

on the nature of daylight

JONATHAN Z LEE



Message from the artist

Sixty-six million years ago, an asteroid known as the Chicxulub Impactor struck the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. The force of the collision created a colossal crater over 20km deep and 150km in diameter. It shook and scorched the Earth. Most significantly, the asteroid landed a precise strike on a rocky region rich in sulfur, which was vaporized and ejected along with all manner of molten debris into the atmosphere. It is estimated that the blast released 325 gigatons of sulfur, which blanketed the planet in an acidic haze. This brought about a global climate cataclysm which triggered a mass extinction event, wiping out 75% of life on earth.

Chicxulub ended the reign of the dinosaurs.

Chicxulub also left behind some peculiar scars – cracks in the earth running across the region, forming a maze of interconnected underwater caves spanning thousands of kilometers. These cave systems opened to the surface world in the form of sinkholes, which dotted the Yucatan jungles, called cenotes. The great Mayan civilization relied on these cenotes for fresh water and regarded them as sacred portals to the underworld. Gates to Xibalba. They were places of reverence, sacrifice, and rebirth. Places which make man feel small and rather insignificant.

Long after the Mayans fell, the Yucatán continues to draw healers and seekers with its distinct energy. Scientists and explorers are now finding copious deposits of rare earth and cosmic elements in these underwater caves, perhaps giving us the clearest reason for the region's magnetic pull. Perhaps we are naturally drawn to what we are all made of – stardust.

This collection, which explores these sacred spaces in our planet's womb, has been a labor of love over the last four years. They are, without a doubt, the most challenging and most technical shoots I have ever done, involving meticulous calculation, planning, and trust between my incredible supporting cast and crew. But they are also the most liberating shoots for me, as I am allowed to compose freely on a canvas of pure light and shadow, without the constraints of gravity

The series plays with the duality of darkness and light to explore our place in the natural order against a cosmic setting.
The images are, taken together in their simplest form, a meditation on the nature of daylight




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*Now Exhibiting – Nova Fine Art, Dogtooth Galleries
Publications - National Geographic, Vanity Fair UK, BBC Earth
Natural History Museum Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2019, 2020 Finalist*



with permission, we ask to enter the sacred space within the earth



From the East, House of Light
May wisdom Dawn in us
So we may see all things in clarity

From the North, House of the Night
May Wisdom Ripen in Us
So we may know all from within

From the West, House of Transformation
May Wisdom be transformed into right action
So we may do what must be done


From the South, House of the Eternal Sun
May right action reap the harvest
So we may enjoy the fruits of Planetary being



From Above, House of Heaven
Where star people and Ancestors gather
May their blessings come to us Now

From Below, House of Earth
May the heartbeat of her crystal core
Bless us with harmonies to end all war

From the Centre, Galactic Source
Which is everywhere at once
May everything be known
As the light of mutual love



Ah yum hunab-ku
Evam Maya e ma ho

all hail the harmony of mind and nature

- Mayan prayer

Every image is treated individually and inspected personally. We use only the finest selection of carefully curated archival fine art papers, with hand-cut, custom fitted frames and museum glass.

Consultation available for a portfolio walk through and customized treatments.

Pricing on request.

Exact dimensions will vary based on the specific composition, with the following sizes for reference:

- Small: 36" x 24"
- Medium: 48" x 32"
- Large: 60" x 40"
- Exhibition: 72" x 48"
- *Custom sizes by request*



Portal
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Medium
- Large
- Exhibition



Paradise Lost
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Medium
- Large
- Exhibition



The Fall
Edition of 15

Available in:


- Small
- Medium
- Large



Then She Fell
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large

A high-contrast black and white photograph of a diver in a cave. The diver is silhouetted against a bright light source, creating a dramatic scene with visible light rays (crepuscular rays) filtering through the water. The cave walls are dark and textured, with some stalactites visible at the top.

The Space Between
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large

Reverie
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large





Xibalba's Gate
Edition of 15

- Available in:
- Small
 - Medium
 - Large



Waiting for Godot
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large



Where Is My Mind
Edition of 15

Available in:


- Small
- Medium
- Large



Twilight Zone
Edition of 15

Available in:


- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Exhibition

A high-contrast black and white photograph of an underwater cave. Two divers are visible in the distance, silhouetted against a bright opening at the end of the cave. The foreground is filled with dark, jagged rock formations and debris. The water surface is visible at the top, with light reflecting off it.

Road to Ruin
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Exhibition



Wasteland
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Exhibition



Messenger
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large

Annihilation
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large





A Reason to Let Go
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large

In the Pit I Find You Still
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large

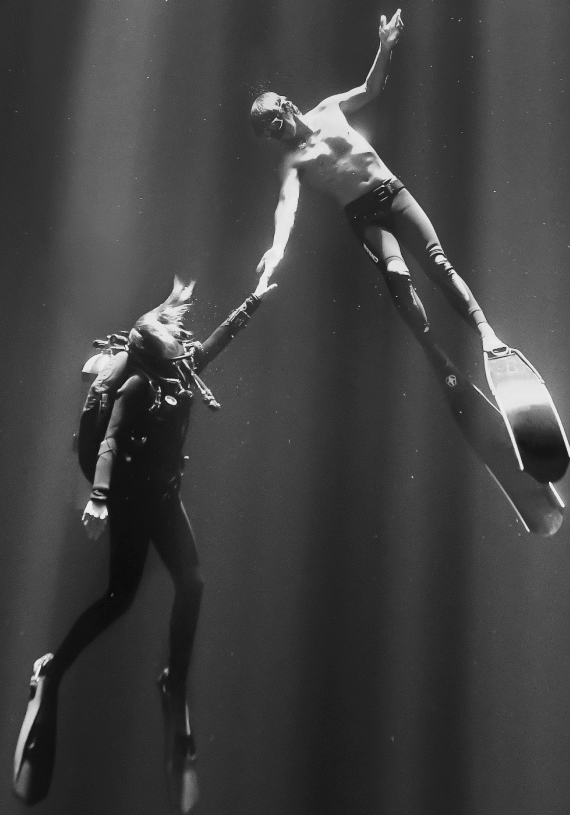




Contact
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large



Prometheus Descending
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Exhibition



In the Heart of the Earth
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large

Our Revels Now Are Ended
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large





Una Luz En Mi Camino
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Exhibition



Return to the Bright World
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large

Interval
Edition of 15

Available in:

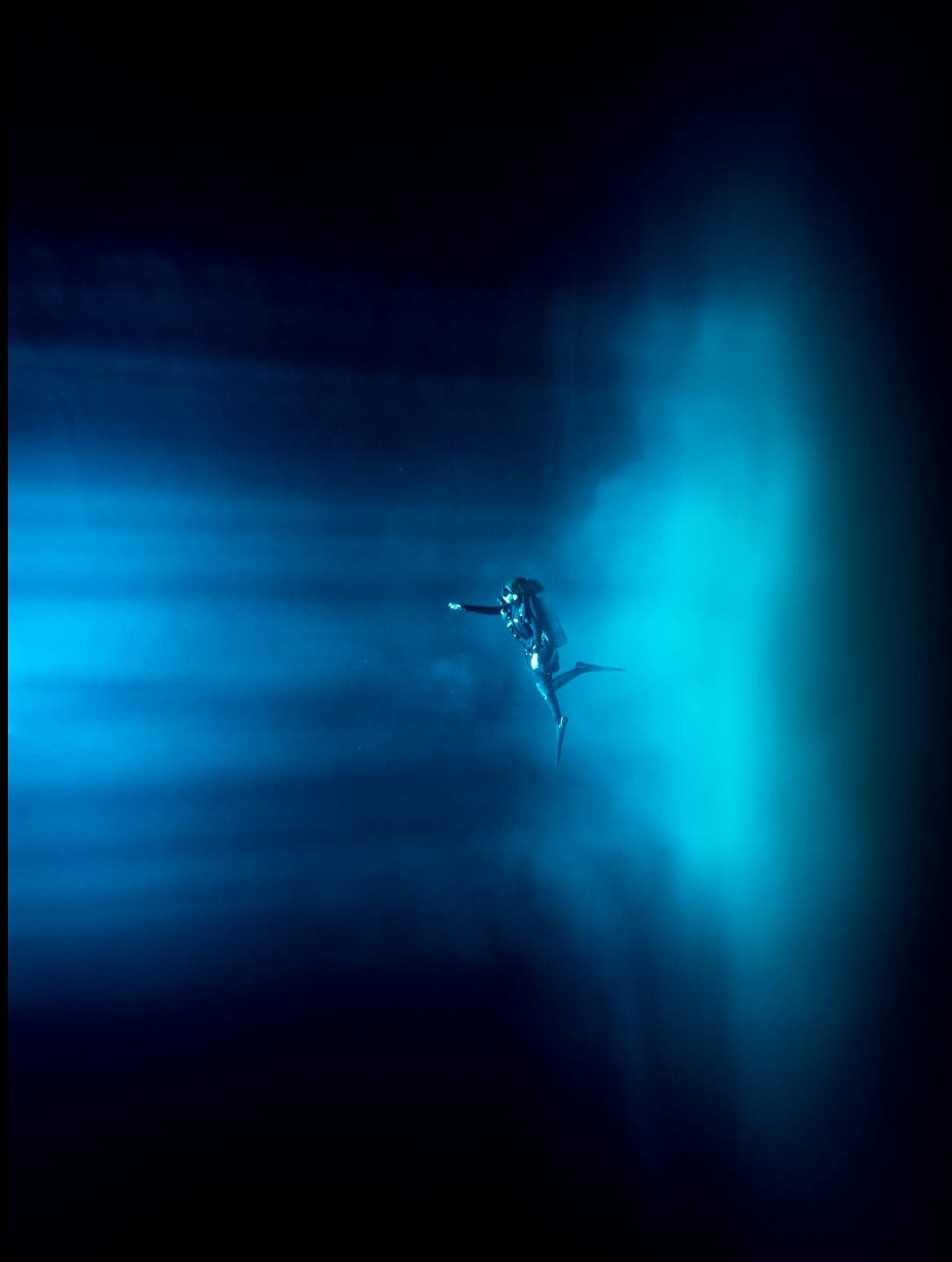
- Small
- Medium
- Large



moksa
Edition of 15

Available in:

- Small
- Medium
- Large



Into this wild Abyss
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave—

Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,

Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds,--

Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith

He had to cross.

-- Milton, Paradise Lost





Thank you to my incredible cast and crew, whose expert technical skills, grace under water, knowledge of these magical places, and immense patience made the series possible:

Dive instructor: Gosia Pytel

Freedive model: Elvis James

Scuba models: Gosia Pytel, Ben Kleinke

Safety divers: Lorena Gutierrez, Ben Kleinke, Tex Toland, John Brice



