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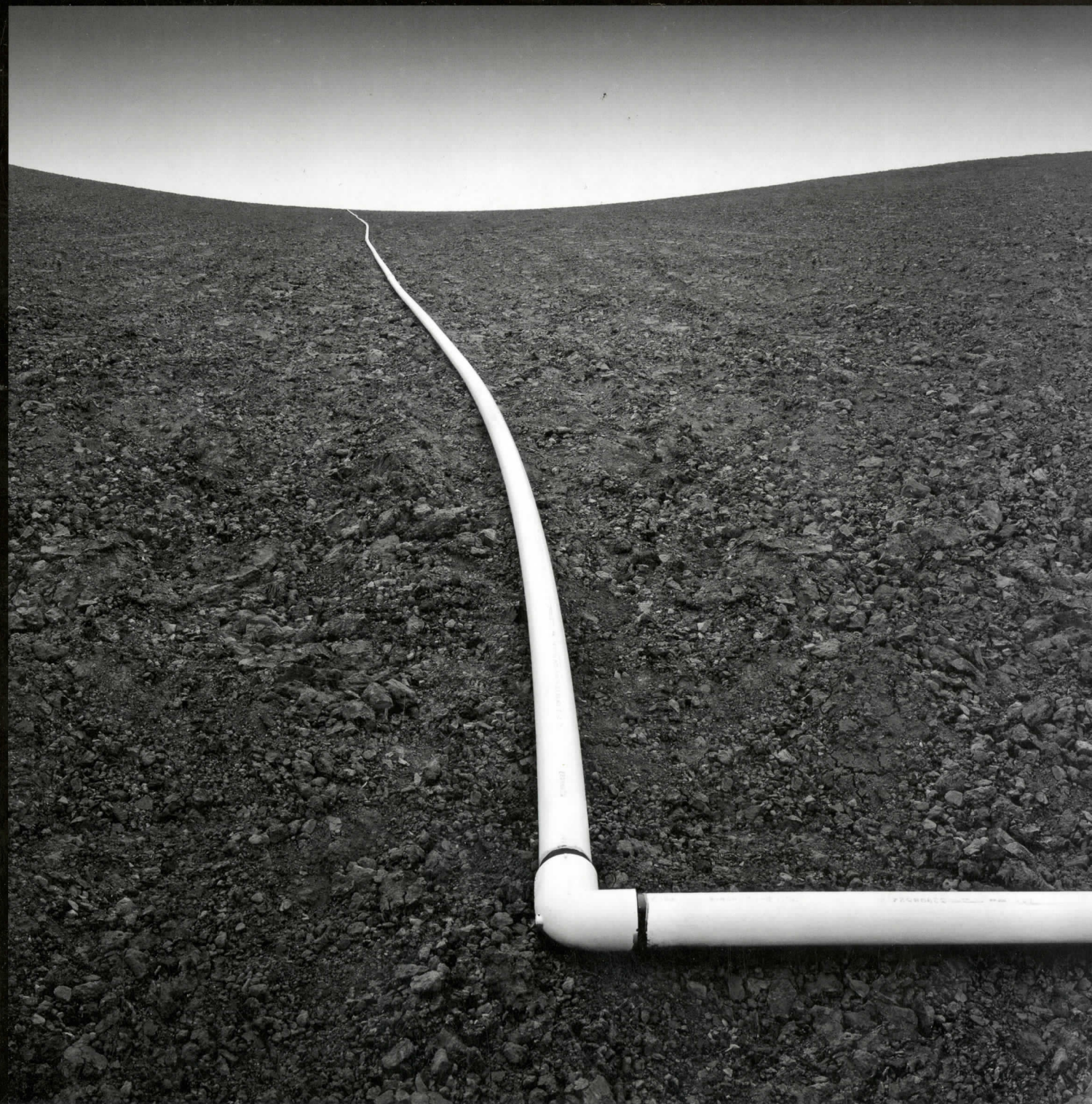
Ana Abrunhosa and Tiago Machado (Portugal)  
Max Helie (France)  
António Vitorino (Portugal)  
Emma Thompson (United Kingdom)  
Rui Vieira Nery (Portugal)  
Kelley Schaefer (Canada)  
David Fokos (United States)

The SCOPE

Travel Environment Geopolitics Arts & Culture

David Fokos

Quarterly — October November December — Portugal Cont €9.75 UK £9.75 US \$14.75 Other Countries \$20.00







## **Fine Art gallery**

The key to these images is to frame the shot in such a way as to emphasize what I wish to share and minimize the rest, to remove distractions, to remove the visual noise.



gasworks









passage to the sea



four poles

∴ The images I make today are the result of 30 years of exploration and discovery in my quest to understand how we are affected by the world around us and how we perceive our environment. My images are not so much about what is seen but rather what is felt. They are the result of my desire to express to the viewer the essence of my experience in these places.

Some of my thoughts on this subject get quite technical and I have been known to prattle on about the wavelength of light, etc. However, to put it simply, I believe that our sense of experience is built up over time — a composite of many short-term events.

I will often suggest this analogy: suppose you meet someone for the first time. Your impression of that person is not a snapshot in your mind of the first time you saw that person, but rather a portrait you have assembled from many separate moments. Each time that person exhibits a new facial expression or hand gesture, you add that into your impression of who that person is. Your image of that person — how you *feel* about that person — is formed over time, rather than upon a single expression or gesture.

Likewise, I believe that our impression of the world is based upon our total experience. For example, the ocean has always made me

feel calm, relaxed, and contented. If I were to take an instantaneous snapshot of the ocean, the photo would include waves with jagged edges, salt spray, and foam. This type of image does not make me feel calm. It does not represent how the ocean makes me feel as I stare out over the water.

What I am responding to is the underlying, fundamental form of the ocean, its vast expansiveness and the strong line of the horizon, both of which are very stable, calming forms. It took me a long time to understand this — 15 years during which my images failed to evoke the emotions I wished to communicate. Then, slowly, I began to sense



some change in a few of my shots.

And while not entirely successful, there were areas within these shots that hinted at what I was trying to express. I spent a lot of time contemplating why it was that these images were more successful for me than others. Drawing upon my technical background in engineering and a profound, decades-long appreciation and interest in Japanese aesthetics, I began to develop my own theory of how we perceive the world and a method for expressing that through my art.

For scenes that contain a lot of movement I have used the camera's unique ability to "average time" through long exposures

ranging from 20 seconds to 60 minutes, to reveal what is felt but generally unseen. This process eliminates what I have termed "visual noise". These are all the short-term temporal events (i.e., things that are moving) that can distract us from focusing on the underlying fundamental forms. In such scenes, my long exposures strip away this noise. In a way, it is like peeling back a page to reveal a world that, while very real, is not experienced visually.

When a scene does not contain movement, a simple instantaneous exposure is sufficient, as a longer exposure would make no difference. The key to these images, much like my time-averaged images, is to frame the shot in such

a way as to emphasize what I wish to share and minimize the rest, to remove distractions, to remove the visual noise.

I know exactly on what I want the viewer to focus and what I want them to see and feel. By reducing my images to austere minimalist compositions I force the viewer to more closely examine what I have left in the frame. In this regard, my study of Japanese aesthetic traditions has had a profound influence on my work. At university, I studied Japanese art history, Japanese film, and *haiku* poetry. I have been greatly inspired by the *haiku* poet's ability to convey deeply felt sentiment through a minimal number of words.



unfinished pier



foggy night





jetty



ferry landing



east meets west



With my work I do not consciously set out to make “photographic *haiku*,” or try to illustrate such concepts as *seijaku* (tranquility), *sabi* (patina and an appreciation of the ephemeral nature of things), *yūgen* (an unobvious, subtle, profound grace), *shizen* (without pretense), and *wabi* (rustic simplicity, freshness, quietness, an appreciation of imperfection). Yet, I feel that the spirit expressed in these concepts resonates within my images. It was through my work, as I struggled to make the first image that I felt successfully conveyed the emotion I wished to share, that these ideals came to reveal themselves to me. ∴

scenic view

