

## SIGNS OF LIFE

Garlinda visited Iceland in 2016 and Patagonia and Atacama in 2017. The result is the body of work you see at this show.

The title, Signs of Life, reflects the instinctive approach that Garlinda takes to her photography; images that powerfully convey the monumental, primitive and often desolate nature of these landscapes and how they either dwarf or obliterate, or sometimes mimic, signs of human existence.

We would like to thank Original Travel, who organised her trip to Iceland, for sponsoring the show.

We would also like to draw your attention to the charity Familia, an orphanage based near Kolkata that saves homeless or abandoned children and brings them up in an orphanage that provides a loving family environment

Garlinda is a trustee and wants to raise awareness and funds to support this exceptional charity, which will be receiving a percentage of all sales made from this show.

More information about Familia is attached.



## WALL ONE: ICELAND

In February 2016 Peter and I went to Iceland with our friends Griff and Jo. We flew to Akureyri, hired a car and drove to Myvatn, where we stayed for a couple of days. Then we made our way around the north and west coasts to Snæfellsnes, finishing off with a day in Reykjavik.

Peter shared the driving with Griff, who was much more sympathetic about stopping whenever there was a good shot.

### TWO MEN WALKING

Just beyond Reykjalið on the shores of Myvatn is the extinct caldera of Kefla. Jo and I went clockwise on the ridge; this is a shot across the volcano of Peter and Griff going the other way round.

I like the way that the hill looks like the back of a zebra.

### HAMLET

The north coast of Iceland is characterised by long fjords between stark mountain ranges. Most of the country's population lives in the south, in or around Reykjavik, so the villages in the north aren't large. This one is at Hofðaströnd.

### BIG SKY

Apparently in the summer Myvatn ('Midge Lake') lives up to its name. In the winter it's a great expanse of ice in a flat, empty and desolate landscape.

### THIN WHITE LINE

Griff stopped the car just beyond Lonkot on Skagafjörður so I could catch this shot of a range of mountains with the snow whipped off their ridges by the driving winds.

Within seconds the white light had gone, and with it the shot. I had captured it just in time thanks to Griff's reaction.

## SOMEWHERE IN ICELAND

After fish and chips at Olafsvik on the north coast of Snæfellsnes we tried to get over the road pass back to the hotel at Buðir, on the south coast. The condition of the road spooked Peter, so after a short walk with spectacular views we turned back and drove round the peninsular.

This hill looked like a line drawing, with snow just thawing in places.

## MOUNTAIN

This was taken near Olafsfjörður, about forty miles from the Arctic Circle. I like the way the mountain seems particularly gloomy - there's nothing inviting about it at all.

## **WALL TWO: PATAGONIA & ATACAMA**

In March 2017 we travelled to Argentina and Chile, to see the Torres del Paine and the Atacama, especially the Altiplano where the land climbs towards the Andes. The landscape is genuinely thrilling, and the weather was a real bonus for a photographer who prefers clouds to blue skies.

## COLOUR MOUNTAIN

Baguales Range in the Torres del Paine, Chile, with the evening sun casting a slanting pattern across the mountain. This picture needed to be in colour as the light was so luminous.

## LITTLE GUANACO

This beautiful lake, Lago Sarmiento de Gamboa, is half in and half out of the Torres del Paine National Park. We walked alongside it for a dozen miles, climbing all the while until we reached a spectacular view of the mountains themselves. The guanaco is a near cousin of the vicuna and alpaca.

## ATACAMA FACE

The unearthly landscape around San Pedro de Atacama, which we explored on foot, was formed when the seabed was violently lifted to create the coastal strip of Chile millions of years ago. This shot was taken at the far end of one of the saline outcrops of the Valle de la Luna, looking towards the salt flats of the Atacama itself.

## SHARK CLOUD

It was really difficult to get a shot of the Torres del Paine (Chile) that wouldn't look like everyone else's, so I was pleased to capture incredible cloud formations resembling a shark and a flying saucer, which momentarily framed the peaks and the shoulder between them.

## SULPHUR

Over 4,300 metres high, in the Altiplano of the Chilean Andes, the geysers at El Tatio are at their most impressive in the early morning, when the cold air condenses the steam and makes it visible. This geyser doesn't erupt like the others, but brings bubbling to the surface salts and acids that stain the rocks a beautiful variety of colours.

## CONDOR

These wonderful birds, with wingspans over three metres, are perpetually on the move looking for food in a landscape that doesn't provide much. We were lucky enough to surprise three condors on the ground making a meal of a rabbit but I was not lucky enough to have immediate access to my camera at the time. So I waited to catch one in flight.

## **WALL THREE: ICELAND**

### TEETH

Iceland sits on the Mid-Atlantic Rift and so is one of the most geothermally active countries on earth. These natural sculptures are formed when lava forces its way into the air, instantly cools and congeals. We were on our way across rough terrain to the cave at Skutustöðahreppur when we stopped for a close look.

### ICE CHORUS

It was tricky to get past the snow drifts and across twenty feet of waist-deep water into the cave at Skutustöðahreppur. We crawled in pitch dark up a steep - though short - incline, and were rewarded with this Greek chorus. The ice stalagmites are formed as pure water drips through the earth into the freezing darkness below.

### COLD HUT

It's difficult to imagine how inhospitable these fields and plains must be in midwinter, though this photograph gives a hint. The Icelanders build huts like this to shelter themselves and their hardy ponies

### FENCE

There's a scarcely drivable track from Myvatn into the interior near Skutustöðahreppur, where after a four hours we donned snowshoes and walked a kilometer to enter a most beautiful cave (where I took ICE CHORUS). This shot is of the fence that the high wheel base LandRover had to follow to make sure that it was on the right road.

Iceland is criss crossed with fences that do, as far as we could tell, practically no work at all.

### S BEND

We drove from Snæfellsnes to Reykjavik along a road that snaked between fields lightly covered with snow. This was taken just beyond Staðustaður.

I like the impression of an empty road, apparently going nowhere.

### ICE SEA

This was taken at Heðingsfjörður, about forty miles from the Arctic Circle. The red roof of the hut offers some comfort in a landscape that is otherwise uninviting.

## WALL FOUR: ICELAND

### BUÐIR

This lovely church is right next to the Hotel Buðir, on the south coast of Snæfellsnes. It sits overlooking the waters of Faxafloi, on the far edge of which sits Reykjavik. There's a coast walk from the hotel, with sandy paths winding among dunes from which you can see the seals playing in the shallow water.

The evening we arrived that day's snow had melted, but overnight there was a fresh fall. I got up early to take this photograph. By the time we left, later that morning, the snow had gone.

### FROZEN AND NOT

This was taken on a stretch of road between Arskogssandur and Siglufjörður, to the north of Akureyri. It seems so odd and interesting to me that one side is completely frozen, and other is not.

## GARLINDA BIRKBECK

### SIGNS OF LIFE

Garlinda didn't study art at school, didn't go to art school, didn't study photography but from her early teens onwards she spent many hours watching and helping her father, the photographer George Llewellyn, in the dark room.

She didn't actually pick up a camera herself until her twenties, but since then it has been her work and absorbing focus bringing great pleasure to family, friends, clients and collectors, as well as generating funds for the many charities she supports.

In recent years her focus on photographing wild desolate landscapes has helped to build her reputation not only as a highly respected photographer but also as an artist.

**Antony Gormley** writes of the image of the church at Buđir, exhibited at *SIGNS OF LIFE*. "A black-and-white photograph of a black and white church photographed in a snowstorm against a bleached sky in which ground and air seem connected through the promise of a distant horizon. The scene is made immediate by the short diagonal flecks of falling snow.

The image is dark but full of feeling, the means limited but the effect wide. It talks of a human need for shelter not just for the body but for our imagined visions of the other side of an unknown and ill-perceived horizon."

**Robin Woodhead** CEO of Sotheby's: "Work of outstanding quality and impact ... a photographic eye that deserves the broadest acknowledgement ... an emotive connection to each one of her subjects delivered with superb technical ability."

**Antony Horowitz**, a fellow kayaker in Antarctica in 2012, writes: "I think her work is extraordinary. She manages to capture the very essence of Antarctica as I experienced it, yet makes it her own ... I am in awe."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT GARLINDA BIRKBECK AND SALES  
PLEASE CONTACT HER AGENT

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