



THE RPS
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

**CONTEMPORARY
GROUP**

Contemporary North Members' Showcase

Issue 9

November 23

Contemporary North

(Part of the RPS Contemporary Group)

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.

18th November 2023 —Meeting in person at Clements Hall, York

Chaired by Patricia Ruddle

Contributors:

- 1) Wendy North
- 2) Barbara Pollard
- 3) Dave Couldwell
- 4) Donata Rogozik
- 5) Janet Cook
- 6) David Leighton



Wendy NorthPrint Making in Portugal

I was asked by Patricia to talk a bit about my Printmaking in Portugal holiday in October 2023. I would like to share the ideas that have arisen for me as a result of taking part in this holiday.



Towards the end of 2022 I saw a link to Lucy Gell's printmaking workshop in Portugal and I thought of the warmth and chance to visit a country I'd never been to before and the opportunity to get involved with printmaking again. So, I booked. Printmaking had come to a halt for me when I lost my partner, as had travelling abroad. I felt this holiday would give me the opportunity to do both and it did. I met a lovely group of people; Lucy was fantastic, and I was so pleased I went.

I began printmaking as I moved into retirement but was also increasingly involved in camera club photography, so I spent several years developing my skills and using both the mediums of printmaking and photography, but rarely together. I was always interested in the more `creative` ways of using photography and when I say `creative` I`m not talking about creating `cos-play` scenarios digitally but much more about using photography as my artistic medium. This was photography that I found sat more easily within the RPS environment than it did in the camera club and the RPS Contemporary North group was where I found inspiration and support.



So what was my big question before I set off on my journey?

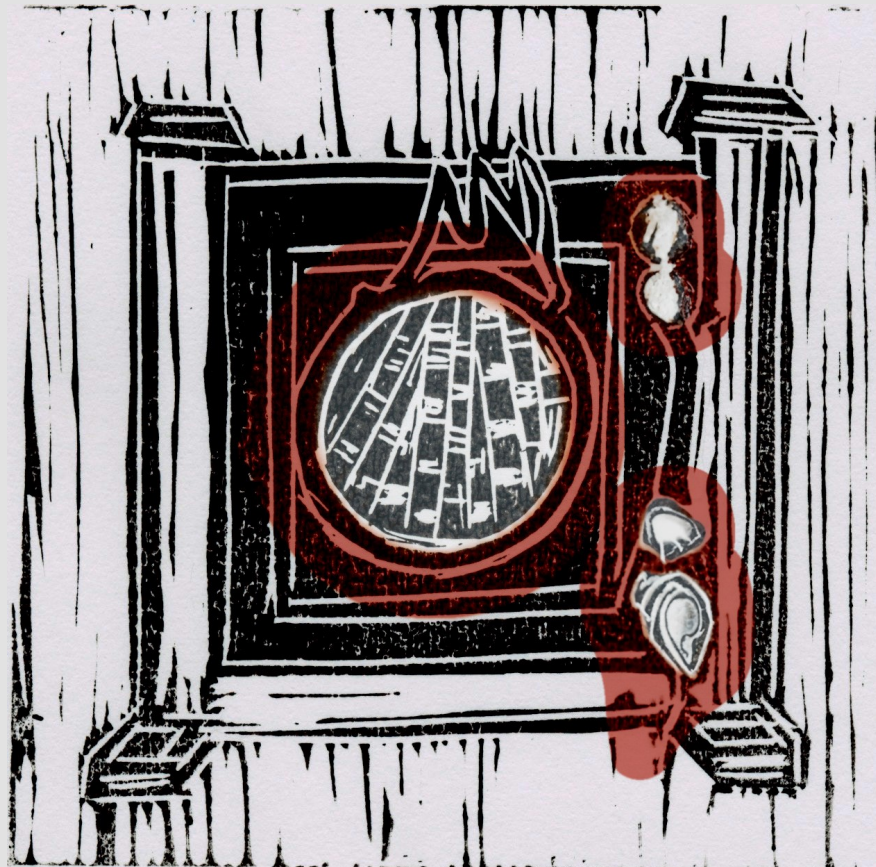
Would the holiday re-kindle my interest in printmaking or was it time to sell my press and accept that I wasn't going to use it to create images in the future?



Lucy had decided on an 'introduction to printmaking' approach which was absolutely right for most of the group who hadn't done any, or much printmaking before. However, this did mean that we really were engaged more with techniques rather than developing our thinking and ideas. This was the approach that most people wanted and I was perfectly happy to go along this route as it got me making prints again and I think more importantly it got me drawing because I hadn't got the where-with-all to do it on the computer. Drawing produces a much more personalised interpretation of a subject than does the computer manipulated photograph and I can see this in my drawings and prints of the puffins (Tetrapak prints) and of the lino-cut 'Gong' that summoned us to meals. It's the thinking and developing of these two ideas that I want to elaborate on here.

Re-imagining the Oriental Gong that summoned us for meals.

I explored this idea very early in the week, possibly on our first afternoon and I then finally used the image for our last print activity which was a lino-cut. Wandering around the site with my camera I came across the table with the chequer board (drafts/chess) pattern printed on the surface and I used in-camera multiple exposure techniques to create the overlapping images using my phone and the app PhotoSplit. I followed this up with a drawing of the oriental gong where I replaced the plain centre with the crossed square design. I probably would have done this digitally if I'd been at home, which wouldn't have given me the individual image I produced via drawing. At the end of the week it seemed an obvious choice to turn the drawing into a lino-print because it had such a strong graphic pattern. So a mix of photography and observational drawing enabled me to create the final image.



Tetra-pak Puffins

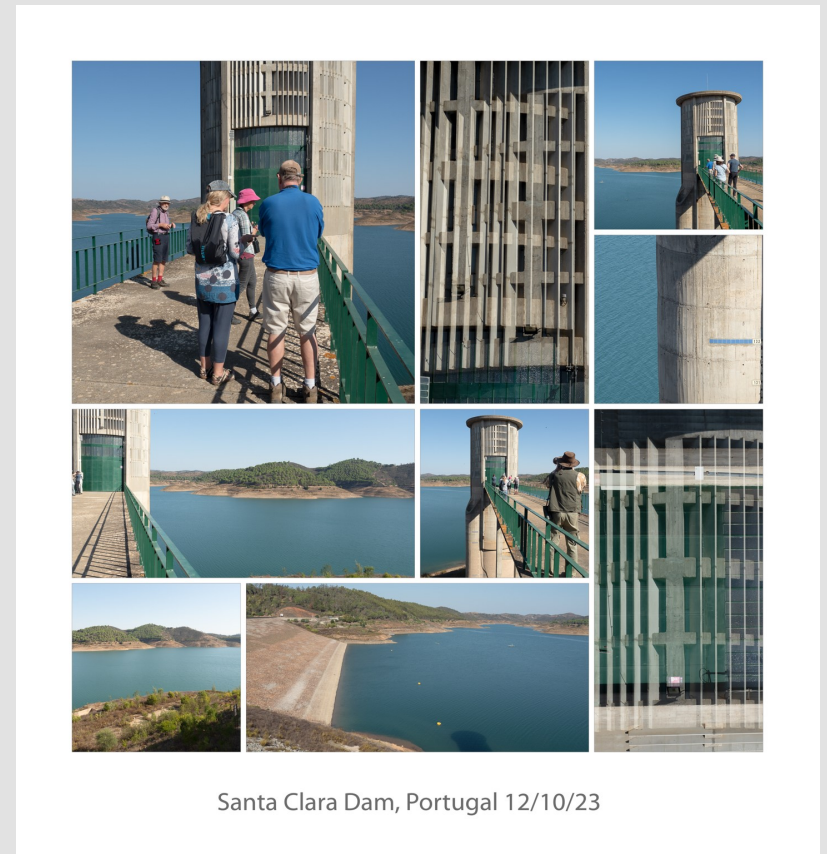
I've never done this kind of print before, and following Lucy's demo I knew that the images had to be big and bold in order to create the contrast of blacks and white that are a feature of this kind of printing – particularly if you are using black printing ink, which we were. I decided that birds might be my subject and puffins seemed an obvious choice. I had some images of puffins taken in Shetland accessible on my iPad, so initially I chose one of these by making drawings from the photograph. As I was ahead of the game and had my tetra-pak plate ready for printing, Lucy suggested I create another one so I ended up with a puffin pair. My intention is to paint in the orange beaks and legs but I haven't got there yet. So here again a mix of photographic source material and drawing enabled me to create this image.





So where was I most in my comfort zone?

Interestingly, for me, it happened when I had a pencil in my hand and was drawing, but it also definitely happened when I had my camera in hand and could lose myself in the moment as I looked through the view finder. The highlight for me was our Thursday morning bird watching walk around some local countryside, particularly when I was gripped by the beauty of the rim light on the dead vegetation and I managed to lose the group briefly. (Kate came back to look for me.)





Quinta do Barranco do Estrada, Santa Clara a Velha

So in answering my earlier question

Will I sell my press - I think not at the moment as my experience of printmaking during the holiday rekindled some of the pleasures (and frustrations) I have in relation to printmaking but working photographically is probably going to continue as my main passion.



Santa Clara a Velha, Portugal

Barbara Pollard Blessings

Just before the Covid pandemic, I started a new documentary project about the Vicar at our village church of St Stephen's – Rev Shelagh Stacey. I had intended it to be produced as a photographic book about her life as a priest, wife and mother. Unfortunately, Covid put an untimely end to that idea. Instead, I followed Shelagh during her continuing ministry through the lockdown. As most of the colour went from our daily lives, it seemed more appropriate to process them in black and white. Here is a small selection of the images.













Dave Couldwell

I enjoyed the afternoon with the R\$PS Contemporary North group in York. As it was my first visit, I didn't know what to expect but found everyone very friendly.

I took a few prints to show, and had a lot of positive feedback from everyone.

I have chosen three images to show here:

- A black and white image from Doncaster station
- A panorama of Goole Dock
- A panorama of Claymills Victorian Pumping Station beams





Goole dock panoramic

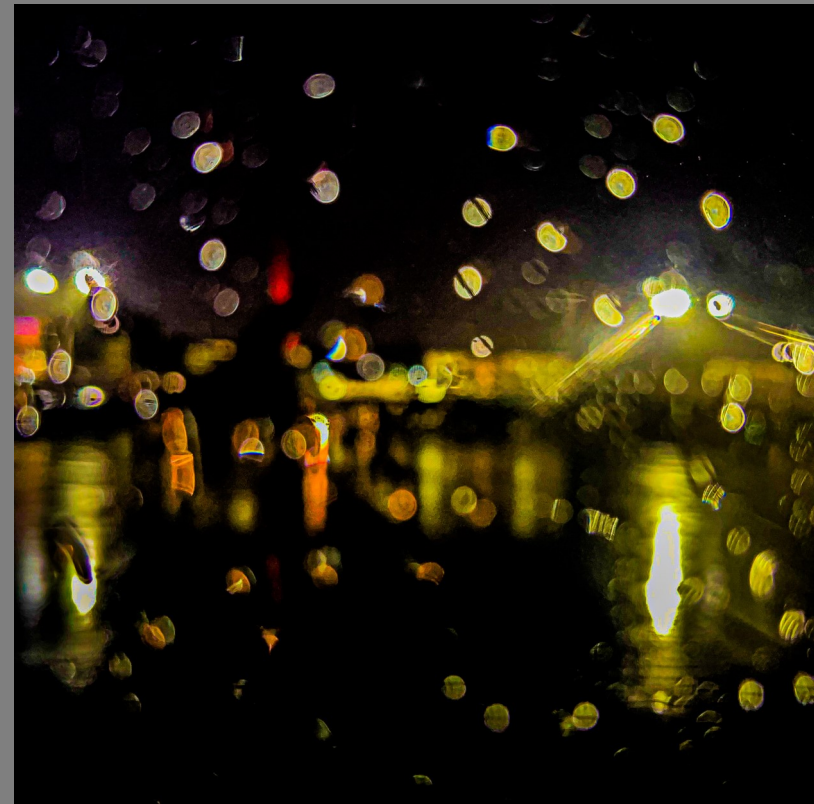


Claymills beams panoramic

Donata Rogozik

After my rediscovery of Saul Leiter, I decided to take some photos through the windows of planes or trains and include glass elements of railway stations or airports in my photographs.

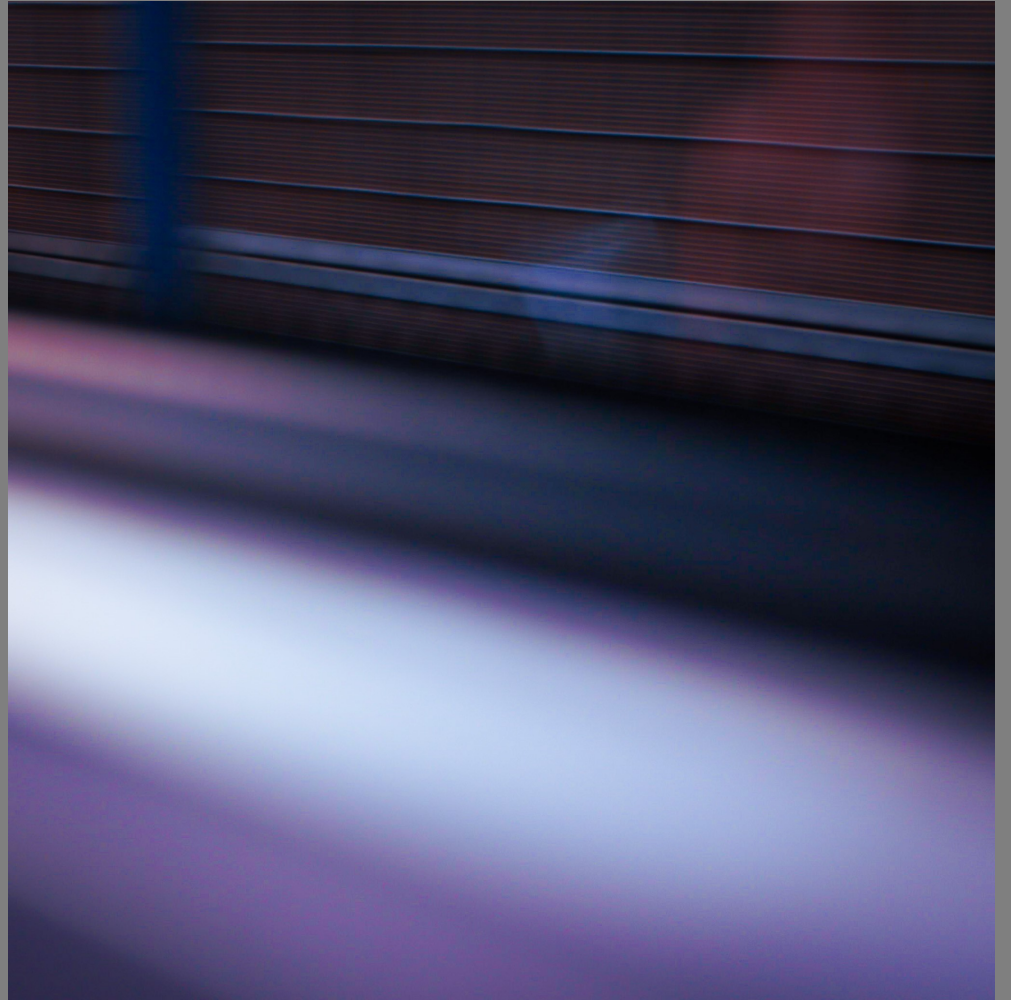
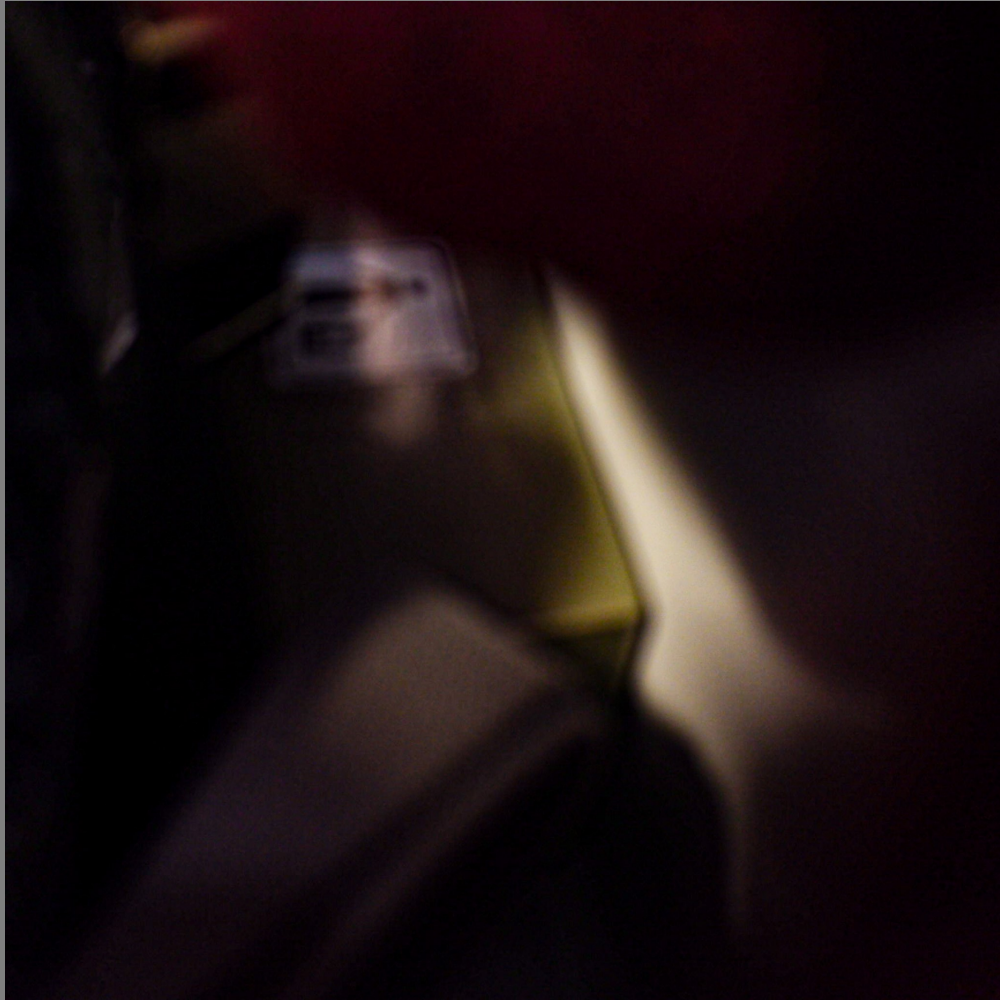
I played with all available sources of lights.



Recently I have been reading *Instant Stories* by Wim Wenders and I consider these photos to be the 'polaroids' describing my photographic trip through October.











Janet Cook

Over the years I have taken photographs of interesting people as I saw them and 'captured' a moment on camera. Only recently while wandering around with my camera, including in South Africa, has my awareness become 'how do they themselves want to be seen'. I have begun a project exploring this issue which is still in the earliest stages and these are a few of my initial considered images.

My photo



Tamali's choice



Tamali is a domestic help at a house where we stayed on The Western Cape.

She wanted me to take her photo after she had changed into her own clothes which was naturally expected.



Stoffel is a parking assistant in Gordon's Bay.

We chatted for a while. I asked him if I could take a photograph of him. There followed a discussion as to why, what would you do with it etc and an explanation that others had asked, he had allowed this then a couple of days later they had brought prints to try to sell to him!! He was, of course, extremely offended!

We talked and after some time he let me take a classic pose. He then said, 'This is how I would greet you as a Rastafarian'.

The hands spread like the claws of a lion. The Lion of Judah is one of the most important Rastafarian symbols representing Haile Selassie The Conquering Lion of Judah.

I met Astrid in Melbourne. She was the young manageress of a designer clothes boutique. There were very few clients so we had time to talk and to listen and became friends over a few days.

She described how the wealthy women would come, try on beautiful clothes in a dressing room surrounded by mirrors, pose, have photographs taken while she wistfully watched and wished.

We arranged that I would go over the following morning and we would have a modelling session when she could try on anything at all and I would take photographs of her.

She was very shy but loved this photograph on the right.



I met the next young lady at a race meeting outside Cape Town. I noticed that she had apparently posed for the local reporter and just took a snap as she was walking towards me.

After chatting for a while, I asked her what she would want her photo to look like if she had a choice and the second photograph was the result.



This is only the initial thinking around 'It's not about how I want to capture my subject but how they want to be represented or seen'. My intention is to continue with this philosophy and see what happens.

I will be having an extended stay over the winter in South Africa which I hope will offer me more opportunities to continue my project but also look forward to pursuing it when I come home in the spring.

David Leighton

.....Queen for a Day

In 2022 all the children of Skipton C of E Primary School studied the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and the Platinum Jubilee arrangements to come later in the year. At the end of each term the whole school go to the Parish Church for a service. As it was a special year it was decided that the children would re-enact the Coronation of May 1953.





We were extremely surprised that our granddaughter Ada, at only seven and a half, would play the part of the Queen. The staff of the school made costumes for the children taking part in the ceremony as well as the crown and regalia for the Coronation ceremony. Unfortunately a horse and carriage could not be found but the dray from Thwaites Brewery and two shire horses were pressed into service for the State Coach. These photographs are a small selection from the day which I am planning to make into a photo book.







