



View from the Chair

A warm welcome to Paul Ashley - this is his first edition of the Journal and I hope you all enjoy it.

Following your response to our questionnaire about Group meetings, our next event will be held on the 30th September 2017 in the Central Library, Manchester. We will combine it with a one day event, open and free to members of the Contemporary Group, but with a small fee for those outside the group. Speakers at the meeting will be photobook publisher Dewi Lewis and Derek Trillo ARPS. There will be an opportunity for attendees to show a selection of related prints or a photobook/dummy for review by our speakers. There will be a short AGM for Group members at the start of the meeting.

It would be helpful if anyone wishing to attend would let me know and also if they will be bringing work for review; we have allowed for a certain number, but if there were more we will plan for extra chairs. We will not be providing lunch for members, but there is a café within the library; the time allowed for lunch will also be adequate to go out to eat. The Contemporary Group is subsidizing this event from reserves as a one off.

Christine Pinnington has taken charge of our newsletter Concept for the past two years and has been responsible for improving it during that time. Christine has now decided to stand down in order to follow her own particular interests, but she has handed over to Lyn Newton and will be working with Lyn for a while. I wish Lyn a happy sojourn with the Contemporary Group.

Best wishes

Avril

Contemporary Photography

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If you wish to submit articles for the Journal, please send all copy and images on disc to:
Paul Ashley, paultheashley@gmail.com

Text should be in Microsoft Word and images are preferred in TIFF format, 300 dpi, file size guideline 10-20Mb. Images are also acceptable as high quality JPEGs, file size guideline 3-6 Mb. For other formats, please contact the Editor. Large image files may be supplied on disc or by use of on-line large file transfer facilities. Unless requested, discs will not be returned.
DEADLINE for the Autumn 2017 issue 1 September 2017

Cover: © Julia Fullerton-Batten. Prava (The Bird Boy), Russia, discovered in 2008, from the series *Feral Children*
Journal fonts: general, Avenir Lt Std: author name, Letter Gothic Std

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

Editorial

Humans have lived on this planet for the best part of two million years. We evolved here, we have survived here in competition with other species, and we have modified the environment to meet our wishes. We should be in comfortable equilibrium with our environment; ignoring the gathering storm clouds of climate change, one could argue that as a species we are in approximate equilibrium.

As individuals, and in particular places, that equilibrium is not so obvious. The bearing surfaces where we touch the rest of the world are not smooth. There is a roughness that causes friction. Take away our supports, our comforts and our places of familiarity and we can become damaged. The opposite happens as well, of course; let other creatures stray into our modified world and they may be lost.

In their different ways, the contributors to this issue of *Contemporary Photography* each examine the interface between humans and their environment at the individual or local scale. Emily Garfoot and Robin Stemp ask us what the 'shape' of the scenes they depict says about the absent person. Julia Fullerton-Batten and Jane Jackson show, in dramatised and documentary images respectively, the trauma that follows when people are taken away from their familiar homes and placed in strange or hostile surroundings. Len Salem tells a picture story of an individual, the representative of humanity, facing and overcoming the challenges of life – an organic human figure against a hard-edged geometric shape. Patrick Foster looks for and finds beauty in the collateral damage to creatures who stray onto roads – one of many elements of our modified environment!

In the best tradition of contemporary photography, no contributor offers clear answers (although Jane Jackson's sense of injustice shines through), but they all ask us questions about our place in the world.

-oOo-

I have thoroughly enjoyed putting together this, my first edition of *Contemporary Photography*. I have joined the well-oiled machine that is the journal production team, and I am grateful for the total support I have received from my predecessor, Patricia Ruddle. I am well aware of the high standards that the journal is expected to maintain. If there are any editorial glitches in this issue then they are, of course, entirely my responsibility, but the standard I have aimed for is that set by Patricia and her colleagues, now my own, in previous years.

Paul Ashley, Editor

Feral Children

Julia Fullerton-Batten

A feral child is one which has lived isolated from human contact, often from a very young age. As a result the child grows up with little or no experience of human care, behaviour or language. Some were cruelly confined or abandoned by their own parents, rejected perhaps because of their intellectual or physical impairment, or the parent's belief that this was the case. In other instances the loss of both parents was the cause. Others ran away after experiencing abuse. Yet more ended up in the wild and were 'adopted' by animals as a result of a wide variety of circumstances – getting lost, being taken by wild animals, etc.

As a mother of two young boys I was appalled and intrigued in turn when I first learned about feral children. My initial reaction was to think how parents could either neglect or lose their child. My maternal instinct goes into overdrive when I consider these young people experiencing their lives alone or in the company of wild animals. Then I consider and admire the fortitude they must have shown to survive such isolation and extreme circumstances. In any of the circumstances that I have read about, it completely overwhelms the boundaries of my comprehension.

However, I have risen to the challenge of trying to capture my thoughts photographically about the isolation under which these youngsters found themselves, wondering at the same time if those living in the companionship of wild animals were perhaps better off than those whose young lives were spent with no companionship at all.

Documented cases of feral children are spread over four continents, and vary in age from babies taken by wild animals up to eight year olds. The cases I portray range from a girl who as a toddler was confined by her parents to a potty chair for ten years to that of a baby boy who was

stolen by a leopardess and found three years later in the company of her and her latest cubs. My idea was not to replicate the exact scenes, but to interpret and duplicate the feelings and actions of each feral child living their experience.

Life is complex, for some more than others, even when we are considering a normal human life. Its complexity varies from one part of the globe to the other. In considering feral children, who are fully human, at least at the start of their lives, how can we not look at my images and question and wonder about the tenacious survival instincts of these 15 human beings.



Genie, USA, discovered 1970

Acknowledgement: I am extremely grateful to Mary-Ann Ochota, whose TV series on the subject of feral children several years ago was inspirational to me and many other viewers.

Editor's note: Julia has included the stories of all the feral children interpreted here on her website: www.juliafullerton-batten.com.

Marie Angelique Memmie Le Blanc
(The Wild Girl of Champagne),
France, discovered 1731.



Shamdeo, INDIA, discovered 1972.



John Ssebunya (The Monkey Boy),
Uganda, discovered 1991.



Madina, Russia, discovered 2013.



Sujit Kumar (The Chicken Boy), Fiji, discovered 1978.



Ivan Mishukov, Russia, discovered 1998.



Rochom P'ngien (Jungle Girl), Cambodia, discovered 2007.



Oxana Malaya, Ukraine, discovered 1991.



Lobo Wolf Girl, Mexico, discovered 1845/1852.



Marina Chapman, Columbia, discovered 1959.



Kamala and Amala, India, discovered 1920.



The Leopard Boy, India, discovered 1912.



Victor (The Wild Boy of Aveyron), France, discovered 1797.

States of Mind - a project in progress

Len Salem FRPS

It's true to say that I spend more time thinking about photography than making work. I include reading about photography and other photographers' work as part of the thinking process and I include thinking about my own projects as an essential part of my own photography. I try to work out why I am doing what I am doing, and to understand why other photographers do what they do.

I use photography in different ways. Casually, as a way of recording family events and making holiday souvenir books, for example. More thoughtfully, as a means of personal expression. I am sometimes asked what type of photographs I take. I reply in line with the statement on the first page of this journal - that I am more interested in photography *about* something rather than *of* something.

If that doesn't bring the conversation to a grinding halt, I explain that I am less interested in what something looks like than how I react to it and what I think about it. And I may share the reactions and thoughts with others by making a series of photographs which convey this.

A year or so ago, thinking about the way I try to express a feeling in my projects, I wondered whether I could make a photographic work about feelings themselves.

I find it useful to give a working title to my projects as a way of concentrating my ideas, and I called this one *States of Mind*. In writing a project description my ideas often become clearer, but sometimes I run into difficulties, indicating that I am not thinking clearly about the project.

Here's some of what I wrote when I began *States of Mind*, with a bit of later fine tuning.

Some people find it difficult to talk about how they feel. Sometimes this is a reluctance related to a stereotypical notion of self or an innate reserve. Other times it may simply be the lack of a suitable vocabulary. How do you describe a blue sky to someone if you have no shared word for blue?

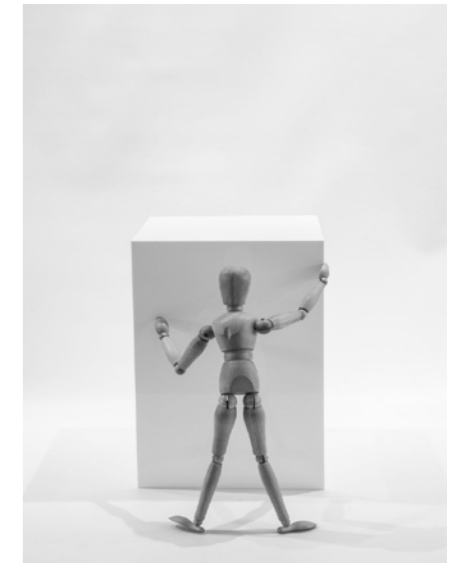
This project is intended to be a visual lexicon for states of mind. It is an attempt to provide image counterparts to feelings that many of us have experienced but perhaps have had difficulty in both properly identifying and then in describing. It will be an attempt to show feelings we might want to share through images we can share.

I made a preliminary list of states of mind that I might depict photographically. They included both negative and positive attitudes. But I quickly realised that the project would need a unifying factor if it was not to become just an unrelated set of illustrations. That is, I wanted the project to have visual cohesion as well as a common theme. I also knew that I would be unlikely to find time to go out to make these images using real world situations. I needed to work on this project mainly within my home.

I had the idea of taking a pure white acrylic cube, about 30cm high, and using it as the common feature in each image. To me it could be a metaphor for a human being. I could place objects on or around it, where the nature of the objects or their placement conveyed an emotion. But I also realised that the simple cube could be a metaphor

for the external world. Thinking about this duality (human being /real world) I realised that a small wooden jointed mannequin figure, commonly used as a model by people learning drawing, would work well with my cube. I could photograph the mannequin reacting to the cube as if reacting to the real world. And the photograph would be a depiction of a state of mind. I also had other ideas of objects that could be used with the cube in different ways.

Because you must start somewhere, I began my first exploration of the *States of Mind* project with the little wooden figure and the cube.



Other explorations of the theme may follow. The thing about the wooden mannequin is that it is not only featureless, and therefore universal, but it is readily posed in ways which are very human and full of character.

Using a simple home studio, I positioned this figure first contemplating the cube and then making a determined effort to scale it and, having succeeded, feeling triumphant.



This resulted in nine images which I imagined could be displayed either in a straight line on a gallery wall or maybe on successive pages in a book or both. I called this series *The Ascent of Man*, a part of the larger *States of Mind* project. It's a snappy standalone title but might need to be altered as the whole project proceeds because the mannequin series is more about individual perseverance



and determination in the face of an obstacle than it is about mankind.

I showed these images to the Herts Foto Forum, which was planning an exhibition. I had a good response but the exhibition was to be in a very small local gallery, so I could not show them in a straight line. I reprinted the nine images smaller, each image repeated on both sides of a panel and the panels suspended in a vertical line as a mobile. When looking at the finished result, I had the idea of placing the actual mannequin at the base of

the mobile. I liked the combination of the real and the photographed mannequin, encouraging the viewer to participate vicariously in the mannequin's experience and to think about the link between the actual and the depicted.

Miniature interiors

Robin Stemp

My studio is very small and I like to work with large interiors and so the only way I can achieve the size I want is by making them in miniature. A small structure can be driven to the beach or carried into the garden, or, if these options are not possible, I can paint a background, which can be propped up behind the windows to give the suggestion, if not the actuality of a view.

The interiors tend to be bare of furniture, except for a chair with maybe a cello, or, for one series, a table with objects against a landscape painting. The rooms are positioned by a south facing window overlooking our small walled garden and the light is constantly on the move. It is the changing light which is the key player here, and a morning light in summer tells a completely different story to the low sun of a winter afternoon. In all the images, the light is entirely natural. The cameras I use at the moment are a Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ80 and a smaller, lighter version, a Panasonic Lumix DMC –TZ35, for using out of doors. I also work with a Sony DSC-RX100. Occasionally I use a tripod, but as I have so little space in the studio and have to shoot as and when the light dictates, I put my trust in a steady hand.

In the white interiors there are, usually, no views from the windows, as the shots are taken from the end of the room, with the main emphasis on the way the light falls sideways across the floor. For me, less is more and a room devoid of the unnecessary can create the atmosphere I set out to achieve. One chair says that someone is, or has been there. They might well be returning, but until then, all is silent and peaceful, with just the light and, maybe, the breeze stirring the curtains. Of course, when in order to make another statement about chaos and disorder, clutter is necessary, but not in my present series of interiors. That may come later. A new series has an old landscape painting along a wall, with still life objects and a few pieces of furniture. The painting is shabby, has no monetary value, but gives an idea of faded (very faded) opulence.

The interiors are made in many ways; some are old dolls' houses, altered with windows added and walls removed, some created with simple pieces of wood (often found in skips) with dolls' house doors and windows, painted with household paint or acrylic. The white interiors are made from various walls and doors, which I dismantled and recreated, and painted white. The series of interiors are connected to my still lifes, as the windows can be used as a frame for the objects, with often a painted background.

Originally a painter, I still think as a painter and see the camera as an extension of the paintbrush. The atmosphere of each image is different and any tranquillity comes about naturally – I find that one can't strive for this – it is either there or it isn't. I was delighted therefore, to read the assessment of Philip Vann, the art writer, when he wrote, "You have created a whole new interior - of silence and beauty."

See: www.robinstemp.co.uk



Early morning, Sonya and Vanya's house, Aldeburgh, August, 6.32 a.m.



Summer afternoon



The cello, early September



Interior with October afternoon sun



Olga's room, Cambridge



Interior with white pillar and landscape painting, 31 March 2017



Waiting for Vanya



Vanya and Sonya's sitting room, Aldeburgh, late afternoon, October

The Jungle

Jane Jackson BA

It was with some trepidation that I arrived in Calais at the Auberge des Migrants warehouse in January 2016, as a volunteer to help the migrants living in the migrant encampment known as ‘the Jungle’. Although I wanted to take photographs, I was aware that most migrants did not want their chances of claiming asylum in the UK to be jeopardised through being identified in photographs that could be used by the immigration services to return them to France under the Dublin III regulation⁽¹⁾. My first trip resulted in only about thirty images, as I was reticent about being seen in the Jungle with my camera.

In the Jungle there were shops, restaurants, a church and mosques, hairdressers and a *hamam* (Turkish bath). Different communities elected elders who liaised with the charities so information could be distributed and the needs of the communities met. One day, while spreading the word about measles vaccinations to be given later in the week, we heard shouting. The CRS riot police, in retaliation for some of the men trying to stop and board lorries on the motorway near the camp, indiscriminately fired tear gas into the Jungle for about two hours. I left for the ferry home, my eyes stinging and tear gas impregnated in my clothes, determined to return and help, but also determined always to carry my camera in the Jungle.

I volunteered again for ten days in February. I worked in the warehouse, litter picking, and in the women’s centre. I also worked on the distribution team, as I had a car and could take volunteers in and out of the Jungle. This gave me access every day, usually distributing clothes. We would be greeted with handshakes and hugs; there was a great rapport with the migrants and we often shared chai or mint tea with them after a distribution. During this visit a judge came to decide the fate of the southern part of the camp. I returned to England for my sixtieth birthday celebrations, and the judge’s decision to demolish the southern part was announced on my birthday.

When I went back in March, the demolition of the southern part was almost complete. The church, school and some community buildings stood in isolation. A large fire razed the final part of the south to the ground. Some migrants moved into the north, or the container camp, whilst others went to reception centres or dispersed into the countryside, or even went to Paris.

I showed some of the photographs I had taken up to this time for my BA degree show. A book accompanied the exhibition.

I was aware of the decision in October to demolish the northern section and to close the camp. I did not want to witness the scrum of journalist and photographers, so did not return until November. I was shocked: the container camp was empty, every structure had been removed and the land had been bulldozed. The only evidence of habitation was seven chairs and the odd empty bottle, shoe or crayon in the sand.

I returned once more in March 2017, as part of my MA study. I attached some of my original photographs to a placard at the exact location they had originally been taken, and photographed them in the now empty landscape. Because the light was dwindling, I returned the next day to rephotograph. The police spotted me and after checking my car, passport and questioning me about the photographs in the car, I was told to

leave. At the tourist beach, I took the only image not taken in the Jungle: an image of a seat looking across ‘la Manche’ which ironically showed the white cliffs of Dover some twenty-one miles away.

The Jungle may have gone, but the migrants have not. They are still arriving in Calais, still trying to hide away on lorries to get to the United Kingdom and in their attempts to do so still suffering terrible injuries, and sometimes death. There are still unaccompanied minors denied their right for re-unification with their families in the United Kingdom, despite international rights or the Dubs agreement⁽²⁾.

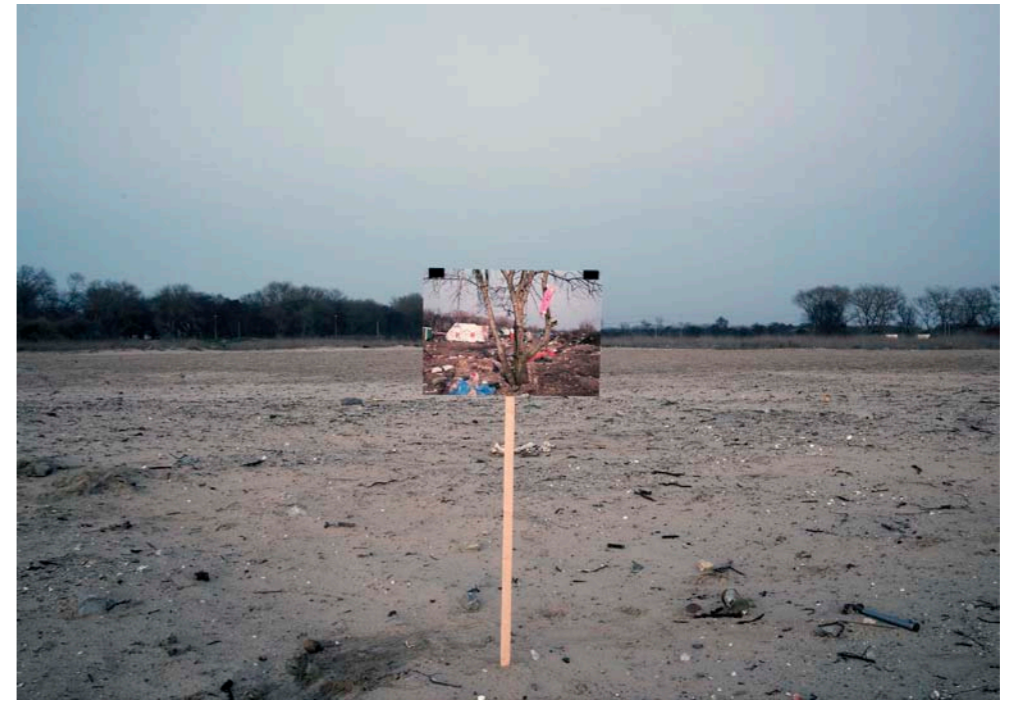
See: www.janejacksonphotography.com



1. EU Regulation 604/2013: the law that determines the country responsible for examining an application for asylum by refugees.

2. Section 67 of the UK Immigration Act 2016: an amendment introduced by Alfred Dubs, that requires the UK government to relocate a certain number of refugee unaccompanied minors from other countries in Europe to the UK, and to support them.





Space and Form

Emily Garfoot BA

Evolution, history and culture have handed to us a visual syntax that says “if this object is here, then we should see that object or person”. Emily Garfoot’s work challenges our expectations of visual environments by reducing them to minimalist spaces. Her simple interiors ask us “what do you expect to see here?” and “what form would it take?”. As in much of her work, she addresses preconceptions about female presence and absence. In her own words:

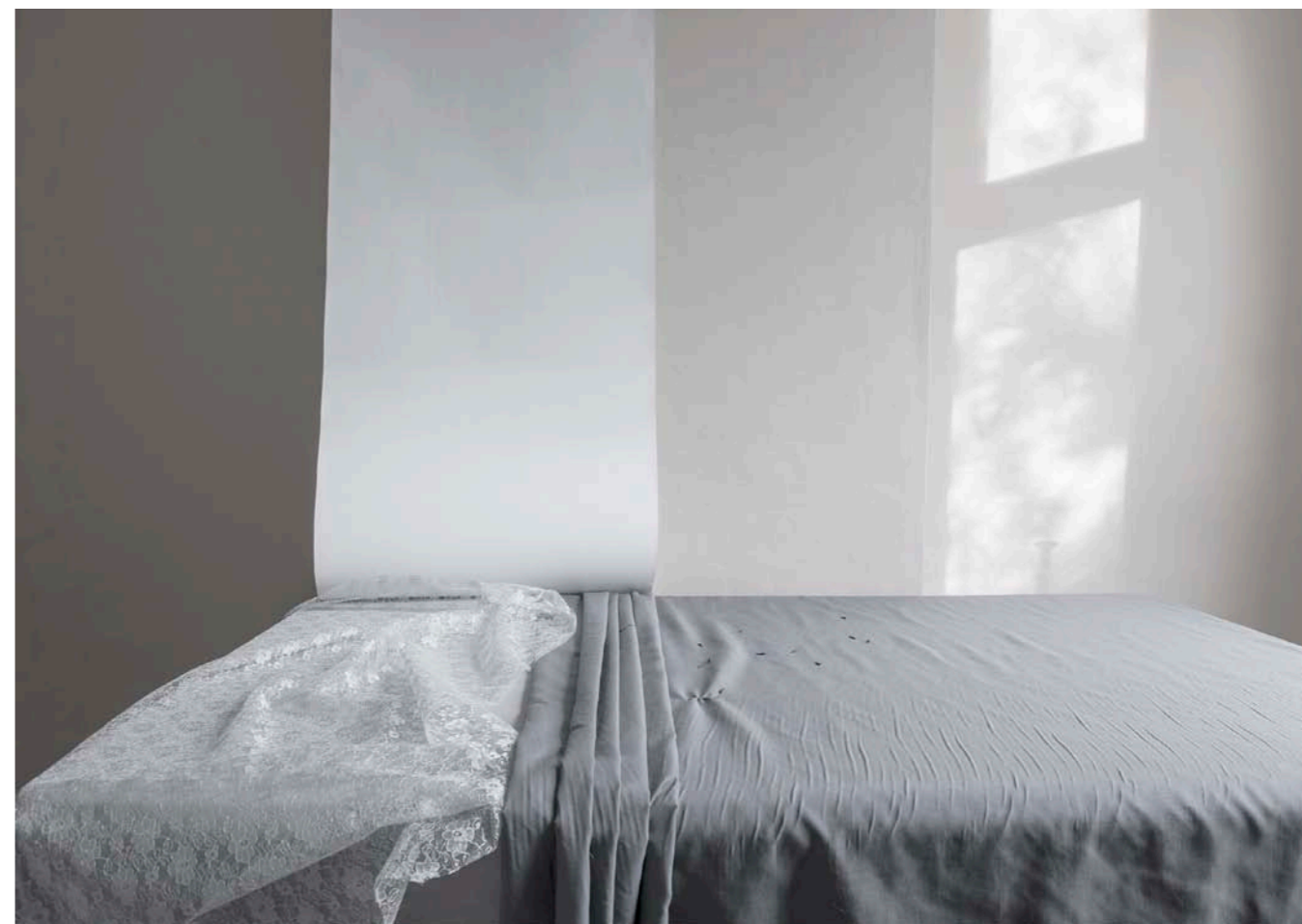
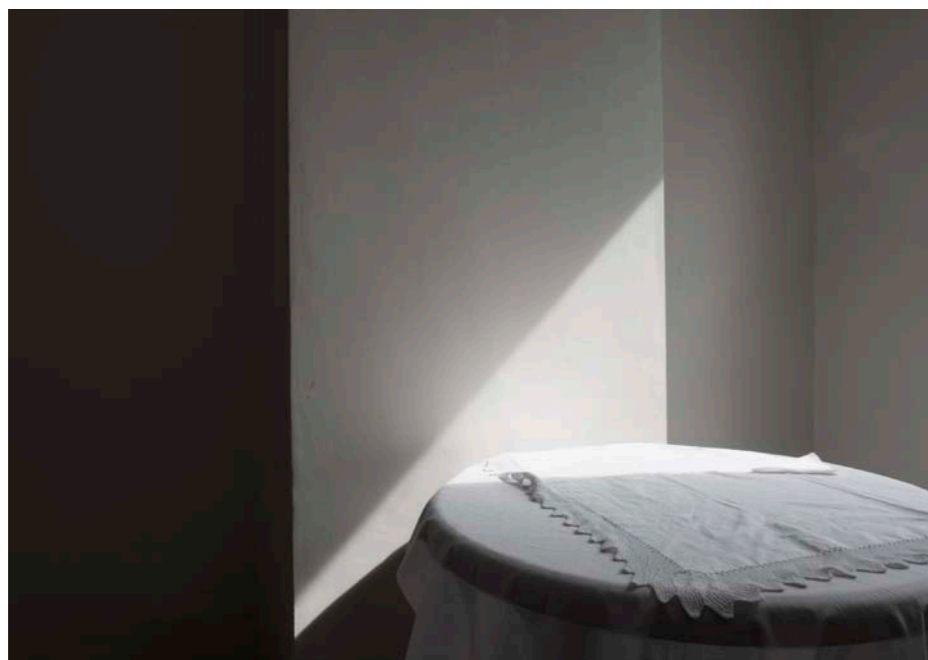
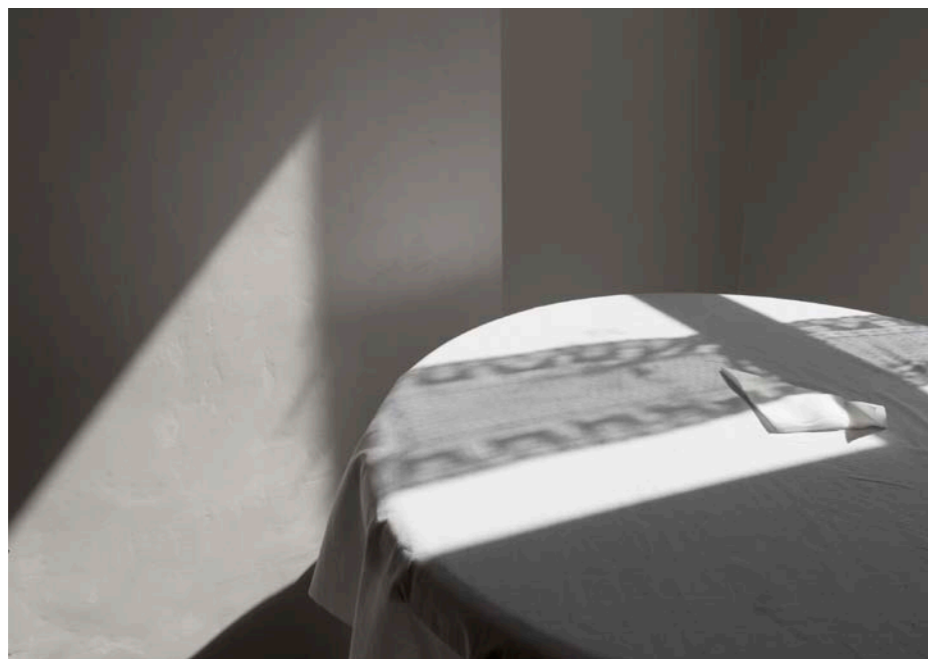
Objects and spaces are defamiliarised to challenge the traditional perception of the home as a feminine domain. Reducing the table top arrangement to the cloth that it would sit upon refers to the feminine vessel that cannot be seen; the traces that are left behind speak of a female presence that might once have occupied the space. Space and form presents scenes in which objects are freed and removed from their everyday function to speak of something other.

Emily is a graduate of the University of Derby, and works as a photographer and artist in the East Midlands. *Space and Form* received a Graduates Award at the 2017 Format International Photography Festival.

Text by Paul Ashley

See: www.emilygarfoot.com





The Dark Side of Beauty

Patrick Foster MA ARPS

What do you do when you see roadkill: do you look on indifferently as you pass by, or do you think about the life that has been extinguished, and wonder if the animal suffered or found a quick death? Or do you look on with compassion and realise that the thing you are looking at was once a living creature? Are you the sort of person who would stop your car and move the animal to the verge out of decency, or do you leave it there to be flattened beyond all recognition by other motorists?

On the other side of the coin there are the people who eat roadkill - this group is growing in number. Is this ethical or distasteful? That's a decision only you can make.

I have been photographing roadkill for a few years now. I live and work in Suffolk and the amount of roadkill here is astonishing. But looking at this with a photographer's eye, I realised that, within all this tragedy, occasionally there is a beautiful picture to be taken. However macabre, these creatures can still be beautiful; fur and feathers all have an innate beauty for us to look at. I call the body of work *The Dark Side of Beauty*. But as they say, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder!

On a practical level, to remove roadkill from the path of future traffic is to help prevent further deaths: all too often, roadkill leads to roadkill as scavengers are struck down by high-speed vehicles while working the remains of the original victim. In 1989, Barry Lopez (an American author, essayist, and fiction writer whose work is known for its humanitarian and environmental concerns) wrote a short book called *Apologia*, in which he described the ritual he had gradually developed of stopping for animals he found dead on the road and removing them, gently and with great care, to the safety of the verge.

Facts: at the end of 2012 there were 34.5 million vehicles licensed for use on the roads in Great Britain (source: DVLA). In the UK, we currently do not know the actual impact of roads and traffic on our wildlife, but it is estimated that in the United States about a million animals per day are killed on the roads, and in Europe about 350,000 to 27 million birds per year are killed on roads. For more information see:

<https://projectsplatter.co.uk/>

<https://ptes.org/record-roadkill-help-british-mammal-conservation-efforts/>

www.patrickfosterphotography.com

Hare



Pheasant





Muntjack



Grey Squirrel



Pheasant



Moorhen

Metropolight, David Gaberle

Book Review by Brian Steptoe FRPS



**24.5x20.5cm
60 pages, 35
photographs,
two essays in
both English
and Czech,
plus list of
kickstarter
donators.
Published
by KANT,
Prague, 2017.**

With over 2000 photobooks being published each year, many aspiring authors turn to fundraising appeals to help cover the costs of bringing their book to market. David Gaberle launched his appeal for *Metropolight* on Facebook in early March 2017, supporting this by an extensive website which included a commendation by photobook publisher Michael Mack and Magnum member Harry Gruyaert. After three days the amount he asked for had been raised. Within two weeks this had doubled and by 14 March, 481 people from around the world had pledged over £19,000 and pre-ordered his book.

Going out on the streets was a psychological problem for Gaberle and he had spent two months in hospital with this mental problem. Then he found that photography and venturing out with a camera enabled him to overcome these anxieties. *Metropolight* is a distillation from tens of thousands of photographs taken in ten cities around the world. Gaberle is only 26 years old.

top right - Tokyo, centre right - Sydney & Tokyo,
bottom right - London & Tokyo



GROUP AND RELATED SOCIETY EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 16 September | Contemporary North East meeting at Central Buildings 2, 13 Bullring, 3rd Floor, Suite 4, Wakefield WF1 1HB 2-5 pm. Contact Patricia A Ruddle ARPS patriciaruddle@btinternet.com tel 01904 783850 |
| 16 September | <i>Understanding and creating a photobook.</i> Regents University, Regents Park. London NW1 4NS. For details and booking see http://www.rps.org/events/2017/september/16/understanding-and-creating-a-photobook |
| 20 September | Conceptual and Contemporary Distinction Assessments for ARPS and FRPS. Fenton House. Bath. Applicants and observers may attend the Associateship assessments. ARPS enquiries arps@rps.org . FRPS enquiries frps@rps.org |
| 30 September | Group AGM followed by talks from Derek Trillo ARPS and Dewi Lewis, photobook publisher. Attendees may bring prints or photobooks for review. Central Library, St Peter's Square, City Centre, Manchester M2 5PD. 10am to 4.30pm. Book at RPS event http://www.rps.org/events/2017/september/30/photobook-craft-and-publishing-with-contemporary-sig-agm , or contact Avril Harris ARPS avrilharris@blueyonder.co.uk |
| 8 October | Contemporary South West meeting at Canon Downs Village Hall. Canon Downs, Truro. TR3 6GH. Contact Rod Fry rod@rod.fry.eclipse.co.uk tel 01803 844721 |
| 18 November | Contemporary North East meeting. Details as above |
| Date not fixed | Contemporary North West meeting. Date and venue not yet fixed. Contact Alan Cameron LRPS alan.cameron@me.com tel 07825 271344 |
| Dates not fixed | Contemporary East Anglia meetings. These will be in the Ipswich and Cambridge areas when arranged. The project underway is the The Ipswich Waterfront Development. Contact Peter Ellis wordsnpicsltd@gmail.com . |

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© Robin Stemp, *Structure by the Sea*, from the series *Miniature Interiors*.