

September 2025

# CONCEPT

*The Newsletter of the Contemporary Group of the Royal Photographic Society*

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# From the Editor

This issue I would like to say thanks!!

Big thanks to Christine Pinnington who has produced and published *Concept* magazine for 10 years and to Burak Oguz who is taking production over from this issue. Without committed volunteers the activities of this group and indeed the RPS as a whole would simply not happen.

As Editor of *Concept*, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all members who have contributed photographs and articles to this edition. This magazine exists as a space to celebrate the talent, imagination, and commitment of our group, and it is your work that gives it life. There has been a very high number of submissions for this issue for which I am extremely grateful.

The photographs presented here are, as ever wide ranging in approach and subject matter. The accompanying articles add valuable depth, offering reflections, insights, and ideas that encourage us all to think more widely about the possibilities of photography.

Thank you once again to everyone who has made this issue possible. I look forward to seeing more of your work in future editions of *Concept*.

Please remember to look out for forthcoming activities and photographic talks, nearly all of which are available free of charge. If you would like to find about group activities in your local area and also some very interesting talks form a variety of image makers visit the what's on page of the group website

<https://events.rps.org/en/?search=Contemporary%20Group>

If you have any feedback on what you would like to see in future issues, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Nick Linnett  
Concept Editor

# 10 Years of Concept

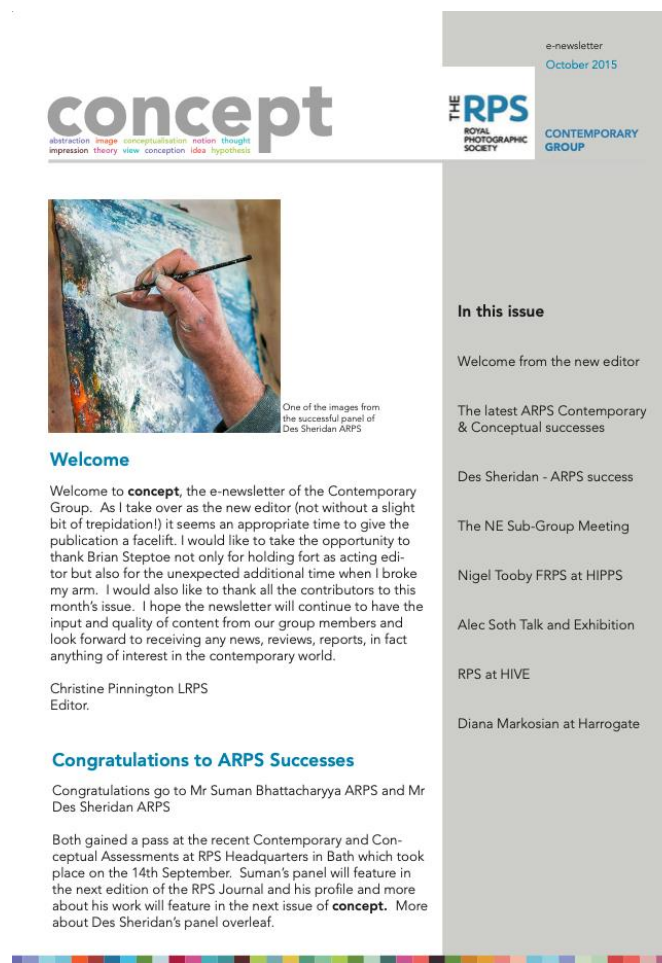
When I moved here to the North in 2013 I joined the North East Contemporary Group. Patricia Ruddle was the organiser. It was a fun group and on my second visit Patricia asked for a volunteer for a newsletter. I had been volunteering for 15 years with the Southern Region and with a publications background I thought 'I can do this'. I thought the newsletter was just for the North group but later discovered I had volunteered for the whole group - daunting!!

I designed, edited and produced the first issue of Concept in 2015 and cannot believe ten years have gone by. I was very grateful for the help and content I was given at the start (particularly from Patricia and Brian Steptoe). Concept has benefitted from our members in production, editing and contributing along the way and has grown considerably. New volunteers always bring new perspectives and a fresh approach.

I am taking a break from doing the publications but I would definitely recommend volunteering. It's a great way of keeping in touch with everything, getting to know fellow photographers and developing skills.

Burak Oguz (who also does media) will be taking over the publication of Concept and Rolf Kraehenbuehl will be taking over publication of the Contemporary Journal and I wish them both the very best.

Christine Pinnington  
Publications



# Update from our Chair

Time flies.

Here we are with the sun rising after I get up each day, and me counting lost opportunities to make photographs at my favourite time of day but at least it means not getting up at 0300hrs to get on location!

So much has happened since March. We now have a new CEO in post and quite a change with personnel at HQ which is now in rented accommodation across the road from the old premises which has now been sold at a loss.

Some staff have gone with the arrival of the new CEO and I'm hoping that their replacements will make the members more centric to the operation of the RPS.

In my opinion it was too much an 'us and them' scenario before the new CEO took over. Only time will tell though, and she is faced with an impossible task of managing change in an organisation that at times appears to resist change.

Change is the only constant as far as I am concerned and we need to embrace it if we are to leave a legacy for future generations of photographers. Without doubt, some people are already uncomfortable and will become more so as the programme of changes is worked up across the organisation.

I'm prepared to cut some slack and allow for new blood to steer us through uncharted waters. I'm not for digging my heels in unnecessarily, after all, if you always do what you always did then you'll always get what you always got. We know where that has got us in recent years.

One of the biggest challenges facing us currently is the amorphous state that Distinctions are in. Some of you may be aware of rumblings about what is happening, and I cannot shed any light on that as MemCom have not had full disclosure of the proposals on the table. Again, I'm prepared to cut some slack here and bide my time until I need to be told about what is being proposed. There is no point stirring up unrest on speculation.

Distinctions certainly need a shake up as far too many negative reports have come my way about expectation management. As with time flying, only time will tell!

Tom Owens ARPS  
Chair

# Postal Portfolio

The Postal Portfolio provides opportunities for members of the Contemporary SIG to view and comment on prints and books made by other members and to receive feedback on their own work.

There are two circuits of boxes at present with five boxes going round each circuit. The original circuit has been in existence for over 20 years. Members find it a stimulating and encouraging means of sharing their photography with others and enjoy seeing and handling work in the form of prints. When a box arrives through the post you add a piece of your own work, be it a single print or a series of prints or even perhaps a book. You can also view the work of other members, read the comments which have been made and add your own comments. The suggested turnaround time for boxes is two to three weeks. Once you have finished with a box, you send it to the next person on the circuit. When the box has completed a circuit and has returned to you, you can see the comments which have been made on your own work.

In addition to the circuits, we have monthly meetings over Zoom to show and discuss work and other topics members want to raise. Every three months a meeting is given over to discussion of a published photography book chosen by a member.

The Postal Portfolio would welcome new members. If you are interested in joining us or want further information, please contact me at [contemporarypostal@rps.org](mailto:contemporarypostal@rps.org)

Nigel Corby  
Coordinator, Contemporary Postal Portfolio



# Committee News

Introducing a new member of the Contemporary Group  
Team: Donata Rogozik

Donata is a member of the RPS Contemporary North Group and serves on the committee of the Windsor Photographic Society, where she manages its Instagram presence.

She describes herself as an amateur photographer since the age of ten, when she received her first film camera. Over the years, she has attended various photography workshops in both the UK and Poland. More recently, her travels have led her to explore fine art and street photography, supported as a mentee by Simon Ellingworth.

Her passion for photography is reinforced by a background in social sciences and marketing, where visual storytelling and audience engagement play a central role. In her current marketing role, she travels across Central and Eastern Europe and is always eager to engage photographically with local environments and cultures. Her dual Polish-British heritage inspires her to seek out stories that reflect shared human experiences.

With her experience and interests, Donata aims to help organise engaging and inclusive events for the Contemporary Group, working closely with fellow team members.

## **Martin Howse ARPS**

(1944 – 2025)

Martin was a long-standing member of the of the RPS South West Region. He was a regular supporter of regional events with his wife Vivien, as well as both being active members of the Visual Art's and Contemporary special interest groups.

His love of photography started in his early teens when he would borrow his uncle's developing tank, and his enlarger was a home-made affair which was kept under his bed.

Whilst he did dabble in digital photography, he was a traditional Black and White landscape photographer, who enjoyed being able to photograph what and how he wanted. He was a master craftsman. Every print he made was carefully considered and a work of art.

Martin was a long-standing committee member and former Regional Organiser. He was very modest about his successes and always ready to help those less experienced. He achieved his LRPS in 1981 and later went on to gain his Associateship.

In 2011 he embarked on a joint project, with Vivien, to photograph the artists living in West Cornwall in their studios. The work was enthusiastically received by Falmouth Art Gallery, and the body of work became part of the Gallery's archive. It is a fitting legacy of his work.

Martin passed away quite suddenly, and we are all saddened by his passing, everyone who knew him will remember what a truly great photographer and good friend he was.

Rod Fry ARPS



# Philip Ian Pearce

*IndustrialART-EN*  
Industrial Art Exhibition in Germany

In the Ruhr region, Germany's steel and coal region, industrial art represents an art form with which everyone can identify: art that explores former industrial facilities from a past industrial era. Proud relics of a bygone industrial period, displayed in photographs, paintings, sculptures, or installations, enjoy great popularity in the region.

People in the Ruhr region identify with and are proud of their past. They spend their free time with friends and family visiting former industrial facilities, which are now part of a comprehensive art and cultural offering.

After successfully exhibiting my photographic artworks of disused industrial facilities several times, I asked myself whether art can be connected to today's industry.

How can a photographic artist make present-day and future companies, their technology, and their employees, emotionally tangible for people through the artist's signature style and their own personal creativity, just as artists have already done with disused industrial facilities?

With the exhibition *IndustrialART-EN*, I intend to take precisely this step and give the people of the Ennepe-Ruhr district (EN) an artistic glimpse behind the scenes of several industrial companies and their everyday operations. Through the perception of art, I want to show them how proud the employees and managers still are of their companies and their work. The only difference is that, as a photographic artist, I portray this working world as I have experienced it and, above all, how I want to reflect it with my art. I take a conceptual approach and consider the desired visual effect before a photo shoot. This involves capturing people at work, here in their typical work clothes, as well as technical details. The photographs taken during the shoots then form the basis of the workflow for further editing in Photoshop. Here, I edit the images using the digital colour palette to achieve the desired effect.

I have been working on this project for over two years now and have been to seven companies for numerous on-site photo shootings. A small part of the exhibition is reflected in the works shown here. Among other things, they depict a welder, a painter, and an employee at work in a sandblasting booth. Other works depict technical details of pumps, pneumatic hoists, and gears.

A total of 65 photographic artworks and six to seven sculptures by a sculptor will be presented to the public consecutively in three local museums from October 2025 to September 2026.

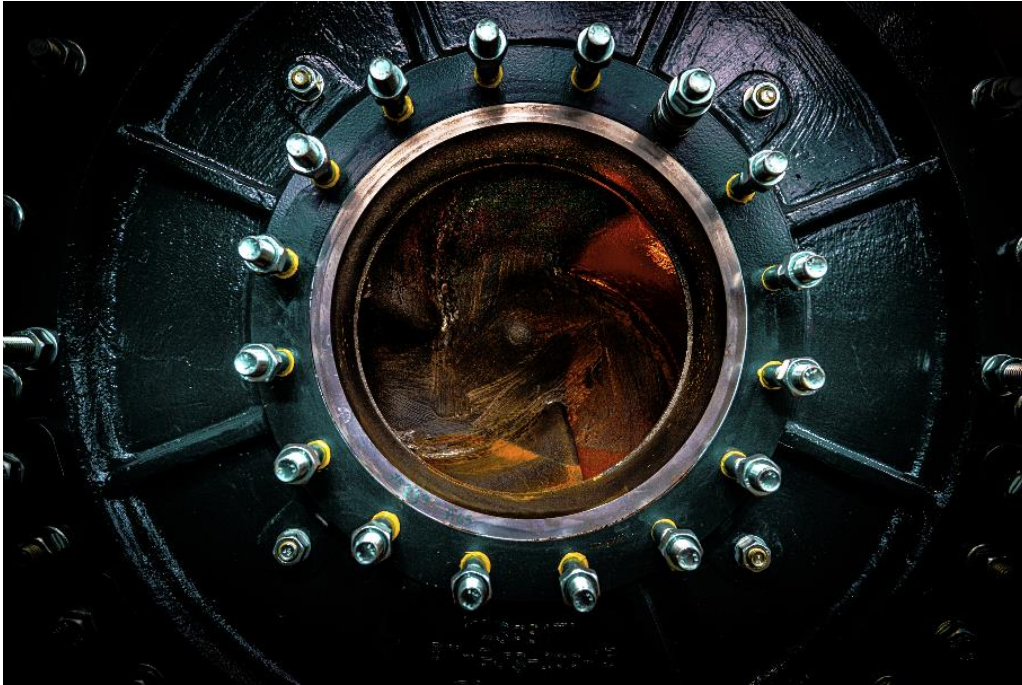
About the photo artist Philip Ian Pearce

The English-born photographer Philip Ian Pearce has been involved with photography since the 1980s. During his professional career as an industrial engineer he held various management positions in industrial plant construction, which has greatly influenced his photographic work.

His artistic works, influenced by Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism, outline his exploration of social structural change through his unique style of "Analytical Expressionism." His emotive interpretation of industry, technology, and work invites the viewer to look beyond obvious themes and discover new emotional meanings in his future-oriented art.

Since 2016, Philip has regularly presented his work to a broad audience in various exhibitions. Starting in the Winter semester of 2021, Philip has taken up a teaching position at the Chair of Digital Art and Cultural Mediation at the private University of Witten/Herdecke in Germany. In 2023 he was nominated for the [KUN:ST] International Art Prize *Grenzgänge* (Crossing Borders).

Philip joined the RPS in January 2024 and is a member of both the Contemporary and Visual Art Groups, as well as the Germany Chapter.



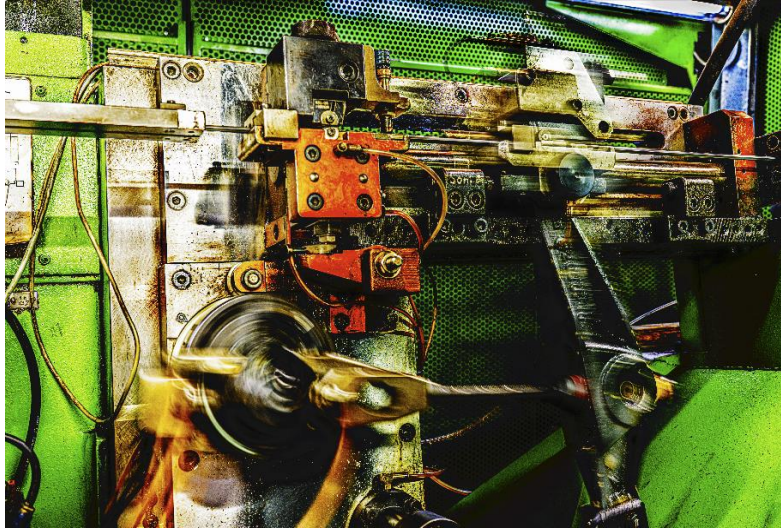
What does the viewer see? A glimpse into the hatch of a submarine? Working with illusions is one of the goals of my photography. The photos were originally taken at a company that manufactures pumps and show men at work and a view into a large pump.



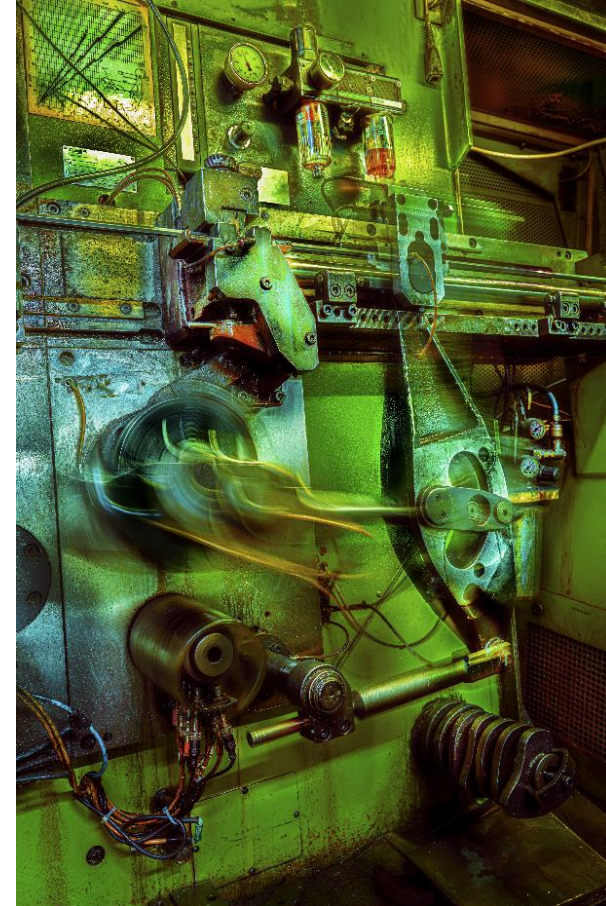


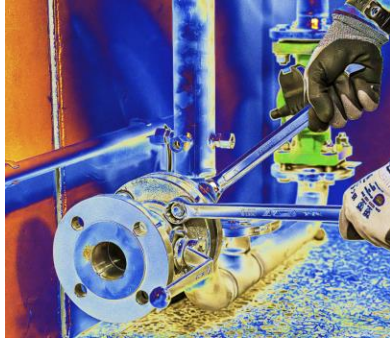
The gaze is directed towards the sky, asking oneself where the image ends and how large the depicted object really is.

When the viewer asks this question, one of my intentions is achieved.



During my photo shoots at companies, it's important for me to get involved in the operational processes. Then the image subjects will come to you naturally. Here, I was fascinated by the movement, and it was important to capture it.

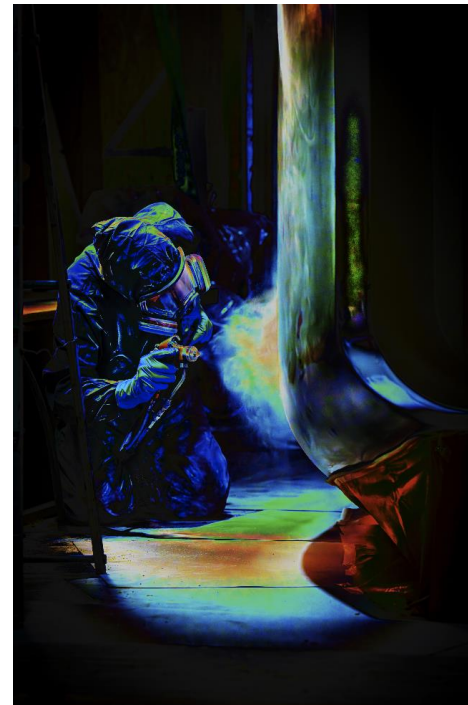
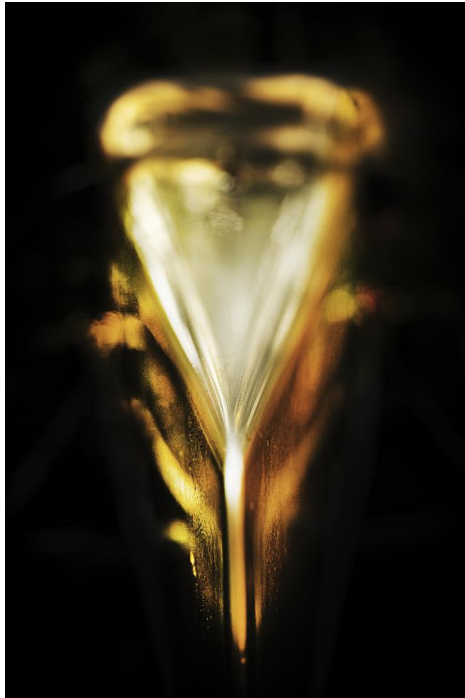




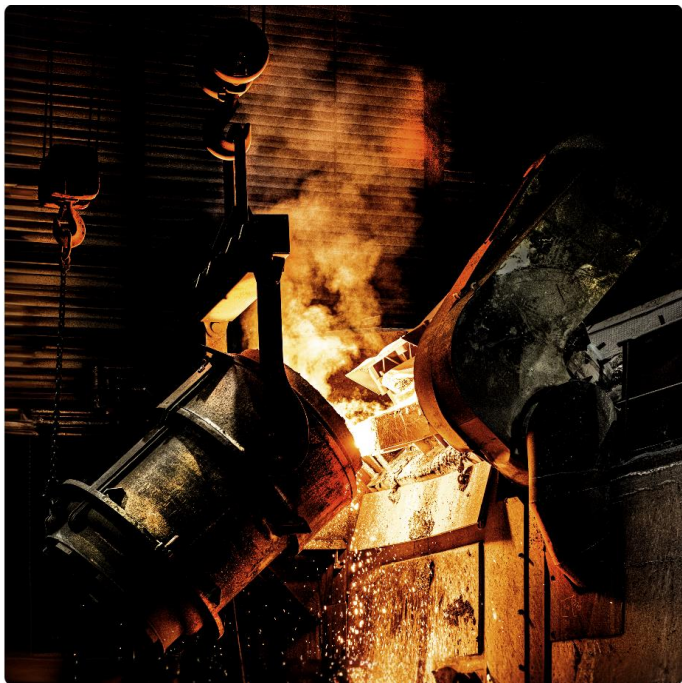
Here we can see the inventors of the gasoline pump with their current products: hydrogen filling stations.

But the viewer should ask themselves what exactly they are seeing.





I spent two years working on the images for this innovation workshop for boat prototypes. It's simply amazing what engineering and craftsmanship can achieve. With my works of art I show what I saw in them and what I intend to show the viewer.

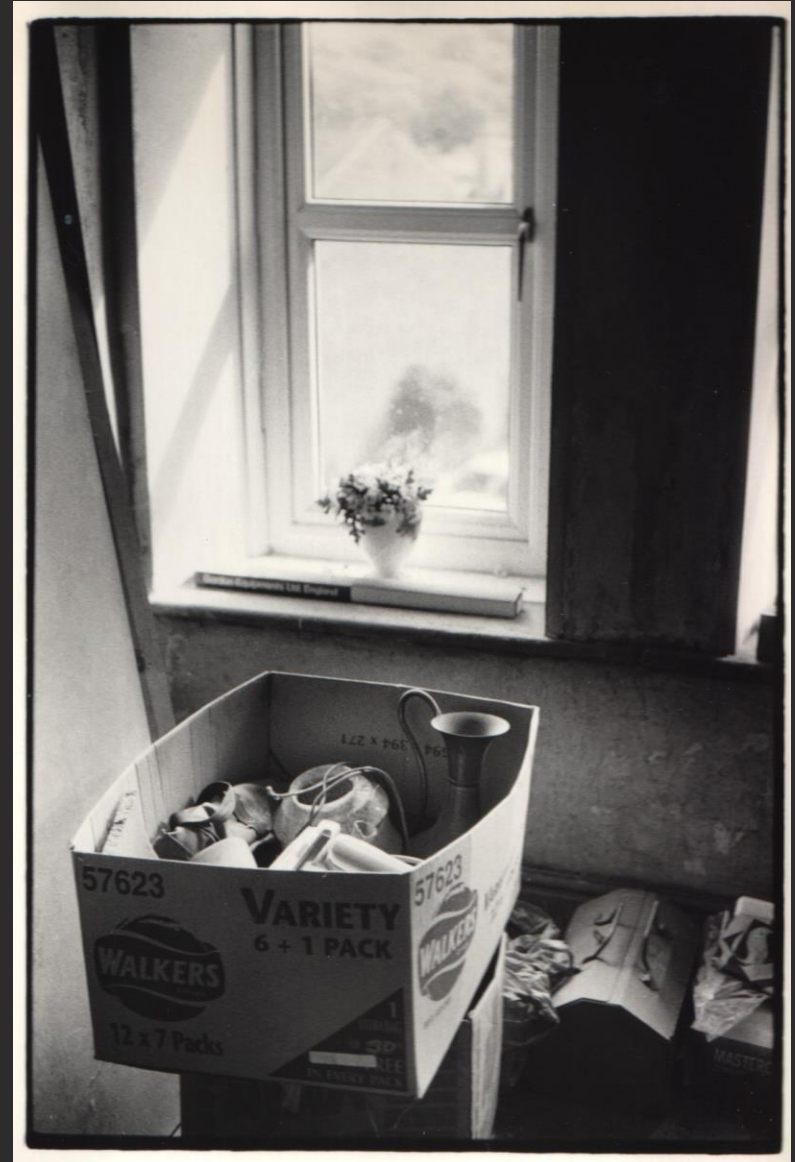


These works of art were created during photo shoots at a medium-sized steel mill for special steels. These were particularly exciting processes, but here I had to exercise particular caution during the photo shoots.

# Golden Years

*Martyn Pearson MA*

Hilda and Gordon have lived in the same house for 70 years. The couple are now in their early 90s and are cared for by their sons, daughter in law and grandchildren. Due to increasing ill health, they need regular medical intervention. The couple are now primarily restricted to the ground floor of their Sheffield home, and, although a stairlift has been installed both are reluctant to use it as 'it is too complicated.' Although, mostly, housebound Hilda and Gordon are often taken on day trips by their family.





"Hilda and Gordon are my parents and they moved into their home the week I was born. Although I don't now live in Sheffield I'd visited the city intensively to complete another project last year. This Hilda and Gordon project has been at the back of my mind for a few years and now, as both of my parents are becoming increasingly frail, it is important that I record this period of their lives, and their home before the inevitable. This project is part of a wider body of work that has the working title 'Love Letters.'



# London Through My Film Camera—A Day in Pictures

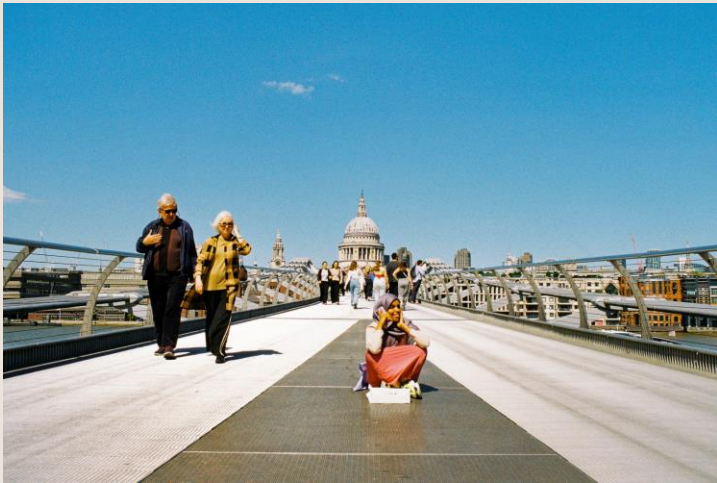
*Bruno Vinel*

In May 2025, I embarked on a film photography walk in London, aiming to document the vibrant life of the city by capturing candid moments of people going about their daily routines with my film cameras. It was an opportunity to rediscover and reconnect with shooting on film—the way I began my journey in photography more than forty years ago.

My walk took me through some of the most touristic and bustling locations in the capital: Covent Garden, St Paul's Cathedral, the Millennium Bridge, South Bank, Westminster and Chinatown. As I was walking, I sought out ways to frame and isolate my subjects—using reflections, contrasts, and architectural elements. I focused on people in motion: commuters, shoppers, and tourists.



Fuji 200. Olympus OM4Ti and Zuiko 50mm f1.4,



Fuji 200 ISO, Olympus OM4Ti Zuiko 23mm lens, Millenium Bridge, London



Cinestill 400D, Mamiya 645 Pro with 80mm f2.8, Thames Pathway near the National Theatre

I aimed to create images that showcase genuine activity and everyday energy, without staging or disrupting the scenes as much as possible. Throughout the day, my attention was on candid moments: people walking past, waiting, interacting—unposed and authentic. I find these genuine slices of city life far more meaningful.

My choice of camera and film helped convey a natural mood rather than a polished portrait. Using Cinestill 400 was a deliberate decision to favour saturated colours, a choice with which I felt comfortable. Using the Mamiya 645 Pro medium format proved to be a challenge and some images are not perfectly in focus.

The walk was neither rushed nor dramatic. Shooting on film, exposing and focusing manually, encouraged me to observe scenes as they unfolded and to take my time before pressing the shutter. It gave me the chance to record everyday London in an unhurried, honest, and simple style.



Cinestill 400D. Olympus OM4Ti and Zuiko 50mm f1.4,  
Charing Cross Road, London



Cinestill 400D, Mamiya 645 Pro and 80mm f2.8,  
Southbank Skating Park, London



Fuji 200, Olympus OM4Ti and Zuiko 50mm f1.4, Thames  
pathway in front of the Tate Modern, London



Cinestill 400D, Olympus OM4Ti and Zuiko 50mm f1.4, South Bank, London



Cinestill 400D, Mamiya 645 Pro and 80mm f2.8,  
Southbank, London



Reflection, Kodak Porta 400, Olympus OM4Ti  
and Zuiko 50mm f1.4, Arundel Street, London



Cinestill 400D. Olympus OM4Ti and Zuiko 50mm f1.4, Victoria  
Embankment, London



# Alchemy

Adrian James

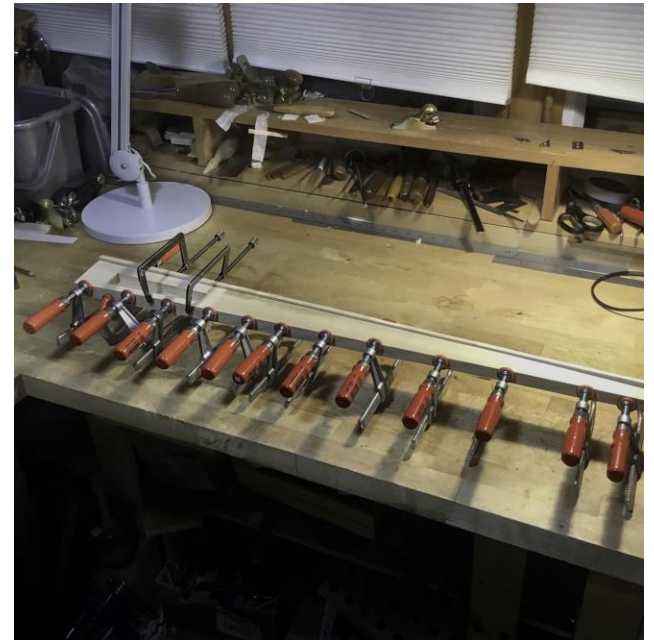
In May this year, I was awarded my ARPS for a photobook with the title, "*Alchemy: the making of an archlute*". Why alchemy? - because what I photographed was the transformation of a few pieces of wood by luthier, Tony Johnson, into a beautiful hand-crafted instrument a process that was little short of magical!

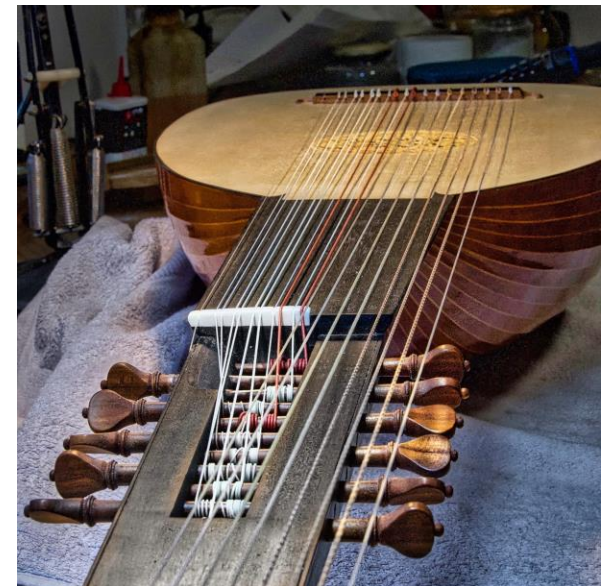


My Statement of Intent described the book as "... a documentary photographic record of the creation of an archlute by one of the UK's leading luthiers. Both the lute and this book were commissioned by the Royal Academy of Music and copies will go to their library. My intention was not only to record the luthier's working environment but also to provide a detailed photographic account of the crafting of this unique instrument. It was therefore necessary to document every step of its construction. For me, however, this book of images is also a means of sharing, with others, my sense of wonderment and fascination at both the craftsmanship and the highly complex technical processes involved in making an archlute. I was so privileged to witness and photograph both the craft and the craftsman."



These are a few of the over 160 images in the book that offer glimpses into this story of alchemy.





# Mundane

(adj: ordinary, unexciting, concerned with everyday life)

*Neil Goodwin CBE ARPS*

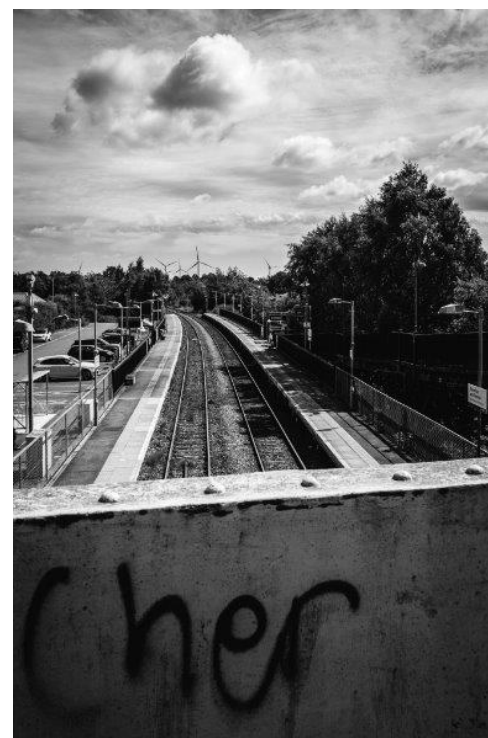
In our day-to-day lives we are surrounded by the mundane and, quite frankly, the boring, which although important to our living we subconsciously ignore. For most of us our daily world is ordinary and unremarkable, and it is this that I am aiming to capture.

In this ongoing project I am inspired by, among others, Edward Ruscha, particularly his well known and seminal 1960's work, *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*; and John Myers, because of his 1970's work capturing the mundane aspects of life in his home town. In common with Ruscha and Myers I am basing my work in the familiar, namely railway stations between my home on the Fife coast and the City of Edinburgh.

To start the project, I am capturing the details of their structures, not just the ordinariness but the symbols and meanings that chime with our everyday life. And to underscore my approach I am deliberately composing in black and white to direct attention to the essential elements of the scene.









## Between the Lines: Photography as a Visual Language

*Clive Watkins ARPS*

Earlier this year, I enrolled in the RPS sponsored Open College of Arts short course, "Photography as a Language". The course encouraged me to move beyond the technical and into the philosophical – to think not just about how I take photographs, but why. One idea that struck me deeply was the concept that photography operates much like a language: we decode our mental model of the world and encode it through choices of frame, form, light, and timing. The viewer then decodes that visual message, arriving at their own meaning. framed as neglect, others might read as texture.



For my final project, I took this concept to the streets of Glasgow. I was drawn to the ways in which people are physically and metaphorically constrained by the built environment – confined by architecture, shadow, neglect, and time. Working in monochrome allowed me to strip away distraction and focus on shape, contrast, and emotional tone.





In these images, individuals move through urban spaces that dwarf, contain, or ignore them. Graffiti-scrawled doorways, blocked passageways, and heavy masonry evoke feelings of marginalisation, weariness, and disconnection. Yet there is also quiet dignity in these moments – a kind of resilience in simply moving forward.

The process became a kind of visual problem-solving. I worked with light, line, and shadow to “speak” about presence and absence, pressure and escape. Just as in spoken language, there is ambiguity and interpretation. What I saw as constraint, others might see as calm. What I framed as neglect, others might read as texture.



Ultimately, this project taught me that photography isn’t just about what we show – it’s about what we ask the viewer to feel and think. Like any good conversation, it invites response.

# ¡No Pasarán!

*Simon Peter Green ARPS*

In 1936, 36 year old George Palmer, a First World War veteran who had endured gas attacks and trench foot, said goodbye to his mother, Eunice O'Brien, who lived at 49 Enham, Hampshire.

As Test Valley's sole volunteer for the Spanish Civil War, George defied a legal ban that would later see many prosecuted and embarked on a daunting journey: crossing the English Channel, evading French police, and trekking over the Pyrenees into Spain.





49 Enham, Test Valley, Hampshire



Crossing the Channel

He enlisted in the International Brigades, 35,000 volunteers from more than 50 countries, and served in No. 1 Company, the Major Attlee Company.

On 12 January 1937, near Madrid, George was killed at Las Rozas, reportedly "blown to pieces." His comrade, Phil Harker, described how he "died an anti-fascist soldier who had won a name for himself."

*It was not fraud or foolishness,  
Glory, revenge, or pay:  
We came because our open eyes  
Could see no other way.  
- Cecil Day Lewis*

I stood in Enham, knocking on doors, chatting with locals, even stopping at the post office yet no one remembered George or his mother. Their story remains quietly forgotten.

This work is my tribute to George Palmer, and to all those who recognise fascism's urgent threat and choose to act.

<https://simonpetergreen.com/no-pasaran>

I've long been fascinated by the Spanish Civil War and recently wondered if anyone from my local area took part. I find it remarkable that mostly working-class people from across the world - including the UK, USA, Germany, Italy and even China - travelled, often illegally and at great personal risk, to fight for the Republican cause against fascism.

Did someone from a remote rural area like Test Valley go to the civil war in Spain?

These thoughts became the starting point for my latest project with CAS, our local artist association in the Test Valley. The theme of our upcoming exhibition is *Remembrance*, after a lot of research, and digging, I eventually found George Palmer and this project flowed from there.



Ebro: British Brigades' Final Stand



Fascists Destroy Spanish Homes



Wounded Republicans Moved by Train: Cambrils to Barcelona



Farewell, International Brigades: Legends Forever

My intention was not to create a historically accurate documentary, but rather to prompt the viewer to reflect on the present. By "projecting the past onto the present," I wanted to make 1936 feel relatable and relevant to today's audience. (punctum and studium?). I combined recycled photographs from my archive with newly made images, piecing them together like a puzzle.

My approach was informed by research into photographers such as Aïda Muluneh, Chloe Dewe Mathews, Mishka Henner, and Emily Allchurch, among others.

Proud to say, *No Pasarán*, has been well received - CAS have even used "Crossing the Channel" as the poster image and banner for the exhibition marketing.

# Water Worlds

## Carol Ballenger

Carol Ballenger's photographs are in collections in this country and abroad and have been exhibited widely, including for the National Trust, The Dartmoor National Park Authority, The Royal Photographic Society and the Edinburgh Festival. London exhibitions include St. Martin-In-The-Field and The Barbican Galleries. *Ashide, A Second Nature*, an exhibition of photographs of Japanese gardens in the UK with Haiku by John Powls was shown at the Embassy of Japan in 2006 and was named museum exhibition of the week by the *Times* newspaper.

A Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society she is a founder member of Arts Live who promote exhibitions, performances and workshops. With a background in music Carol enjoys working in collaboration, often as a violinist in performances.

Her work has always reflected environmental issues, and she sees her photographs as meditations on the landscape. *The Tree of Life*, was shown at the Science Museum, London; The New York Hall of Science and used in a report at the 2016 Paris Summit on Climate Change. *Kaze*, a video documenting a coastal storm, was shown at the 2018 South Korea Biennale.

She has used a range of processes and cameras from darkroom to digital and feels that skills learned in the darkroom have informed her digital work.

Books include *Dartmoor Dreams*; *Stone Universe*; *Dartington Hall*, *One Endless Garden*; *Route 66*; *Ashide*; *The Red Comet* and *Working with Light*.

For more information, please go to [www.artslive.org.uk](http://www.artslive.org.uk).

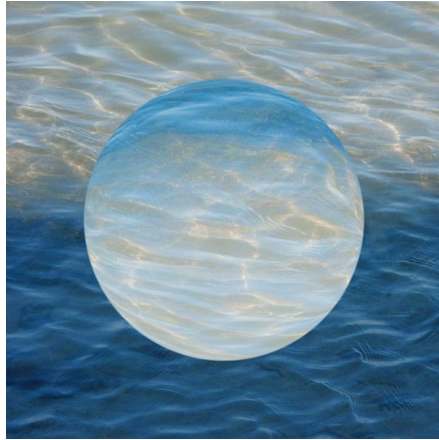
To be exhibited at the Galleries shown below - follow the links for more details:

MAKE Southwest, Bovey Tracey, Devon: August 16th - November 1st, 2025.

<https://makesouthwest.org.uk/all-activity/maker-showcase-carol-ballenger>

Avivson Gallery, 49 Highgate High Street, London, N6 5JX: November 15th - 22nd, 2025.

[Avivson Art Gallery in Highgate, London | Inaugurated in 2018](#)





These Water World images were made in the shallow intertidal waters of St Ives Bay, Cornwall, and reflect the special light for which this area is known. As metaphors for marine habitats, from the fragile ecosystems of tide pools to the mysterious undiscovered depths of the ocean floor, the narratives they hint at are far-reaching. Some distant planets and moons in our galaxy which scientists have named Water Worlds may have similar watery environments that might support life. Some of the images in the Water World exhibition may prompt us to imagine what these distant worlds might look like.

# Anastasia Potekhina FRPS

For those of you who weren't able to attend the online talk with Anastasia in July here is a link to the Zoom event.

[https://youtu.be/jkADT8emofl?si=v8tfJe8eOwA35\\_9U](https://youtu.be/jkADT8emofl?si=v8tfJe8eOwA35_9U)

During the meeting Anastasia talked about her creative journey that led to the Fellowship. These are stunning, remarkable photographs taken on her mobile phone and printed digitally. We've included her Statement of Intent here, her hanging plan and several of the images from the panel.

Since receiving the Distinction, Anastasia has won the 1<sup>st</sup> prize in PhOETRY III which will be shown in October at the ARTE Music Academy in Nicosia. The festival is an innovative and multicultural event that places poetry at the centre of all art forms.

Watch this space: as a member of the Women in Photography SIG, Anastasia will soon be interviewed in their online magazine.









# STATEMENT OF INTENT

"A dream is not reality but who's to say which is which?" - Lewis Carroll.

Perhaps, when we create something, we become like children and use our imagination to emigrate to our imaginary world. Reality can be harsh, but our fictional world makes us feel harmonious in it. In this selection of self-portraits taken by camera phone in one shot, I find my world in reflections and shadows. These are reflections and shadows that I suddenly come across while going about my day-to-day activities. Out comes my mobile and I emigrate. While creating the composition, I discover an amazing thing. Before I take out the camera, I look around and it seems like there is chaos everywhere. However, when I look through the camera screen (viewfinder), I form the background, middle and foreground of the photo and find my place in this new reality. At that moment, before I press the touchscreen button, everything in the photo itself forms an unexpected order, everything finds its place and interacts with the other elements, including my own image. This is how my composition is built.

I think this is very important because it is a principle that really helps in life to understand difficult situations. It's good to look at your chaos, as if from the outside. That's what I do now, I look at everything through the viewfinder. From childhood we are taught to be the same as everyone else, but then, throughout our lives, we try to find our differences and show our individuality. It seems to me that when we are fearless in our self-expression in creativity, and not only, it reveals us from different sides and makes us different and interesting.

Assessment Date – 15 May 2025

# FELLOWSHIP

## Presentation Layout

						
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
						
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 (Optional)

Applicant Name

Anastasia Potekhina

Membership/Record Number

Assessment Date

15/05/25

Genre

Contemporary Photography

Save As...

Print

## Southwest Activity Group

### Contemporary SIG Group

#### 16th March 2025

The Southwest Activity Group met on Sunday 16th March at Dartington in Devon. Eleven people were present, with two apologies, the largest number since before the Covid Lockdown.

Members were delighted to learn that a portfolio of work documenting the Uyghur community in China, taken by Muriel Somerfield ARPS some sixty years ago, has been accepted by the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) to form part of their historic collection. Muriel is a long-time member of the Contemporary Group and a regular participant in Southwest Contemporary Meetings until she moved to the East Midlands to be near her family.

Martin and Vivien Howse have been helping to sort out and dispose of Muriel Somerfield's photographic collection, which is how the Uyghur photographs came to be accepted by the RGS. Another set of images, which they brought along, comprised a set of monochrome prints taken by the late Richard Sadler FRPS, former Chair of the Contemporary Group and well-known for documenting post-war Coventry. Muriel first met Richard when they had worked for Courtauld's in Coventry. Muriel had subsequently been gifted various images for her collection over the many years that they remained friends.

These included original prints of his photographs of Weegee and various 'well-known faces', all signed by Richard.

Vivien also shared a selection of images that she had recently taken at RAF Dry Tree at Goonhilly Down in Cornwall. This WWII RAF radar station later became the centre for British Satellite Communications and offers a wide range of historic and decaying buildings. In a not dissimilar vein, Rod Fry is compiling a collection of photographs of what he describes as 'relics of the 1939-45 war', some his own and others collected from other photographers. The collection is wide-ranging in its scope: land, sea, air, coastal, city, Bristol and several piers which were damaged and later dismantled such as those at Plymouth and Minehead. Rod also shared a book of images of unrestored German fortifications in the Channel Islands.

Graham Hodgson had been trying to imitate Cornish Paintings using photography. This led him to produce composite images of a building superimposed on an image of a stone wall with a pronounced horizontal division in coloration (created using a colour-shift) thereby producing the appearance of a landscape or seascape. These were then printed in on A2 paper.

Shelley Hodgson, who was visiting the group, shared six monochrome images of glass as part of an exploration of work that she may be using as part of a forthcoming exhibition.

John Evans-Jones continued his exploration of the nature of spaces and places by asking how space can be defined. If you select the appropriate viewpoint one space can look like another, as he illustrated with images of MOMA and Marks and Spencer's. A second example consisted of photographs asking whether an empty shop repurposed for an Art Exhibition but now again disused, is an empty shop or an empty gallery? John then further demonstrated the way in which Art Installations can look like something else. A packed-up exhibition can resemble IKEA and a Bike Shop, and a Bike Art Installation can appear effectively identical.

The final printed images were shared by Carol Ballenger and comprised the latest developments of her work on the intertidal region, now entitled 'Along the Salt Strand'. This will be appearing in both Devon and London later in the year and explores a range of ideas, concepts and concerns important in the tidal marine environment.

The second set of books were presented by Ken Holland. In the main these comprised collections produced and published by Contemporary Southwest some fifteen or more years ago. Ken also shared the new edition of his book on how to appraise photographs, especially but not exclusively, from the perspective of a Camera Club Judge. Entitled 'Let's Look at Photographs' this is available from Blurb, both in printed form and also as a pdf.

## Southwest Activity Group

### Contemporary SIG Group

Moving on to Projected Images (incorporating the usual lessons on how to facilitate the communication between pieces of equipment designed to be incompatible with each other) we began with a presentation from our second visitor, Simon Green. Simon has been working with an interdisciplinary group from the University of Birmingham which is looking at the ways in which the mind and body coordinate rhythms. This involves DJ and dancers wearing Brainwave Caps and photography of laser patterns from a disco-ball. The research is a 'simple' surrogate for looking at how the brain analyses complex information from a range of sensory inputs and makes appropriate body movements such as when a driver approaches a complex road junction including multiple vehicles and types of vehicles, pedestrians and traffic lights.

Paul Kirby shared the latest progress in his Landlines project. This now consists of square monochrome images of lines in the landscape which are made by human beings in a range of ways which are both purposeful and accidental (for example a path can be deliberate or can emerge/evolve with time).

John had been exploring cardboard boxes bearing logos and used to contain foods and other branded goods, something which began with his careful dismantling of boxes to minimise the space needed for recycling. He presented three themes 'The Street', 'The Fun' and 'The Art'. Clearly things are sold in boxes (TheStreet) but logos can be blurred or cropped to rectangles and used in Pelmanism (Fun). Finally, as Art, boxes can be used to construct sculptures and perhaps painted (similar to the work of Rauschenberg) or used to produce squares which can be used in work similar to that of Josef Albers but in John's work using averaged colours from individual boxes.

Ken has just completed a study which he began in 2008 and entitled 'By the Way', in which he photographs derelict buildings in Southwest England, many of them wayside garages and cafes. On this occasion we viewed 'Part 1: The Outside' with Part 2, looking inside the building, coming along at the next meeting. The work begins looking at the buildings in their entirety and then gradually moves in closer and closer to the fine detail. Finally, Graham provided his usual entertainment. This began with a tessellation of signs, which he then edited by moving to the use of large pixels to hide the individual detail. This could then be edited by removing alternate rows, columns or both or alternate pixels to create a chequerboard effect.

Other manipulation is possible, and it is possible to emulate the effect of petal and sand flowers. An individual pixel does not constitute a picture just as a petal is not a flower.

There was general agreement that the subject matter of the images that we had seen and discussed were even more varied than usual. We were also, as always, very grateful to Carol and Graham for hosting these meetings and for providing the excellent food and choice of drinks.

Adrian Hough ARPS

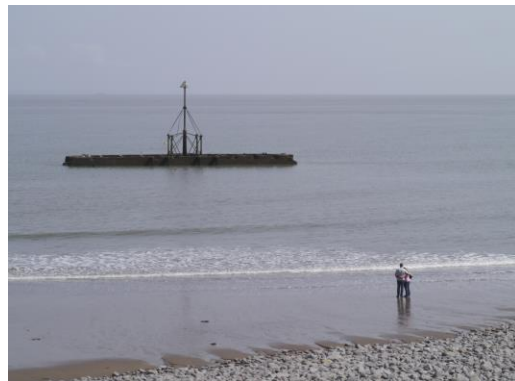
**Southwest Activity Group**  
Contemporary SIG Group



Ken Holland FRPS



Ken Holland FRPS



Royal Observer Corp bunker at Berry Head  
by Rod Fry



Beesands Pillbox by Rod Fry



The remains of Minehead Pier demolished at  
the start of WW2 by Rod Fry

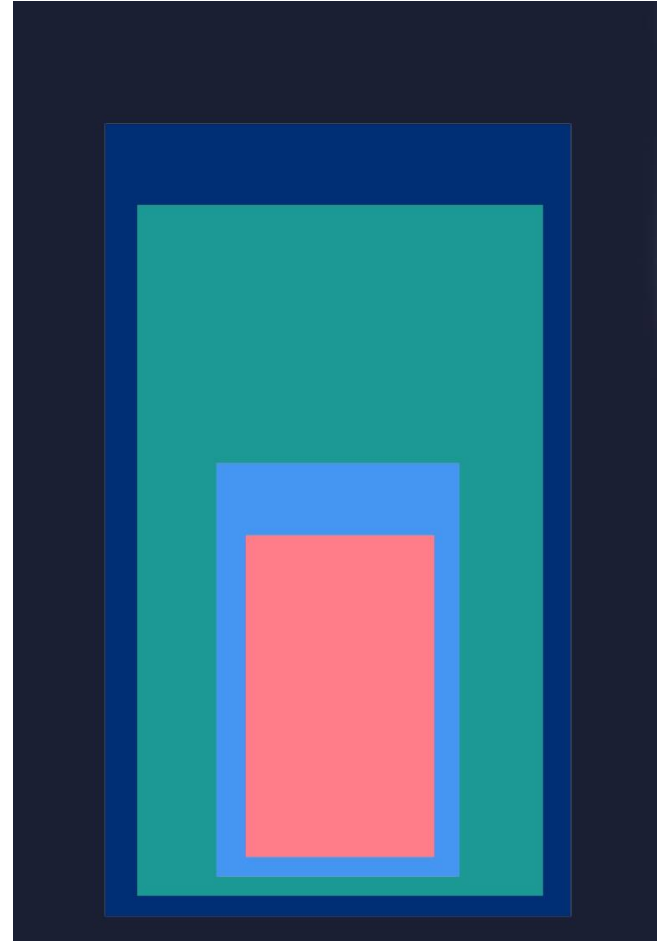
**Southwest Activity Group**  
*Contemporary SIG Group*



MOMA New York by John Evans-Jones ARPS



M&S Dartford by John Evans-Jones ARPS



Homage to the rectangle after Albers  
by John Evans-Jones ARPS

## Southwest Activity Group

### *Contemporary SIG Group*

**19th June 2025**

The Southwest Activity Group met on Sunday 29th June at Dartington in Devon. Nine members were present, with two apologies.

The meeting began with those present reflecting and sharing their memories of Graham Howse ARPS who had sadly died just over a week previously at the age of eighty. Graham was a highly talented black and white film and darkroom photographer and had been a long serving member of the RPS and the Contemporary Group as well as being very active in the life of the RPS Southwest Region. Examples of Graham's work can be found in previous editions of Concept, although the digitisation and transfer to a screen does not do justice to the quality of his prints.

Following these thoughts, and a more general discussion on photographic issues, we moved on to consider the images that members had brought along to share. As is always the case the discussion of the images ranged far and wide and covered all sorts of photographic concepts and history which went far beyond the actual images themselves, but which had been stimulated by them.

John Evans-Jones had brought along a draft of the first volume in a series of three books entitled 'Art as I see it'. In this series John intends to collate, organise and explore his photography in and around Art Galleries. The first volume, 'Me Taking and Making Pictures', focusses on an exploration of Art and Photography which builds up to an 'exhibition' at the end of the book. Along the way John uses photography to explore various aspects of art, including photographs taken in or edited to appear in the style of various well known and distinctive artists.

In addition to the draft of book one, John had also brought along mock-ups of the sort of images and layout he intends to use in the other two books. The second book will address issues around art galleries and the third a combination of feet and frames. In the third volume John asks the question 'What happens if we produce art to match a frame rather than selecting a frame which shows the art to its best advantage?' John's presentation led to a very wide-ranging discussion as well as various suggestions regarding layout, font and image sizes.

Adrian Hough has been playing around with ideas for three separate possible projects. The first of these was originally to have been about electricity but was later narrowed down to look at radio.

Adrian was somewhat surprised at the positive response to the two images which he had brought to share. Adrian's second potential project concerned the feeling and impression that a visitor may obtain on entering a particular small church building in Devon. The group examined seven images and made a number of helpful suggestions. Finally, Adrian shared an idea for a third project which is, as yet, unillustrated which left everyone intrigued as to the sorts of images that might be involved.

Graham Hodgson had been wondering if any of the many photographs that he had taken but never used for anything could be put to good use by taking a non-direct approach. To this end he took ten monochrome images of trees and layered them together to produce a composite image which he then printed on A2 paper. The result was intriguing and raised various questions. Graham also took ten landscape and townscape images and applied the same process. The result on this occasion was quite striking and every bit as good as much abstract art which sells for large sums of money. It was suggested that printing on textured paper would really make the image and its nuances stand out and that Graham should join the Visual Arts Special Interest Group!

## Southwest Activity Group

### Contemporary SIG Group

Shelley Hodgson (no relation) shared a set of high contrast black and white prints which represent part of her preparations for a local exhibition. Some of these had a macabre quality to them, produced in part by the subject matter which included several different sets of models of heads which, in their real-life context, appear innocuous in themselves but when photographed became quite unsettling.

Carol Ballanger shared the latest developments in her preparations for the forthcoming exhibition at 'MAKE Southwest' in Bovey Tracey, which is due to open in August and which will later transfer to London where it will be on display in Highgate. Readers are referred to previous editions of Concept for a wider description of this project. However, Carol had now decided to focus the whole exhibition on images of imaginary worlds obtained by selecting and rotation central sections of photographs obtained on the seashore. The group examined 26 different images all of which will appear both on-line and in the book, but only ten of which will be printed as 80cm square diabonds for display. Members all selected some four or five images that they would choose to be amongst this set of ten in order to give Carol a feeling for how the different images might be received.

Simon Green shared a set of portraits of a Seikh family together with a video presentation in which Pam, the lady who commissioned the portraits and who Simon had met because she worked as a cleaner at the University, spoke about her life and interests. Pam (the colloquial version of her full name) explained various aspects of her life and it was clear that she enjoyed both cleaning and conversing with the people whom she met and with whom she interacted. Simon writes "Pamsfam: The family is the first institution in human history. No group is as universal as the family, the family is the strongest universal group. Families have existed in every age and in every society. Families are found in all corners of the world. No culture or society has ever existed without some type of family organisation. Each one of us is a member of some family or another. Pamsfam represents a family who live in Hillfields, Coventry, UK." The accompanying photograph shows Pam herself, whilst the complete set of portraits as well as the video can be accessed at

<https://simonpetergreen.com/pamsfam/>.

The final set of prints barely fitted in the room and comprised Adrian Hough's unsuccessful submission for an RPS Fellowship. The twenty-one images were all taken in the garden of The Bishop's Palace in Exeter and explore various aspects of the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity through photographs of a statue in the garden.

Moving on to projected images, Rod continued the theme which he began at the previous meeting with further images of buildings surviving from the 1939-45 war. Rod began by photographing some of the 6,000 or so pill-boxes which remain from the 30,000 which were constructed during the war. Much of this work focussed on Plymouth, mainly the outskirts of the city as only two buildings in the city centre survive from before the war. Due to the naval dockyards Plymouth probably suffered more intense bombing than any other British city outside London. However, Rod also ranged further afield, including Exmouth and Weymouth, as well as capturing some of the people who dressed up to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Ken Holland also provided us with a Part II, in this case the presentation entitled 'By The Way' that he began at the previous meeting. Part I had focussed on the exterior of closed down and derelict garages and industrial units that could be found 'by the way', in other words, at the side of the road. In Part II we moved inside such buildings a more difficult assignment due to the dangers of derelict buildings and the risk of trespass. These dangers, of course, included the risk of asbestos for which Ken was ever watchful.

## Southwest Activity Group

### Contemporary SIG Group

The final presentation followed the tradition of an entertainment provided by Graham, this time entitled 'Messing about with Other People's Pictures'. Graham noted that any internet user can easily find well-known artworks that have been modified in (often misguided) attempts to be humorous. Graham's approach, albeit superficially similar, was far more sophisticated as his editing was done with a purpose in mind which there by generated Contemporary Photography.

As always, we are very grateful to Caroland Graham for hosting these meeting sand for providing the excellent food and choice of drinks.

Adrian Hough ARPS



All images by Rod Fry ARPS

# By the Way

*Ken Holland*

## BY THE WAY

By the wayside,  
You stood, once proud to serve us.  
Time passed by.

By the wayside,  
You were discarded by the Throwaway Society  
That passes you by.

By the wayside,  
You still stand, now forgotten ignored and unseen.  
We all pass by.

By the wayside,  
Your walls, doors, floors and windows share tales of the past.  
Our eyes pass them by.

By the wayside.  
I still marvel at your hidden subtle beauty.  
I cannot pass you by,  
by the way.



Abandoned Factory by Ken Holland



Former Repair Garage by Ken Holland

## Documentary - Scotland

### Contemporary SIG Group

#### Summer '25

So far we've had three Days Out...Edinburgh May 27th, Glasgow June 19th, and Edinburgh again on 6th August. On those days we've visited various galleries and exhibitions and published e-zines of our photographic attempts on those days Too.

There is another two to go...Aberdeen August 28th, and then in Stirling in September, actual date to be confirmed but before the end of the Stirling Photography Festival.

The numbers of members attending these days is gradually, but definitely, increasing and we have seen numbers rise from an interested 4/5 to a healthy 12 at our last Edinburgh Day Out.

For Autumn and Winter we'll revert to our online zoom meetings and will have a few member's nights, a speaker or two, a book club night, and a Labhairt Beag night. In the last two years we also had a pre-Christmas Day Out and Lunch, so we've agreed this years too...December 3rd at the Verdant Works in Dundee.

This varied programme seems to be working for us, and despite Scotland being a big country we move our Days Out around so that everyone gets at least one event close-ish to home.

Steven Whittaker ARPS  
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## Northwest Activity Group

### Contemporary SIG Group

After consulting my regulars I found that the suggested dates didn't suit everyone and so the best way for us to enough Halifax was by meeting there twice. Following our agreement to find places on rail lines Halifax seemed ideal even if we strayed into Yorkshire. Seven members joined over both days and we welcomed Pete Gleeson for his first outing with us.

As always members used a variety of approaches and styles of camera. Geoff Batchelor came with his Olympus Pen half frame and Nikon film camera, while Paul utilised his small pocketable compact Canon and Romney used his usual setup of a fixed 50mm on his full frame Canon SLR. It was good too to see Brian back on the streets with us after years of medical issues.

Halifax is a fascinating town with lots to see. Of course, the Piece Hall is probably the best known, but other highlights include the Market, Halifax Minster and the Town Hall.

We were hoping for the wide view of the courtyard at the Piece Hall only to find that it had become a building site for the temporary staging for the Halifax Summer Festival. It gave a different view of this busy venue, and we came across a camera lashed to the railings capturing a time lapse of the building process. Still the colonnades were popular subjects particularly when the sun shone to produce sharp shadows.

The Market Hall and its stalls proved popular and on the second outing we managed to gain access to the Town Hall and its magnificent architecture.

Our final stop was the Minster with its fine stained glass and carved wood.

In early July we managed to catch up on Zoom and enjoy the output of attendees. We also decided on our next outing.

Next stop will be in September 18th in the newly refurbished Rochdale Town Hall, where we'll have the chance to examine the interior in our own time. After lunch we will have the time to see other locations including the original Co-Op. Contact me or sign up on the CG page <https://events.rps.org/en/4LrdQ66/contemporary-group-north-west-activity-group-meeting-18-sep-2025-5a2NN2AvzH7/overview>

Alan Cameron ARPS  
Regional Organiser  
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## Northwest Activity Group

Contemporary SIG Group



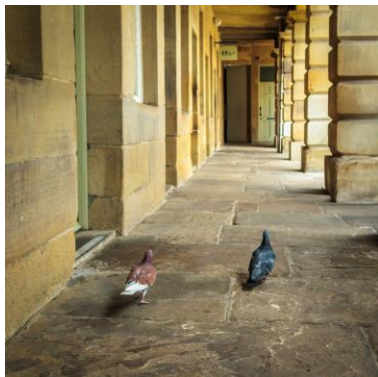
Station approach by P Gleeson



Brian and Geoff at the Piece Hall  
by A Cameron ARPS



Shop in Piece Hall by G Batchelor ARPS



The loos are down here  
by P Cayton LRPS



Time lapse in progress by A Cameron ARPS



Stripes - Piece Hall  
Colonnade  
by P Cayton LRPS



Piece Hall  
Colonnade  
by G Batchelor  
ARPS



Market Hall Clock by K Rowlatt LRPS



Town Hall interior by K Rowlatt LRPS



Town Hall Ceiling by A Cameron ARPS



Council Chamber ceiling by R Styles

## Northwest Activity Group

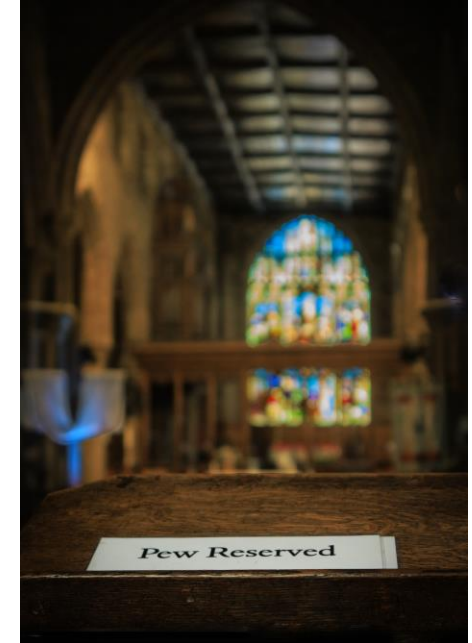
Contemporary SIG Group



Time out in the sun by A Cameron ARPS



Choir Stall by A Cameron ARPS



Pew Reserved by P Cayton LRPS



Freshly made Sandwiches by R Tansley ARPS



In the Minster by P Gleeson



Minster tomb by R Tansley ARPS

## North Activity Group Contemporary SIG Group

Our group continues to tick along with an average of 16 members attending alternate monthly meetings at Clements Hall in York or on Zoom. (except for a two-month Summer break.) We are pleased that our Zoom meetings attract members from around the world, including not only Europe but Australia as well.

Each meeting is reported in our superbly designed *Showcase* publication by Lyn Newton, which appears on the CG webpage and on *Issue*.

<https://rps.org/media/vk4d4xv0/cn-showcase-may-2025.pdf>

[https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/june\\_25\\_rps\\_contemporary\\_group\\_north\\_members\\_showc](https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/june_25_rps_contemporary_group_north_members_showc)

<https://rps.org/media/2nrjxmbz/cn-showcase-june-2025.pdf>

[https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/june\\_25\\_rps\\_contemporary\\_group\\_north\\_members\\_showc](https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/june_25_rps_contemporary_group_north_members_showc)

Since the last *Concept* in April, we've had two meetings and an outing. As mentioned previously, another outstanding effort on our group's part has been the on-going participation in the UK Bradford Year of Culture with the Yorkshire Region who is taking part, as well as initiating its own events to celebrate the year. Our member Morris Gregory is liaising with the Region with various projects. The end result will be a book and/or exhibition in December.

Morris' project to date can be seen in our June *Showcase* publication. Included here are a few by Harry Silcock and Patricia Ruddle.

We've had another publication recently with our book *Water*, the design and graphics by Christine Pinnington. It took almost a year in preparation with 130 pages, 23 members participating on the theme, imaging everything from climate change to street furniture, sand patterns, canal building, water towers and everything in between.

We were delighted to have Tessa Mills, Past Chair of the RPS Contemporary Assessment Panel, write the Foreword. She was complimentary about our project: "... I found it to be an inspirational and worthy book that confirms the importance of photography from original thinkers who enjoy exploring important issues through visual communication."

Our next meeting will be at Clements Hall in York when we will celebrate all aspects of book-making:

20 September, Clement Hall Hall, York, 12.00 to 4.00

18 October on Zoom 1.00/1.30 to 4.00

15 November Clements, York, 12.00 to 4.00

13 December maybe Zoom, if members are interested

Everyone is welcome. Please contact Patricia A Ruddle ARPS, [contemporaryne@rps.org](mailto:contemporaryne@rps.org)

**North Activity Group**  
*Contemporary SIG Group*



By Patricia Ruddle



By Patricia Ruddle



By Harry Silcock



By Harry Silcock



By Harry Silcock

# Contacts

## The next issue of Concept will be available January 2026

If you have any contributions you would like to have including, news, reports, reviews, publicity, profiles, images, please email your ideas to Nick Linnett via email [concepteditor@rps.org](mailto:concepteditor@rps.org)

Features and reports should be between 300 and 800 words please. Pictures as separate jpeg files of 1 to 2 megabytes, containing no watermarks please.



<https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/contemporary-youtube/>



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September 2025

# CONCEPT

*The Newsletter of the Contemporary Group of the Royal Photographic Society*