



# Contemporary Photography

	<b>Editorial</b> Paul Ashley ARPS	<b>34</b>	<b>Cholitas Bravas</b> Celia D Luna
<b>2</b>	<b>They Came From The Water While The World Watched</b> Giya Makondo-Wills	<b>43</b>	<b>Katalog – Barbara Iweins</b> Book Review by Paul Ashley ARPS
<b>10</b>	<b>Outforest</b> Terence Lane FRPS	<b>44</b>	<b>View from a Graphic Designer</b> Christine Pinnington LRPS
<b>18</b>	<b>A Cumbrian Community</b> Tim Hancock ARPS	<b>45</b>	<b>Listing of Group Officers, Committee members and rôles</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>The Crimson Thread</b> Erin Lee		

© The copyright of photographs and text in this issue belongs to the author of the article of which they form part, unless otherwise indicated.

If you wish to submit articles for the Journal, please send all copy and images to:

Paul Ashley (Editor),  
59 Gilbert Road, Cambridge CB4 3NZ

paultheashley@gmail.com

Text should be in Microsoft Word. Images are preferred in TIFF format, although high quality JPEGs are also acceptable. Images should be at least 2500 pixels on the longest edge. For other formats or to discuss reproduction, please contact the Editor. Large image files may be supplied on disk or memory stick, or by use of on-line file transfer services, such as WeTransfer or Dropbox. Unless requested, disks and memory sticks will not be returned.

Deadline for the Winter 2022 issue is 1 December 2022.

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

# Editorial

The notion of *identity* is important to us. We want to know who we are, where we fit in, and who else is like us. The death of Queen Elizabeth and the funeral ceremonies and the media reporting that followed reflected that wish. They identified a nation with a common heritage, and a common understanding of it. That, at least, is what we would like to think.

Another way of looking at it is that the mourning period served to create an identity, rather than express an identity. I consider myself as English as they come, but I am 1/8 Scottish; two of my grandsons are 1/4 Irish, 1/4 French, 1/4 Portuguese, 7/32 English and 1/32 Scottish. In Britain there have been people with different skin colours, different languages and different religions for many centuries. We are a dynamic mixture of people, and our identity is just a momentary stability among us and those we know.

It was the work of Giya Makondo-Wills that prompted some of these thoughts. She reflects on what she calls the “complex interplay” between Christianity and Ancestral Religion in South Africa as seen in her own family (my own grandfather was a missionary in South Africa in the early 20th century). From a different colonial perspective, Erin Lee looks at how the historical narrative about identity in Australia has been dominated by one viewpoint, which we now (I hope) recognize as being only partial. Celia Luna, like Makondo-Wills, has documented an (enjoyable) encounter and blend between two cultures: indigenous women of Bolivia and imported sports activities, such as skateboarding and rock climbing.

Tim Hancock found a bastion of a very particular identity: Millom, the oldest amateur Rugby League club in the world. Fallen on economic hard times, the community turned out in full to watch the encounter with the very distant team, fans and flag of Red Star Belgrade.

Peter Terence Land's images show no people, no culture, no identity as such. But his depiction of an ancient forest environment surviving as fragments in a modern peri-urban landscape bring home to us how elements of our own cultural history are disrupted, fragmented and broken, but then reformed into something different – what we actually are, for the moment, today.

Paul Ashley ARPS, Editor

**Cover Image:** *Cholitas - Skater* © Celia D Luna

**Back Cover Image:** *The Crimson Thread* © Erin Lee

Journal fonts: general, Avenir Lt Std: author name, Letter Gothic Std

# They Came From The Water While The World Watched

*Giya Makondo-Wills*

This work depicts indigenous South African Ancestral belief and Christianity, in relation to missionary activity and the colonisation of the country, addressing the long-term repercussions of the 19th century European colonial agenda. It discusses the attempted dismantling of Ancestral religion and its replacement with Christianity whilst considering documentary photography and the western gaze, exploring the sanctity of keeping traditional beliefs alive and the adaptation to the world we know today.

The complex interplay between Christianity and Ancestral religion is manifest within my own family, where it is common practice to call on God and The Gods. Being both British and South African, I address the clash of beliefs from the point of view of the coloniser and the colonised. Embodying a dual perspective and with an exploratory approach, I highlight the symbiotic relationship between cultural elements and the resilience of pre-colonial customs as they adopt a modern guise. The title *They Came From The Water While The World Watched* refers to the initial European migration and colonisation of South Africa and the western world's indifference to the act.

I began this work whilst studying for my BA and MA in documentary photography at the University of South Wales, as my first long term project. In hindsight, I now see it as a 'coming of age' work for myself. Not only was it my first opportunity to discover my visual language, but, more importantly, how I wanted to go about making work. I learnt how to listen, follow leads, collaborate and most importantly, understand that I do not have complete control.

To make this work I travelled around South Africa by bus, visiting family members and friends. I spent long hours travelling by coach, sitting and waiting and thinking, and less time making images than I expected. I imagined images and sketched them out, waiting for the moment for them to materialize. It taught me to not hunt for the photo, but to observe closely enough that it would eventually come to me. I was also grateful to many researchers along the way, notably at the special collections at the University of Johannesburg, the University of Pretoria, and the British Empire Collection in Bristol. These archivists helped me uncover and understand the scale in which primarily British and Dutch missionaries operated during the colonial period in South Africa.

But the most important contribution to this work was from those who allowed me their time. The pastors, priests, Sangomas (traditional healers), aunties, uncles, business owners, family and friends who lent me their time to discuss such a vast and complex topic, which also allowed me to understand a little bit more about myself.

See: [www.giyamakondo-wills.com](http://www.giyamakondo-wills.com)



*Sangomas Necklace from Bristol Museum. This item was sold to Bristol Museum in 1898 by a missionary called Sister Christian. Items like this that relate to ancestral practice were taken back to Britain from South Africa as proof of 'barbaric practices' and toured around the country to raise funds for the colonial agenda.*



*Holy Crusade*





*Post baptism*



Mr Chauke





*Baptism*



*Prophet Solomon*



# Outforest

*Terence Lane FRPS*

the old forest boundary for hundreds of years and the lookout keeping guard can you see and the fence but further down another stalwart field marker is surrounded by dancing saplings and it is clear we have complex problems and this is all for show we need to live somewhere the fields are no good but the forest is inviting so let's root them out and make a clearing and live there and our houses can have a motif on the gable like a tree high that will do but now the cracks appear and I see a new tree with other new grey ones behind with branches each that whirl in the wind and they make some light work somewhere but I can still just see glimpses of the forest so there is hope as I look one way and the saplings still dance around new houses celebrating their build not built and then the other way and the thin end of the wedge is cutting but I can rest on the bench made of one that was felled but it's fine there's another one nearby but then dividing and supported by another one felled and the saplings will restore and each fence upright dead stands memorial to those felled as I go around and around just circling until I see the end of the path and look there's loads more to take out and I am directed towards the forest reach and from the shadows we can only see complex problems and it's all for show and it is relentless and we are out of time and I am tired now on the OutForest and I am looking in do you follow what the lookout can see because who can it's just not clear

is it?

See: [terencelane.com](http://terencelane.com)



















# A Cumbrian Community

*Tim Hancock ARPS*

When I read in the local paper that Red Star Belgrade were the visiting team at the weekend, as a long term Manchester United supporter that name meant something special to me – the Munich air disaster of 6 February 1958. But this was a rugby league match! Against lowly Millom in Cumbria in the Challenge Cup (an early round). Millom is home to the oldest amateur Rugby League club in the world. Being a keen amateur sports photographer I had to go, looking to capture the best of the action, I thought.

As soon as I arrived it was clear what a special event this was, not only for the local people, but also for the visiting Serbia supporters. Even the England Rugby league elite were there – and the television. But contrary to what I expected, it was not the game that attracted me, but the hordes of people who had turned up to watch – many avoiding paying the £3 entrance fee by watching over the wall. Some had brought farm trailers to stand on to give a better view. These roadside spectators also had the advantage of being directly opposite the pub! Families were there, kids running around, dogs too.

Millom is not a picture postcard part of Cumbria, but a town which has fallen on harder times since the closure of the iron works, even being referred to as a “town of despair” by a local mayor. But there was no despair on view today – the community roared, laughed, drank and played together. Millom can perhaps teach many about the true meaning of community spirit. And once again, it is sport which brings people together.

This game took place back in January 2019, and somehow even this short passage of time seems to add to how the event resonated with me. I thought I should share it with you, as a tribute to the importance of community, and to Millom in particular.





















# The Crimson Thread

*Erin Lee*

The Crimson Thread is the first chapter of an ongoing photographic project that investigates the ubiquitous presence of Australia's colonial history, and attempts to better understand the impacts of colonisation and white privilege on contemporary Australian society. Using speculative documentary photography, the work encourages viewers to question official histories and to consider how strongly our past still exists in the present. The title of the project is taken from a quote by Sir Henry Parkes, a British-born Australian colonial politician who described Australia's connection to the British motherland as "the crimson thread of kinship, which defined Australia as a bastion of 'whiteness' in the Asian region".

The work to date has been created by retracing part of the Royal Tour of Australia made by Queen Elizabeth II & the Duke of Edinburgh in 1954. It documents what the contemporary settler society of Australia looks like today, our ongoing connection to the British monarchy and highlights how the incessant honouring of colonial history generates and sustains white privilege. Alongside the documentary approach the project combines four photographic pillars.

- Australian landscapes by which history is reimagined through the eyes of British invaders descending on this strange new land.
- A series of objects representing the ideas of 'progress' that drove imperialism.
- Staged portraits to each depict a paradigm introduced by colonialism that persists in society today.
- These approaches are intertwined with archival material related to the 1954 Royal Tour of Australia and key political standpoints from throughout the 20th century, such as the White Australia immigration policies.

By taking the route of the 1954 Royal Tour I wanted to see what the Queen saw, imagine how a person of this stature perceived her 'ownership' of this realm and try to understand the magnitude of the reception given to her by the Australian people at the time. The tour remains a source of historical pride for many of these places and, considering the recent death of Queen Elizabeth, this is an extremely poignant moment for Australia, and other colonised countries, to reflect upon our own identities.

It was during the trips I came to realise that it is not only our connection to the Queen which is problematic, but just how ever-present white colonial history is, and that the honouring of it is incessant. This serves only to romanticise Australia's white history; it does not represent the truth and trauma of what really happened, what has been lost, and leaves very little room for alternative dialogues which



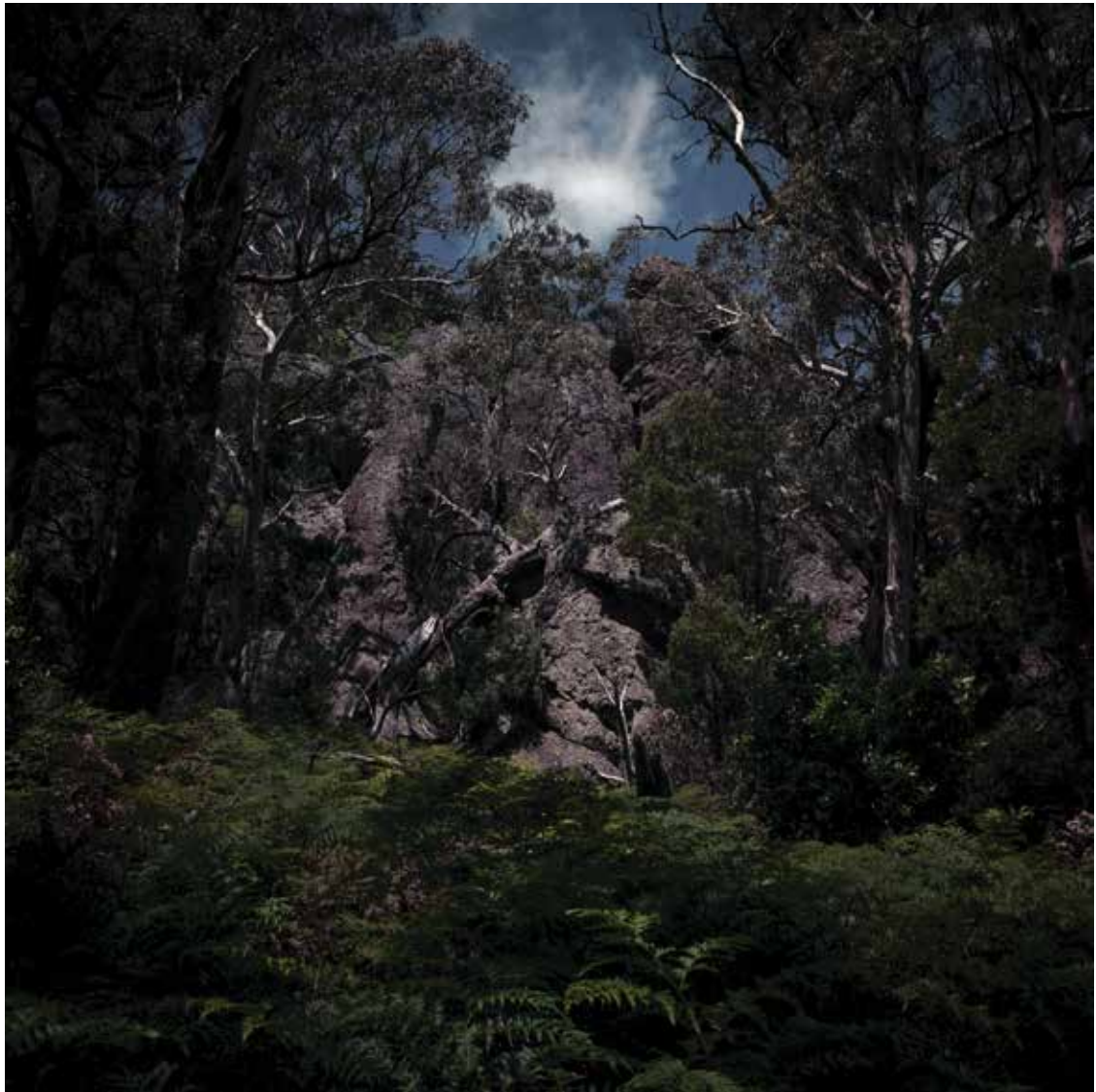
confront this specific version of history. By including related archival material in the project and expanding the research beyond our connection to the British monarchy I encourage viewers to question official histories and whitewashed versions of what we are taught, who and what we are expected to honour, and to consider how strongly our past still exists in the present.

Many people are apathetic towards the Queen and would say that she was just a symbol. But we should ask ourselves, what does she symbolise? Everything that modern Western democracies are supposedly against; hereditary systems of power, secretive and untransparent ways of operating, an arrangement that invigorates inequality and a 'soft' or symbolic power which is enforced by very real, hard, military powers. How could she be described as anything other than a hyper-pinnacle of white privilege? Someone who was born to literally sit on a throne, drenched in jewels, inside a castle, paid for historically by the slave trade and today by taxpayers' money from 54 Commonwealth countries. These countries are predominately coloured nations and were inherited through the invasions of the British Empire. The Queen and the continuation of the Royal Family do not only represent modern colonialism but are the #1 symbol of white privilege that exists in the world today.

See: [www.erinleephoto.com/](http://www.erinleephoto.com/)



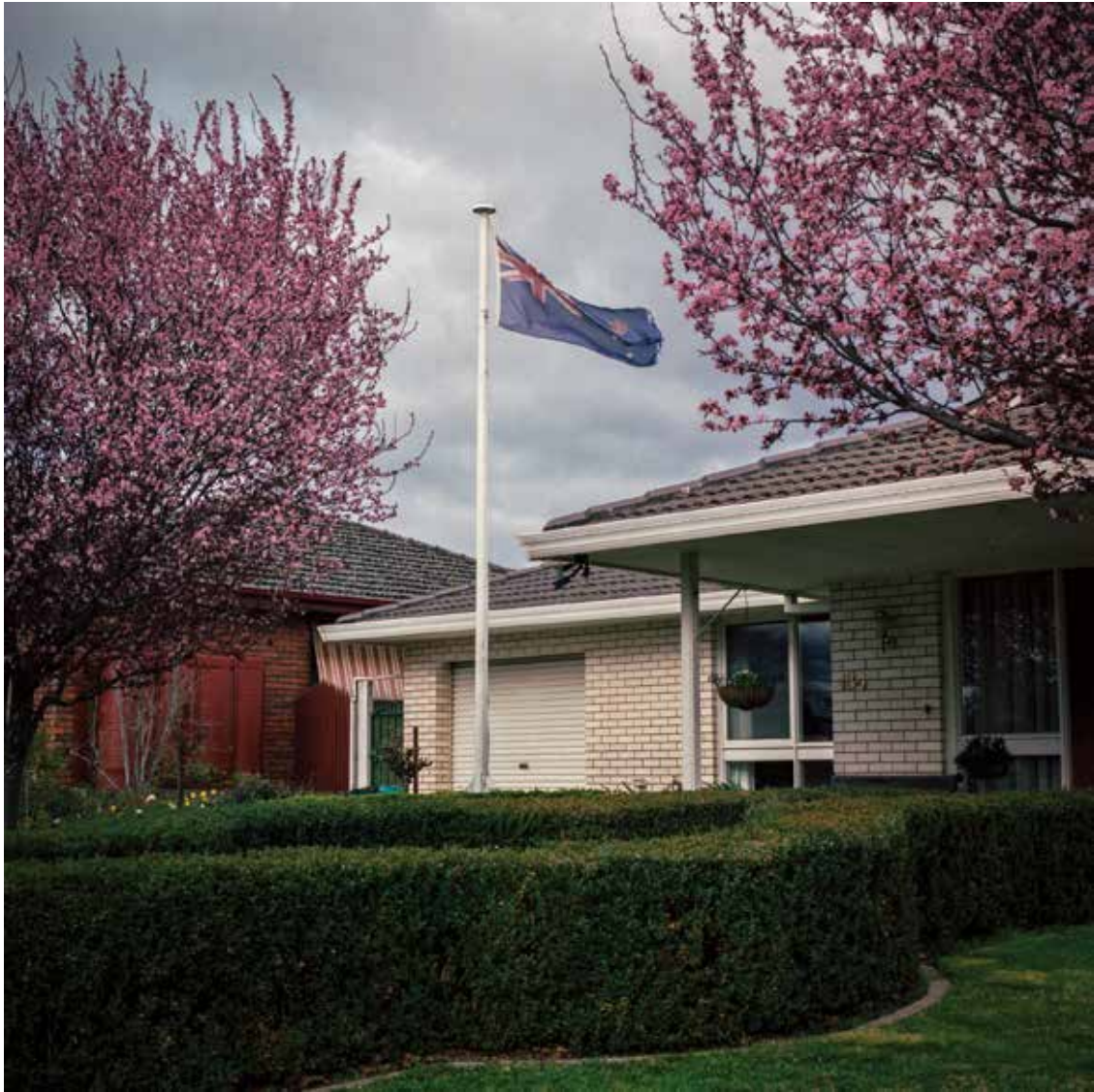


















# Cholitas Bravas

*Celia D Luna*

I was raised by a single mother in the Andes in Peru. I've always admired brave women and culture, it's in my DNA. I found out that Cholitas, indigenous women in Bolivia, were doing extreme sports while embracing their roots. Not too many years ago, the term 'Cholita' was a derogatory name for young Indigenous women. Nowadays, Cholitas proudly wear traditional clothing to break ethnic barriers. Being from a neighbouring country where we have similar backgrounds, this hit a weak spot in my heart. I had to meet and capture all these ladies. And guess who I brought with me as my assistant? My mama. She immediately said yes to this adventure.

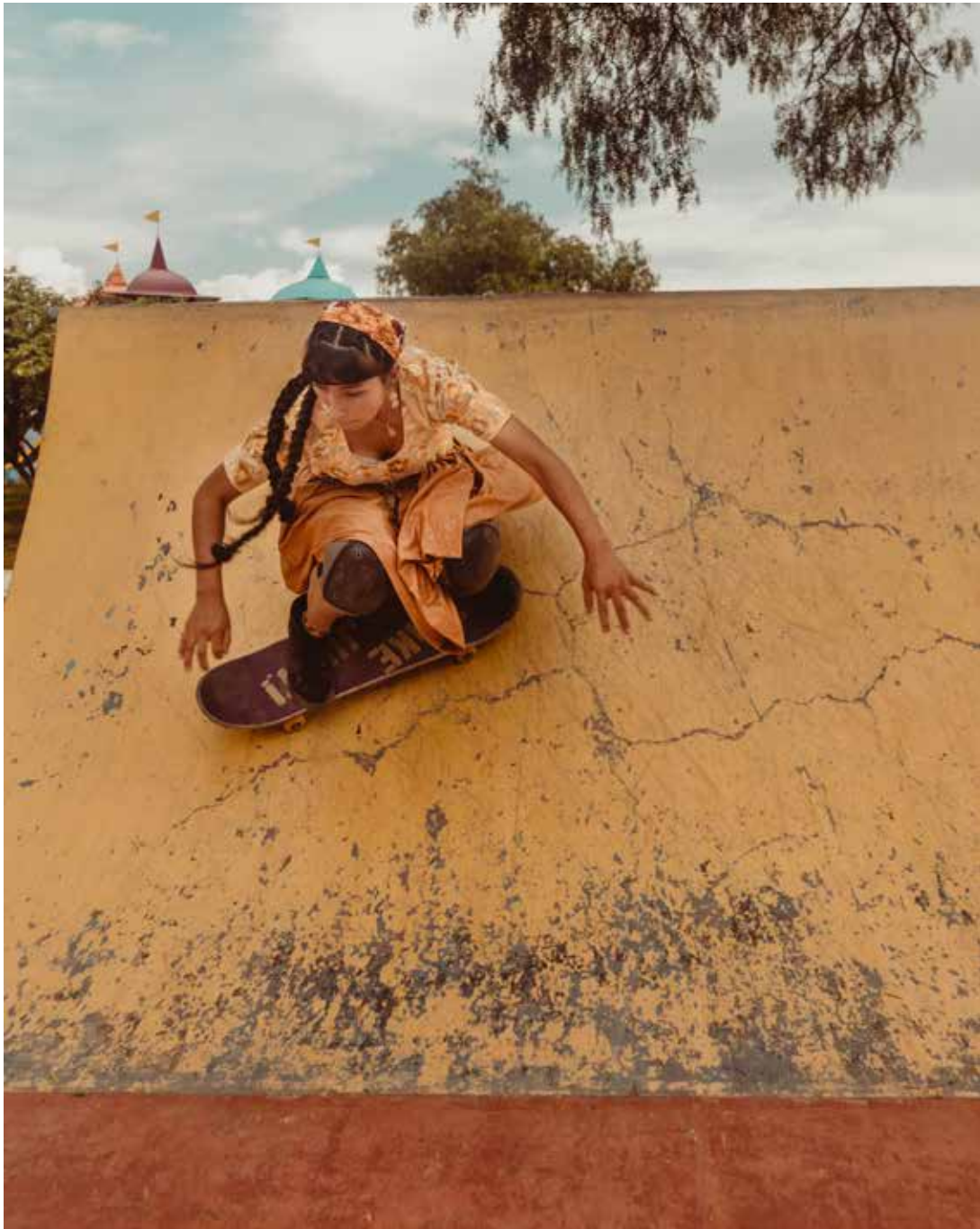
See: [www.celiadluna.com/](http://www.celiadluna.com/)



Cholitas Skaters





















Cholitas - Luchadores



Cholitas - Escaladores



# Katalog – Barbara Iweins

*Reviewed by Paul Ashley ARPS*

Barbara Iweins has photographed all the contents of her house in Brussels, placed the images in order, and published them as a book, *Katalog*. When I write "all the contents", I mean it: a page is devoted to photos of individual pieces of Brio track and trains. The same consideration is given to make-up brushes, Christmas decorations, underwear, shoes, books, sex toys, Lego bricks.....

The only classification is roughly by room, but otherwise Iweins appears to have worked at random. There are pages devoted to clothes, to a family member, toys, or a particular memory. Some pages are just rows of small photos. Many have wry comments with misleadingly precise statistics:

"The sum spent on all the objects in the bathroom is estimated at 5,159.80 euros"

"30% of my books have been lent and never returned"

"99% of the objects on the stairs are uniquely composed of books (1,212) and socks (228)"

Some pages are devoted to recollections of a particular incident and have a couple of paragraphs of explanation (e.g. photos of the contents of the handbag that she grabbed in an emergency).

The book is in French, published this year in paperback by delpire & co. There are no page numbers, but it is 227.1mm tall, 170.6mm wide and 22.4mm thick. It can be enjoyed (dipped into) without a knowledge of the language, but Iweins' annotations add to the pleasure. It is a reminder of how much stuff most of us have (down to paperclip level), and what that says about us, our friends and family, our own history and our West European culture. It's also a fun way to rummage around someone else's life.



# View from a Graphic Designer

*Christine Pinnington LRPS*

Some time ago I was taking some photographs with a 60 year old Polaroid camera and a man came up to me asked if this was a new type of digital camera. He was very interested and I had a long chat with him about the camera and my project. As he walked away he shrugged his shoulders and said to his wife "that's different".

I like to make things with my photographs. Grayson Perry commented on one of his television programmes that "it's good to make things". My own photography is mostly collage/photomontage, which allows me to mix graphic design with photography and at the same time use it to make and say something different.

One of my first inspirations in photomontage was Alexandr Rodchenko (1891 – 1956), a painter and graphic designer who believed that art in all its forms should be used for the benefit of society. Originally inspired by the Dadaists he used other photographers' work but then began shooting his own material. He gave up painting to immerse himself in photography. His use of unusual angles, was intended to force the viewer to actively engage with the image over time.

This is a path many of us have followed – inspiration, discovery, development and making our photography *about* something and engaging the viewer.

In the original Concept newsletter heading I included words that are often starting points for our own purpose and creativity: abstraction, image, conceptualisation, notion, thought, impression, theory, view, conception, idea, hypothesis. I am sure we could all think of many more.

Photography is all encompassing and isn't it great to have such a platform to be able to express ourselves? After all, isn't part of what contemporary photography achieves is to hold up a mirror to ourselves and the world around us?

# GROUP AND RELATED SOCIETY EVENTS

The Contemporary Group continues to hold meetings online and, when possible, in person. Keep an eye on the RPS website (when up and running), Concept and the group Facebook page for details of future talks.

## Regional meetings

Contemporary East. Meetings are held online on the first Thursday or Friday of each month in the afternoons. Contact Tom Owens for more information.

Contemporary North. Meetings are held monthly live at Clements Hall, York, and online, on Saturdays. Contact Patricia Ruddle for more information or see the RPS website.

Contemporary South West. Contact Adrian Hough for details of regional meetings.

Contemporary Northwest. Contact Alan Cameron for details of regional meetings.

Contemporary Central. Meetings are held jointly with the Documentary Group on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, online. Contact Steff Hutchinson for more information.

## COMMITTEE

Alexandra Prescott FRPS	Chair	<a href="mailto:contemporary@rps.org">contemporary@rps.org</a>
Tim Hancock ARPS	Secretary	<a href="mailto:contemporarysecretary@rps.org">contemporarysecretary@rps.org</a>
Alan Cameron ARPS	Treasurer and North West group organiser	<a href="mailto:contemporarytreasurer@rps.org">contemporarytreasurer@rps.org</a>
Keith Launchbury	Membership co-ordinator	<a href="mailto:contemporarymembership@rps.org">contemporarymembership@rps.org</a>
Duncan Unsworth	Postal portfolio	<a href="mailto:duncan.unsworth100@gmail.com">duncan.unsworth100@gmail.com</a>
Paul Ashley ARPS	Journal editor	<a href="mailto:paultheashley@gmail.com">paultheashley@gmail.com</a>
Sean Goodhart ARPS	Webmaster	<a href="mailto:contemporaryweb@rps.org">contemporaryweb@rps.org</a>
Brian Steptoe FRPS	Journal design	<a href="mailto:bsteptoe@compuserve.com">bsteptoe@compuserve.com</a>
Suzi Darsa	Concept editor	<a href="mailto:concepteditor@rps.org">concepteditor@rps.org</a>
Patricia Ruddle ARPS	North group organiser	<a href="mailto:contemporaryne@btinternet.com">contemporaryne@btinternet.com</a>
Tom Owens ARPS	Eastern group organiser	<a href="mailto:contemporaryea@rps.org">contemporaryea@rps.org</a>
Steff Hutchinson ARPS	Central group organiser	<a href="mailto:info@steffhutchinson.co.uk">info@steffhutchinson.co.uk</a>
Adrian Hough ARPS	South West group organiser	<a href="mailto:contemporarysw@rps.org">contemporarysw@rps.org</a>
Tessa Mills FRPS	Distinctions Panel Chair	<a href="mailto:tessamills@hotmail.co.uk">tessamills@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Christine Pinnington LRPS	Concept/Journal Design	<a href="mailto:photopinni@btinternet.com">photopinni@btinternet.com</a>

