

## CAMPBELL WORKS

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### The Archaea: Stephanie Rushton



Fig 1 Stephanie Rushton, Nature's Retribution. (2015) Digital Photography.

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Opening Reception: Friday 18th September 6.00 - 9.00pm  
15 -19th September 2015: Gallery hours 12 noon - 6.00pm

*"of all creatures that breathe and move upon the earth,  
Nothing is bred, that is weaker than man."* **homer the iliad.**

The Archaea' is the final work for Stephanie Rushton's MA in Film and Photography at The University of Derby.

'Archaea' refers to the kingdom of single celled organisms with the simplest known molecular structure, thought to be the closest living ancestor to the origin of all life on earth.

'The Archaea' features a series of constructed photographic tableaux of tangled, botanical phantasmagoria, which refer to the landscape with a suggestion of figuration. Inspired by the 'Jungle paintings' of Max Ernst and alluding to Ballardian themes of Nature's retribution, the resulting images succeed in being both menacing and simultaneously humorous.

The high-contrast, backlit, large scale photographs are created in the studio and subsequently manipulated with a digital technique normally eschewed by professional photographers; used here to denote an underlying molecular structure redolent of microscopic photography. This serves to enforce a link between animal and vegetable but also lends the work a painterly quality, paradoxically at odds with the photographic medium.

The resulting imagery emits a dreamlike quality that induces the pareidolic illusion latent in the human Psyche, this anthropomorphism further reinforcing the Archean molecular link between everything that exists. All plants, animals and humans, are biologically connected and this genetic inheritance can be traced

back to the human brain and spinal column. The split between animals and plants on the Phylogenetic tree occurred around 1.6 million years ago, however with some plant species we still share as much as 75% genetic similarity.

Stephanie studied photography at Blackpool and The Fylde College and was apprenticed to David Bailey for five years. Following a photographic career in fashion, advertising and editorial portraiture, her work has undergone something of a volteface.

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This work is her graduation show for the MA in Film and Photography at the University of Derby, where she is also a lecturer.

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**Date:**

15 Sep 2015 - 12:00pm - 19 Sep 2015 - 6:00pm