Audio description:

**The artist invites you to listen to sound recordings accompanying the four photographic artworks which are set out from left right on the wall in the same order as described here.**

**To follow is an audio description of the artworks, each with an artist commentary. The recording will play in a continuous loop.**

The first photograph, part of a set of four by Natalie Doig, was taken in 2022. This image is titled Edinburgh Blue Morning. Using portrait format, the artist has captured one of the busiest streets in Edinburgh, the Royal Mile, at daybreak, when the cobbled stones are clear of traffic and people, and a handful of pigeons have alighted in their place, pecking at the ground for food.

The photograph has been taken at a point where the Royal Mile begins to descend through tall regal sandstone buildings on its way down eventually to the Firth of Forth, which is just visible in the distance, forming a thin layer of light blue beneath tinted grey bands of cloud that the early sunlight has infused with a glow in places. Hints of rugged hills and woodland lying in more exposed light tell of a world beyond the city.

From the camera’s perspective, the majority of the foreground is steeped in twilight, with a broad run of cobbled stone making up a crossroad at which two traffic lights stand, one either side of the onward descending street, each light set at red. To the left, the silhouette of a wheeling gull overhangs the draped flags of St Andrews that alternate with the Union Jack.

From hereon, the buildings stand in the early gloom with windows glinting the colour of steel and certain shapes beyond the foregrounded architecture remaining as partial silhouettes. We find flag poles, a lightly knobbled turret, a thin cross raised into the cloud-swept pale blue sky, with the crown-like tower of St Giles Cathedral to the right and the outline of a tree further on, on the same side, as the submerged blue of the Royal Mile begins its descent towards the waking landscape.

The second photograph in the series is titled Alone in a Crowd. It is set in landscape format and centres on the incidental portrait of a bypassing tourist outside Edinburgh Writer’s Museum.

A man in his thirties with dark blonde hair and beard, his face is caught in a band of sunlight as he turns to his left towards the camera. The very top of his wheelchair backrest is visible, with a knitted black and white hat draped over one side. Dressed in a blue puffer jacket, and with a black camera strap around his neck, he is captured alone, away from a group of people of similar age and dress who stand around in conversation outside the elegant sandstone building. Although otherwise expressionless, his eyes engage with us frankly, apparently aware, as a fellow photographer might be, that he is the subject of the shot.

The third photograph in the series is titled Made Small by Nature. It is set in portrait format, enabling the artist to capture the scale of a very tall deciduous tree in comparison to the person standing at its roots, a young woman in a short dress who looks up at the canopy with her hands composed together.

The tree stands just to the left of the centre of the image, which encompasses in the foreground a grassy clearing, which leads into woodland comprised of other tall trees and dense bushes. The tree trunk is so thick, that while the woman stands before it, the majority of its width is visible on either side of her. With such a broad canopy overhead, the under parts of the trees are shaded, with patches of more brightly lit woodland appearing in the gaps between them. The woman appears to be smiling peacefully, and in awe at the tree’s great height and majesty.

The fourth photograph in the series titled St Cuthbert’s Isle Dreaming. It is shot in landscape format and works in alternating slashes of dark and light as streaked waters and rocky formations of land stretch into the distance.

The scene is captured at daybreak, with a glow in the sky on the right of the landscape that catches under daubs of grey cloud that are mainly clustered in the upper right, above a horizon of rolling hills.

The foreground shows the edge of a sandy shore that gives into a band of rockpools in which the early light acts as countless mirrors to the sky. A dark line of rock marks the edge of a stretch of water that loops back around, surrounding the image’s centrepiece, a low isle on which a stark lone cross has been planted centrally, at a low mound that marks the isle’s focal point.

The colourings of the rocks and water, and the countryside beyond the isle, are muted and subtle, awaiting the further rise of the sun. It is a peaceful and calm setting, with distant hints of farmland and agriculture the only immediate hint of human intervention in this quiet haven for nature.

Artist commentary:

Edinburgh Blue Morning. Stillness and quiet on the Royal Mile. The air was chill. The light blue, the night still lingering. The dawn sun only just catching the clouds and the gold topped open tower of St. Giles cathedral. My only company were the birds. I was tired as the photo was taken at 4:45am. The only time really to find such solitude in the city. It wasn't until processing the photograph later, that I noticed that you can see the Firth of Forth at the end of the Royal Mile.

Natalie: Alone in a crowd. Jamie approached me because a friend of his had just had their bag snatched, and he wondered if I'd caught the culprit on my camera. Sadly, I hadn't. We got talking outside the Writer's Museum, surrounded by tourists. There's a walking tour in the background of the photograph.

Jamie: "I'm Jamie and being alone like out in the middle of nowhere kind of thing is kinda like scary, especially in a big city of Edinburgh. There's some days like, I like to be alone because it's really peaceful and quiet, like you can get some really nice places to turn up to and kind of be alone. And like, it's just, it's just calming kind of thing, being alone as well and that stuff is really like peaceful and relaxing as well."

Natalie: The light on Jamie's face was reflected off a tenement window. But for the instant of taking that photograph, we could have been completely alone.

Made Small by Nature. A warm August morning beneath stately trees at Beaver Castle Park. My 19 year old nice Antonia, who drove me there and modelled for me, is tiny in comparison to this tall old tree. The sun was just emerging from behind a cloud. So the dapples of sunlight are warm, but not harsh. We were comfortable in silence.

St Cuthbert’s Isle Dreaming. Dawn. Cold. Salt on the air. The seals are calling to each other out past the island. The wading birds cry. I am on an island cut off from the mainland by the tide, looking to a smaller island, cut off from this one. A lone cross stands out against the distant hills. I feel tranquil and at peace with my solitude.