

Contemporary Photography

A collection of the best of new Contemporary
Photography from the UK and around the world



Issue 91
June 2023

THE RPS
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY



Image © Karolina Wojtas

Front cover image © Luciana Demichelis

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Paul Ashley ARPS



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Contemporary Photography

Contemporary Group ethos - Photography that conveys ideas, stimulates thought and encourages interpretation; photographs 'about' rather than 'of'.

This publication is produced by the Contemporary Group of the Royal Photographic Society.

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If you wish to submit articles for the Journal, please send all copy and images to:

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Deadline for the Sept 2023 issue is 1 August 2023.

Editorial

What does 'performance' mean to you? Perhaps it is live music, a theatre, or a dance routine. We also use the word in talking about a musical recording: "the musicians performed well" (though what we hear may be the result of multiple recordings stitched together). I photograph a lot of stage productions, explaining light-heartedly to others that "I enjoy getting close to such powerful emotion and drama, however fake". 'Performance' is behaving in a way that, to a greater or lesser extent, is not true to how we really are.

I'll try not to reopen the debate about whether photography shows us truth. But can photography help us understand performance? Is every person we photograph performing in some way, as a means of getting through life and interacting with others? Can we show people as they really are (whatever that might mean) without the barrier of performance?

Sandy Miles writes that "the power of our own gaze is the knowledge of our own truths". Her collaborators, though posed for photography, want to be seen for who and what they are, without artifice or pretence. Robert Nicklin's couples on the other hand have no motive for showing themselves as anything other than what they are, and how they relate to each other; nevertheless, they are still consciously posing for the camera. It is how they instinctively present themselves to us that we find interesting.

Luciana Demichelis has gone looking for dance floors, where young people dance alone and for themselves. She brings in the notion of 'limbo' as a space where young people can work out who they are and who they will be in their adult lives (how they will 'perform').

Pratya Jangkong and Olga Fedorova, on the other hand, have documented in detail how they and others are obliged to put on a performance for the benefit of the immigration authorities. They create an evidence trail that investigators can discover, evidence of a relationship that may be true, or false! Such obligatory performance may be distressing, irritating or entertaining, depending on your circumstances. When it steps over a boundary into a forced conformity it becomes disturbing. Karolina Wojtas makes an angry critique of discipline in Polish schools, partly relieved by the rebellion shown in many of her images. As she made this work based on personal experience, it appears that in her case at least the drive for conformity has not worked.

You will see that alongside switching to a four month publishing schedule, we have redesigned the journal. I hope you like it, and we welcome any comments. Thanks are especially due to Christine Pinnington, the layout editor.

Paul Ashley ARPS, Editor

Limbo

Luciana Demichelis

Limbo - a liminal space (from the Latin *limes*, which means limit or border) responds to the stage of not being in one place or another: it represents the threshold between something that has gone and something that is yet to come. Throughout history, the concept of limbo represents the place where souls awaiting trial were condemned.

4 For years, I photographed people alone despite being together among smoke machines, sweat machines and DJ booths. At these parties, over the years, I have seen the transition from youth to adulthood of my generation, and the time between life and death of several people I have met.

That limbo exists in this body of photographs: the dance floor was a border territory and contained an immense political charge in the search for our own identity. Psychoactive substances, a substantial component of the body's trance during those nights, have the same enigmatic component in Argentina: the lack of information about what is consumed, due to the lack of testing and access to evidence-based information.

Limbo is a personal photographic project that imagines a border journey of one's own body on the border between documentary and fiction.

See: lucianademichelis.com.ar















Bed Checks

Pratya Jankong and Olga Fedorova

Bed Checks is an authentic look inside one of the hundreds of thousands of relationships affected, and endangered, by the limits on freedom of movement imposed by the state.

A 'bed check' is an immigration enforcement tactic wherein government agents knock on the married couple's door at dawn, seeking proof that the citizen and 'the alien' sleep in the same bed. This project began as a reaction to the government's perverse attention to the photographers' mixed immigration status marriage. Combining photographs with the documents from the so-called 'alien file' obtained through a freedom of information request, the project negotiates the territory between surveillance and privacy, intimacy and performance, individual and the state.

Despite being widely seen as the easiest way to immigrate to the United States, mixed-status marriages are subject to an invasive vetting process. Applicants are compelled to spend thousands of dollars on legal and application fees. Those who cannot afford to do so, or do not meet the income requirement, face being separated. Immigrants are compelled to self-police, crafting the types of marriages most likely to pass the vetting process. Failure to meet the standard of evidence can lead to deportation; what counts as evidence - a capitalist trail of shared consumption and debt - is irrevocably tied to power dynamics of race, gender, and class.

As the camera's point of view shifts from the inside to the outside of the relationship, the project confronts the viewers' notions of family, migration, and photographic evidence.

See: www.pratyajankong.com and olgafe.myportfolio.com



Affidavit of Support Under Section 213A of the INA		USCIS Form I-864	
Department of Homeland Security		U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services	
Affidavit of Support Submitter <input type="checkbox"/> Petitioner <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> Substantive Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> JN Owner		Section 213A Review <input type="checkbox"/> MEETS <input type="checkbox"/> DOES NOT MEET requirements Reviewed By: _____ Office: _____ Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____	
For USCIS Use Only		Number of Support Affidavits in File <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2	
To be completed by an attorney or accredited representative (if any)		Remarks	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Select this box if Form 4-28 or 4-28a is attached		Attorney State Bar Number (if applicable) _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Select this box if Form 4-28 or 4-28a is attached		Attorney or Accredited Representative USCIS Online Account Number (if any) _____	
START HERE - Type or print in black ink.			
Part 1. Basis For Filing Affidavit of Support		Mailing Address	
1. Eligible Petitioner I, the sponsor, am filing this affidavit of support because (check only one box):		2.A. In Care of Name _____	
1.A. I am the petitioner. I filed an I-130 for the immigration of my relative.		2.B. Street Number and Name _____	
1.B. I filed an alien worker petition on behalf of the intending immigrant, who is related to me as my _____		2.C. Apt. Box <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fr. <input type="checkbox"/> Ext. <input type="checkbox"/> 488 #2	
1.C. I have an ancestry interest of at least 1 ancestor(s) _____ which filed an alien worker petition on behalf of the intending immigrant, who is related to me as the _____		2.D. City or Town Houston, TX	
1.D. I am the only joint sponsor.		2.E. State <input type="checkbox"/> DC <input type="checkbox"/> ZIP Code 77007	
1.E. I am the _____ (husband/wife) of the intending immigrant.		2.F. Postal Code _____	
1.F. I am the original petitioner in Abscond. I am the petitioner's sponsor. I am the intending immigrant's _____		2.G. Country USA	
NOTE: If you are filing this form as a sponsor, you must include proof of your U.S. citizenship, U.S. national status, or lawful permanent resident status.		Other Information	
Part 2. Information About the Principal Immigrant		3. Country of Citizenship or Nationality Thailand	
1.A. Family Name (Last Name) Jackson		4. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) 09/26/1984	
1.B. Given Name (First Name) Jackson		5. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any) A- _____	
1.C. Middle Name _____		6. USCIS Online Account Number (if any) _____	
		7. Daytime Telephone Number 8174783147 Dallas, TX 75201	
		Reviewed/Qualified By NBC OCT 15 2008	
Form I-864, 08/07/08			
141 963 000 000 1304555 012647 58 1792157 042515 22105 011219 401_0333-000007 Part 1 of 10			

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

In the matter of the I-130/I-485 Petitions of:
Olga FEDOROVA, Petitioner
Pratya JANKONG, Beneficiary/Applicant

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss.:
COUNTY OF QUEENS)

Boothree Rogganring, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. [redacted] make this Affidavit in support of Olga Fedorova's Petition for her husband to adjust his status to that of a legal permanent resident.

2. I have known the beneficiary, Pratya, through our mutual acquaintance for more than 3 years and we also live very close to one another in the same neighborhood in Queens, New York. Over the course of these last several years he has become a close friend to us and often attends our family functions and holidays. We also talk with and/or see each other on a regular basis.

3. I first met his wife, Olga, last year when Pratya brought her along at one of our house parties. Since then, I have had a chance to witness their relationship grow. I often see them together in the neighborhood at one of the several restaurants we regularly go to or out for a walk or morning jog.

4. My family and I were also guests at their wedding ceremony. We know each other very well and I am fully familiar with the facts and circumstances of his personal situation. In this way, I know the nature and extent of their marriage, their residence and that they hold themselves out in public as husband and wife. I wish them all the best.

5. I can be reached at [redacted] if there are any additional questions.

WHEREFORE, I swear under penalties of perjury that the foregoing is truth.

Sworn to before me this 20th day of December, 2018.

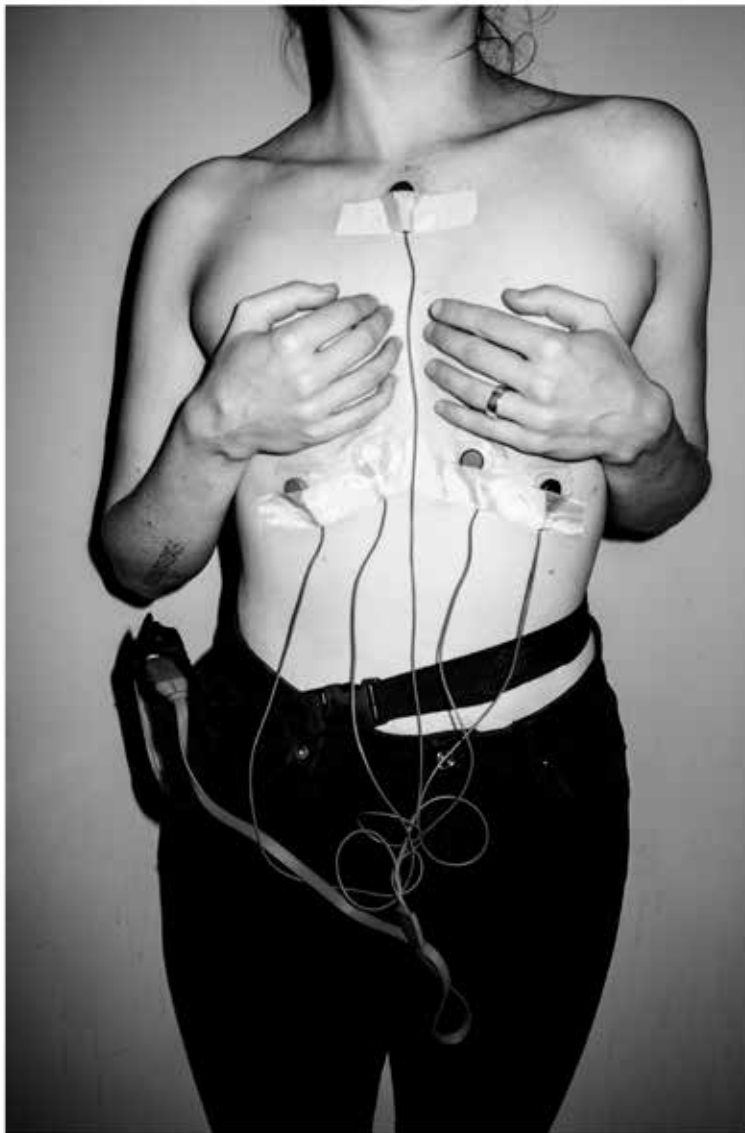
Parvati Gupta
Notary Public

Boothree Rogganring
Boothree Rogganring

20181220 150455 02365 14 378257 04225 2210 04225 AOL_LL10-08587



100304





Do not detach or separate the W-2 Records below. File Form IT-2 as an entire page with your return. See instructions on the back.

Have you **EVER**:

48.a. Committed, threatened to commit, attempted to commit, conspired to commit, incited, endorsed, advocated, planned, or prepared any of the following: hijacking, sabotage, kidnapping, political assassination, or use of a weapon or explosive to harm another individual or cause substantial damage to property? Yes No

36. Have you **EVER** directly or indirectly procured (or attempted to procure) or imported prostitutes or persons for the purpose of prostitution? Yes No

57. During the period from March 23, 1933 to May 8, 1945, did you ever order, incite, assist, or otherwise participate in the persecution of any person because of race, religion, national origin, or political opinion, in association with either the Nazi government of Germany or any organization or government associated or allied with the Nazi government of Germany? Yes No





STATE OF NEW YORK
 COUNTY OF KINGS

Mr. Tarzom Tabares being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. [redacted] make this Affidavit in support of Olga Radomack's Petition for her husband to adjust his status to that of a lawful permanent resident.

Oxys:

2. I have known the Petitioner, Olga, for over 17 years or so, having attended CUNY Hunter College in New York City together. We are good friends and know each other's circumstances well. I have knowledge of her first meeting, having a relationship with, and subsequently marrying her husband, Tarzom.
3. I met Petrus at their wedding reception. I had been participating in few social settings before then. However, Olga and I had many online conversations about how they first met and pursued a relationship, all the way up to the wedding. I was impressed with the photos from Olga's photography project, as well as Petrus's work. They have a very interesting creative relationship. Later that year, they both attended my birthday barbecues, as well as joined me in other meals and art events.
4. I attended their wedding reception in Chateaufort, Manhattan, in the company of their family and friends. They are clearly and very publicly in love and make quite the stylish couple. I wish them the very best in their future together.
5. I can be reached at [redacted] for any additional questions.

(truth)

Diana Sokolova
 Diana Sokolova

Sworn to before me this 20th day of 2018

[Signature]
 Notary Public



180120180000 1104112 422241 18 1796207 041127 21118 041127 440_11218-000001

Chalk and Cheese

Robert Nicklin

Chalk and Cheese is a documentary insight into couples and relationship. It explores how couples interact within the studio. They were given very little instruction, to see how they naturally acted together. The couples range from being together for two months to 62 years. Each couple was asked how they met to help them slightly relax and ensure a more realistic capture of their relationship.

See: robertnicklinphoto.com









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Abzgram

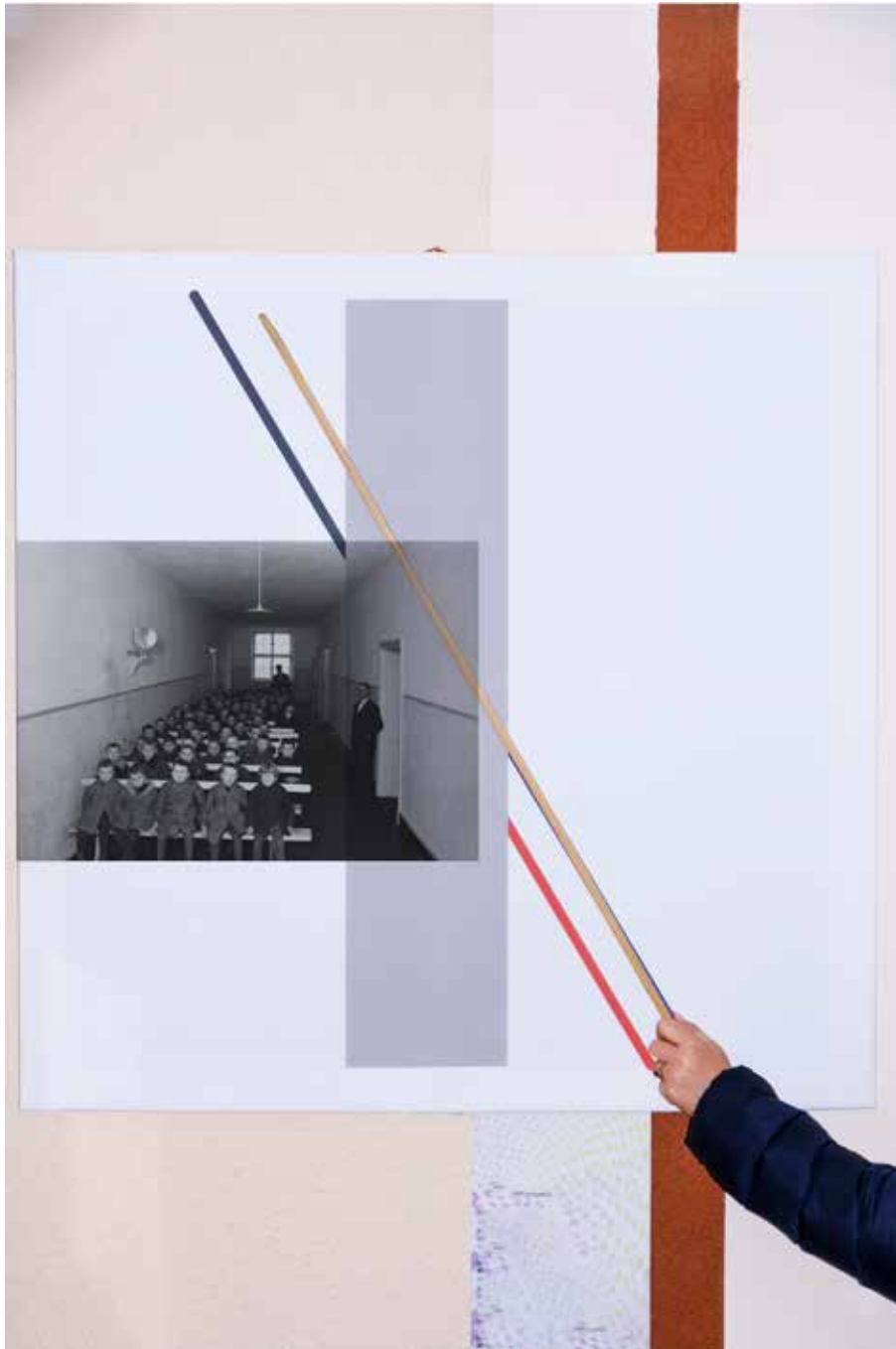
Karolina Wojtas

CLASSROOM ENTRY PROCEDURE

In front of a classroom:

1. Teacher arrives to the classroom immediately after the bell.
2. Pupils are arranged in alphabetical order. The order is permanent until the end of the year.
3. Pupils stand, do not touch each other, they have rucksacks placed on the floor next to the right leg, hands are held along the body, they look straight, do not make sounds, do not move.
4. From the moment of arrangement, which means from the state of acceptance (see p.3) the teacher counts down a minute. If pupils last out a minute, the teacher begins to let the next person into the classroom. He lets in the first person; the first person enters, takes a place and sits down. Then another person comes in, etc. Pupils who wait for the entrance stand according to the rules in p.3.
5. Teacher admits in persons who meet the conditions of p.3. Persons who do not meet these conditions stand in their places. They do not move and do not change their positions.
6. Teachers sets a next minute for those pupils. If they still do not meet the conditions he lets them into the classroom anyway, one after another.
7. If during the entry process, any of the pupils says a word, he comes back to his position and stands according to p.3.
8. Important: Immediately after the pupils take their places, the teacher reads out the rule and adds the last point: "The pupil is rewarded for his good behaviour: it pays to behave well".
9. Immediately after the rule is read out, the teacher gives tokens to the pupils who entered the classroom correctly. Only for those who entered on the first try.
10. Important: the formula is read before each lesson. After reading the formula, the lesson begins.

See: www.karolinawojtas.com









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The Gaze

Sandy Miles ARPS

The power of our own gaze is the knowledge of our own truths; there is no need for any outside approval or recognition. Our empowerment is the confidence of accepting that our body's appearance is no longer the focus of who we are.

See: www.sandymilesphotography.com



Anna



Katy

Contemporary Photography



Judith

No clothes!
What's the difference between naked and nude?
Is it rude, crude or pornographic?
Or is it an unclothed body, simply beautiful in all its naturalness?
Isn't it our minds that taint and tarnish? – after all we're born naked.

The layers of clothing we wear depend on our culture
The layers of our learning depend on our upbringing.

Oh! how deeply we have been shamed
Shamed and guilted into believing a lie ...
So many lies that tell us we're simply not good enough – especially in the eyes of god
And yet the Greeks captured the beauty of a body in their many carvings
... are they all nude, crude, pornographic?
I think not.

Who's to decide where the divide is?
Where in humankind's mind is this?
Nature is natural!
Are we the only part of nature that has separated ourselves from ourselves?

Sexual creative energy is part of nature.
We are nature ... and yet we disown and disassociate ourselves
Surely it's only when we disown and disassociate that we enable condemnation and criticism that then birth sexual perversions (whatever they might be)

Predatory sexual perversions are in the mind
A mind that manages our behaviours in the world
Our worlds can change because minds can change ...
If we're willing and we believe it's possible!
Otherwise we'd still believe in the tooth fairy wouldn't we?

Who knows what goes on in the mind and heart of another
But like the invisible wind, we can see it's effect.

What if we liberate our minds and see our natural beauty?
No judgements, no innuendoes, no perversions
Just our unclothed body in its natural born state of nakedness – whatever our age.

Can we strip back the layers of learning
And simply celebrate ourself – body and mind
For being the awesome creatures we are behind all our masks.

Judith, July 2022



Jennifer



41

Naomi



Jane



Emmaline

Big Fence - Rhiannon Adam

Reviewed by Graham Bridgeman-Clarke

Occasionally a photobook comes along which is a little bit different. This book isn't one of those. This is totally different to any photobook you may have seen.

Big Fence is one person's journey to fulfil a dream created by reading *Mutiny on the Bounty* years when it was the sole reading material given to seven-year-old Rhiannon Adam whilst sailing across the Atlantic from Ireland to the Caribbean on a small steel boat. Her ambition was to go to Pitcairn Island, the final resting place of HMS *Bounty* and the destination for Fletcher Christian and the mutineers, a small remote island in the South Pacific. It was also an island which had been found to be a haven for rapists and child pornography, resulting in arrest and jail for a large proportion of the men on the island.

The book is magnificently bound, box like, and in several sections. It is an account of Rhiannon's time on the island, and the daily activities. It contains her own images, postcards, memorabilia, and the transcripts of the trials. Rhiannon Adam is both a wordsmith and an excellent photographer, using both film and polaroids to document her adventure. The book comes with pull-outs, images of the residences, a plan of the island and family trees.

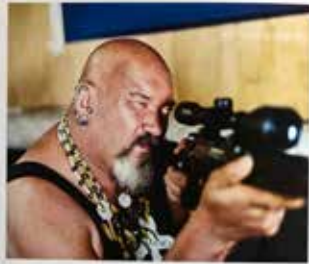
The book, which has been awarded the Meitar Award for excellence in photography, comes in

two versions; the more expensive book contains an audio cassette of conversations with the islanders and a replica of a nail from HMS *Bounty*, together with a signed photograph.

Whilst the book is more expensive than most, it is well worth the investment.

Published by Blow Up Press, 2021, £95/£185





View from the Chair

Tom Owens ARPS

If you had asked me early on the 25 March 2023 whether I'd be writing a 'View from the Chair' I would have laughed, but here I am doing just that!

I'd like to thank Alan Cameron for stepping back into the role when Alex resigned and for setting a high bar to try and follow.

Thinking about, and making, images is something I do plenty of. With our recent talk by Christy Lee Rogers I was reminded as to why I make images: it is, as Christy said, to please myself and satisfy a need to create something that has my signature look on it. Christy made several references to vulnerability in her talk, both her vulnerability and that of her models. I think we are all vulnerable when it comes to other people critiquing our work, but first and foremost, we have to satisfy ourselves.

She also said how important it was to make work, even if it is bad so that you can learn from it. This is something that I do. You have to know what is bad to recognise what is good and why it is so. Those reasonings were made very plain to me by the late Eamonn McCabe when he tutored me at university. He would select work presented to him by students, reject the majority, then explain why he had selected the few left on the table but also why he had rejected the others. It was not necessarily because they were bad, but that they could be improved. This is what I felt Christy was saying in her talk.

Getting out, or indeed staying in and making work and working out your own style can only happen if you create a sufficient catalogue of work to edit from. We can all be influenced by other photographers, but if what we make is a pastiche then in my view we have failed in our quest. The bodies of work that we see in this journal are myriad and reflect huge efforts on the part of their creators reflecting in some cases the many years it takes to craft of 'contemporary photography'.

Committee and Contacts

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Group meetings

The Contemporary Group continues to hold meetings online and, where possible in person. Keep an eye on the RPS website, Concept and the group Facebook page for forthcoming events.

Regional meetings

Contemporary East. Meetings are held online on the first Thursday of each month in the afternoons. The regional online exhibition 'Waldo' is now live: go to www.artsteps.com and search for 'Waldo'. Contact Tom Owens for more information.

Contemporary North. Meetings are held monthly live at Clements Hall, York, and online, on Saturdays. Contact Patricia Ruddle for more information or see the RPS website.

Contemporary South West. Meetings are held regularly, online and in person. Contact Adrian Hough for details.

Contemporary Northwest. The next meeting will be on Zoom on 25 June 2023. See the RPS website to register, or contact Alan Cameron for details of this and future meetings.

Contemporary Central. Meetings are held jointly with the Documentary Group on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, online. Contact Steff Hutchinson for more information.

RPS Contemporary Group
rps.org/groups/contemporary

Contemporary Group Events
rps.org/events-listing/

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