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psychiatry in pictures

Recovery (2007)

Allen John Shand (b. 1976)

Allen Shand works as a general adult psychiatrist at Royal Cornhill Hospital, Aberdeen. He has always been an enthusiastic artist but only took up photography in 2004 while living in Melbourne, Australia where he worked as a registrar in psychiatry. He describes *Recovery* as follows:

'This image was taken with a digital SLR camera. It was an autumn evening in the Scottish Highlands and it had been raining heavily. Unexpectedly, the rain stopped and the sun broke through the rain clouds. The title comes from the story behind when the picture was taken; it reflects the first signs of improvement in mental state, more specifically depression. The shafts of sunlight which can just be seen reflect the improvement in mood. Like the weather, improvement in psychiatric conditions can be unpredictable, especially the chronic and treatment resistant disorders.'

'Much of my photography is influenced by my work as a psychiatrist. I treat a lot of patients with depression and as a result feel most comfortable photographing melancholic images which, for me, carry more resonance and importance. I find that when I view the completed image it often produces a much stronger emotion in me compared to when I took the photograph. This first-hand experience of emotion helps me empathise with patients.'

Edited by Allan Beveridge.

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