

THE **RPS**

ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY
GROUP



Contemporary North Members' Showcase

Issue 13

March 2024

Contemporary North

(Part of the RPS Contemporary Group)

Members' Showcase

provides a platform for contributors to our monthly meetings to display the work they have shared.

Contributors have curated their own images and provided the accompanying text making this a collaborative group venture.

16th March 2024 Meeting held via Zoom

Chaired by Patricia Ruddle

Contributors:

Philip Pearce

Michel Claverie

Douglas May

Carol Olerud

André Bergmans

Janet Cook

Lyn Newton

Patricia Ruddle

Wendy North

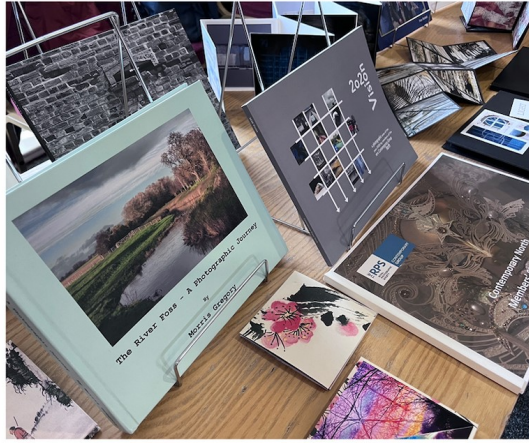
Colin Howard



RPS Yorkshire Members' Day

Saturday 9th March

Six members of our North Group represented the Contemporary Group at the Yorkshire Region Members' Day and AGM in March along with a few other SIGs. We exhibited the many facets and projects that our Group specialises in, from posters and prints to books, collages and innovative exploding books. We also distributed about 40 copies of the Contemporary Group Journal. Our presentation was successful and generated much interest in our photography, with several Yorkshire members expressing a wish to join us at future meetings.



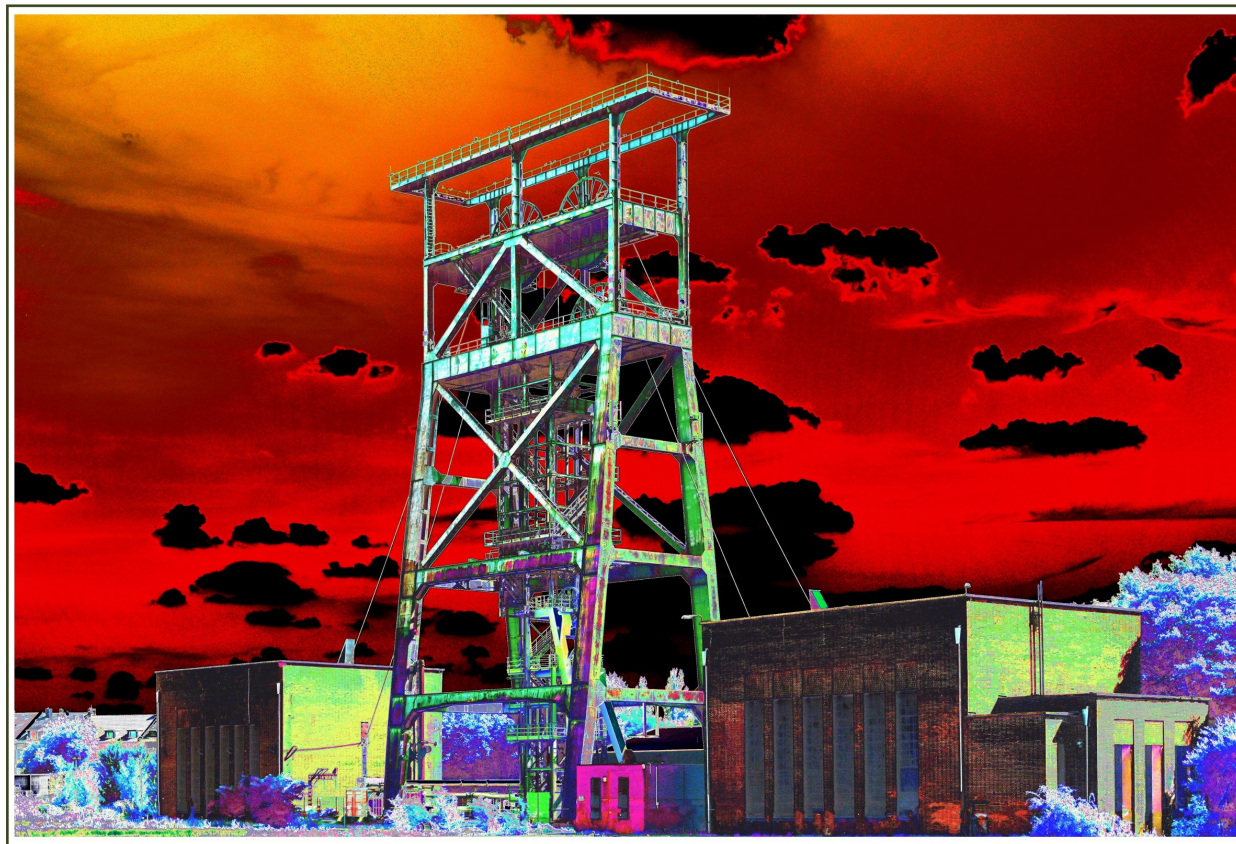
Philip Pearce

The university in Germany where I have a teaching position offers a so-called Studium Fundamentale. Here students can attend seminars that are not directly related to their course of study. These can be social topics, artistic topics, etc.

In this context, among many other seminars, my seminar on **photographic ethnography** is offered. Here young people learn to explore and perceive their living environment through the viewfinder of a camera. We go on two photo excursions and have two photo discussions during the semester.

Up to now it has always been possible to organise a photo exhibition at the university at the end of the semester. It's an exciting job that I really enjoy.

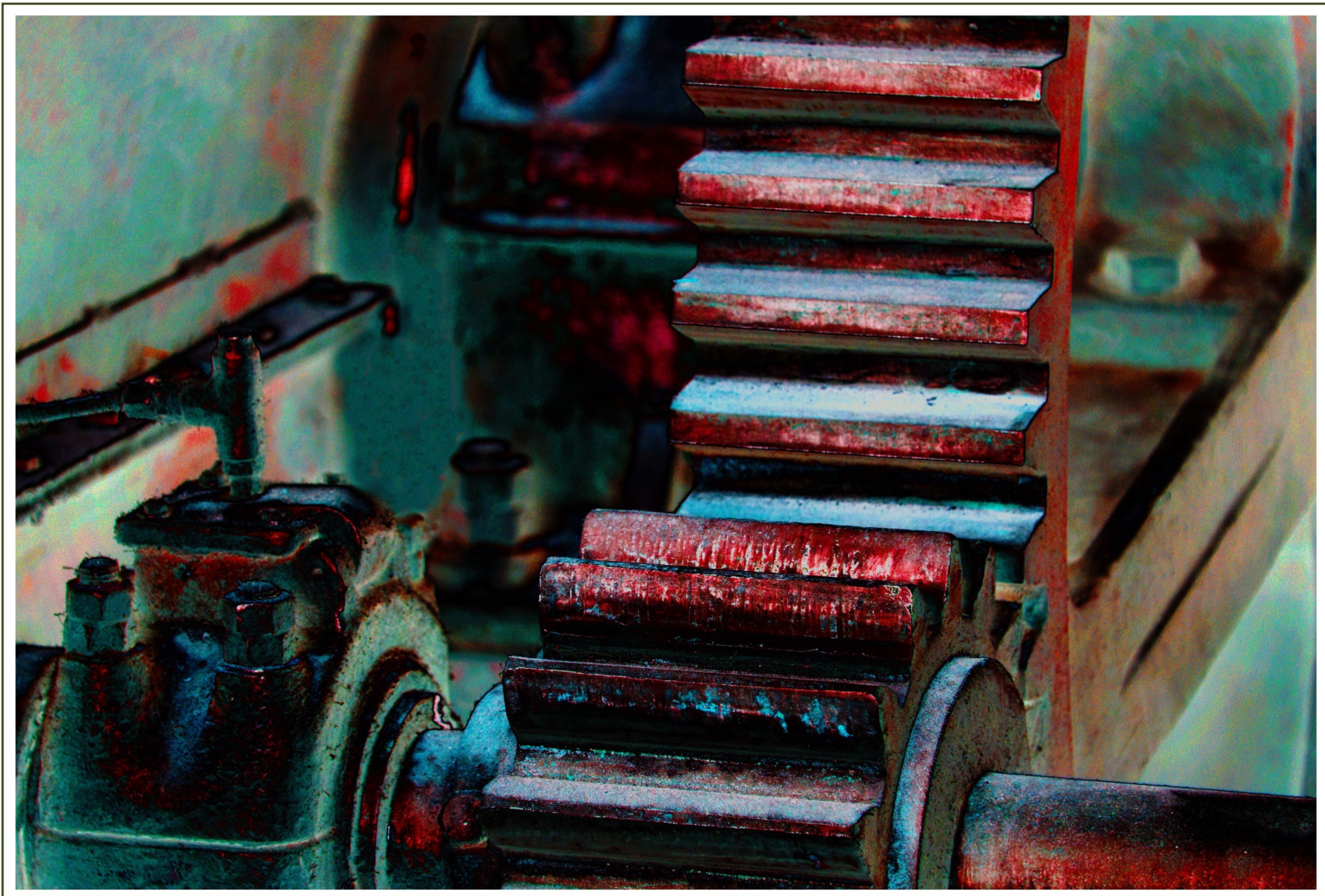
The link to my website is www.pearce-photography.de Although it is in German, I think the images speak for themselves.



Burning Sky



Autumn



Driven



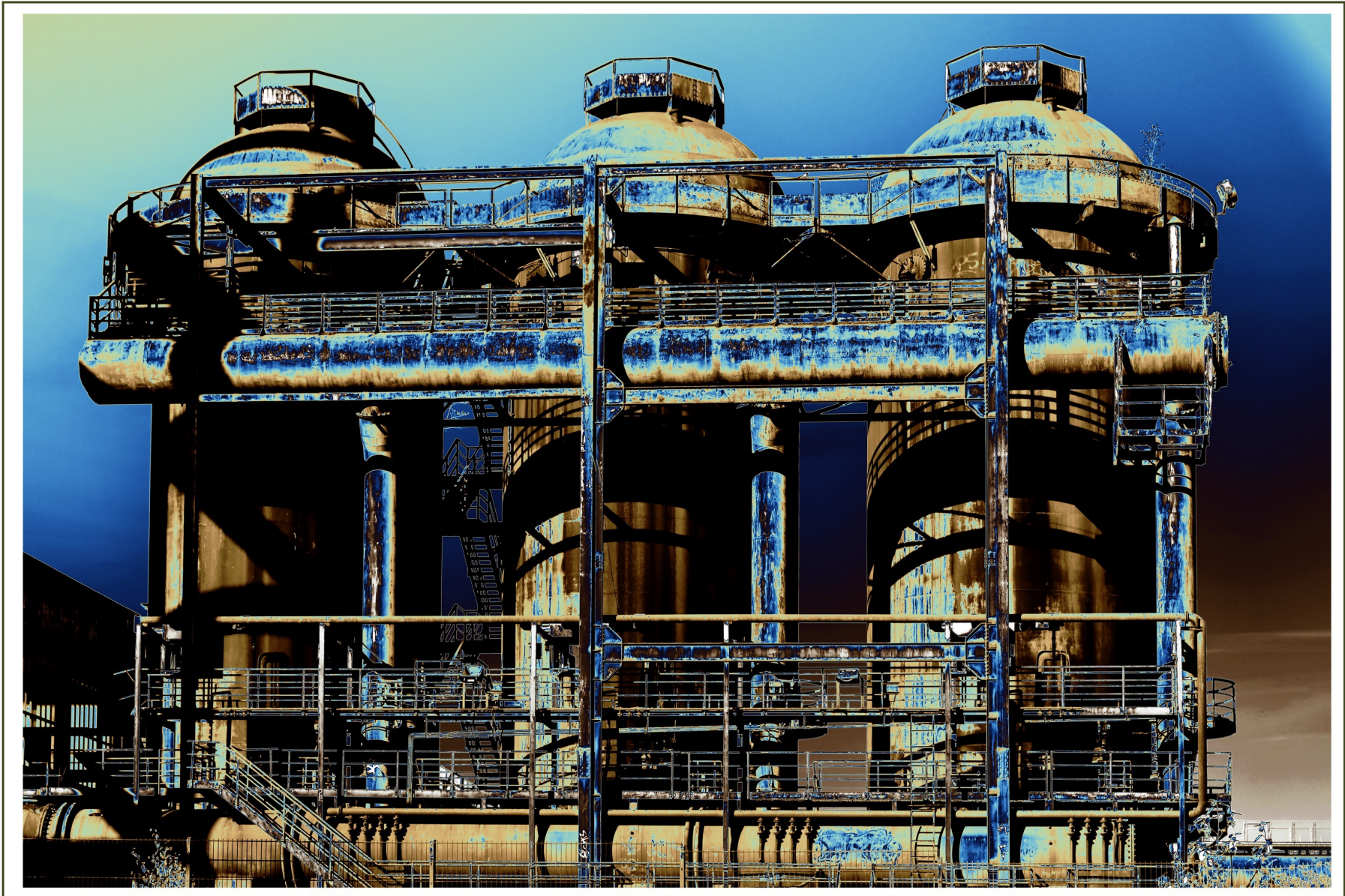
In focus



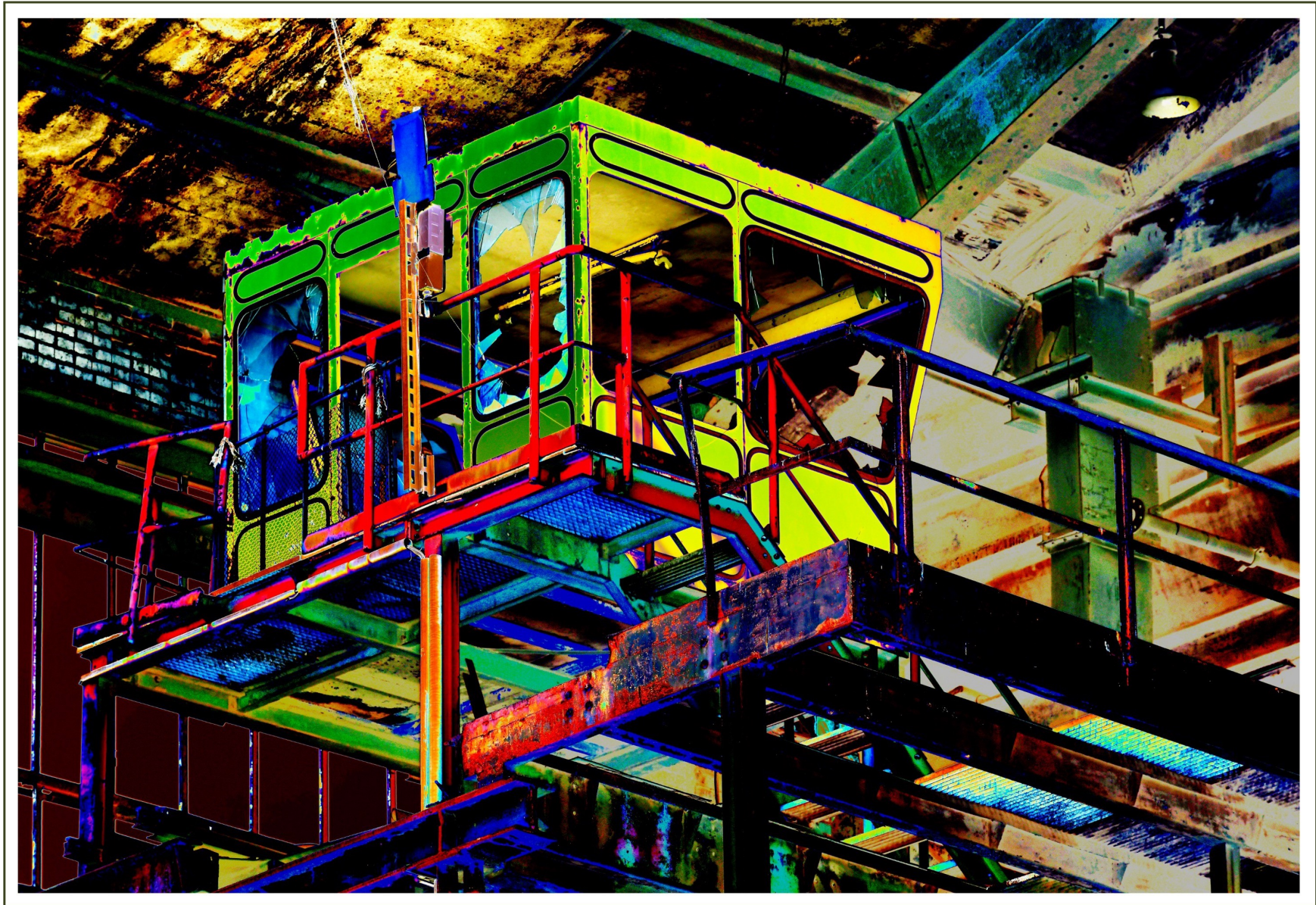
In Spotlight



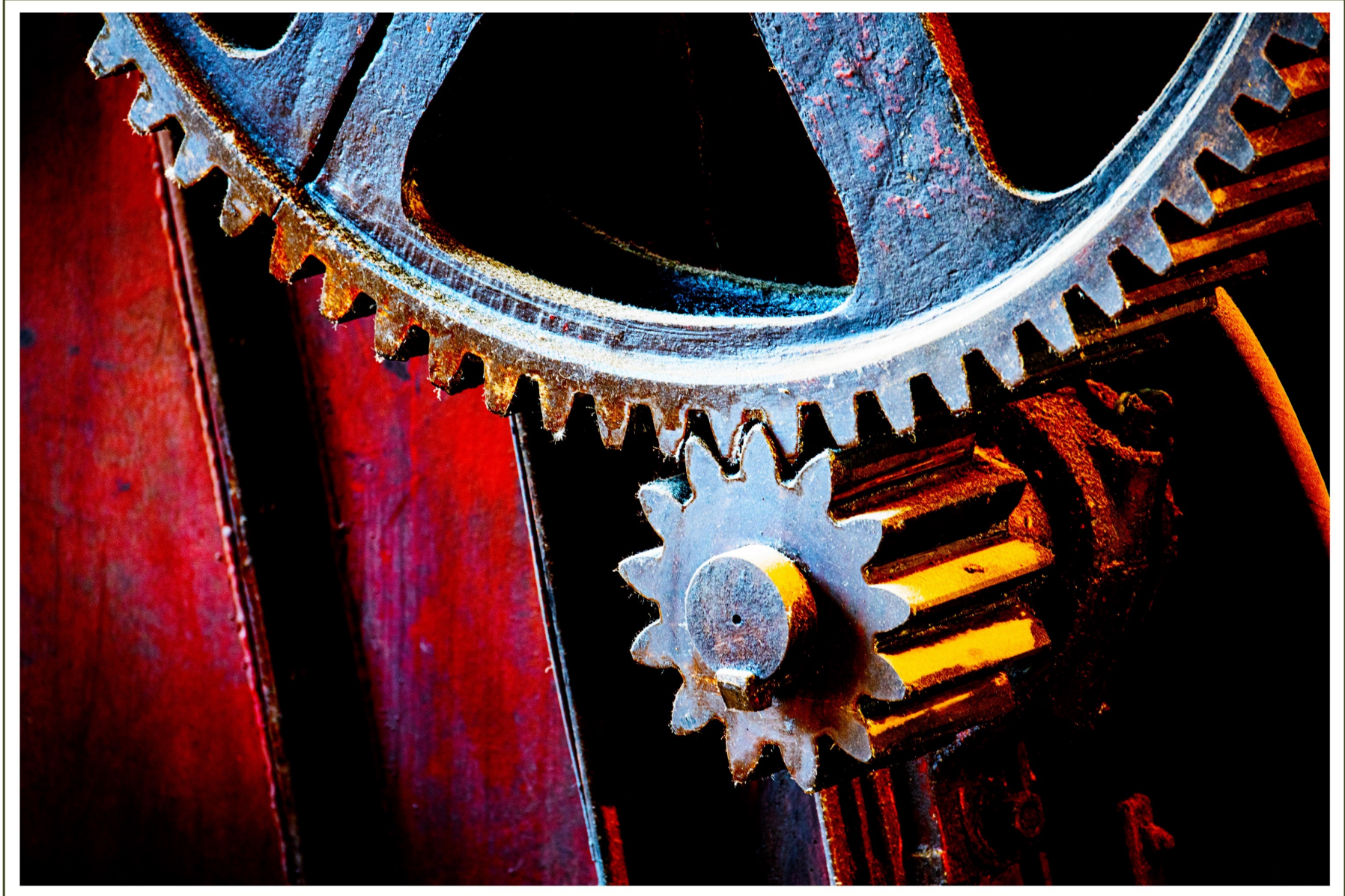
Luminosity



Monument



Pilot Bridge



Powered



Proud

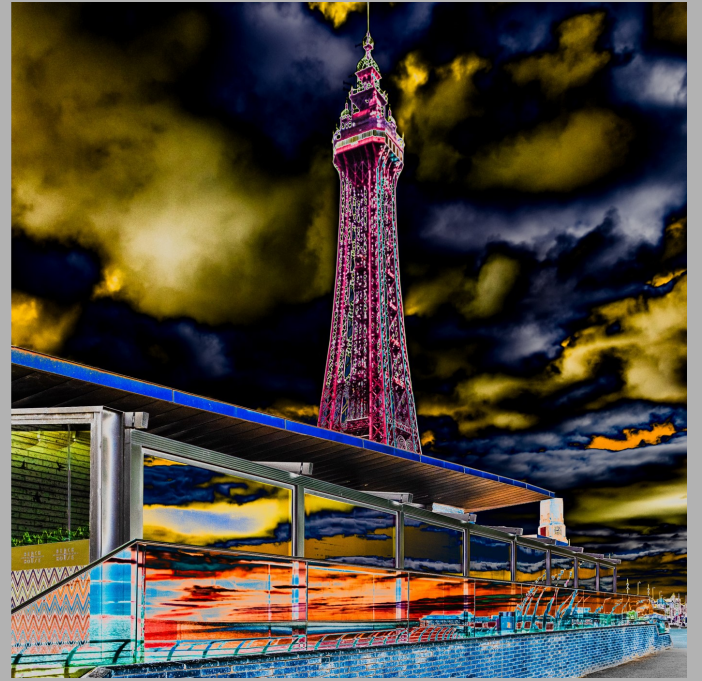


Storm

Michel Claverie



London Bishopsgate Refractions



Blackpool Tower Reflections



London Bacon Street Open Space



London Coventry Street Billboards

Douglas May FRPS The sad tale of Mrs McLeod

Margaretha Zelle was born in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands in 1876. A well off childhood ended when her father become bankrupt, her mother died and the family fell apart.

She answered a newspaper advert placed by a Dutch officer, Captain McLeod and became his wife.

She went to live with him in the Dutch East Indies, where he treated her badly.

Whilst there she studied Indonesian dance and upon her return to Europe in 1902 she separated from her husband and reinvented herself as an exotic dancer with the stage name Mata Hari.

She also became a successful courtesan. She had danced for the Crown Prince of Germany.

During World War I she was engaged by the French to spy for them. She also accepted money from the Germans to supply information to them.

The French arrested her and executed her by firing squad on 15 October 1917.

Her portrait hangs in the Hotel d' Indes in the Hague, which she used to habituate.

This series of photographs is not intended to be biographical but to represent her in the twilight world in which she lived.







Eyes



"Eyes" © Carol Olerud FRPS

The Eyes, is of one family—my sister's. Her husband passed away a few years after I took them, and she has this photo hanging in her new home (with her new husband). It's the family with three children and a very special photo for her. They were part of a group exposition I took part in, called 'Lens voor de Mens'.

Portraits

Portraits, is of my family members. Husbands, wives, sisters, daughters, son, brother, uncle, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephew, brother-in-law etc.

I'd taken part in a Mentoring group with my photo club and we were asked to take photos with different compositions, like macros of faces/eyes which were not the standard portrait styles usually taken.

Usually I'm a colour photographer, but for this collage black and white works better for the skin tones.



Portraits © Carol Olerud FRPS

I came across this body of work in my archive – as you do –

It was a project I did on Relationships - Mother and Daughter. Part of a masterclass workshop with Rosa Verhoeve (RIP 2018). It is a conceptual body of work, which I don't usually do. It was very difficult to try and take photos of our relationship. I had first made sketches of the idea, a circle with stick figures in different positions!

We are supposed to be standing in a circle (can't see it because of the long grass) and I have a self-timer button in my hand. The photos were taken when my daughter wasn't aware, to try and keep the spontaneity and let our emotions go. Playfulness, love and the mother/daughter role. I think we swapped who had the timer, so that we both had no idea when the photos were taken.

My mentor wasn't overly impressed with it all! They were in colour and the green was overwhelming now in hindsight. I have since processed them again in black and white square photos to focus on the two people and include less of the surroundings.

Anyway, now in retrospect, I enjoy these photos (with the new edit). It was a period in time with my youngest daughter Lena who is now living and studying in Sweden so I don't see her so often!

Even if the project didn't please my mentor (not a mother) I am extremely pleased myself to have these photos as a lovely memory of when she lived at home still and we could play in front of my camera!

Taken with Canon 5DM2, 28-70mm f2,8L on a tripod in my overgrown back garden May 2016.

Putting them into a panel and rearranging the sequence, with the four outer corners which have a slightly different perspective, works – in my opinion!

The mentor was really good – she got me out of my comfort zone, and this project was the lead up to my Empty Nest Syndrome! She really made you work with your emotions and things you were going through!

The Masterclass group, Storytelling – lasted until 2020 with 2 more mentors.



Mother Daughter Relationship © Carol Olerud FRPS

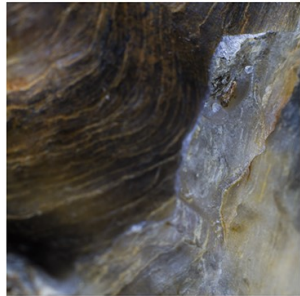
André Bergmans Polyptychs

André was one of our members who made us aware of the grid approach to develop single ideas or to use as a basis for more considered long-term projects.

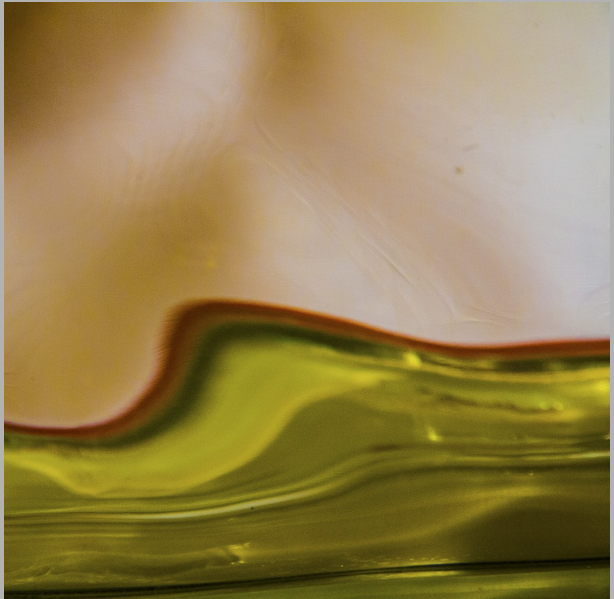
He wasn't able to attend our meeting because he has been mentoring a young photographer with two exhibitions. The first one opened this weekend, the second one in September to coincide with the world-wide suicide prevention week. Mirthe Beerling is the young photographer and her conceptual work deals with her mental health history and healing process.

Her website: <https://mirthebeerling.myportfolio.com/>

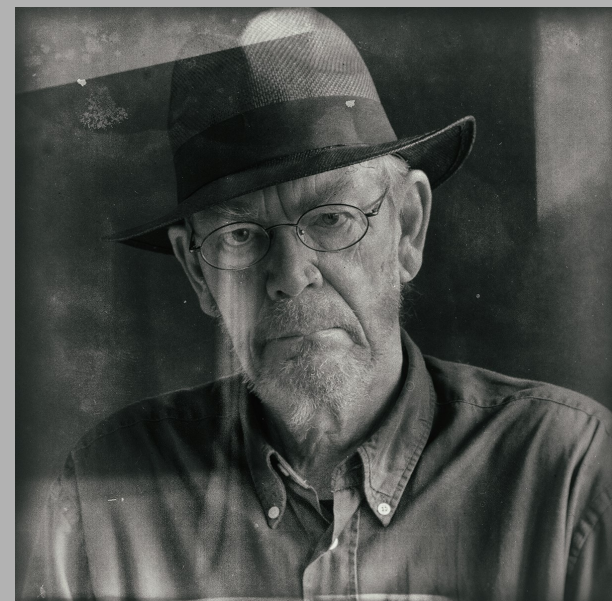












Janet Cook Cambodia 2014 - around the swimming pool and a first foray into grid making.

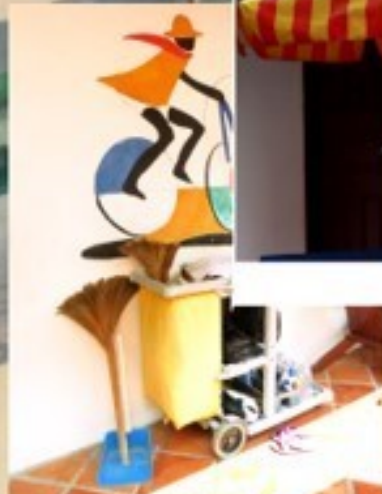




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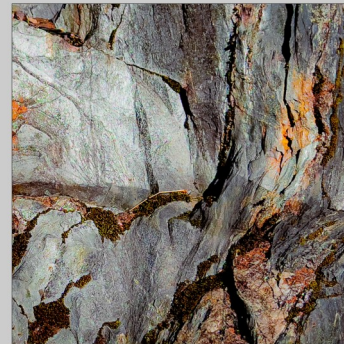
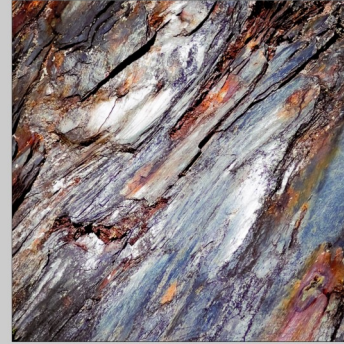
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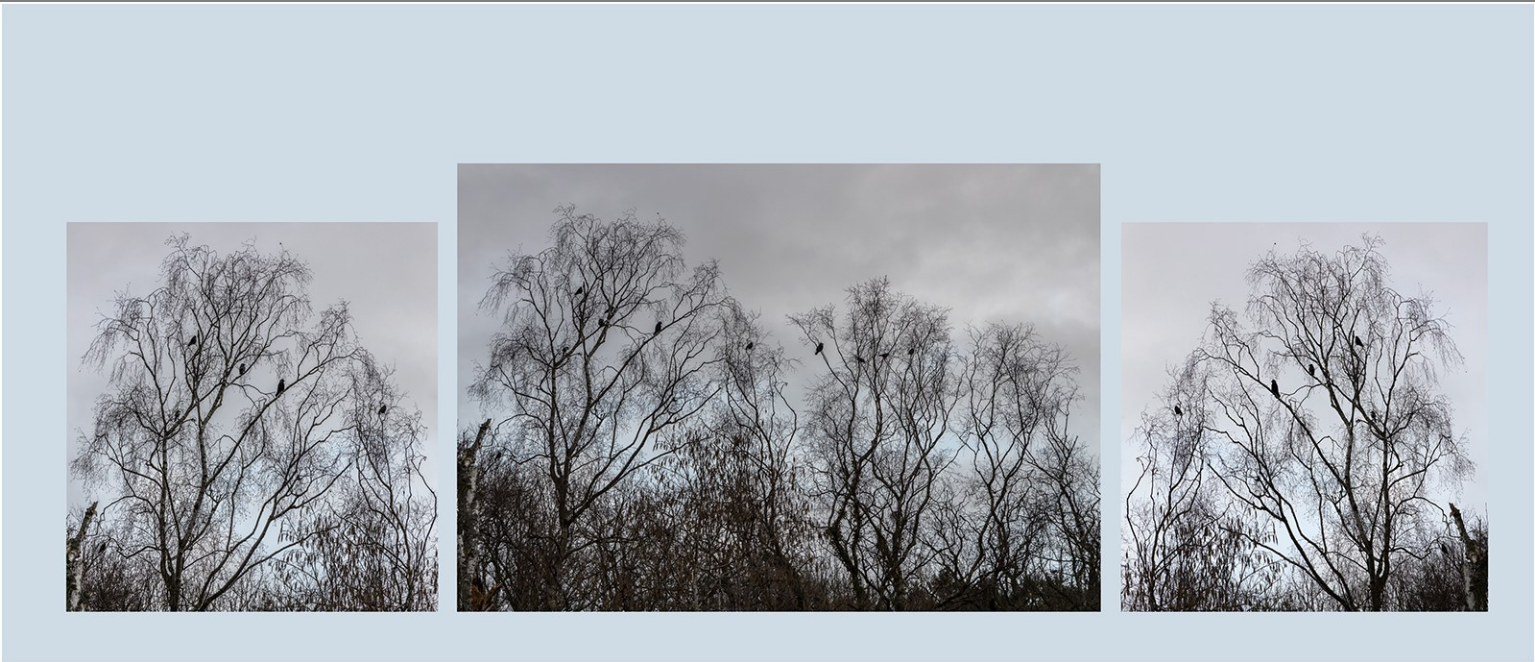


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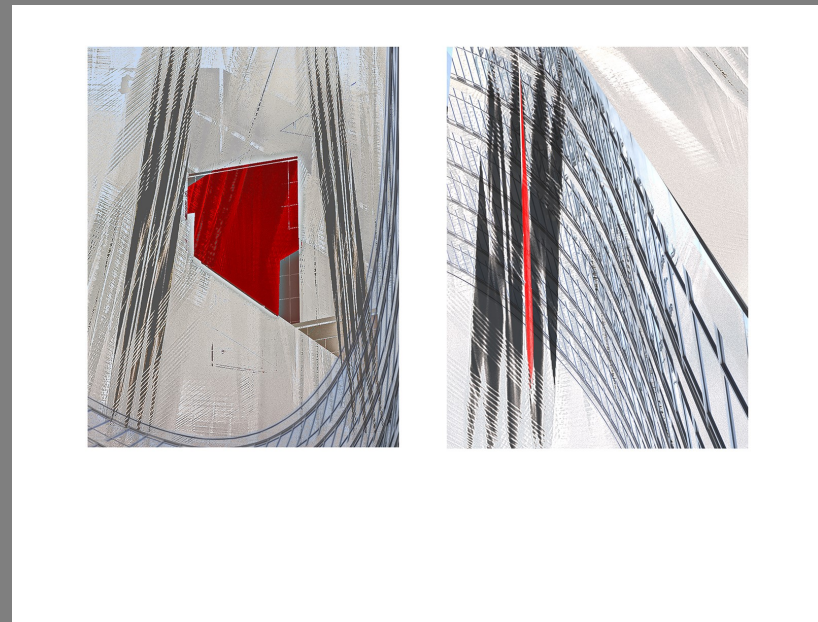
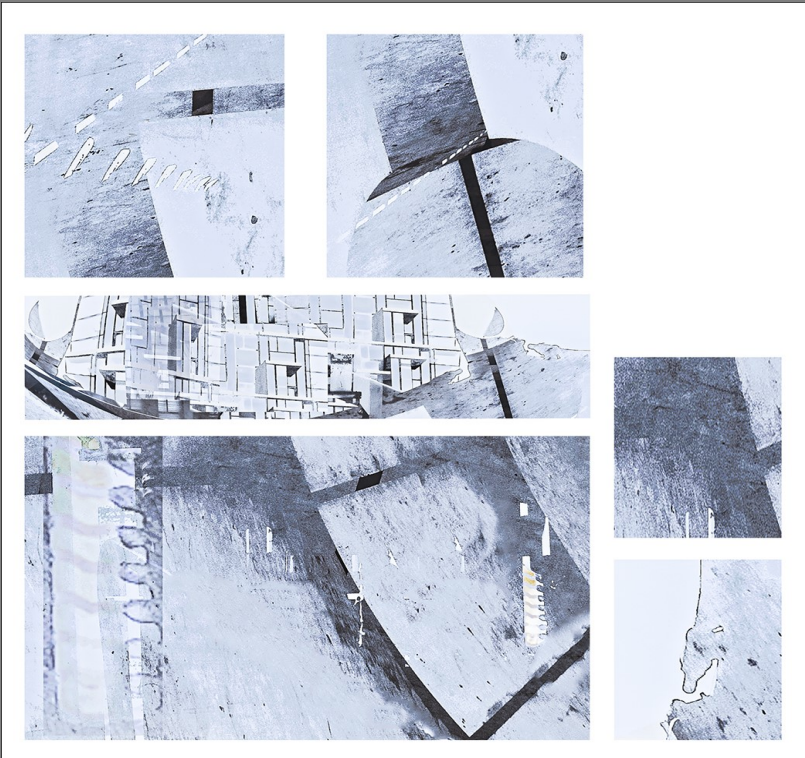
Lyn Newton

Grids are an excellent way of combining a collection of images to create impact and a sense of place. The grids on these two pages were all taken in a local park one cold winter's day.

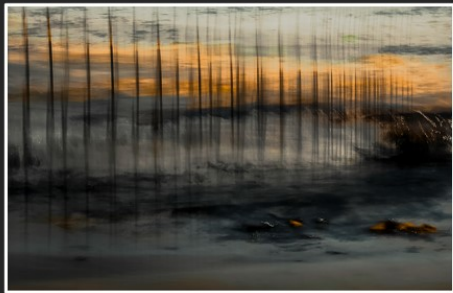
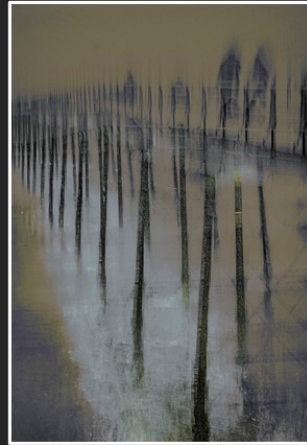
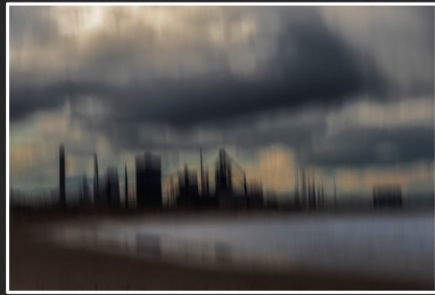




Each of these grids uses disassembled parts of buildings in different ways to create a new way of looking at something quite ordinary.



The Pier



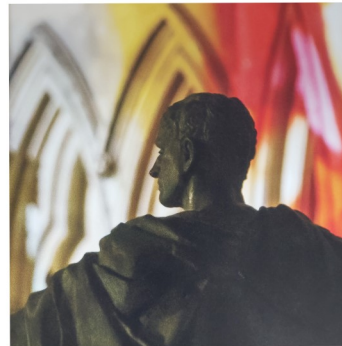
This is part of a project I am working on relating to Saltburn Pier. By pulling the images together it creates a pleasing cohesion.

Patricia Ruddle ARPS

Faces of York

Perhaps the beginning of a project, which André Bergmans talked about in our meeting in December.

Showcase Issue 10: <https://rps.org/media/owafnng1/cn-showcase-12-23.pdf>



My first thought was to capture the well-known faces of York. Only four here in the grid, but it gave me the idea to expand to a project with all faces, whether famous or ordinary citizens. Then another idea emerged – investigation into St Cuthbert in York for a larger project. (I've always wondered why he isn't our national saint, as opposed to some dragon-killer from Turkey!)

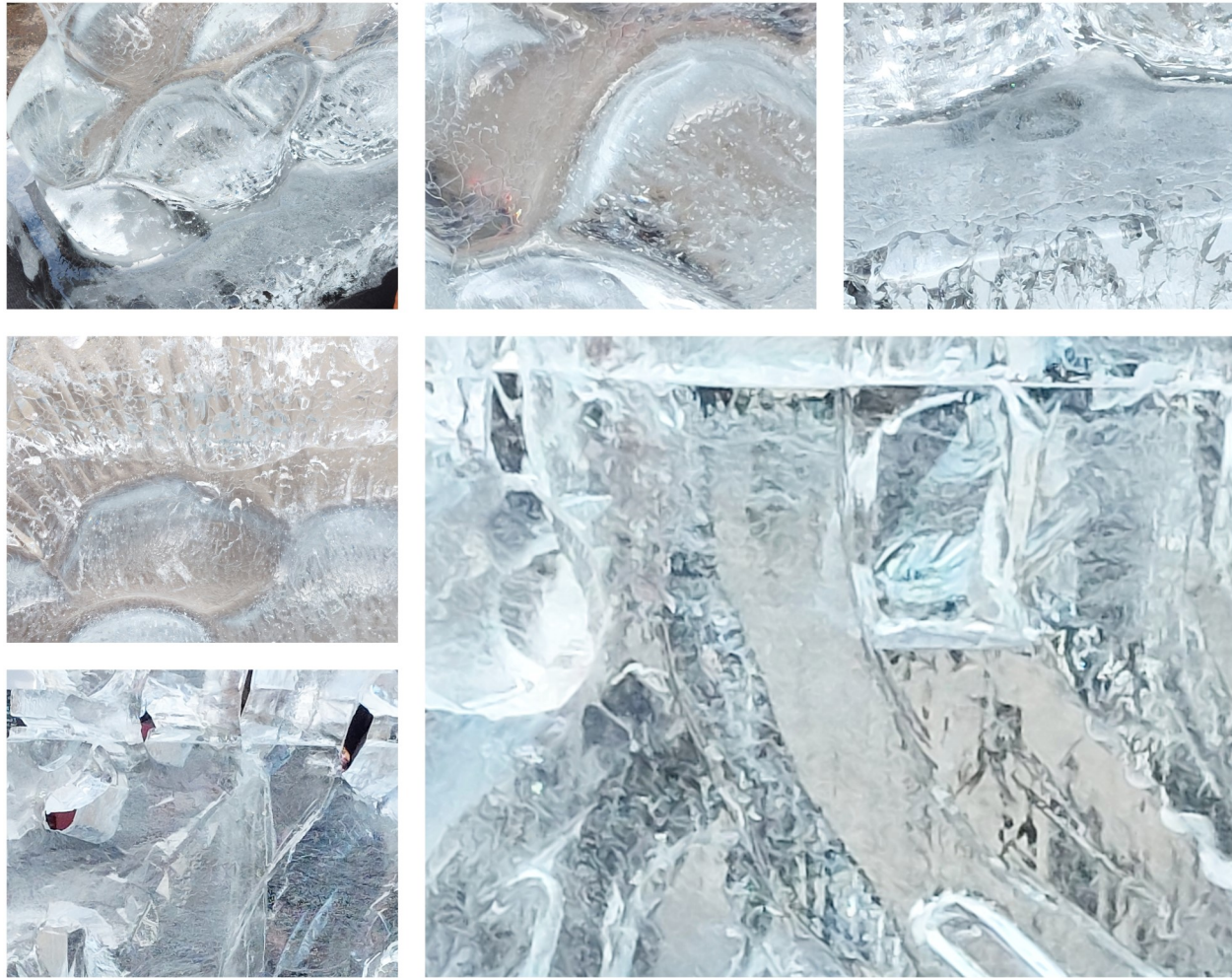
Mexborough Canal

Walking along the canal for an hour with the goal of taking enough photos for a 3 x 3 grid. Not easy! My second attempt at an In-Collage group of photos.



Ice Sculpture

Taken during the Annual York Ice Sculpture Festival with the purpose of creating a 3 x3 collage, although this one a bit different with regard to size of grids. I'm still learning.



Spring Alert!

A gift of daffodils made me happy to think that Spring was soon to arrive. Taken on my phone and then manipulated in Snapseed – great fun. Sometimes I think that we are too serious with our photography and forget the sheer pleasure of just playing.



Wendy North Sharing my photographs in a grid format

In the last edition of Showcase I shared links to places on the web where you can find examples of photo grids I've created. For this edition I've chosen to say a little more about how I use them in my Blipfoto diary.

With the advent of digital photography and particularly since phone photography has taken off, the world is drowning in millions of images, many of which never see the light of day. By creating photo-grids we have a means of sharing images that might never be seen and when selecting the images we use, we are using our editorial skills to create something new, something that says more than a single image could ever show us.

I've created photographic grids ever since I discovered the grid layout tool in what is now the redundant programme called Picasa. I think I first began to use the format because it was fun but my thinking has developed over the years and I now use photo-grids for different purposes. Sometimes this has involved asking the viewer to construct their own story based on the images while at other times I've thought of the 'cubist' painters and their saying that the eye sees multiple viewpoints which the brain then assembles to form a particular view of that object or scene.

I've created hundreds of these grids over the years, so at our March meeting I shared grids that I'd used in my Blipfoto diary during the first few months of 2024. I also felt it might introduce the group to an alternative way of sharing images and a different photographic community.

So starting with the most recent and going back to February 2024 here are a few of the images I shared.



16 March 2024 - A visit to Cannon Hall museum with a friend who is interested in antiques, particularly silverware, which he still deals in. It was the shapes and structure of this furniture which grabbed my attention. The big hall was full of chairs and the natural light coming through from one side was fantastic. I've always been fascinated by the 'wheel' chairs so I took the opportunity to take several images of them in their room setting.

12 March 2024 - I've been doing Blipfoto since October 2010 so it's often difficult to get creative. Sometimes I allow the day I edit an image to be my Blip of the day. Here I wanted to emphasise the shapes of the windows and decorative features and so I created a triptych from a single image taken of *da Mula* on the island of Murano.



8 March 2024 - a post lunch walk with my camera in the walled garden at Cannon Hall. They have recently restored the greenhouse windows and the patterns attracted my attention. I took quite a lot of images and then selected the arrangement I wanted using In-Collage, which is an App for tablets and phones. Abstract patterns often surface in my Blifoto diary.





25 February 2024 -

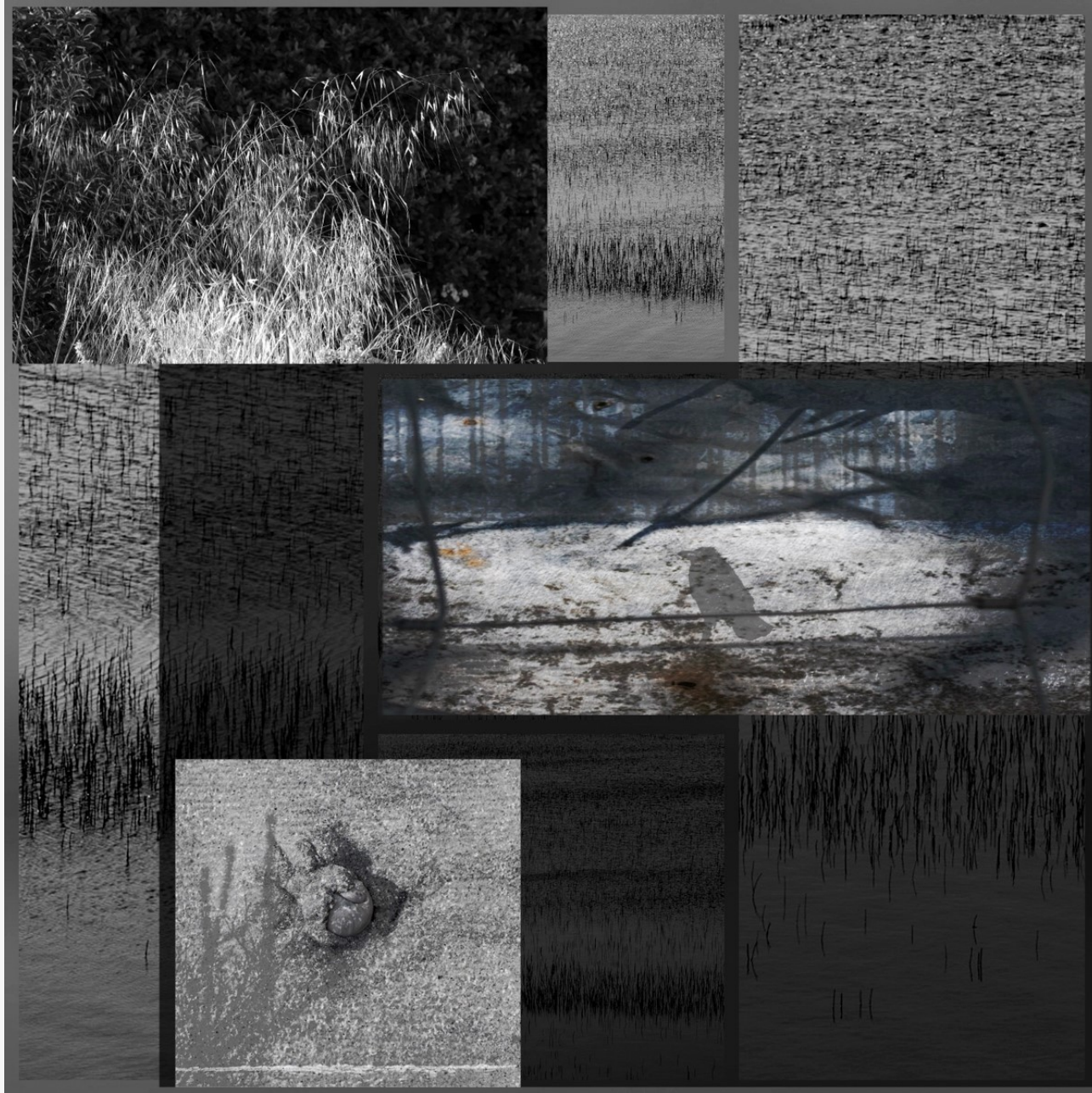
A simple grid layout using two images from this year's Venice Carnevale. With so many people around in St Mark's Square there was often a face peering over a shoulder so I chose to present these participants as a diptych.



9 February 2024 - Carnivale time and it's raining.

I took a new small Lumix camera to Venice with me this year and before I left I set up three custom settings which included a soft focus slow shutter setting with which I hoped to record the movement of people. I think the rain helped as it reduced the amount of light in the street. I used the jpeg version to create this grid in In-collage while I was away.

Blipfoto is a social networking site with a difference. There is no advertising and it's funded by the subscription of members. People use it in lots of different ways. In my early days I networked with several people from NZ and Australia and one of those early contacts, Rainie, is still part of my photography circle today. I have to confess that I've not reached out and commented on other people's images nearly enough recently, which is how you build up contacts. I started in October 2010 following an invitation from a friend who moved to Spain. I've often found that my membership of Blipfoto kept me taking photographs, even when I was struggling to keep motivated. Sometimes I've come up with gems when pursuing an idea though at other times, keeping going has been a real struggle. I've shared a small number of images here but you can find others on my Blipfoto site: blipfoto.com/Viewpoint



An example of a grid which asks the viewer to construct their own story

Colin Howard FRPS

Madrid

Meet my friend Pablo (Juan Pablo Minguillón). When the sun shines, he can be found within the beautiful gardens surrounding the Museo El Prado in Madrid. Together with his photo box he offers an old-fashioned alternative to the iPhone selfie. After 10 minutes or so in the warm Spanish sun, you can walk away with a crafted silver gelatin portrait for the princely sum of €10. Here is how it works.

Inside this magic box is a focusing screen for the f11 plate camera lens, a box of Ilford multigrade darkroom printing paper (ISO 6!), and two small trays of chemicals, developer and fixative. The inside is accessed through a light tight glove port and the setup is completed by a focusing hole on top of the box, accompanied by a one minute egg timer.

After the subject is comfortably seated, their image is focused on the internal screen. A piece of Ilford Multigrade photo paper is then removed from its box within and attached to the front of the focusing screen. An exposure of the sitter is then made for three seconds. The sheet of paper is subsequently developed and fixed using the chemicals in the two internal trays. The paper once taken out into the light reveals a negative image of the sitter.

Once dry, the paper negative is now placed into a holder swung out in front of the lens. This in turn is focused and a second sheet of paper attached to the internal focusing screen. After 3 to 4 seconds exposure, the piece of paper is developed and fixed. The resulting positive image is withdrawn into the daylight and dried in the sun. All that remains is to present the 5X7 image to the delighted client.

Surprisingly, Pablo has a steady stream of 10 to 12 clients a day, so fascinated by this antiquated form of photography. Pablo closed his photo shop in Madrid during the pandemic and decided not to reopen it afterwards. Now he just enjoys himself by fascinating passers-by on their way to El Prado.

Footnote

I first saw one of the street photo boxes in the rural town Pergamino in Argentina in 1980, long before mobile phones became ubiquitous. To my surprise, I have seen recently at least one other similar photographer complete with photo box elsewhere in Spain.



Bruges

Bruges—this a darkroom print. I made a nine hole mask of black card and then performed nine separate exposures on the same sheet of photographic paper. You will note eight are the same: only the ninth image is different! This was part of an exercise I undertook when I was a regular attendee at the Missenden Abbey advanced photography group.

