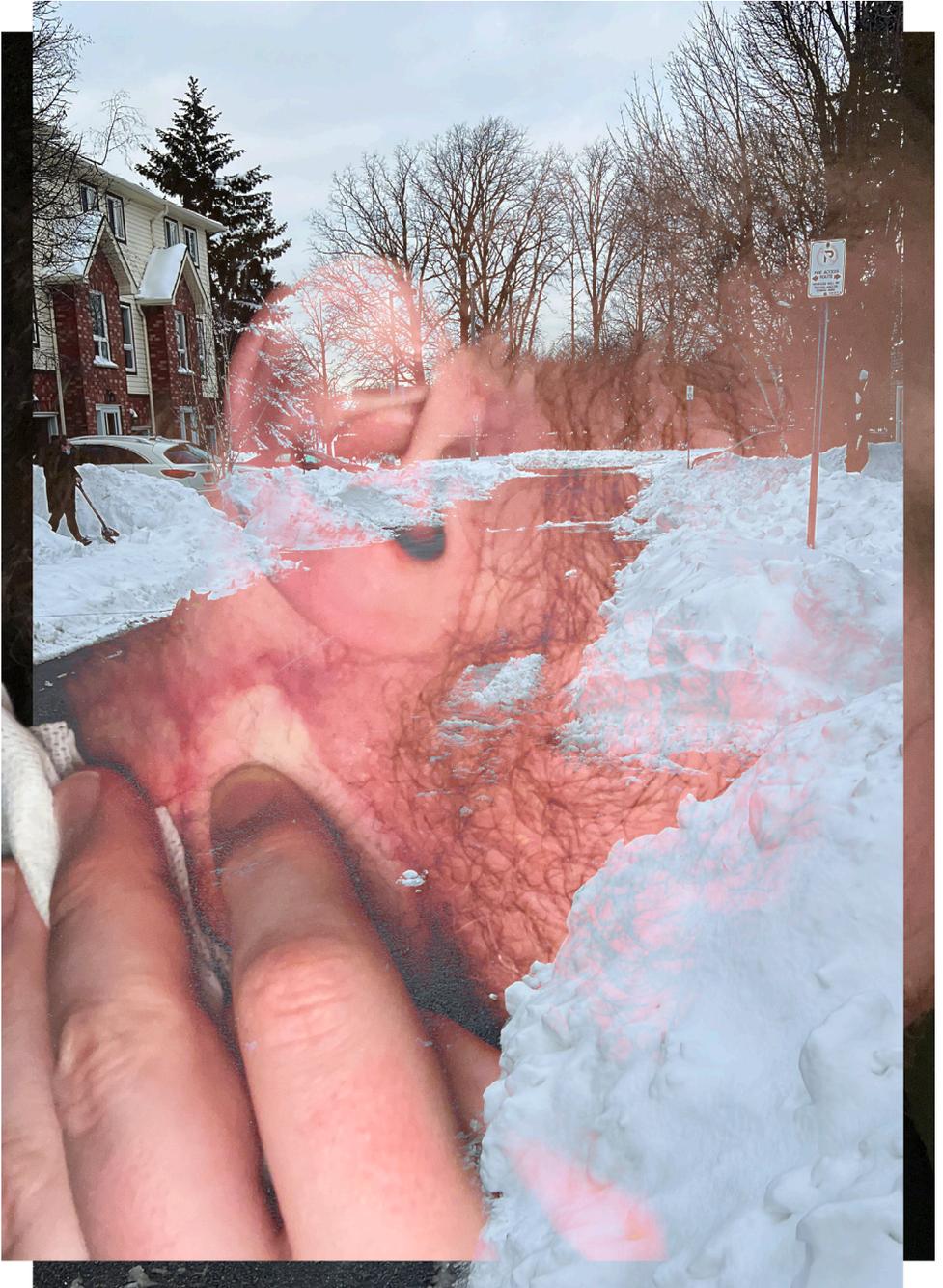


Richard William Purvis

# ImAverage

An ordinary day. An ordinary person. An extraordinary life.



## About the Artist

Richard William Purvis was a multimedia artist based in Hamilton, focused on photography, experimental filmmaking, and unconventional storytelling. A curious and creative soul, Richard gravitated towards creative work, pursuing his BA in Media Arts from Royal Holloway University of London, and his MA in Anthropology of Media from the SOAS University of London.

Originally from the UK, Richard's photography and creative work was a driving force. He lived and traveled in countries around the world, with his collection of photographs spanning multiple countries and continents including England, South Korea, Japan, Scotland and Canada. He settled with the love of his life in her hometown of Hamilton in 2019, excited to join the local artist community and be steps away from film productions across the city.

Sadly, after being diagnosed with metastatic melanoma in 2021, Richard passed away in December 2022. He entrusted his beloved wife as the keeper of his creative work with the hope of bringing more light into the world, even after he is gone.

## About the Keeper

As a professional communicator, my capacity to be creative trends pragmatically. I am not an artist, but I am a storyteller. I'm someone who finds the connection between things, seeing the world unfold and the systems that propel it.

After meeting Richard in Yokohama, Japan, back in 2015, I had no idea that my heart would be captured by a man who did not possess a single linear thought in his mind. I saw Richard for not just who he was, but why he was that way. I loved him for it. And as luck would have it, he loved me right back.

I cared for him throughout his cancer journey, physically, mentally and emotionally tending to all his ailments. A couple weeks before his unexpected decline we began planning how we could work together to share his art with the world. He didn't make it this far, but I promised him I'd find a way. It's my honour to share his creative legacy with you.

## About the Exhibition

How could the average image of an average day be anything but average itself?

*ImAverage* explores just that.

Created from the personal photographic archives of the artist, this collection of composite images are layered and combined to create an average of images from an everyday moment in time. Somewhere between long-exposure photography and a visual puzzle, the image averages provoke a chain of questions asking exactly where, what and why it looks the way it does. Variations of the same photo combinations will show how perspective can change the way you see a situation.

This exhibition brings together the final works of the artist, completed in the last few months of life. Beyond the collection of images, Richard left behind his artistic intentions in a project notebook entrusted to his wife, Kim. There he shared his ideas, hopes, motivations, demonstrating his love of expression through art with all the possibilities for a future he would not have.

Self-deprecating and humble, Richard never had the chance to share this work publicly. It was never *ready*. It wasn't *there* yet. As keeper of his life's work, I challenge the idea that his work was "not ready" and invite you to do the same. You see what you see. You find what you find. And as you let the images speak for themselves, remember these two things:

There is *always* beauty and potential in the average, and share your work with the world. It needs to see it and you can't take for granted the time you have left.

# Testimonials

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*“For Richard, the rules that govern space and time for most of us always seemed less strictly imposed. Attempting to say goodbye to him because you needed to be somewhere else, work out which country or time zone he was in, or figure out which intellectual leaps he had made to reach the maddening conversational ally he’d dragged you through demanded one possess an elusive, non-Euclidian, instinctual logic quite specific to him. Confusion reigned when you spoke with him, as he’d jump, shift, reference and pun his way across a colourful repository of experiences and knowledge. Heaven forbid you should attempt to nail-down a fixed, philosophical outlook beyond his unwavering, kind, innocent brand of mischief. He’d change and contradict himself without apology; join a cult and partake in dream experiments one day, and extol the virtues of a scientific, rationalist outlook the next. Meaning would be layered into incomprehensible shifts of mood, pivots in focus or bridges between times, concepts and occurrences that were seemingly irreconcilable with each other, all punctuated with a fixed stair, wide grin, and staccato giggle.*

*Put that behind a camera and an editing suite, however, and it became obvious the issue was the medium - conversation - and not the message.*

*Richard didn’t do then-and-now or this-and-that. His conception of the world was more immediate and emergent, open to re-reading depending on the lens one chose to slide in front it, with events impacting each other irrespective of their place in a chain of cause and effect. What made verbal conversation wonderfully dynamic (if maddeningly incoherent) made his art impacting and emotionally resonant; a kaleidoscopic montage across his experiences, as though it was versions of his own self that were being superimposed on top of each other. You can see him in each, if you look. Odd, comic, beautiful and quite unique, always utterly unafraid to be himself even if that self was in a moment of total panic, negative self-shaming, or existential frustration, as it often was. He always said it best in a picture, and you’ll get more of a sense of him through this work than you would through reading a thousand notes from his friends. I miss being baffled by his words and awed by his images. I hope you feel the same.”*

- Pete Peasey

*“Art is the vocation of the brave, the observant, and the reflective. These are all qualities Rich had in abundance, captured in perpetuity in his creative work.*

*Rich’s art is bold and often vibrant, much like the man I knew. I see his passion for film, cinematography, people, and travel in his work. His deeply philosophical nature also shines through.*

*Each piece tells a different story, providing a greater insight into the person Rich was and the person he remains in everyone who loves him.”*

- Joe Pegg

*“Before I knew Richard as an artist, I knew him as my brother.*

*Every year he made beautiful birthday cards for myself and our parents, often accompanied by a silly and heartfelt message.*

*However, many of my earliest memories are of him with a camera in his hand, making sure to document and immortalize every birthday, family celebration, day out. Any moment that he thought needed to be captured. A friend laughing, our family gathered around a table, a sister having a tantrum. A cloudy sky, a shopping trolley submerged in a dirty river. He found meaning, whatever that was for him in the moment, in all of it.*

*The precision Rich applied to any creative project, whether it be making a birthday card or a film, was something to behold.*

*He would spend hours on the smallest detail, making sure everything was perfect.*

*It wasn’t until later in my life that I realized the importance and meaning behind what he’d been doing for all of those years, all working towards this collection of beautiful images comprised of thousands of moments, memories, joys, losses and everything in between. He’d been telling the story of his life, of all of our lives, as we were living it.”*

- Elisha Reynolds

*“I met Richard within the first few minutes of starting University (RHUL) back in 2003. It was immediately apparent he was unique as the rest of the new housemates were outside drinking while he was climbing a tree... It was in that moment I knew I wanted to be his friend! We lived together for 4 years - his passion for art and media was infectious. We spoke daily about films, photography and mixed media. His interpretation of colour and movement and how presence in that moment could be captured was special and defined him as an artist.*

*It was a privilege to be his friend and miss him every day.”*

- Richard Weaver

*“Layering of minutes, hours, days, years and roads traveled - Rich Purvis’ photography effectively transcends time or the specifics of location through meticulous, ephemeral compositions rich in colour, light and depth.*

*There is a deep sense of curiosity in the imagery, prompting an eye that searches for tangibles in the abstracted compositions, and invites the viewer to lose themselves in these timeless spaces.*

*Simultaneously mood and memory, dream and action, the work is compellingly grounded in meaning and a tapestry of lived experience.”*

- Brigitte Huard

*“My friend Rich was a one-man force of nature, he sort of came in after Earth, Water, Air and Fire. He was discombobulating, colourful, funny, empathetic and exasperating in equal measure. He had a dress sense that could at best be described as unusual, and used to drink concoctions that would have made an ogre sick. He was also vital and life affirming and had an artistic vision was beyond anyone else I’ve ever met. His art was extra ordinary and the leaps his mind could make were unparalleled. We all miss him very day but I’ll always feel he’s with me every time a terrible joke is told, or an awful pun is concocted.”*

- John Rossiter

Factory Media Centre is Hamilton's not-for-profit artist-driven resource centre for film, video, new media, installation, sound art, and other multimedia art forms.

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