

## Contemporary North

A SUBGROUP OF THE RPS CONTEMPORARY GROUP



### Report of the RPS Contemporary Group North Meeting held at Clement's Hall, York

Saturday 16th October 2021 1.30 - 5.00pm

Group Organiser - Patricia Ruddle  
Co-ordination and editing - Patricia Ruddle  
Text - Gary Morgan  
Layout and design - Christine Pinnington



This was our first in-person meeting, back in Clements Hall, York. It was nice to see old friends “in the flesh” again, although members from further afield were missed. Fourteen people joined us for the meeting, including a new member. Apologies from eight local members. Although Zoom allowed us to continue and include people from far and wide during lockdown, it’s no substitute for meeting face-to-face and being able to chatter and debate.

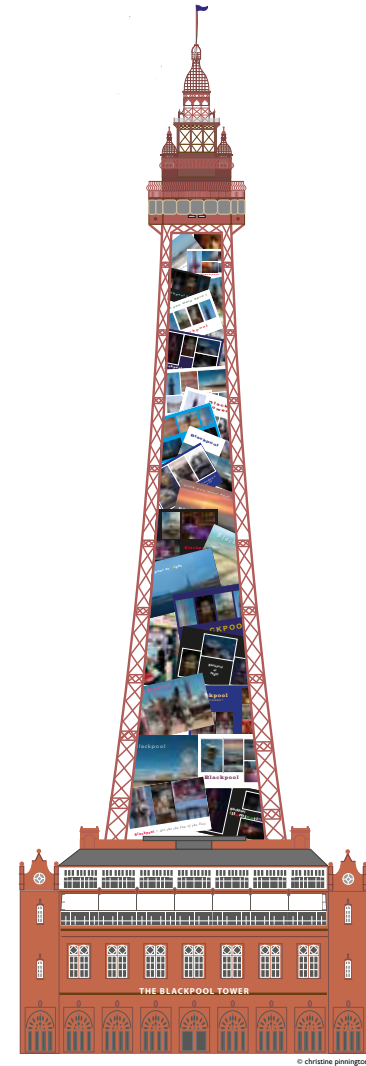
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**Christine Pinnington** was visiting Blackpool and wanted to buy some traditional seaside postcards. She was unable to find any and deduced that this was because people now send pictures from phones rather than send post cards.

She thought that it was sad that cards were going out of fashion and so she decided to make her own postcards and make a memorial to the great British seaside postcard.

The cards were made using Adobe InDesign and then printed. She then produced a scaled, detailed drawing of the tower, using Adobe Illustrator. This was then printed and glued to a backing. The body of the Tower was then filled with the cards that she had previously designed.

The artwork is 5ft high, contains 22 postcards and 71 images.



**Avijit Data** presented his thoughts about the way that photography and other arts are evolving around the country: *Whither Photography - transcending geographical and conceptual silos.*

The advent of computational imaging and artificial intelligence means that the science and technology of photography is on the threshold of dramatic changes.

Equally significant are conceptual and artistic advances, and combination of photography with other media epitomised by submissions to the Royal Academy of Arts, Reclaiming Magic, the theme of their Summer Exhibition 2021 of 1,382 works curated by the British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare RA.

Conceptual themes include magic, textiles, slavery, neurodiversity, disability, feminism, diversity, photo books and COVID-19. Photographers include Allen Jones RA and Cindy Sherman. Avijit showed examples of textile art that emulated Bauhaus concepts by Kandinsky and others, and encouraged us to do the same using mixed media. RPS London is promoting Café Art which is empowering people affected by homelessness through art, photography and entrepreneurship. These approaches help to transcend conceptual silos allowing art to be used to promote social justice.

Sir David Adjaye RA, who designed the new African American museum wing of the Smithsonian, curated the architecture room with aplomb, highlighting environmental issues worldwide (his brother provided the music).

The Royal Academy borrowed \$74 million to build expansion to celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2018. COVID-19 has meant that it has been closed for much of the year and therefore income was lost, a large proportion of which comes from art sales from the Summer Exhibition, which has been held annually since 1769.



[www.aumphotos.com](http://www.aumphotos.com)  
Instagram: [@aumnamahshiva](https://www.instagram.com/aumnamahshiva)  
<https://www.cafeart.org.uk/>

*Patricia announced that Avijit Datta has not been elected to the RPS Council. She said: "It is with much sadness that Avijit has not been elected to the Council. All of us know that he would have been a valuable member what with his background and current experiences, his knowledge not only of the photographic world, but moreover his enthusiastic nature, his passion in everything that he does. It is the RPS' loss, our loss".*

**Rachel Perry**, who is our newest member, gave a short presentation entitled *Water Towers* as a taster for a more polished presentation that she hopes to give later. She was doing a contemporary fine art degree at York St John University when she encountered the work of the Hilla and Bernd Becher's water towers.

Inspired by their work she went in search of water towers in the UK and showed us some pictures taken on the Isles of Lewis and Harris. Whereas most photographers would go there for the beautiful landscape, Rachel was more interested in the water towers near the beaches. Initially she found their locations on the Internet. However, when visiting them she found that local people would tell her where there are more and also some of their history.

The Bechers' images were in monochrome. So, Rachel played with adding subtle colouring. When she was asked what her original intent with these images was, she replied that it was partly architectural and partly utilitarian. She lives in Acomb (in York), near to where Severus water tower used to be, and used this as a source of inspiration.

Rachel now hunts for water towers and maps out an efficient route between so that she can photograph up to six in a day. Although she prefers to do this on her own, she sometimes combines water towers with family holidays, although there is more scope for engaging with locals when she is on her own.



<https://rachelperryartist.com/>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bernd-becher-and-hilla-becher-water-towers-p81238>

## Books and Journals!

**Patricia Ruddle** had a clear-out and brought some early copies of the Contemporary Group Journal, *Contemporary Photography*. She was the first editor of the Journal and was responsible for the first 60 issues.

We were delighted that **Richard Hall**, Lincolnshire, was passing through York and had the opportunity to join us (and later in the day, his wife **Dona**.) We know Richard from our Zoom meetings and so it was super nice to meet him in real life! He brought along some copies of his book *I am alone with the Beating of my Heart*, which gained him a Fellowship, described in our June 2021 meeting, along with his other books.

These were all eagerly examined during the meeting.

You can find more of Richard's work on

Instagram: [@richard\\_hallphoto](https://www.instagram.com/richard_hallphoto)

Flickr <https://www.flickr.com/photos/146272443@N05/>

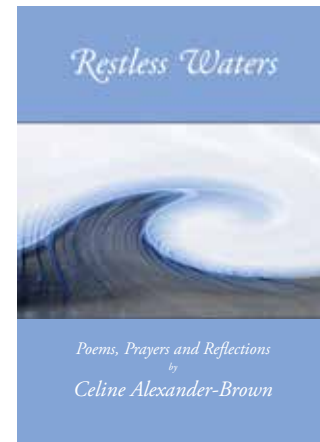


## **Celine Alexander-Brown**

brought copies of her just-published book, *Restless Waters: Poems, Prayers and Reflections*. Celine has been writing poems for many years, and it wasn't until our third lockdown that she was encouraged to collect them into a book.

The book contains poems written over 20 years, poems that have helped her through difficult times. She hopes that by sharing them they may be of comfort to those experiencing uncertainty or loss.

The book contains her photographs as well and has been beautifully designed by Christine Pinnington. Celine is donating all monies to two charities: The Host Apostolate and Interplastuk.



Donations can be made by PayPal via [eyesoftheheart18@gmail.com](mailto:eyesoftheheart18@gmail.com)

Contact by email: [eyesoftheheart18@gmail.com](mailto:eyesoftheheart18@gmail.com)

**Peter Bartlett** also brought his series, *The Shards of Yorkshire*.

The project began in 2016 before Brexit and came to an end due to Covid in June 2020. The initial idea was for a series of five books to create a mosaic of images depicting street life in West Yorkshire, but he made four due to Covid.

Peter's idea of the shards came from the archaeologists' use of them to create how lost civilisations lived. They are the "left behind places." The four volumes capture a snapshot of how life was changing in the period between Brexit and Covid.

<https://www.peterbartlettimages.co.uk/>  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/peterbee/>

Vol 2 p6 Dewsbury



Vol 3 p66 Bingley



Vol 4 p53 Keighley



Vol 1 p43 Huddersfield

## **STOP PRESS!**

In the week after our meeting, we had joyous news about three of our members.

**Mary Crowther** was awarded the Fenton Medal in this year's RPS Awards for her outstanding contribution to the work of the Society.

Contemporary Fellowships were awarded to **Carol Olerud** for *18 Days – A Time of Great Sadness* and **Alexandra Prescott** for *Universal Truths*.

Many congratulations for achieving the highest RPS Distinction. Perhaps they can be persuaded to show us their panels at our next meeting.

**The next Zoom meeting will be on  
20th November, 1.30 – 4.00 pm (UK time).**

**The next meeting at Clement's Hall, York will be on  
December 16th, 1.30 - 5.00 pm**

**See you soon!**