

concept

abstraction image conceptualisation notion thought
impression theory view conception idea hypothesis

THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY
GROUP

e-newsletter



Escape
© Neil Whittman ARPS

Welcome to the February issue of concept with more news about our members, groups and their work. If any members would like to write about their work, or just an individual image, I would love to hear from you. If you would like to promote any exhibitions or meeting contact details are given on the last page.

In this issue we have details about the RPS Photobook Exhibition 2016, which I am sure is going to attract lots of entries. The photobook "The Blank Book" by Ronaldo Aguiar, which was featured in Winter issue of the Contemporary Journal, certainly provided inspiration.

The actress Bette Davis once said "Attempt the impossible in order to improve your work."

Christine Pinnington LRPS
Editor

Scottish Contemporary Group Meeting

Due to unforeseen circumstances the above meeting has had to be rearranged to the 10th March 2016.

If you are a Scottish Contemporary Group Member and don't receive a personalised e-mail concerning the meetings, please send your e-mail address to davidfells111@gmail.com"

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Erratum

In the last issue of **concept** an error appeared in the article, Contradictions - An Orwell Narrative. The East Anglian Group was in fact brought together at the suggestion of Peter Ellis LRPS, not as stated in the article.

The North East Contemporary Group Meeting

16th January 2016

Avijit Datta FRSA reports

Thirteen members of the RPS NE Contemporary Group, including the RPS Yorkshire Regional Organiser Mary Crowther ARPS, met at the Royal Oak pub in York on 16th January 2015. Participants had travelled from as far afield as Derbyshire and Middlesbrough.

Nigel Tooby started the meeting by discussing the history and semantics of contemporary photography. The group had started in 1992 ; the approach was to capture "about" rather than "of" and general bodies of work, often accompanied by text were employed rather than single images. Nigel showed his photobook of family and close associates. Images included a child on a potty at a society wedding. Old photographs were printed on architectural tracing paper. A group photograph at a wedding had the groom's image cut out reflecting subsequent divorce. His comments brought to mind Alfred Stieglitz who said that the photograph was the equivalent of what he saw and what he felt.



Patricia Ruddle (far right of photograph), who organised the meeting, spoke about the "Box round" whereby members contributed photographs to the box, which was sent between members who were invited to write comments and add a new photograph. She also announced that Christine Pinnington, editor of the RPS Contemporary Group e-newsletter **concept** was looking for contributors to a joint group photobook.

Regina Wilkinson showed her photobook of her aunt Masha's country home in Belarus. Regina explained that she had been born in the (communist) USSR and had moved to England in 1999. The images portrayed happiness, loneliness and dependence via a bucolic idyll in a semi abandoned village (Mir) contrasting with an oppressive lonely city life in Minsk under an apparently overbearing Soviet state regime. The theme is reminiscent of Indre Šerpytyte Robert's dark work on Lithuania under the Soviet regime recently exhibited at the Tate Modern and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Graham Evans showed photographs of memorials to those killed in the Great War. This included Remembrance day wreaths laid at the memorial in York, tombstones with Chinese characters commemorating indentured labourers in France. He contrasted the unclipped grass of the German cemeteries with the manicured lawns of the American cemetery outside Cambridge. His image of the memorial to a young boy shot at dawn reminded participants that there was an exhibition called " Shot at Dawn " by Chloe Matthews.



Martin Drury then displayed his examination of shadows which he showed on a loose leaf photobook looking like an artist's sketchbook.

Martin separated his work into four themes:

- a. The dark part of a picture
- b. Silhouette
- c. Intercepted light
- d. A dark projection onto a surface

On seeing the first category (The dark part of the picture), Nigel Tooby alluded to the cover of Led Zepplin's 1976 album ' Presence '. The image, created by Hipgnosis shows various images of a family interacting with a black obelisk shaped object. The explanation for these images by the designer was 'When I think of the group, I always think of power and force. There's a definite presence there.'

Martin's image of the silhouette echoed Ansel Adams' notable photograph of a tree silhouetted at sunrise. Adams used the term extract rather than abstract for the technique. Such work brought to mind the Tibetan word Miksang – meaning hidden eye. The concept is to uncover the hidden meaning i.e to perceive directly without the burden of habitual likes and dislikes which cloud clear perception and thereby uncover what is already there. An American exponent of this photographic form was the late John Daido Looi, author of 'Making love with light ' (2000) who became a Zen Buddhist monk.

The meeting concluded with Patricia showing back issues of the RPS Contemporary Group Journal " Contemporary Photography ", which she edits.

*(The next meeting of the North East group will be on Saturday 19th March, at the Royal Oak, York.
Contact: patriciaruddle@btinternet.com)*



A dark projection onto a surface
© Martin Drury



Intercepted light
© Martin Drury



Silhouette
© Martin Drury



The dark part of a picture
© Martin Drury

Neil Whittman ARPS

Neil's successful ARPS panel was recently seen at the Harrogate International Visual Arts Expo in November 2015.

He is currently exploring digital surrealism as a form of expression.

Neil's Statement of Intent.

"It's all about Me

By looking attentively at old and smeared walls, or stones and veined marble of various colours, you may fancy that you see in them several compositions, landscapes, battles, figures in quick motion, strange countenances ... ~Leonardo da Vinci

The use of symmetrical inkblots is often associated with, and was used in, psychiatric analysis (Rorschach being one of many to use this technique).

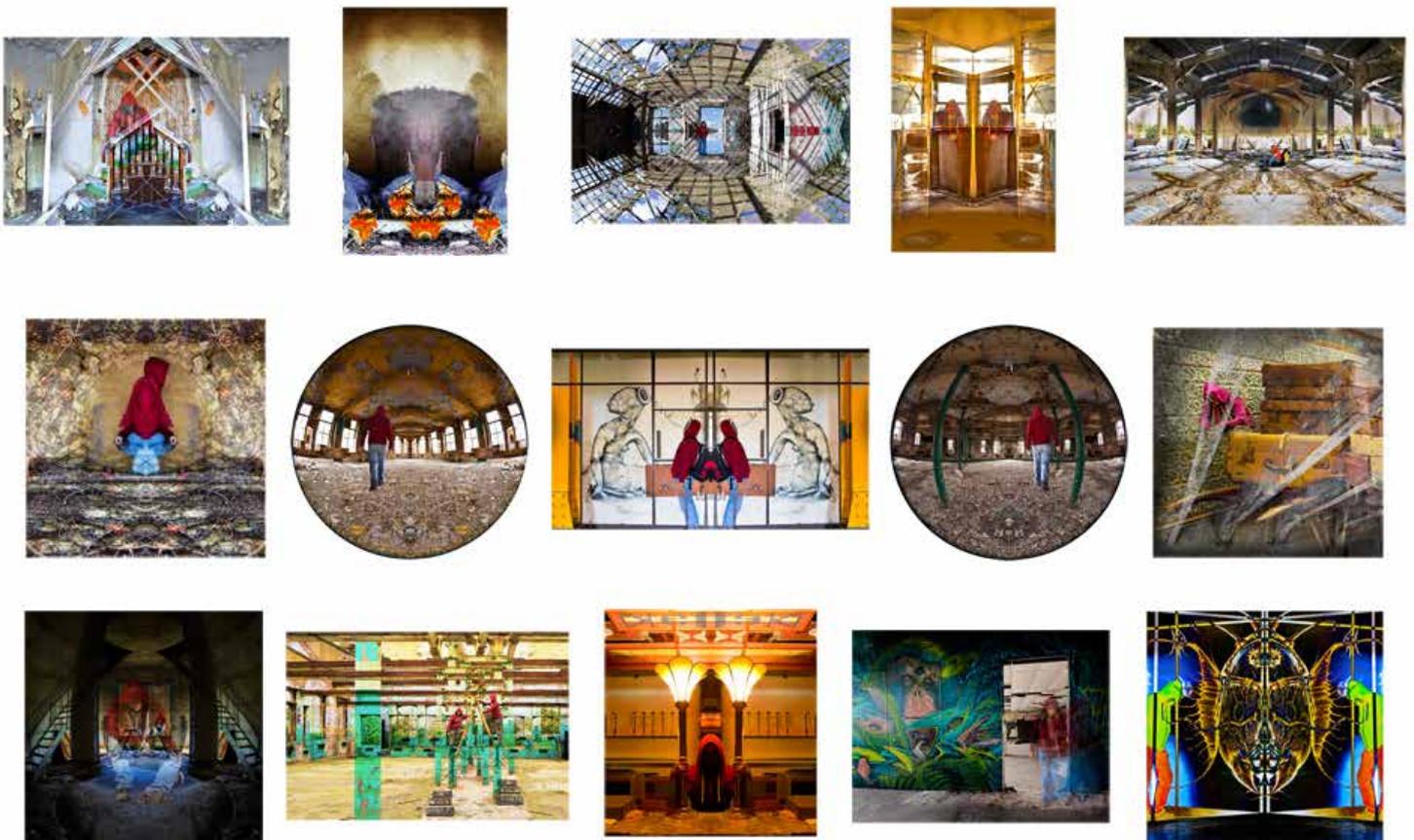
I have combined the above ideas in an exercise of self examination and what this might mean regarding my 'self' or 'inner psyche' within the world space I occupy.

I have discovered representations of my place in the cosmos, myself at the crossroads of a decision, places where I am part of the 'big picture', places where I am simply in transition from one state of mind to another. In some I am meditative. Faces, animal and human, are to be found within the symmetries. I have included two instances of the same photograph, they represent the 'Yin and Yang', light and dark of life that here I have shown to be existing symbiotically within the original photograph.

These and many other aspects of what I consider makes up 'me' are to be found within the images I have produced. The hood and mask are metaphors of times in my life when I have tended to be 'a little backward at coming forward', shy. Reticent to push myself to the front, all the while believing that I could contribute more. "



Seeking Direction
© Neil Whittman ARPS



Member Profile

David Edge

David Edge is from Glasgow and now lives in Derby. He retired in 2014 and joined the Contemporary Group in November 2016 and is an active member of the North East group. His work will soon be seen in an exhibition to be held in May.

Here we find out more about his photography.

How did you start in photography?

I bought a Russian SLR at the age of 17 but I didn't 'get' light - I understood exposure, but not colour, direction and quality. Then a year ago a friend told me she thought my vision was in black and white. That was a fantastic help - in the space of a year I went from somebody who regarded black-and-white as a special effect that you applied to photographs that didn't work in colour, to unlocking my way natural of seeing.

What about now?

I use digital cameras now. As for post processing I keep it simple, more or less what you'd do in the darkroom. I'm moving from Aperture to CaptureOne. I really can't get excited about the oversaturated, over-sharpened and over-contrasty look that's in vogue.

Have you had any formal training?

I started a photography degree at a local university in 2012. I got little feedback and dropped out, but I was really grabbed by the whole visual literacy/photography as an art thing. I'm still trying to get my head around that.

I did a two-day course on street photography in 2010 with the School of Life in London tutored by the very brilliant Nick Turpin. I took more interesting photos that weekend than in the previous ten or twenty years, but I never progressed with street photography and it ended up being a dead end.

I revisited my work at the encouragement of Paul Hill who suggested that I select "Me photographs" from my collection. I did that and it seemed to me that the common theme was isolation. However, when I showed them to a group of local artists they didn't agree and pointed me at Michael Fried's notion of absorption and theatricality, suggesting that I was showing people who were absorbed in what they were doing - no bad thing.

What sort of photography are you currently enjoying?

When I retired I had the notion of photographing people at work. However people who know me think I'm an extrovert and some days I am, but I find approaching people really difficult. Recently I've taken one or two half decent series of pictures and that's boosted my confidence. My first attempt at photographing people at work was at a local bakery. I'd always planned to go there, but kept putting it off. Then I found that it was their last day before retirement and closure. The local paper gave the story a full page and they were really pleased.

The biggest challenge for me is approaching people - because for me, photographs without people, or at least traces of people, are not very interesting.

Apart from people at work, what else do you photograph?

I've tried a number of things and not made a particularly good job of any of them. So I'm where I am through a process of elimination! I also enjoy photographing people in architectural spaces - these are on my website.

Where do you find inspiration?

I use the internet to look things up that I don't have access to. But I'd rather sit down with a book and take my time or visit a festival or gallery.

I used to think modern art photography was pretentious nonsense - but that was based on one local venue. I then discovered galleries in Scotland and Wales where the selection of photography is aimed at a wider audience and so became more interested in contemporary photography.

© David Edge



© David Edge



I volunteer at the Artsmith Gallery in Derby and also the Third Floor Gallery in Cardiff. They are volunteer organisations (no Arts Council grant) so I help out. I can recommend being a gallery attendant - it's a great way to meet people with similar interests and to discuss the work on show. Independent galleries are important because there's no imperative to please a sponsor.

Third Floor also gave me a big opportunity. I was asked to take some photographs of the opening of Peter Jones's exhibition. Peter's a superb 'poetic' photographer. David Hurn (pictured) a superb 'prose' photographer. The marvellous thing was to have permission to photograph. Photographers aren't worried about what you are doing. I did resort to a little bit of Dutch courage but once I'd got the first picture after about 20 minutes everything flowed.



Left Peter Jones, right David Hurn
© David Edge

What has joining the RPS brought to your work?

I wanted feedback on my work from people with similar interests. I've fallen on my feet with the North East Contemporary Group.

And the future?

I worry that I'm a fraud. In my opinion, just because a lot of "A"rt photography is boring and pretentious doesn't mean that if I produce boring pretentious stuff it's art. Is my deadpan flat look really a conscious rejection of the 'shiny' club/publicity aesthetic, or have I simply not mastered the craft?

When I show work people do react. So long as people say "oh!" from time to time I'll carry on.

<http://www.davidjedge.uk>

[More information](#)

<http://nickturpin.com>

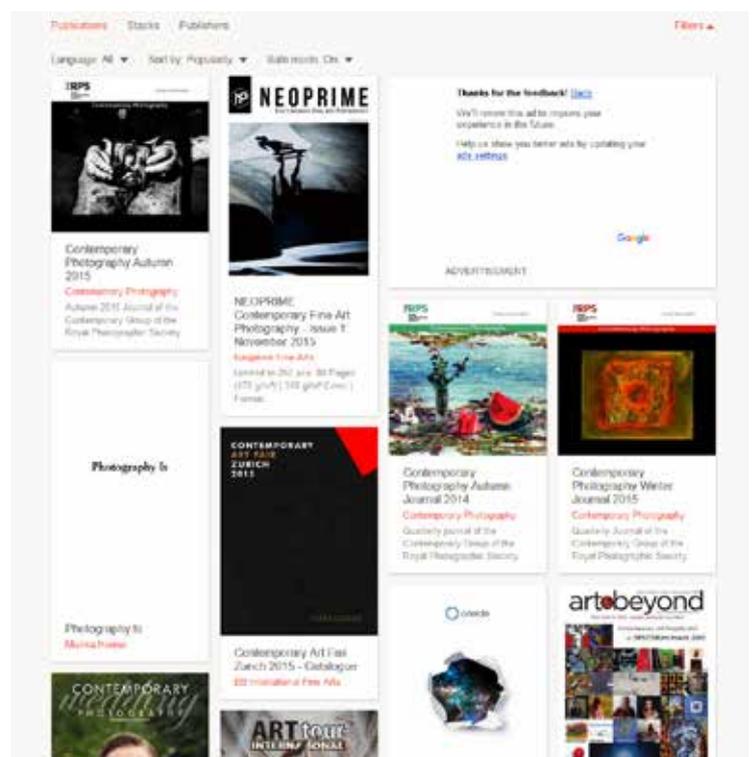
<http://www.hillonphotography.co.uk>

More about issuu.com

Brian Steptoe

The www.issuu.com website service hosts over 25 million publications, all of which can be freely viewed by readers. The Contemporary Group Journal has been hosted on issuu since 2012. Journals are uploaded to issuu one month after printed copies are sent to Group members. Going to their website and entering "Contemporary Photography" gives results in a similar way to a google search and several of our Group Journals appear at or near the top of the scroll-down list.

Statistics are collected each day by issuu. These are not public, but available to the account holder. Statistics include the number of times a publication is read, the number of 'impressions', which means the number of clicks made on the publication as people scan through issuu, normally without it being read, the numbers of issuu users who 'follow' a particular publisher, and the number of readers who include a particular publication in their personal 'stack', if



they choose to have a stack of favourites. There has been a particular success with our Autumn 2015 journal, possibly due to it being recommended by issuu staff.

Recorded numbers of reads in the top 10 countries over the last 30 days are:

Top 10 countries

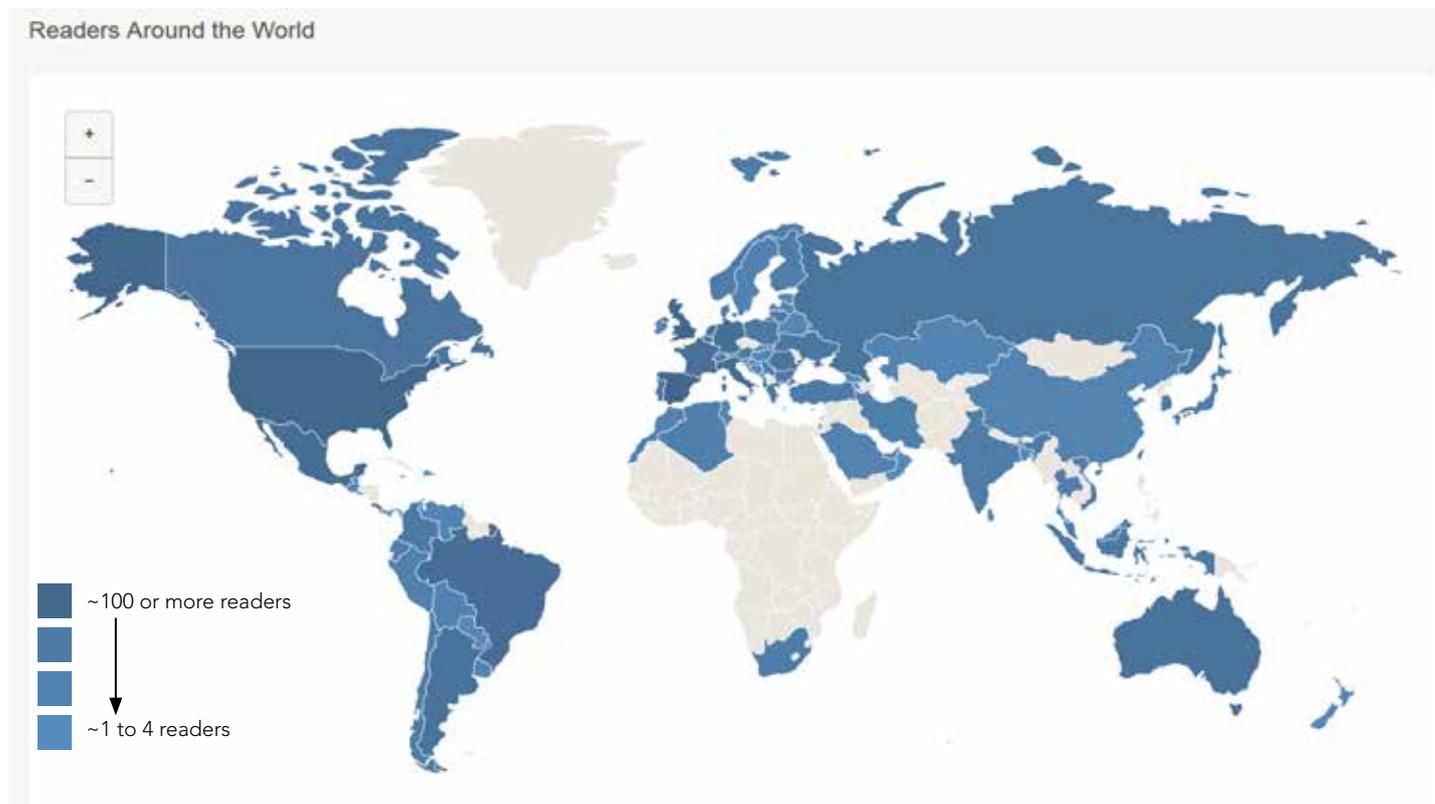
United Kingdom	143	Brazil	63
United States	135	Germany	62
Spain	124	France	60
Italy	81	Netherlands	56
Mexico	63	Australia	42

Those readers who choose to 'follow' our publications and those that choose to add a particular one of our publications to their 'stack' have reports passed to our account holder of the name they use on issuu and their country. These are shared with our Journal editor.

The RPS have also set up an account on issuu in January 2016 for distribution of publications from Regions, Chapters and Groups.

The worldwide range of readers is shown on this map, with darker blue for larger numbers.

6 Feb 2016





OPEN INTERNATIONAL PHOTOBOOK EXHIBITION 2016



CALL FOR ENTRIES CLOSING DATE 31 JULY 2016

Short-listed books and winners will be exhibited at the Espacio Gallery, 159 Bethnal Green Road, London E2 7DG from 18-23 October 2016, at the Impressions Gallery, Centenary Square, Bradford, BD1 1SD on 12 November 2016 and at St Saviours Hall, Barbican, Plymouth, PL1 2NN in conjunction with Fotonow CIC

- see over

Entry requirements

- Self-published, photobook dummies, artist's and handmade photobooks.
- Produced by on-line digital print services, by offset printing or any other processes.
- No commercial book trade publications.
- Only one book per entrant. The book must be the author's own work, (however books containing found images may be used, provided their source is stated).
- Books must have been created between 1 January 2014 and the closing date for entries of 31 July 2016.

Entry Fee – per person is £25.00, £10 for 25 years old or under entrants.

Books are returnable where return postage is supplied.

Selectors - David Campany, Lucy Kumara Moore and Dewi Lewis

Full details and Entry Form - see www.rps.org/photobook

Awards:

Winner award £1000 and RPS medal

Second - RPS medal and Bob Books token value £150

Third - RPS medal and Bob Books token value £100

facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/RPSPhotobooks

General enquiries:

Rod Fry ARPS, rod@rodfryclipse.co.uk

With thanks to our sponsors



including winner prize
contribution of £500



printing cost
of catalogues



Fotonow CIC hall
in Plymouth

What's on

10th March - Scottish Group Meeting. (Please note change of date)

Edinburgh PS between 1 & 4pm
Contact David Fells LRPS
davidfells111@gmail.com, tel: 07563756137.

19th March - Contemporary North East Meeting.

Venue to be announced.
Contact Patricia A Ruddle ARPS.
patriciaruddle@btinternet.com, tel: 01904 783850

Tuesday 29th March - Contemporary North West Meeting

Days Inn, Charnock Richard Services on the M6 (between junctions 27 and 28) starting at 7.30pm.
Contact Ian Maxwell.
mail@ihmaxwell.com, tel: 01524 770278

20th April - 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

Deadline for contributions for inclusion in the March issue is **22nd March 2016**.

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

*Christine Pinnington LRPS
Editor, concept
the e-newsletter of the RPS Contemporary Group*

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