

Contemporary Photography



View from the Chair

I am delighted that Jenny Leathes FRPS has been awarded the Fenton Medal for her services to photography and to the RPS; it is richly deserved. Jenny has been a tower of strength to the Contemporary Group, being one of the original contemporary workers in the South West. Jenny took over as Regional Organiser, from Rod Fry ARPS in 2009. Since then she has strengthened the links with the University of Plymouth, suggesting what became a Contemporary Group weekend event. She was the main driving force in us being allowed to use the University, with students granted access. Jenny has continued with her own work and attended the annual weekends; all regardless of illness. Our very grateful thanks are owed to Jenny for her enthusiasm and support.

Rod Fry has now sent out over 100 application forms and rules for the Photo Book competition. Considerable interest has been shown and the bookings for the workshops, which are run by Brian Steptoe FRPS have been successful. The degree of interest is very positive, and if you wish to apply for entry it is now possible to pay online through the RPS Shop: please click on the logo, a pile of books, and the facilities for card details will be there (see page 39 for more details).

You will probably have seen from the RPS Journal that the new website for the RPS has now been launched. It is necessary to register if you want to show your images. If you have any problems doing this please contact Stewart Wall LRPS, our webmaster, at stewartwall@icloud.com and he will be happy to help you. On another matter, Stewart is running a workshop in conjunction with the RPS 'How to Photograph Children and Families' www.rps.org/events/2014/May. If you are interested please book; numbers are limited.

Our membership is increasing quite rapidly, which is very encouraging. It is a tribute to the hard work that goes into the Journal and the Contemporary Times e-newsletter. Unfortunately we are still having problems with incorrectly archived members, not as much as in the past, but if you do not receive either your RPS Journal or your CG Journal could you please let me know and I will try to resolve the problem.

Best Wishes,
Avril.

Copyright notice

© The copyright of photographs and text in this issue belongs to the author of the article of which they form part, unless otherwise indicated.

If you wish to submit articles for the Journal, please send all copy and images on disc to:
Patricia Ann Ruddle, 28 Malvern Avenue, York, YO26 5SG.
patriciaruddle@btinternet.com

Cover: © Chris Harrison, *I Belong Jarrow*



ISSN 0959-6704

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 online large file transfer facilities.
Unless requested, discs will not be returned.

DEADLINE for the Summer 2014 edition is 30 June 2014.

Contemporary Photography

Number 55 Spring 2014

View from the Chair	Avril Harris ARPS	2
Editorial	Patricia Ann Ruddle ARPS	4
I Belong Jarrow	Chris Harrison	5
My Old Clothes	Anne Crabbe FRPS	11
Lost	David Burgess ARPS	16
McCoy Wynne and 'the other self'	Julia García Hernández	20
The Medium is the Message?	Chris W Morris ARPS	24
A Given Spot	Peter Harvey ARPS	30
Book Review: Holy Bible, Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin	Brian Steptoe FRPS	32
Unnatural Habitats	Peter Heaton	34
Group Events		39
Committee		39
From his book <i>Behind the Green Door</i> , by Richard Sadler FRPS		40

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

Editorial

“The act of making art is like a mantra.”

The audience was expecting a lecture on queer theory; instead it heard a talk on fibre art. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, writer, textile artist, photographer and Buddhist, visited the University of York several years ago at a time when queer theory was a popular course in the History of Art Department. She was one of the subject’s foremost exponents, and I assume that we thought it would be the subject of her lecture. Bemused and bewildered students sat through an evening of projected images of, for example, cyanotype images printed on fabric, cut up and sewn together with other images, sometimes with poems handwritten on pieces of cloth.

As a cyanotype maker myself I was on her wavelength. I have never forgot some points she made that evening. She told us that her thoughts were mostly about process, and when she began a project, she often didn’t know what would be the outcome. This brings to mind those artists who were part of the Process Art movement in the mid-twentieth century. They were concerned with doing and making art, whether painting, sculpture, photography, etc. It was the journey that was important; it was the experience itself that mattered. Like US artist/photographer Robert Smithson, who emphasized not just the meaning of the art process, but also the use of non-traditional materials. He created artworks that disdained what he considered elitist white gallery walls. Sedgwick believed that her lack of high-level textile skills meant that she could relax and enjoy the work; sometimes allowing the materials to do what they wanted to do; again, much like the impermanent materials that Smithson used in his land art.

Making art has many different moments (again Sedgwick), which I relate to when I consider that the finished image for me isn’t the important end result. I enjoy the process of selecting the image, mixing chemicals, painting the paper, sitting in the sun while the picture is exposed. Then the moment of serendipity when the image is washed in water.

Of course, I am barely skimming over Sedgwick’s ideas and Process Art concepts when referencing some of their thoughts and processes here. Nevertheless, like them, I too have an aesthetic purpose - an agenda in which I can explore my sentiments and views about the society in which I live. And with joy in the making.

Patricia

I Belong Jarrow

Chris Harrison

I was born and brought up in Jarrow, a tough industrial town on the south bank of the river Tyne. It’s where I call home.

I have lived abroad for more years than I care to admit. My Mother and Father are getting old and moving out of Jarrow, cutting me adrift with no way back. Finally, I have been forced to think about who I am and where I belong.

I never wanted to leave Jarrow. I always imagined that one day I would make it my home. I realise now that I can never return. Somehow I traded knowledge of the outside world for some vital piece of me. With this realisation, I have returned home in order to try to establish how much of where I am from determines who I am, and to begin to understand why I can’t seem to let go.

What makes Jarrow so special? It may have a rich history stretching back to pre-Roman times but this isn’t what makes it so special to me. Rather, its relevance seems to be something essentially intangible. Is Jarrow a place that exists more in my imagination than in reality? Perhaps its essence is based on a collection of handed-down stories rather than facts? Sadly, the places connected to these stories are disappearing fast and I feel the need to preserve them somehow, if only so that I can share them with my children.

Hopefully, by photographing the places I know intimately I can show something we all instinctively recognise; that, as L.P. Hartley said so eloquently “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.”

These photographs are taken from his book: Chris Harrison. I Belong Jarrow. (Essay by Val Williams). Amsterdam: Schilt Publishing, 2012.

Ed. note: The exhibition *Copper Horses* by Chris Harrison was the result of his tenure as the Bradford Fellow in Photography, 2012-2013, at the National Media Museum. There are three short videos about this project at: <http://nationalmediamuseumblog.wordpress.com/2013/11/02/copper-horses-chris-harrison-bradford-fellowship/> www.chrisharrison.no



The Dad is a skilled tradesman, a Rover.
Which is worse since he's one of the funniest
men I knew. He would come home knackered
and smelling of oil and sweat and drink
from the pop bottle in the passage. The
Mum would let him because he had
been to work all day.





*Gladys in the Village has been there
forever and she still runs it. She must be
90 now. This one time the handbressers
petbull took a liking to Gladys Yorkshire
terrier. Gladys got savaged passing
Willow out of the Petbull's mouth.
Willow the yokie survived.*

My Old Clothes

Anne Crabbe FRPS

In Robert Frank's series *Storylines*, he records in images and words his tender feelings about owning his father's old coat. Marc Kelly Smith expresses very different emotions in his poem, *I'm wearing my father's old coat*; but both works underline the power of someone else's clothes.

Anyone who has had, after a death, to decide what to do with clothes, still infused with perfume and smell and shape, will know the conflicting emotions that arise.

These images of my own old clothes, too, have a complicated aura, for making them has reminded me of how and why they were bought and worn, enjoyed or suffered in. And a sort of grieving for past times.

However, there has been only fun in the making of the pictures because of the active participation and ideas from younger members of my family who dressed up for me. The old clothes now have another layer of memories.

For more information about Robert Frank's coat: Robert Frank. *Storylines*, with essays by Philip Brookman and Ian Penman, Gottingen: Steidl, 2004.

See: http://youtube.com/watch?v=_fqtNDkuPcw for a performance by Marc Kelly Smith of his poem. (accessed 12 March 2014.)







Lost

David Burgess ARPS

This long-term project looks at pet culture at its most fragile, when the pet has been lost or stolen. By examining the language used in these posters and the location in which they were posted, I want to give viewers an insight into the world of the pet lover. Initially I am interested in the question, "why was the poster put in this spot?" Although the posters themselves provide much information, I add titles which include the location and date when discovered. This may give viewers a feeling for the length of time the pet has been missing, which inevitably gets longer and longer.



TILLY,
Cambois Beach,
Northumberland,
April 2012



There follows another unanswerable question – "was the pet ever reunited with the owner?" The image can act as a catalyst that sparks an idea, a question or a narrative in the viewers' mind. It becomes a mystery, giving viewers an opportunity to write their own endings. And, the mystery is enhanced by selective depth of field, in which the background is out of focus. We move forward into a future that becomes uncertain. Posters become blurred and faded due to time and weather conditions. Perhaps this can be seen as a metaphor for the project as a whole. With time, the fading image and memories are all that remain.



LENNY,
Havre des Pas Pier,
Jersey,
May 2012





FLUFFY,
Ledston,
West Yorkshire,
June 2011



PANDA,
Les Quennevais ,
Jersey,
May 2012



McCoy Wynne and ‘the other self’

Julia García Hernández

The project *Triangulation* is made up of two types of picture: a 360 degree, multiple frame, panoramic ‘view’ taken from a primary triangulation (or trig) point; and a single frame photograph of the concrete trig pillar. The dual worlds of the ‘view’ and the material thing at its centre, contrast not only in photographic form, but also in the treatment of the subject: the ‘view’ is determined by the position and height of the trig point on top of which a camera is placed; the pillar is a feature within a selected landscape scene.

Informing this project is the picturing of the American landscape, from 19th century survey photography through to the ‘man-altered’ landscapes of the New Topographics.⁽¹⁾ In *The Rephotographic Survey Project* of the late 1970s, Mark Klett and his team relocated the vantage points from which Timothy O’Sullivan, and other survey photographers, had recorded the American West. Published in 1984 as *Second View*, it paired the same view 100 years apart. Although rephotography

features in earlier projects by McCoy Wynne, the repeat in *Triangulation* relates to the survey, rather than the image, since the project follows in the footsteps of the teams who measured and mapped Great Britain during the *Retriangulation of Great Britain* from 1936 to 1962. A camera and tripod replace the optical theodolite that would have been fixed into the top of the triangulation pillar. McCoy Wynne’s ‘second view’ re-pictures the graphic of the Ordnance Survey map as a photographic, multi-directional ‘view’ visually connected to other triangulation points lying on the distant horizon. As an impossible view, it is as faithfully ‘unreal’ as Ordnance Survey’s abstract landmass of lines and symbols. The addition to McCoy Wynne’s ‘second view’ is the image of the solitary pillar. It is in the pairing of the ‘view’ with the pillar that *Triangulation* can be understood, like Klett’s project, as both “science and art [that] somehow joins celebration and melancholy”.⁽²⁾

As mapping tools, trig points have been rendered obsolete, unable to fulfil their primary function, by a new mapping technology. An unseen, and intangible, constellation of space-based satellites has usurped the network of land-based pillars.⁽³⁾ Man is losing his material world. Acknowledging the consequence of this loss evokes a melancholy: “the object world [...] is the other

self of each of us, the *alter* ego without which we cannot be ourselves”.⁽⁴⁾ As if to confirm Man’s dependency on the object world, the remaining trig points retain their alternate role as navigational landmarks and tangible stones for the hill and mountain walker. The concrete pillar, and its photograph, tether the view and locate the viewer; burrowed into the earth’s surface, more buried



SH 364 447 Yr Eil 564m Gwynned



SH 364 447

than revealed, the pillar acts as ballast to the view. And the 'view' is a land without borders, traversing counties, and embracing a complete and varied British topography. ⁽⁵⁾

The photographs of the 'view' and the pillar invert our expectations. The 'view' forms part of a catalogue of which a completed collection, from all 314 primary triangulation points, will visualise the entire land surface

of Great Britain providing a visual survey. The man-made pillar, which could have been treated as a neutral typology, responds to its nomenclature. Exchanging the term 'triangulation point' for 'pillar' shifts the language from the mathematical and functional (and now obsolete) to the architectural and the romantic notion of the ruin. As ruins, the pillars are abandoned and neglected memorials



SO 768 452 Worcestershire Beacon 425m Worcestershire

within a sometimes barren, sometimes picturesque landscape.

Either one of the two photographers who make up the partnership of Stephen McCoy and Stephanie Wynne will set up the camera equipment to record the 'view'. This part of *Triangulation* is determined by a procedure that is repeated at every location; twelve frames taken at 30-degree increments become a complete panorama. Having recorded the 'view' the photographers turn their cameras to its centre point. McCoy and Wynne take numerous pictures of the triangulation pillar, all at this stage possible partners to the 'view', in a process that occupies the most time on-site. The dualities within the project extend to McCoy Wynne. This is a project of two pictures and two people, each taking co-ordinates from the other, each dependent on 'the other self'.

1. The exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* showed in 1975 at the George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.
2. *Scientific American* quoted in Klett, M. 1984. *Second View: The Rephotographic Survey Project*. USA: University of New Mexico Press.

3. Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)
4. Susan Pearce, in Pearce, S. M. 1997. (ed.) *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World*. London: Leicester University Press, p. 3.
5. In *The Panoramic Image* the art historian Brandon Taylor explains that "the word 'panorama' conjoins the Greek meaning 'all' with 'view': the conjunction literally means something like 'all-embracing view' or 'entire view'." Published 1981 by The John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton.

A selection of photographs from *Triangulation* was exhibited at the Cornerstone Gallery in 2013 as part of the exhibition and publication *Processing* for Liverpool's photography festival LOOK13.

McCoy Wynne are based in Liverpool.

www.mccoywynne.co.uk

blog.mccoywynne.co.uk

www.mccoywynne.co.uk/projects/triangulation.aspx



The Medium is the Message?

Chris W Morris ARPS

Looking at photographs, how important is the manner of their presentation? On a screen, on the wall, in a frame or not; printed on aluminium sheets, printed on silk parachutes. In a book or in a box. Tied up with ribbon or buried in the earth; nailed to a tree or set out in the snow. Some photographers are always looking for new ways in which to present their work. The ways in which the presentation of photographs can enhance their interpretation is a subject rarely tackled in its own right. Used imaginatively and appropriately it can add new dimensions to a body of work; done badly it can be clichéd or downright crass.

What is a photograph after all? Long, long ago there were daguerreotypes on silvered copper; and there have been tintypes and glass slides. Celluloid positive colour transparencies have been around since the 1930s, but until recently we could have said, with some reasonable certainty, that a photograph was usually an image on a piece of paper. Today the vast majority of photographs exist only as electronic data.

Mary Price's book, *The Photograph*⁽¹⁾, on how the meaning of a photograph is directed by description and context is perceptively subtitled *A Strange Confined Space*. The traditional presentation of art photography on paper, mounted, in a frame, is so well-established as to be almost invisible. The discipline of the frame is, however, a constraining one. It isolates and elevates. It says 'this is a picture to be hung on a wall'. There are decisions about scale. Photographers and curators seeking to expand small ideas to cover large gallery walls chose bigger and bigger prints. More imaginative exhibition designers mix prints of different sizes and framing. There is more to consider, though, than just size.

The choice of how to realise an image, how to manifest its visual potential, has always been important. Today that choice is greater than it has ever been. What I believe often has been underestimated is just how important it can be to the overall effectiveness of the work.

A recent experience brought this to my attention in a particularly vivid way. In December 2013 the Hayward Gallery showed work by the Indian photographer, Dayanita Singh. It is rare enough to see gallery space in the UK devoted to a single photographer from the Subcontinent, even one of Singh's reputation. Before I come back to her work, it is worth considering the wider context.

It is arguable that photographers have been slow to recognise the power of presentation compared with other contemporary artists. It seems that there is still conservatism, an inheritance from the 'fine arts' tradition that seeks to put pictures in frames on gallery walls. Contemporary artists in other media have been more adventurous. The feminist

artist, Judy Chicago, made the *Dinner Party* (1974-1979)⁽²⁾ to celebrate women by using media closely associated with a traditional female stereotype – weaving, embroidery and china painting – while subverting it with defiantly feminist values. More recently, Grayson Perry has used tapestry in his depiction of English class culture⁽³⁾ and social mobility not least because of its roots in traditional artisanship and craft values, and its association with grand houses and historic scenes.

There is a point where presentation becomes such a major part of the work that it crosses the line and becomes an 'art installation'. Installation has been described as "a form of modern sculpture where the artist uses sound, movement, or space as well as objects in order to make an often temporary work of art"⁽⁴⁾. It is my view that in the case of photography it is a matter of the relative importance of the photographs in their own right. If the structure of the installation is one that enhances and contextualises the photography on display, then it is a form of presentation rather than an art installation. A good example of this was Mark Powers' exhibition (1999) *The Shipping Forecast*, which was accompanied by an audio track that sampled the eponymous BBC transmissions and played them through period radios, together with ambient sounds of sea, wind and rain. *The Shipping Forecast*, however, is a coherent photographic work that existed in a satisfactory book form⁽⁵⁾ without the additional sound-scape, but the latter did make the exhibition a richer experience.

In recent years the 'photobook' has received recognition as an art form. Les Rencontres d'Arles has been awarding prizes for photobooks since its inception in 1970; these days this annual event has to be limited to 500 submissions. There are now many books written about the photobook form, not least the three volume treatise by Badger and Parr⁽⁶⁾. The photobook is an artistic concept in its own right, providing a familiar, tactile medium for presenting images in a very personal, one-to-one way. Comprising a fixed sequence of images interspersed with text to a greater or lesser extent, it offers a diversity of form that encompasses graphic design, typography and book-binding. As such, it is unique; each element is important, on its own and *in toto*. Having a book in your hands initiates a process of discovery that has been structured by the author, but is experienced at your own pace. When Ed Ruscha published his series of photographs *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* he produced a 25 foot accordion-folded book⁽⁷⁾, directly referencing the subject both topographically and punningly. He was making a statement that was simultaneously both anti-art and determinedly modernist.

The Night Revels of Lao Li (2000) by Wang Quingsong is a photographic parody of *The Night Revels of Han Xizai*, a 10th century painting by Gu Hongzhong. The scenario and dress reflects contemporary culture, but the presentation is in the same longitudinal right-to-left scroll form as the original painting. Quingsong has since performed a similar parody with the 42 metre long frieze *The History of Monuments* (2010)⁽⁸⁾. These works

take traditional fine art forms (scroll painting and frieze sculpture) and subvert them in the cause of cultural satire. The form of presentation is a coherent and essential part of the concept.

It is a defining characteristic of certain photographic prints, though by no means a unique one, that they need to be handled – to be taken up and studied, to be pored over. Framing and hanging takes away this opportunity, it isolates them as objects to be studied and admired (or not) from a respectful distance. In a book they are packaged and sequenced. Put the photographs in a box and the intimacy is multiplied. The box must be opened, releasing the distinctive smell of photographic prints, and each print individually taken out ‘by hand’. It is another, quite different way of saying ‘these are special objects’. When David Bailey produced his *Box of Pin-ups* in 1964 it was a typically bold, youthful statement of self-worth. It is still an unusual commercial publishing format for photographs, and one that is usually associated with limited editions and high-value prints.

The Catalan photographer Joan Fontcuberta, in collaboration with Pere Formiguera, produced a series of fake photographs (and supporting documents) of bizarre and fantastical animals. *Fauna secreta*⁽⁹⁾ purported to be the long-lost archives of German zoologist Dr. Peter Ameisenhaufen, who disappeared in Scotland in 1955. The pathologically precise descriptions, Dr Ameisenhaufen’s small neat handwriting, his drawings and notes, the aged prints and broken glass plates all bore witness to artists’ attention to detail. Speaking during the Conference for European Photographers in 1995⁽¹⁰⁾, Fontcuberta described how he had exhibited this work in The Zoology Museum of Barcelona (1989)⁽¹¹⁾. The director of the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Madrid at the time, Pere Alberch, had first seen the work in the New York Museum of Modern Art, and he noted that even in a gallery context its accurate mimicry of scientific style had convinced some visitors of its authenticity. Presenting the work in a museum environment, a place where visitors were used to being presented with scientific ‘facts’, added a further layer of credibility to what was fundamentally a hoax. For Fontcuberta this was more than an amusing parody. He was challenging the assumed authority of the venue: “Both media and institutional platforms in which visual works are presented have inherent authority which should be questioned by the artist, as that authority conditions the message.”⁽¹²⁾ Alberch’s view was slightly different: “... it forces us to ask one of the most fundamental questions in biology, one that underlines the whole field; why do we observe certain forms in nature and not others?”⁽¹³⁾ From both perspectives the context provided by the presentation style and the venue were integral to the message.

To return to Dayanita Singh. The central work in her exhibition at the Hayward was *Museum Bhavan*, eight tall free-standing units meticulously built from hardwood. Each unit had numerous contiguous frames, each approximately a foot square, allowing a changeable matrix of monochrome photographs. Each unit contained a storage space where many other framed prints were held, unseen. It added an intriguing element of mystery, and

potentially allowed Singh to make each exhibition of her work unique with the construction of new photo-narratives. Singh has said: “The work is not about making photographs, it’s about editing and sequencing...”⁽¹⁴⁾. As photographs they are beautifully composed, richly printed and comfortably occupy a position between traditional documentary and staged scenarios; the architectural structures in which they are presented add a new dimension to the work. Experimentation with presentation is part of Singh’s practice; *Sent a Letter* (Steidl, 2008) is a slip-cased set of seven pocket-sized accordion form booklets. Each small book concentrates on a single location and was handmade as a gift for a particular friend. Her publisher has faithfully reproduced the physical form, retaining the low-tech intimacy of Singh’s originals.

Today, at a time when so much photographic imagery is seen exclusively in electronic form, it is pertinent to ask what this medium of presentation can add to the work. I struggle to find an answer; in fact the work that comes to mind is Martin Parr’s *Playas*⁽¹⁵⁾. Its design and printing was deliberately outsourced to a low-cost Mexican company. This is a photobook that is intended to be unsatisfactory, with inaccurate printing, garish colours and other imperfections. That is the point of it. Images created for the computer screen, the ultimate ephemeral medium, never actually exist in tangible form; they are created anew each time they are summoned from their electronic beds. It is a context that imbues them with insignificance, but unlike *Playas*, I doubt that is the intention of the photographer.

Intentions are the crux of the matter. With thought and imagination, good photographs can be made to communicate much more effectively when presented in an appropriate way. The experience of looking and understanding can be both broadened and deepened.

1. Price M., *The Photograph: A Strange Confined Space*. Stanford University Press, 1994.
2. Shown in the Edinburgh Fringe in 1984; now on permanent exhibition in the Brooklyn Museum, New York since 2007
3. Perry, G. *The Vanity of Small Differences*, 2012; six tapestries 2m x 4m.
4. Definition of *installation* noun (ART) from the online *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus*, Cambridge University Press (accessed 01 Jan 2014).
5. Power, M., *The Shipping Forecast*, Zelda Cheatle Press, 1996.
6. Parr, M. & Badger, G. *The Photobook: a History*. Vol. I 2004, Vol. II 2006, Vol. III 2014, Phaidon.
7. Ruscha, E. *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, 1966, self-published book.
8. Exhibited in Les Rencontres d’Arles, 2011.
9. Fontcuberta, J. and Formiguera, P., *Fauna*. Touring exhibition, shown at The Photographers’ Gallery, 1988.
10. *Conference for European Photographers*, 3-5 November 1995, Gray’s School of Art, Aberdeen.
11. Now called the Natural Sciences Museum of Barcelona.
12. Fontcuberta, J. & Meyer, P., *Personal Stories*. *Op. Cit.*, Conference Handbook, ed. Alasdair Foster.
13. Alberch, P., in *Fauna secreta*. Museo de Zoologia, Barcelona, 1989.
14. Singh, D., *Go away closer*, Hayward Publishing, 2013, p 43.
15. Parr, M., *Playas*, RM & Chris Boot, 2009.



Museum of Chance with Dayanita. Courtesy the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London
© The artist 2013

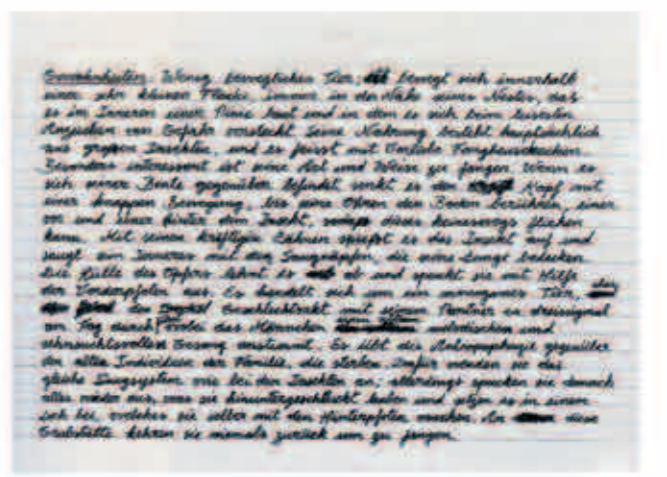
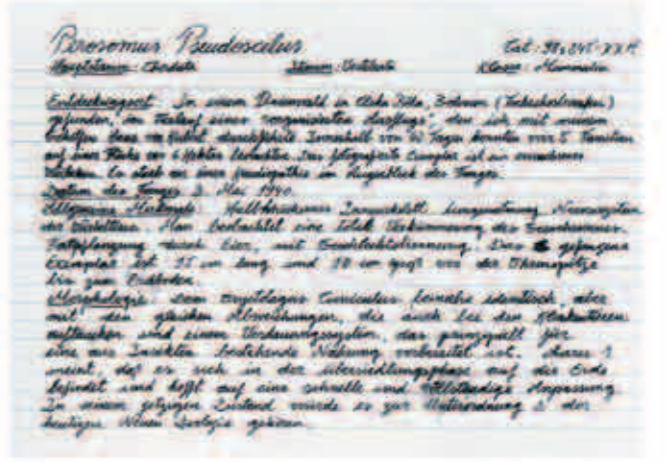


Illustration: Perosomus pseudoscelus
Fontcuberta, J & Formiguera, P. Fauna secreta,
Museo de Zoologia, Barcelona, 1989
© The artist 2013

A Given Spot

Peter Harvey ARPS

Places are freighted with meanings and significance based on their history, their location in physical space, their ownership, their political or bureaucratic delineation, their topography, their culturally-defined importance as well as more personal experience. Where things happen - especially emotionally charged events - become markers in our personal and collective memories and the narratives of our lives.

The locating of the place of death has obvious significance - we ask whether someone died at home or in hospital, for example, as there is an added layer of sadness knowing that someone died away from their home in a strange, unfamiliar place. The bureaucracy of death requires siting - as with our arrival in the world, our departure from it requires a location to be noted and certified.

The actual site of a death is, however, often distanced as the physical memorialisation is located in formally designated spaces (cemeteries) or monuments (war memorials, statues, plaques). Save for battlefields or other sites of mass destruction, places where deaths have occurred are largely forgotten. Their locations may be known only to a few by dint of specialist knowledge or personal experience - a historian, a worker in the emergency services, a bereaved relative. These places are mapped in a unique personal atlas of experience and events, located in a multi-dimensional space of geography, history, relationships and emotions. They are ignored by others, not included in their personal gazetteer, passed by and ordinary, unworthy of note.

Places have a hidden history, and the mode of photographic representation may challenge how we view our world. These images were taken where the fatal road accidents occurred, presented along with some minimal biographical information about the victim(s) with a few bureaucratic details. The flatness of the images, the banality and ordinariness of the location and sparseness of the information are in stark contrast to the significance of the event to all those involved. The chosen sites were photographed when the streets were deserted, not so much to portray 'the presence of absence', but more in attempt to demonstrate a 'charged emptiness' in the ordinariness of the locations.

Ed. Note: These photographs were part of Harvey's final exhibition for an MA in Fine Art at the University of Chester. They were presented in a casebound book set within a presentation box.

Site 9a

06300508
415762/433087

30/07/2008

MALE 20



Site 15a

1059208
418561/433381

11/12/2008

MALE 21
MALE 17
MALE 16
MALE 15



Holy Bible

Photobook Review by Brian Steptoe FRPS



Oliver Chanarin, book launch,
7 June 2013

At the present time there is a trend for photobooks which utilise images from sources other than the photographer author of the book. These may be a part but also may form the entire imagery in the book. Examples of such 'found' images range from use of photos picked up from disaster scenes, photos discarded in skips, images from the internet, family photos and other sources.

The photographs used in *Holy Bible* are sourced from The Archive of Modern Conflict. This renowned archive was established 20 years ago in London and contains over 4 million photos.

Broomberg and Chanarin's June 2013 publication follows their success in winning the Deutsche Borse prize earlier in the year for *War Primer 2*.

Both books make extensive use of 'found' photographs. The book printing is on bible paper, complete with gold edging, two place tapes and black embossed cover. It is in fact the text of the Bible with photographs imposed on many pages, with certain lines in the bible text linking to the images nearby underlined in red.

Many of the photographs show disaster or war themes, others range from circus or magician photos, these latter linked to the frequent phrase "And it came to pass [...]", more domestic images and some of a sexual nature. The overall message would seem



to be that the texts of the bible, particularly in the Old Testament, are often descriptions of terrifying scenes and violent enactments.

The book is 721 pages long, accompanied by an essay *Divine Violence* by Adi Ophir. It was short-listed in the Paris-Photo-Aperture awards book exhibition of October 2013 and is included in several published 'best photobooks of 2013' listings.

This is a book to be dipped into and seen in bite-sized chunks appreciating a number of pages and text references at a time, then coming back later for more. Broomberg has been quoted as describing it as "a disturbing and offensive book" which reflects many of the political/religious conflict situations of the world today. It is an uncomfortable but important publication. Broomberg and Chanarin have been collaborating on photographic books for over twenty years.

Photobooks utilising found images illustrate one of the ways in which photography on paper has expanded over the years; no longer simply being definable as just about the photography itself.

Holy Bible, Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, ISBN 9781907946417, is published by Mack Books in conjunction with AMC Books, London, 2013

Photos of cover and page spreads courtesy of Mack Books

Unnatural Habitats

Peter Heaton

On a visit to Felbrigg Hall in Norfolk, I was peering into the cases of stuffed birds on display in their Bird Corridor when my attention was drawn to movement in the case in front of me. My eyes shifted focus quickly to track the movement of a reflection in the glass with a bird flying past outside the large windows opposite. I was suddenly struck by the incongruity of the event, the still image of lifeless birds posed in a representation of a 'natural' environment, overlaid by the image of a live bird soaring in flight in its true environment in the sky outside the Hall.

This event was the inspiration behind the work that has become the *Unnatural Habitats* series.

The images have been collaged together digitally, utilising elements from many separate individual shots. I photographed stuffed birds in both public and private collections as the basis for each image, often combining birds from several different cases into one composition. Typically, each completed work also contains landscape shots of the bird's natural environments, reflections, textures, writing and details that betray the hand of the taxidermist. These details were often sourced from the backs of the individual bird cases.

There are many thematic concerns that run through and connect the images, but one common to them all, and influenced by my original inspiration, is that they contain the symbolic image of a window, which represents both the birds' encasement behind glass and also ours in our built environments with their tantalising views through to the world outside. In some instances the images of windows are obvious, in others less so, being almost abstract forms within the frame.

Compositionally, careful attention was given to the structure of the collages, and the intensity and scale of the different elements. When seen as large prints the viewer is able to move in relation to the image; this allows certain elements to become visible at different viewing distances. Shapes take on more dominant roles within the image, and at very close viewing unnoticed details emerge, often serving as reminders that we are looking at birds in very unnatural and twice constructed habitats.

The full series of *Unnatural Habitats*, along with other work, can be seen in the gallery section of my website at www.peterheaton.co.uk







GROUP EVENTS

- 10 May Contemporary North East meeting. Strensall Village Hall, near York 2-5pm. Artist Talk by Benedict Phillips, including hand made books. Contact Nigel Tooby FRPS, nigel@mogulimage.co.uk, tel 01924 274100
- 19 May Contemporary North West meeting., Days Inn Hotel, Charnock Richard Services, northbound M6. between J 27 and 28. Evening at 7.30pm. Contact Ian Maxwell, mail@ihmaxwell.com, tel 01524 770278
- 29 June Contemporary South West meeting. Venue to be confirmed, but likely to be at Carnon Downs Inn, near Truro TR3 6JT. Contact Rod Fry, rod@rod Fry.eclipse.co.uk, tel 01803 844721
- 21 July Contemporary North West meeting. Provisional date. (details as above)
- 26 July ARPS Advisory Day, covering Visual Art, Travel, Contemporary and Professional & Applied categories. Pimlico, London SW1V 3RY (to be confirmed). Contact londonevents@rps.org
- 17 September Contemporary Distinction Assessments for ARPS and FRPS. Fenton House, Bath. Applicants and observers may attend the Associateship Assessments. Contact Andy Moore, tel 01225 325760
- 12 October Thames Valley Region Annual Print exhibition and joint meeting with Contemporary Group. Drake Hall Community Centre, Chiltern Avenue, Amersham HA6 5AH. Our speakers in the afternoon are Peter Ellis LRPS and Derek Dewey-Leader LRPS.

Now until 1 September (closing date) Enter your photobook for the 2014 RPS Photobook exhibition, open to all members of the RPS, with a closing date of 1 September 2014. Details available on RPS website, see www.rps.org/exhibitions-and-competitions/photobooks. Contact rod@rod Fry.eclipse.co.uk if any problems. Pay your entry fee on-line at the RPS shop www.rps.org/shop/entry-fees-and-tickets/photobook-competition-entry. Post your book with a second completed entry form (to cover payment of return postage), to Fenton House, Bath

Chair - Avril Harris ARPS
avrilrharris@blueyonder.co.uk
Deputy chair - Rod Fry ARPS
rod@rod Fry.eclipse.co.uk
Secretary - Peter Ellis LRPS
wordsandpicsltd@gmail.com
Treasurer - Greg Holba
greg@holba.net
Postal portfolio - Anne Crabbe FRPS
info@annecrabbe.co.uk

Event organiser - Avril Harris ARPS
avrilrharris@blueyonder.co.uk
Journal editor - Patricia Ruddle ARPS
28 Malvern Avenue, York. YO26 5SG
patriciaruddle@btinternet.com
Journal Editorial committee -
Patricia Ruddle, editor
Anne Crabbe
Brian Steptoe, design

Webmaster, e-newsletter editor, Stewart Wall, artonastudios@gmail.com
Committee members -
Brian Steptoe FRPS
bsteptoe@compuserve.com
Nigel Tooby FRPS
nigel@mogulimage.co.uk
Douglas May FRPS (co-opted)
douglasjmay1@btinternet.com
Ian Maxwell (co-opted)
mail@ihmaxwell.com



© Richard Sadler FRPS, from his self-published book *Behind the Green Door* in which he juxtaposes house exteriors with what goes on behind them.

Journal price where sold, £5