



Title: *“Blurred Red Lines”*

Description: Tulips, Southland.

Photographer: Henrik Moller

Where, when: Triflor tulip farm, Edendale, Southland, October 2021.

Sustainability? This image from Triflor tulip farm is stitched from 5 photographs using Intentional Camera Movement (ICM). The camera has been set on slow shutter speed and the camera is deliberately moved to alter the image.

ICM is not for everyone – detractors like to refer to it as “Blurry shit”, advocates think of it as using the camera more like a paint brush. The effect on textures and the way colours and objects can run together is sometimes astonishingly beautiful in my view, but a lot of my attempts end up in my computer’s Trash.

You can think of ICM in terms of fractals. As you stand back from a landscape you see different things – new patterns emerge. Here I am struck by the broad bands of colour and the background forest green comes more into my consciousness than in the image (“Red Lines” HM#026) that precedes it in the sequence. It’s part of human psychology that we tend to concentrate our eyes and seeing on what is in sharpest focus – I guess that was an evolutionary smart strategy to prioritise detection on something near you or coming at you, either to mate with you or to eat you!

The classic approach to a photograph’s composition is to keep the foreground and main subject in sharp focus and to de-emphasise the other parts of the image. This simplifies the story. Personally, I find strict adherence to this ‘rule’ to be stultifying. In most cases when a plant and animal are photographed, I like to see it’s surroundings and to put it more into ecological context. Others like to record the beauty of the single plant or animal in extraction. ICM goes the other way i.e. blur to prevent focus on just a small part of the image. Many of the stunning ICMs produced by Noelle Bennett in the Ecosystems Photography project present an exquisite mix of the two approaches – a sharp object embedded in a beautifully abstract and textured landscape smear.

Picturing landscapes from a sustainability point of view invites the same conflict of scales and focus. Some observers will see the detail in one part of the view, others a broader sweep and connectivity. Not agreeing on the scale and boundary of the subject is a source of much debate when considering sustainable land use – should one be basing ones’ expectations and target management on a 1 m² plot at your feet, or the paddock, the whole farm, the catchment in which it sits, it’s ecological region or even it’s biome? Should we focus on individual species, the community, the ecosystem or the biosphere? Should we consider the ecology and biophysical world, or include humans and their communities and economies.

Photographs can help us see these different scales and their connections. This can help our discussion on what we should focus on together rather than talking past each other by framing the opportunity or threat at different scales.

Photo notes: I took this photo at Triflor, a tulip farm near Edendale in Southland. It’s a stitch of 5 images using Intentional Camera Movement (ICM), each exposed for 1s using a zoom lens at 53 mm, f/29 and ISO-100.

This is one of six photographs of the Triflor tulip farm presented in this gallery (HM#022 – HM#027).

Digital specs: 11,308 x 4,412 pixels (50 MP).

Key words: Farming, rural landscape, tulips, flowers, red, focus, fractals, scale, connection, Henrik Moller, Aotearoa, New Zealand, Sustainability.

Price: \$150 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image.

Visit www.ecosystemsphotography/sales for details & to order, and to get a quote if you want a high-quality print.

Donation: The price includes a \$100 donation to a sustainability organisation or project of your choice, or otherwise for the *Forest Hill Trust* based in Gore, Southland https://www.facebook.com/forced_account_switch?next=https%3A%2F%2Fm.facebook.com%2FForestHillFoundationTrust%2F&_rdr.

I recommend that the donation goes to the *Forest Hill Trust* because it is a not-for-profit coalition of local volunteers who are working to restore the 578 ha (1430 acre) Forest Hill Scenic Reserve. Forest Hill is the most significant remnant of forest surviving in the Southland Plains area. It is ideally suited to becoming a mainland island and would be an outstanding sanctuary for threatened species on the mainland. Forest Hill is surrounded by farm land making pest eradication and possible predator proof fencing a practical and cost-effective option. The vision for the project is: “To remove forever all introduced mammalian pests and predators from the Forest Hill Scenic Reserve and restore the forest to a healthy diversity of indigenous flora and fauna, many species of which have not been seen in the area in our lifetimes.”

Image Ref: HM#027 (Please refer to this reference in orders and correspondence)

Henrik Moller

29 November 2021.