



DEATH BECOMES HER

The black-and-white image of a woman who jumped to her death in 1940s New York (above), which first appeared in Life magazine, was the original inspiration for Mel Bagshaw's provocative project 9 Lives. Bagshaw recalls being mesmerised as a boy by the peaceful appearance of Evelyn McHale's corpse, which lies cradled by the car bonnet she landed on after leaping from the 86th floor of the Empire State Building. He has been working since 2007 on this project, which explores the nature of suicide and takes inspiration from iconic images of death as well as the beauty and decadence of the fashion world. Bagshaw uses glamorous female models to convey the mystery and tragedy of young suicide victims who — like Evelyn McHale — often appear to be healthy, happy individuals. Main image: Bagshaw drew on stories of teenage suicide pacts, and his own childhood fears of drowning, to create this picture. The styling is a nod to the work of the pre-Raphaelites, in particular the famous painting the drowned Ophelia by John Everett Millais, completed in 1852 (below)





BEAUTIFUL BODIES

The shot above, set in a circus ring, was inspired by 1940s US crime-scene photos such as Weegee's *Murder at the Feast of San Gennaro* (left). Below: his voyeuristic take on *The Death of Chatterton*

by Henry Wallis (bottom left) has a blonde posing as a corpse on an operating table. *The 9 Lives* project will feature at Art Chicago, April 30-May 3, and at the Amstel Gallery, Amsterdam Oct 14-31; www.amstelgallery.com

