



THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY
GROUP

Contemporary North Members' Showcase

Issue 6

June 2023

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.

17th June 2023—Meeting via Zoom

Chaired by Patricia Ruddle

Contributors:

Carol Olerud

Morris Gregory

Michel Claverie

Harry Silcock

Avijit Datta

Bunshri Chandaria

Nigel Tooby



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Carol Olerud FRPS

Mexico by Night

Mexico is amazing! I was there end November to early December 2022 for only three weeks. My first visit. My son has been living there, on and off, with his Mexican girlfriend since 2020. They plan to leave to return back home for continued study, so it was a now or never opportunity to go.

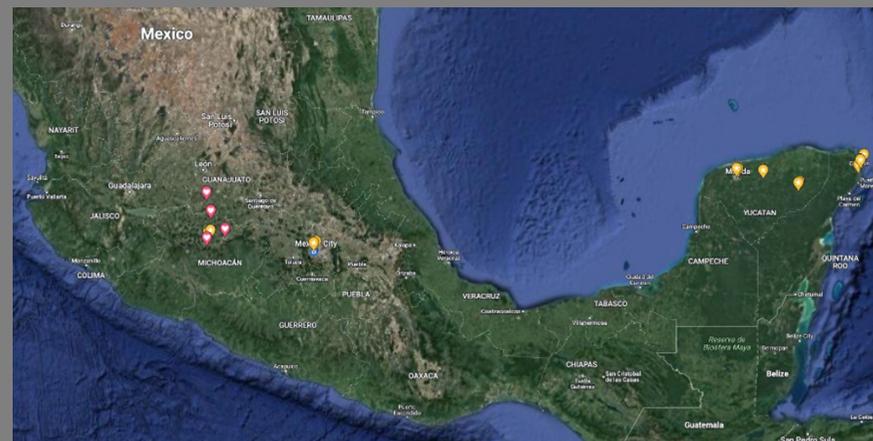
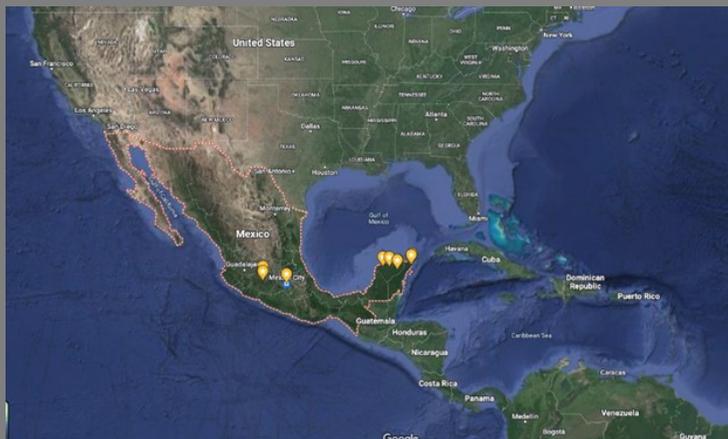
We were warned it wasn't safe to be out at night – Mexico sadly isn't a safe country. It's a wonderfully beautiful place, the people are great too. But corruption rules, cartels run the country. Poverty is rife, hot water is a luxury and you can't drink from the tap. There is so much potential as the country has a lot to offer. The scenery is magnificent.

We travelled to Mexico City, then northwest into Michoacán, an area not recommended for tourists by the US and NL governments. This was noticeable, we were the only Europeans there. We also went to the Yucatán and ended at Isla Mujeres, near Cancún.

I had been busy with night photography for a project so I was continuing with this here. I didn't especially go out at night, it's just when we returned to our hotels or B&Bs after dinner. It gets dark early.

I've shared these images on my Insta page and I intend to make a book when I have a good selection/edit.

Locations I visited in Mexico







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Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/carololerud/>

Website: www.carololerud.com

PS Benelux Chapter and International Photo Festival Pelt 2023

RPS Members Print Exhibition

Spring Challenge – “Daily Life of Us”

Photo Festival theme is ‘*Lens op de Mens*’ – ‘*Focus on Man*’

June 4th to October 1st 2023



4th June – 1st October 2023 - International Photo Festival - Pelt, Belgium

The International Photo Festival in Pelt, Belgium is now in its fourth year and is getting bigger and bigger! More international photographers, both professional and amateur have found their way to this exciting event. It's on every two years. This year the subtheme is 'Humour'.

The streets of Pelt are filled with photos, on walls, posts, inside the church, inside CC Palethe (Cultural Centre) and other places. Approximately 1,000 photos on a route of 3.5km around the town show many different photos on the main theme, 'Lens op de Mens', Focus on Man. Many photos are humorous but not all of them.

2021 Bronze winner in the amateur category was our own Janet Haines ARPS—she has five photos on display this year!

The RPS Benelux Chapter has its own area—the wall of the old church close to CC Palethe, with photos from its Spring Challenge, "Daily Life of Us", where members sent in up to three photos each. Jury members Armando Jongejan FRPS, Jan Ros ARPS and Carol Olerud FRPS, selected the final 23 images.

This is the second year the Benelux Chapter has been involved and therefore 'Supported by the RPS' is part of the Photo Festival. We also provide a jury member for the whole photo festival and Carol was jury member for the second time, with close to 1,300 photos to be ranked. Six jury members selected the photos for the Gold, Silver, Bronze and Honorary Mentions in both Professional and Amateur categories. Also best Creative photo, best under 30 years of age category and the Humour Award. A task which took many days to do!

See: <https://fotofestivalpelt.be/en/winners-2023/>

All jury members have five photos each, hanging on posts on a pathway as well. That's very nice, so everyone can be introduced to the jury members.

The photos shown are of the RPS Benelux Chapter along the wall and of Carol with her panel of five as a jury member.

The RPS Benelux Chapter has also organised a workshop, Mindful Photography with Diana Bokje, on Sunday 24th September. Signing up details are to be found on the website and you can make a great weekend of it because Martin Parr Hon FRPS will be giving a presentation of his work on the 23rd September. His photos are on display in CC Palethe.

Good for Pelt and good for the RPS!

Link to programme with all the details: <https://fotofestivalpelt.be/en/programme-2023/>

Carol Olerud FRPS

Morris Gregory

The Kiplingcotes Derby is said to be the oldest annually run horse race in the world, dating from 1519 when Henry VIII was on the throne. It takes place on the third Thursday in March and there has been no break in this since the first running of the event. When the weather has been particularly bad one horse has been led along the 4.5mile course to ensure the unbroken tradition is kept alive. A particular curiosity of the race is that it is sometimes more profitable to finish second rather than first as the winner gets £50 whereas second place gets the remainder of the entry fees, often a lot more than £50. It is as much a social occasion as a horse race so I was intrigued to go along and photograph some of the characters involved.





I was certainly not disappointed. Most of the action occurs near the finishing line, where the jockeys get weighed and pay their entry fees, and where the betting takes place. The mix of jockeys, horses, punters and general racegoers provided for some interesting shots.









Michel Claverie

The effects of LSD* on Australian flora

- LSD = Light Spectrum Distortion

This is an informal series of images presented at the RPS Contemporary North group June session. Although I am still struggling to fully understand what constitutes contemporary photography, I enjoy the group show and talk meetings and I am happy to share my experiments with an open-minded audience.

Light spectrum distortion is simply a distortion of the light spectrum beyond the reasonable. The Curve tool is available in all photo editors and often used to enhance the image contrast, or to modify the weights of shadows and highlights in the light histogram. It can be used on its own, or in combination with the Levels tool that defines the low and high limits and the middle point of the light histogram.



Backlit Australian gumnut tree



Agapanthus africanus shadows on hot macadam

LSD is difficult to control, is unpredictable, and almost impossible to reproduce. However, it sometimes reveals components of the image (details, textures and gradients, colour combinations) that would not appear with conventional editing. A very satisfying experience, especially to an already twisted mind.

The abstraction created by light spectrum distortion results in objects that may not be immediately recognizable, and the effort to understand the content hopefully helps the viewer see behind the obvious and creates an image that is “about” rather than “of” the object – one of the enigmatic tenets of contemporary photography.



Eucalyptus tree at dawn

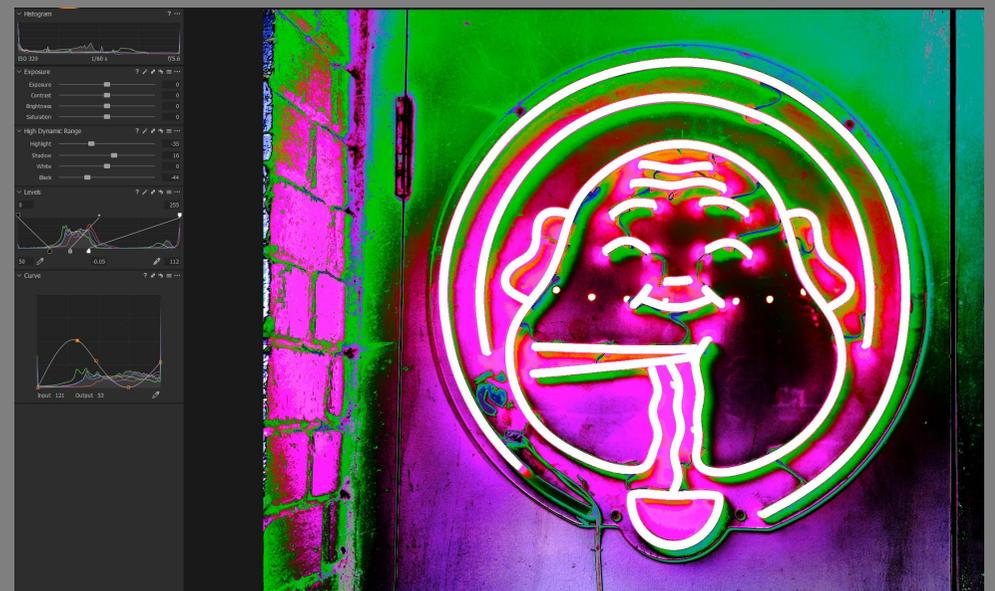
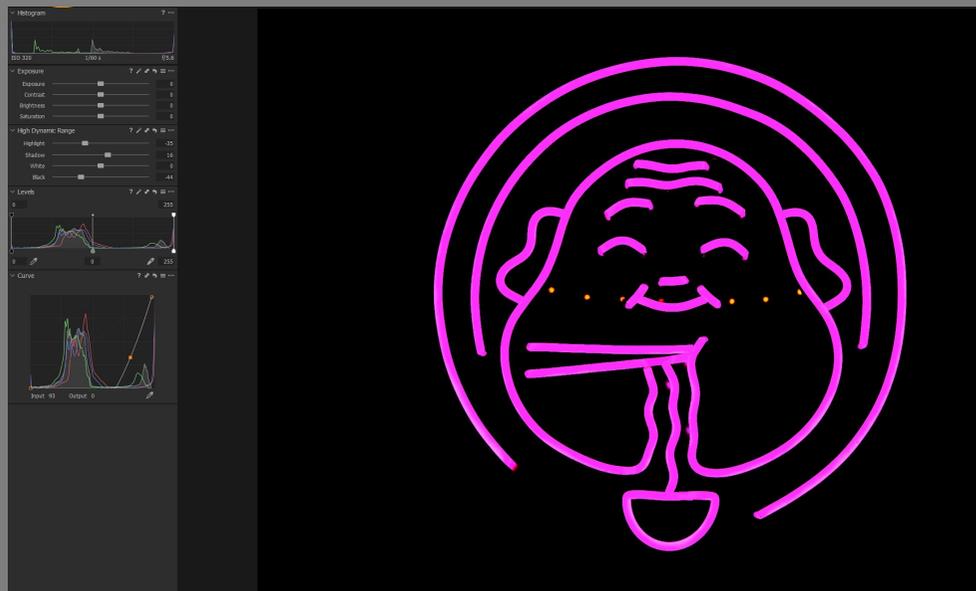
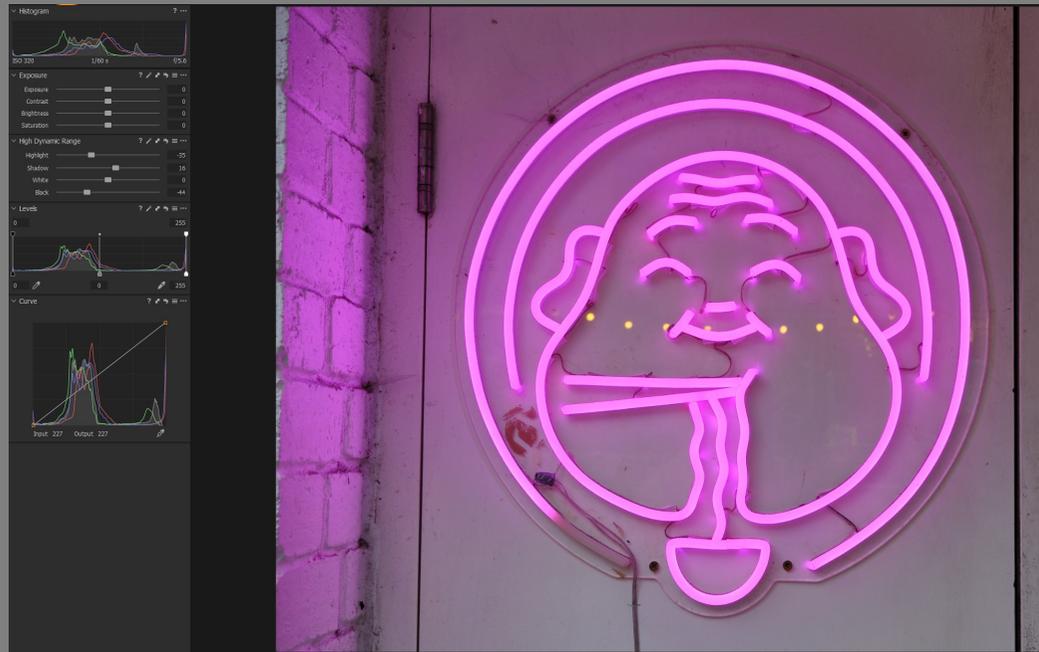


Mediterranean cypresses and undulated stratus clouds.
(No LSD here, but this image is definitely Contemporary...)



Chlorophytum Comosum aka Spider plant shadow on a clay pot

Examples of light spectrum distortion result from manipulation of the Curve and Level tools of any photo editing software.



Harry Silcock

This presentation was prompted from a recent talk from one of our group members on the subject of mannequins, so I had a look into my photographic archive. I have always enjoyed recording the incongruity of dummies in their surroundings, often linked to 'real people'. Here are a few examples.





Spirituality in Varanasi

The accompanying 14 photographs by Shubhdeep Roy show spirituality and death at Varanasi, beside the Ganga.

Varanasi, on the banks of the Ganga, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities, said by Hindus to have been founded by Lord Shiva. Guru Nanak visited it for Shivratri in 1507 and thereafter founded Sikhism. The young philosopher saint, Adi Shankaracharya, walked on the banks of the Ganga at Varanasi in the 8th century and composed the immortal Sanskrit song “Bhaja Govindam”, exhorting piety over worldly knowledge - “what use is grammar at the time of death?”. Shankaracharya’s philosophy of non-duality, advaita vedanta, is shared by Buddhism. Tulsidas reworked his Magnum opus of 50 000 verses, the Ramayana in Varanasi as the Ramcharitmanas. The Dashashwahmed (pictured) and Panchganga ghats beside the Ganga are sites of devotion to the Ganga, including the evening aarti ceremony. The orientalist scholar James Prinsep FRS recorded that in 1830 there were 1000 temples in Varanasi, of which the largest was Kashi Vishwanath.

Dying and being cremated in Varanasi gives Moksha – release from the cycle of death and reincarnation. The Manikarnika (pictured) and Harischandra gnats are used for that purpose.

The Prime Minister of India, Sri Narendra Modi has Varanasi as his constituency since 2014. He has spearheaded two initiatives. Firstly the Sri Kashi Viswanath Varanasi Corridor connecting the ghats with Kashi Viswanath. Secondly he has promoted the clean up of the Ganga, “ Namamami Ganga" via 344 individual initiatives.

Ganga: Spirituality and Geology

Ganga (or Ganges) is personified as a goddess, consort of Lord Shiva. It is mentioned in the Rig Veda, the oldest Vedic text. In the Mahabharata it is described as “The best of all rivers, born of all the sacred waters”, the mother of all humanity. The Srimad Devi Bhagavatam Purana (318 chapters) which promotes devotion (bhakti) also describes the Ganga at length.

Geologically, it was formed 75 million years ago as a part of the Southern super continent Gondwana which drifted north eastwards across the then informed Indian Ocean over 50 million years.



Along the river



Compassion



Cremation in the Ghats of Varanasi



Eternal Flame



Inferno



Labour



Ganga Aarti



Morning Aarti



Serendipity



Morning Saga



Rest



Passage to Heaven



Salvation



Waiting

Shubhodeep Roy is a recent graduate of Kolkata University. He was the author of the 39th RPS COVID-19 blog “ Kolkata Migrant workers in the Pandemic ”, all 41 of which I edited/and/or wrote.

Avijit Datta

[https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2021/july/kolkata-migrant-workers-in-the-pandemic/#:~:text=Shubhodeep%20Roy%20is%20a%202020,Year%2C%202021%20\(UK\).](https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2021/july/kolkata-migrant-workers-in-the-pandemic/#:~:text=Shubhodeep%20Roy%20is%20a%202020,Year%2C%202021%20(UK).)

Bunshri Chandaria

You are warmly invited to the
Private View
'Patterns of Experience 2023'

Bunshri's Multi Media Installation, *Silent Voice is part of
a Group Exhibition – making Visible the Invisible.*

Tuesday 11th July 2023

6.00 – 8.00pm



Peggy Jay Gallery

Burgh House

New End Square

NW3 1LT

<https://www.burghhouse.org.uk>

Exhibition from July 12 – 23 (Free Entry)

Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sun

10am-4pm

If you would like to attend the private viewing please RSVP to Bunshri at Bunshri@bunshri.com



“Do Memories die or go to sleep for one experiencing Alzheimer’s?”

Bunshri’s photographic publication, *Silent Voice* reveals the light bulb moment – how she managed to trigger her mother-in-law’s deeply embedded fractured memories.

Being awarded a Fellowship of the RPS for *Silent Voice* prompted Bunshri to share with a wider audience her publication – addressing hope, love and family dynamics.

She warmly invites you to her multi-media installation – part of a Group Exhibition: *Patterns of Experience*. It is soon to be showcased in Peggy Jay Gallery in Burgh House, situated in the heart of Hampstead Village.



Nigel Tooby FRPS

I have been absent from photography for too many years following a move in 2019 by which I left my photographic homies several hundred miles behind and concentrated instead on settling in to a new home, new friends, new environment and retirement.

I now exist in deepest countryside where the nearest neighbour can be a mile away, but where the community bonds are strong, far beyond those found in most towns and cities.

This is livestock farming country in the main and there is a story to tell.

It bothers me to read a constant stream of media reports where campaign groups blame a supposed loss of habitat and climate change on farming practices in general and farmers in particular. That these groups, composed in the main of town and city bred folk, get such media oxygen for their agendas creates a highly unbalanced debate which needs to be addressed.

The lines of attack are too numerous to list here, but for example, anyone who claims that farmers are habitually cruel to their animals has not seen a farmer fighting back tears at the loss of a cow or calf, or witnessed first hand the 24/7/365 care that is applied to the animals in their stock.

Nature is, and always will be, red in tooth and claw. It exists in a state of balance which needs to be maintained and country people know this all too well. Huge fields of arable crops grown to provide vegetable food for the masses distorts nature by breeding hoards of species which feed on that crop. Rebalancing nature requires intervention to reduce the numbers of those pests. In the cycle of life, man has a place in nature as a predator or, at the very least, one who can rebalance the effects of agriculture.

But the countryside faces further threats from the town in the guise of big business investors. A more recent trend is the bulk buying of productive land to 're-wild' and/or to grid-plant fast growing conifer trees to absorb carbon from the atmosphere; to sell on as 'carbon credits'. Broadleaf woodland is preferable but doesn't grow fast enough. Conifer woodland kills the forest floor through lack of light. Hardly anything lives there. Acres of land made productive by centuries of toil ruined almost overnight in the name of Net Zero.

And so, perversely, the big city-based concerns set on rewilding and woodland planting in the name of net-zero get cheered on their way to rural damage by the same campaign groups who blame and attack the generational farming community for mismanagement of the countryside.

In the UK the urban-rural disconnect is wider than it has ever been.



So I have a story to tell about the deeply rural community where I live; how it works and plays, how it functions and how it copes with the threats it faces. This will not be a quick process, but here are a few early images which might, or might not, make the cut....







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