

Contemporary Photography



View from the Chair

I would like to add my condolences to the family of Simon Gomery ARPS whose work was shown in the last issue of the Contemporary Group Journal, Spring 2016. I did not know Simon but by all accounts he was a most enthusiastic photographer and an asset to the South West Group.

Ian Maxwell is standing down as organiser of Contemporary North West, and in his place we welcome Alan Cameron LRPS who has been a regular member for the past two years. To Ian we owe gratitude and thanks for his years of support to both the Contemporary Group and the North West Group. His well-considered remarks have been very welcome.

Contemporary Midlands, our sixth Contemporary Group subgroup, organised by David Edge, will hold its inaugural meeting 13 August 2016 at the QUAD Arts Centre in Derby, 13:30-16:30. The meeting will gather views about how people would like the group to develop and also provide an opportunity for discussion of images. Contact details are on the Events page.

Photobooks for the Open International Photobook Exhibition have been coming in from all over the world. We have received a wide variety of hand-made books as well as those from Blurb and Bob Books. Please see the Events page for information about dates and locations of the Exhibitions in October and November.

Best wishes,
Avril

Cover: © Tuba Korhan *Punk Princess* from the series *Surreal*
Journal fonts: general, Avenir Lt Std: author name, Letter Gothic Std

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If you wish to submit articles for the Journal, please send all copy and images on disc to:
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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 on-line large file transfer facilities. Unless requested, discs will not be returned.
DEADLINE for the Autumn 2016 issue 30 September 2016

Contemporary Photography

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

Editorial

Is there a female gaze?

Perhaps nowadays there's no such thing as 'women's photography'. However, this hasn't always been the case. Historically it was more common for women to photograph scenes from everyday life, to make intimate family portraits or stage allegorical scenes, restricted to those domestic avenues open to them. Also, in photography's early days women often helped partners in development and experimentation. But rarely are women credited or mentioned in the traditional canons. And this also includes not only the makers but curators, critics, exhibitors, etc.

Sure, things have changed enormously. But it can't be denied that women photographers have faced (and in some cultures still face) physical, social and economic barriers that male photographers have never experienced. The balance has been redressed somewhat. There are women-only awards, organisations, gallery shows, prizes, for example. However, I do worry though that these may only serve to marginalise women further from what is mainly a male-dominated profession.

At *The Photography Show* in 2015 there was a discussion "Where are all the female photographers?" Reported by *Redeye* for *Look/15*, Jo Slack begins by suggesting this exercise. Try it – it's revealing! Google "women in photography" and you'll note that there are such links as, for example, the 14 female photographers you should know, or information about conferences on the subject. Then Google "men in photography". There is no list of the top male photographers or debates on what is male photography. There follows the experiences and concerns by four contemporary women working in today's photographic climate.

Can subject matter determine the sex of the photographer? Or, can knowing the photographer's gender influence our interpretation of the image and its critical appraisal as well? The fact that we continue to discuss and debate these questions helps to reinforce the perception of female photography as 'other' or subordinate to the mainstream.

Although there is much research and information available now on photography and sexuality, I recommend Naomi Rosenblum's survey on women photographers. Interestingly, she cites Laura Gilpin (1891-1979) who observed that "camera images are either good, bad or mediocre [...] you can't tell the sex of the photographer by the photograph." What do you think?

Patricia Ann Ruddle, Editor

<https://www.redeye.org.uk/opinion/where-are-all-the-female-photographers>
Rosenblum, Naomi. *A History of Women Photographers* (updated and expanded). New York: Abbeville Press, 2000.
(Breaking barriers - an encouraging note: In a recent BBC 2 programme *New Tate Modern: Switched On*. Frances Morris, the first woman Director at the museum, revealed that 50% of the work in the new extension is by female artists.)

Pages from a Story Book

Tuba Korhan

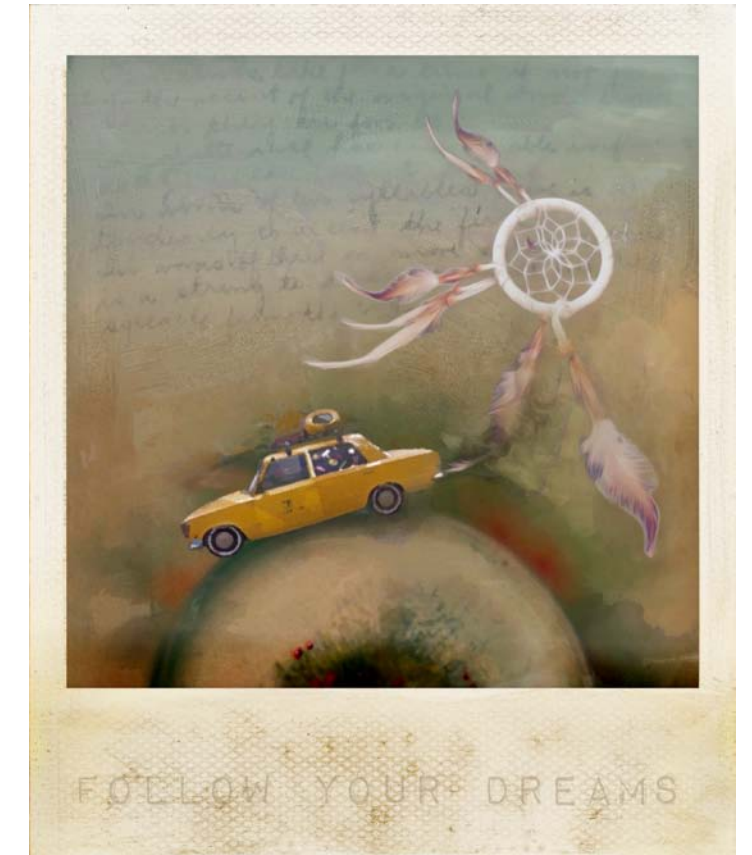
Besides working currently as an interior designer after studying for a Fine Arts degree, I am interested in photography. I like traditional photography but now approach the process and material as the beginning of a journey in order to create images in which I can tell my own story.

My satisfaction comes from using my mobile phone, in exploring the creative possibilities of the iPhone. In summer 2011, I discovered Instagram and then experimented with many other apps, and currently use, for example, Snapseed, Leonardo and the Hipstamatic camera app.

I photograph every image that I like and find interesting. Usually, when editing I am inspired initially by an idea by just looking through my photos, choosing those which would trigger some emotions and thoughts. I try not to plan anything beforehand, preferring to improvise as the process develops. This, I believe, improves my vision.

The first idea usually reminds me of a scene in a movie or a memorable line from a novel. In fact, my interests go beyond design and photography, and I embrace a variety of media, anything from fashion to literature. I am influenced by figurative art as well as pop culture.

By using my emotions and thoughts I try to shape a visual integrity, which may go on its own journey to interact and engage with viewers. Sometimes I put titles which help them understand my point of view, but I am still very much excited by the fact that there are as many different perspectives as there are individuals.



Ed. note. Tuba works in Ankara, Turkey. You can see more of her photographs on the Internet, including interviews and her street photography. I recommend <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tubakorhan> and http://instagram.com/to_be among several others. Also of interest is her *A Digital Approach to Rorschach* which was shortlisted in the Terry O'Neill Photography Awards in 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/gallery/2014/dec/18/shortlisted-entries-for-the-terry-oneill-photography-awards-2014-in-pictures>.



Abduction



The Mighty Cat



Float with me in the world of ether (David Lynch)



Soul of the Home



Here comes the sun (The Beatles)



If you stop you will fall off

Concealed, She's Got a Gun

Shelley Calton

"I don't want to rely on talking an intruder out of killing me or my loved ones", Lee Ann said as she skillfully loaded the magazine into her Beretta.

The women in this collection have chosen to own handguns for protection. The majority of them have been through training to obtain licenses to conceal and carry their guns in public. They are ready to face an attacker, take aim and pull the trigger.

Each woman has her own unique backstory that has motivated her decision to carry a concealed weapon. Some of the women have had incidents in their past, and others have been threatened; they now feel the need to own a handgun for self-defense. Many grew up immersed in the Texas gun culture, and to them, guns are a form of cultural expression deeply embedded in a family tradition passed on from generation to generation. In this respect, I understand the rich history and stories that can accompany these sentimental objects, as well as the sense of security they can provide. I share a common ground with these women. As a child, my family owned shotguns and rifles for sport, and my father kept a handgun in his nightstand. My father taught my sisters and me to shoot at an early age.

The images of these women with their guns can be startling. Guns are typically envisioned in the hands of men, not mothers and grandmothers. Guns are powerful and polarizing. They can both take a life or save a life.

I considered photographing the women and their guns separately but felt that it was imperative to allow them to expose a portion of their identities that is regularly concealed. It was also important to capture how each woman holds her gun, how she relates to it and where she keeps it at home or carries it on her body.

On a very basic level, the women own a handgun for protection, but the bigger question is - why? This question was at the core of my photographic investigation. I found that gun ownership gives women an opportunity to make a bold statement: they refuse to be vulnerable and victimized. They decry the myth of the helpless woman and instead project an ethic of unapologetic self-reliance.

Much of the opposition I faced insists that these women are insecure, careless and paranoid. To that, I would ask - what makes them this way? What kind of society are we living in that in order for a woman to go to bed and feel safe she needs a gun tucked under her mattress? The public has grown accustomed to seeing guns in the hands of soldiers and police officers but are quick to criticize when they are in the hands of a defenseless woman.

Indeed, an ideal world would be free from fear, and no one would need a gun. But in a society in which the overwhelming majority of sexual assault and domestic violence is against women, these images portray women in the rôle of taking self-protection into their own hands.

The gun control debate and issues around it have been raging in the United States for a long time. Continuing tragic events that surround us in the media fuel the conversation. Political views aside, my intention for this project is to give the viewer a glimpse into a subculture of Texas women who will not become victims.

Ed. Note: Shelley Calton is a Texas-based photographer. For more photographs from *Concealed* and her other projects see <http://www.shelleycalton.com>. *Concealed, She's Got a Gun* and her earlier book *Hard Knocks: Rolling with the Derby Girls* are both published by Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg.



My gun serves as my own personal militia of self-protection, perseverance and bad-assery. Sleeping with my Glock under my mattress has afforded me more security than any door lock, alarm system or boyfriend. And my alert dog, Scooby, helps too!
... Casey



Growing up my family participated in Marksman competitions. ... I received my first gun from my grandfather, a Ruger Super Blackhawk, similar to the Dirty Harry gun. ... I keep guns pretty much within reach of me within my apartment. ... A gun is not a boost for my pride nor is it permission to be reckless, and it's an added means of protection ... Katie



I have always worked in 'dangerous businesses'—a used car and repossession business. ... I closed my liquor store because even with the guns it was really too dangerous. ... The guns make me feel safe and in power of my life. ... My sons know not to touch my guns—that they are dangerous. I stress gun safety ... Carrie



The initial reason that I got my CHL was because of all the road trips back and forth from school to Texas with my guns. ... Being from Texas, everyone assumes that we are gun-wielding crazy rednecks, and this allows me the opportunity to show people that while, yes, most of us have guns, we are responsible about it ... Amy

Growing up my family enjoyed shooting. It was a tradition and a way of bonding. ... I own several firearms and carry on my body. ... It's not about fear; it's about being prepared and taking responsibility for yourself. When asked what am I scared of, I smile and say, 'What is there to be scared of when you carry a 38?' ... Alana





*I have my own business and
I often have to travel on the
road with my three children.
Women are easy targets, and
I don't want to find myself in
this position. I want to be able
to protect my family and myself
...Jeniffer*

Seams

Mairi McCormick

Aesthetically, I find the ugliest things the most pleasing, or at least the most interesting. These are photographs of things people don't want to see – the naturally occurring bi-products of what we like to think of existing 'as is', when it takes more than what meets the eye to create it and then we don't acknowledge the aftermath. Things that are the way they are even though they 'shouldn't' be. These are photographs of the end products. They often don't look the way we wish they did.

We have expectations for almost everything around us, including ourselves, to be and look and behave a certain way. These usually take maintenance, intentional effort. Maybe in some way pride is involved, to hide what isn't 'right' before anyone notices. I think we rarely want to publicise the in-between stage that people don't want to publicise. I find that in-between phase often more interesting than the clean end product that's usually seen. I think the story of how something becomes what we expect or want it to be is interesting.

Sometimes the end product is not what we want it to be. Sometimes we don't want the end product to be the end product at all. We want it to be the hushed and hidden phase, the process, in hopes that at some point that thing (whatever it is) will be what we envisioned. Perhaps the different stages in the development of the final product are, in and of themselves, final stages.

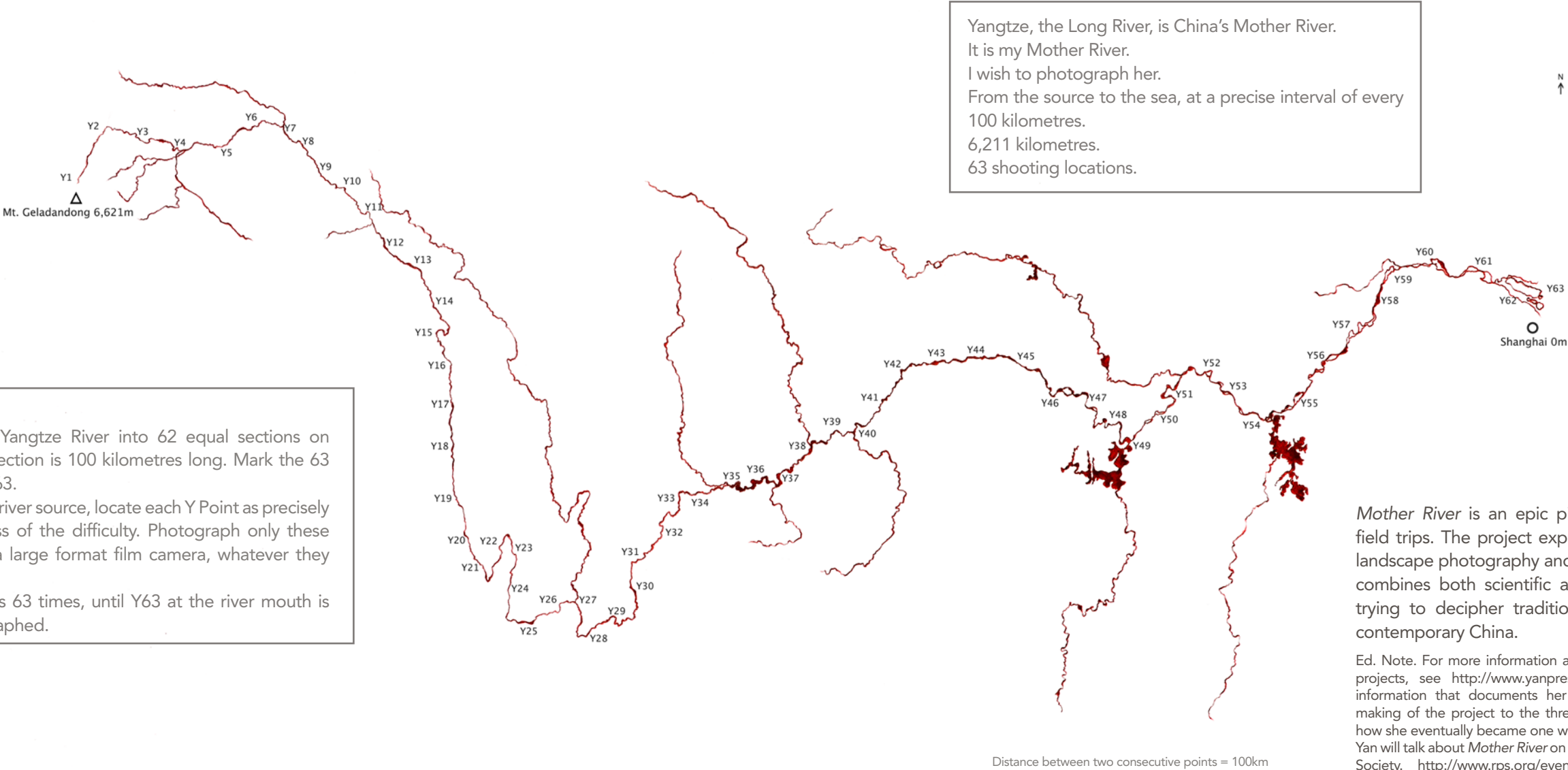
My objective was to explore the unwanted bits of everyday life that are brushed aside as 'unnecessary', and labelled 'inappropriate'. Maybe because under the surface, something isn't clean or pretty. The mattress stained. Each time I remove my sheets to wash them, the stain beckons some sort of confrontation. The stain was there before I slept in the bed. I don't know what it's from but it's there. Somehow I find it welcoming. It stays there even after I put sheets on again. It's consistent. It's an end product that was a mistake... But it's there. Nothing is seamless if you look closely.

Ed. Note: Mairi recently completed an internship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. This September she begins a degree at Falmouth University's Institute of Photography. Website: mairimccormick.com. On Facebook: Mairi McCormick Photography



Mother River – A Photography Journey down the Yangtze (2010-2014)

Yan Wang Preston



© Yan Wang Preston

Mother River is an epic pilgrimage made during nine field trips. The project explored issues about mapping, landscape photography and myths - a methodology that combines both scientific and pictorial strategies while trying to decipher traditional Chinese myths within a contemporary China.

Ed. Note. For more information about *Mother River*, and Yan's other projects, see <http://www.yanpreston.com/>. There is a wealth of information that documents her modern day adventure from the making of the project to the three engrossing videos that illuminate how she eventually became one with the river. Yan will talk about *Mother River* on 29 October 2016 at the York Medical Society. <http://www.rps.org/events/2016/october/29/a-photography-journey-along-the-yangtze>

Y2 100km from the river source
16 November 2011



Y11 1,000km from the river source
9 March 2013



Y8 700km from the river source
11 November 2013



Y25 2,400km from the river source
5 June 2013



Y32 3,000km from the river source
16 June 2013



Y54 5,300km from the river source
24 November 2013



Y38 3,700km from the river source
15 March 2011



Y61 6,000km from the river source
19 November 2014



Kintsugi

Francesca Cervasi
ARPS

Kintsugi is a very special Japanese technique of restoration that, rather than hiding the lines of an object's break with perfect sticking and coverage, does entirely the opposite. Kintsugi marks those lines with unique reparation made with gold and silver, thus highlighting the jagged lines of the break. This transformation turns the old object into a new work, enriching the old unaltered shape with a bright scar.

Gold instead of glue, metal instead of adhesive transparent substances. The difference is all in that choice: is it better to hide the loss or celebrate the story of survival?



Western countries have a difficult time blending in with the cracks. Kintsugi is not only a metaphor of reconstruction or appreciation of experience, as well as a metaphor of positive change, but is also a metaphor of the articulation of the parts with the whole: creative transformation of life starting from the loss of fragments that cannot be replaced. Positive reception of such transformations gives birth to an identity that is continuous and ever-changing.

<http://www.francescacervasi.com/>

Member of the Italian Chapter of the
RPS (CIRPS)

Give a Man a Mask and He Will Tell You the Truth

Magda Rakita

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth ...Oscar Wilde

As a photographer who has worked in Liberia on several occasions, I was keen to return to this West African country in the aftermath of the Ebola epidemic. While the world's media attention shifted away from Liberia post-Ebola, I was curious to see how the stories I had previously told, as well as other Liberians, were coping with yet another difficult experience.

The media silence suggests that people move on, and yet many are still struggling with the aftermath of the recent epidemic. While the rise in other diseases, like measles, as a result of the focus on Ebola is well-documented, few are aware of such other consequences as an increase in cases of child abuse or child prostitution, as orphans make easy targets.

As times passed, I grew increasingly frustrated with the apparent dissonance between the stories I was told and the images of life seemingly returning to normal. How do you photograph internal struggle and psychological turmoil?

This frustration led to cooperation with a grass-roots organization called *B4 Youth Theatre*. It employs art as therapy in the process of empowering youth, and to help them deal with difficult experiences. These young people create songs and plays that address such issues as sexual abuse, as orphans, as students caught up in a 'sex for grades' trap, and as children growing up with the stigma associated with Ebola.

In their plays, children use specially designed masks that portray basic human emotions, like joy, sorrow, fear, anger, awe, disgust, shame, ambivalence and pride. These masks allow actors to express strongly felt emotions associated with hurtful or painful experiences without exposing the 'self', and to work towards healing and closure.

I decided to photograph some of these young amateur actors in real world settings but 'protected' by their masks: in streets in towns where they live or even in their own back yards so as to connect their emotions to real places rather than a fictional stage. Some of the images are accompanied by quotes from those young people about motives behind choosing a particular mask and emotion.

Ed. Note. Magda is a documentary photographer based in Cambridge. She works with the media and NGOs worldwide. See <http://www.magdarakita.com> for more of her work, including several multimedia projects.

J.Lee

I chose anger mask because I sometimes get angry and I want to see myself when I am angry. The mask helps me to be brave when I am acting.



Nelson

My favourite mask is the fear mask. It is my favourite because fear is part of my life every day. These are some of the things that I fear: I am afraid when I am not helpful to someone who is in need. I am afraid when I am not doing the right thing. I am afraid of hurting someone who does me no wrong. I FEAR GOD!



Fear



Surprise



Mary

- Why did you choose fear mask?
- Because I am often afraid.
- What are you afraid of?
- That somebody will grab me when I walk around.

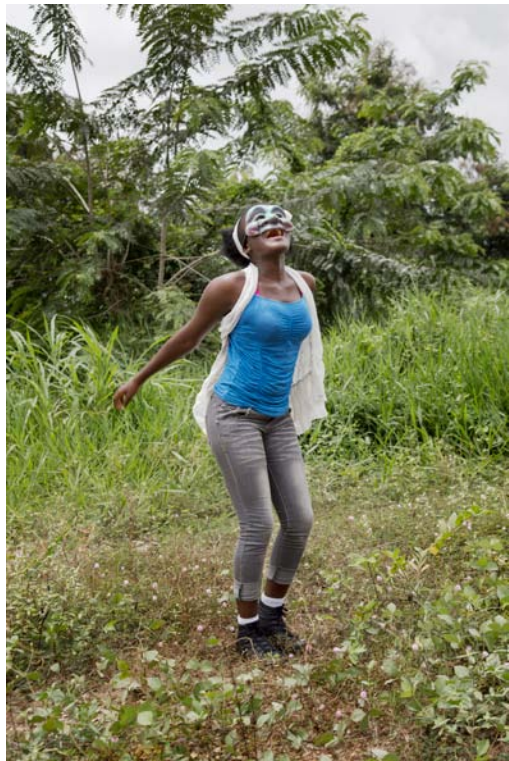


Disgust



Dorcos

- Why did you choose mask of sorrow?
- Because I feel sad... because people say bad words to me.
- What do they say?
- That I don't have parents.



Joy



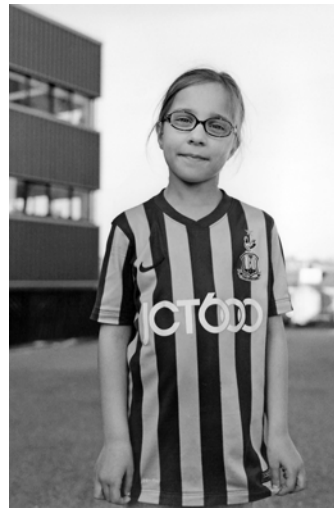
Sorrow



Surprise

City Girls

Nudrat Afza



A couple of years ago my daughter Khadijah was invited to go to a Bradford City football match. I had to accompany her as her full-time carer because she has a life-threatening illness and learning difficulties. So I went to my first game.

Immediately I was caught up in the atmosphere. Like a magnet I was drawn in to a sea of amber and claret colours, by the chants that sounded like hymns.

Rôles reversed, my daughter led me by the hand to our seats in the terraces.

I expected to see only men but there were all these fantastic, committed women cheering for the team. They were involved in the action as much as the men. It was during this time that the idea of taking photographs developed. I decided that I wanted to capture the beauty of the female football fans, their enthusiasm and passion.

Originally, I started off by taking pictures outside the ground. Then Bradford City Football Club gave me a press pass to take photos inside during the home matches. Now I'm a fan and proud season ticket holder.

Ed. Note: Text is from an interview in *The Bradford Review* by Haigh Simpson, Issue Nine, November 2015. For more information about *City Girls* see the online magazine *Jaquo*: <http://jaquo.com/city-girls/>. There is a profile of Nudrat on the website *Not Just Hockney*: <http://www.notjusthockney.info/category/artists/> Nudrat is a Bradford-based photographer whose *City Girls* is available as a 2016 calendar. But the project is still ongoing. For more information email nudratafza@live.co.uk.





Photography Visionaries – Mary Warner Marien

Book Review by Christine Pinnington LRPS

This book is a comprehensive text covering the lives, careers and works of 75 creative image-makers who draw their inspiration from all forms of art. They cross all the genres but are united in their inspiration and vision. Some are creative; some follow culture; some are or have been influenced by change and historical events.

The book is a large-size paperback (8" x 11") and the reproduction is excellent quality. Each photographer has a chapter detailing their life and work. This includes several examples of their photography, and not always the obvious choices. Alongside this is a timeline taking you through achievements and successes.

For example, with Hannah Höch (1889 – 1978) the book writes about her involvement in the invention of photomontage and how her work was over-shadowed by Raul Hausmann with whom she had a relationship. The book describes the complexities of her montages, which used fragments and mismatched pieces and often clipped images of well-known figures to add poignancy. We learn about Höch's feminism, describing her famous work *Cut*



with a Kitchen Knife, which “embeds women’s achievements in a network of contradictions”. It discusses the fact that many component parts of her work are often disproportionate (leading to difficulty in summing up her work) and how her later work used fewer items. The timeline charts her progress and retrospective exhibitions. The piece is accompanied by full-page colour images, *Tamer and*

Abduction (from her *Ethnographic Museum* series).

I am a frequent visitor to my local library and having renewed this book several times I decided I had to buy it! It is an excellent reference book, certainly one I would recommend to have on your bookshelf.

Publisher: Lawrence King, 2015.
ISBN 978-1-78067-475-9

GROUP AND RELATED SOCIETY EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 13 August | Contemporary Midlands kick-off meeting at the QUAD Arts Centre in Derby 1:30-4:30. The meeting will gather views about how people would like the group to develop and also provide an opportunity for discussion of images, so please bring prints. Contact David Edge davidjedge@me.com tel. 07947 849643 |
| 17 September | Contemporary North East meeting at Central Buildings 2-5pm, 13 Bull Ring, Third Floor, Suite 4, Wakefield, WF1 1HB. Contact Patricia A Ruddle ARPS patriciaruddle@btinternet.com tel. 01904 783850. |
| 21 September | Conceptual and Contemporary Distinction Assessments for ARPS and FRPS. Fenton House, Bath. Applicants and observers may attend the Associateship assessments. ARPS enquiries arps@rps.org FRPS enquiries frps@rps.org |
| 26 September | Contemporary North West meeting at Days Inn, Charnock Richard Services on the M6 between Junctions 27 and 28, 7-10pm. Contact Alan Cameron LRPS alan.cameron@me.com tel. 07825 271344 |
| 2 October | Contemporary South West meeting in Devon, venue to be confirmed. Contact Rod Fry rod@rod Fry.eclipse.co.uk tel 01803 844721 |
| 18-23 October | RPS International Photobook Exhibition and associated print exhibition. Espacio Gallery, 159 Bethnal Green Road, London E2 7DG. Opening times 1-7pm daily, 1-5pm Sunday. |
| 23 October | Contemporary Scotland meeting at Edinburgh Photographic Society 1-4pm. Contact David Fells davidfells111@gmail.com tel. 07563756137 |
| 29-30 October | RPS International Photobook Exhibition. St Saviours Hall, Barbican, Plymouth PL1 2NN. Held in conjunction with Fotonow, Plymouth. Details to be announced. |
| 12 November | RPS International Photobook Exhibition. Impressions Gallery, Centenary Square, Bradford BD1 1SD. 10.30am-4.30pm. |
| Dates not fixed | Contemporary East Anglia meetings. These will be in the Ipswich and Cambridge areas when arranged. The project underway is the The Ipswich Waterfront Development. Contact Peter Ellis wordsnpsltd@gmail.com |

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At a young age we would use the colored Easter eggs that we had decorated for target practice. ... I have three handguns, a shotgun and a rifle that I claim as mine ... Megan

© Shelley Calton, from the series *Concealed, She's Got a Gun*. 2011-2014