

# concept

abstraction image conceptualisation notion thought  
impression theory view conception idea hypothesis

THE **RPS**  
ROYAL  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY  
GROUP

Image from the panel 'In Praise of  
Shadows'  
© Phil Lavery ARPS



## A Happy New Year to Everyone!

No doubt many of you will be making new year's resolutions. My own is to finish one project before starting the next - I make this one every year!

I know several members who have made a resolution to get a distinction this year and for inspiration, this month we see a recent successful one from Phil Lavery, who recently gained his ARPS.

Good news for 2017 is that we now have a new editor for the Contemporary Journal beginning with the Summer 2017 issue. More details will follow in a future edition of Concept.

It's good to have the opportunity to see work from our Contemporary Group's members and hope many of you are able to visit Duncan Unsworth's Exhibition and the Herts Foto Forum '21'.

We also have details of our Contemporary Group Conference on the 8th April. There is limited space so you are advised to book early. Further details in this issue.

Christine Pinnington LRPS  
Editor

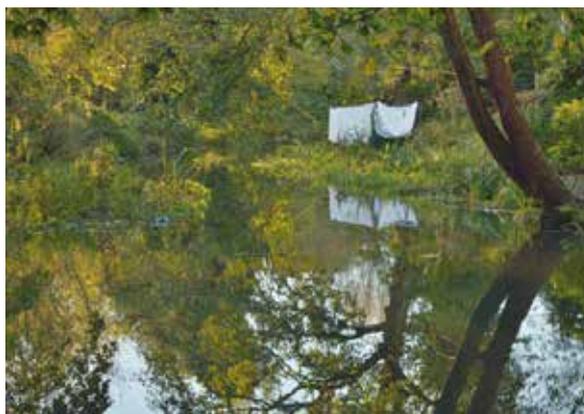


Image from the Exhibition Rivers  
© Duncan Unsworth

### e-newsletter

#### In this Issue

Message from our Group  
Chair, Avril Harris

Contemporary Facebook Page

Phil Lavery ARPS

NE Group Report

#### Whats on

Duncan Unsworth Exhibition

Herts Foto Forum '21'

Contemporary Group  
April Conference

North East Group Meeting

North West Group Meeting

Distinction Assessment Dates

## From our Chair, Avril Harris ARPS

The PhotoBook Exhibition was well received in Bradford and it was gratifying to see so much enthusiasm for the books shown. My thanks to Impressions Gallery for allowing us to show all the books and for their help, I much appreciated it.

While on the subject of thanks I would like to thank all the volunteers who have helped throughout the year, not only with the Photobook Exhibition but also the various events around the country in the different regions. I sometimes wonder if members realise how much time these volunteers give and with such graciousness. Without their help we would not be able to do the things we embark upon. I could not have managed Bradford without their help, unloading the books, setting up and allowing me time to eat and then packing them up again. So Janet Cook, Patricia Ruddle, Christine Pinnington and Brian Crossland – Thank you

**A date for your diary.** 8th April 2017 Yan Wang Preston speaking about her project and book 'Mother River' and Polly Braden talking about her project and book, jointly authored with David Company, 'Adventures in the Lea Valley'. Full details in the **What's On** section.

## RPS Contemporary Facebook Group

**The RPS Contemporary Facebook Group** has an international membership currently standing at 531 and growing. The group is very active with contributors posting ideas and concepts promoting constructive feedback and lively, informative discussions. We are probably the most active group on Facebook within the RPS.

We decided that the group should be public and open to members and non-members of the RPS in order to showcase the ethos of the Contemporary Group and promote discussion and feedback. We also hope that by doing this we attract like minded photographers into the fold of the Contemporary Group and the RPS.

Recent discussions included views on the EGM held on the 19th January, where the proposal was defeated 3:1 in a vote that attracted a disappointing 20% participation from the RPS membership. We also promote exhibitions and workshops that fit in with our ethos and advance a modern take on image making.

A number of our Facebook members are studying photography as part of further education and prompt some interesting and erudite discussions both on the meaning of photography and feedback on their chosen projects and subject matter. We feel that this places the Contemporary Group at the forefront of forward thinking within the wider world of Photography and encourages the creation of images that are outside of the box – images that are "About" something not just "of" something – come and join us here;

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RPSContemporary>

Peter Ellis LRPS

# Phil Lavery ARPS

## His recent successful Conceptual and Contemporary ARPS Panel 'In Praise of Shadows'

### Statement of Intent

#### In Praise Of Shadows

"Were it not for shadows, there would be no beauty."  
Junichiro Tanizaki. In Praise Of Shadows. 1933

*I find myself drawn to the interaction of natural light and shadow on the geometric shapes found in interiors and in particular, the transitional spaces of buildings where art is displayed or made.*

*By their very nature, these spaces aren't destinations, they are for passing through and yet, they are often the only place in these buildings where natural light is allowed to enter unhindered by shades or baffles. The subtle abstracts created by this slowly moving light and shadow are of course, also transient, sometimes only lasting seconds before a cloud dims the sun, or a shadow moves enough to break an alignment I have been waiting for.*

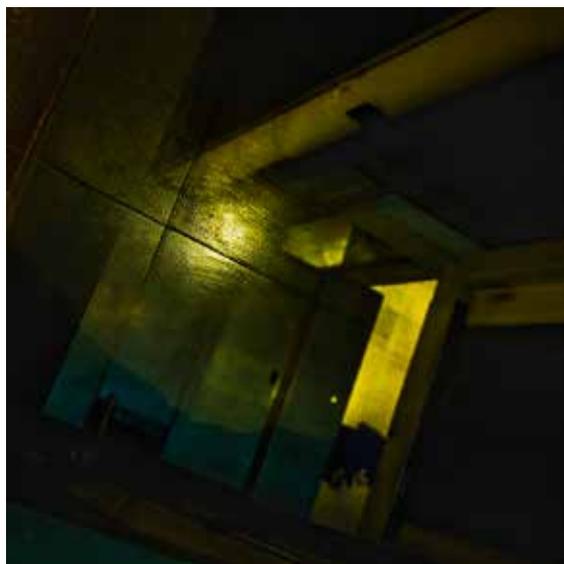
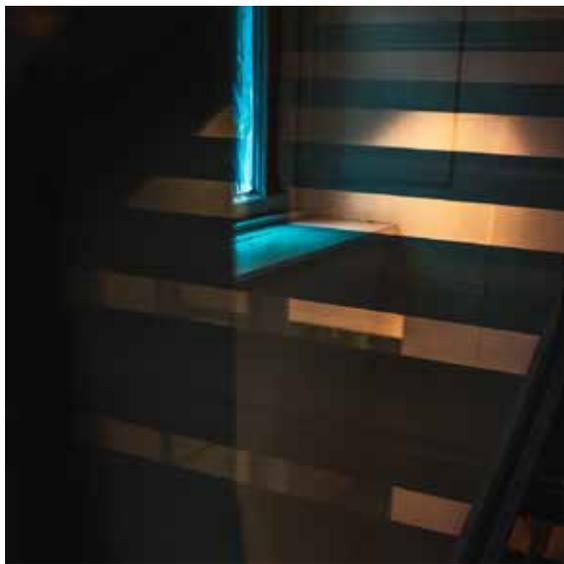
*In his book, In Praise Of Shadows, Tanizaki argued, that the simple interiors of traditional Japanese buildings, the objects within and the clothes worn, depend on shadow for their beauty.*

*Perhaps this is also true of these transitional spaces and is why I find myself pushing these images of usually well lit corridors, stairs and other between spaces, ever darker and yet still find, that even the brightest, simplest image can speak to me, if there is shadow.*

Phil Lavery ARPS



Panel Hanging Plan



Images from the panel © Phil Lavery ARPS

## Phil Lavery on Phil Lavery ARPS

Over the years, it has become quite apparent, that I don't know me. I thought I did, when I was young, but that might have been arrogance. The same is true of my photography. This makes writing a bio, or this sort of thing, a problem. So let's stick to basics.

**Me :** I wanted to be an abstract artist, but became an architect, got a Mac in the 80's and now do digital stuff.

**Equipment :** I started in the 60's with an Agfa Silette, got an OM1 in the 70's, then bland digital stuff. Two years ago bought a Fuji X100s - bliss! Now repairing my OM1.

**Influences :** All of the above and other stuff.

As for photography, I do what I do. I have little choice in the matter. I get ideas, I try to follow them through, some things work, most don't.... I'm never sure.

At an RPS event, James Frost said that I shoot light and shadow - I hadn't noticed, but this did influence the theme and statement for my A panel.

I thought I shot colour, till, at a recent portfolio review, I was told that I mainly do monochrome. Who knew?

Website : <https://philipjlavery.com>

Instagram : <https://instagram.com/phil.lavery>

# NE Contemporary Group Meeting, 19 November 2016

Report by Christine Carr LRPS

Our last meeting of 2016 so there were mince pies. Thank you, Janet. There was also much lively debate ranging from book production, through different genres, to our understanding of 'contemporary'. We welcomed Mary Crowther, RPS Yorkshire Region Organiser and also Geoff Hicks on his first visit to these meetings.

Apart from all the discussion there was also plenty of work to consider. The projected work, which we see on a TV screen, was covered first.

Avijit Datta showed work from the competition 'Faith through a Lens'. The 2016 judging panel was led by renowned photographer Don McCullin who allegedly praised the lighting around Scarborough and the NE coast. The competition influenced Avijit's choice of work for the meeting where the images were based on how children learn faith. In the Hindu faith, this is often through dance.

Janet Cook explained how she worked on her 'A' panel, the first installation to be accepted in the Contemporary category prior to its name change. All aspects of the installation were considered. For one the images were printed on rice paper, to emphasise the fragility of the Indian women portrayed in the images.

All Janet's images were mounted in window frames, made by Janet. These frames harmonised with the subject matter such as the distressed paint and dirt to encase the images of an old building in Portugal. The question they all posed was whether the viewer was looking in or looking out.

Dave Burgess brought us his pictures from a holiday visit to the USA. He had managed to capture a range of themes, from Halloween; the Presidential Election; (both rather scary) to the music scene near Jacksonville. It was this latter topic that he showed, featuring guitar playing characters in their environment. The monochrome images captured the gritty characters to great effect.

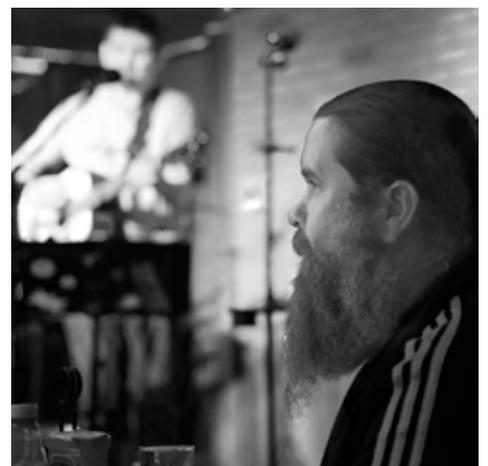
Many individuals are now working on books of various styles and Patricia Ruddle showed her project on masculinity presented in a 'PhotoBox' book. She made



© Avijit Datta FRSA



© Jane Cook ARPS



© Dave Burgess ARPS

little comment on the work "Just look at the pictures – job done". That of course led to an animated discussion.

'Smiley Hippo' is another online photobook producer ([www.smileyhippo.com](http://www.smileyhippo.com)) and was used by Geoff Hicks for his project on unseen landscapes. The areas underneath the Tinsley Viaduct carrying the M1 past Meadow Hall, Sheffield and the infamous Spaghetti Junction provided the subject matter. Geoff recently attended a bookmaking course at the Hepworth, Wakefield and this, together with the work of Sir Stanley Spencer some of which was exhibited at the Hepworth earlier this year, influenced Geoff's work 'Shooting round Corners'. The pages of this book initially show one image but when unfolded reveal a triptych of the scene. The scene was captured as one shot using a 10mm lens before post processing work, particularly on verticals, achieved the required result.

We finished the meeting looking at prints from Mick Nolan. Using a collection of glassware, reflective card and controlled lighting, Mick produced a distinctive style and is now on the lookout for more glassware to continue the project.



© Patricia Ruddle ARPS



© Mick Nolan



Images from 'Shooting round Corners'  
© Geoff Hicks LRPS

**The next meeting of the NE Contemporary Group will be held on Saturday 28th January (Full details under What's On).**

# What's On

## Rivers

Duncan Unsworth

10 January – 24 February 2017



**Open Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm**  
**Entry is free**

**Artistsmeet at Watersmeet**  
**High Street, Rickmansworth WD3 1EH**  
[www.facebook.com/artistsmeet](http://www.facebook.com/artistsmeet)



## Herts Foto Forum '21'

16th March to the 29th March 2017

Nude Tin Can Gallery, 125 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, AL1 4JS

[www.nudetincangallery](http://www.nudetincangallery) telephone 01727 569 291

An exhibition of work by several members of HFF including eight who are Contemporary Group/RPS members to celebrate twenty one years of existence.

# The Contemporary Special Interest Group's April 2017 Conference

**Saturday 8 April 2017,  
Cophthorne Hotel, Paradise Circus, Birmingham B3 3HG**

10.00 (for 10.30 start) to 17.00. £50, including teas/coffees and buffet lunch. RPS members and non-members welcome.

The conference will feature presentations on the River Yangtze by Yan Wang Preston and the River Lea by Polly Braden. Attendees may also bring prints for review.

- 10.00 - 10.30 Meeting and greeting, tea/coffee
- 10.30 - 12.30 Presentation by Yan Wang Preston
- 12.30 - 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 - 15.15 Presentation by Polly Braden
- 15.15 - 15.45 Tea/coffee break
- 15.30 - 17.00 Discussion and review of attendee prints (up to ten max. per person)

**Yan Wang Preston** is a British-Chinese photographic artist whose landscape work is about challenging myths and revealing hidden complexities behind the surface of the landscape.

The Yangtze is China's Long River. Yan Preston will talk about her project *Mother River*, photographing locations from the river source to the sea at exactly 100km intervals, regardless of the difficulty; 63 locations in total.



Y25 2,400km from the river source. From 'Mother River' series (2010-2014). ©Yan Wang Preston

[www.yanpreston.com](http://www.yanpreston.com)  
[www.motherriver.info](http://www.motherriver.info)

**Polly Braden** is a documentary photographer who works on self-initiated projects as well as undertaking commissions for international publications.

Polly Braden and David Company have been photographing the River Lea in East London since 2004 and this work has recently been published as a photobook entitled *Adventures in the Lea Valley*. Polly Braden will present this project in the afternoon.



Inflatable Santa, New Year's Day, 2005, Upper Lea Valley © Polly Braden and David Company

[www.pollybraden.com/work/adventures-in-the-lea-valley](http://www.pollybraden.com/work/adventures-in-the-lea-valley)

## To book see

<http://www.rps.org/events/2017/april/08/tales-of-two-rivers>

When booking, please also inform the event organiser.

Contact: Avril Harris, [avrilrharris@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:avrilrharris@blueyonder.co.uk), tel 07990 976390.

**28 January 2017**

14:00 - 17:00

**Contemporary Group North East Meeting**

Third Floor, Suite 4  
13 Bull Ring  
Central Buildings  
Wakefield WF1 1HB.

There are limited places for this meeting, if you wish to attend please contact the organiser

**Please note the revised date: 28th January 2017**

Contact: Patricia A. Ruddle ARPS

Email: [patriciaruddle@btinternet.com](mailto:patriciaruddle@btinternet.com)

Tel: 07572 124290

See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2017/january/28/contemporary-group-north-east--january-meet#sthash.59Z0ZHdJ.dpuf>

**30 January 2017**

19:30 - 22:00

**Contemporary Group North West Meeting**

Days Inn, Charnock Richard M6  
Jct 27-28 M6 Northbound  
Mill Lane  
Chorley. Lancs PR7 5LR

A small contribution is collected to cover the cost of hiring the meeting room.

All are welcome.

Contact: Alan Cameron LRPS

Email: [alan.cameron@me.com](mailto:alan.cameron@me.com)

Tel: 07825 271344

- See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2017/january/30/regular-contemporary-north-west-meeting#sthash.Zcv5Plfq.dpuf>

**19 April 2017**

10:30 - 16:30

**ARPS Conceptual & Contemporary Photography - Print & Images for Screen Submissions Assessment**

The RPS, HQ  
The Royal Photographic Society  
Fenton House  
122 Wells Road  
Bath  
United Kingdom  
BA2 3AH

See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2017/april/19/arps-conceptual--contemporary-assessment--print--images-for-screen-submissions#sthash.VHCNgMXO.dpuf>

**19 April 2017**

10:30 - 16:30

**FRPS Conceptual & Contemporary Photography Assessment**

The RPS, HQ  
The Royal Photographic Society  
Fenton House  
122 Wells Road  
Bath  
United Kingdom  
BA2 3AH  
Tel:01225 325733

See more at: <http://www.rps.org/events/2017/april/19/frps-conceptual--contemporary-assessment#sthash.tvPcIU6d.dpuf>

**Deadline for contributions for inclusion in the February Issue is 20th February 2017.**

News, reports, reviews, publicity, profiles, images, in fact anything of interest in the contemporary world. If you have any contributions you would like to have included, please email to:

[photopinni@btinternet.com](mailto:photopinni@btinternet.com)

*Christine Pinnington LRPS*

*Editor, concept*

*The e-newsletter of the RPS Contemporary Group*

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



Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rpscontemporary>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RPSPhotobooks>