



East Anglia
Contemporary
Group

A sky without
clouds...

April 2025



About East Anglia Contemporary Group EACG

We are member of the Contemporary Special Interest Group of the RPS who reside in East Anglia. It is a large geographic area covering from the M25 up to the Wash and the western edge of Cambridgeshire,

The participants are small in number and spread all over the region. We meet monthly via Zoom and try to produce bodies of work twice per year that we used to exhibit virtually.

The problem with virtual exhibitions is the quality of image rendition. This zine is an attempt to do justice to the work produced

Contact the group at contemporaryea@rps.org

'Without'

This theme is taken from a quote attributed to Thoreau, a Canadian transcendentalist "A sky without clouds is a meadow without flowers, a sea without sails"

The intent of this group is to interpret our set themes without necessarily taking the literal interpretation.

"A sky without clouds is a meadow without flowers, a sea without sails"

David Henry Thoreau June 23rd 1852

Cover photographs credit

Front cover:

Jonathan Williams

Back cover:

Paul Ashley ARPS

Exhibitors

Jonathan Williams	6
Paul Ashley ARPS	16
Mark Farrington ARPS	22
Keith Locke ARPS	30
Tom Owens ARPS	38

This assignment proved to be somewhat challenging with not all members making that leap into interpreting the statement..

Thoreau's musings are from just 13 years after the dawn of photography as we know it and one has to wonder how life was like in those times if one had sufficient time to note down thoughts every day without having to fuel the masters of the Industrial Revolution.

The thoughts that Thoreau penned have a direct link to making photographic images. His obvious powers of observation form a critical aspect to making contemporary photography by noting and positing the things that caught his eye and brain.

In earlier parts of the journal he notes the mares tail skies. Seafarers have for eons noted the effect of sky presentation on impending weather and sea conditions. His attention to detail is worthy of merit in making bodies of work that are made in open spaces.

The responses to this extract are as diverse as usual for the group.

Tom Owens ARPS

April 2025

Mark Farrington has sought out detail in the distressed patination of apertures in Rabat and Mdina.

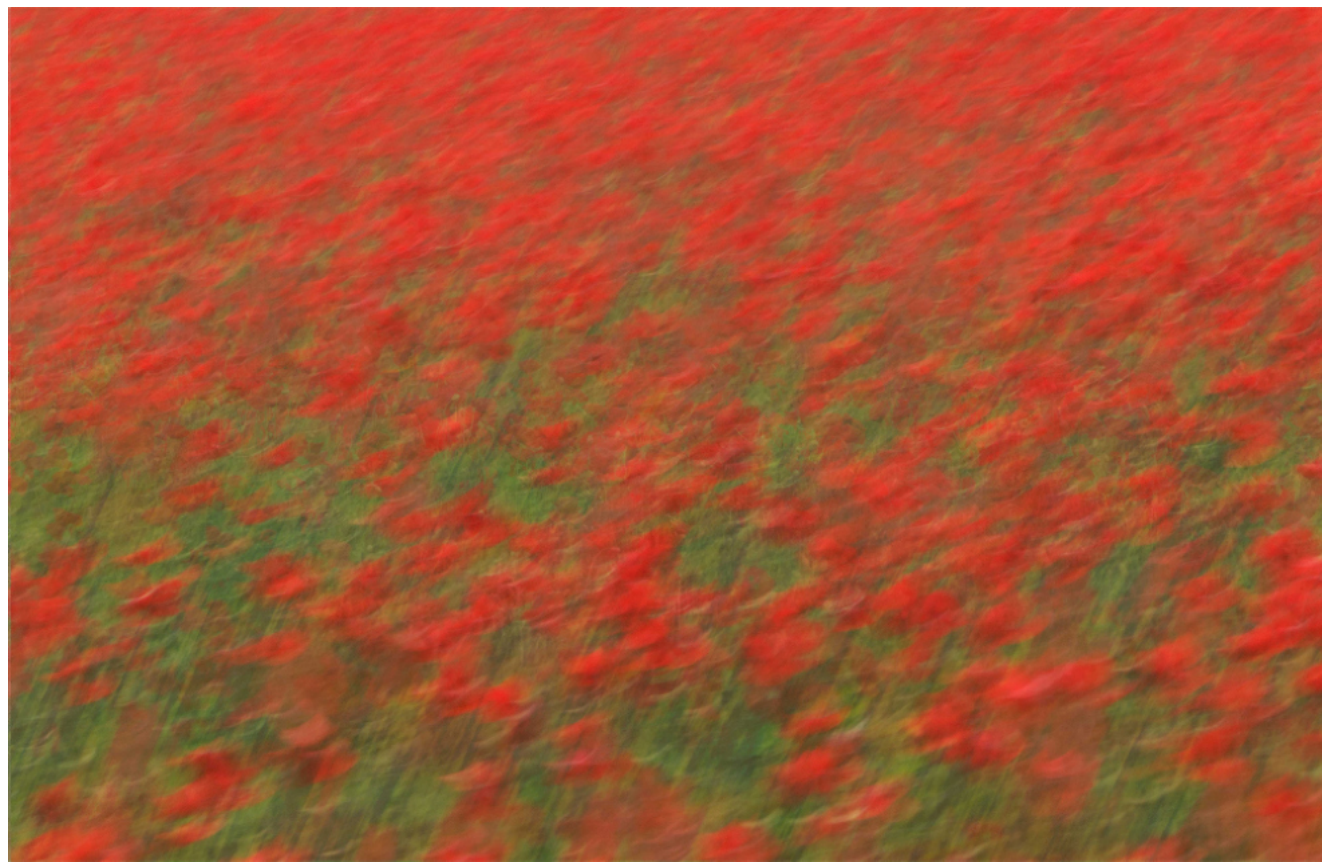
Paul Ashley has managed to eliminate shoppers in Cambridge market and also capture a dual-sided flag depicting lone star and stripes that morphs into a Union flag. Is this a metaphor for our times?

Jonathan Williams is challenging notions of different viewpoints taken to photography.

Keith Locke has delved into views below and above the clouds.

Tom Owens has sought to reference incompleteness in most of his images whilst taking a literal stance in the lack of clouds or sails in two of them.







This quote seems to be one person's view of the aesthetics of landscape. However, from a photographic point of view, photography can be loosely divided into art photography and documentary photography, which can have different assessment criteria to arrive at an aesthetic judgement. This selection of photographs has been chosen to examine the ideas behind art and documentary photography. It is then up to the viewer to decide whether they meet the aesthetic criteria specified by the quote

The extract, opposite is taken from Thoreau's journal, dated 23rd June 1852

serve, and its shore is silvered with white maples, which show the under sides of their leaves, stage upon stage, in leafy towers. Methinks the leaves continue to show their under sides some time after the wind has done blowing. The southern edge of the meadow is also silvered with (I suppose) the red maple. Then there is the darker green of the forest, and the reddish, brownish, and bluish green of grass-lands and pastures and grain-fields, and the light-blue sky. There are not clouds enough in the sky to attract you to-day.

The sweet-briar bud which I brought home opened in the night. Is that the habit of roses?

June 24. P. M. — To White Pond.

The keys of the white ash cover the trees profusely, a sort of mulberry brown, an inch and a half long, handsome. The *Vaccinium macrocarpon*, probably for some days.

The *Calopogon pulchellus* (*Cymbidium* of Bigelow), grass pink of some, a pretty purple arethusa-like flower in a shady low copse on Corner road, near the *Asclepias quadrifolia*, a rather striking flower with two umbels of small pink and white flowers standing above the surrounding herbage. *Spiraea salicifolia* by the roadsides. *Archangelica atropurpurea*, interesting for its great umbels and vigorous growth of its purplish but rank-smelling stem. It is one of the most forward early leaves in warm springy places. I perceive excrescences on the grape leaves and vines, resembling in their form and disposition the grape clusters that are to be.

The drifting white downy clouds are to the landsman

what sails on the sea are to him that dwells by the shore, — objects of a large, diffusive interest. When the laborer lies on the grass or in the shade for rest, they do not too much tax or weary his attention. They are unobtrusive. I have not heard that white clouds, like white houses, made any one's eyes ache. They are the flitting sails in that ocean whose bounds no man has visited. They are like all great themes, always at hand to be considered, or they float over us unregarded. Far away they float in the serene sky, the most inoffensive of objects, or, near and low, they smite us with their lightnings and deafen us with their thunder. We know no Ternate nor Tidore grand enough whither we can imagine them bound. There are many mare's-tails to-day, if that is the name. What could a man learn by watching the clouds? The objects which go over our heads unobserved are vast and indefinite. Even those clouds which have the most distinct and interesting outlines are commonly below the zenith, somewhat low in the heavens, and seen on one side. They are among the most glorious objects in nature. A sky without clouds is a meadow without flowers, a sea without sails. Some days we have the mackerel fleet. But our devilishly industrious laborers rarely lie in the shade. How much better if they were to take their nooning like the Italians, relax and expand and never do any work in the middle of the day, enjoy a little sabbath in the middle of the day.

I still perceive that wonderful fragrance from the meadow (?) on the Corner causeway, intense as ever. It is one of those effects whose cause it







Mark Farrington ARPS

Glorious decrepitude: Ir-Rabat, Malta

Much of the twin towns of Rabat and Mdina in Malta has been refurbished, and the remainder of their ancient, flaking charm is under threat as buildings yield to the developer's plastering trowel and paintbrush.

Image 1 shows one of the better results, but too-perfectly aligned joinery and even plastic window frames are appearing elsewhere.

One area of Rabat, right under the fortress walls of Mdina, is holding out with stubborn determination, and my other 7 images capture details of its flaking, attractively faded paint, splitting wood and crumbling plaster.

Surely these beautiful imperfections are where the town's 1000-year history can still be most strongly felt?





24



25























© Copyright 2025 remains with all artists



For more information about the Contemporary Group of
the Royal Photographic Society please visit
<https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/>