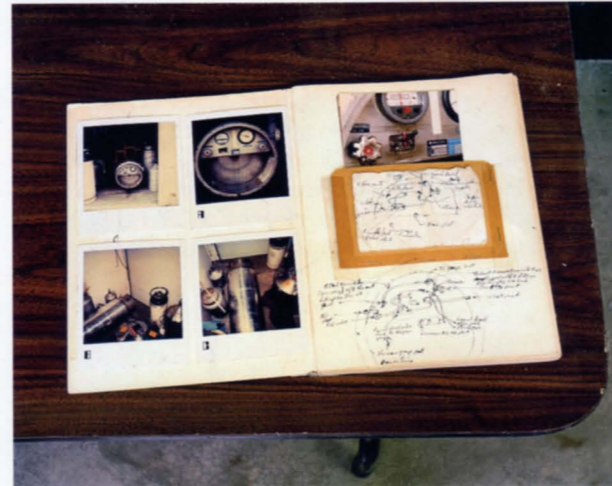


On view

The Prospect of Immortality runs at Impressions Gallery until 17 September. www.impressions-gallery.com



MURRAY BALLARD UNITED KINGDOM

As debut projects go, Murray Ballard could scarcely have chosen a more intriguing subject to get noticed than cryonics. The practice of preserving dead bodies at very low temperatures in the hope of bringing them back to life far in the future is commonly thought to exist only in science fiction, where it is generally known by its technically inaccurate name of "cryogenic freezing". Yet as Ballard (no relation to his namesake, the sci-fi author JG) discovered during his five-year investigation of the topic, there are already hundreds of people around the world who have invested in what he has called "The Prospect of Immortality".

The 27 year old began documenting cryonicists while studying photography at the University of Brighton, after he discovered there was a group of British believers based just along the Sussex coast in Peacehaven. He was soon making much longer excursions; his work took him to the Alcor Life Extension Foundation in Arizona three times, the

rival Cryonics Institute in Michigan twice, and the burgeoning Kriorus facility just outside Moscow on a further two occasions.

Having worked as an assistant to Magnum photographer Mark Power for four years, Ballard is now looking at biotechnology for his first commission, which will be shown as part of the British Science Festival. He revels in the "honesty" that working with a large format camera allows, saying, "You're not saying, 'Look at this bit of the picture', you're saying all of it is equally as important, and all of the details are there to piece together meaning and narrative," he explains.

Power was on hand last month to formerly open Ballard's first major solo exhibition at Impressions in Bradford, featuring Ballard's images of the people involved in this pursuit of real-life resurrection, and the equipment in which they are entrusting their dreams of everlasting life.

www.murrayballard.com