

A black and white photograph of a turbulent river with rapids and a large rock formation in the background. The water is churning and white with foam, indicating strong currents. The background is dark, suggesting a deep canyon or a night scene.

The Last Rivers Song

LLOYD GODMAN

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The Last Rivers Song

This book is based on the photographs from
The Last Rivers Song project,
Clutha River Photo-murals and Panels from 1983 - 4.

This was a photo based project exploring critical elements (earth, & water, light & dark) of the Clutha and Kawarau Rivers, before the filling of Lake Dunstan at the completion of the hydro dam at Clyde in Central Otago, New Zealand.

LLOYD GODMAN

Notes on the context and making of

The Last Rivers Song

The early 1980s in New Zealand was a time when many environmental issues predominated, it was a time when government rhetoric proposed large scale development of natural resources as a means of financial recovery and future social security in what was called Muldoon's "Think Big Schemes". While some strongly favoured large scale development, others loudly condemned the rhetoric. It was a time when social division prevailed and the community became polarized over these issues.

One of these "think big" schemes was the proposed aluminum smelter to be built on the grassed sand flats that converge with the expansive tidal estuary near Aramoana at the entrance to Otago Harbour in Dunedin. The pro-smelter lobby argued that the smelter would create jobs, bring growth and prosperity to the ailing economy of an old stagnating city, while the anti-smelter group argued that it would be detrimental and irreparably change the sensitive environment. They suggested the effects of the smelter would provide minimal financial benefits, but damage a fragile environment and associated wildlife, change the life style of the residents and for these reasons must never proceed.



Graham Carse checking the tube at Aramoana. Circa. 1969

Aramoana was a place I felt passionately about, a place that I had meaningful personal connection to, an emotional possession. For me it was a site where a part of "Eden fell"; where we first cooked baked beans over

an open fire, where we watched ace surfer Carse set fire to the lupines and the hot tongues of flame licked each strand of the marram grass as we laughed with a stupid naivety. It was a place where Dickie showed us the fundamentals of hanging the tail out on the gravelled corners in the trusty Morri 8, a place where we engaged in our first beer-drinking weekends, although we spilt more than we ever swallowed, and a place where we discovered something of the nature of girls.



Aramoana, Dickies crib, Lloyd Godman second from left. Circa. 1968

Aramoana was a place I knew well, a place where in the late 1960s I learnt to surf in a fun-filled adolescence, a place where the chill of the south wind coaxed the sun-sparkled swells with a whispering kiss into the hollow waves we searched for. A place where the white plumes of spray feathered before shooting skyward as the swells arched towards the fine white sands between us and the shore, where a salt rain lashed us as each wave crashed in an ephemeral crystal vortex. A place where the north east swells had a tempered power perfect for learning on, unlike the large powerful widow makers that crashed onto the beach at St Clair and Blackhead leaving one's body and ego bruised. A place where the hot summer sand barked under scuffing feet that hurried to be someplace else, a place where I first shared the ocean with the small blue penguins that surfaced at the most unexpected place and time. A place where the royal albatross skimmed miles across the ocean surface on the flick of a single feather while we strained to paddle the short distance through the waves to the lineup. Aramoana

But long before this it was a place of different memories, an older nostalgia. A place of family picnics, where the ocean was cold and unfamiliar and swimming was only for a heated pool. A place to kick balls, fish, a place of summer salads, cousins, uncles, aunts, grand-parents, a place to talk and be a kid in the January sun, a place to take the long climb and eventual race down the great sand hill blown hard against the even greater cliff face, as had my mother and her friends a generation before.

Photographs are something I have always been intrigued with. From as early as I can remember, I was captivated by their ability to act as depositories of memory. They not only allow us to recall with specific detail people, places and events of our past but they can also express an abstraction from the real in the process of translation. In the case of my mother and friends at the hockey picnic, the photographs create a memory of an event not directly experienced by me, but are intriguing because of the generational connection. From early in my life, the combined narrative of my mother's memories and the irregular discovery of the photographs in an album established a powerful bond between myself and the place that augmented my own growing experience.

For as long as I could remember, Aramoana, was a place I belonged, I to it, and it to me. Before moving back to Dunedin in 1974, my life changed and in the intervening period I moved away for several years, lived in the North Island and Hawaii, experienced another life I could not have if I had remained. Soon after my return, the smelter proposal surfaced, and it was an unwelcome intrusion to my ideals of this place. Like many others, I was convinced that surely an aluminum smelter would ruin the essence of Aramoana, with insignificant reward for the community and the country and I needed little convincing the proposition must be protested.



Aramoana family picnic. Lloyd's father Ron bottom right, his mother, Joan behind far right. Lloyd has his back turned to the camera, centre back. Circa. 1959



Lloyd's mother with her sisters and friends on a hockey club picnic climbing the great sand dune at Aramoana. (The small dots at the base of the central rock by the ocean are people and give some idea of the scale of the dune.)



At the hockey picnic at Aramoana. Sitting on top of the great sand dune. Circa. 1946

It was! From the nation, as well as the local community, there were outcries for the planning and project to cease. Environmentalists, scientists, lawyers, recreational users, families that had lived here for generations, and others that had recently moved to the area, all protested, and among the voices, none seemed more poignant than the artists. Prominent figures, like Ralph Hotere, Andrew Drummond, Chris Cree-Brown, Chris Booth, to name a few, made significant and powerful work that related to the issue, they gained publicity and acclaim with exhibitions and appropriate comment in various, news papers, art magazines. Initially, because of the involvement of these artists, I felt I had to be part of this cause too. After all, it was a place I considered "my patch". Around this time I was beginning to regard my photographic image-making as a more serious activity and part of my life, and like the other artists, it seemed relevant to link the smelter issue to my photographic image-making.

Unfortunately, all too quickly Aramoana seemed to become a fashion, a catch phrase, a band wagon to climb aboard for the sake of fashionable protest, and from my perspective it reached its peak when a report surfaced in the news paper, that of a well-meaning North Island photographer, camera at the ready, who was found wandering aimlessly on the sands of Victory Beach across the harbour, convinced he was at the threatened location and making an important series of documentary images.

While I still felt strongly about the smelter, and the concern drove a need to comment on the proposal, I was also concerned about the ineptness of working on a project that appeared to have adequate comment, a project everyone one and their dog wanted a piece of. I debated the issues over many months until it became obvious the planning for this smelter could only proceed under the rhetoric of the 'THINK BIG' schemes promoted by the government.

The viability of the smelter proposal was associated with and was indeed dependent upon another "Think Big" project, the cheap 'surplus power' produced from the proposed Clyde Dam output; an equally dubious project. Here was another important environmental issue, for the high dam proposal once completed would destroy an exceptionally wild stretch of river and much of the unique surrounding area. For me it was an equally important environmental injustice, another saga of 'Environmental vandalism'.

As with Aramoana, the Clutha River was also a place of family nostalgia, a place I had emotional possession and one I belonged to. Cromwell, at the meeting of the Clutha and Kawarau rivers was a place where as a family we had holidayed for many summers, a place where I had swum with my brothers and sister, friends and relations in the calmer stretches of the blue swirling currents around Lowburn, where the water quietly curled and sucked around the warm lumps of sand that locals called Sandy King's Islands, as it ran sea-ward from Lake Wanaka and licking under the lazy hanging branches of the willow trees. It was a place where I had hunted tadpoles as if they were strange magical creatures that might possess the answers of life in a shorter span than our own, fished for eels in black waters on a dark night with flickering fire-light and torch, slept under the clear inland skies and wondered how large really was the universe.

It was a place where we had played a full 9 holes of golf with cricket bats. It was a place where I had already conducted my own dam experiments; a place here, with my cousin we had flooded a whole Apricot orchard as we experimented with the unlocked controls of an irrigation dam, it was a place where we had also gorged ourselves on tree-ripe apricots as we picked box full's in recompense. The orchardist had instructed us only to pick the firm fruit that was not yet ripe - the ripe fruit we were allowed to eat. It seemed strange at the time that the best tasting fruit was discarded, and this led to my interest in growing my own fruit that I could let ripen on the tree. First in the garden at Brighton, Dunedin, and then in St Andrews, Victoria, where I now have over 160 varieties.

It was a place where on more than one occasion the strong winds and heavy rain had leveled our tent, a place where in the warm breeze and darkness of a summer's night I had kissed a first love as the river below eternally washed the rocks as it ran forever onward to the ocean.

And over the summers it was a wild place I had always spent hours entranced, watching the water spin and curl in the blue magic, its immeasurable depths and white rapids, it was a place where I had witnessed the evidence of hard rock torn away by the softness of water, it was a place where the surge of water pushed a land locked surf, a place where the river pounded off down the gorge sucking every drop of water from the black tarns high in the mountains, from the melting winter snows above.



At Sandy King's Island, near Lowburn, Lloyd standing on right, his mother behind Circa.1964

But from my very first visit to this environment, I also sensed that here in these canyons was something of a primeval New Zealand: a quintessence that only the initiated could perceive, a darker mysterious side to the landscape that opposed the colourful popular post card images of yellow poplar trees, blue water, the iconic meeting of the waters at Cromwell, the delicate cultivation of the orchards, the cheerful escape of a summer vacation. The darker side of the land was a distinct quality that Van Der Velden,

McCahon, James K Baxter, Hotere had already perceived in the landscape, opposing forces, a blinding light against a primeval blackness.



Rose Kennedy a first love of Lloyd's at Lake Wanaka at the head of the Clutha River - Circa.1969

Surprisingly, there was much less protest from artists about the dam, the focus for many had been the smelter, and those artists that did make comment on the river were perceived as less "vogue"; the dam issue was not the "bandwagon" the smelter was. So, not only for its importance as a significant place but because of this unacknowledgement by the art establishment in 1983 I decided to work with the Clutha River and not on a project centered on Aramoana.

From the outset, I realized that while the smelter protest was much more likely to succeed, the government was already committed to the dam and construction was under way, if for no other reason than the fact that political futures were at stake, and the project was unlikely to be terminated. I was not put off by not being able to halt the project through art as protest, indeed it insinuated a poignancy in working on a project centred on a place that would be affected, would be changed forever.

However other artists also worked with the dam issue; Robin Morrison, a sensitive series of portraits on the residents effected by the flooding; Marilyn Webb a compelling series of prints called "Good Bye- Clutha Blue" in 1983 and Bruce Foster a series of Cibachrome prints investigating the fluorescent pre-construction lines painted on the land, it seemed none had dealt with the elements that I found compelling, the essence of the river, the contrasts of rocks and the water, of solid and fluid, of blackness and whiteness and the spiritual analogy of light against the dark void.

Initially I researched the area to be affected and from the relevant information, mapped out the boundaries my project should investigate, discovered the creeks, streams, the rocks, bluffs, sweeping currents, swirling eddies that would disappear under the proposed hydro lake. I looked closer, discovered the names of these features, discovered Byford Creek, Hydes Spur, Sonora Creek, Leaning Rock Creek discovered Cairnmuir Gully, Gibraltar Rock, Nine Mile Creek, Jackson Creek, Firewood Creek, Deadman's Point, Walker's Creek, Banockburn and Molyneux Face, discovered names to places that I would soon become much more



Cairnmuir face and the Clutha River 1984 notice the fruit growers road on the opposite bank of the river. This was eventually flooded when the dam was filled. On the lower left is a digger undertaking some work for the construction of the dam.

Eventually, the protest against the smelter at Aramoana was successful, the proposal became less and less viable and eventually disintegrated, leaving the environment intact as it remains today. However, the dam proposal was one project that despite logic, cost over-runs, the discovery of earthquake fault lines under the foundation, re-roading problems, threatened subsidence on the banks, was pushed and pushed against natural odds to completion.

familiar with. But quite soon, I also discovered there was more at stake than just the flooding of the "Clutha River", for quite a stretch of the Kawarau branch that converges at Cromwell and runs down from Queenstown and Lake Wakitipu would be stilled by the high-dam too, the filling lake was to push up the reaches of not one but two rivers, still the native waters of two wild rivers, and the loss of both these areas motivated me to complete this project.

During 1983-4 I made several expeditions to the area, photographing extensively along the winding curves of the river that would soon be flooded. I camped with Elaine, then pregnant with Stefan, our first son, in the immense eerie valleys and canyons like Cairnmuir Gully that run up from the river near the fruit grower's road across the river from the main gorge road so I could photograph the last and first light on the river. As in the central image of Clutha Panel XII. I spent winter days with a river in full flood as the sleet turned colder to snow and spun shrapnel-like from the sky to merge with leaping splashes which hold a scream in every drop of river water thrown skyward from the turbulent rapids. As in the images of Mural II.



The meeting of the waters below the old Cromwell Bridge - once Lake Dunstan was filled the bridge was submerged and remains so today

I climbed and crawled over the raw boulder-strewn banks of both sides of the rivers, I witnessed the work of water and ice, sheer chasms cut in the rock over thousands of years, the huge boulders tossed down the gorge like broken marbles, and I left only foot marks in the thick silt piled on the bank after a flood, while all the time taking photographs.

During these expeditions I shot roll after roll of film, always investigating the essential elements of the river - the reflective qualities of the rushing water - the hardness and darkness of the rocks. I constructed a long boom with a hinge and pulley system

that allowed me to suspend a light weight camera with a motor drive 15ft out into the river and shot a full sequence with several rolls of special 72 frame auto winder film. I pushed the capabilities of photographic film of the era to the max. Down-rated special film from 12 ISO to 3 ISO to allow long time lapse exposures of several minutes in bright sunlight, and up-rated the fastest commercial film from 400 ISO to 1800 ISO.



Lloyd's 1953 Land Rover crossing a washed out ford on the fruit growers road - the boom used to place the camera for the water shots is tied to the roof.

For me the true essence of this river was the relentless force of the water, the unification of rain drops, melting snow flakes and ice into a potent force, seeping slowly from the frozen heights into ever growing trickles, babbling brooks, tumbling steams, racing creeks, small rivers channeled by the hardness of the bare rocks into the third fastest flowing river in the world.

Back in Dunedin, once the negatives were developed and the proof sheets made, the magic was revealed. From the raw visual resource, I began to examine ways of working with the negatives to create photographic works that expressed the full power of the rivers. In the first few prints I made, the might river looked like a small stream, I decided I would need to look at other strategies.

Some of the frames were shot as three or four image sequences, moving the viewpoint left to right across the scene from frame to frame, but not as a perfectly aligned panorama. These sequences deliberately played with visual disjuncture where visual elements repeated from the left of one image into the right of the next. The effect expanded the view in a visually poetic manner. I was drawn to the repetitive elements and the melodic musical sensibility the composites suggested.

I made 2 copies of each proof sheet and cut one set up to paste them down in a range of layups. For the murals I exploiting a strong gestalt I joined several images together to create expanded composite works and looked at scale. I decided to dramatize the river and print large! The largest photographic mural paper I could locate was 40 inches wide so printing full frame this gave a print 40 X 60 inches. When over laid as composites these could be expanded out to 20 ft or more. For the mural works I first printed a smaller photograph with all the necessary burning and dodge adjustments, then copied the image onto a sheet of 4x5 film to make the enlargement from. To get the degree of enlargement needed, the enlarger was swung out from the bench so as the image projected onto the floor. Heavy weights were placed on the back of the base board to hold the enlarger in place. I fashioned a large vacuum easel to hold the paper fast driven from a vacuum cleaner, I remember exposing the first print and trying to process on the floor with sponges. It was late an Peter Nicholls was helping me, when the image was fixed he congratulated me, I stood up hit the enlarger which lurched forward, the weights slid off hit the print and ripped it. Peter, said if you are an artist toy will just stay and get this first one done, he made me stay until 2am in the morning to re-print this image. However I decided there must be a better way of developing the large sheets and made a special series of tube trays to process the prints by rolling them through the solutions. This was a much more effective manner of processing the prints and all the remaining prints were developed using this method.

There were so many images I wanted to use in the project I decided to print a smaller set of images that was laid out in a grid for the "Clutha Panels". In the layout of both murals and panels I often looked to exploit the filmic quality of the sequences, where the water moved, bubbled and pulsed as the camera skimmed past the surface of the water. In 2012 I was able to create a stop frame animation of the river from the many sequence images shot at this time.

The work from this period was duly completed, exhibited during 1984 as a large series of mural photographs up to 20ft long and a smaller series of photographs, mounted in sequences that became known as the "Clutha Panels". Later the work was published in 1989 in a book (Last Rivers Song) with an introduction by Brian Turner, who was also instrumental in publishing the work. Despite this and the fact that the dam construction, problematic as it was, continued in one form or another, I never expected the flooding to happen, for so many years it appeared so distant.

Depending whether one was a procrastinator, engineer, government official, politician, local, protester or contractor, the completion of the dam and filling of the lake became both dream and nightmare. Problems seemed to ooze from the very rock itself, a dyke-like structure with eleven leaks and an insatiable budget.

But finally, after delay after delay the set time had come, the dam was complete and ready to fill. For some time it stood awaiting commission like a grotesque great Egyptian pyramid, a technological wonder waiting for a purpose, waiting for the pharaoh to die. The main highway was stabilized, enough drainage tunnels drilled and hill sides removed or secured enough not to tumble down into the lake, and the river would change forever, would sing its last song. I was quite dismayed when a date was set and the flooding would finally begin. As with the earlier series of photographs, I felt I had to respond to the irrevocable act, the death of the river's song. I felt I had to mark the passing in some way, but if I did it would have to be in a much different manner than the earlier work that celebrated the rocks and water, a response would demand another quite different strategy.



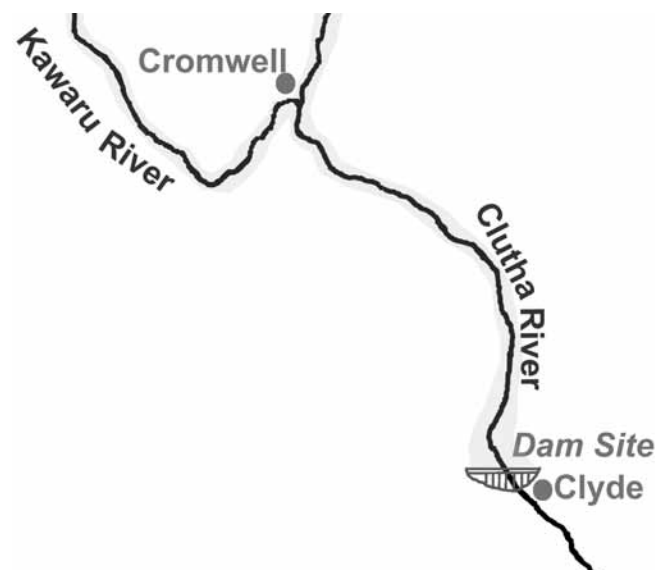
The Clyde Dam with Lake Dunstan. 2011

Lake Fill Performances

Performance to mark the first filling of hydro lake Dunstan, Clyde, New Zealand - Lloyd Godman
Lake Fill I 1992 - photograph En Teong Low

The Lake Fill series of performances followed the Last Rivers Song of 1983-4. By 1992 the construction work on the hydro dam Clyde had reached completion and Electrocorp were ready to fill Lake Dunstan.

Rather than engage in another series of photographs similar to those of Last Rivers Song, for the filling of Lake Dunstan, I had decided on a performance based work, a ritualistic ceremony at the very time the water was rising, the river dying, the lake growing. I completed 2 performances, one in 1992 & and a second in 1993.



River river on the wall - Kai Jensen - NZ Listener October 21 1984

These are not so much photographs as a deliberate attempt to drown anyone who walks into the east room of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. They are whole rivers, suspended on the wall, with no guarantee that they will stay up there. These are waterscapes that will vanish, will themselves be drowned when the Clyde Dam fills.

The enormous photo-murals of *The Last Rivers Song*, an exhibition by Lloyd Godman, are a determined assault on the human viewers by the inhuman energies of rock and water. They are, if you like, the rivers' revenge for the dam a denial that humanity exists.

On one all, the Kawarau River in flood is poised above your head in seven overlapping panels: a total mural height of three meters, width of seven. Godman used a five-metre camera boom and water proof housing to place our eyes in midstream, inches above the white water. The big Kawarau mural was taken during showers of snow, when the river was at its angriest - risen four metres. "Most people think a river just flows" Godman says, "but the Kawarau surges. I saw it flow down one side of a rock and then surge back up the other side, more like a tide than a river. To get this shot, however, I had to be down low. With such violence, with boulders being pushed around, I wondered what I was doing there."

The hard light of that snowy day and Godman's use of contrast create a savage effect: twin arms of rock and furious water reaching for you. Yet their foaming finger-tips dance with a strange, inhuman gaiety. This mixture of alien harshness and alien joy pervades the exhibition.

Meanwhile, your ears are full of the musical roar and piping of water as it grinds rock, the hiss of rock chips carried down the channel. Music composed and recorded for the exhibition by Trevor Coleman (synthesiser) and Paul Hutchins (flute) pushes you beneath the rivers' surface. This is not

a purist's show of tidy, silent photographs, but "almost an installation" (Godman), a grand experiment, which comes close to outrage, risks melodrama.

You turn away, but there is no escape: high up the opposite wall the whole Clutha bears down on you: a royal procession of water. The Kawarau's wildness is absent,

but the force of the water column descending the infinite gorge towards you is awesome. The end frames of this six-panel crescent are gold-toned with the river's own gold into a deep dark blue-black. The tenth of an ounce of pure gold used in the exhibition was donated by a dredge operator on the Kawarau.

The river gold over sepia tone produces a medley of rich reds and browns in a third mural, like the rust on an old freighters side. The mural is "smaller" : successive shots of one view, a rugged bluff from the water level. The red, used only on the middle panel, emphasizes the splash as the lens is wholly submerged.

This effect, potentially a cliché, contributes here to a sense of the river's indifference to our observation: it is a slap in the face. It obscures the only hint of human presence in any of the five works on display, a tiny telephone pole atop the bluff. To Godman this pitiful artefact is a deliberate reminder of McCahon's symbol for "the crucifixion of the land".

This is the sole clue to the artist's outrage in the murals themselves. However, outrage courses through his typed commentary on the exhibition. And when he speaks of the dam, his disgust is emphatic. As a child, Godman spent many holidays in Cromwell with his family. The damming of the Clutha, which will submerge much of the Kawarau gorge as well, seems to him "like a bowel stoppage for the whole country". Other photographers have recorded the human history which will vanish

in the lake, but Godman feels "they have missed the point."

Hence the determination to show the wild riverscapes which will be sacrificed for electric power we don't really need. This determination has sustained him through huge labour. He estimates that 600 hours have gone into the project, three expeditions to Central Otago and weeks in the Otago Polytechnic darkrooms, where he is a technician. He had to build special equipment to take the photographs, then build special darkroom equipment to develop the one by one-and-half meter sheets of "mural paper". His Central Otago trips yielded so much material that a second exhibition, sequences of small river photographs, was held at the Marshall Seirfert Gallery in Dunedin. Godman refuses to estimate how much money it all cost him to the point where he handed the prints over to the Dunedin Public Art Gallery for mounting (the gallery may chose one work from the exhibition in return for mounting expenses). He is amused to recall the photographer who said, early in the scheme, "But you can't do a project like this without a grant from the Arts Council" Godman did and as the murals went up for the exhibition opening he seemed numb in reaction to the end of all the work. Then another photographer asked him about the extremes of black and white in the hanging panels saying "I find it sinister."

The rivers pounce from the walls, a confluence of Kawarau and Clutha where we stand. But Godman is borne up - there is no need to drown if you love rivers so. "No not Sinister." I wanted to show a landscape before humans came to New Zealand, a pre-animal landscape... "He has succeeded so well in this, flooding *The Last Rivers Song* with both artistic and political force that his rivers may well flow onto other polished floors in other main galleries soon.

The Last Rivers Song

photographs from the

Large Murals

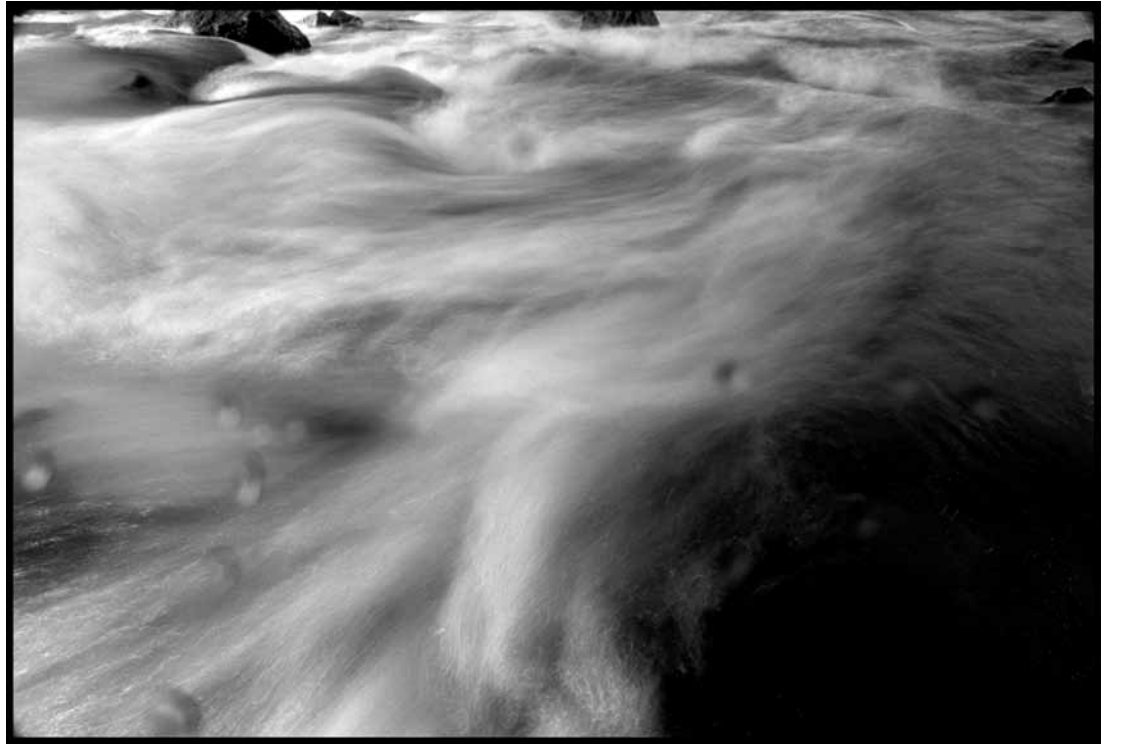


The Last Rivers Song, Mural V - 1984
Original silver gelatine exhibition prints: approx. 4.56 X 1.06 approx (3 prints 1.52 X 1.06





The Last Rivers Song, Mural V - 1984
Original silver gelatine exhibition prints: approx. 4.608 X 1.06 (4 prints 1.52 X 1.06 X each)





The Last Rivers Song, Mural I - 1984

Original silver gelatine exhibition prints: approx. 4.56 X 1.06 (3 prints 1.52 X 1.06 each) Central Print

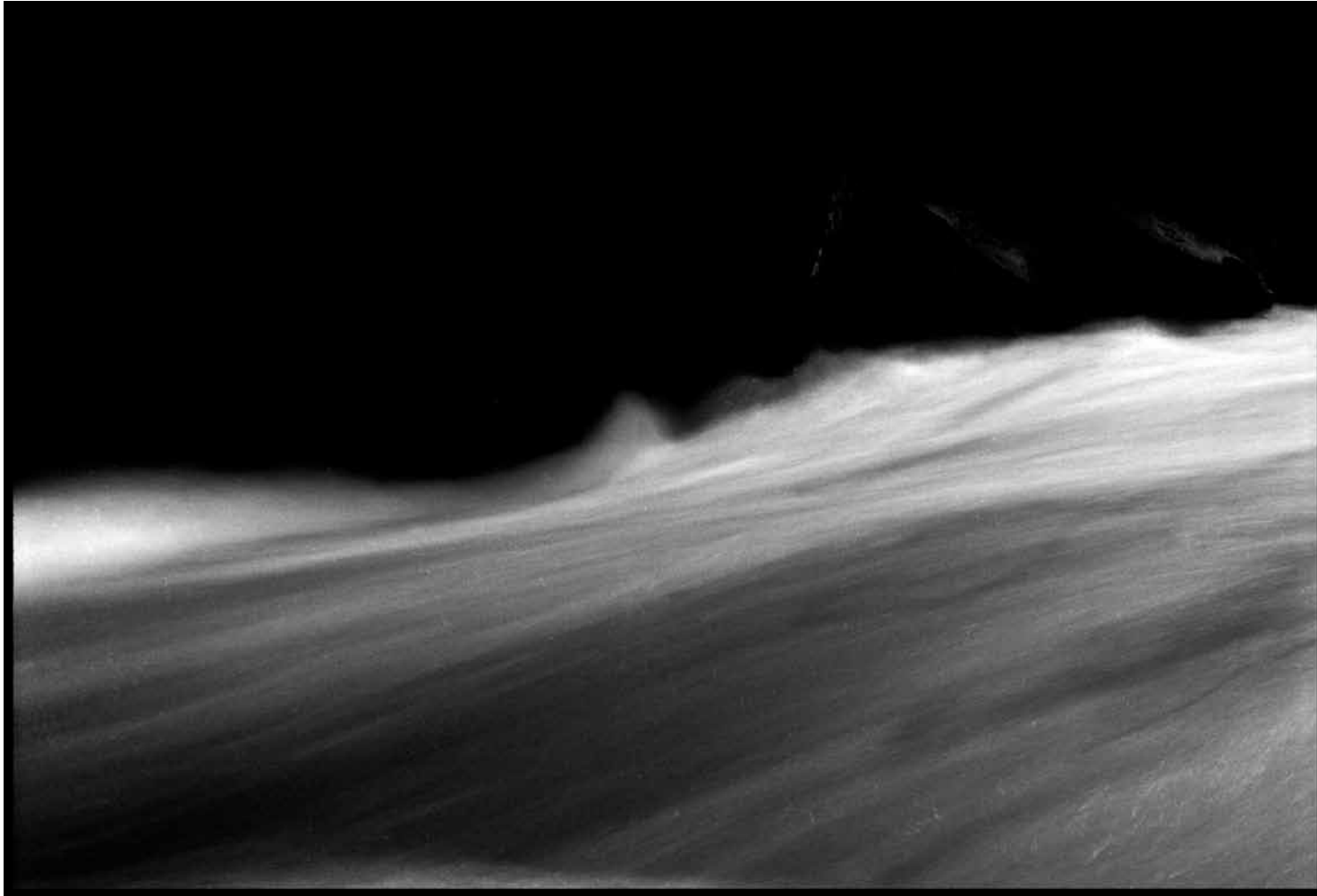




The Last Rivers Song, New Mural VII - 1984

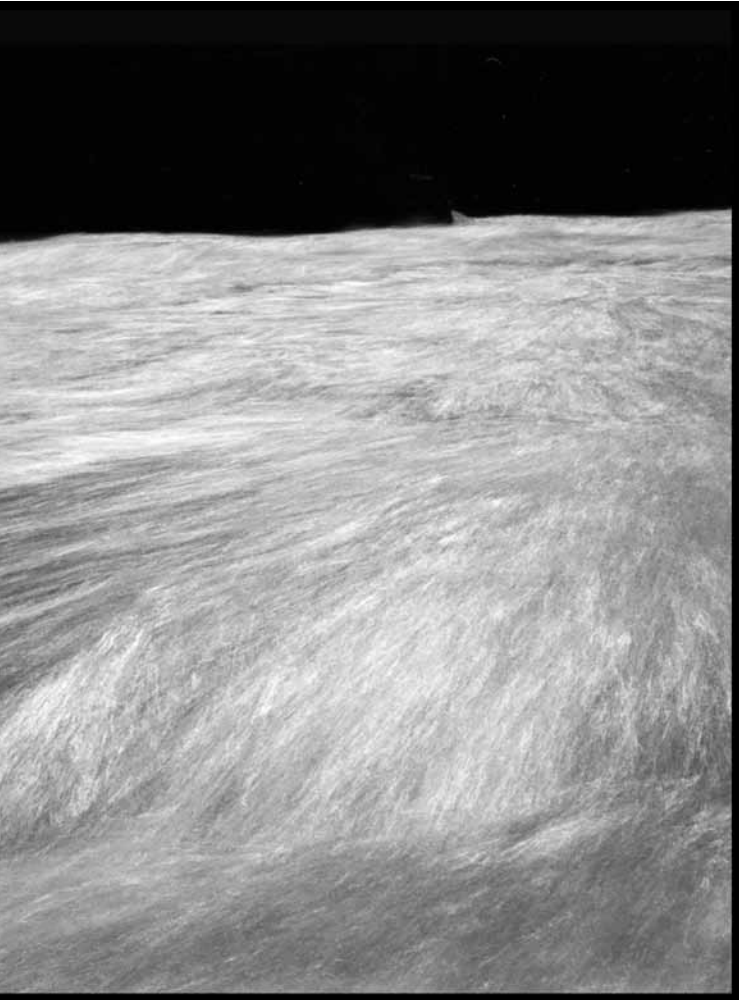
This work was not part of the original mural series but was added as a composite in recent years

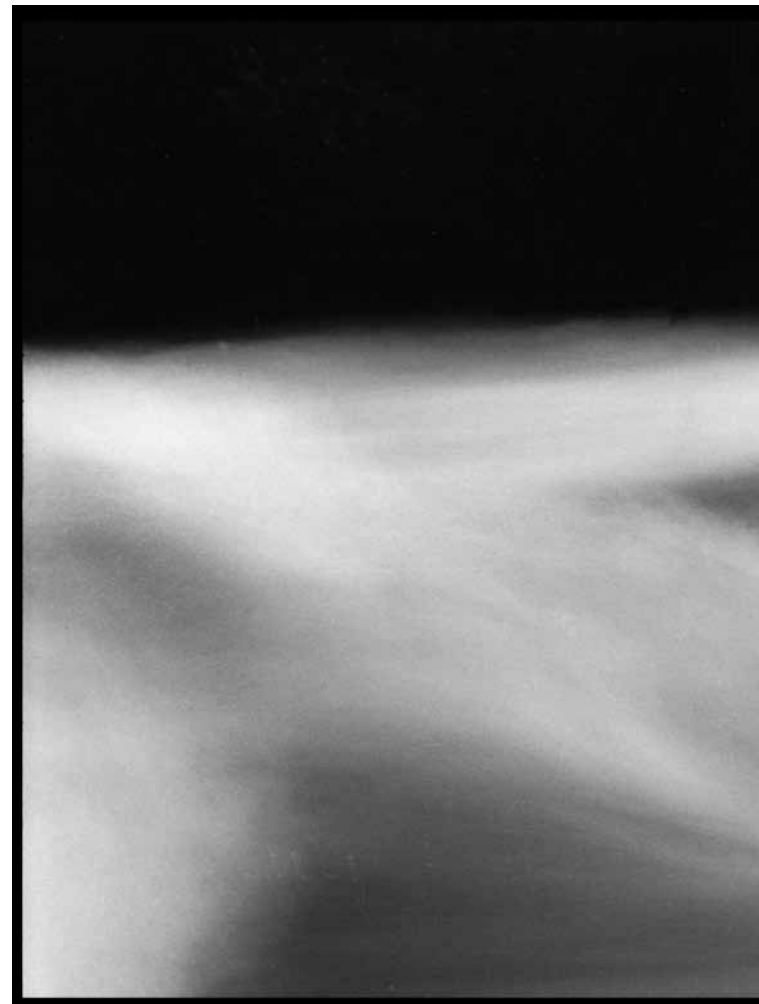
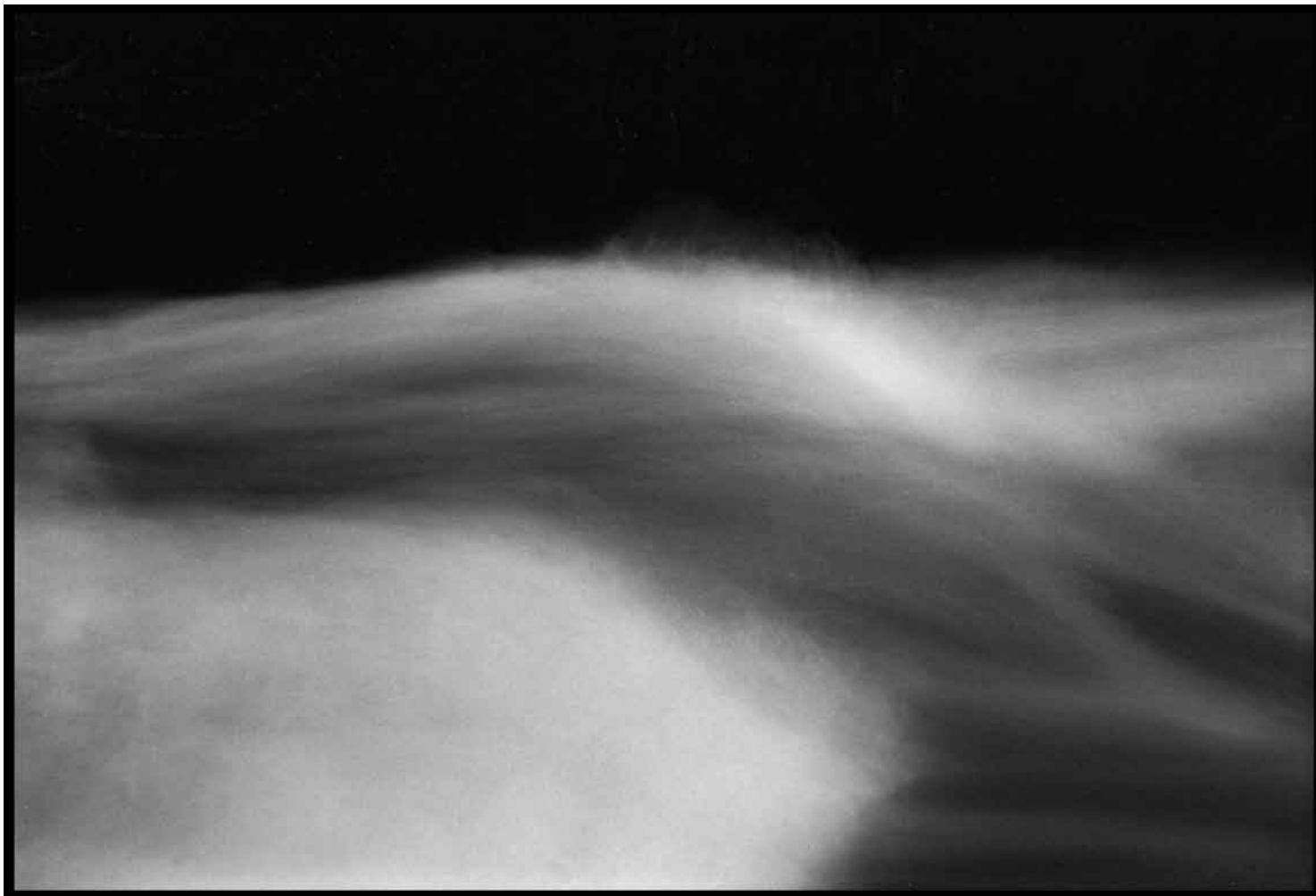




The Last Rivers Song, New Mural VIII - 1984

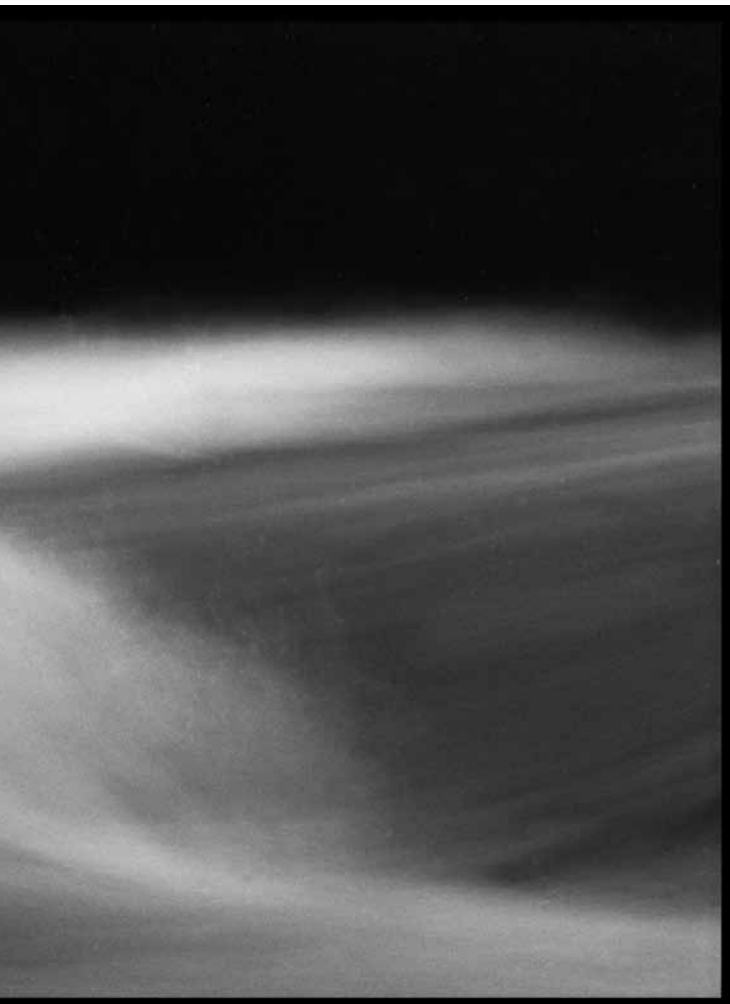
This work was not part of the original mural series but was added as a composite in recent years

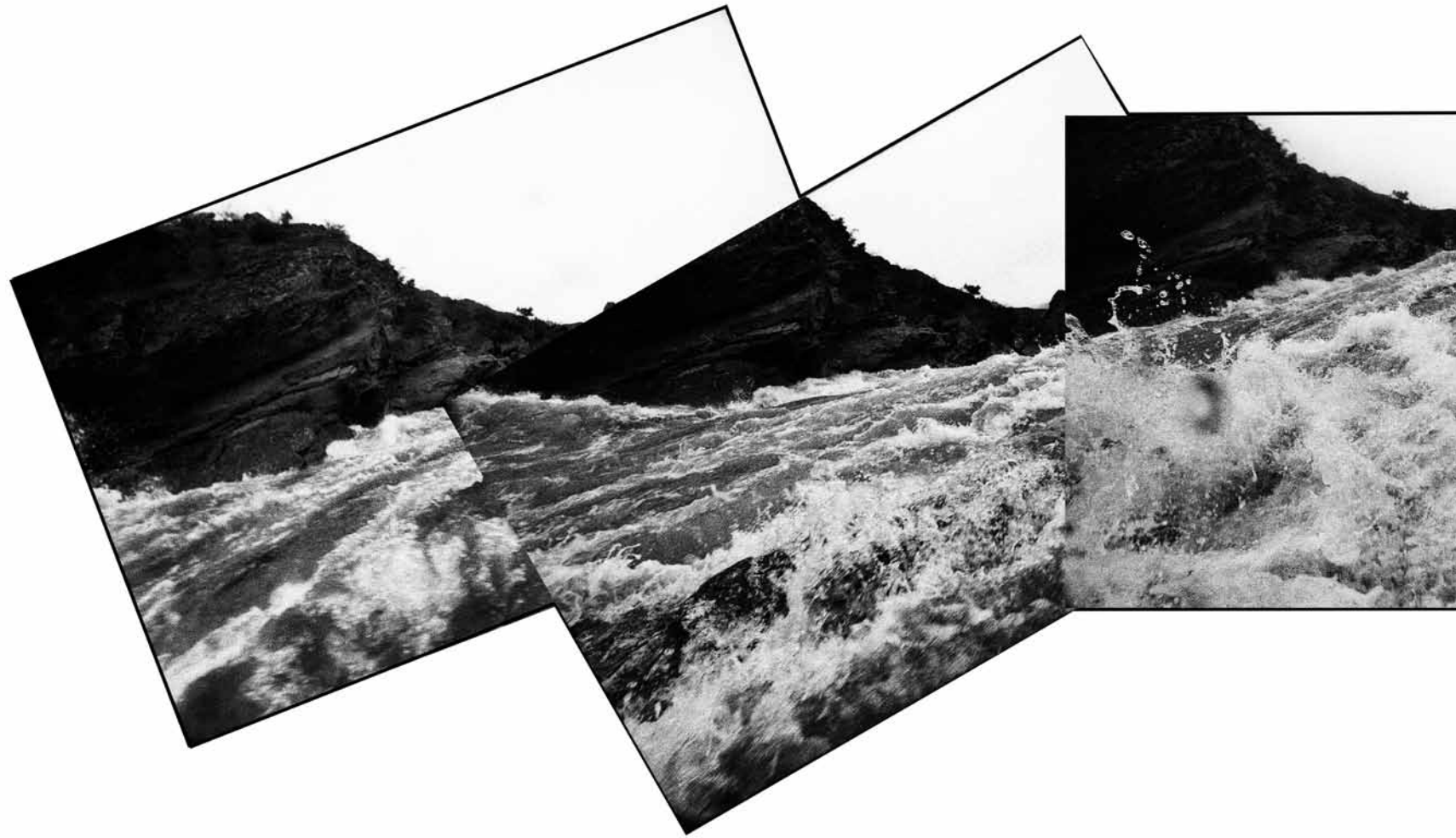




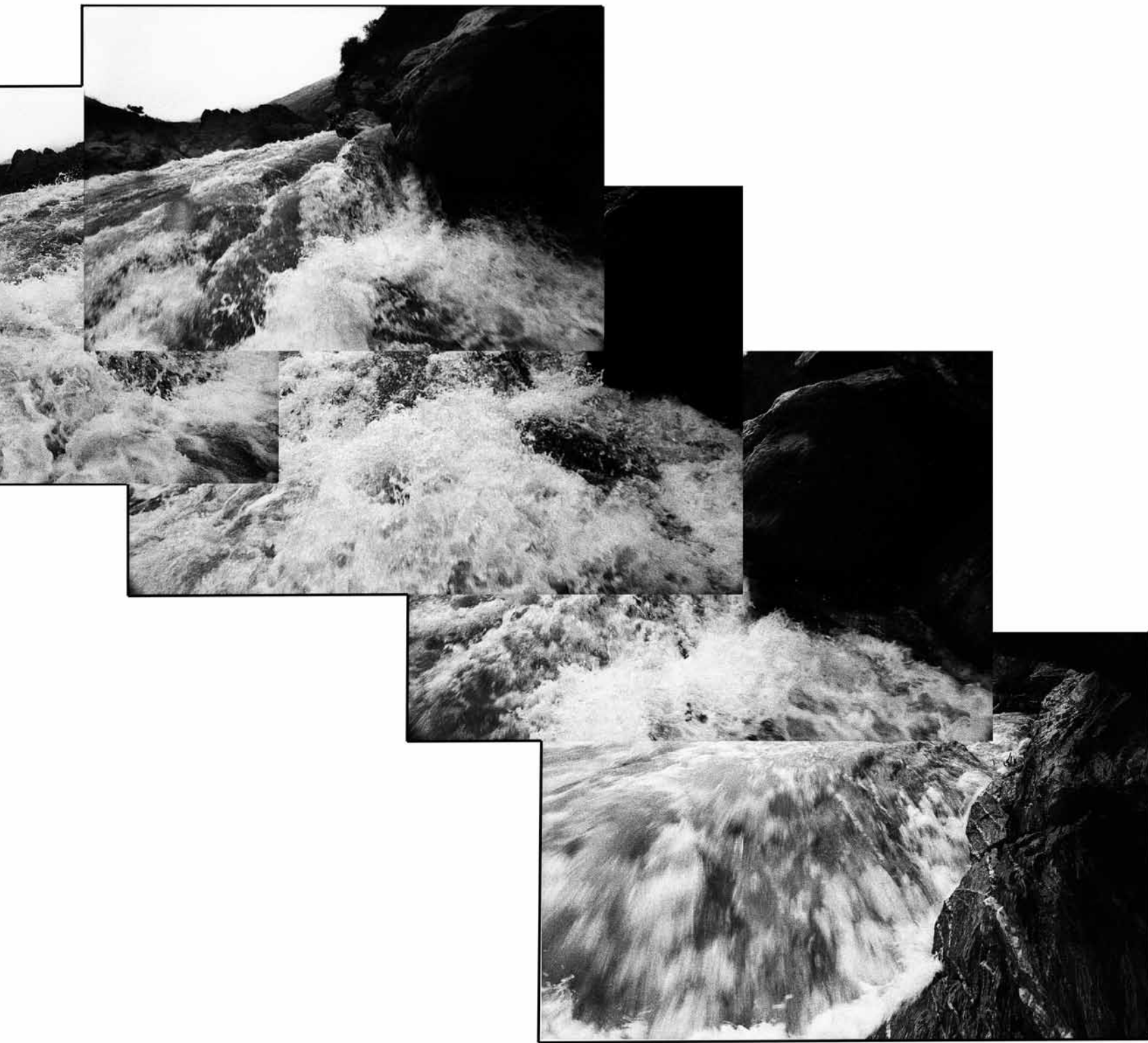
The Last Rivers Song, New Mural IX - 1984

This work was not part of the original mural series but was added as a composite in recent years





The Last Rivers Song, Mural II - 1984
Original silver gelatine exhibition prints: approx. 5.4 X 2.4 (7 prints 1.52 X 1.06 each)





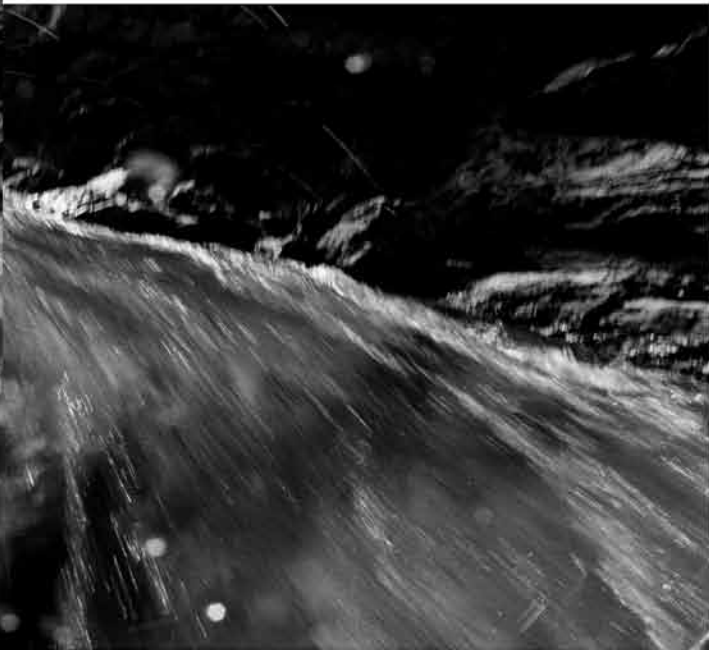
Detail - 3rd image from left- *The Last Rivers Song, Mural II* - 1984 (a scream in every drop)



Detail - 2nd image from left- *The Last Rivers Song, Mural II* - 1984



The Last Rivers Song, Mural III - 1984
Original silver gelatine exhibition prints: approx. 6.7 X 1.82 (6 prints 1.52 X 1.06 each)





Detail - left image - *The Last Rivers Song, Mural III* - 1984





Installation of Mural works Dunedin Public Art Gallery 1984



Lloyd Godman with the installation of Mural works Dunedin Public Art Gallery 1984

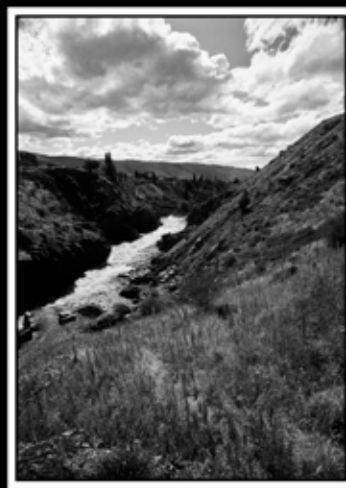
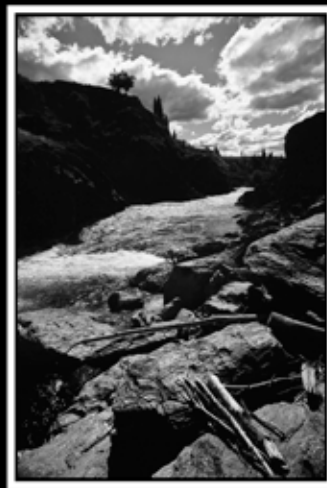
As with Aramoana, the Clutha River was also a place of family nostalgia, a place I had emotional possession and one I belonged to.

The Last Rivers Song

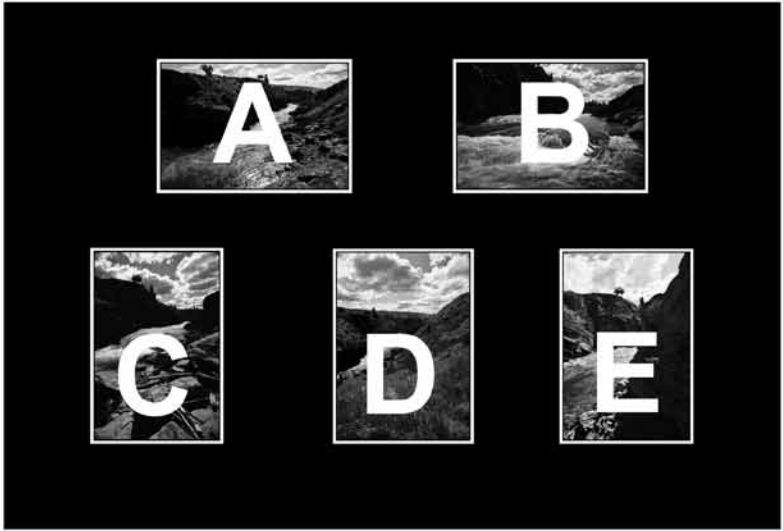
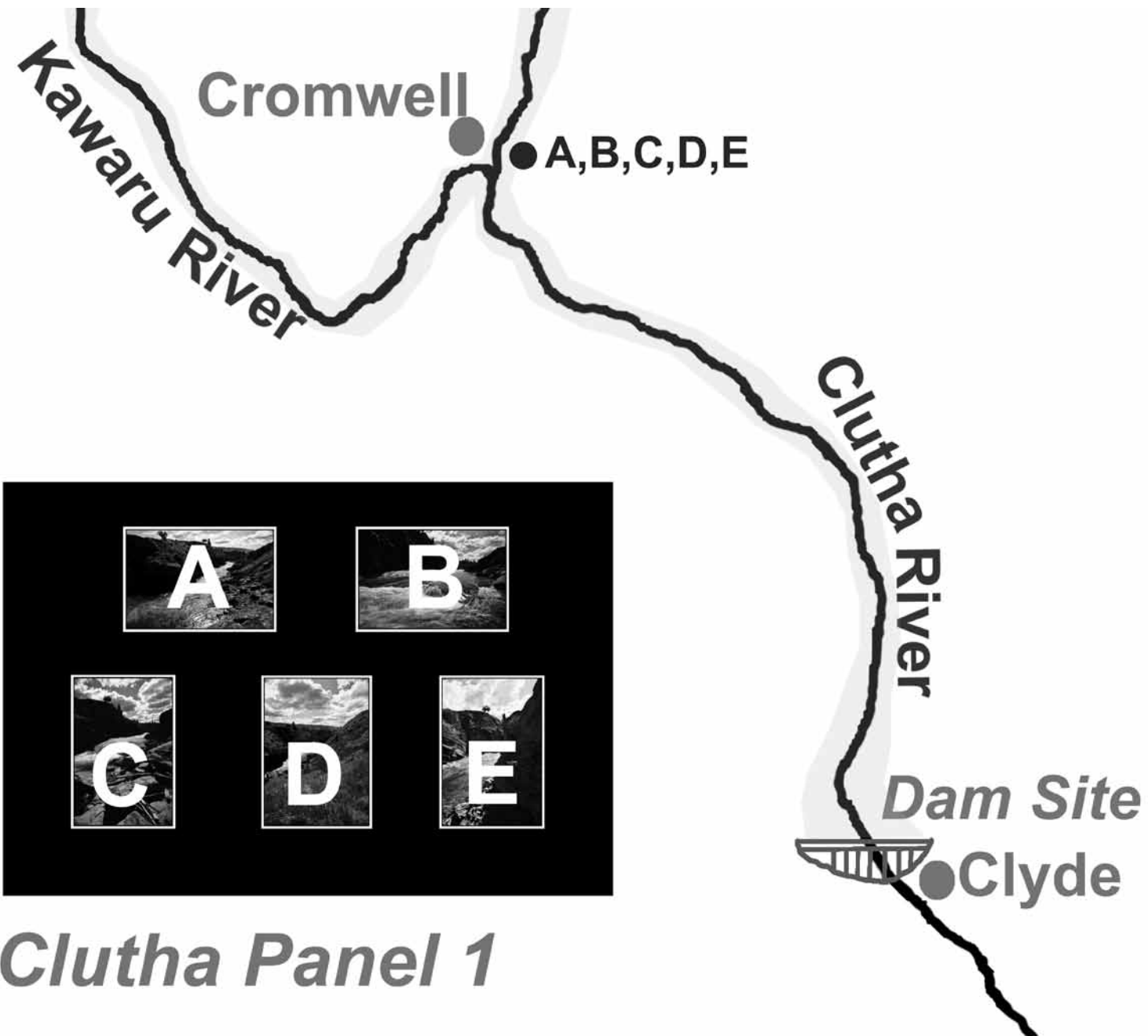
photographs from the

Clutha Panels

The Clutha Panels, were much smaller than the Mural composites. The original 13 panels consisted of 63, 180 x120 mm SG prints , 3 - 8 photographs in each panel. The images in the book are from scans from the original negatives and are placed in a similar format to the 1984 panels.



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel I - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)

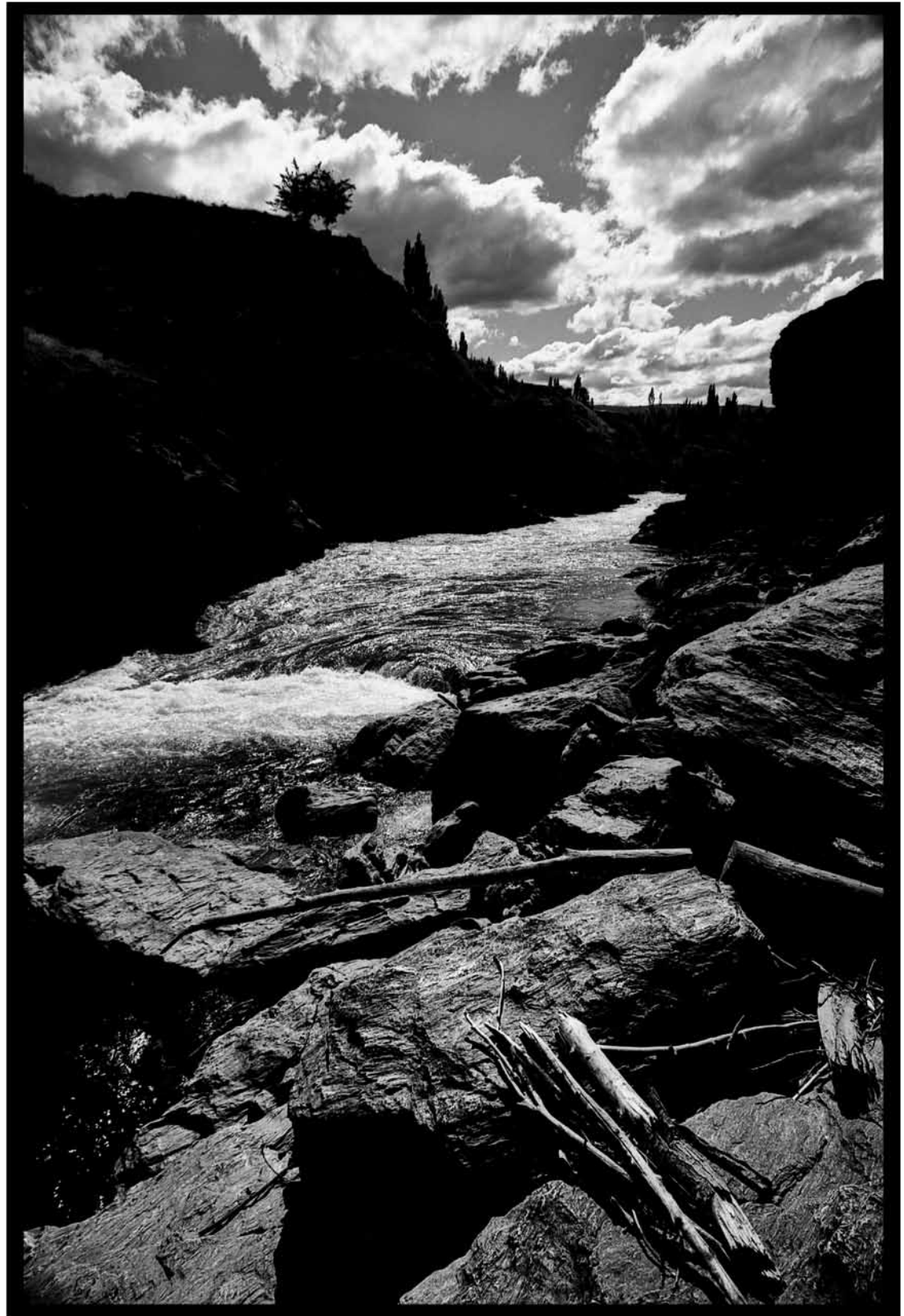


Clutha Panel 1

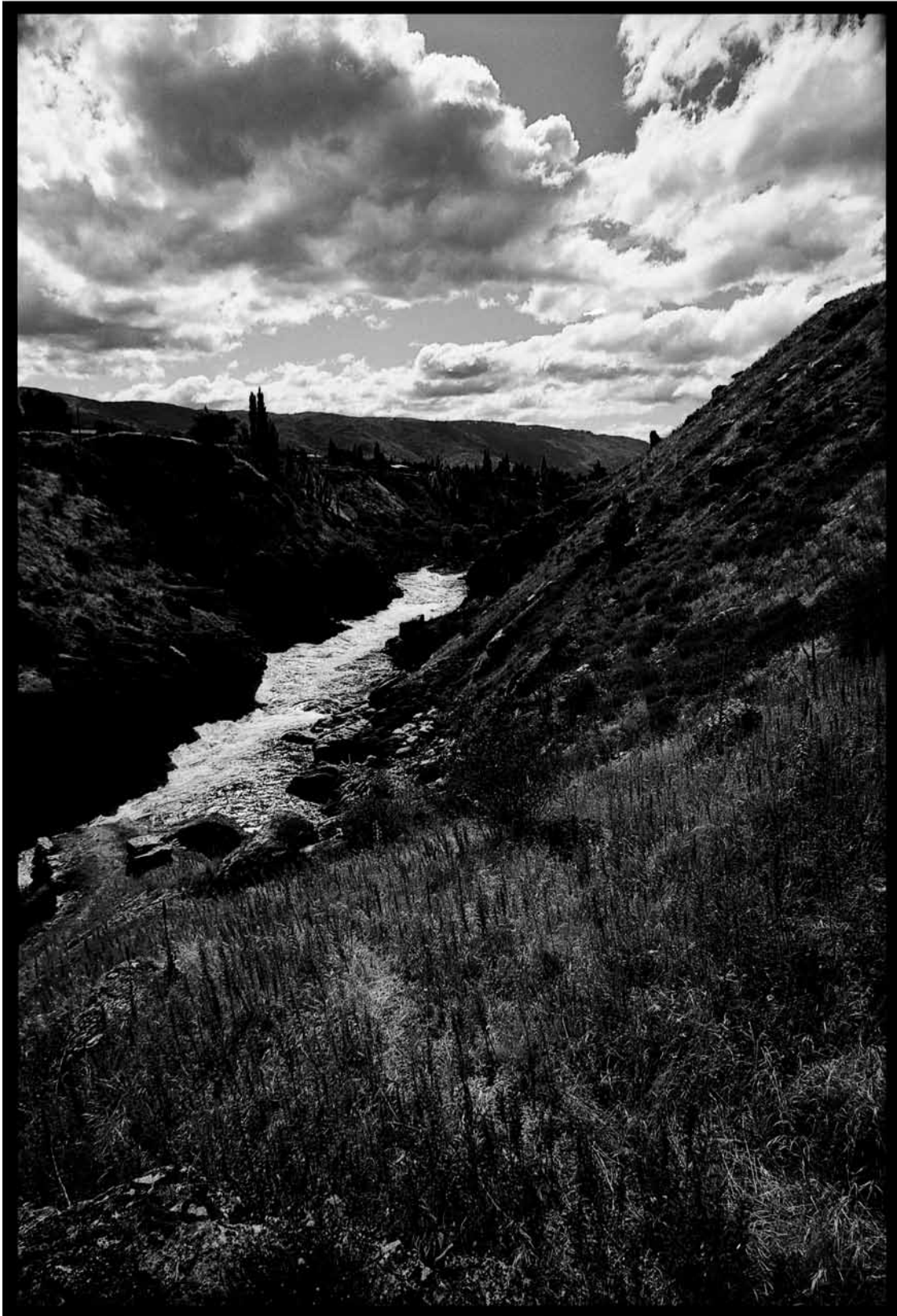


Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel I* - 1984

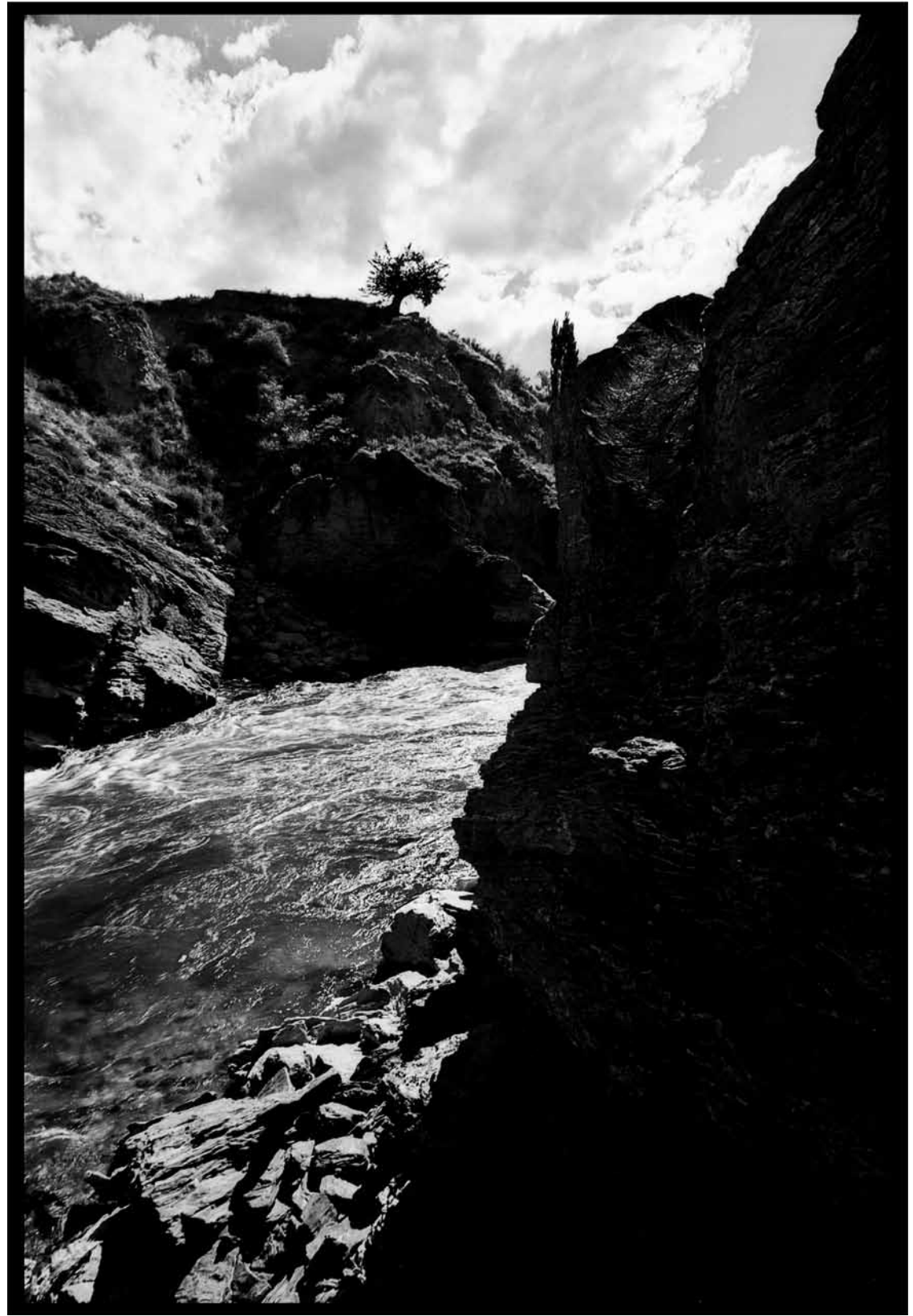




Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel I* - 1984

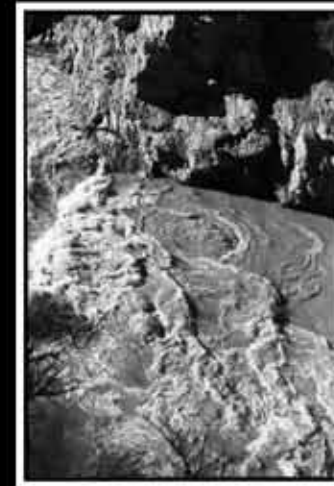


Detail D - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel I* - 1984

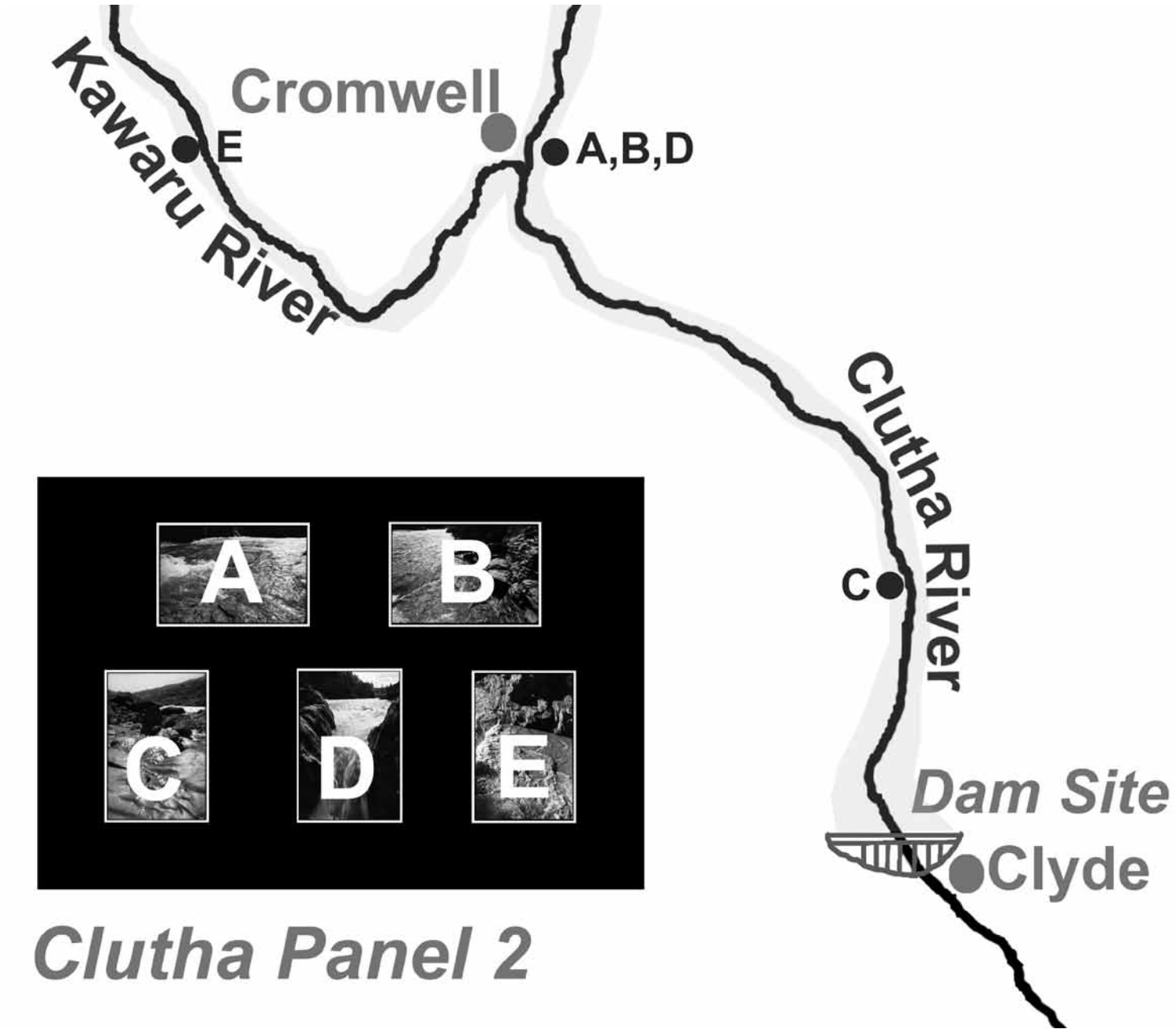


Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel I* - 1984

And over the summers it was a wild place I had always spent hours entranced, watching the water spin and curl in the blue magic, its immeasurable depths and white rapids, it was a place where I had witnessed the evidence of hard rock torn away by the softness of water, it was a place where the surge of water pushed a land locked surf, a place where the river pounded off down the gorge sucking every drop of water from the black tarns high in the mountains, from the melting winter snows above.



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel II - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)

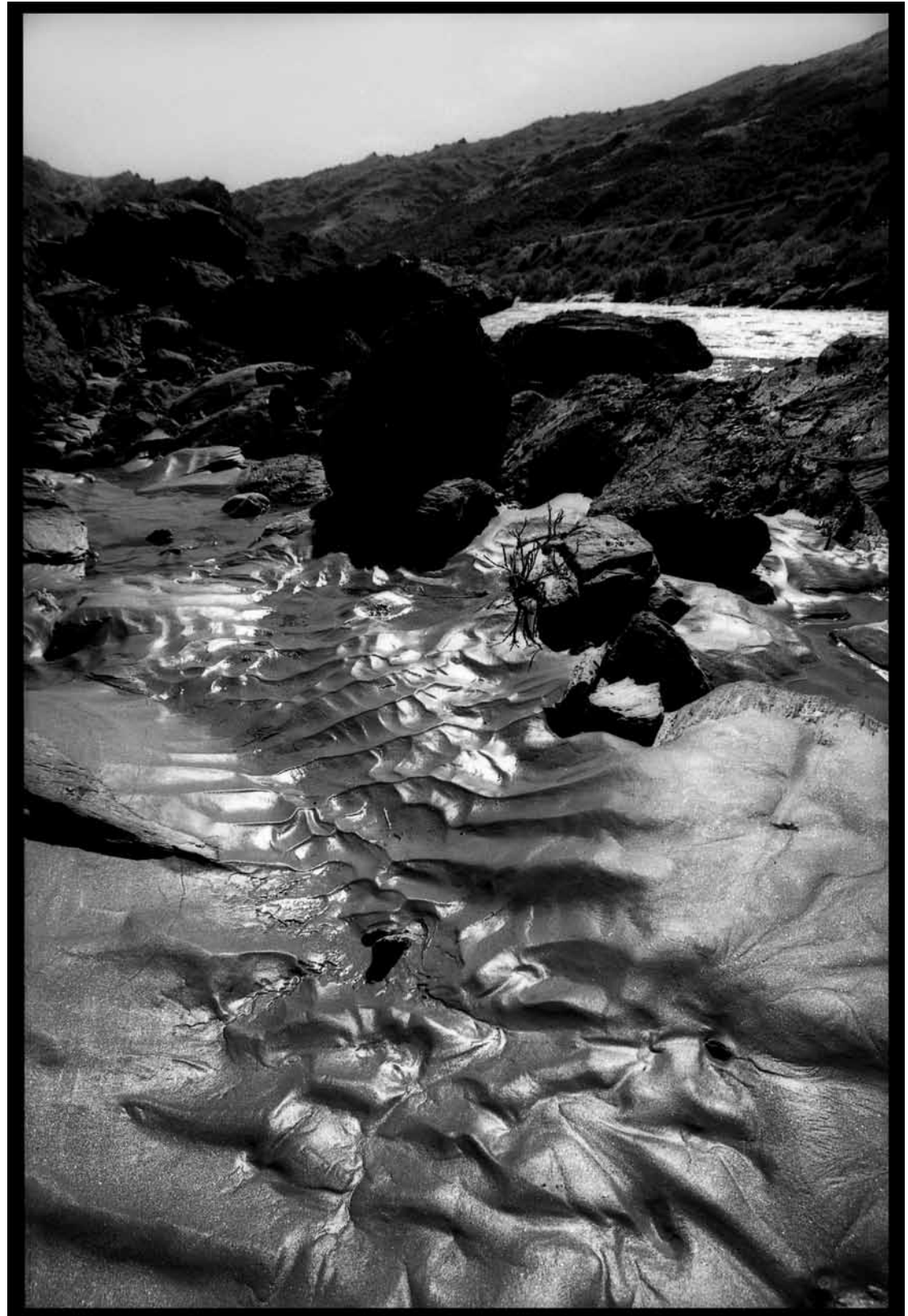


Clutha Panel 2

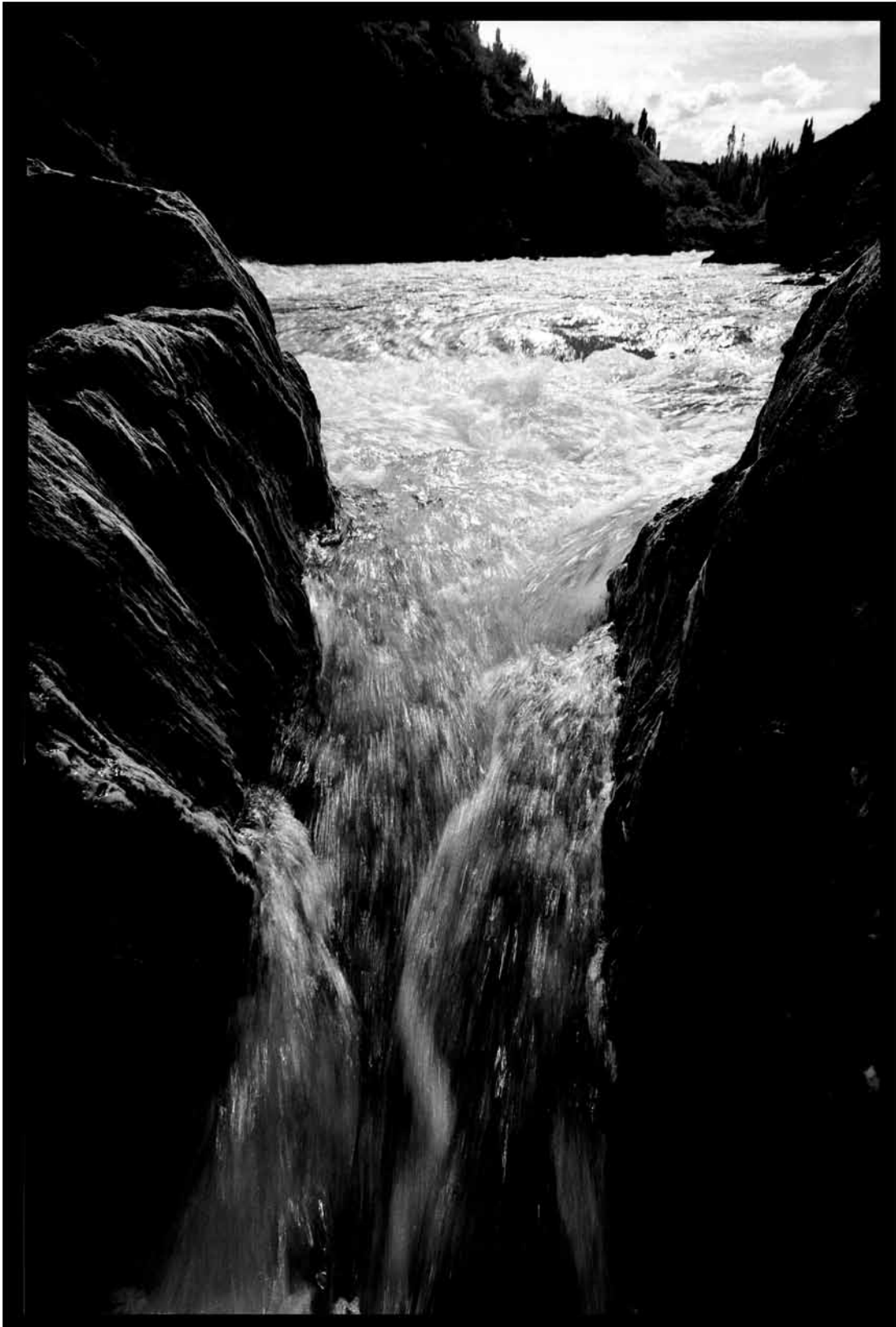


Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel II* - 1984

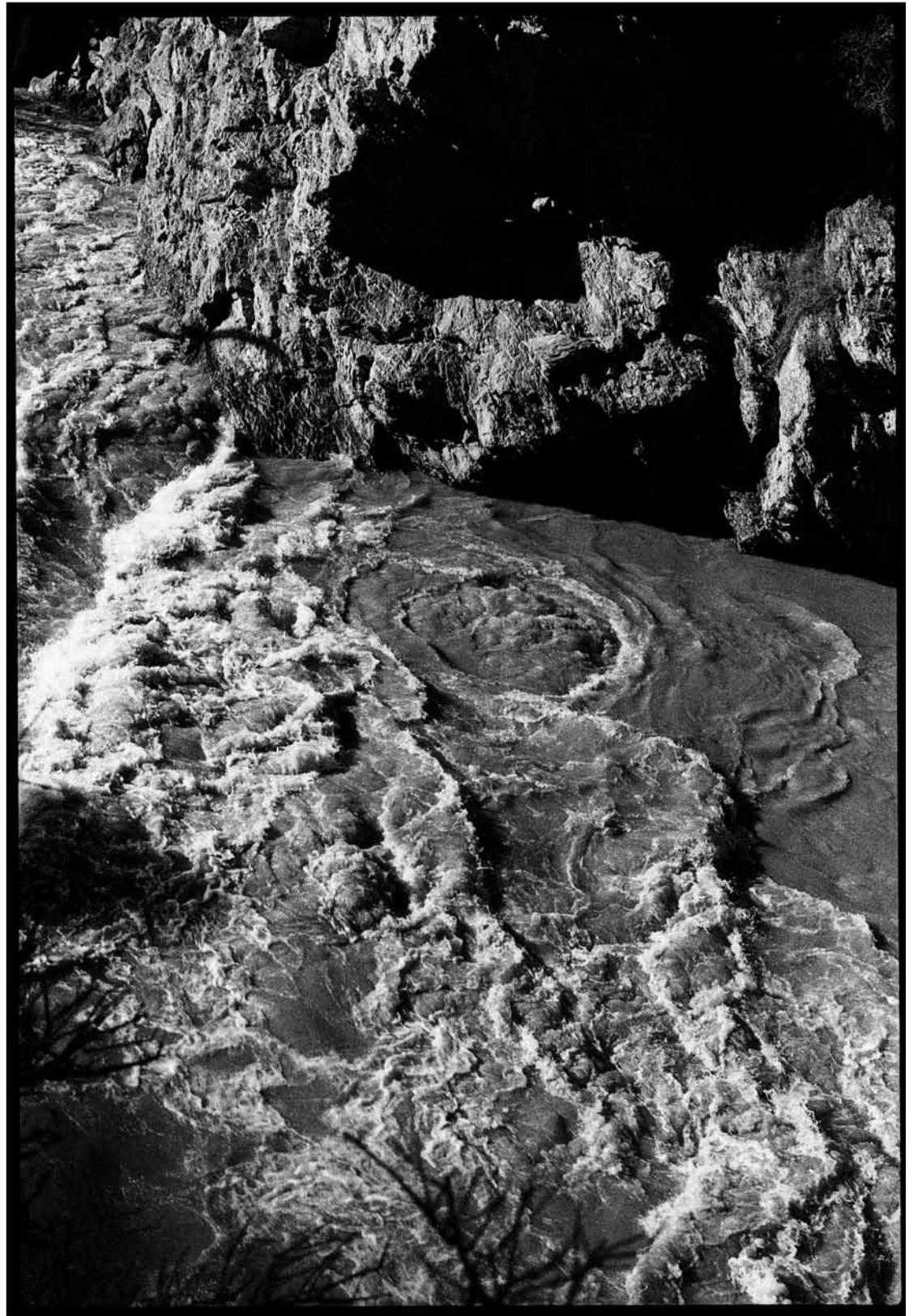




Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel II* - 1984



Detail D - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel II* - 1984

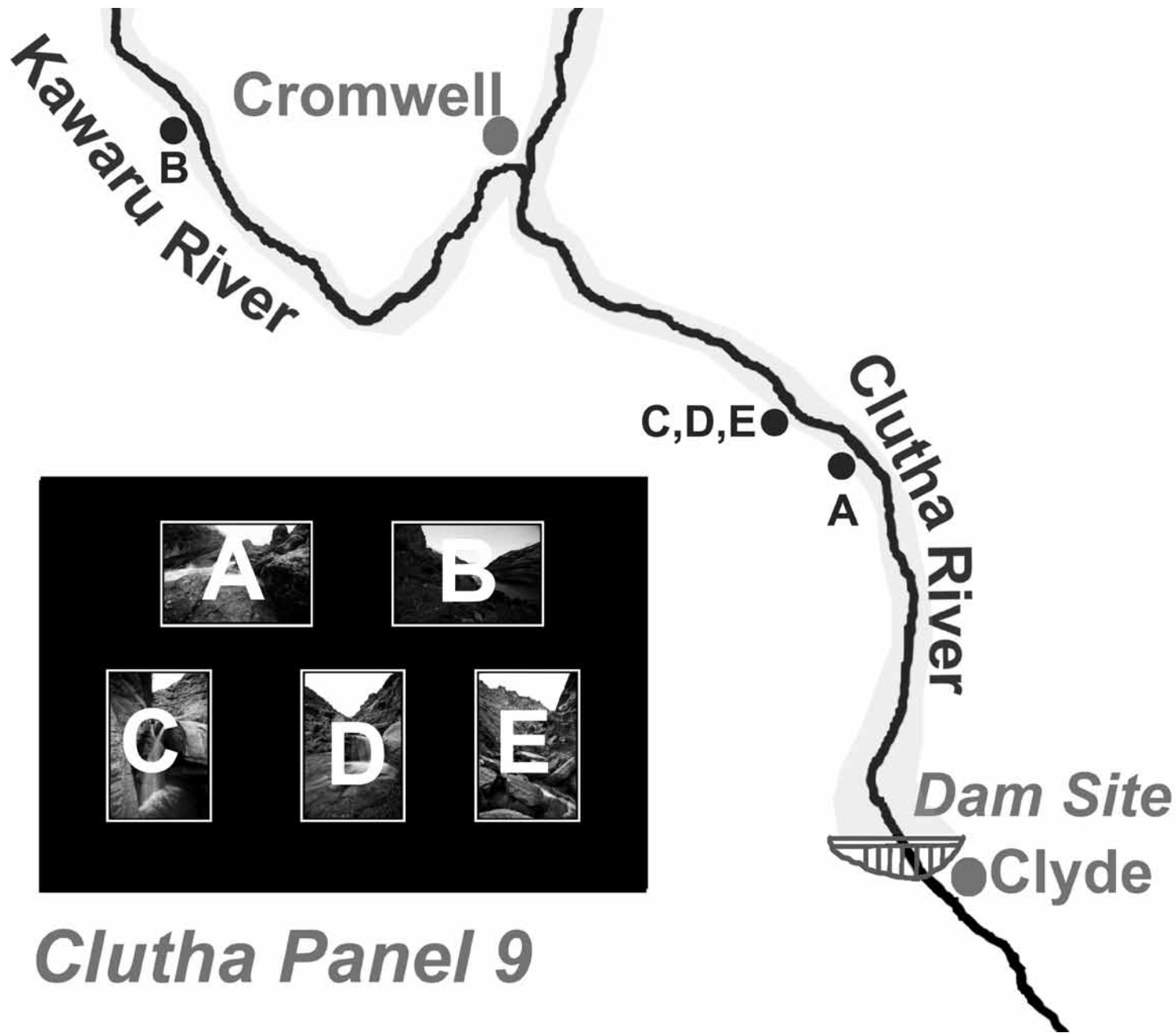


Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel II* - 1984

But from my very first visit to this environment, I also sensed that here in these canyons was something of a primeval New Zealand: a quintessence that only the initiated could perceive, a darker mysterious side to the landscape that opposed the colourful popular post card images of yellow poplar trees, blue water, the iconic meeting of the waters at Cromwell, the delicate cultivation of the orchards, the cheerful escape of a summer vacation.



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IX - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)

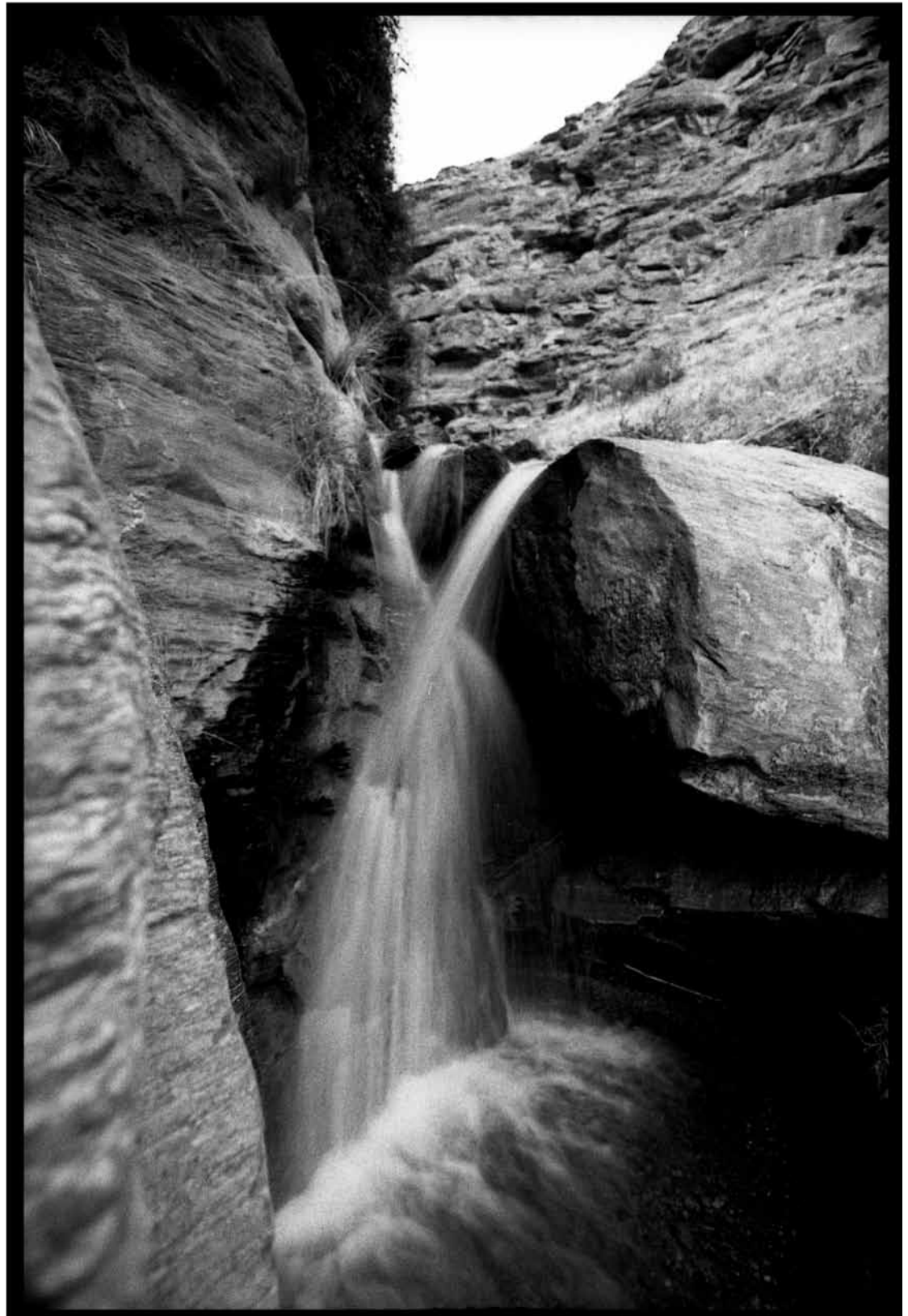


Clutha Panel 9



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IX* - 1984

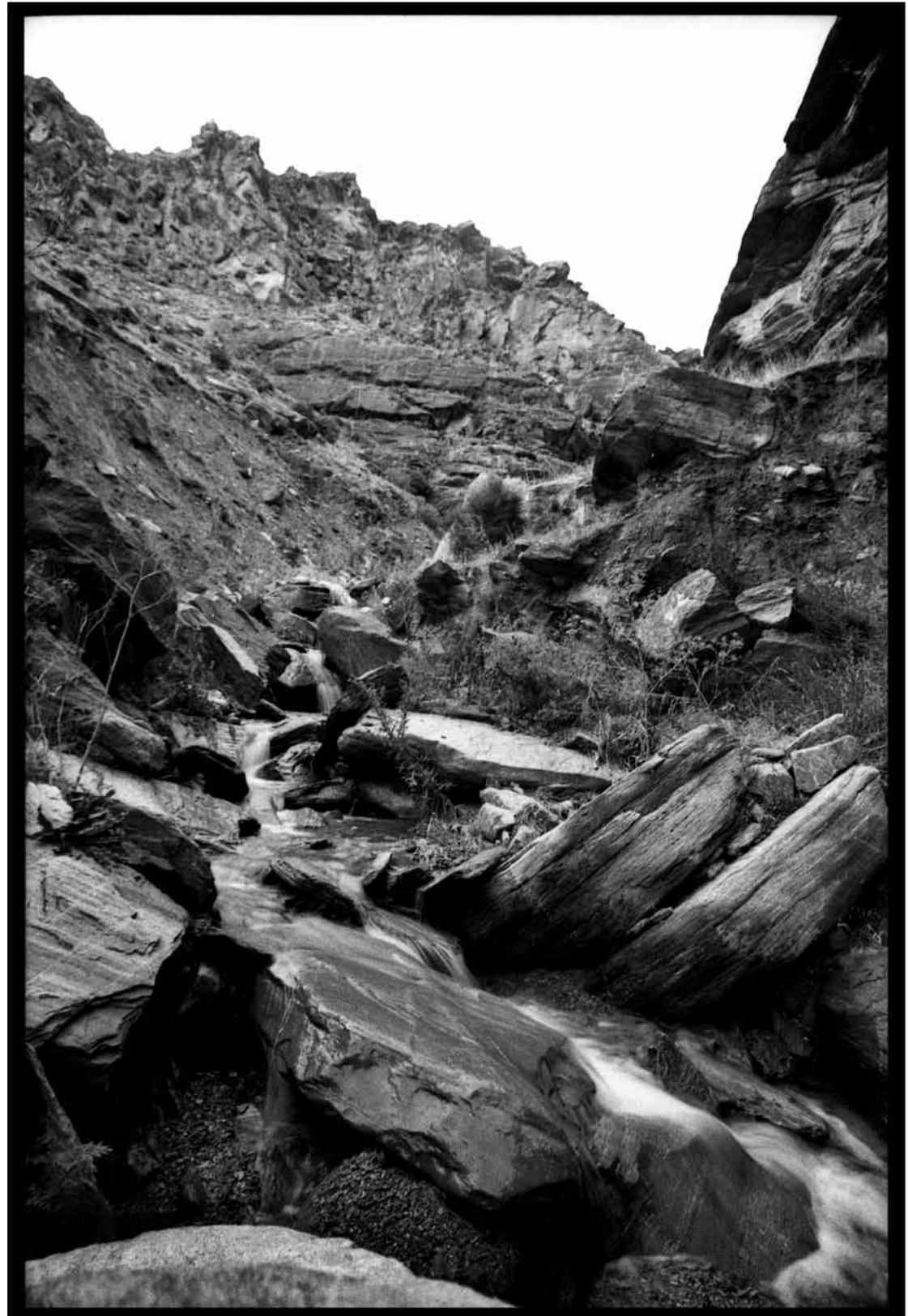




Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IX* - 1984



Detail D - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IX* - 1984



Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IX* - 1984

The Last River's Song - 1984

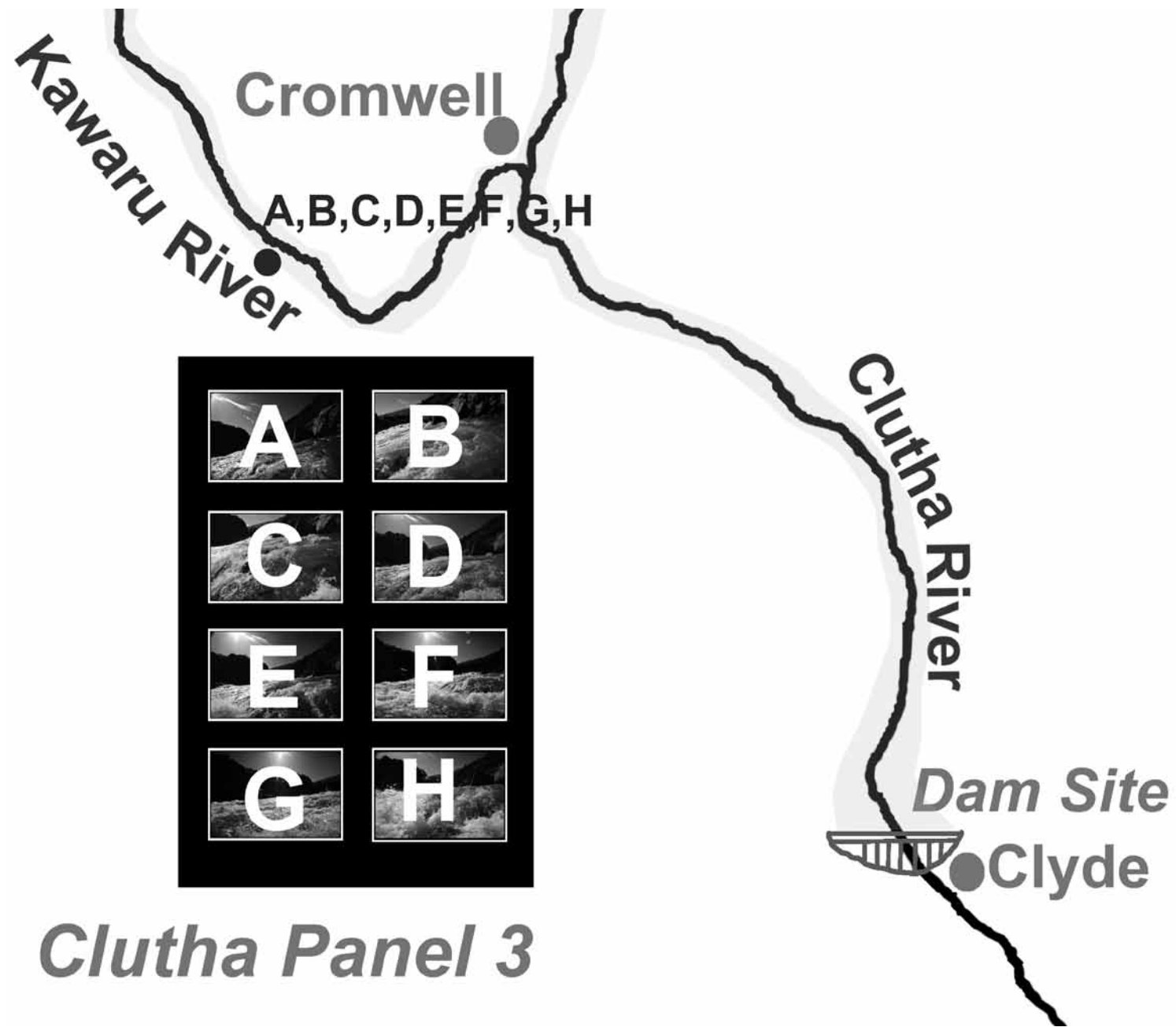
Gone ! the swirling vortexes, the fly
of spray, the suck and the spit!

*Gone! the rapids' roar, the ever-
changing eddies and the crash of foam!*

*Gone ! the gentle lap of a river at her
bank and the violence of her flood!
Gone! A River's Song!*



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel III - 1984
Original work (8 prints SG Prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 3



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel III* - 1984





Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel III* - 1984





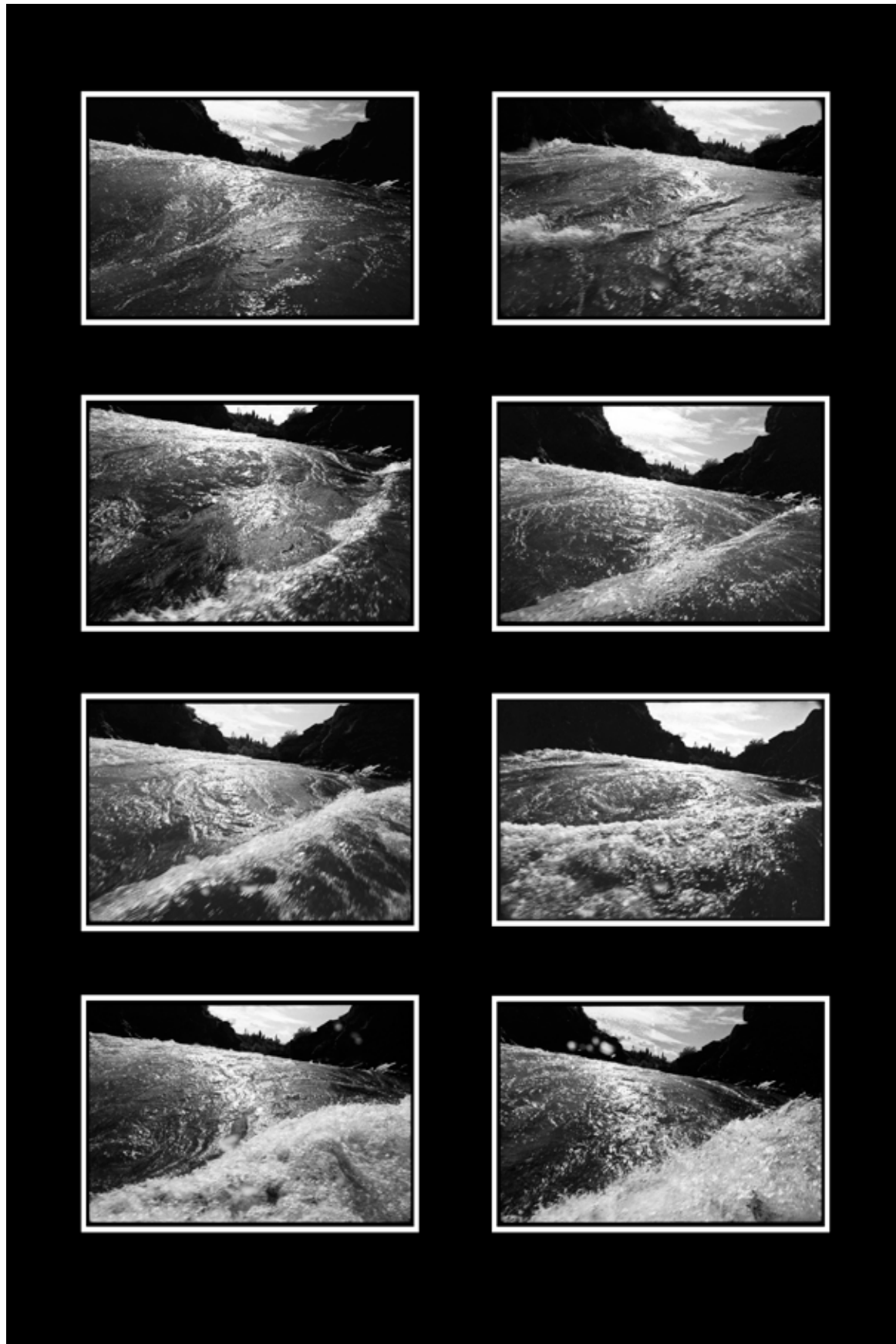
Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel III* - 1984



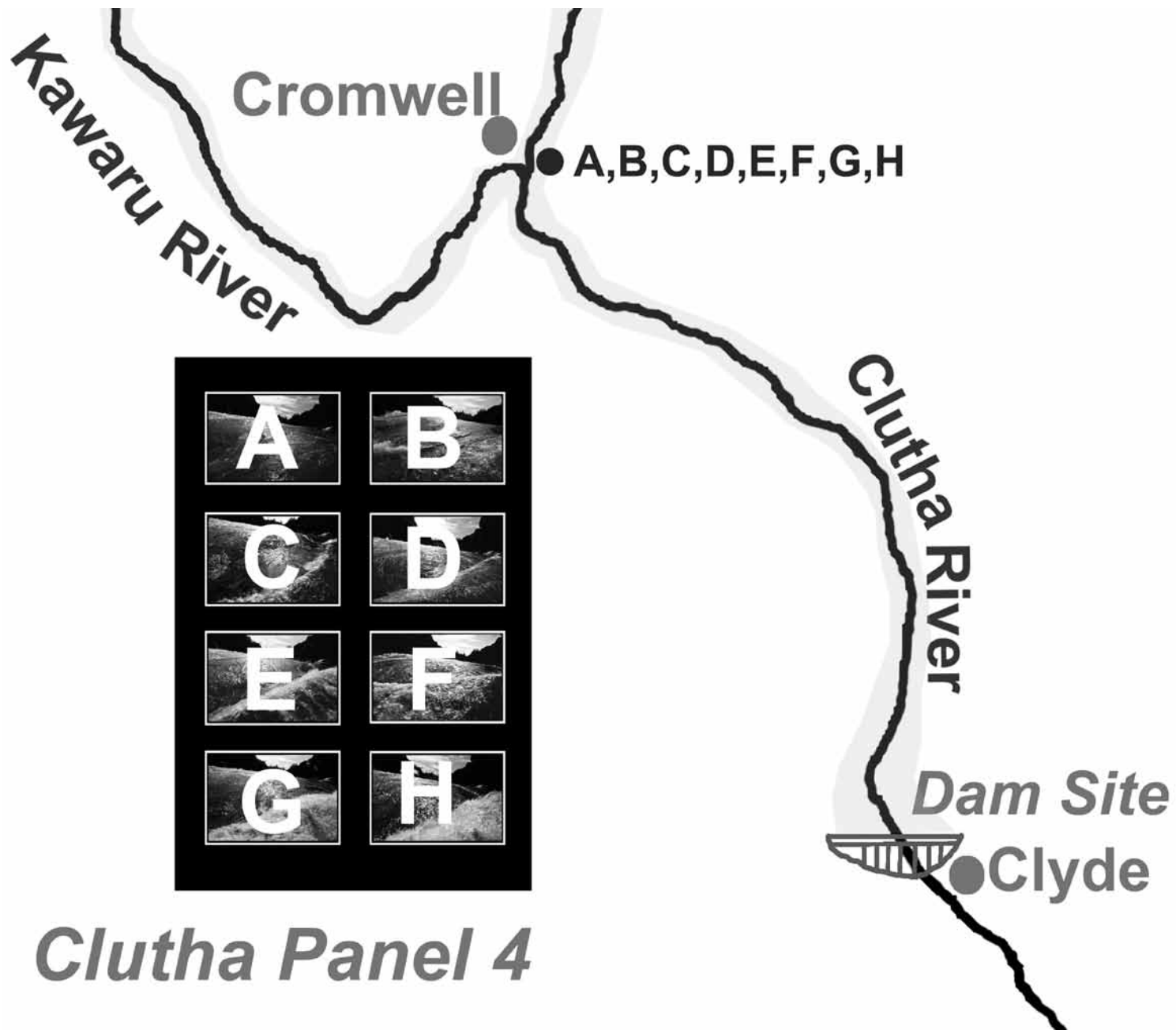


Detail G - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel III* - 1984





The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IV - 1984
Original work (8 prints SG Prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 4



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IV* - 1984





Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IV* - 1984





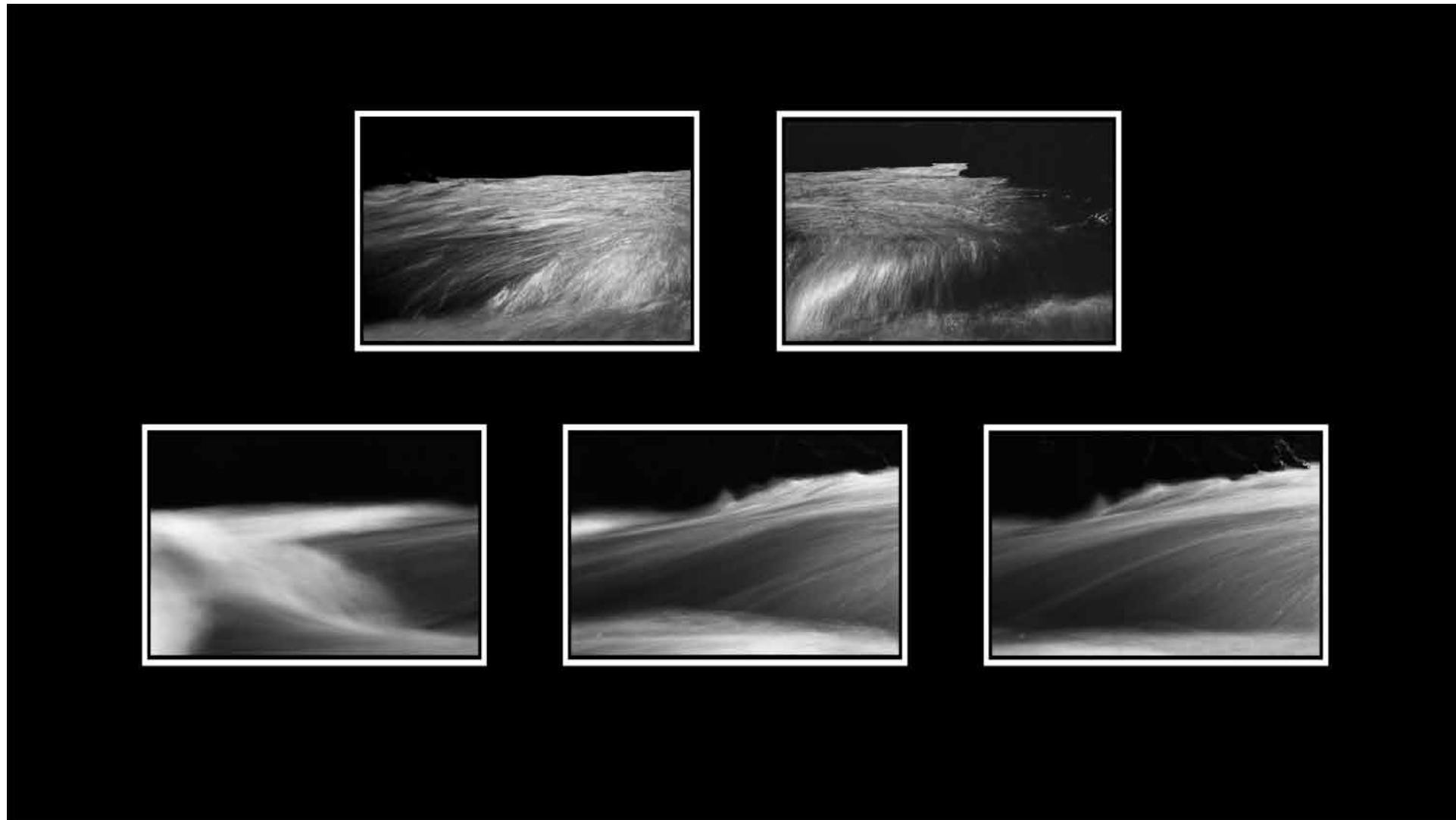
Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IV* - 1984



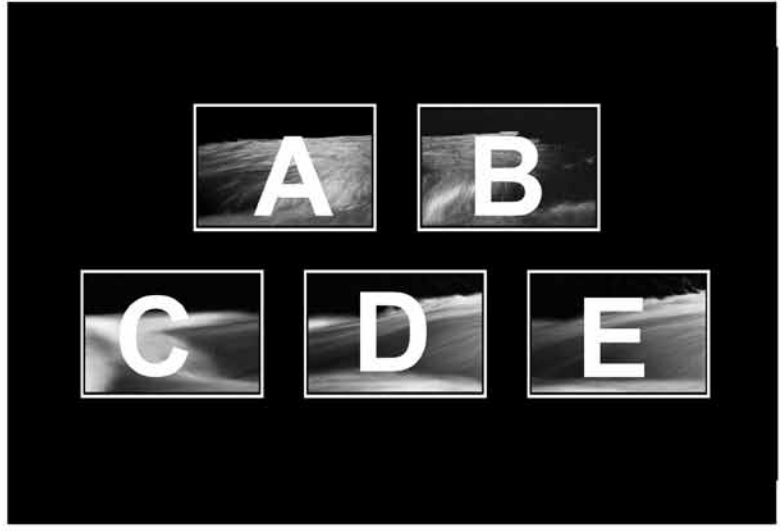
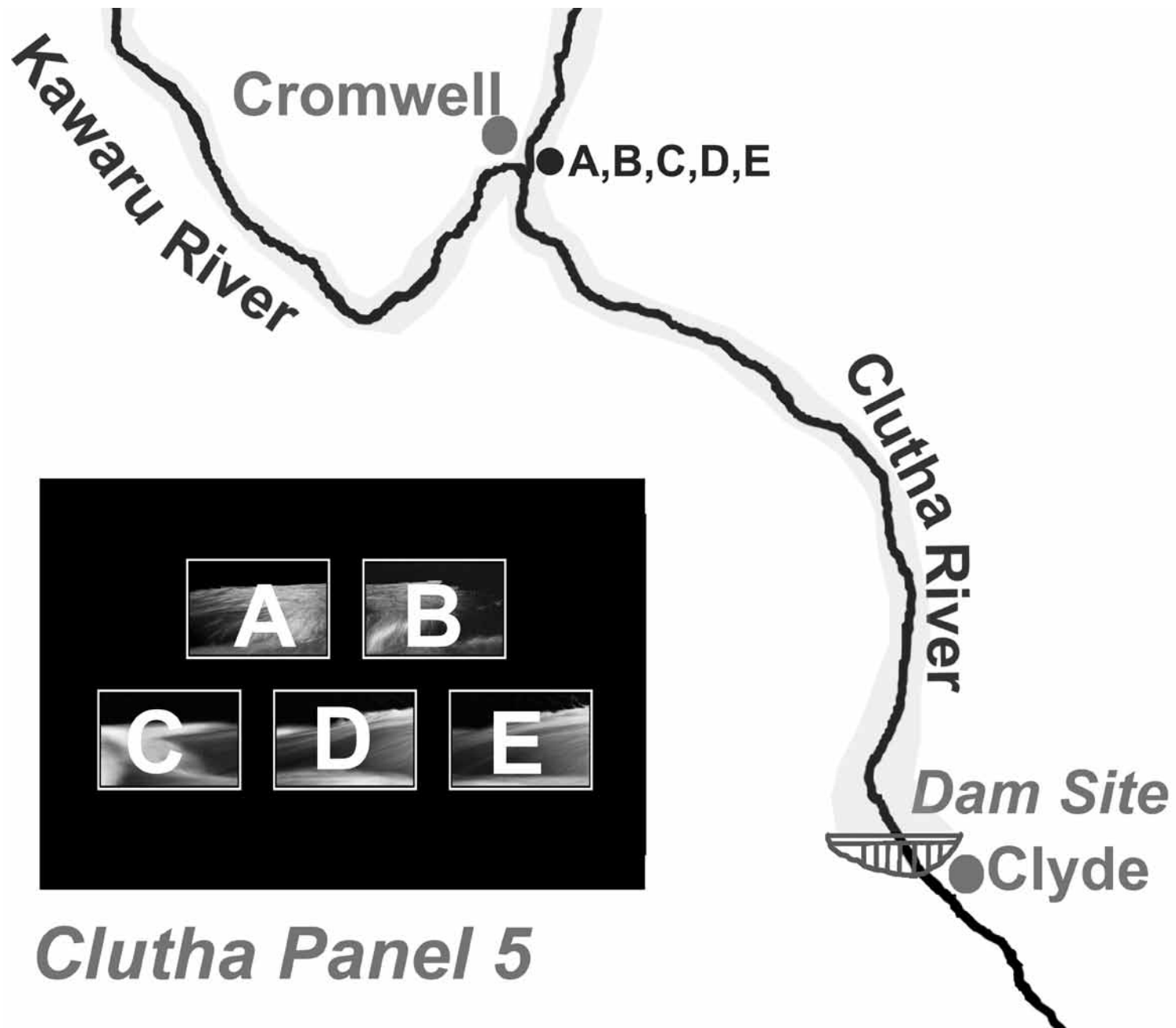


Detail G - *The Last Rivers Song*, Clutha Panel IV - 1984

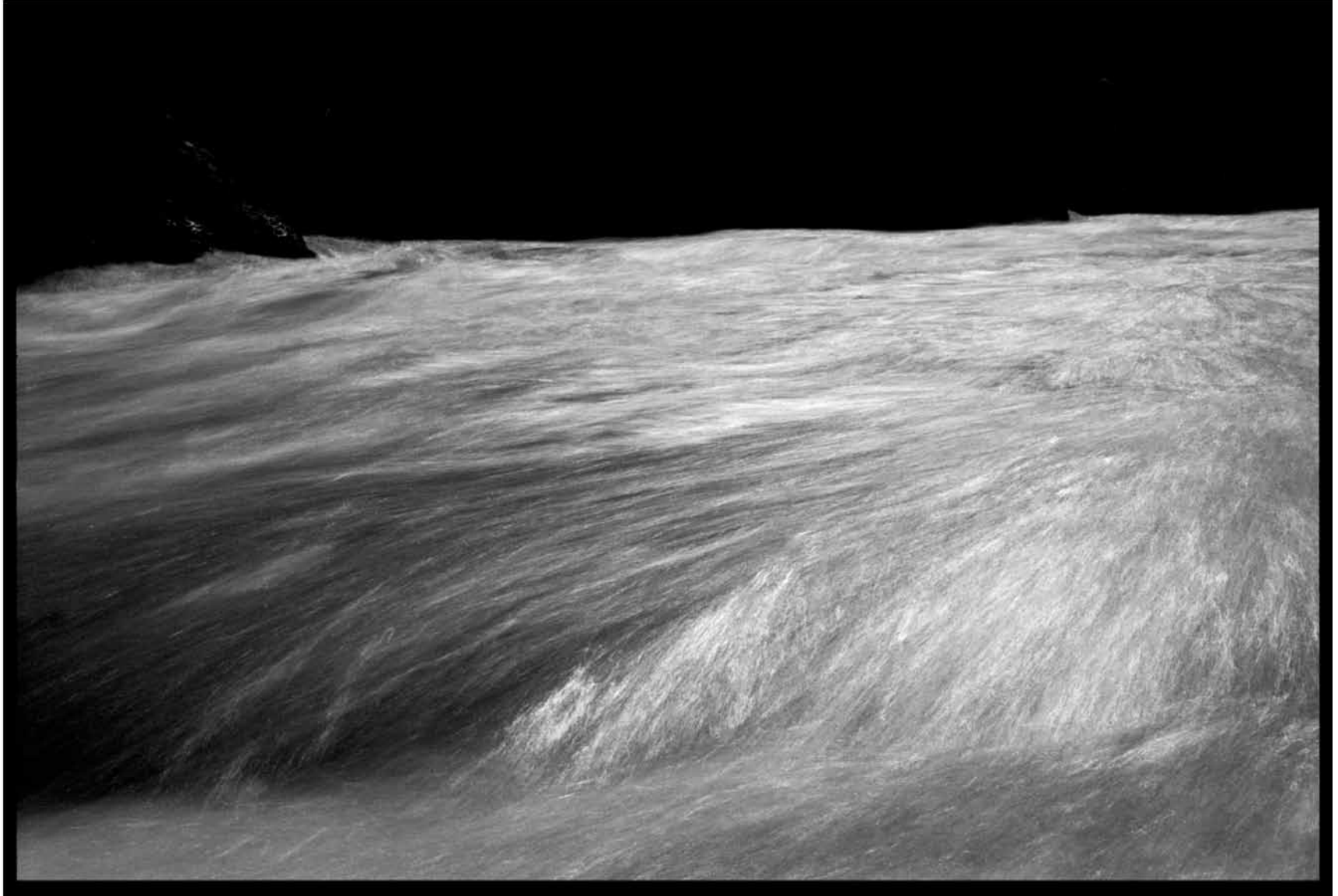




The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel V - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 5



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel V* - 1984





Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song*, Clutha Panel V - 1984



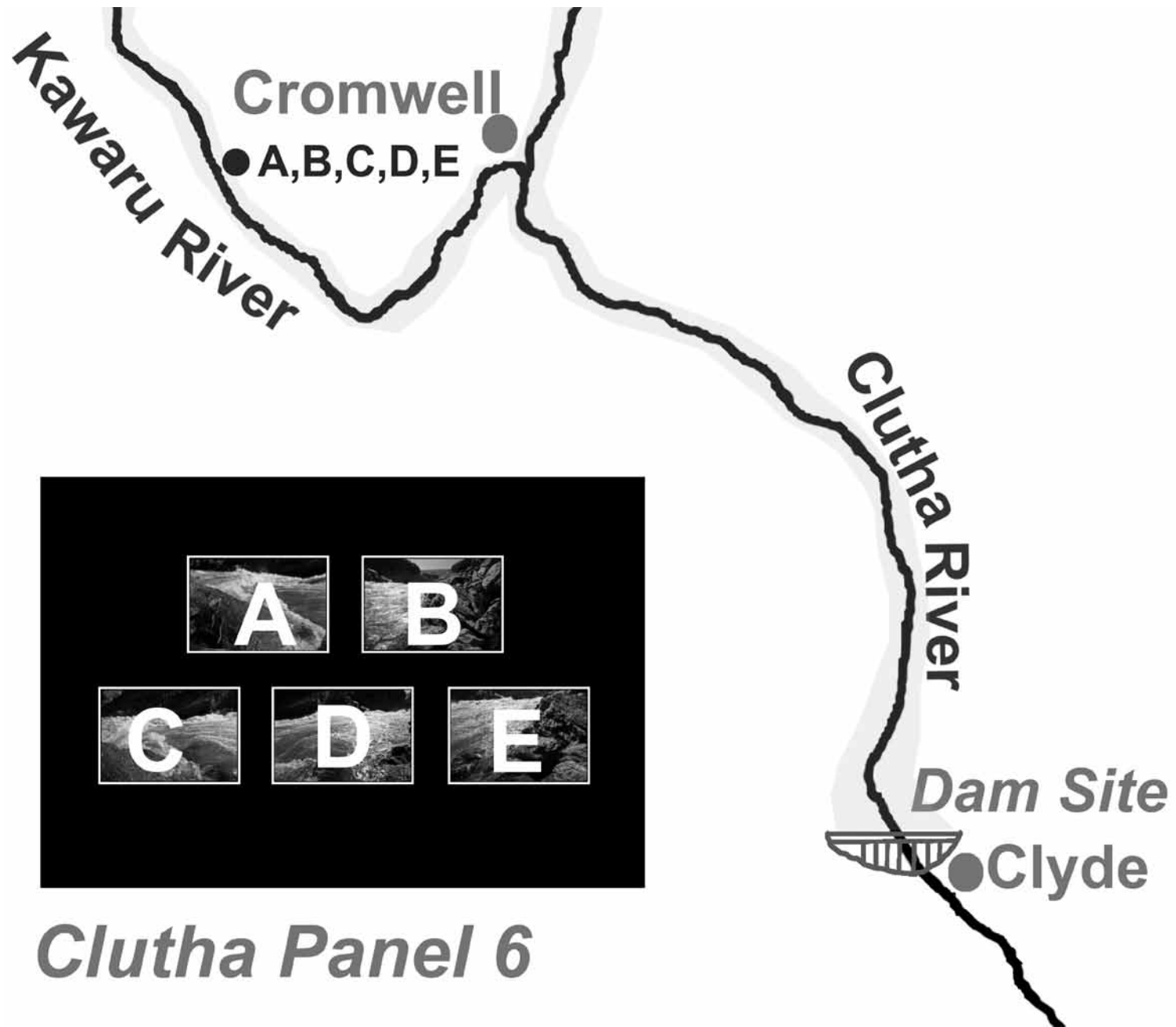


Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel V* - 1984

Initially I researched the area to be affected and from the relevant information, mapped out the boundaries my project should investigate, discovered the creeks, streams, the rocks, bluffs, sweeping currents, swirling eddies that would disappear under the proposed hydro lake.



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VI - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)





Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VI* - 1984





Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VI* - 1984



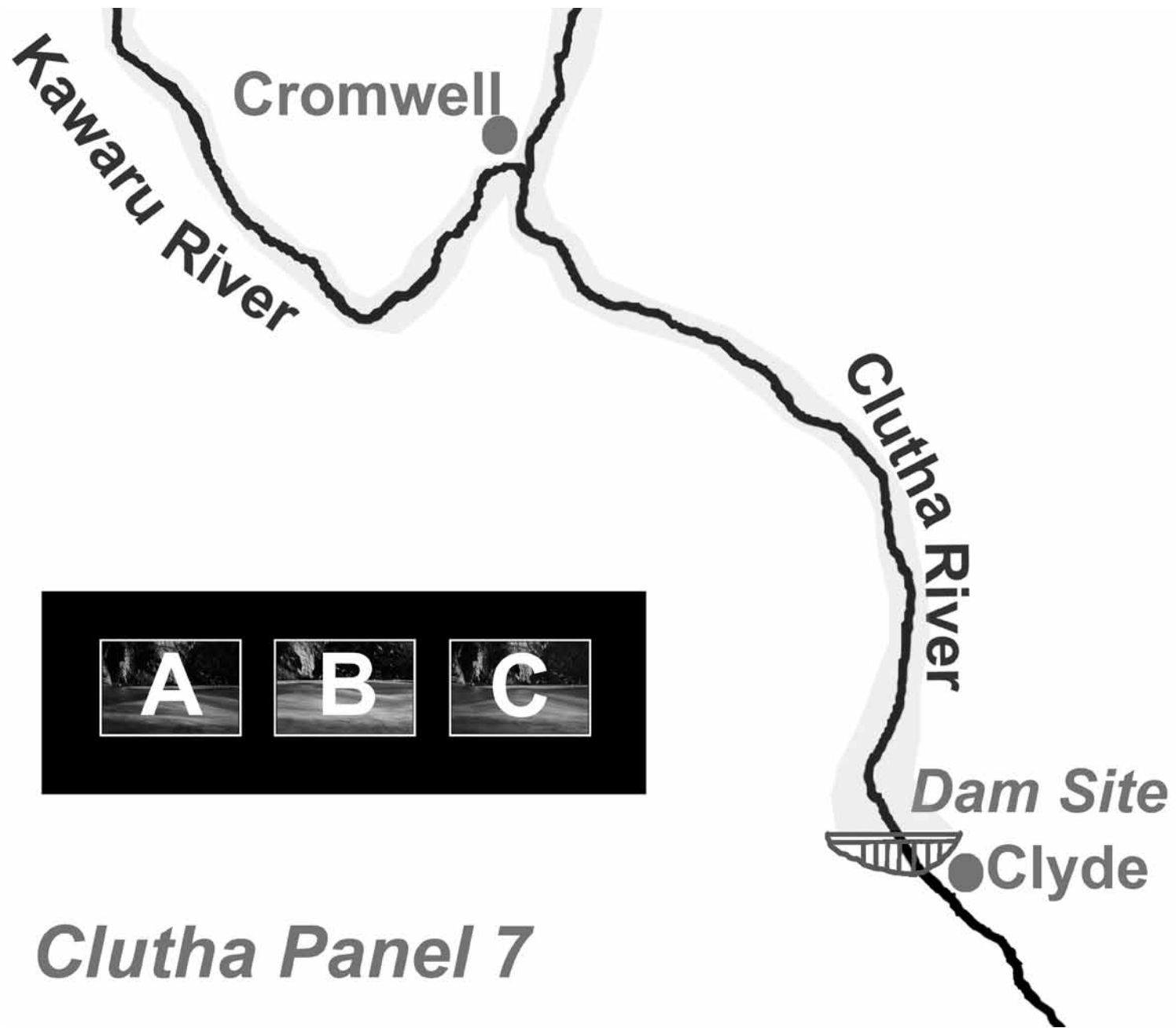


Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VI* - 1984

I spent winter days with a river in full flood as the sleet turned colder to snow and spun shrapnel-like from the sky to merge with leaping splashes which hold a scream in every drop of river water thrown skyward from the turbulent rapids.



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VII - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 7



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VII* - 1984



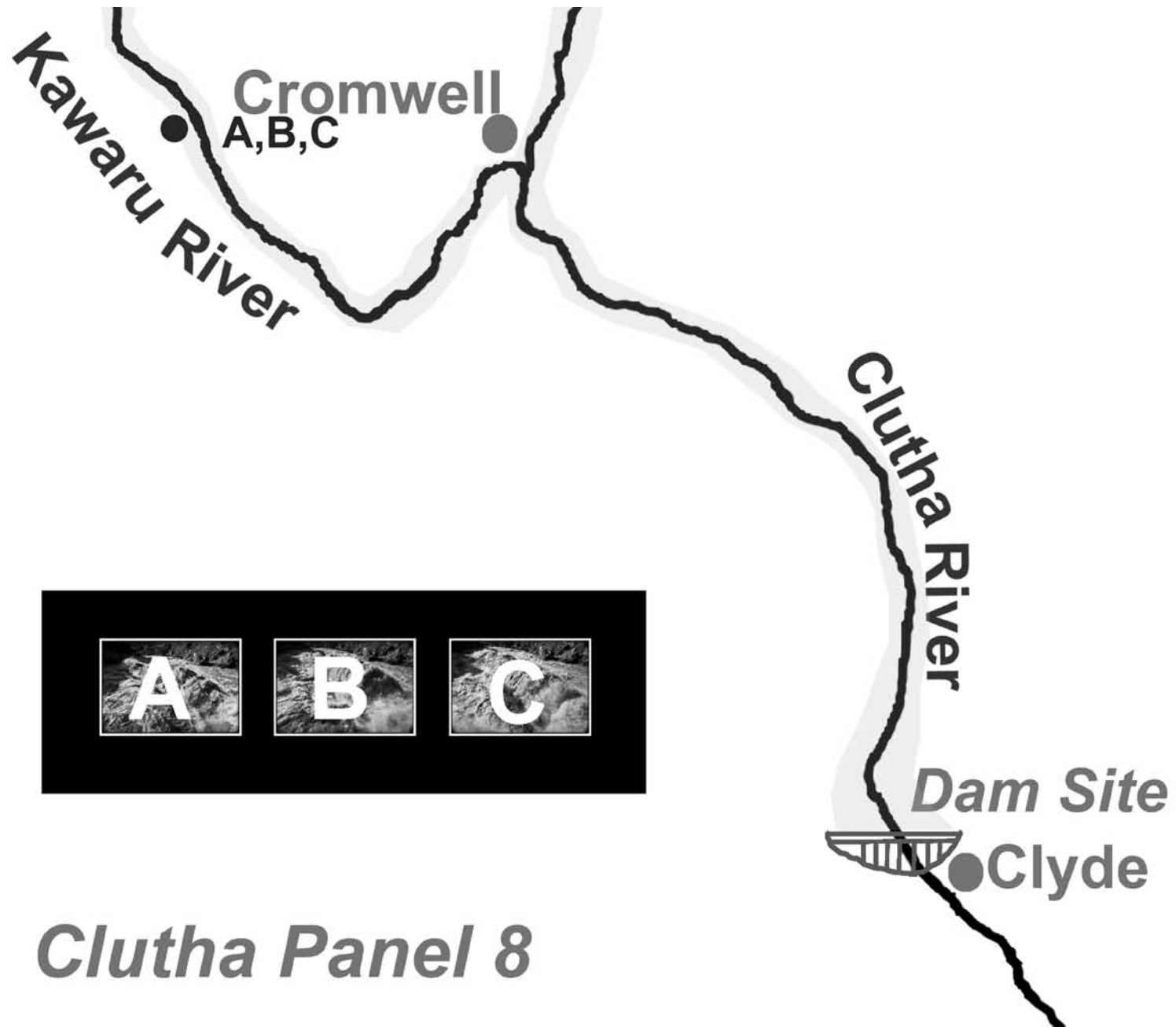


Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song*, Clutha Panel VII - 1984

*I climbed and crawled over the raw boulder-strewn banks of both sides of the rivers,
I witnessed the work of water and ice, sheer chasms cut in the rock over thousands
of years, the huge boulders tossed down the gorge like broken marbles*



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VIII - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 8



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VIII* - 1984



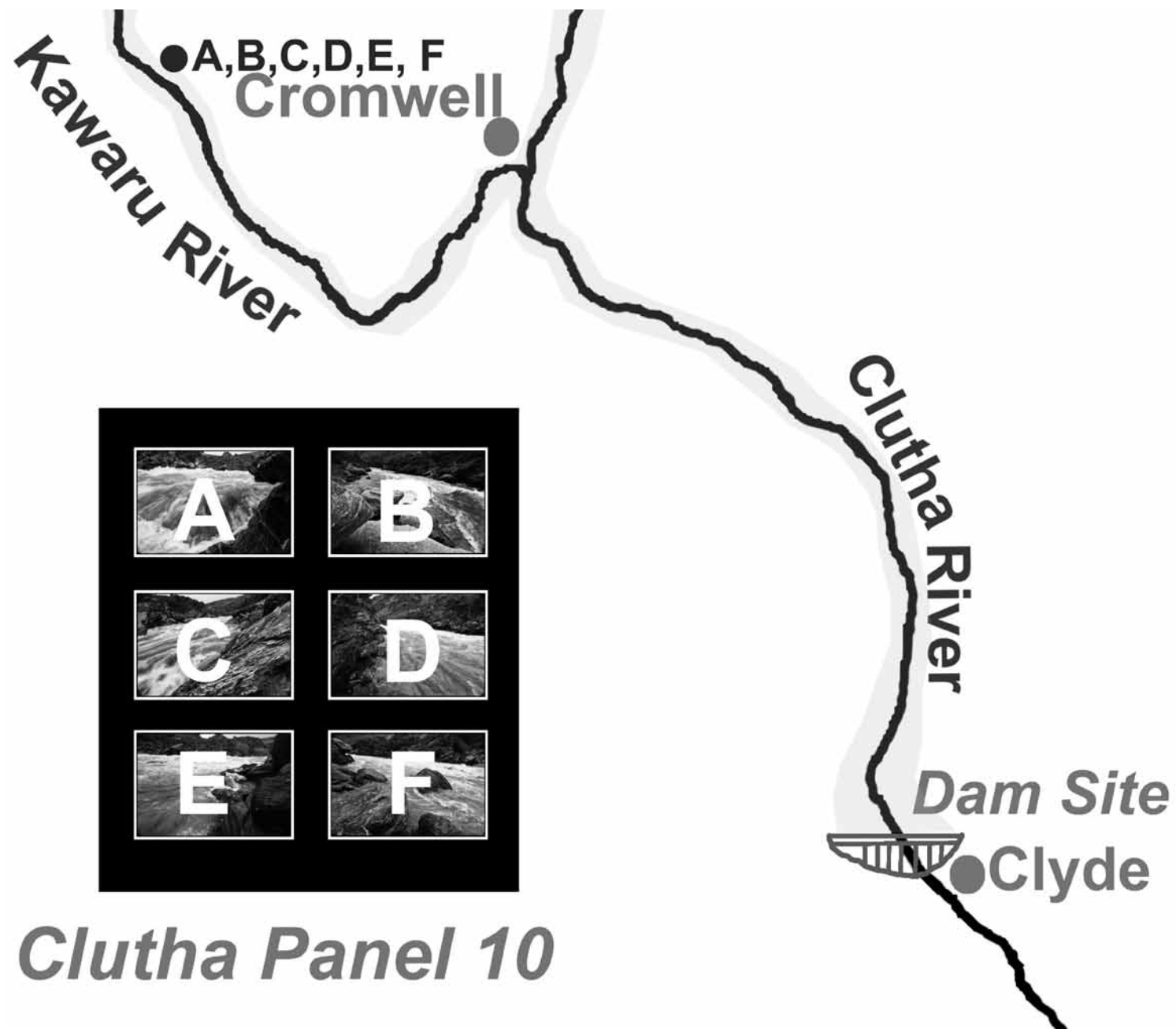


Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel VIII* - 1984

For me the true essence of this river was the relentless force of the water, the unification of rain drops, melting snow flakes and ice into a potent force, seeping slowly from the frozen heights into ever growing trickles, babbling brooks, tumbling steams, racing creeks, small rivers channeled by the hardness of the bare rocks into the third fastest flowing river in the world.



The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel IX - 1984
Original work (6 prints SG Prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 10



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel X* - 1984





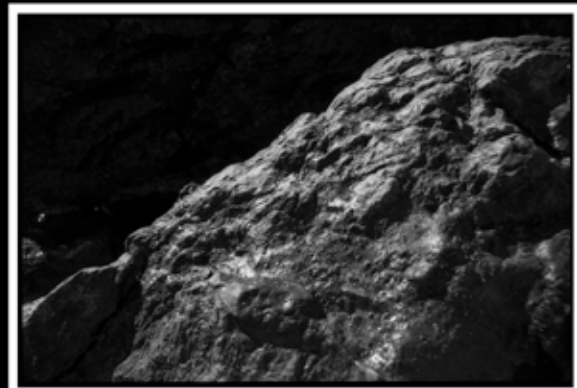
Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel X* - 1984



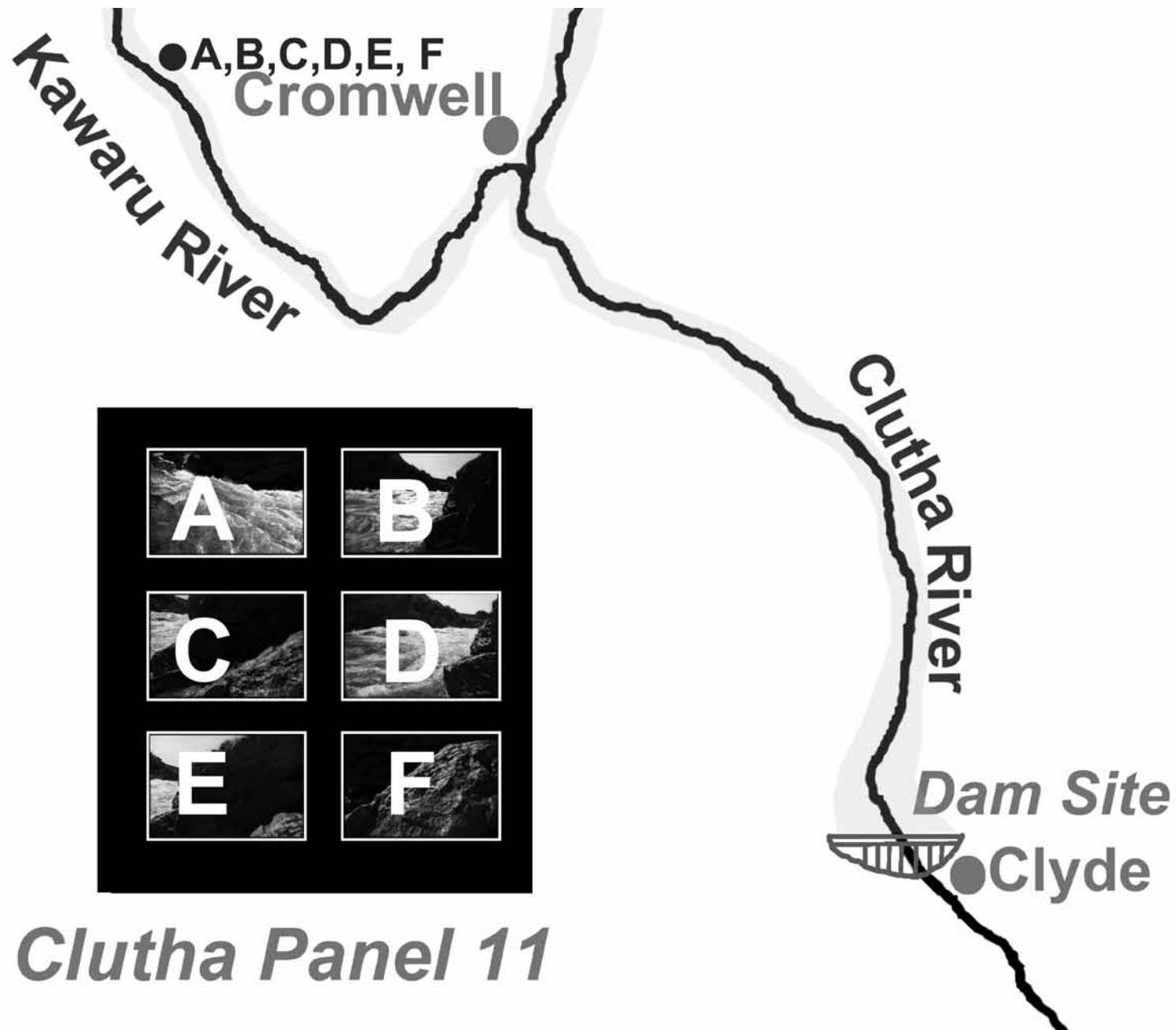


Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel X* - 1984





The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XI - 1984
Original work (6 prints SG Prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 11



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song*, Clutha Panel XI - 1984



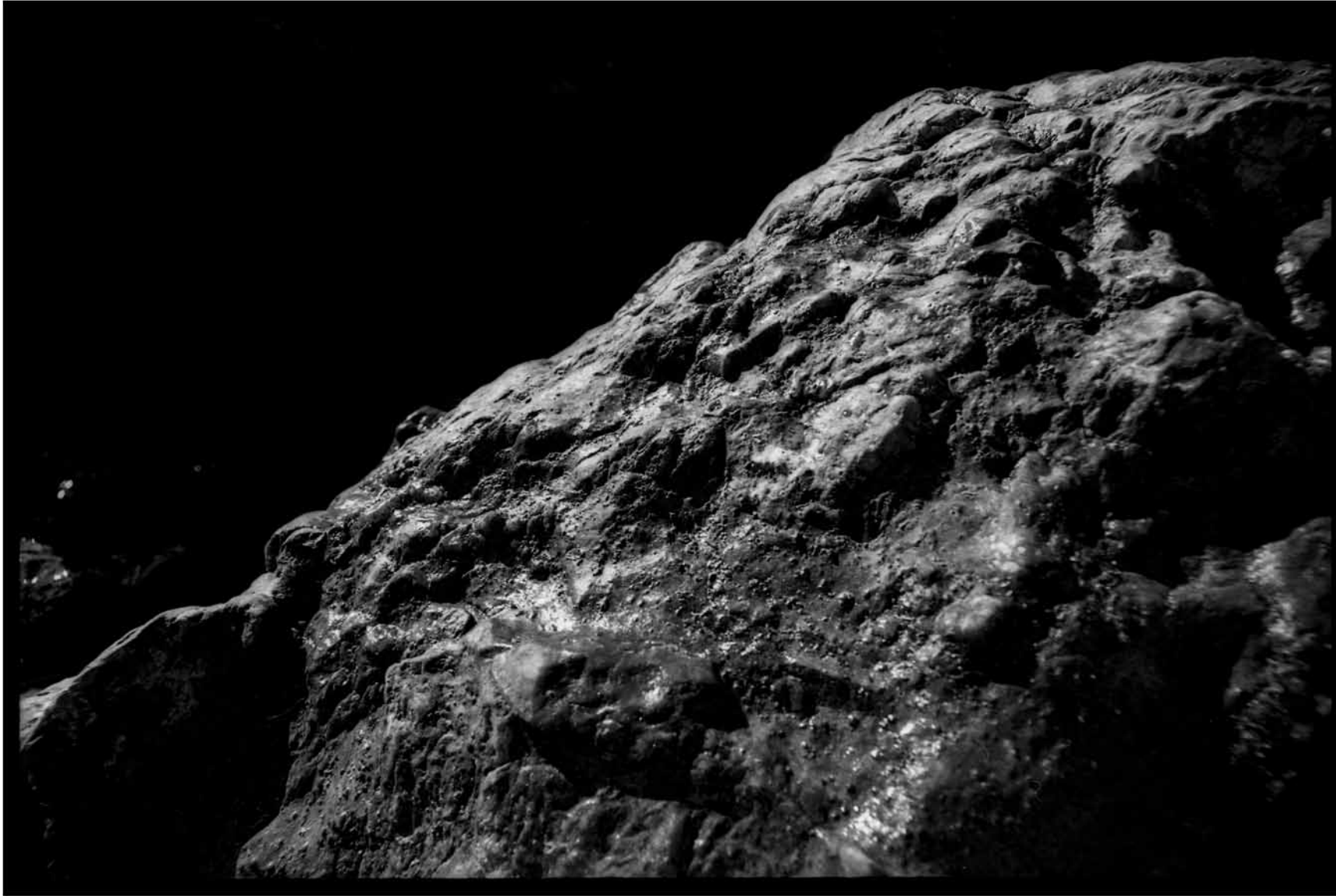


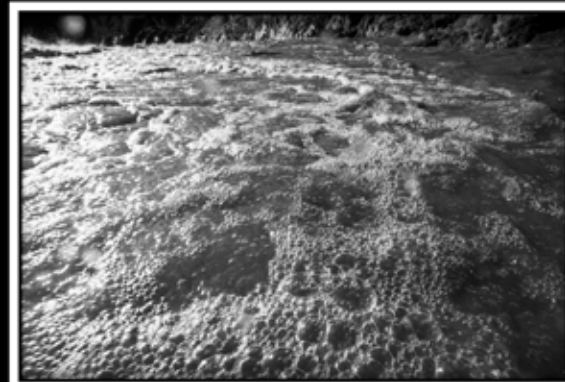
Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XI* - 1984



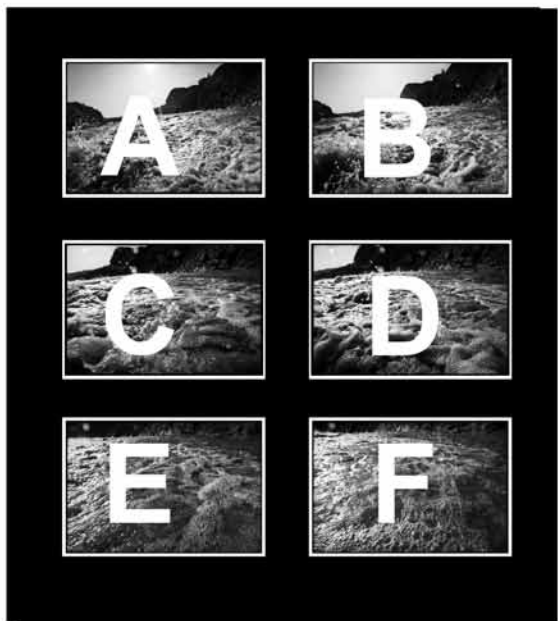
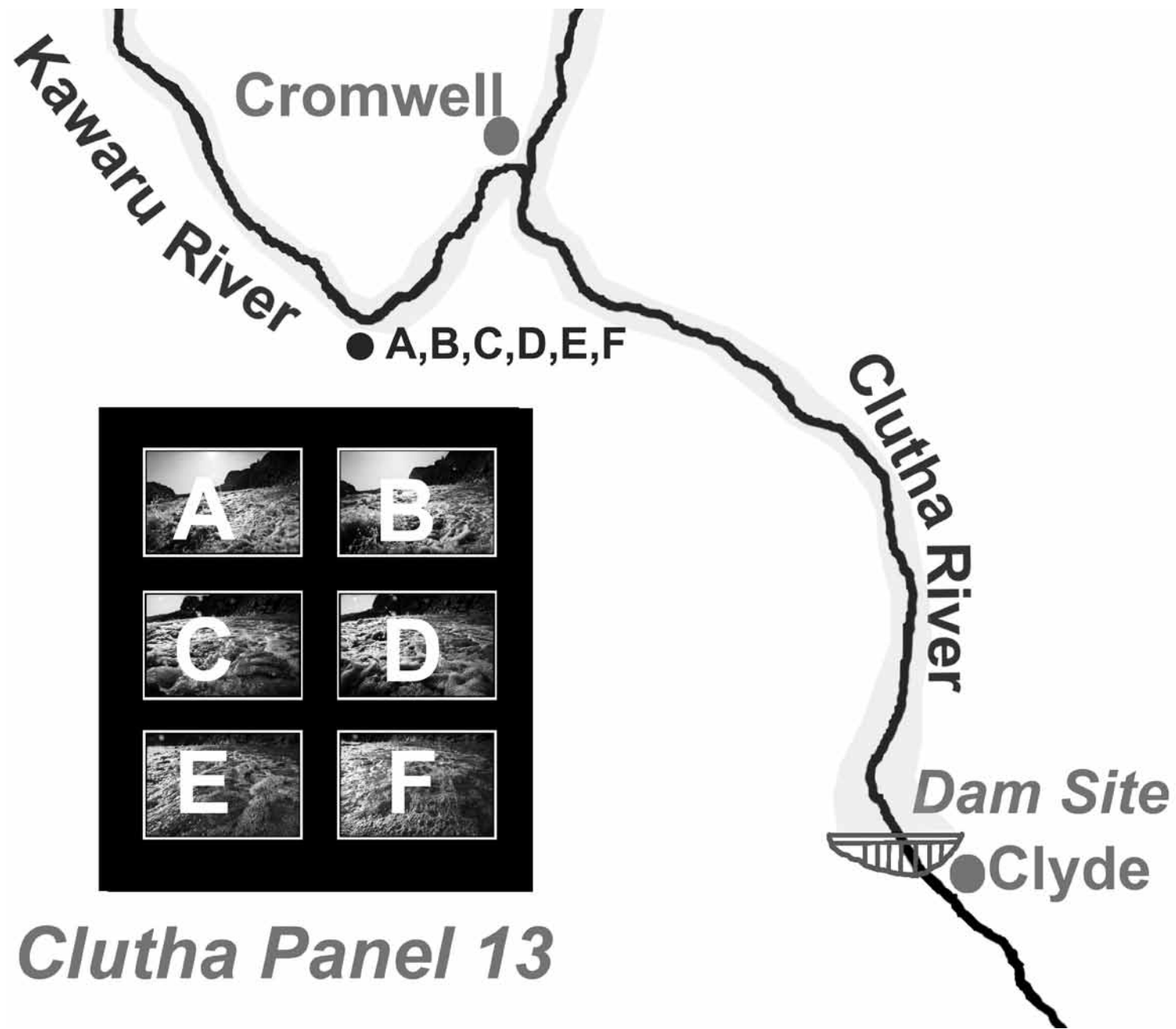


Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XI* - 1984





The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XIII - 1984
Original work (6 prints SG Prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 13



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XIII* - 1984





Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XIII* - 1984



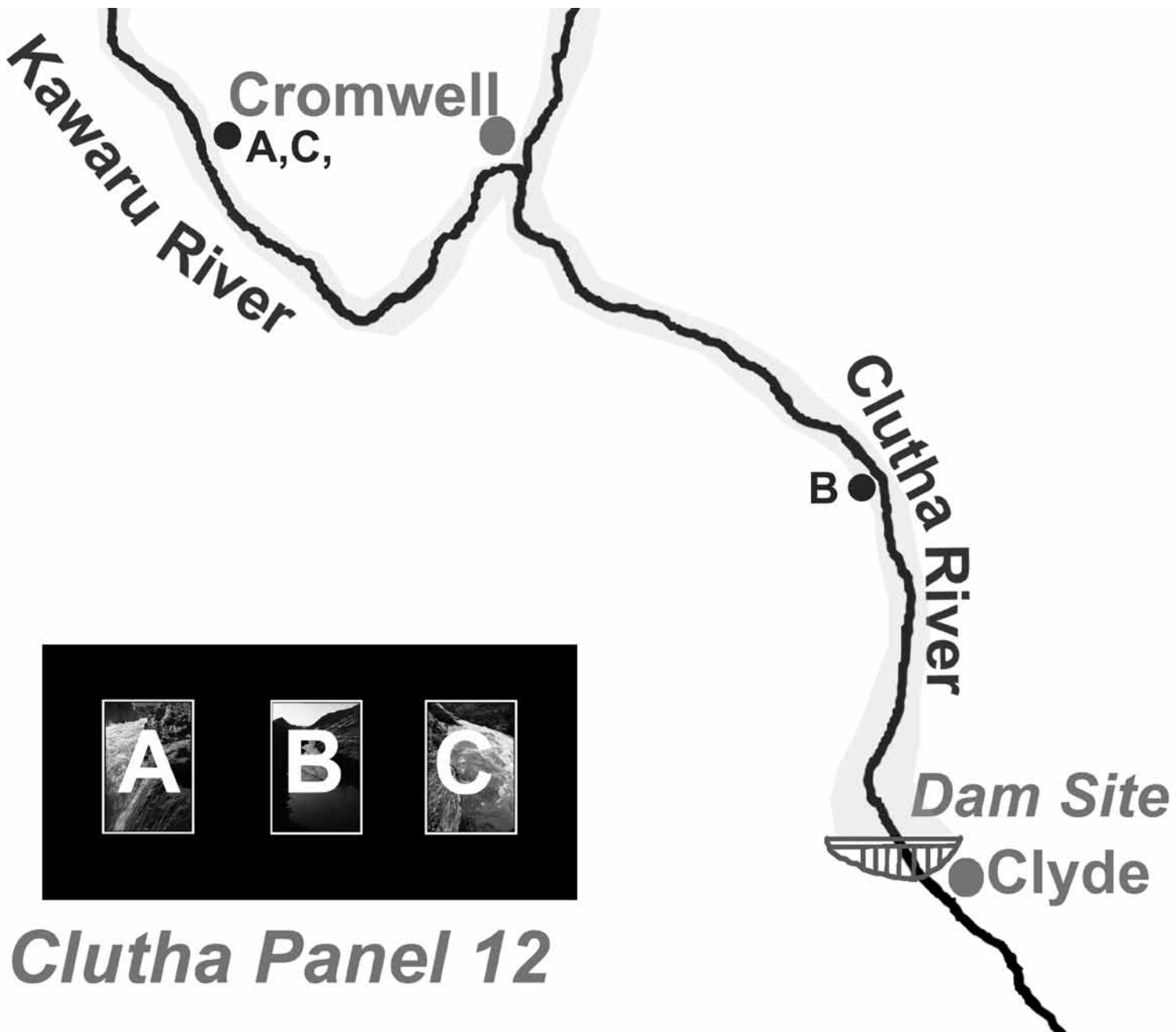


Detail E - *The Last Rivers Song*, Clutha Panel XIII - 1984





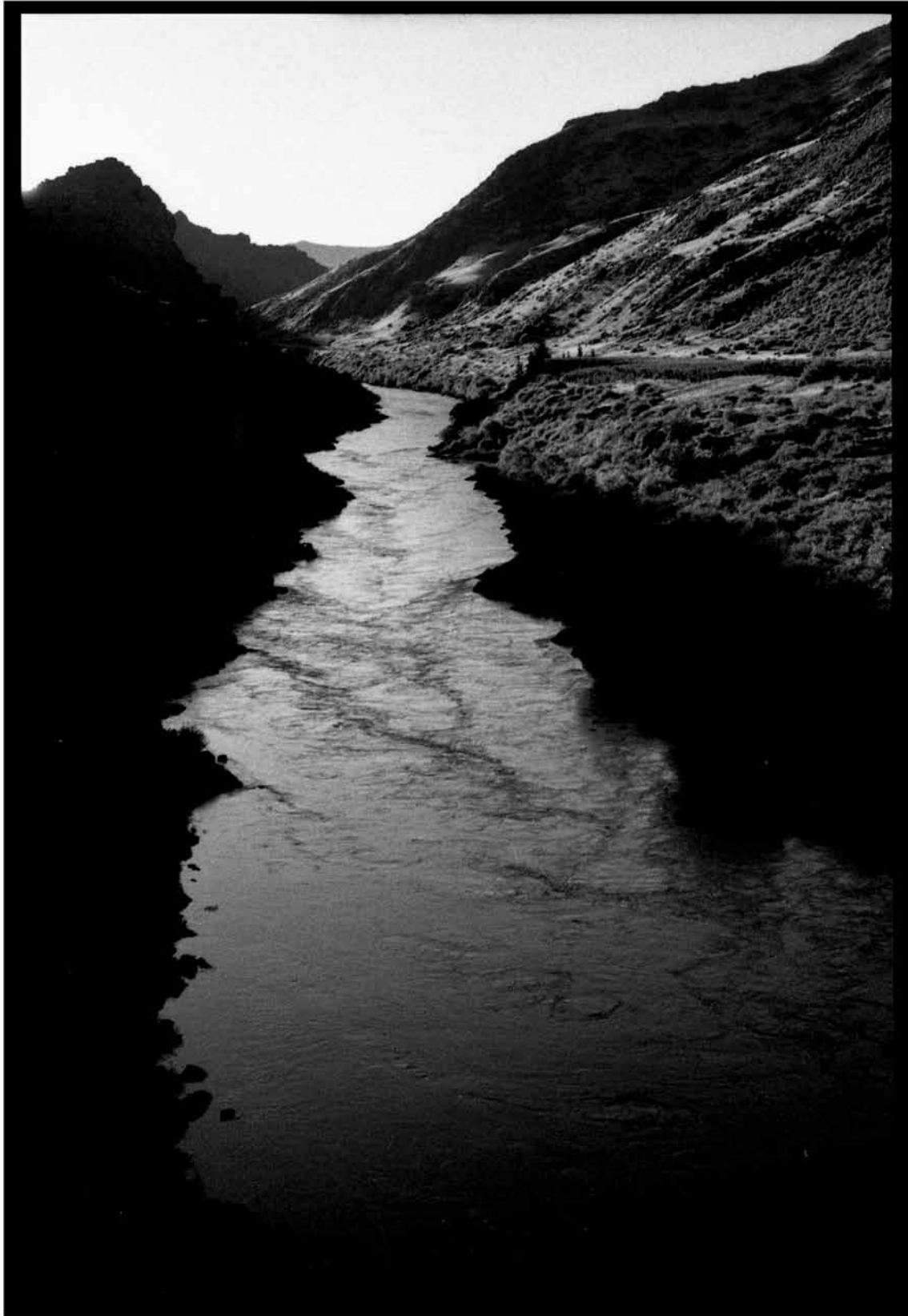
The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XII - 1984
Original work (5 SG prints 180 x120 mm)



Clutha Panel 12



Detail A - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XII* - 1984



Detail B - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XII* - 1984



Detail C - *The Last Rivers Song, Clutha Panel XII* - 1984

I also discovered there was more at stake than just the flooding of the "Clutha River", for quite a stretch of the Kawarau branch that converges at Cromwell and runs down from Queenstown and Lake Wakitipu would be stilled by the high-dam too, the filling lake was to push up the reaches of not one but two rivers...

Technical information

The Last Rivers Song

Cameras:

Nikon F2 - used for land based shots

Nikon EM with power winder - used for shots from a boom suspended above the water, and those shot in the water with an under water camera housing

Linhof 4x5 Cardan Colour - used to copy prints onto 4 x5 film for the mural enlargements

Lenses:

20mm f3.8 Vivitar

50mm f1.8 Nikon series E

55mm f1.2 Nikkor SC

135mm f2.8 Nikkor Q

150mm f f.6 Symmar

Filters:

K2 Yellow

YA2 Orange

25A Red

Neutral Density x2, x4, x8 - these were used combined for the time lapse shots in bright sunlight

Exposures: From 2min @ f22 to 1/2000 @ f5.6

Films: 35mm film Pan F, FP4, HP5, HP5 72 shot Auto winder, Tech Pan 4x5 sheet film

ASA Ratings: 3asa to 1800asa

Developers: Michrophen, ID11, Perceptol, P.Q Universal, Tech Pan LC

Photographic paper: Kodak Mural Paper R3 used for mural prints Ilfobrom used for small panel photographs

Technique: All the photographs were first shot on location at the river with 35mm film using a variety of approaches:

Time Exposure - Tech pan film and Pan F were down rated. Tech pan from 12 ISO to 3 ISO and Pan From 50 ISO to 25 ISO. These time lapse exposures were created but using a stack of neutral density filters which allowed exposures of 2 minutes at f22 in bright sunlight with the camera on a tripod in the shallows of the river. The technique was used for the images in Mural 4 and 5 and in panels 5, 7, and threes prints in panel 9 and gave a timeless effect of the water flowing over the rocks.

Stop Motion Exposure - This involved up rating HP5 400 ISO film to 1800 ISO. This allowed exposures of 1/2000 sec to stop the action of the flowing water, in some exposures with drops of water suspended in the air. The technique was used for images in mural 3.

Soundscape: The enigmatic electronic soundscape that accompanied the exhibition was specifically composed by Trevor Coleman & Paul Hutchins for the installation in 1984. This was lost for many years but in 2012 was found in a shoe box under Trevor's mothers bed.

Trevor and Paul played live at the opening in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Standard Print



Blue toned Print



Standard Print



Sepia Toned Print



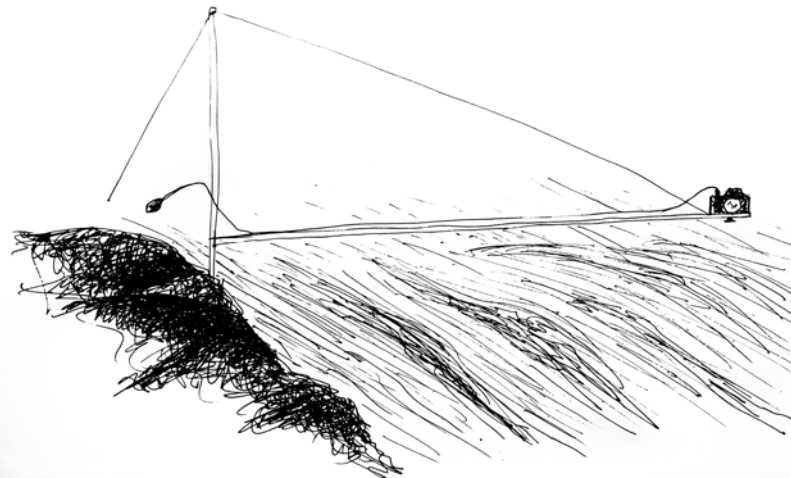
Red toned Print



Gold Toning: The murals consisted of large composite photographic images up to 6-7metres long and containing up to 7 prints 5'x 2 1/2'.

Selected prints from this series were gold toned with native gold dredged from the Clutha river and donated to the project by Bob Gray. The gold dust was converted to gold chloride by Bob Cunningham from the Chemistry Dept at the University of Otago, and combined with other chemicals in such a manner as to produce either red and deep blue tones in the photographic prints. Two recipes were used for the gold toning - one to produce deep blues, this was applied to the two outside prints of Mural 3, and the second mixture was applied to a previously sepia toned print, the central image of Mural 1, and reacted to produce, rich rusty reds. For me the colours referenced the meeting of the waters at Cromwell where the brown water of the Kawaura fused with the azure blue of the Clutha.

Boom: The Nikon EM was suspended with the power winder on a retractable boom about 3 meters long and set on auto exposure out and just above the river surface with a long pneumatic cable release from the camera back to the shore. An accurate record of the exposures was impossible to keep - but would probably range from 1/1000 sec to 1/30 sec. All these exposure were made using an auto exposure setting.



The light weight plastic bodied Nikon EM was ideal for mounting on the boom arm.



"Water surges, sprays, foams, whirls, ripples and rests, framed by very black rock which, when devoid of detail cameos the textures of its movements. In other instances a chiaroscuro lighting throws forward rock surface, its water-worn texture combining in rhythmic counterpoint with the current. The mural works are more expressively extreme, and have a greater over-all movement, each work capturing a different mood, from candy-floss fibres of foam in mural five, to the bone-crushing torrents".



Lloyd Godman has an MFA from RMIT University Melbourne (1999) and has had over 45 solo exhibitions and been included in more than 250 group exhibitions. He established and was head of the photo section at the School of Art Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand for 20 years before moving to Melbourne in 2005. He also instigated and helped organize several major arts events. Concern for the environmental is a resilient thread that has connected his many projects. The Last Rivers Song was the first series of work where this concern in the natural environment played a pivotal role.

In recent years Lloyd has shifted his art practice to work with living plant sculptures.