

Buried

Photographs by
Stephen Gill



From *Buried*, by Stephen Gill and Nobody Books © Stephen Gill.

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Stephen Gill seems like one of the happiest adventurers out in the world playing with photography today. Still at a young age, he has already written and edited award-winning books. He's had great commercial success, lots of exposure, international shows, and always seems to be doing something new and exciting and — different.

One of Gill's latest projects follows on earlier work from *Hackney Wick* (where he photographed fly-by-night flea market vendors and hangers-on in an abandoned field on the outskirts of London using a plastic camera). He then took some of those photos and artfully arranged flower petals and the like on top of the prints, and re-photographed that work with stunning effect. With *Buried* he embraces whimsy and chance in a new way.

"The Photographs in this book were taken in Hackney Wick and later buried there. The amount of time the images were left underground varied depending on the amount of rainfall..." "Not knowing what an image would look like once it was dug up introduced an element of chance and surprise which I found appealing. This feeling of letting go and collaborating with place — allowing it also to work in putting the finishing touches to a picture — felt fair. Maybe the spirit of the place can also make its mark."

There is also fun in the packaging of this limited edition artist's book. As the bookseller at the Photographer's Gallery in London was ringing up my purchase, he said with pleasure and admiration, "Look at that cover! That's proper Hackney mud smeared all over it by hand." An earthy touch, no? Included with each book is an original C-print with the encouragement to "Bury your own!" The philosophical reveries inspired by this bit of fun begin to pose some very real and serious questions about the nature of photography, the object-quality of prints and books, and a way to make each part of a multiple series unique in its own right. Alec Soth mused about Gill's latest work: