such as Human Response to Tall buildings, Kitsch, or a Girl like I, can be juxtapositioned against The War’s Best Photographs, Born Free, and Goldfinger (Ian Fleming), revealing the Goldfinger narrative from a different perspective.’