

# Members' Showcase

## A Contemporary Group North Activity

Issue 26

November 2025



## *Members' Showcase*

provides a platform for contributors to our monthly meetings to display the work they have shared.

Contributors have curated their own images and provided the accompanying text making this a collaborative group venture.

**15th November 2025—Meeting in person at Clements Hall, York**

**Chaired by Patricia Ruddle**

Contributors:

Andrew Hersom

Avijit Datta

John Elvin

Ian Sayce

Lyn Newton

David Couldwell

Celine Alexander Brown

Howard and Jackie Fisher

Alistair How



## Andrew Hersom APSA EPSA EFIAP/b .....Liepāja

We went on a cruise to the Baltic recently. A lot of photo-ops but the excursions were all a bit rushed. These images were taken in Liepāja in Latvia. The gulls sitting on parked cars seemed completely unafraid of humans, making for a different sort of street photography.











Mannequins are a long term project of mine and these in an outside market caught my eye.



## Avijit Datta FRSA .....Photo Festivals as drivers for Contemporary Photography

Photomonth EastLondon was a huge success – it had 60 exhibition sites including the Tate, Whitechapel, Flowers and Aperture Galleries and the involvement of five universities throughout October. Similarly PhotoOxford recruited multiple sites including the Weston and Bodleian. PhotoParis is now running.

Both PhotoMonth EastLondon and PhotoOxford had central themes with an associated symposium examining the theme. For London it was *Longing* and for Oxford *Truth (and AI)*. Both festivals are drivers for critical thinking and the intellectual advancement of photography – central to Contemporary Photography, rooted as it is in images ‘about’ rather than ‘of’.

Readers will also recall the anniversary RPS symposium on Contemporary Photography where the definition and semantics were given by Zelda Cheadle, HonFRPS, a founder member of the Contemporary Group and the driving force (with others) of PhotoMonth EastLondon [https://youtu.be/46TDp917iml?si=DWvkMTaClR99\\_brC](https://youtu.be/46TDp917iml?si=DWvkMTaClR99_brC)

In London over 140 international submissions of both text and images on *Longing* encompassed bereavement, loss of freedom during the COVID-19 lockdown, revisiting an empty former parental home and forgotten Palestinian sites of antiquity in Israel.

Lidar, Cyanotypes and large format photography techniques were employed.

The symposium, convened by Fiona Yaron-Field, a photographer and psychotherapist, invited those authors to expand on their work and its context. The Pavilion was packed and the audience which included internationally recognised academics engaged actively. The hypothesis analysed was that *Longing* sits on a spectrum ranging from desire to craving and addiction; as such Longing is rooted in mental pain and suffering, as described in Hindu and subsequent Buddhist scriptures. Relevant advanced neuroimaging techniques to examine the mental states associated with longing and addiction were also discussed.





The accompanying photographs show Durdak – the dance of Death by the Tashi Lhunpo monks at Shigatse reminding us that death is forever nearby.







These monochrome images are by Nicholas Vreeland , the Abbot of Rato Monastery. Nicholas was trained by fashion photographers including Irving Penn and Richard Avedon. Fashion is rooted in desire and longing. While commissioned to photograph his holiness The Dalai Lama, he ultimately adopted a new path as Abbot. Henri Cartier Bresson recommended that he continue photography. Nicholas has authored many books including *Monk with a camera* (2014 ) and *A Profound Mind: Cultivating Wisdom in Everyday Life* (2011) . His contribution to the RPS contemporary series of illustrated articles on COVID-19 which I solicited and edited is about *The quiet dignity of trees* and may be found at:

<https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2020/december/buddhist-perspective-on-the-pandemic/>







In summary, PhotoFestivals engage the public in photography and encourage critical thinking large scale creative artistic work and what Austrian Photographer-teacher Lisette Model espoused at the New York New School of Social Research - "Photography starts with the projection of the photographer, his understanding of life and himself into the picture". As such photo-festivals are drivers for Contemporary Photography. PhotoFestivals also represent the best of what Jennie Lee MP envisioned in the formation of the Arts Council in her 1963 White paper *A policy for the Arts*.

## John Elvin ..... The Walk

In recent months, I have been in the habit of taking a morning walk between mine and a neighbouring village (and back). For one week last March I took my camera with me and recorded the route. It is far from being the most beautiful or spectacular in Yorkshire, but it has the great advantage of starting and finishing at my front door.

































Home at last!!



# Ian Sayce

Images from Florence and a photography workshop in Cortona.

























## **Lyn Newton** ARPS ..... On making a book

I have recently completed a four week course on making a book—not hand made but professionally printed. This meant getting my head around a new bit of software—Affinity Publisher 2 (which is now available to download free of charge) and learning how to navigate the requirements of the chosen printing firm. The course, run by Stewart Wall, provided all of the virtual handholding needed and the book I produced is much more professional than any I have produced before.

Why do this? Because books are on a shelf - they are picked up and looked at. The images on my computer are lucky to get a second glance. And, selecting images for a book forces you to make editorial choices, to look for sequencing to tell a story, to engage with your images in a much more intensive way.

And at the end, you have this beautiful, physical manifestation of all your hard work. What's not to like.







Lessons learned:

Don't cram in too many images—make every image earn its place

Sequence carefully to tell your story

Don't use too much text

Allow the book to breathe - don't rush in on the first page with images—instead give a hint of what is to come (see above)

## David Couldwell

Here are three images from Newark Air Museum. I'm thinking about doing a project about old aircraft and these are the first I took. I converted them to black and white because I think it goes well with the past. I'm not sure if I will put any colour images in. I will have to see.









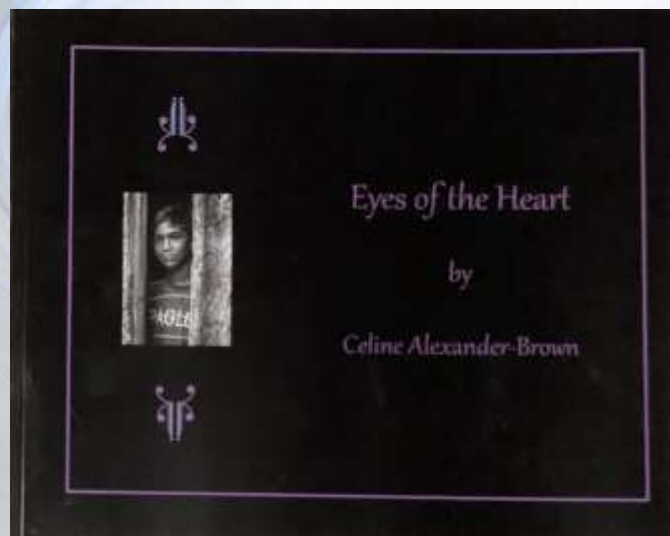





## Celine Alexander Brown

**Restless Waters** was published in 2021, with all proceeds donated to InterplastUK and The Host Apostolate. **Eyes of the Heart** was published in 2022, and the funds raised were sent to the Hope Foundation for Street Children in Kolkata. Neither of the books were for sale but attracted generous donations for the respective charities.

Both of these books were a labour of love and deeply personal to me. They have reached readers across all five continents. I hope they have touched the hearts of others.







### *Restless*

Restless, as the waves that turn  
First one way and then another  
Not sure which way to go  
Crashing and foaming  
Ebbing and flowing  
Are my emotions like the waves?

Continuously confused,  
The current pulling and tugging  
Leading one way and then another,  
Do I fight and swim against the flow?  
Fighting laws of nature,  
Or surrender all to You, Lord,  
For only you can give me peace.



## *Restless Waters*

*Poems, Prayers and Reflections*  
by  
*Celine Alexander-Brown*



### *Winter*

Now, crisp, white and clean  
Transforming the world around me  
Making it magical and beautiful  
A wonder to behold.

From the depths of winter  
Dark, dreary and cold  
A little, minor miracle  
Starting to unfold.  
Flakes of snow, drifting  
Fills the morning sky  
Floating down like feathers  
Softly landing on the ground.

Footprints, tyre tracks, paw marks  
Markings in the snow  
Patterns like the songlines  
Learnt from long ago.

Nature teaches lessons  
If we are willing to learn,  
Shows us the wonders of creation  
Each and every day.

It lifts our spirits, hearts and minds  
Out of the mundane and ordinary,  
Shows resurrection and new life  
Even in the depth of winter's decay.

## Howard and Jackie Fisher .....A Cyanotype Workshop

On 18th October 2025 we attended a workshop on Cyanotype photographic processes at the Darkroom London in Camden. The workshop was lead by Catriona Gray, an expert in alternative processes and lasted four hours. Apart from we two there was only one other participant, a Swiss journalist.

We were asked to take a couple of colour images on a memory stick. Given the process we sought more graphic images thinking these would reproduce better than ones with a lot of detail. Seeing Catriona's examples we need not have fretted over this as she has some beautiful complicated woodland scenes to demonstrate the depth of the process.

Our first task was to make a digital negative of our images. This involved making mono conversions and then reversing them to make the negative. Catriona recommended using high quality acetate such as Fotospeed's DC Film. Two of our negatives are shown here. Next we were introduced to the chemicals we were to use — a proportionate mixture of Ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide.

We then used the solution to coat watercolour paper using various tools such as a foam pad and different sized brushes. The coating has to be done in subdued light, and in the case of the workshop, Darkroom London's highly equipped darkroom.

After coating and drying the paper we contact printed the negatives onto the paper using a professional standard UV light set up. Exposure can be done using sunlight but UV gives a more standard exposure. A step wedge helps to judge the appropriate exposure. The depth of the blue colour depends on the exposure used.

When exposed the paper is washed in cold water to remove residual chemicals and the blue colour appears - a quite exciting time seeing the image emerge. The print is then dried.

This was a truly inspiring workshop and we will be taking the process much further, experimenting with different strengths of solutions, and double coating the papers. In Jackie's case she is keen to print onto fabric and then embroider over the print. All very exciting for us.

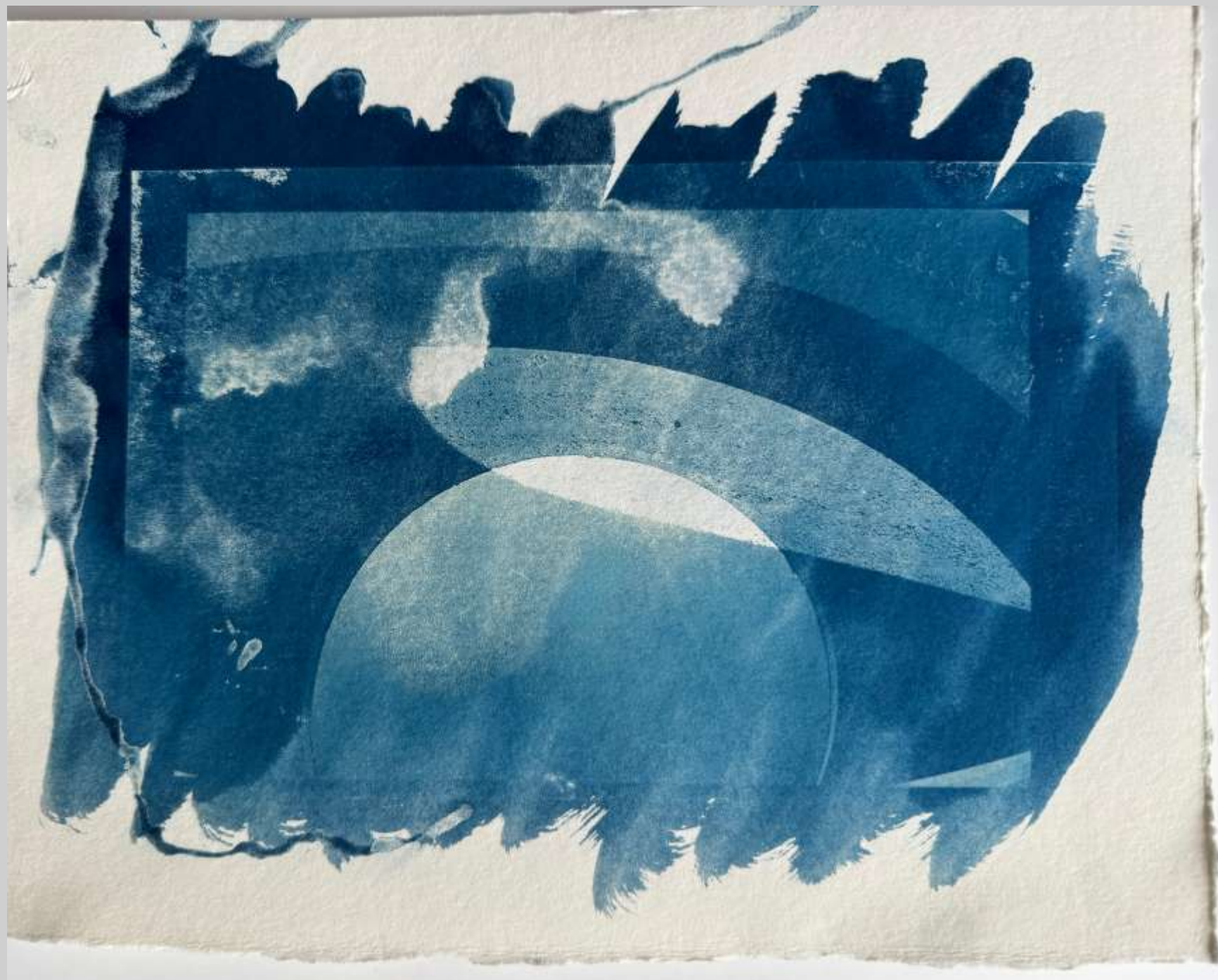
The prints here illustrate our first attempts at the process and especially our inexperience in the paper coating process, sometimes too thick and others incomplete. However, that's what workshops are for, to learn new processes and experiences.

<https://www.darkroomlondon.org/>

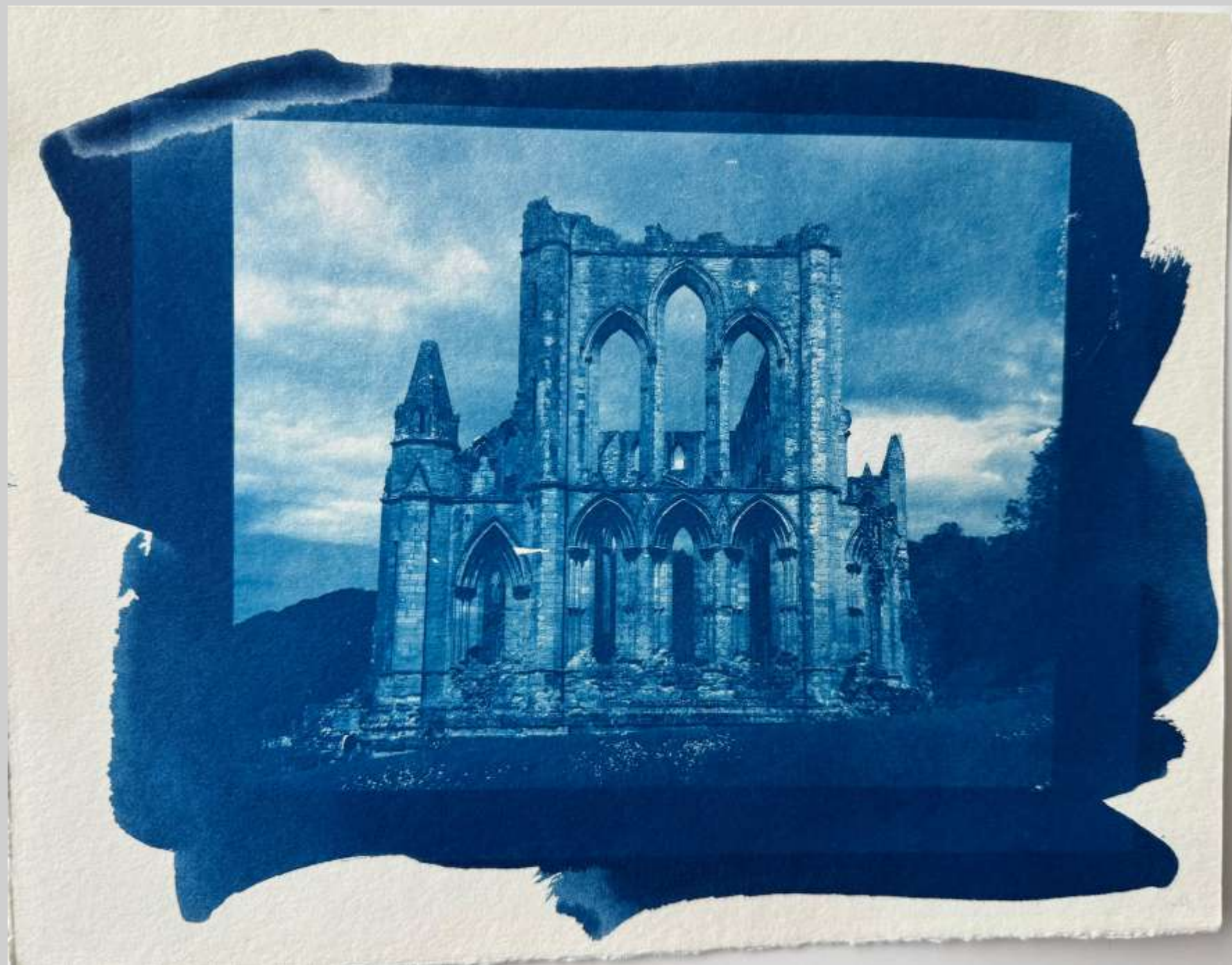
<https://www.catrionagray.co.uk/>

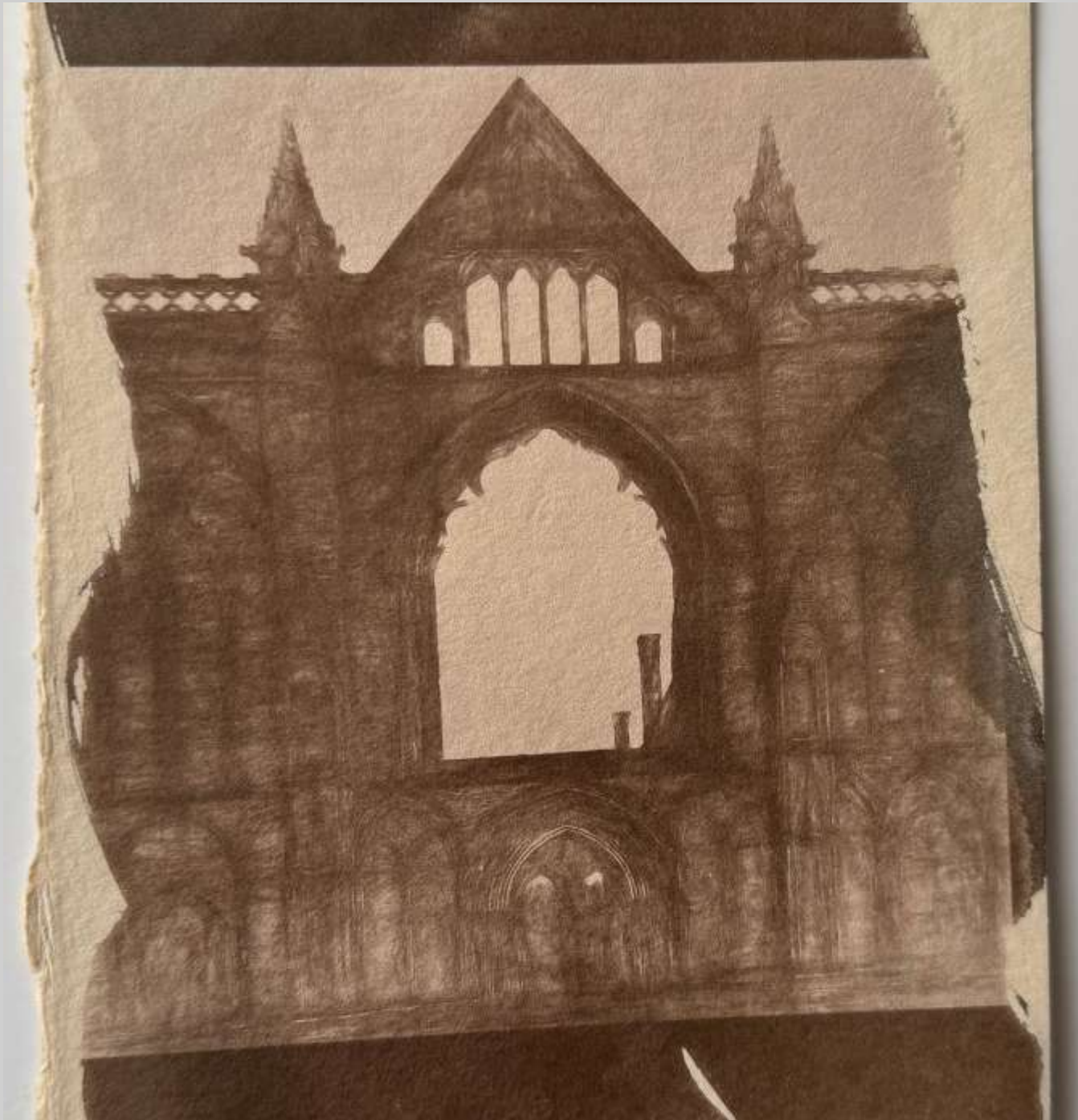












After learning the basic methods we were introduced to toning the image. We used tea which produces the brown tones but various things can be used including plant materials for differing colours. We will be experimenting with this. Also we bleached back the blue prints using washing soda (Sodium carbonate) before placing the print in the toning bath. The amount of the bleaching and time in the toner affects the depth of the colour.





## Alistair How .....Coraggiosi si diventa - As brave as we can

The 5th Edition of the Fotografia Bergamo Festival showcased the inner strength and resilience of human stories across borders and cultures. These images show the reactions of viewers who often separate themselves from the reality that is on their own door step.



















I AM UGANDAN,  
AFRICAN, QUEER,  
AND PROUD!  
I SHOULD BE LEGAL!

