

Concept

The Newsletter of the Contemporary Group
of the Royal Photographic Society



From *The Other Blackpool*
© Neil Goodwin

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Welcome to the December issue of Concept. If you're like me you are probably wondering where did 2024 go? I always think this is a good time to look back at the images I have taken in the previous year and think about what I want to do next, I like to have some sort of plan! Anyway, I hope you have all had a successful year of photography and look forward to seeing some of your work in future issues of Concept.

We have another packed issue with a wide variety of work, including Street Photography, Conceptual work and Documentary Images.

My thanks go out to all the contributors who take the time and effort to send their images and thoughts in for consideration for this and previous issues. If you have any thoughts on what you would like to see included in Concept next year, then please don't hesitate to get in touch, for example if you have seen any exhibitions or found a photography book you really enjoyed, please drop me a line with some information.

The Contemporary Group volunteers put an enormous amount of effort into making the group work for its members including organising talks, events and publications, so as a member of the group as well as editor of Concept I think it's worth saying thanks to everyone who takes the time to volunteer, it's not always easy and is much appreciated.

You will see in this issue we have several talks already lined up for 2025, I hope you can join them as they are always interesting. Don't forget you can also stay up to date with everything that's happening by visiting the Contemporary Group website pages on the main RPS site - <https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/> where you can see all events as well as news articles and videos

Best Wishes

Nick Linnett
Concept Editor

View from the Chair

Here we are again in December, and I'm left wondering where the year has gone in terms of how little work I've made and on the other hand how it has dragged with really heavy admin stuff going on with HQ.

This year has seen a huge change in the issuing of the new Terms of Reference and restructuring of the committee into voting and non-voting roles and the imposition of a levy for services rendered by the centre on our behalf.

Behind the scenes, members of MemCom have worked up an agreed service level agreement (SLA) with Finance so that Finance Officers (Treasurers in old money) now have certain expectations on the services undertaken on our behalf such as banking and expenses payments.

The latest effort is now centred on the Ticketing and Booking of events as HQ impose the cessation of the use of third -party platforms such as Eventbrite and Biletto. We had a very brief dalliance with these platforms just before their use was given a red light back in March. I've been seconded onto the sub-team that will negotiate an SLA for this function.

Mike Kitson has been doing a sterling job arranging speakers at regular intervals during the year. We have had plenty of excellent speakers, but we do not get attendee numbers that reflect the effort that Mike goes to in organising them. I also feel sorry for the speakers, especially those that do not charge, speaking to such small audiences. I really would like to see more members attending these free events in 2025.

In an effort to cut down on expenditure we have adopted a single business account for Zoom for use by regional organisers, and the committee. This will save us about £180 per year in separate accounts being claimed via expenses. Our other big change is reducing Contemporary Photography to two issues per year, but it looks so much better with more pages and images in it. Big thanks to Paul Ashley and Christine Pinnington for their sterling work here.

Thanks for your support this year and I wish you all well for the forthcoming year.

Tom Owens ARPS
Chair

Forthcoming Talks and Events

Tuesday 10th December at 19:00

Joanne Coates.

Joanne Coates is a working-class visual artist working in the medium of photography who lives and works across the North East of England. Her work explores rurality, hidden histories and inequalities relating to low income through photography, installations, and audio. Coates uses photography to question the concepts of power, identity, wealth, and poverty, by exploring the social histories of land, gender, and class to narrate stories that have long been forgotten – or simply never told. Participation and working with communities are an important aspect of Coates' work, and in 2022 she was announced the winner of the Jerwood/Photoworks award.

Monday 13th January 2025 at 19:00

Contemporary Photography, Associate and Fellowship Distinctions Q&A

Perhaps you are thinking about putting together a panel of images for either your Associate or Fellowship Contemporary Photography Distinction, or just want to know slightly more about these Distinctions and what the assessors are looking for in a submission. This is your chance to ask those questions to a very distinguished panel comprising Richard Brayshaw, Mick Yates who are both members of the Contemporary Distinctions panel, together with Viveca Koh, holder of two Fellowships, the second one being in the Contemporary genre. Please submit your questions in advance by 1st January 2025 to contemporaryevents@RPS.org although there may be opportunities to ask general questions on the night.

Please Note: This is not an advisory session, none of the speakers will be able to give you any feedback on images, panels or on potential Statement of Intent. Should you require this then please book a 1:1 through the RPS booking system.

Monday 17th February 2025 at 19:00

In conversation with Lucy Sagers

Since 2013 Lucy has photographed everyday stories of rural life, drawn to the threads that connect people with each other and with their landscape. She is interested in the impressions we leave on each other, on the land and in turn the marks a place makes on us. Lucy uses a handheld camera and available light to reach into the shadows of the natural world and dark domestic and agricultural interiors. From her North Yorkshire studio, she makes limited edition prints, often working in black and white seeking to abstract emotion and to blur the space between past and present.

In his foreword to her book, *Ford of the Sorrel* (Bluecoat Press, 2021), Ian McMillan writes: "These wonderful photographs are poems and short stories; they are miniatures and epics; they are tiny movements at the edge of the folding map and huge gestures at the vortex of the turning world.... Lucy Sagers' images have the timelessness of cave paintings but, somehow, the modernity of Instagram."

For more information and bookings please go to our website pages

<https://events.rps.org/en/?keywords=Contemporary>

NW Contemporary Group Volunteer Organiser Needed

We are seeking a member in the NW of England to take over organising the local group. The NW regional group has been running for over a decade, initially led by Ian Maxwell. Current organiser, Alan Cameron ARPS took over when Ian decided to stand down in 2016.

The region stretches from Cheshire in the south to the Scottish border taking in Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, the Lake District and the Isle of Man There are upwards of 50 Contemporary Group members in the region with 10 or so taking an active part in meetings.

We try to mix zoom calls with face-to-face meetings alternating one with the other. This year we have met up for the Whit Friday Brass Band Competitions in the Saddleworth area, a photo walk in Leeds and in Lancaster earlier this month.

I feel that there is a need for someone to inject new thinking into the group and will stand down after our scheduled meeting in Samlesbury to chat about prints. I am happy to discuss the ins and outs of running the regional group with whoever would like to volunteer.

You can get in touch at
contemporarynw@rps.org

Alan Cameron ARPS

Thoughts on Photography and Representation

Jonathan Williams

This photograph is taken from a project of mine, where I take photographs of photographs that are displayed in public, in a non-gallery setting. This particular photograph was taken in the bathroom of a lodge at Center Parcs. The photograph is tiled onto the wall of the shower so you can see it while you are in the shower, but to see the whole photograph properly you have to view it from the other end of the room .

The photograph was probably chosen for its visual qualities and in some way is a cliché with the sun's rays spacing out from behind a tree trunk. I am sure many photographers have taken a similar photograph; I know I have.

The photograph is of the forest that symbolises the Center Parcs experience, it reinforces that part of the connection with Center Parcs is being in the woods and closer to the natural world than you would be if you stayed at say an off-site hotel. Although you are only a few hundred yards away from the restaurants and sports facilities, that are also part of the Center Parcs experience. The important fact is that you chose to come here and that being in the forest is part of the experience. This photograph could be perceived as an art photograph quite at home on a gallery wall but here it is also functional in establishing the place where you are and chose to be and what holiday experience you can expect, to experience isolation, be close to nature, but with civilisation not too far away.

In taking the photograph of a photograph, this could be seen as appropriating another person's photograph. My argument would be that this is more of a documentary photograph and in appropriating it I am showing it as it is displayed rather than pass it off as my own. It would be difficult to have a project on how photographs are displayed without taking photographs of them. This photograph is about when you can ask questions about how photographs are displayed rather than taking a photograph to show what the world looks like in a photograph. Also,

I have taken the photograph to see what I can write about rather than necessarily view the photograph for its visual qualities. There are photographers who believe that the photograph should speak for itself and not need explanatory text, but I think that photography is a pathway to discussion. I think that Contemporary Photography is all about pushing the boundaries and asking questions about the nature of photography, and so this can be seen as an example of where photographs eventually end up being shown. As an addition I decided to include myself in the photograph so that it acts as a self-portrait, I am projected on a shower screen, so as to appear in the forest but I am in the cabin lodge, but I could be anywhere. I am both in the forest virtually and actually in the forest which is 50 yards away. This is me playing with ideas of representation.



Naples

Marija Lees LRPS

The Swiss writer and philosopher Peter Bieri once said that learning a new language is like opening a new window. This is certainly how it feels to me. Now that I am learning Italian, I am also learning about all things Italian – culture, history, tradition, food, landscape etc. Having read all Elena Ferrante’s vivid Neapolitan novels, her uncompromising portrayals of the city made me want to see Naples with my own eyes – and my camera. I was not disappointed.

To some degree, learning a foreign language is in many ways similar to street photography – you really need to get out of your comfort zone – be ready for the unforeseen and enjoy the sense of discovery. It is so good when you say something and the locals understand you and satisfying when viewers can understand your visual story telling.

Noisy, dirty, chaotic – that is how I expected Naples to be, but I did not expect to find a city which has such a unique identity and strong community spirit. Whilst many famous cities are suffering from mass tourism and are turning into theme-parks for tourists, Naples is a city for Neapolitan people. This is where they live and work and a lot of that living is done out in the open – on the streets and narrow cobbled alleyways where young and old, traders, customers, neighbours meet, work and socialise. It is like one big open-air theatre, or film set – full of tension and drama. The language they speak is incomprehensible, even to other Italians as among themselves they speak their own language (Neapolitano).

The noise and raw energy I could feel around me was quite overwhelming at first and crossing the street, navigating between cars and scooters seemed like a suicidal act, especially, as they say, traffic lights in Naples are mere decorations. However, “when in Rome, do as the Romans do”. I soon became accustomed to what one could describe as “organised chaos” and learnt to be quick and confident when crossing the road. They may not appear to obey traffic rules, and they may be the worst, but they are also the best drivers, highly alert and used to stopping very quickly.

Naples is a fascinating and intriguing city – loud, boisterous, weird and wonderful. It makes other cities like Florence and Venice feel like museums. It has been ruled by Greeks, Romans, French, Austrian and most of all by Spanish and they all left their mark on the city. Under Spanish rule, Naples was an important and wealthy city - it has the oldest opera house in Europe and one of the oldest universities and it was an obligatory stop for the European upper class and nobility when on their Grand Tour of Europe. However, after the unification of Italy, Naples

went into an economic and social decline and became a stronghold for Camorra mafia. Although Camorra is still present in the everyday life of the city, the people of Naples are resilient and they are fighting back for the city they love and are proud of. This is the feeling that I had wondering through the streets of the old town (“centro storico”) - a labyrinth of streets, alleys and squares and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. With its dilapidated, crumbling buildings, one would not call it pretty, but it is the beating heart of the city. It is rough but it uncompromisingly stubborn and resisting gentrification.

As a tourist, you are left on our own, nobody is trying to sell you souvenirs or drag you into their restaurants. The Neapolitans go about their own business - and, as someone said, they greet you with welcoming indifference.

Apart from being the birthplace of pizza, among other things, Naples is also known for its obsession with football. Whilst St Gennaro is their patron saint, there is another more recent one - Diego Maradona. He is loved and idolised by the people of Naples. And he is everywhere - on walls, on posters, on flags, T-shirts. Their love and obsession for Maradona is now a defining characteristic of Naples and is a story of poverty, prejudice and pride!

I feel that my Naples story is far from over. I will be returning to the city that has made a lasting impression on me with its uniqueness and passion for life.







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Exploring The Concept Of Our Garden

Vivian Oldfield

Since moving to the East Sussex countryside three years ago, the garden and surrounding landscape have become a constant source of inspiration. So when an Open Call went out from PhotoHastings inviting images of our gardens for a botanically inspired exhibition I decided to take the challenge.

We were asked to explore the immediate space around our homes and respond photographically to show what our garden meant to us. I was delighted to have my work selected alongside 14 talented photographers for the exhibition 'Rooted', curated by Alison Bettles and held at the Electro Studios Project Space in St Leonards-on-Sea in October.

'Material Nature' captures the light falling on leaves in a hidden corner of the garden emphasizing the contrasting textures, shapes, highlights and shadows. It reflects my love for the oasis of calm, atmosphere and wild beauty to be found in untended areas of the garden that are often overlooked.

We were also invited to submit a separate black and white image for 'Plant', an A3 zine style publication printed in a limited edition of 100 to coincide with the exhibition. Having recently worked on a series of exotic botanic images, it was interesting to experiment with a section of Cannabis plant leaves for 'Plant Sculpture' to give a sculptural feel.

The subject of flora and fauna has always been an inspirational subject for visual artists. Taking part in the exhibition encouraged me to look more closely at what was growing on our immediate doorstep: to use my imagination in a conceptual way to show how it is an escape from everyday life where we can immerse our senses. The wide variety of subjects and photographic styles both in 'Rooted' and 'Plant' demonstrated the importance of our garden to our world and its value as a muse.



www.vivienoldfieldart.com

www.photohastings.org

Digital Image and Culture

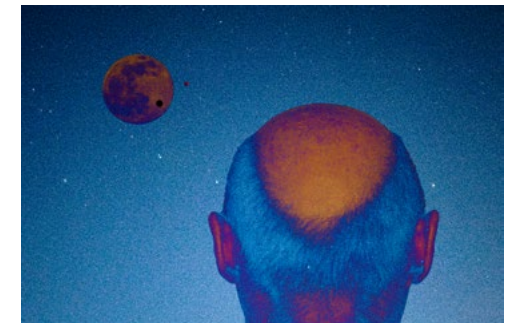
Kevin James LRPS

Although I have been a member of the RPS since 2014, I am relatively new to the Contemporary Group. I am also a student of photography at the Open College of the Arts (which is now the distance learning organisation of the Open University).

These images emerged from a university assignment within a section of the course concerned with “digital image and culture”. The assignment required an element of self-portraiture and I chose to tackle the brief in terms of the more psychological aspects of self, rather than the purely physical. In this case, the images aim to explore my relationship with nature in all its forms and ways in which that relationship has influenced my feelings and beliefs.

In my own mind at least, the natural world has many different aspects. It provides sustenance in many forms; it’s a resource for leisure activities; it’s something to be cherished and explored; it’s a source of wonder and amazement. I aimed to suggest these things within the images.

The images were created using digital compositing techniques, primarily in Lightroom and Photoshop, and every element is taken from an original digital photograph created by me



The Ultramax Challenge

Tim Hancock

Mike Kitson

There has been a lot written about why some photographers prefer film to digital, or at least use both. Whether it is the slowing down, more thoughtful approach, the look of negatives versus sensors, or maybe the enjoyment of just using older more characterful cameras, the trend to analogue is positive and I believe very welcome. Film is of course a format that is loaded with constraints. The choice of film being the most obvious, with all the different looks, but also the practical restriction on the number of shots that can afford to be taken at a set location or occasion. Spray and pray is not an option. It is these constraints which in many ways add to the enjoyment – where there is care there is usually satisfaction.

Once developed, negatives can be printed in a wet darkroom, which allows some post processing modifications, or scanned when all the flexibility of software can come into play. These post processing options, even if just cropping and managing contrasts can “improve” images a great deal, even altering the look completely. It seemed to me that such manipulations to some extent work against the fun factor of film of concentrating on getting it right in camera. This is not in any way to knock such alterations, but if these are put away for a while then the challenge of taking photographs as you hope you want them to turn out becomes all the greater.

It was with this in mind that a friend (Mike Kitson) and I set ourselves the “Ultramax Challenge.” One roll of 35mm (36 exposures) each with no set themes or approaches, to be printed in a photobook with no post processing at all. Here I had to confess to Mike that I did allow myself the liberty of straightening two or three images a touch – a problem I often face due to having a head at an angle to the neck it seems. The images look straight in the viewfinder, but with no clever tools to check this, I always seem to lean to the right a few degrees.

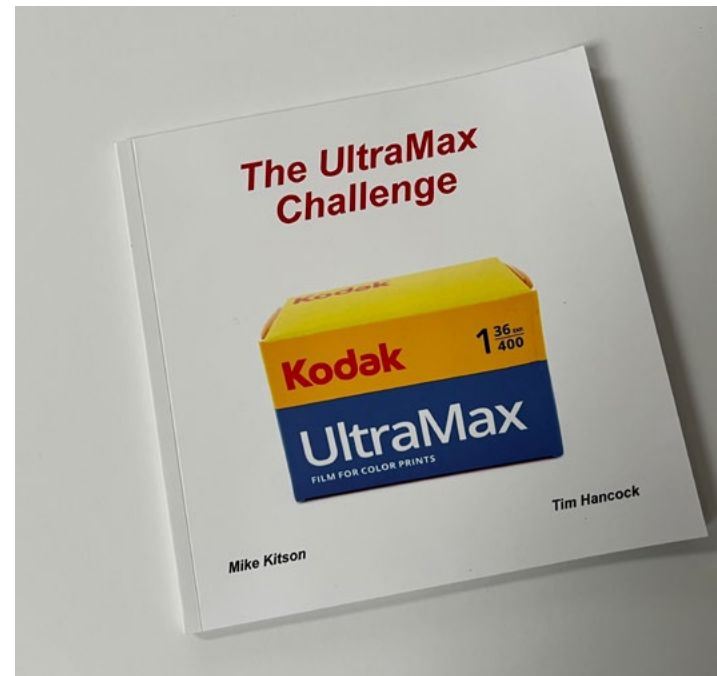
The rules of engagement went further. We agreed that :

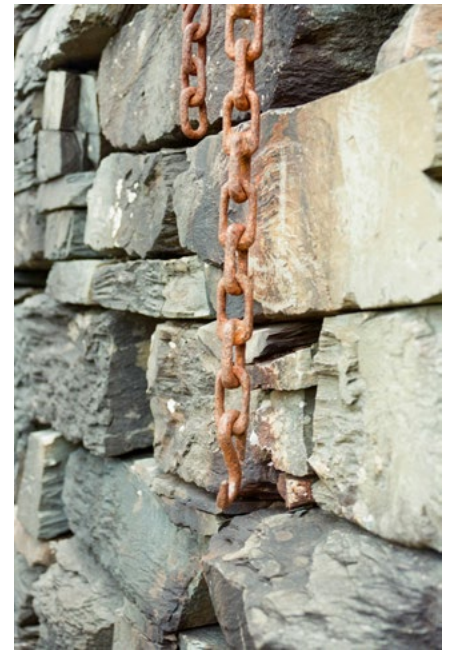
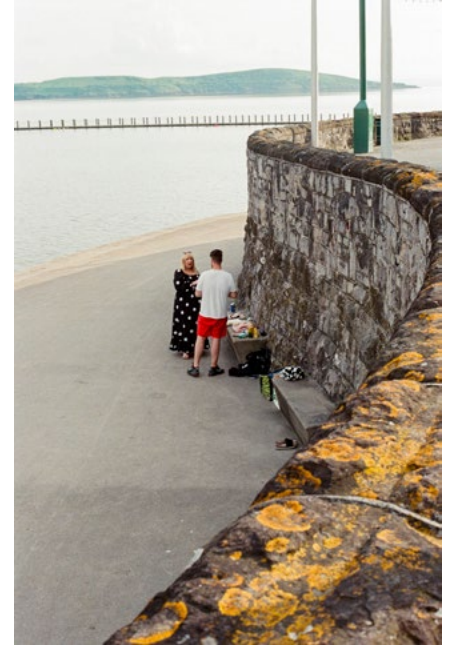
- 1) all 36 images would be printed with no selections, and
- 2) the images would be sequenced as they were taken. That’s a tough one when you take several days to finish off the roll! Mike used his Olympus OM2n from 1979 and I used my much-loved Leica M2 from 1966.

Once the films were developed, and scans made (and my tweeking of horizons) Mike took charge to produce the photobook and decided to alternate the printed images between himself and myself. I suspect this was done to disguise the sequencing but am not sure? It was quite surprising on publication (which was the first time I saw the final product) how well the sequencing worked out between us.

The final photobook was printed square (20cm) and was an enjoyable and valuable exercise in itself, as well as making me think a little bit extra every time I prepare to press the shutter. When I go back to digital with its 64Gb SD cards and endless chimping opportunities I feel like I am cheating, but now try to learn from the Ultramax experience by being much more selective over compositions. Give it a go maybe!

THIS BLOG WAS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED ON THE EXCELLENT 35MMC WEBSITE 35mmc - Photography Blog - Reviews, Theory, Reflections, Tutorials, Knowhow and Photography Experiences.





The Other Blackpool

Neil Goodwin

Blackpool is probably the most iconic of England's seaside towns, attracting some 18 million visitors every year. It's certainly well-known to me as I was born and brought up in northwest England, where Blackpool is located, and I spent many happy hours visiting the town.

However, beyond the glitz of the promenade, piers, amusements and, of course, the famous Tower, another Blackpool exists. For it is also one of the most socially deprived parts of the country, meaning that a significant proportion of residents lack what they need to have a decent life, such as work, money, housing, and public services.

One consequence is that life expectancy for Blackpool residents is 12 years lower than the national average for men, and 10 years lower for women. Blackpool also has the highest rates of hospital admissions for alcohol-related harm and drug related deaths in England, coupled with significantly worse indicators of poor diet, excess weight and physical activity.

These issues affect not just Blackpool but many other coastal resorts. Such is the extent of the economic, social and public health challenges affecting these areas, that they were the subject of the 2021 annual report of the Chief Medical Officer for England.

I decided to document this other Blackpool using a street-based approach. However, Blackpool is first and foremost a holiday and fun destination and so to provide balance, I also captured moments of humour characteristic of England's seaside towns.



Contemporary Group Rural School Bursary: Update

Ken Holland FRPS



A year ago I was delighted to read that the RPS Contemporary Group was awarding a bursary to fund 'A photographic project that conveys the experience of being a school student in a rural environment' as part of the RPS Photography for All initiative, and even more so when I learned that it was awarded to Broadhembury Church of England Primary School in East Devon: a school of only 30 children and two full-time staff.

At the end of the project and the school year (July 2024) the school planned to display the children's work in their Village Hall, and there was an open invitation to attend. Many years ago I enjoyed being the head teacher of a school of similar size, so I was particularly interested to see the finished project.

Adrian Hough ARPS (Contemporary Group's South West regional organiser, who helped the school to spend some of the bursary on appropriate equipment as well as working with the children and printing and mounting their work), Sean Goodhart ARPS (Contemporary Group Communications Officer/Webmaster and coordinator of the Contemporary Group judging committee) and myself turned up at Broadhembury Village Hall to arrange the prints on display boards for all to admire later in the day.

It was the first time I had seen the children's work, and I was immediately impressed with the quality of their photography. They truly were photographs "about" rather than "of". Their work was

uninhibited by so-called photographic "conventions" and I felt like I was standing there in their shoes while they made their photos. The afternoon was a huge success: you can read more about it in Sean's report: bursary project exhibition ([rps.org](https://www.rps.org))

While driving home afterwards it occurred to me that many of the prints on display would not look out of place in a Contemporary Distinctions panel submission. I'm an RPS Contemporary Distinctions panel member and I've seen quite a few! Work of that quality deserves to be rewarded and recognised so I contacted various RPS staff, and Liz Williams (Education Manager) came up with a suitable certificate.



Leeds Photowalk

Roger Styles

On Wednesday, 11th September at 10:30am, I met four lucky members of the Contemporary Group by the huge statue of the Black Prince on horseback in City Square. We were “lucky” because all five of us had chosen to travel to Leeds by train and all five had arrived without suffering delays or cancellations! My first question to the group was to ask why was this huge statue of Edward the Black Prince dominating City Square? What was his connection to Leeds?

I explained that I was neither a historian or a resident of Leeds, and I had only learnt the answer a year before, thanks to attending an English Heritage Guided Walk around the city. Since then, using the same route, I had led two Photowalks around the city pointing out buildings of interest and sharing a few snippets of information gleaned from the English Heritage Guide, without taking responsibility for their factual accuracy! On each walk a new location or an extra bit of information came to light and on this walk we would have the chance to see a major retrospective of photographs by Peter Mitchell, titled *Nothing Lasts Forever*, at Leeds Museum and Art Gallery.

So we began our 3-mile walk, passing the Bank of England (a reserve just in case something untoward should happen to the one in London), a clothing warehouse that would not look out of place in Granada’s Alhambra, and the building where the Pearl Assurance company was founded.

Already cameras were out and in use, capturing the day-to-day life of this vibrant city, with the inevitable discussion about gear, choice of brands, lenses, etc. Soon we came to the Museum and Art Gallery where the

magnificent Tiled Café was our first refreshment stop and where we also had the chance to photograph the adjacent Library Staircase.

After admiring the excellent, thought-provoking work of Peter Mitchell, we followed the Headrow to turn down Briggate (Bridge Gate) and explore the impressive Arcades whose narrow entrances had originally been established as individual shop fronts with workshops and residences behind.

A wander through the Market, passing the original Marks and Spencer Penny Bazaar, and ending at the fish stalls, brought us to a rear entrance of the Corn Exchange where a stairway took us to the first-floor balcony. The staircase was lined with large framed black and white prints showing the past activities of the Exchange. One print in particular grabbed the group’s attention. It was a perfectly composed image of the clock and part of the impressive roof structure. Of course, the temptation to attempt to replicate the image was too great and a happy time was spent leaning in awkward positions on the balcony railings trying to secure a perfect match!

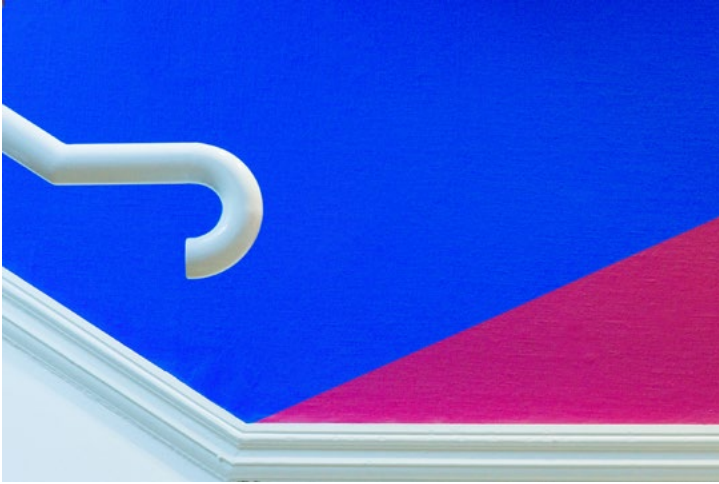
After a refreshment stop at the ground floor café in the Corn Exchange, we wandered via the Time Ball Building, pass the Briggate Minerva sculpture and into the Trinity Shopping Centre to admire and photograph the Equus Altus sculpture. Both these modern works of art are by Andy Scott who is better known for the magnificent Kelpies in Falkirk.

Was the day successful? The excellent images presented with this article provide an answer. But

what of the Black Prince’s connection to Leeds? And where is he buried? The answer is that he has no connection to Leeds. The statue was initially placed in London, but it was considered so big that it dwarfed other famous statues and so it was sent to Leeds! And his resting place is Canterbury Cathedral, where his actual fighting gauntlets are on display. Time for a Contemporary Group Photowalk around Canterbury, perhaps!

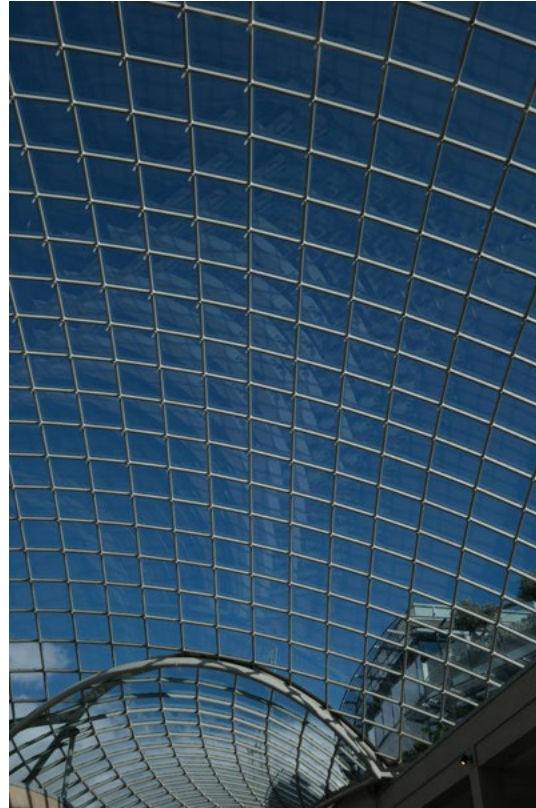


The Black Prince



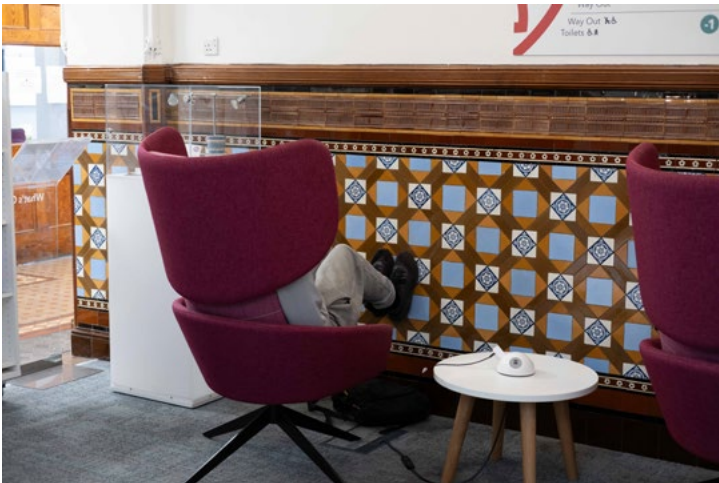
Handrail.
© Paul Cayton LRPS

Trinity Centre Sky
© Geoff Batchelor LRPS



Number 21 Corn Exchange
© Ken Rowlatt LRPS

Roger Styles
© Private Phone Call



A confused reflection in
the Borse
© Chrius Field

Dancing in the Dark

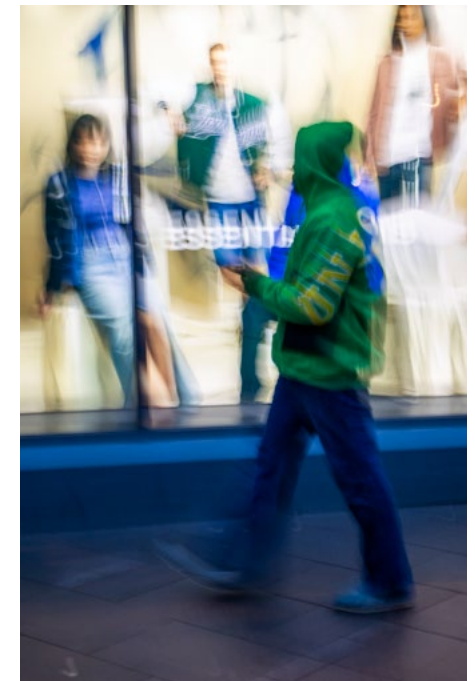
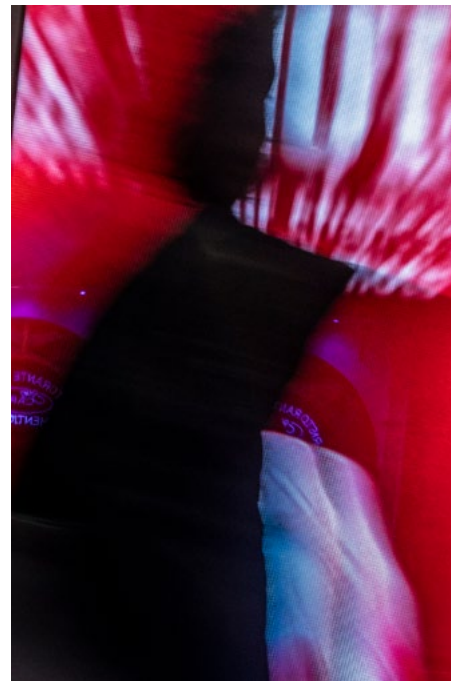
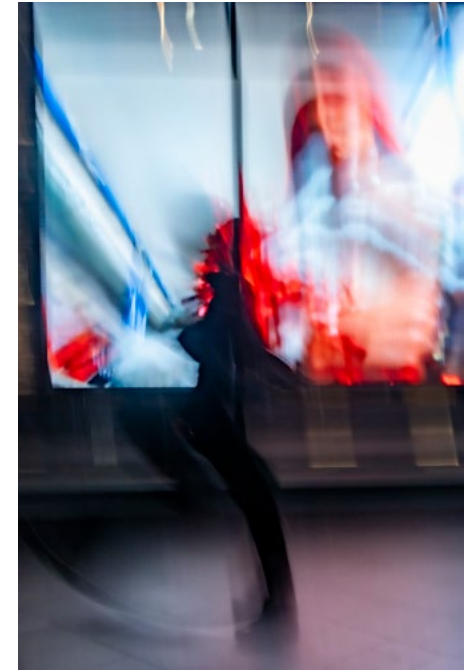
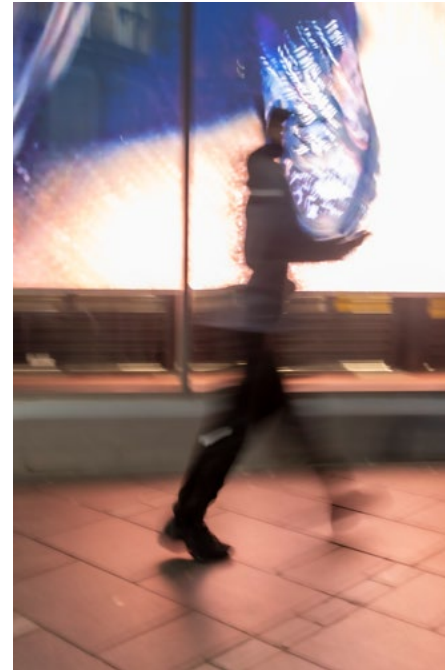
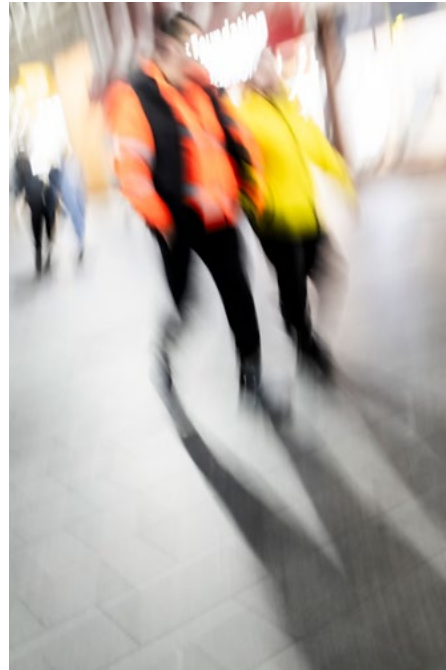
Nick Linnett

Working as a commercial photographer can be very restrictive – you are working towards what the client wants - every vertical straight, all images sharp and everything is carefully in focus. I wanted to produce some personal work that rebelled against everything I had been doing and wanted this project to go against the constraints of traditional composition, embracing chaos and spontaneity.

Shooting in the evening after dark and taking photos with the heart, not the head I embraced the energy and movement of a city at night. Each image is free from conformity and constraints, a celebration of the excitement I felt when I first started in photography.

No thinking about F-stops and very little processing – raw and unfiltered which felt just right for both the subject and my intentions.

All images taken in Leicester City centre.



Regional Group Reports

Contemporary Southwest July 2024

The Southwest Activity Group met on Sunday 7th July at Dartington in Devon.

As usual we began with business before moving on to discuss the images that members had brought along to share. As has become customary we enjoyed a wonderful lunch provided for us by Carol.

In the course of the business session, we noted the exhibition from the Contemporary Group Rural Schools Bursary which was due to take place in Broadhembury, within the Southwest Region, on 12th July. Mention was also made of two exhibitions of Dartmoor Photography during the coming months, one by Chris Chapman and one by twenty-five different photographers. Adrian also spoke about his recent visit to Fotografiska in Stockholm, after which it was realised that one of the recent finalists in the Prix Pictet Environmental Photographic award, Sian Davey, lives in Dartington within a mile of where we were meeting. An image of the list of exhibitions is included. Finally, we noted that we have been invited to deliver the main presentation at next year's RPS Southwest AGM to explain the nature of Contemporary Photography. Whether we help or hinder the understanding remains to be seen!

Moving on to the actual images, Graham Hodgson continued with his use of GoogleEarth, this time to produce large composite images which reflect a much greater degree of symmetry than is present in reality. These included a road interchange (imagine six 'Spaghetti

Junctions' forming a series of six junctions in a circular pattern and a French Royal Palace (guess which one!). For some reason we then moved on to a discussion about left-handed cameras. This included Graham showing us a still from a feature film which must have been reversed as the SLR camera appeared to be left-handed but which, nevertheless, had its name on the pentaprism still reading correctly from left to right.

Rod Fry had once again been indulging his passion for Street Photography. This had focussed largely on Torbay, including buskers, pirates and the spectators at the Torbay Airshow, but also included images from Plymouth and York. Two of Rod's images are included.

Martin Howse had produced a series of monochrome darkroom images of the Forest of Dean, each in a white mount. For those who like to know these things they were printed on Ilford Multigrade, warm tone, resin coated paper. The negative film stock was Ilford FP4 and Pan F, developed in Ilford D11 at 1 plus 1 and exposed using a Bronica Etra (645 format) and a Pentax 6x7.

John Evans-Jones had been exploring Abstract Art and reminded us that Kandinsky claimed to have a brain which transposed colour and sound so that his abstract paintings were representations of sound. The painting which John had studied was 120cm by 120 cm in reality and so alongside his photograph of the painting he had produced a 3x2 panel of life-size extracts from the painting. As the painting had been displayed in a room which also contained an Eliassen installation, including a white light which changed colour-temperature with time, he took multiple images of the painting at different colour-temperatures.

The unexpected result was the discovery that the automatic white-balance on his digital camera works perfectly as they were all almost identical! This image is included.

At this point, and prior to lunch, we took a look at several books. Paul Kirby had produced a book version of his project to photograph the bridges across the River Avon in Bristol and this was considered in detail. We also looked at the books which Vivian and Martin Howse had produced in the course of a workshop in Plymouth led by Stewart Wall, namely 'One Saturday in Plymouth' and 'One Sunday in Plymouth'. Rod had produced several books of Street Photography, including one of images taken against a particular wall. The final product from within the group was a 'Memoir Zene' which John has been drafting and in which he reflects on his photographic experience. We also took a look at two books by third-parties, 'Humans of New York' by Brandon Stanton and a book of Dartmoor photographs by Chris Chapman and James Ravillious which accompanies one of the exhibitions referred to above.

Returning to photographic prints, we discussed two sets of large monochrome analogue prints contributed by Vanessa, a friend of Carol who was visiting for the day and who had brought along photographs that she had taken some years ago. One comprised young people adopting their own poses and the other a set of images of rural Ireland.

Adrian Hough contributed a set of prints (colour 33x22 cm printed on A3) of various places which he had visited in the course of the preceding four months. This became Contemporary Photography (rather than Travel) because the title was 'Spending Your Inheritance' a joke about his daughter's observation (spoken in jest) that by dramatically increasing his travel in retirement he was spending her inheritance. Three images are included, one of Abergavenny, one in Norfolk and one of a European Capital City, but which one....? (The answer is printed below).

Ken Holland had been having a sort out and found a set of darkroom prints which had been the spare set for his first Fellowship submission some twenty years ago and which had not been recommended. There followed a discussion about why this had been the case. For those readers who have also produced submissions which have not been recommended, we should note that Ken was awarded a Fellowship at a later date and is now one of the Assessors. One of the images is included.

Carol continues to work on the images and ideas which we examined at our previous meeting (see an earlier edition of Concept) and which will form her Intertidal Exhibition. In particular we discussed the ways in which some of them might be presented. Much of the work is likely to be printed on a metallic finish 'Dibond' material. We also discussed the presentation of her 'Cabinet of Concerns' showing material of concern which she has found in the Intertidal Environment, a presentation which mirrors the Victorian 'Cabinets of Curiosities'. We closed with two sets of projected images. In the first, Ken Holland had found himself at the Arnos Grove Hotel in Bristol (as used by the RPS to accommodate assessors for RPS Distinctions) where

he was set a challenge by his fellow assessors to produce a Licentiate Panel in one hour without leaving the hotel. This he did, with one hour of photography and one hour of editing at home. At present we don't know what his fellow assessors make of the panel but I think we felt that it was worthy of an award! Ken has kindly supplied one of the images.

In the second set of projected work, Graham showed how a declutter tool can be used to tidy your belongings. Every time you press a button a belonging disappears! (Think camera on tripod taking a series of photographs of a dresser with an item being removed every time). Press the button too many times and..... your whole life disappears and you just get a white screen. My question, unasked at the time, is why a white screen and not a black one (or green or whatever) and is this significant?

Our next meeting is planned for late November or early December and will again be at Dartington in Devon.

Adrian Hough ARPS
(The city is Stockholm)

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© Ken Holland FRPS



© Adrian Hough ARPS



© Ken Holland FRPS

© Rod Fry ARPS

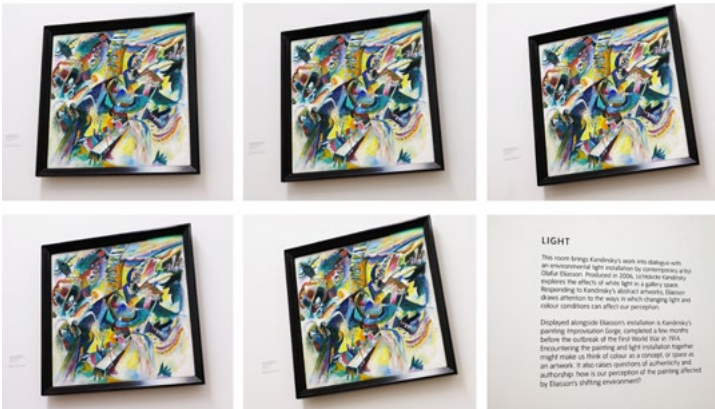


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© Rod Fry ARPS



© John Evan-Jones



© Adrian Hough ARPS

Contemporary East Anglia

'What else they are'

The latest efforts produced by the East Anglia contemporary group, was based on the quote attributed to Minor White "One should not only photograph things for what they are, but for what else they are". We have dropped the virtual exhibition space and now just knock out a small zine.

View the Zine here [What else they are](#)

This assignment has had a lengthy gestation period as many of them do for this group.

One thing such assignments do for the group is encourage discussion and positing of ideas. That has to be a good thing.

It is purely coincidence that we have two entries portraying postage stamps, one a deliberate choice by Jonathan Williams in the discovery of King Edward VII stamps, and the other being a 'to pay' stamp affixed to a 'last post' postcard sent from the trenches of World War I. Two totally different stories but one with particular tragedy and poignancy.

We can conjure up all manner of back stories as to what the tin of stamps found by Jonathan might entail but with Keith Locke's uncle, there is terrible sadness in his relatives having pay on the doorstep for a postcard sent just hours before his demise, yet they were unaware of his passing.

Paul Ashley has featured actors portraying characters from plays, yet each actor must carry themselves into the part they are playing just as we do as photographers when engaging with any subject matter. Just how much of the character is the actor?

Tom Owens has captured a view of anticipation and hope in the build-up to the last game of Ipswich Town's monumental performance of the 2023-24 that ultimately gained them entry into the Premiership.

Our current theme is based on a quote by Henry George Thoreau "A sky without clouds is a meadow without flowers, a sea without sails".

We ought to come up with something by next Easter.

Our monthly meetings are normally on the first Thursday of a month at 1400hrs and held on Zoom

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Mark Anthony, Julius Caesar (William Shakespeare).
Artist Paul Ashley ARPS



'Last Post' Artist Keith Locke ARPS



'Blue sky' Artist Tom Owens ARPS



Artist Jonathan Williams

Contemporary Scotland

2025 starts again for us on the 15th January with an evening in conversation with Simon Hill FRPS to discuss his latest project and involvement in the book *Coal Faces*.

The second of our Gallery days is then planned for March 14th, this time in Edinburgh at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. The National Galleries of Scotland have collected the finest of Scottish photography for 40 years, and to celebrate this there is an exhibition at the SNP. G.

That will bring us nicely back into our Light Days programme, and we'll do a few days out, including the Fringe one in Edinburgh.

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Contemporary NorthWest

Light Up Lancaster
Friday 8th November 2024

Light Up Lancaster is an annual event held each November for several years as part of a wider "Light Up the North Festival." Three RPS members and two from Poulton le Fylde Photographic Society joined the event.

The festival consists of a number of installations across the city from the Canal Basin via Sun Square to the Castle, the Storey Building, the Priory Church and back to Dalton Square where we met

that evening. Here is a selection of images from our favourite venues.

In the Canal Basin area, we were captivated by *Monad*, a light and sound installation with ever changing images projected through a water spray. Pythagoras called the circle *Monad* stressing that it was continuous without beginning or end. Our images by Malcolm Birkett and Geoff Batchelor LRPS capture the mysterious nature of the event, while Spencer Stephens chose to capture the audience against the backdrop of the light show.

Sun Square gave us *Dancing Fountain*, a brightly lit bowl with water sprayed to create the fountain in time with staccato music. Alan Cameron ARPS managed to capture the fountain taking full advantage of image stabilisation to hand hold for 0.5s. Other members got similar shots, but Spencer tried some experimental 120fps images only to find that the camera was set to capture the images in mono.



Monad © Geoff Batchelor LRPS



Monad © Malcolm Birkett

Nevertheless, he successfully captured a tender mother and child moment at the side of the installation.

Up in the Storey Building, Ray Wilson, a physicist by training was keen to see how the Synchrotron was being re-imagined in *The Storage Ring* while Alan Cameron immensely enjoyed the *In Microns* installation of huge projections of micrographs of cells, taking the time to use the fact that the projectors were low down to capture a self portrait silhouette.

Back in the open air we faced the gatehouse of the forbidding Lancaster Castle, seat of the Duchy of Lancaster (King Charles is the current Duke). Throughout the evening the light display *Garland the Gate* gave us constantly changing images to capture. Malcolm Birkett caught it at its most floral.

Turning up the hill from the Castle we found our way to the *Daydreams* installation in the dimly lit Priory Church. Ray Wilson captured the mysteriously changing patterns projected on a triangular screen while the choir of the church was illuminated in blue and green primary colours.

Our first and final stop was the son et lumière commemorating the centenary of the local textile company Standfast and Barracks. Geoff Batchelor's image captures this so well, concentrating as it does on the projector set up and the audience in silhouette.

Our December meeting will be on Zoom on 18th December at 14.00. To join the meeting follow the link below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82032430969?pwd=REVPaH-Q1dUx3NTloQjlQeWZqOUJPZz09>

Meeting ID: 820 3243 0969

Passcode: 215532

Contact: Alan Cameron ARPS

contemporarytreasurer@rps.org



The Storage Ring
© Ray Wilson



Monad © Spencer Stephens

Mother and Child © Spencer Stephens



Dancing Fountain
© Alan Cameron ARPS



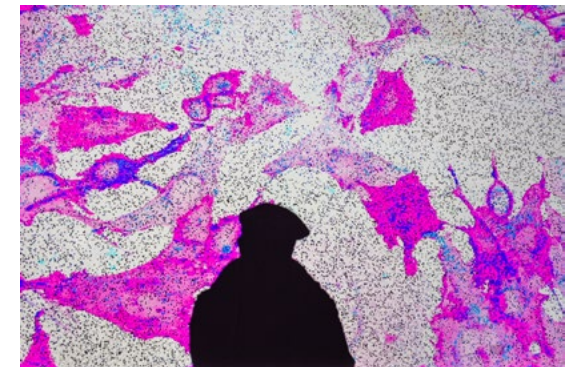
Daydream
© Ray Wilson



Garland the Gate
© Malcolm Birkett



In Microns © Alan Cameron ARPS





The next issue of Concept will be available April 2025

If you have any contributions you would like to have including, news, reports, reviews, publicity, profiles, images, please email your ideas to Nick via email concepteditor@rps.org

*Features and reports should be between 300 and 800 words please. Pictures as **separate** jpeg files of 1 to 2 megabytes, containing no watermarks please.*



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