

## **Title: More lonely ere**

### **Abstract**

Watford, Hertfordshire is situated between the city of London and the pastoral countryside of the Home Counties. It has an identity associated with commuting infrastructure where people share the same space yet live according to an individual rhythm - in what Roland Barthes' termed an 'Idiorhythm.' Community closely intertwines with how the space is designed to take you away, through and past Watford. However, with the pandemic and lockdown, an opportunity was created to re-evaluate this relationship between community and its spaces, challenging its identity as a commuter town when there is no more commuting.

Through a photographic survey of Watford's spaces and characters, I explore the idea of connection 'edgelands,' which is fundamentally impacted by the need to be distant. I applied traditional B&W photographic process to highlight a nostalgia associated with its aesthetic. I created a series of portraits and landscapes to create a journey narrative, which starts to question whether community is able to come to terms with the 'new normal,' versus the perception of its former self.

The result is a dichotomy between the idealistic and reality. The photographs represent a truth; one a perception of a community through a nostalgic lens and one that highlights the way in which a community will naturally evolve its own identity - even when we place romanticised abstract nostalgia upon it.

*Keywords: community, narrative, nostalgia, perception, photography*

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#### **Bio**

Phil Hill is a photographer whose practice is concerned with community, connection and identity. Phil aims to examine these concepts by also drawing attention to processes of photography and its qualities, questioning the way we place value on them. Phil's focus is on long-term socially engaged projects, writing, and teaching.