

S. Gayle Stevens
Allegory

Allegory consists of a series of wet plate collodion tintype photogenic drawings of plant, animal specimens and detritus I have collected on walks. This series is inspired by "*cabinets of curiosity*", natural history collections from the 17th century and the precursor of museums. The original meaning of "*cabinet*" was a small room; these rooms housed collections of plants, preserved animals and minerals. I have rendered my drawings of these specimens in wet plate collodion. The silhouettes of the photogenic drawings are black shadows, sparse yet expressive.

As my earlier series **calligraphy** is to the silhouettes of found objects, **allegory** draws its strength from the space surrounding the silhouettes. By manipulating the development process I create the supportive background for my collaged imagery. This can be seen in the surrounding waves which ebb and flow in "*wideness of the sea*" and in the sense of falling in "*when the bough breaks*". It is this space that defines the narrative of each piece. **Allegory** asks the observer to ascribe personal meaning to ambiguous shadows cast from another reality.