Hi folks

As the sun begins to show itself again and we are all trying to lose the weight we put on having binged on chocolate eggs, take some time to sit down and enjoy April’s edition of Concept.

We have some great contributions by Contemporary Group Committee Members Anne Crabbe, Rod Fry and Tom Owens which really give us a flavour of their photographic journeys.

Colin Howard has shared with us a three year project, ‘Barking Mad’. The project turned into a labour of love as he re-visited, after many years, sixteen miles of the Hammersmith and City Tube line, ultimately finding the house he was born in.

Janet Cook has treated us to an insight into her recent visit to the Zeitz Mocca Museum in Cape Town, South Africa. The largest museum of contemporary African art in the world, it is housed in an old silo. Interestingly it was featured on a recent BBC episode of Amazing Hotels.

And finally, just a reminder that you can still book for our own Contemporary Group Conference with Bill Jackson and Chloe Dewe Matthews on 12th May 2018. It promises to be a great event. See the Events page for more details.

As usual we would really welcome your images, be it one or a panel. This is your chance to share your work with fellow image takers.

Enjoy the read.

Lyn Newton
Editor
lynconcept@btinternet.com

Christine Pinnington
Graphics Editor

Images from the book “Women in Dance” © Avijit Datta
Speakers Bill Jackson and Chloe Dewe Mathews will join the Contemporary SIG for the day at Regent's University London.

**Bill Jackson** is a conceptual artist working on performance and space-time photography, mapping natural spaces and man-made environments. Interactions with natural elements such as the wind or the tides are intrinsic to his process as he documents live performances over an extended period of time to produce his still photographs. His work has been exhibited in the UK and worldwide including The National Portrait Gallery and The Photographers Gallery in London, The Brno Museum in Prague and the Museum Of Contemporary Arts in Argentina. His work is also in many private and public collections.

**Chloe Dewe** Mathews will present projects ‘Shot at Dawn’ and a botanical commission for Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. ‘Shot at Dawn’ was exhibited at Tate Modern as part of ‘Conflict, Time, Photography’, with a book published by Ivory Press. ‘A Modern Herbal: Experiments in Botanical Imaging’ is now on permanent, public display in the Patient Transport Lounge at the hospital. Chloe’s awards include the BJP International Photography Award, the Julia Margaret Cameron New Talent Award and the RPS Vic Odden Award and her nominations include the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, the Prix Pictet and Paul Huf Award.

There will be an opportunity for attendees to show prints or books for review at the event.

The event is a short walk from Baker Street underground station, London. Please arrive at 10:00 for a 10:30 start. The finish will be at 16:00. Lunch is available at The Garden Café nearby.

Avril Harris
Email the event organiser: avrilharris@blueyonder.co.uk
Anne Crabbe FRPS
Contemporary Group Committee Member

I joined the RPS Contemporary Group soon after its inception in 1989. The steering committee listed in the first newsletter included Paul Hill, Edward Bowman, Michael Langford, Mari Mahr Eamonn McCabe, Jo Spence, Brian Steptoe and Virginia Khuri – who wouldn’t want to be part of that group! At the same time, Edward Bowman was writing challenging and amusing articles in the RPS Journal suggesting a fresh attitude on photography.

I soon joined the Postal Portfolio Group; still belong and have been encouraged and stimulated by the work of the other photographers and their comments on my own work. It has made me think in a critical and analytical way about the photography I see and has influenced my own work.

I sat on the Contemporary Group Distinctions Panels under the chair of Carol Hudson, Brian Steptoe and Douglas May and now play a small part in the production of The Contemporary Group Journal, where I enjoy encouraging Group photographers to submit work.

Most of my photography includes people, either in a conceptual or in a documentary way and I have selected some images to illustrate both. Learning how to print in workshops with Paul Hill and John Blakemore and a course at Brunel University with Brian Nevitt was so satisfying and still amazes me in what I could produce. I have never achieved the same quality in my digital printing but am doing more and more digital book production and this ties in well with my interest in series of images. And above all, through the Contemporary Group, I’ve got to know diverse and talented photographers. But that’s not on the prospectus.

Anne Crabbe
Rod Fry ARPS
Contemporary Group South West Region Rep.

I joined the Society in 1991 and obtained my LRPS the following year. I was a keen club photographer and my work was very much in the pictorial landscape genre. Slowly but surely my interest in capturing the wild remote places on Dartmoor and the coast led me to try for an Associateship. The panel was unsuccessful which proved to be a blessing in disguise. In trying to achieve an “A” my work was becoming mechanical. I found myself producing images to please others, rather than myself.

Something had to change so I ditched all my camera equipment in favour of just a 50 mm lens and camera, I switched from colour to black and white. I also started to work in themes. All at once I was relaxed and enjoying my photography once more.

In 2003 South West Region held an open day with the Contemporary Group to show work. Our speakers were one Brian Steptoe and Graham Hodgson (the first member to obtain his Fellowship in Contemporary Photography). I realised straightaway the Contemporary Group was the natural home for my photography. In 2004 I submitted a panel and was made an Associate in Contemporary Photography.

My photography has evolved again, I moved to digital and back to colour but still prefer fixed focal length lenses.

I like the discipline of making books, which fall into two sorts the well-considered project book that can take years to make and the quick almost sketch books, which can be completed in days.

My work - I suppose you could say I am fascinated with the ordinary everyday life which goes on around me, and which I find truly extraordinary. For example, I did a photographic essay on my late father who died in 1976. I only have a few family papers and a handful of photographs to remind me of his existence. I did however have a whole store of memories where I can remember being with my father. I decided to visit these locations to see if the camera could act as a portal to link the present with the past, to see if traces of my late father were still present - a sort of “Ghost in the Landscape”.

The project ran over eight years and in many respects the journey was more satisfying than the arrival.

I hope this gives you an insight into my image making.

Rod Fry

‘Ghost in the Landscape’;
My father died on the 3rd May 1976. I went to various locations where I remember being with him. Here are four examples from my book.
Tom Owens ARPS
Contemporary Group Committee Member

Tom Owens on himself:

Owens is the Regional organiser of the Contemporary group for East Anglia. He is not sure how he came to be seconded to this role but his chief objectives surround herding cats and bagging fog. The EACG (East Anglia Contemporary Group) is made up of clusters of hot spots. As is our want, being creatures of a certain type, we do not get involved with organised events or competitions. Here in the East of the East Anglia Contemporary Group we engage with a gaggle of like-minded photographers, professional and amateur alike to have infrequent group exhibitions of our craft. Having been a runner up in the first RPS Photobook competition, Owens curated and co-hosted the picture exhibition in the first International Photobook Exhibition.

Profile

Owens is an eclectic photographer making work mainly in series. He graduated as a mature student with a BA(Hons) Photography and is a guest lecturer and technician at the University of Suffolk where he provides a drum scanning service using their equipment. He is also a member of the Rooftop Collective.

Owens had a solo exhibition that ran for 8 months at the Museum of East Anglian Life featuring work that was part of his Edgelands photobook. Owens is sponsored by Kodak for his extended shooting of the series. His current large format series is based on the Stour estuary at low tide.

Most of his serious series work is made on film; medium and large format. He has two huge images on permanent display at the University of Suffolk – one at 11.9m and the other at 8.1 metres wide. These were however shot digitally.
On 28th January 2018 in Cape Town and, full of anticipation, I head for the Zeitz Mocca Museum. Zeitz Mocca is the largest museum of contemporary African art in the world and only opened in September 2017. It was the idea of Jochen Zeitz, a collector of African contemporary art and businessman who invited British architect Thomas Heatherwick to develop the site. Formerly a century old grain silo, Heatherwick and his team were inspired by a grain of corn left behind. They went on to create a public space using a series of curved concrete lines and light while revealing to visitors the tower’s industrial mechanisms.

Having read there are 100 exhibition spaces I arrive early to allow time to pause and to absorb as much as possible. The building is vast and, the moment I step inside, I am incredibly excited!! I start at the top ...the glass lift to the sixth floor affords a fabulous view of the stunning interior architecture...

As I wander from room to room I am overwhelmed by the beautiful, the expressive, the strange, the political, the troubled, the uplifting and the fearful … all as inspiring as they are diverse. But, as a photographer I am especially drawn to three exhibitions.

**Mouna Karray**

Born in 1970 in Tunisia, Karray studied Cinema and Photography in Tunis before moving to Tokyo in 2002 to complete an MA in photography. Karray works primarily in photography and sound installation, often using video work. Her art merges socio-political themes with personal experience to explore identity and memory. 'Nobody Will Talk About Us' is a body of work taken across landscapes in the south of Tunisia. The series, shown for the first time in its entirety, presents a figure shrouded in a white sheet photographed against rural and desolate backdrops. The area is one of the most disadvantaged regions in the country with a lack of investment and marginalisation of a people who are seen as neglected and forgotten. Karray’s work explores her encounters with both the people and the landscape in which they exist. She uses the anonymous white sheeted figure placed in the environment as a personification of the isolation and alienation of the people in the region.

**Thania Petersen**

Born in 1980, in Cape Town, Thania Petersen moved to the UK with her family when her father was exiled under the apartheid regime. She studied at the Central St Martin’s College of Art in London, returning in 2007 to Cape Town. She uses self-portraiture, installation, and multi-sensory performance to explore the problematic identity terms ‘Cape Malay’ or ‘Cape Coloured’ used by the apartheid regime. Using her Indonesian heritage and experiences of Islam she explores aspects of her identity.

Her current work began with a search to uncover her Cape Malay heritage, initiated by her father, who had traced her family’s lineage back to Tuan Guru – a prince from Tidore who was the first political prisoner to be held on Robben Island in the late 1700s, and is now regarded as the father of Islam in South Africa. Petersen continued her search, creating the body of work, ‘I Am Royal’. As the subject of these photographs she places herself directly within the context of her own history, finally staking her claim to a lineage.
William Kentridge

William Kentridge was born in Johannesburg, South Africa and is known internationally for his prints, animated films, drawings, and theatre productions. With a BA in Politics and African Studies, a diploma in Fine Arts and a student of mime and theatre he has a wide portfolio of skills. At one time a practicing lawyer, his passion for social justice is seen in his work. Tracing the effects of Apartheid and Colonialism through hand drawn animated films, he has symbolised the abuse and injustice by using the landscape of the exploited industrial and mining areas around Johannesburg. ‘More Sweetly Play the Dance’ lasts for 15 minutes and can be viewed on YouTube at the link given below. It is an eight-screen dance macabre complete with brass band and cut out profiles from Kentridge’s drawings, moving across the barren mining landscape.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBZYd-InWnM

The work of both Mouna Karray and Thania Petersen resonate with me. It strongly reflects their life experiences and a continuous search for identity as does much of my own practice.

William Kentridge’s ‘More Sweetly Play the Dance’ encircles me in fifteen minutes of darkness and mesmerising sound, story and imagery overwhelming my senses and imagination in a way that stays with me long after the moment...

I leave Zeist Mocca tired but not weary, impressed, certainly but more importantly, inspired!

Useful links:

https://zeitzmocaa.museum/artists/mouna-karray/
https://zeitzmocaa.museum/artists/thania-petersen/
https://zeitzmocaa.museum/artists/william-kentridge/
https://www.mariangoodman.com/
On this bitterly cold March day 13 members attended the North East Contemporary Group meeting held at Nigel and Elaine Tooby’s, Studio in Wakefield.

This being the penultimate meeting at the studio, before Nigel and Elaine re-locate to Northern England, discussion was held regarding future venues. Members generally felt that York was the most centrally accessible location. Avijit Datta had previously generously researched a central city venue which unfortunately hasn’t worked out but Patricia Ruddle has located a very accessible York venue with excellent facilities which, the meeting has decided to pursue for now. Patricia is going to confirm a few details and hopefully book us for the July meeting if not the rest of the year, but I am sure she will keep us updated on that.

We all enjoyed an afternoon treat which started with Christine Carr showing us Digital images of a project exploring who and why people dress up. Whether for re-enactment groups, dressing for conventions, demonstrations, or simply for pleasure or work. Is this an escape from reality? Christine used composite images, lifting people dressed up into another scene, an imagined reality. Is this where those people imagined themselves to be? The images attracted very good and constructive discussion.

Whilst working recently in Japan on the snow-covered island of Hokkaido, Jim Souper took some stunning landscape images of trees, grasses and sea defences in the snow. He showed us digital images and prints in monochrome and colour. Jim was exploring a very minimalist approach which was excellently presented.

David Kershaw, who joined us for the first time, provoked more lively discussion, when he showed us two images on his concept of the changing pace of the high street. David is looking at what small shops are about, why they open and, in some cases, how quickly they close. He had a number of questions for the group about producing a foldout concertina book, to show the whole side of one street. Each shop front attached to its neighbour correct in scale and perspective.

Unfortunately, a few technical glitches meant that Janet Cook was unable to presents her work. However, she has done a short report for Concept elsewhere.

I attempted to present my study of a group of outlying farm buildings, on an estate in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The study done over a period of 20 plus years looked at the dereliction of these farm buildings, the cause and intentions, the way in which it affected the village community, and the effect on the landscape. The change that subsequent re-generation of the buildings has brought about is astounding.

David Burgess treated us to some excellently presented prints of London architecture and street photography. David concentrates on the shapes produced by the architecture, he also loves photographing people. The concept of where people go in their minds whilst travelling on the tube is beautifully illustrated here.
Two books by Peter Bartlett were presented to us. “It’s All Behind Us”, a collection of images, taken in many cities over a period of 6 years, shows us some of the things many of the people in Peter’s images don’t notice around them. “Transported” on the other hand is a study of four individuals, convicts, transported to Australia in the late 18th early 19th centuries. Peter visited the Port Arthur Penal Colony in Tasmania in 2014 where in his own words “I couldn’t help but reflect on the harshness of a system that transported people to the other side of the world”. Peter has given us real insight into the harshness of the system through pictures and the descriptive portrayal of the lives of these four convicts. Peter’s books can be viewed on [link](http://www.blurb.co.uk/b/8568685-transported) [link](http://www.blurb.co.uk/b/8525240-it-s-all-behind-us)

The feminine concept of Women in Dance was brought to us by Avijit Datta in his two books. The larger of the two having excellent photographs portraying the empowering energy of dance for women. Avijit talked about the mirroring and patterning of dance through different cultures.

A lovely afternoon eclipsed only by a hairy 2 hour drive home in driving snow. All our thanks to Nigel and Elaine for their hospitality.

Jane Batty

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**Pete James**

Most people in the photography world will already be aware of the death of Pete James who was known to many of us as a photographic historian, a champion of photography and photographers, and the former Head of Photography at the Library of Birmingham. Contemporary Group members will remember him with affection and it is fitting that we mark Pete’s contribution to photography here in Concept.
I was looking to rediscover London through photography. I had worked for nearly 40 years in Central London but at retirement felt I knew little of the city as it is now. I had been brought up in the East End but had not returned there since leaving for college as a teenager in the 1960s. Enthused by reading Walk the Lines by Mark Mason, I decided, therefore, to follow the sixteen miles of the Hammersmith and City Tube line. This cuts through the very centre of the capital, passing as it does from west to east, through the cultural and intellectual heart of London, its mix of different communities, the financial powerhouse of the City, the regeneration zones of the eastern suburbs to finally what in my youth was regarded as the edge of Essex.

In operation since 1863, the stretch from Paddington to Farringdon is the world’s oldest underground railway. It is barely below ground for much of its route and visible for long sections to the west and east. It is a true artery for the ebb and flow of life in this great city.

Over a period of three years, I attempted to capture the diversity of both cultures and city landscapes to be found in proximity to the line’s 29 stations. But this became less of a project and more of a pilgrimage to end up at the end of the line in finding the house where I was born.
If you would like to see more of Colin’s work, he has an upcoming exhibition called ‘Passing By’ - an exposition of urban photography – which will run May 19th to May 26th at De Koffee Pot, The Left Bank, Hereford.
Introduction

Nine members attended the above meeting with apologies from Marcia Fry, Ken Holland, Louise Allen, Lesley Treloar, and Anna Goodchild. There was a brief overview of the goings on at the RPS and CG. Chloe Dew Matthews has been confirmed as the second speaker at the Contemporary Event to be held in London on the 12th May. The meeting then moved onto the most important and enjoyable part of the day namely looking at people’s work.

Mick Medley kicked off proceedings with two of his own books on aircraft and trains. The SAAL books showed his talent for photographing aircraft at Air Open days on the ground and in flight especially the Red Arrows.

Mick’s second book was homage to the HST 125 train in all its various guises. The HST trains, which have been in service for over 40 years, will soon be phased out and replaced with the New Intercity Express Train Class 802. Mick’s extensive knowledge on railways was put to good use in taking the photographs to illustrate this book.

John Evans Jones followed with a humorous book looking at snatched pieces of conversation caught when he passed people on the Camel Trail in Cornwall. His well observed images had speech bubbles added which contained some surreal and very funny comments. The work was originally seen as a digital projected show, which has been developed into a blurb soft back book.

Rod Fry brought two books one called Dreamland, a photo-journal showing places I have visited in 2017 and the other book a photo essay called “We are building a New Utopia.” This book is an essay on the effects of new developments and their impact on the countryside.

Carol Ballenger did not have any work to show as such, but very kindly shared with the group her research notes and photographs on a possible project concerning her late mother and her family home in Spartanburg South Carolina. Her mother was a gifted painter and kept a journal in her studio. Carol read some passages from her late mother’s Journal in which she recorded her early-married life in post war America as a GI bride from Plymouth.

Google Earth provided a fascinating view of modern day Spartanburg, but Carol was able to point out places that she remembered growing up in the States. All agreed that there was scope for a very fascinating project and looked forward to seeing it develop.

Adrian Hough had two sets of photographs to share with the group. One was based on Student Bedsit land in Exeter. The work was in two parts. One concentrated on the plethora of agent’s signs that have invaded the terraced houses blighting the area. The other looked at the abstract nature of the purpose built student halls of residence.

Adrian’s second set of work was taken on trips to the Holy Land, which he organised. His statement of intent was the first verse of “O Little Town of Bethlehem”. The very powerful images were taken from the Palestine side of the Segregation Wall (which was built by the Israelis), included graffiti, local cafes in the style of American diners, watchtowers and a forlorn Christmas tree in the Bethlehem Square, told a very different story. This set of work really needs to be shown to a wider audience, and guidance should be sought if Adrian were to submit this for a Society Distinction.

Muriel Somerfield showed some very abstract close up photographs of rocks at Porthleven and Carbis Bay in West Cornwall. The Devonian dark metamorphic hornfelsed slates and siltstones with calcite intrusions from Porthleven contrasted with the heavily fractured green/brown Devonian mudstones and sandstones found on the north coast around Carbis Bay.

Martin Howse showed the group more photographs from his project, which documents the changes to a boat yard at Gweek. His restrained approach worked well alternating between distant views and close up details. Martin’s traditional black and white photographs made a refreshing change and were much admired.
Martin’s second set of photographs were of artists who use the Passmore Edwards Community Centre in Helston. The centre has long been under the threat of closure and Martin wanted to photograph the artists in their studios before they had to leave. This is a fine body of work and is an adjunct to his long-term project to photograph the artists of West Cornwall, prints that have been archived at Falmouth Art Gallery and were also made into a book.

Vivien Howse showed the group a set of images from Orford Ness and asked the question “Am I getting there?” in her understanding of Contemporary Photography. Well after looking at all her images the answer is a resounding, Yes!

John Evans Jones had also brought with him a set of DPI’s, which centred on Highgate Cemetery in London; he entertained us with his idiosyncratic photographs and dry sense of humour.

Graham Hodgson delighted us with a short sequence in which the adobe Photoshop programme was deconstructed before our eyes. It was a very funny sequence and probably one of the best pieces of work seen on the day.

The meeting closed at 16.20

The date of the next meeting would be on

8th July 2018 at Carnon Downs Village Hall Truro.

What’s On

RPS Contemporary North West Group Exhibition 2018

– Last Chance –
finishes 29th April 2018
Lytham Heritage Centre, 2 Henry Street, Lytham FY8 5LE

Alan Cameron 07825 271344

P is for Print

Patricia Ann Ruddle ARPS

A celebration of printing processes, with a variety from the historical cyanotype and vintage colour photographs to intaglio and relief prints, along with a combination of the different processes to produce new practices.

27th June - 25th July 2018

The Sun Lounge Gallery
City Screen, York, the Riverside Arthouse Cinema
13-17 Coney Street
York YO1 9QL
www.picturehouses.com/cinema/York_Picturehouse
**Immersion:** When your whole presence is submerged; a state of being deeply engaged and absorbed in just one subject, oblivious to anything else.

People can become immersed in all kinds of subjects. Whether those subjects are good, bad, fun or sad is another matter, but it is a fact that a human can from time to time let one thing become an entire focus until becoming totally submerged.

Contemporary art photographer, Alan Organ LRPS, presents 20 such examples at the CET building, 157 Corporation Street, Coventry
Saturday 21 April until Friday 1 June 2018.

The venue is the abandoned Coventry Evening Telegraph Building at 157 Corporation Street Coventry; a huge cavernous place that was once the home to a newspaper employing hundreds of people, which has recently been used as a pop-up arts space. This will be one of the last chances to explore it before developers take over on 15 June. The CET building is open Monday to Saturday 12:00 – 16:00.

Official immersion prints and products can be purchased from redbubble.com
This project is the sole copyright of Alan Organ and may not be produced without permission.

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**Only the Tide of Time**

An exhibition of photographs by Clifford Morris

12 January 2018 to 15 July 2018
National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port
South Pier Road
Ellesmere Port CH65 4FW

Revisit of Clifford Morris’ photography from the turn of the millennium to reflect on the many changes to the landscape that have taken place during the intervening years.

"The canals, being man made, have no tide. The only tide to have intruded is that of time itself. The years of "canal mania", saw industries rushing to use what was, at that time, the most efficient means of transporting goods available. Canals’ critical role in the industrial revolution that swept across Britain offered no futureproofing against the competition from first rail and then road that was to bring an end to their industrial use. These photographs reflect the paradoxes of social and economic change and in so doing interpret our industrial past in the light of times today." Clifford Morris.

The museum is closed on Mondays but opens Tuesday to Sundays, 10.00 till 4.00.
Yan Wang Preston, who you will remember, was a key speaker at the Contemporary Group Conference in Birmingham last year, has contacted us with news of the launch of his first monograph entitled ‘Forest’ which won first prize at the Syngenta Photography Award last year. Yan tells us that the launch is on **10th May at the Photographers’ Gallery in London at 6-8pm.**


Enjoy a few of Yan’s images here: Forest by Yan Wang Preston

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**Deadline for contributions for inclusion in the next Issue is 18th June 2018.**

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

Concept The e-newsletter of the RPS Contemporary Group
Lyn Newton LRPS, Newsletter Editor
Christine Pinnington LRPS, Design and Layout Editor

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**RPS Website** [http://www.rps.org/Home/Special%20Interest%20Groups/Contemporary](http://www.rps.org/Home/Special%20Interest%20Groups/Contemporary)

https://www.facebook.com/groups/rpscontemporary