



# ***PROJECT GROUNDWELL***

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE**

**P**

# PROJECT GROUNDSWELL

*Visions For Climate Protection*

Photo Museum Ireland initiated Project Groundswell in 2022 to create opportunities for artists and audiences to engage with the climate emergency.

Working with partner organisations in Austria, Italy, and Portugal, the project invited photographers across Europe to explore climate action, not only its impacts, but ways of being the change we want to see.

From 571 submissions, 12 finalists were selected.

This exhibition presents four overall winners:

**Gonçalo Fonseca**

**Ingmar Björn Nolting**

**Maria Oliveira**

**Yvette Monahan**

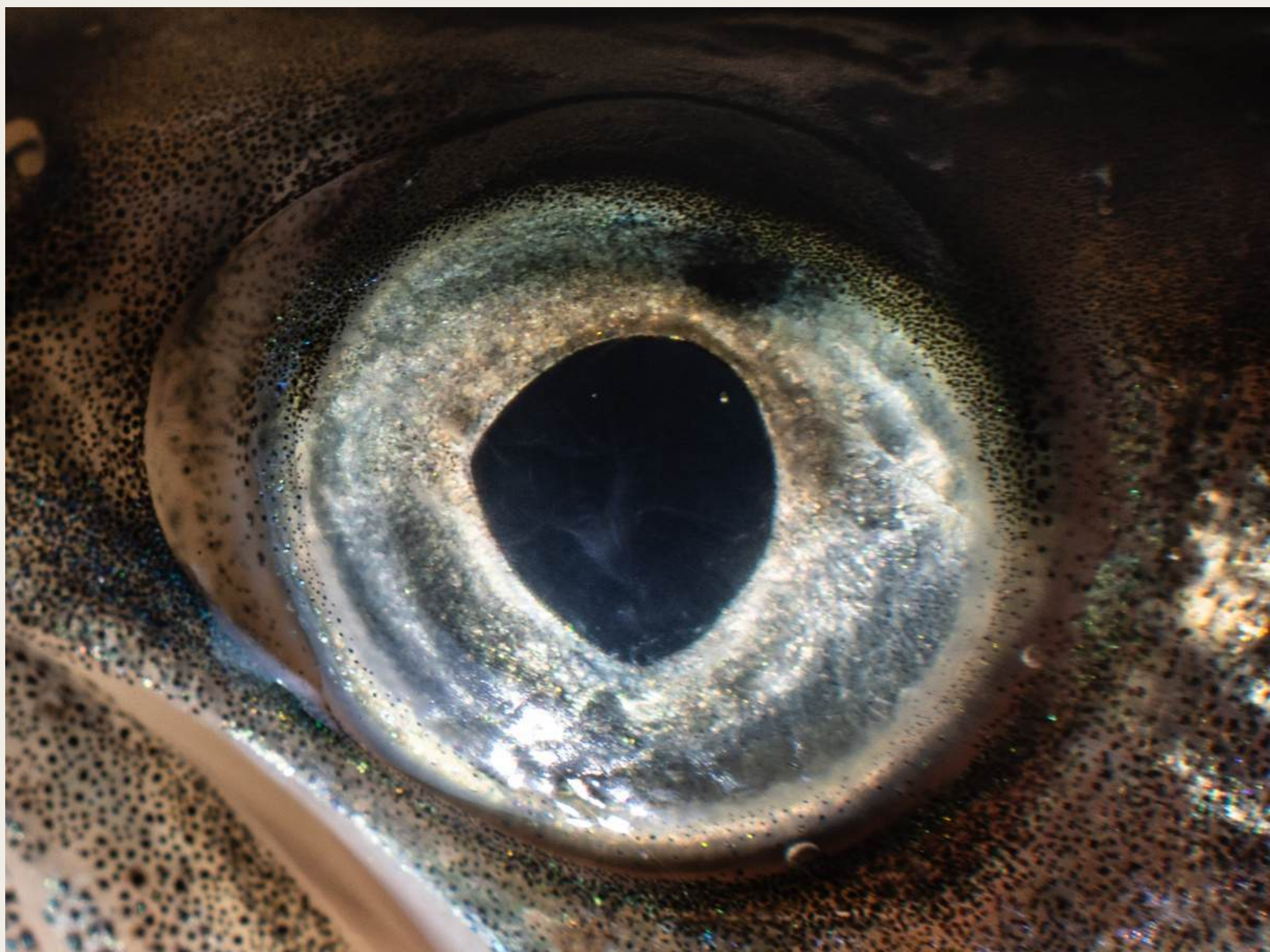
See the Showcase Award winners videos on:

[www.projectgroundswell.eu](http://www.projectgroundswell.eu)

# Yvette Monahan

The Ocean Within





### **What is this work about?**

Yvette Monahan explores fish as living archives.

Otoliths (ear stones) and scales record growth and migration like tree rings. Fish carry environmental histories within their bodies.

As oceans warm, these records become fragile witnesses to change.

Her work invites us to rethink how we understand time, memory, and the ocean.

### **Key Concept**

Nature stores memory - and we are part of that story.

### **Look Closer**

What details make this image scientific?

What makes it poetic?

How does scale affect how you feel?

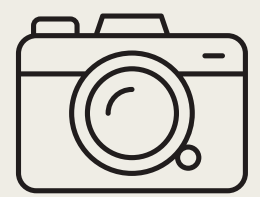


### **Create & Respond**

Research one marine indicator species.

How does it signal environmental change?

How could you use the photographic image to show your findings?



# IMAGE INDEX

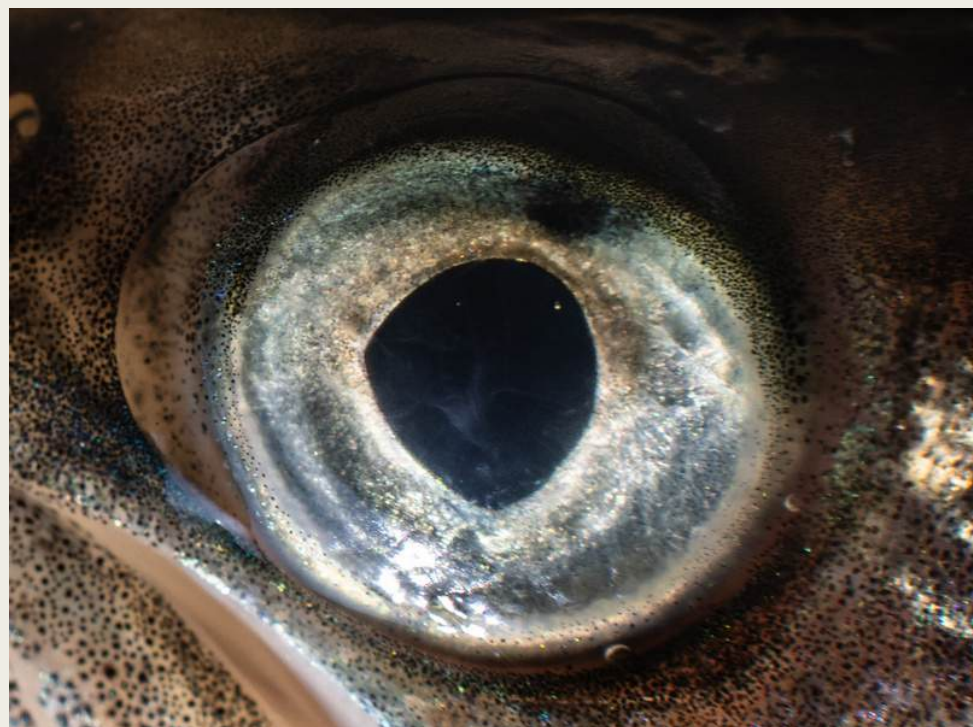
## OTOLITH I – COD

These ear stones help fish sense sound and vibration. Like tree rings, they record age, growth, and traces of a fish's life.



## MOTHER SEA

The salmon eye can be peeled in layers, each a translucent archive of the fish's life.



## PATH TO KINSHIP

'Perhaps we will never truly understand the lives of fish ... but by recognising their particularity, their individuality, their capacity to think, feel and learn, it may be possible to see not only them, but ourselves, differently. Perhaps by saving them we might save ourselves.'



# Maria Oliveira

Bone Foam





### **Look First**

What feels ordinary in this image, and what feels unexpected or unsettling?

How does Oliveria use light, framing, or concealment to shape how we see this scene?

What kind of relationship between humans, animals, and the land is being suggested in Oliveira's photographs?

### **What is this work about?**

In rural Portugal, families live closely with the land. They grow food, care for animals, and follow seasonal rhythms.

Oliveira photographs women whose daily labour sustains their families. Her work presents this way of life not as nostalgia, but as resistance - an alternative to industrial food systems.

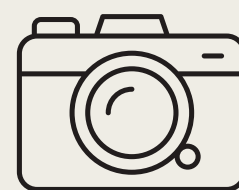
Her images show care, patience, and connection.

### **Key Concept**

Climate action can be a lifestyle, not a protest



## **Create & Respond**



Photograph an Alternative

Take a photograph that represents a slower, more sustainable way of living.

It might show; Growing, sharing, repairing, preserving, reusing.

Compose your image, think about: light, distance, focus, mood.

## IMAGE INDEX

Untitled from the series Bone Foam. Bone Foam is a photo essay exploring the quietly sustainable farming practices in the Alto Minho region of Portugal, where the artist is from.



Untitled, from the series Bone Foam. A translucent form hangs in the landscape, blurring the boundary between animal body and environment.



A duck's head rests inside a plastic bag. The image reflects the realities of rural life, where animals are part of both the environment and the food system, while the plastic bag hints at the presence of modern consumption.



# Gonçalo Fonseca

A Burning Landscape





### **Look First**

What differences do you notice between these two images by Fonseca?

Which image feels active? Which feels still?

What emotions do they create?

### **What is this work about?**

Portugal has recorded the largest burned area in Europe over the past two decades.

Fonseca moves beyond dramatic images of fire to examine what happens before and after. This work asks - how can communities live with fire and reduce its impact?

### **Key Concept**

Climate action can mean preparation, prevention, and long-term planning - not just emergency response

## Look Closer

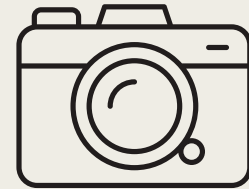
Who is being protected in these images?

What systems are at work here - education, science, emergency services, land management?

Does the presence of young people change how you see the future?

## Create & Respond

Fonseca photographs both damage and prevention.



Take a photograph that shows either:

A place that needs protection or an action that prevents future harm

Think about:

What story does your image tell - before or after?

Does it show vulnerability or resilience?



# IMAGE INDEX

Children from a local school learn about fire behavior at the annual open day at the LEIF, the Laboratory for the Study of Forest Fires, the most important wildfire research centre in Europe. Lousã, Coimbra, Portugal. 30 May 2025.



The burnt remains of a home in the village of Casal do Monte, Trancoso, Guarda district. 3 September 2025.



Firefighters from the Arganil fire brigade try to stop a wildfire from reaching the village of Porto Castanheiro in Arganil, Coimbra district. 14 August 2025.



# Ingmar Björn Nolting

## Eviction



### **Look First**

Where does your eye go first in each image?

Who appears powerful?

### **What is this work about?**

Between 2020 and 2023, climate activists occupied the German village of Lützerath to stop lignite coal mining. Beneath the village lay millions of tonnes of coal. In January 2023, police cleared the site and buildings were demolished.

Nolting documents the occupation, the resistance, and the eviction. His photographs show what happens when climate action becomes direct confrontation.



### **Look Closer**

How does scale operate in these images (e.g machine vs body)?

What symbols of power can you identify (machinery, uniforms, demolition)?

What is being defended and what is being removed?

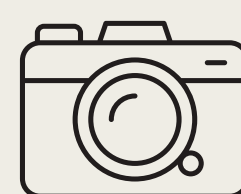
### **Key Concept**

Climate action can mean physically resisting systems of extraction, even when the outcome is uncertain.



## Create & Respond

Nolting photographs moments of tension between people and systems.



Create a photograph that shows a visible conflict between two forces.

This could be: nature vs industry, individual vs institution, protection vs destruction, community vs corporation

In your image consider:

Who dominates the frame?

How does scale shape meaning?

What happens just before or just after this moment?

# IMAGE INDEX

People are blocking the bucket-wheel excavator on the edge of the Garzweiler II open-pit mine near the outskirts of Lützerath, Germany, on January 8, 2023. When individuals are present in the danger zone at the edge of the mine, the bucket-wheel excavator must pause its operation until the affected area is vacated by those individuals.



An activist hangs above the ground as buildings are demolished during the clearing of the village of Lützerath, where protestors resisted the expansion of a coal mine.



Police remove a climate activist during the clearing of the village of Lützerath, which was demolished to expand a coal mine. Noting documents moments of confrontation between climate protestors and systems of extraction.



# GLOSSARY

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Documentary Photography	A style of photography that records real events, people, and environments, often focusing on social or political issues.
Photographic Series	A group of related images that explore a theme, story, or concept over time.
Visual Narrative	A story told through images rather than words.
Composition	How elements are arranged within a photograph (light, framing, foreground, background, balance).
Scale	The relative size of subjects within an image. Scale can communicate power, vulnerability, or dominance.
Representation	The way people, places, or issues are portrayed in an image - shaping how viewers understand them.
Symbolism	When objects, gestures, or scenes represent larger ideas or concepts.
Climate Action	Efforts to address climate change. This can include protest, prevention, restoration, research, or lifestyle change.
Extraction	The removal of natural resources (such as coal) from the earth.
Restoration	Repairing ecosystems or landscapes after environmental damage.
Collective Action	When groups of people work together to create social or political change.
Resistance	Opposition to systems, policies, or actions - often through protest or direct action.
Sustainable Living	Ways of living that reduce environmental impact and support long-term ecological balance.
Energy Transition	The shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.
Systems Thinking	Understanding how environmental, political, social, and economic systems connect and influence one another.

<b>What other terms are new to you? Add them here</b>	

# Meet the curator

## Curatorial Considerations

"My job as the lead curator for Project Groundswell has two main parts: selecting the artists and helping them show their photos in the best way possible.

For Project Groundswell, we decided that a gallery show was the best fit for four of the artists. A show lets people walk around and spend as much time as they want looking closely at the photos. But it still lets the artist/curator highlight important aspects of the series, by changing the size and where they hang each print.

For other artists, though, a video or slideshow worked better for sharing the mood and story, plus it has the bonus of being seen by anyone in the world online!"

See the Showcase Award winners videos on: [www.projectgroundswell.eu](http://www.projectgroundswell.eu)



**Tanya Kiang, Senior Curator**

# Meet a Youth Panel member

## Youth Panel Perspective

"Project Groundswell brings emotions of hope and sadness, showing the fear for the future of our climate but also the optimism and love we have towards nature. It is a guide to today's environment and how we can navigate it through art."

Genevieve Eyzat is a member of the Photo Museum Ireland's Youth Panel 2026. She is also 5<sup>th</sup> Year in Edmund Rice Secondary School, Carpenterstown, Dublin 15.

To find out more about our Youth Panel [click here](#).



**Genevieve Eyzat, PMI Youth Panel**



## CREATE & RESPOND

Share your response

If you created a photograph inspired by this exhibition, share it and tag:

**@PhotoMuseumIRL**

**#ProjectGroundswell**

## CURRICULUM LINKS

Leaving Certificate

### **Visual Studies (Leaving Certificate Art)**

Today's World: The Artist as Social Commentator

Students analyse how contemporary photographers respond to social, political, and environmental issues through documentary practice and visual narrative.

### **Politics & Society**

Strand 2: Active Citizenship

Strand 3: Human Rights & Responsibilities

Students examine protest, power, collective action, and environmental justice.

### **Climate Action and Sustainable Development**

Environmental Systems, Sustainability Practices, Socio-Environmental Justice

Students explore human impact on ecosystems, climate action, and sustainable futures.



To book your tour or if you have any questions or suggestions please contact [education@photomuseumireland.ie](mailto:education@photomuseumireland.ie)

This education resource was created by the Photo Museum Ireland Education Team in collaboration with Youth Panel members Elia de Leon and Genevieve Eyzat. This work is supported by the Heritage Council of Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland.



If you would like to get in touch with our Education department please contact [Education@photomuseumireland.ie](mailto:Education@photomuseumireland.ie)



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