



THE **RPS**

ROYAL  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY  
GROUP

East Anglia  
Contemporary  
Group

# The colour of memory

October 2025



# About East Anglia Contemporary Group EACG

We are member of the Contemporary Special Interest Group of the RPS who reside in East Anglia. It is a large geographic area covering from the M25 up to the Wash and the western edge of Cambridgeshire,

The participants are small in number and spread all over the region. We meet monthly via Zoom and try to produce bodies of work twice per year that we used to exhibit virtually.

The problem with virtual exhibitions is the quality of image rendition. This zine is an attempt to do justice to the work produced

Contact the group at [contemporaryea@rps.org](mailto:contemporaryea@rps.org)

## 'The colour of memory'

This theme is taken from a quote attributed to an artwork by Valda Bailey exhibited in the Bosham Gallery 2022.

"The world retreats, our lives contract. We look, we listen, we contemplate, we grieve. The world has toppled from its axis and we can no longer find the pieces to complete the puzzle."

Valda Bailey 2020

Cover photographs credit

Front cover:

Jonathan Williams

Back cover:

Paul Ashley ARPS

## Exhibitors

Christopher Cross LRPS	6
Paul Ashley ARPS	14
Keith Locke ARPS	26
Jonathan Williams	32
Tom Owens ARPS	40

The intent of this group is to interpret our set themes without necessarily taking the literal interpretation

As ever, this assignment proved to be somewhat challenging with not all members taking part in interpreting the statement, or indeed finding the reference work catalyse their thoughts..

Bailey is a multi-discipline artist with a background in painting and her work straddles Abstract Expressionism and Surrealism. More can be seen on her site <https://www.valdabailey.com/about> |

The responses to this extract are as diverse as usual for the group.

Tom Owens ARPS

October 2025

Paul Ashley hit upon a theme very early on in this exercise and it is one of those things we take for granted every day as we make our way around our built environments

Jonathan Williams, is challenging notions of colour memory in relation to childhood toys and the use of nurtured memory pitched with that of AI and the vast archive of colours banked in the 'space we call the Web that is employed by algorithms to colourise and 'correct' our memories.

Keith Locke has dug into his archives to select significant events or locations triggered by dominant colours associated with those memories.

Chris Cross has, like Paul Ashley hit on something that is accessible to all of us but possibly unseen by most in the patina of age on graveyard headstones

Tom Owens rummaged through an old cigar box of childhood photographs handed to his wife during a brief period of glasnost by his mother and has used them to trigger certain colours and light that remain significant to him today.

Christopher Cross LRPS







With the passing of time, we think back to when Elizebeth and William were buried, and their headstone was newly placed. Clean stone fresh from the stonemason's yard with their names freshly chiselled into the surface. From the vision and memory of the mourners, bright unblemished stone to honour the dead.

As the years have passed, with the headstone standing proudly with others in the Great Churchyard, nature and the environment have come to bear and leave its mark on the pristine stone. As we look at the stone today, lichen has grown which clings to the stone with mighty force. Bringing colour where previously none existed, with yellow and grey making their presence felt over the passage of time. If anyone was still alive today from that funeral, they would recall the event and picture that gravestone and remark on how nature has coloured their memory into the vision we see today.

I have attempted to show with a selection of images and the panel of 6, that nature with the passage of time has added colour to the memory of the deceased. Some might call it neglect, but this cemetery has been long closed, so there will only be relatives with no living memory of those gone before. A tranquil place giving many photographic opportunities to link the past with the present.

Christopher Cross LRPS

## Paul Ashley ARPS



14



15









## 'The colour of memory - is blue'

A selection of blue plaques around Cambridge put up by Cambridge Past Present and Future.

Paul Ashley ARPS





Colour photographs play a significant role in triggering and preserving memories. The vibrant colours in these images can evoke strong emotional responses and deeper connections to the past.

Colour is intrinsically linked to emotion and experience. When we see a colour photograph, the colours themselves can trigger a cascade of memories associated with that specific event or place, making them a powerful tool for recalling and reliving cherished moments, thereby making the experience feel more real and vivid.

1. Grey Morning at Ipswich Docks.
2. Turquoise colour of Moraine Lake Alberta Canada.
3. Silver colour of excitement collecting new Moto Guzzi Motorcycle 2006.
4. Blue Calm of Downtown Toronto Waterfront.

Keith Locke ARPS.





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Memory is a complicated phenomenon. Our memory of a photograph is reconstituted from partial information from our memory of the original photograph and possibly a memory of being there when the photograph was taken. Our brain then will fill in the missing fragments that we have forgotten about to produce the current memory. We do not have a photographic memory, the camera is accurate, but our brain is not as precise.

In these photographs my aim is to explore how good my memory is in remembering colour compared to letting photoshop do the analysis as well as asking the question what is the true colour of a photograph?

The first photograph is of a toy using out of date slide film produced a slide with a colour cast. The second photograph is of my attempt to correct the colour cast using Photoshop tools, to take the colour as close to the original as I could remember. The third photograph is the photograph corrected automatically by Photoshop using its AI tools. The fourth photograph is taken by a digital camera with the Raw file being processed by DXO software.

This could be viewed as a technical exercise with little practical use, in that Photoshop is better at producing realistic results than trying to do the same thing manually. Colour itself is problematic as the colour seen on screen can be different from a print of the same photograph.

The other photograph I have worked on is a typical black and white photograph that I have applied the colourise filter in Photoshop to produce a colour photograph. I was there in the original so I can testify that as far as I can remember (65 years ago) the colour in the photograph is a fair representation of the original colours.

Jonathan Williams





Memory is a complex thing. In my early career I had to write up contemporaneous notes that might be used in a Court of Law. Each team member had to record what they saw and did and mostly the records differed. Perfectly co-ordinated notes were indicators of collaboration and connivance that could lead to a case being thrown out of Court. Notebooks were one thing, but I also had to use a camera to record suspects and concealments of contraband. Photographs were almost always accepted as unchallengeable evidence. How would that fair today?

Early career aside, my earliest, memories of colour were based on weekend camping/fishing trips especially in early Spring where from the age of 5 or 6 I was mesmerised by light and colour, particularly contre-jour, although I had no idea of that at the time. I did however fixate on the early leaves on Acer Palmatum trees as we trudged up the valley from the campsite to attend church services on a Sunday. That is my first recollection of planted co-ordinates in my head of light, colour and place.

I rummaged through an old cigar box of photographs of me as a child, almost all are monochrome with an odd colour one thrown in. No meta data in those days but the first image is of me an hour old some 70 years ago, followed by a place near Bamber Bridge where my mother scavenged sphagnum moss from the bogs nearby for her hanging baskets. Clearly that would be a capital offence these days!

The rare colour image is either before or after an enforced religious ceremony. Judging by the colour of the tie, it must have been a Jesus theme as we always had to wear blue for the Virgin Mary.

Colour does have a place in memory as does place and some cases locks the two together.

Tom Owens ARPS





For more information about the Contemporary Group of  
the Royal Photographic Society please visit  
<https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/>