

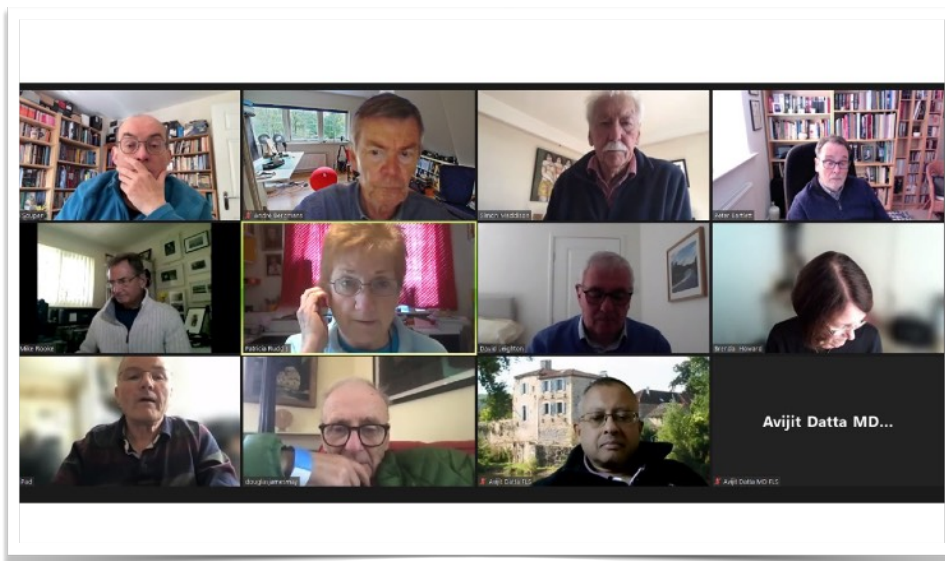


ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

## Contemporary North

A Subgroup of the RPS Contemporary  
Group

### September 2022



Report of the 17 September 2022 Zoom  
meeting, 130 - 400 pm.

Hosted by: **Jim Souper**

Text: **Avijit Datta**

Layout and design: **Wendy North**

Co-ordination and editing: **Patricia Ruddle**

**The next meeting is face to face 1.30 till 5pm on 19 November  
at Clements Hall, York YO23 1BW.**

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## Introduction and Announcements

We began the meeting with a tribute to the late Queen Elizabeth II who was patron of the RPS between 1952-2019.

Thirteen members participated from the Netherlands, Edinburgh, Yorkshire, Derbyshire and the Isle of Wight with eight apologies. We welcomed two new members to the Contemporary Group, **Brenda Howard**, and **Simon Maddison**. Both were complimentary in the interval about the style and content of the meeting and how instructive it was.

Our two October meetings in York have been cancelled due to the inability of RPS HQ to advertise on our webpage, which meant people were unable to book. Members were saddened that as a consequence both Regional and Special Interest Group meetings have been cancelled. They will be rescheduled.

Patricia discussed the current edition of Concept, another excellent issue, which contains work by **Jim Souper** and also **Don Harris**, from Mexborough – an expert photobook maker. Patricia also extolled the Newsletter's new initiative, Photo Focus. Every issue will contain four members' one picture with up to thirty words. Let's get submitting!

**Michel Claverie** was speaking from the Photography Show at the NEC - our reporter-at-large! He presented a short PDF (with Jim's help), A Contemporary Photography Parable. These photos illustrated his concept of contemporary photography, taken in London between 10-15 September. He suggested that photography can record and remember the end of an era and sometimes see a new generation.



*What does a thumb up mean? A happy reaction to being caught on camera? An expression of gratitude and respect? Or something else altogether?*



*Pictures are objective, but their interpretation is subjective and personal. For example, many felt comfort from the Queen; that she was looking after them...*



*Many people queued to pay their respect, and it looked like the long and demanding wait was a necessary and welcome part of saying thank you. For many, it was also an opportunity to participate in a historical event on distinguished grounds.*



*Life went on, though, with one-time visitors and habitual residents mixing easily.*



*A picture can also be ambiguous and open to contrasting interpretations.*



*In the end, we use photography to record and remember. Sometimes the end of an era, or the arrival of a new generation.*



**André Bergmans** talked to us about the beginning of this project several meetings ago, where he had asked photographers in a camera club in Den Haag, Holland to mimic photographs by famous photographers such as Paul Strand, Edward Weston, André Kertész and Daido Moriyama.

The process of mimicry was instructive and the photographers also recorded their experiences. Conclusions from the feedback were threefold:

The process was much more difficult than expected.

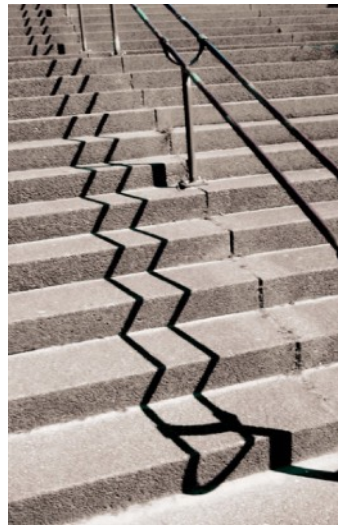
It was great fun.

The process was revealing and inspired their own photography.

The members then wanted to choose their own photographer in the future so that they could pick a particular photographer's style and learn more about that style. The next step was to make photographs in that style. A photobook is planned.



André Kertész



Joop Peerboom version



Alfred Schultze



Kamal Ahmed version



Paul Strand



Heather Oortman-Bridge version



Steef Zoetmulder



Roberto Francini version

**Simon Maddison** revisited images that he took on a visit to Ukraine in 2019, which he thought of at the time as rather standard shots. He looked at them again in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and discovered that many had a new meaning in this new context. In particular the innocence of children being photographed by their parents on Second World War tanks now had a poignancy, and illustrated how the passage of quite recent time gave these images their own history. At the beginning of the tour he was given a piece of blue and yellow ribbon which he tied to his camera without much thought. Little did he know that three years later this symbol of resistance to Russian aggression would be everywhere.

The full story of his trip can be read in the Documentary Group's current Decisive Moment journal. <https://rps.org/groups/documentary/the-decisive-moment-the-quarterly-journal-of-the-documentary-group/>



He showed two young ladies in red white and blue colours of the Russian federation in front of a statue of a Cossack, unimaginable now.

Simon has an interest in countries from the old Soviet bloc including Romania and Latvia. During this Ukraine trip he spent three days in Chernobyl. We asked him to show us these photos at a future meeting. And, we learned that **Mike Rooke** has also been to Chernobyl. So this is something to look forward to, both their photos.



Another image of Putin toilet paper was shown together with Soviet memorabilia.



A picture of the underground escalator is poignant as it is now used as a bomb shelter



Simon's Flickr site and his Ukrainian albums can be found at:  
[www.flickr.com/photos/simonmaddison/sets](http://www.flickr.com/photos/simonmaddison/sets)





**Patricia Ruddle** spoke about her participation in the Contemporary Group's first Sandpit initiative held last July on Zoom. The theme was Mobile Moments.

How to interpret the theme? At first she thought about alluding to the old Kodak advert about those "Kodak moments" when their film forever captured our memories. When this didn't work out, she found a quote by Garry Winogrand that seemed applicable: "No one moment is most important. Any moment can be something."





*During the worst Covid restrictions, as a city dweller the only respite from my concrete neighbourhood was the allotment at the bottom of my road. Many a time I would walk around the site because it was within travel limits, the coast and dales too far away for a drive.*

*In remembrance of these days, although now free to travel, I spent an hour walking around, capturing these mobile moments.*

*However, when subsequently looking at the photos I realised a pattern. Perhaps I was subconsciously drawn to this type of image, what with Covid now becoming prominent again, requiring us to wear masks, socially distance, avoid large crowds.*

*Cover up and tread carefully...*



**Brenda Howard**, our new member, told us about a four-week course on street photography with Simon Illingworth and is now undertaking a subsequent 6-week course with him. She will speak about this in more detail at a future meeting.

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