



The Tower

Max Reeves

With an Afterword by Anthony Iles

The Tower

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While from a proud tower in the town,
Death looks gigantically down.

Edgar Allan Poe
The City in the Sea

Shardenfreude

This series comes from my long-standing interest in the Tower. My mess of thoughts began to configure into a form upon seeing two works by Marwan Rechmaoui in Tate Modern a year or so ago. *Monument for the Living* a replica of the iconic Burj al Murr building in Beirut built just before the Civil War and only ever used as a sniping position. The Tower, unused and unable to be demolished, stands to this day as a monument to fear. And *Beirut Caoutchouc* a rubber map of Beirut divided up into zones. My research on-line led me to a proposal to turn the Tower into an organic mound that described “an imaginary urban circle of about 2.2 km of fear around it”. (<http://spatiallyjustenvironmentsbeirut.blogspot.com/2011/07/occupying-urban-landscape-burj-el-murr.html>).

Originally thinking to trace this 2.2 km radius of anxiety and go to Beirut to photograph it my attention turned to the Shard in my home of London. The Shard is a 95-story Tower next to London Bridge at 309.6 metres (1,016ft) high it's the tallest building in London, and the UK dominating the Scape. The terrain and the mindscape.

So I drew a one mile radius of anxiety around the Shard Tower imagining it to be the epicentre of some undefined, omnipresent danger or malnoia. A malefluence. The mile distance I concluded, after consultation with an ex-British Army Sniper, being the rough accuracy range of modern sniping rifles in normal conditions. In a complicated urban environment ballistic behaviour is much more complicated and hard to predict. But it gave me a guide.

Planning to walk the border whilst photographing the Tower when it appeared, imagining these zones to be the most distressing. I divided the circle into 12 sectors, named them for the compass points they inhabit and allocated them Zodiac Houses for reasons of ordering and to allude to some occult interpretation.

Whilst on hold events changed with the Coronavirus Pandemic presenting a real invisible danger. After a month of lock down I decided to make the walk. It took place on the four days of Sunday 10th, Monday 11th and Tuesday 12th May 2020 so as to lessen the risk of exposure. These few days marked a mood shift in government attitude towards the virus hinting at a loosening of restrictions.

I found that the houses of Virgo to Gemini had no direct line of sight to The Tower. This represented a vast area and an 'Invisibility' in the project so deciding that as the danger is mercurial I went back on Wednesday the 13th and photographed various places on the radius in the direction of the Tower looking for sites of Sykogeosofical resonance so as to register its unseen presence. These Houses have four photographs each with an explanation below, the rest six.

Max Reeves
May 2020

East South East

Aries



East South East

Aries



East South East

Aries



South East

Pisces



South East

Pisces



South East

Pisces

