

Royal Photographic Society Announces Ground-Breaking New Exhibition Exploring Neo-Pictorialism

Squaring the Circles of Confusion Neo-Pictorialism in the 21st Century, is the latest exhibition to be showcased at the Royal Photographic Society's (RPS) Bristol-based gallery and takes its inspiration from Pictorialism.

This high-profile exhibition, featuring new and previously unseen work in the UK, will show how photography has evolved as an artform, combining historical influences with today's technology and approaches to photography.

Pictorialism became a dominant artform from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century as photography became recognised as an art beyond the mediums of science and documentary.

The exhibition, which runs from 10 April to 21 June, has been curated by Zelda Cheatle, curator, editor and lecturer in photography who has worked with many internationally renowned photographers.

Commenting on the show Zelda says: "The artists in this show use the making of the print as an expressive part of their work, which examines many contemporary issues including mental health, sustainability, world culture and the environment.

"The original aim of pictorialism was to create an emotional or spiritual quality, evoke a feeling in the viewer, and this exhibition shows that neo-pictorialism enables everyone to discover and see something new, perhaps eliciting an emotional response. No prior knowledge of photography is required, but hopefully it will awaken an interest in the early practices applied to new work."

The eight-week showcase will feature works from the following artists:

Spencer Rowell works with psychoanalysis and photography. These works are stereographs, a reference to the Black Shuck of Norfolk, the ability to see and not see, to record a fact or not, how we interpret what we see, is the reason he has used the stereograph.

Joy Gregory's work raises awareness of the many uncharted parts of black history as she is inspired by her British Jamaican heritage in her personal selection of imagery for this show. Working with salt prints, gum bichromate and cyanotype, the process of making is integral to the work.

David George creates traditional bucolic romantic landscapes but on closer inspection reveal how man is affecting the land and therein the damage to the environment. Mostly photographing in England, frequently at night. He has made photogravures for this exhibition.

Susan Derges works directly from nature through her use of cameraless imagery. In this exhibition she has recorded tide pools, which are almost devoid of life. These are beautiful camera-less images made direct onto sensitised paper.

Takashi Arai creates an installation of contemporary daguerreotype portraits of teenagers. In this show, 17 teenagers daguerreotypes are shown with accompanying audio chronicling how they feel about being a teenager and living on a nuclear site.

Céline Bodin's work is all digitally created but to look at her images they would appear to be akin to Victorian paintings, as she uses photography to replicate a very traditional art form, blurring the boundaries between art and photography.

Ian Phillips McLaren exhibits 16 images entitled 'Gwen' in the form of a grid which come together to create a portrait of his mother-in-law who is suffering from Alzheimers. The gum bichromate layer upon layer are a metaphorical connection to the layers of the brain.

Tom Hunter is best known for reimagining classical paintings. The exhibition will show 'The Death of Cotelli 2009' and three '*Prayer Place*'s made by a pinhole camera, with the image transferred directly on to large format colour transparency film.

Dr Michael Pritchard, Director, Education and Public Affairs for the Royal Photographic Society says: "This is an important show for us here at the RPS, highlighting that much contemporary photography remains influenced by the medium's history whether that is aesthetic or by process, allowing artists to produce exciting and thoughtful work.

"Zelda has done a superb job in curating a fascinating set of photography which everyone who visits will be able to find something meaningful and personal in it for them."

For more information visit: rps.org/circles

The exhibition is free to attend and will be open every Thursday to Sunday from 10.00am to 5.00pm at The Royal Photographic Society, RPS House, 337 Paintworks, Arnos Vale, Bristol, BS4 3AR.

Ends

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About the Royal Photographic Society:

The Royal Photographic Society is a registered charity No.1107831 which exists to educate members of the public by increasing their knowledge and understanding of photography and in doing so to promote the highest standards of achievement in photography in order to encourage public appreciation of photography. The RPS has a membership of over 11,000 internationally. Membership is open to all, irrespective of experience or knowledge. No qualifications are required to join, simply a passion and love for photography or images, its technologies or applications.