

concept

abstraction image conceptualisation notion thought
impression theory view conception idea hypothesis

THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY
GROUP

e-newsletter

Well, good weather seems finally to have arrived and Concept will be taking a Summer break. **The next issue will be October but short bulletins will be sent out over the summer months if needed.** Please email me if you want anything included (and don't forget to check the website!)

We had a successful AGM on the 9th and although a slightly disappointing attendance it was a good meeting and we were treated to two excellent talks. More about this in this issue.

There are various 'asks' of our members in this month's issue. As the existing editor of our Journal, Patricia Ruddle is now stepping down we are looking for a replacement (see page 2). A lot of work is currently underway to improve our website and develop the group's activities; proposed online portfolio reviews and new sub groups. I hope members will endeavour to make a contribution wherever possible.

This issue we are treated to some light relief on contemporary photography, with a wonderful contribution from Graham Hodgson FRPS - always guaranteed to lighten any dull day and remind us that sometimes we can take ourselves too seriously.

The Yorkshire Region is soon to be hosting 'Mother River', a talk by Yang Wang Preston. Details appear in this newsletter and we hope to see many of you there. Yang's work will also be appearing in the Summer issue of our Journal.

In the meantime I hope you all have a good summer and I look forward to getting some articles from you for October (however small!).

Christine Pinnington LRPS
Editor



The Artworkers Guild, venue for this year's Annual General Meeting

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Editor Contemporary Photography

The Quarterly Journal of the Royal Photographic Society's Contemporary Group

After 6 successful years our current editor has decided to step down after the Spring 2017 issue.

An opportunity now arises for a new editor to take our Journal forward and propose new ideas.

With support from the Journal Editorial Committee, this is a prestigious and rewarding position within our group. We are looking for an editor who is able to uncover less well-known contemporary photographers working in all genres, particularly across the span ranging from personal documentary to art photography. The Journal's aim is to provide articles with a value and purpose, mainly seeking such contacts within and outside the RPS and often outside the UK. Researching to identify such potential contributors would therefore be a key activity. The Journal also has an important role in the encouragement of new members to the Group.

Contemporary Photography is a quarterly well respected journal which encompasses the ethos of the Contemporary Group – photography that conveys ideas, stimulates thought and encourages interpretation; photographs 'about' rather than 'of'. All Contemporary Group members receive printed Group Journals, giving them a permanence. As well as the current circulation through the RPS, the Journal is currently featured on issuu.com where it has a worldwide following particularly in North and South America, and in Eastern and Western Europe, with an on-line readership of up to 3000 per issue and over 370 named followers.

If you are interested in becoming the new editor and would like to discuss this in more detail please contact:

Avril Harris ARPS

Chair

Contemporary Group

avrilharris@blueyonder.co.uk

Tel: 07990 976 390

RPS Contemporary Group Annual General Meeting

Held on 9th July 2016 at the
"Art Workers Guild" London

The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 9th July, 2016 at the Artworkers Guild, Queens Square, London. This was a good venue for travel and a very interesting building. The AGM took place in the morning and after lunch we enjoyed two talks one from Tom Owens and one from Fergus Heron

The meeting was led by Rod Fry, Deputy Chair. Peter Ellis, Secretary presented the officers' reports followed by discussion on the topics from the agenda. Items raised included increasing input for the portfolio boxes, a need for a new convenor for the NE Sub-group, and holding more one day events regionally. New positions were agreed, Peter Ellis becomes Deputy Chair (Rod Fry is standing down) and Kate Wentworth becomes Secretary (to replace Peter Ellis). Patricia Ruddle is stepping down as Editor of the Journal from next Spring. How to increase our membership was also discussed along side the RPS Strategic Plan. The Minutes will be sent out to all members shortly.

Following lunch we had two excellent talks, the first from Tom Owens followed by Fergus Heron.

Tom known for his solo exhibition, *Edgelands* and more recently the joint exhibition *Contradictions*, started his talk declaring that he was 'just a photographer'. However his talk soon showed that he is much more than that. Tom showed us his early images of Liverpool and from his first job in the Civil Service carrying out surveillance photography, all accompanied by some interesting related stories.

Tom then showed us two fascinating works, from his 2011 degree course. *Random Enigma* and *Artist Enigma* based on stacked numbers from exhibits at an exhibition of Brian Grimshaw's work. He then followed on with his series *10 minutes* and an interesting take on yellow lines! He then went on to present his images documenting the Docklands on the River Orwell and finished the talk with his project *Edgelands* which he started in 2013. All were taken with large and medium format cameras.



Tom Owens (left) and Fergus Heron

The second talk followed by Fergus Heron, a Senior Lecturer in Photography in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Brighton. The images shown were from his projects, *Charles Church Houses*, *Shopping Centre Interiors*, *Commons* and *Motorways*.

Members during Fergus' talk



Fergus talked about the technical side of his photography, explaining that he uses a 5 x 4 view camera placing emphasis on the optics and on the camera being part of the scene. He talked of his influences of Keith Arnott, John Gossage, Jem Southam and the work of the Bechers, quoting the *Water Towers* where they appear to be the same but each has its own uniqueness. His landscape pictures of the *Charles Church Houses* explore this repeat motif and show how in the modern setting different periods are mixed.

His *Shopping Centre Interiors* also show this similarity but each is different using architectural references from the local areas. His images of motorways showed the feeling of stillness and extension of time, a pattern that had also been seen in the *Charles Church Houses*.

Fergus ended his talk explaining that his work was contemporary rather than conceptual and what drives the work is his fascination with place.

On a personal note, what came over to me was that both had a passion for their cameras, feeling they were a very important part and inclusive to the image. Certainly it made me want to open the cupboard and get my old Bronica out again!

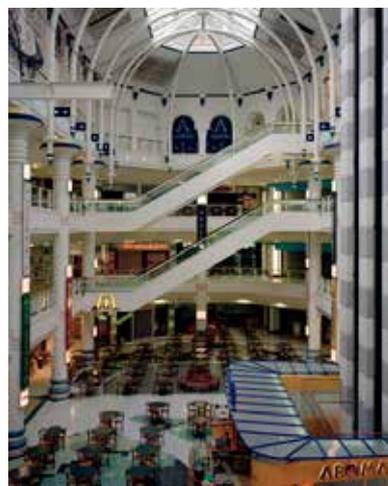
The afternoon ended with Rod Fry giving a vote of thanks to Tom and Fergus for their fascinating and inspiring talks. Those who couldn't attend certainly missed two excellent talks.

Christine Pinnington LRPS

<http://tomowens.openpoint.co.uk>
www.fergusheron.com



Stowmarket, from the series 'Edgelands'
© Tom Owens



Peacocks, Woking, 2003 from the series
'Shopping Centre Interiors'
© Fergus Heron

Proposed new Sub-group for London, Thames Valley and Nearby Regions

Our contemporary group currently has six local sub-groups holding regular meetings, but there is no sub-group in the South, other than the SW one in Devon/Cornwall. I would like take the initiative to set one up for the London, Thames Valley and nearby regions.

Looking at the work that the other regional groups do it seems worthwhile finding out if there is demand in the region to form such a group. It could meet bi-monthly and, at least initially, undertake the same sort of activities that the others do, image/portfolio review, discussion and possibly moving on to regional exhibitions. As a first step, with help from the RPS in Bath, I will get a message out to Contemporary Group members in the region to gauge demand.

**Ahead of that if you would like to contact me on
gareth@imageinpro.com
feel free to do so.**

The Compact Oxford Dictionary defines 'conceptual' as 'relating to ideas or concepts' and 'concept' as 'an abstract idea'. The RPS has indicated that conceptual photography is not the same as conceptual art, but a quote from the book Photo-speak says "Photography has played a part in Conceptual art, as in the work of Joseph Kosuth, who juxtaposes a photograph with a word or its definition in order to question the notion of representation." So that's all sorted then.

Graham Hodgson FRPS reflects on 'Conceptual'

I decided to work on the idea that a concept is an idea and that the concept is more important than the individual images (my excuse for rubbish pictures). So I took as my inspiration 36 Views of Mount Fuji, by Hokusai (woodblock prints). Not to mention 36 Views of Mount Fuji by Hiroshige (prints); 36 Views of the Eiffel Tower, by Henri Riviere (drawings); 36 Views of St Michael's Mount, by Trevor Burston (B&W photos); 36 Views of Mount Shard by David Timoney (photos); 36 Views of Sutro Tower, by Howard Spielman (photos) and last but not least, 28 Views of the Moon by Carol Ballenger FRPS (photo-montages).

However, I thought I would do a more modest 9 Views of Totnes Castle - partly because after nine views boredom is likely to set in and also because there are only nine pubs in Totnes. (Not what you are thinking: sitting in nine pubs in turn sticking the camera out of the window and hoping for a view of the castle – that's a different concept for another time.) So here is one of the nine views of Totnes Castle with the diagram explaining the concept – one subject in the centre (the castle) with arrows from each of the nine viewpoints.



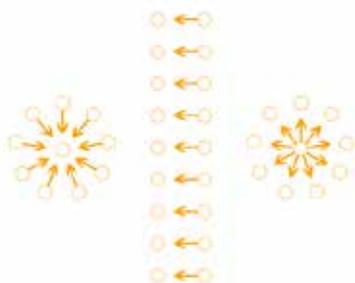
From this was born the idea of 9 Views of Totnes Pubs. Here is one of the views with the diagram explaining the concept – nine subjects (pubs) with nine different straight-on viewpoints.



And so to 9 Views from a Totnes Pub. Here is one of the views taken whilst sitting in a pub beer garden (enjoying a well-deserved pint after an exhausting day of photography) with the diagram explaining the concept – nine different subjects from one viewpoint.

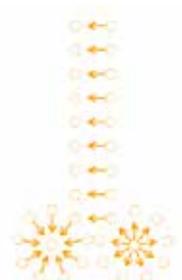


So let's remind ourselves of the three diagrams.



The challenge now is to combine them into one all-encompassing, meaningful diagram that sums up everything I have been talking about.

That'll do it!



Website Update

Our Webmaster Sean Goodhart is looking to refresh the Contemporary section on rps.org and is looking to highlight more work on the site's gallery pages which are tagged as contemporary and clearly represent our group ethos "photos about". Please continue to send Sean any sets of contemporary images that would make good banners for the website Sean and the links of any good galleries you spot: The banners are presented randomly when people visit the site, but soon get repeated without regular addition. Your help is most appreciated.

Images to be featured on RPS website pages need to be 1085 wide x 605 high - approximately 16:9 HDTV ratio. For a banner of the 605 height, 130 are obscured at the top; 380 are visible in the middle and 95 are obscured at the bottom so choose images that will look good presented that way. That's a letter-boxy 3:1 for the visible part of the image. Files need to be named like this: A Summer Day by John Smith ARPS (actually as the jpeg title).

Contact the Webmaster
sean.goodhart.contemporary@outlook.com



Fame at Last !

Spotted on the London Embankment, restoration work on Temple Station
© Brian Steptoe

Master of Photography Sky Arts Thursday evenings at 8pm

A new programme started this week - a search to find Europe's best photographer. 12 photographers are each given an assignment, their images judged, and each week one will leave the competition. The judges are Oliviero Toscani, Rut Blee Luxembourg and Simon Frederick. Alex Webb acts as mentor for the first episode and the show is hosted by Isabella Rossellini. The first show ended with the photographers being told by the judges that they thought they were taking pictures for the judges rather than themselves!

Well worth a watch.
www.masterofphotography.tv

Help needed with Proposed Members' Portfolio Review Scheme

We are looking for someone with experience of using on-line software to pilot a Portfolio Review scheme. You will receive full support of the Committee and help and advice from more experienced members.

If you are interested please contact
Peter Ellis LRPS, Deputy Chair
at wordsnpicsltd@gmail.com

What's Happening and What's On

Contemporary Midlands Kick-off Meeting at QUAD

13 August 2016

13:30 - 16:30

QUAD Arts Centre, Derby, Market Place
Derby DE1 3AS

The Midlands sub-group of the Contemporary Group is being set up in Derby and the first meeting is being held at 13:30 on Saturday 13th August at the QUAD Arts Centre in Derby. The meeting is open to all RPS members.

In line with the Contemporary Group ethos, we aim to look at "Photography that conveys ideas, stimulates thought and encourages interpretation; photographs "about" rather than "of"; with a focus on "sets of images to a theme rather than individual stand-alone photographs". The designation "Midlands" reflects Derby's location on the border between the East Midlands and Central regions.

The first meeting has two aims, to discuss what people want from such a meeting and how often it should be held. The proposal is that the group is primarily one that critiques members' own projects. However we will also discuss at the meeting what other ideas people have. Hopefully we can reach consensus fairly quickly and spend most of the meeting looking at work. Projection will not be available at this meeting, so if you do bring work, it will need to be prints this time.

The QUAD is in the city centre close to the bus station and a comfortable 15-minute walk from the railway station. The photographic group exhibition "East Meets West 2", showing appropriately sixteen artists from the East and West Midlands, will be on show and the Quad café can be recommended for a spot of lunch.

If you wish to attend, please contact the organiser David Edge and let him know if you are proposing to bring work and please provide an email address and phone number in case of last-minute changes.

email: davidjedge@me.com
tel: 07947 849643

Getting there:
<http://www.derbyquad.co.uk/how-find-quad.aspx>



The Quad

© Graham Lucas Commons 2010

17 September 2016

The Contemporary Group North East

14:00 - 17:00

Central Buildings
13 Bull Ring, Third Floor, Suite 4
Wakefield
United Kingdom
WF1 1HB

Contact: Patricia Ruddle
patricaruddle@btinternet.com
07572 124290

- See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2016/september/17/the-contemporary-group-north-east---wakefield#sthash.FyNRwfMz.dpuf>

2 October 2016

Contemporary Group South West Region

10:30 - 16:00

42 Hunters Moon
(Carol & Graham's House)
Dartington
United Kingdom
TQ9 6JT

Contact: Rod Fry
rod@rodry.eclipse.co.uk
01803 844721

See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2016/october/02/south-west-region-contemporary-group-meeting#sthash.Sw0tgg6o.dpuf>

Mother River

A Photography Journey along the Yangtze

Yan Wang Preston



British-Chinese photographer [Yan Wang Preston](#) describes the process of documenting the full 6,211 km of the Yangtze River as "four years of blood, sweat and tears."

Yan began the project as a way to reconnect with her homeland after moving to the UK in 2005. She was interested in the ways in which the Yangtze is perceived and portrayed in China and the West.

Mother River project follows a strict 'Y Points System': to photograph one of China's Mother Rivers, the Yangtze, with a precise interval of every 100 kilometres on a large-format film camera. Measured at 6,211 kilometres long, the river provides 63 photographic locations for the single-minded artist-explorer.

Completed between 2010 and 2014, the project has received multiple awards, including the Reviewer' Choice Award at Format International Portfolio Review in Derby (2014) and the Shiseido Photographer Prize at the Three Shadows Photography Award in Beijing in April 2016. Solo exhibitions of *Mother River* have been staged at the 56th Venice Biennale as well as museums in China such as the Chongqing China Three Gorges Museum and Wuhan Art Museum.

The renowned British curator Zelda Cheatle comments on *Mother River*:

Yan Preston's pictures of the Yangtze River will stop you in your tracks. This is a photographic odyssey that is remarkable for the pictures and remarkable as a story. This young and fearless woman set off to make a pictorial record of the entire Mother River, stopping every 100km to take a picture on her large plate camera. The result is an astonishing look at the whole inner life of China, composed and shot with great skill and ingenuity in often the most adverse conditions. Three and a half years later, this wondrous series of pictures is being made into an exhibition that will thrill and enthrall and educate.

A work of genius and an eye-opening experience.



Date: Saturday 29th October 2016 **Time:** 18.30.00 PM – 20.30 PM

Location: York Medical Society
Postcode: YO1 8AW [23 Stonegate, York]

Cost: RPS Members – £7.00 Non-members – £10.00

To Book: Robert Helliwell ARPS **Email:** bobhelliwell@clara.co.uk
Phone: 01904 500231

Type: Talk
Region: Yorkshire

Please see the RPS website for all details, booking and cancellation policy. Booking is essential:

✂.....

Event Booking Slip [RPS Yorkshire Region]
PLEASE CUT OFF THIS SLIP AND POST, ALONG WITH YOUR REMITTANCE -
[cheques made payable to 'RPS Yorkshire'] TO -

**Regional Treasurer, Mr. Robert Helliwell ARPS, 37 Derwent Mews,
Osbalwick, York, YO10 3DN**

Type: Talk
Date: Saturday 29th October 2016 **Time:** 18.30PM – 20.30PM

Location: York Medical Society
Postcode: YO1 8AW [23 Stonegate, York]

Contact: Robert Helliwell ARPS **Email:** bobhelliwell@clara.co.uk **Phone:** 01904 500231

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....Post Code:.....

Email:..... Phone:.....

Please complete as appropriate:

RPS Member £7.00 **RPS membership No:** _____

Non Member £10.00

Electronic transfer of monies available please request details from Robert Helliwell.



Photobook Exhibition 2016

The closing date for entries for the above event is the 31st July 2016. Winners and short-listed entries for the RPS Open International Photobook Exhibition 2016 will be exhibited, together with an associated print exhibition. Books can be browsed by visitors.

18 October 2016 - 23 October 2016

13:00 - 19:00

Espacio Gallery

159 Bethnal Green Road
London
United Kingdom
E2 7DG

<http://www.rps.org/events/2016/october/18/rps-open-international-photobook-exhibition-2016#st-hash.a9RG5khf.dpuf>

29th and 30th October 2016

St Saviours Hall, Barbican

Plymouth PL1 2NN.

As well as the exhibition of the selected books being on show, Simon Roberts FRPS has agreed to be one of the speakers, on Saturday and we are also hoping to get Robin Maddock a local photographer who has done some interesting work around Plymouth as a second speaker. On Sunday we aim to have a workshop to actually make books. The photobook exhibition will be shown over both days and we aim to have a publisher selling books, so far Trolley books have agreed to be here and also copies of any of the books selected for the exhibition can be sold. There will be a basic charge of £5.00 to see the exhibition, plus a further £5.00 for the two speakers.

The workshop on Sunday will be limited to 12 people at a cost of £40 per head to cover all materials.
for further information

Contact Rod Fry ARPS
rod@rodry.eclipse.co.uk

12 November 2016

10:30 - 16:30

Impressions Gallery Bradford

Impressions Gallery
Centenary Square
Bradford
United Kingdom
BD1 1SD

<http://www.rps.org/events/2016/november/12/international-photobook-exhibition>

21 September 2016

10:30 - 16:00

RPS HQ, Bath
Fenton House
122 Wells Road
Bath BA2 3AH

ARPS Conceptual & Contemporary Assessment (Print & Images for Screen Submissions)

- See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2016/september/21/arps-conceptual--contemporary-assessment--print--pdi-submissions#sthash.U0tkYJyc.dpuf>

FRPS Conceptual & Contemporary Assessment

See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2016/september/21/frps-conceptual--contemporary-assessment#sthash.a6ipaVIM.dpuf>

Tel:01225 325733

Deadline for contributions for inclusion in the October Issue is 20th Oct 2016.

News, reports, reviews, publicity, profiles, images, in fact anything of interest in the contemporary world. If you have any contributions you would like to have included, please email to:

photopinni@btinternet.com

Christine Pinnington LRPS
Editor, concept
The e-newsletter of the RPS Contemporary Group

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