

# concept

abstraction image conceptualisation notion thought  
impression theory view conception idea hypothesis

THE **RPS**  
ROYAL  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY  
GROUP

e-newsletter

The North West Group's Exhibition at Lytham



Summer is nearly upon us (although not weather-wise!) and our AGM is fast approaching - 9th July - and we hope to see many of you there.

There is plenty of emphasis in this month's issue on photo-books and exhibitions. We can share in the experiences of the Contemporary North West Group and individual members of the North East Group and follow Kate Wentworth's visit to the Bristol Photobook Weekend. This is also a reminder to us all that the deadline for submissions to the RPS Photobook Exhibition is also fast approaching.

Contemporary North West have a new group convenor. Alan Cameron will be taking over from Ian Maxwell. Ian is stepping down after 7 years and I am sure we would all like to thank him for all his efforts in making CNW a successful group.

Christine Pinnington LRPS  
Editor

Image from Peter Bartlett's Photobook *Empty Premises*  
© Peter Bartlett LRPS



## In this Issue

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## Exhibition

# Photographs by Contemporary North West : Lytham Heritage Centre

**Keith Launchbury FRPS discusses the recent North West Contemporary Group exhibition held at the Lytham Heritage Centre**

How time flies. I was taken aback for a moment when Ian Maxwell, in passing the convener's baton to Alan Cameron, told us that he had been involved with the group for seven years (and I remember a smaller number of us meeting in Andy Biggs' home for a couple of years before that first formal gathering at Days Inn, Charnock Richard). An early project for involving the wider group had been the publication of a Blurb Book, with Andy Biggs co-ordinating. Eleven of the group participated with six images on a theme of their choosing and 'Personal Views' was subsequently published on 31st January 2013. Shortly thereafter I proposed that a natural follow on would be to hold an exhibition, but where and on what terms?

At that time I had been involved in exhibiting with another group, Lancashire Monochrome, and at the Lytham Heritage Centre (LHC). I therefore had an understanding of just what potential this venue offered for a less experienced group like CNW. The venue had the benefit of being hire-able for a set price and the expense of £225 would work out at only the equivalent of our Blurb book if the same number of members took an equal share of that cost. Since I was already known to those responsible for the running of the LHC I offered to act as liaison, accepting that the lead-in time to hanging a CNW exhibition there would be up to two years or longer.

The risks of failing to successfully deliver such a proposition were, in my opinion, quite small. Key to this were the attributes of the venue itself in affording flexible spaces that could look filled with as few as forty framed prints, while also having the capacity to hang one hundred 20x16 inch sized frames (each requiring only to be conventionally strung, making hanging on the vertical wires very easy). The venue itself was in a former bank, well-positioned within the main shopping centre serving Lytham. Open six days a week (only closed on a Monday) and well staffed with its own volunteers the premises are established as a sub-regional venue for a wide range of art and craft shows. LHC itself distributes posters of whatever is currently showing to another 60 public venues within the natural compass of the Fylde, so any publicity or promotion CNW could undertake itself would be building on this base of awareness-raising.

The notion of exhibiting proved a popular one within CNW and eleven members came forward immediately to each offer a £10 deposit so we could secure the hire. It was decided that the nature of the photography submitted could be freely chosen within a limit of six frames. That initial expression of enthusiasm to do this together carried right through into all the key aspects of co-operation necessary to achieve a successful team effort.

The shared experience in holding our first group exhibition over the three weeks 5-24th April, 2016 has helped to further develop the feeling of mutual self-identity as CNW. All feel that the best investment of what we have learned is to now work collaboratively on a second exhibition project, perhaps around a theme. I have proposed: 'The Unpromising Landscape', a title everyone feels offers sufficient scope in



Members of CNW. Left to Right John Corbett LRPS, Keith Launchbury FRPS and Alan Cameron LRPS (the new convener for CNW)



its interpretation for each member to work within. On behalf of the group I am now liaising with people I know who are responsible for programming public exhibition venues in Lancashire with regard to exploring the possibilities as to where and when our future themed showing may be placed. I very much look forward to the next CNW public show.



## RPS Contemporary Group Annual General Meeting

9th July 2016  
at the  
"Art Workers Guild" premises,  
6 Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AT  
10.00 to 16.00.

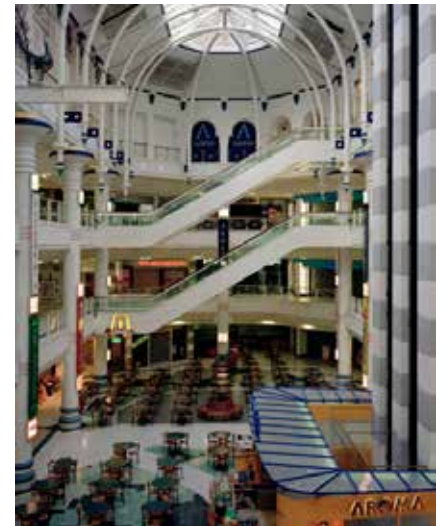
We are pleased to announce that the RPS Contemporary Group AGM is to be held on the 9th July at the "Art Workers Guild" premises, 6 Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AT between 10.00 and 16.00.

The AGM will be held at 11.00-12.00 and is open to members and non-members, although only members will be allowed to vote. [This is a free event - there will be no charge to non members.](#) All Contemporary Group members will be sent a copy of the Agenda in due course.

After lunch\* we are pleased to welcome two photographers who are both accomplished in producing work that exemplifies our ethos on Contemporary Photography. These are Fergus Heron and Tom Owens ARPS. Their presentations will be followed by an open forum.

**Event Organiser: Peter Ellis LRPS, Secretary, Contemporary Group**  
**email: [wordsnpicsltd@gmail.com](mailto:wordsnpicsltd@gmail.com)**

\*Bring or your own lunch or eat at one of the many eateries in the area (info - google, [www.londontown.com](http://www.londontown.com) or [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com))



Peacocks, Woking, 2003 from the series  
'Shopping Centre Interiors'  
© Fergus Heron



Stowmarket, from the series 'Edgelands'  
© Tom Owens ARPS



# Photobook Bristol

This event took place on 10-12 June at the Southbank Club, Bristol. Speakers included:  
Ken Grant :: Mark Power :: David Solo  
Laura El-Tantawy :: Amak Mahmoodian  
Dragana Jurisic :: Martin Parr :: Krass Clement  
Yumi Goto :: Ivars Gravlejs :: James Barnor  
Mariela Sancari :: Ania Nalecka.

Kate Wentworth attended the event and shares her experience.



The Book Room

Photobook Bristol this year was an amazing experience - an intense weekend gathering of people from the diverse world of photobooks. 20 speakers from 13 different countries presented their work and ideas in the relaxed setting of the Southbank Centre, a former working men's club full of character. Speakers included photographers (established and emerging) and book people (authors, designers, publishers, sellers). 13 publishers/booksellers displayed their wares for browsing and buying, and launched new books; and there was an exhibition of selected first and dummy books. The open and friendly atmosphere included delicious food, a barbecue and the Saturday disco with live music. The organisers, including lots of volunteers, gave us an excellent and (generally) smooth running weekend.

Here are a few highlights (with apologies for omitting many exciting presentations.)

- Dragana Jurisic's presentation of Yu: the lost country examining 'What is your home when your home has ceased to exist?' Travelling over former Yugoslavia, she concludes that 'Nationalism is a cheap identity toy; it is more difficult to look inside and find out who you are.'
- Yumi Goto and Hajime Kimura talking about RPS (Reminders Photography Stronghold) in Tokyo where photographers attend workshops to create intricate and original hand made books. Examples: Silent Histories (Hiroshima survivors), and Red String (the red string holding a couple together breaks after 35 years). Generally only 35 or 45 handmade books are made, but some are available in faithful trade editions.
- Krass Clement in conversation with Martin Parr. Krass said that, although he is a documentary photographer, his work is essentially 'pictorial poetry to do with loss'. A prime example of this is Ved døden (at death) where he traces the last day of his mother's life through to her cremation. Other photobooks cover Northern Ireland, Russia and Denmark and his next book is about Syria 8 years ago.



Julian Germain talking about Football, Photobooks and Love



Lunch time - spot Martin Parr!

Mark Power, Daniel Cockrill and designer Dominic Brookman





- Ania Nalecka on photobook design giving essential advice - 'There are no rules, there are only consequences'; 'all elements are connected; reduction is the main thing'; 'a book is like a Jenga tower - eliminate as much as possible but it must stand firm'.
- Mark Power and the poet Dominic Brookman describing how they made Destroying the Laboratory for the sake of the experiment (DTLFTSOTE) . Over four years they travelled the country looking at 'What it means to be English'. They 'stole Constable's view'; saw a road sign saying 'do not carry explosives in the car'; went to 'Shit upon Avon', Margate, and many other places.

What did I find? That the photobook world encompasses zine type books by Craig Atkinson's Cafe Royal Books for £7 each, through to collectors' items at the highest prices. Photobooks are excellent for intensely personal projects, for example Maria Sancari's quest for her long dead father by photographing men of his age and with blue eyes like his: 'I do believe in the healing power of art, both for the artist and the viewer.' They are also good for telling stories, excavating family archives, and making profound philosophical, social and political points. They can also be very, very funny. We live in world swamped by electronic photos and images. Photobook production also benefits from the new technology bringing enormous scope for invention and originality. Photobook Bristol is an inspiration.


Next comes the RPS Photobook Exhibition and Competition (closing date for entries 31 July 2016, exhibition 18-23 October). Be inspired and enter your book!

Kate Wentworth LRPS  
16 July 2016  
Images © Kate Wentworth





# 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 Company, Lucy Kumara Moore and Dewi Lewis


**Full details and Entry Form** - see [www.rps.org/photobook](http://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

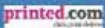
facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/RPSPhotobooks](https://www.facebook.com/groups/RPSPhotobooks)  
General enquiries:  
Rod Fry ARPS, [rod@rod Fry.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:rod@rod Fry.eclipse.co.uk)

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including winner prize contribution of £500



printing cost of catalogues



Fotonow CIC hall in Plymouth

<http://www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/contemporary/blogs/2014/may/brian-steptoe-frps-talks-about-the-selection-criteria-for-photobooks>



# North East Contemporary Group Meeting

21st May 2016

Report by Avijit Datta FRSA FLS

Fifteen members attended the NE Contemporary Group on the 21st May in York. Members had travelled from as far afield as Derby and Middlesborough. Patricia Ruddle started the meeting and began by reiterating the call for a successor to her as group convenor; this was to be the last meeting in York for the foreseeable future; Nigel Tooby has kindly agreed to host the next meeting on Saturday September 17th – further details will be circulated to the group. David Edge, Yorkshire Region web-master, discussed the RPS Contemporary Group web-master, Sean Goodheart's call for images for the RPS website. David also mentioned that plans were underway to form a Midlands contemporary subgroup.

Peter Bartlett presented three photobooks. The first "Empty Premises" shows empty shops and retail premises and captured a consequence of the recent economic recession. The front cover shows a photograph of a dilapidated building called Patricia's hairdressers. Peter saw the building when visiting his mother, who lived nearby. The shop had been kept in the same condition by Patricia's widower as a poignant memorial to her. The second book, "Sixteen Façades Near Plunkett Road" again shows retail premises, this time in Dandenong, a suburb of Melbourne, Australia with a high level of migrant settlement and consequent cultural diversity.

Notably all the images were taken in a period of only 50 minutes. The third photobook was "Main Street" (2016; ISBN 978-1-36-431763-8). Again showing buildings, this time in Gembrook, another suburb of Melbourne, where Peter's sister-in-law and brother-in-law reside.

Celine Alexander-Brown of the Annexe Photography Group, Middlesborough, showed photographs of everyday Delhi street life. Celine's charming and humorous images are in sharp contrast to those in the recent "Invisible" project of photographs of Indian Women by artist Ann-Christine Woehrl, funded by the German cultural foundation Stiftung Kulturwerk / VG Bild-Kunst. These latter images show reconstructive surgery for (mainly female) burns victims, including acid attacks, who must confront more than just a changed face in the mirror and are often ostracised from their communities and families, and unable to continue working at their old jobs.

Lyn Newton, also of the Annexe Photography Group showed images of the street processions during Holy Week in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. Costaleros. Men in Brotherhood groups carry pasos, heavy silvered and gilded wooden structures depicting the virgin Mary and scenes of the passion of Christ respectively. The Costaleros are often hooded so that they are 'known only to God'.



*Black Oxide* from photobook  
Sixteen Façades Near Plunkett Road  
© Peter Bartlett LRPS



© Celine Alexander-Brown



© Lyn Newton

Patricia commented that Lyn's Catholic religious photography may be compared with that of Salvo Alibrio ARPS who captured Sicilian festivals in "La Sicilia sacra", published in the RPS Journal Contemporary Photography (2013, vol 53) which she edited and in the National Geographic magazine.



© Lyn Newton

Close inspection of Lyn's second image of the hooded costaleros, shows him to be slightly blurred; a discussion on the subjective nature of composition and the pre-requisite necessity of sharp focus throughout an image required by RPS distinction panels ensued, with marked variances of opinion. Unsurprisingly, Cartier Bresson's maxim "sharpness is a bourgeois concept" was quoted.

It was Mick Nolan's first visit to the group and he explained his personal journey of artistic photography. It started with landscape photography of the North York Moors emphasising ploughed ridge lines which led to the production of composite photographs with photographs of ruffled cloth. Then by using coloured gels, photographs of chiffon, led to images of a series of sinuous horizontal lines. Mick was somewhat concerned that he was going out on a limb; however these lines are reminiscent of the "Lines of Time" project of Ann Christopher RA who depicts .... the 'ever changing effects of the climate and light on the landscape' using coloured straight lines. Mick then made a montage of this with a photograph of a tree to produce a landscape image.

© Mick Nolan



After a break, three speakers then discussed various aspects of creating and curating a photographic exhibition.

David Edge presented two sets of images. The first work, 'Spaces' examines the visual interaction of people and architectural spaces. The second project was the previously seen project "Abandoned Bulgarian Psychiatric Hospitals" (photographed in Great Malvern) which has now moved on to an individual psychological examination called "Waking up in an Institution". The title may refer to a marriage or an organisation, not just a hospital. David expressed nervousness at including the image *Waking Up*, and its emotional sequelae in a public exhibition.



© Mick Nolan

David also shared lessons he had learnt from a proposed solo exhibition featuring his 'spaces' and 'waking up' work plus some environmental portraits, which was subsequently abandoned. Firstly, if glass is used, polarised anti-reflection glass is reasonably effective, but expensive. Secondly, find out as early as possible the gallery's policy on fixings. They may like mirror plates and not self-adhesive fixatives that they later have to remove. Thirdly, paper selection was an interesting and rewarding part of the process; He recommended seeking advice from certified printmakers for advice on choosing a paper. Fourthly, it is important to get a consistency of mood and tone on the wall. Finally, David explored potential layouts, understanding that layout altered the sequence viewed.

*Waking Up*  
© David Edge



Avajit Datta discussed his recent exhibition in York on spirituality on the twin themes of "colour and joy". Images of white and Asian people joyously enjoying a festival of colour (Holi) together gave a positive image of multiculturalism. The A2 prints were

displayed on a white wall at eye level in two rows of a 'railway carriage' arrangement in wooden frames behind glass with no visible battens. These frames would be re-used for future exhibitions, reducing the standing cost of curating exhibitions. He discussed a planned future exhibition as part of the celebrations in Hull for the City of Culture celebrations official "Roots and Routes" theme, depicting the development of migrants to Hull and the patchwork of peoples with their own unique spirit, character and distinctly international flavour, showing new partnerships and collaborations as communities unite in a grass roots celebration of arts and culture as a model for multiculturalism in any city of the world.



Holi Exhibition © Avajit Datta FRSA

Neil Whittman is preparing four pictures to be exhibited at the RPS photobook opening at the Espacio Gallery, Neil also considered printing, framing and transportation issues. He had seen large aluminium prints and found a specialist printer online He ultimately decided to have his four works produced on aluminium di-bond matte finish to about 40cm square, roughly the size of Neil's usual framed prints. The aluminium prints come with their own wall mounts that give a 'float' off the wall look for exhibition. This simplicity makes for a lightweight durable picture with a contemporary look. The images Neil presented had spiritual themes and were discussed in detail in the February Issue of concept.

Transcendental Meditation  
© Neil Whittman ARPS



The meeting ended with a discussion on producing a North East Contemporary photobook. Various themes were proposed and an six potential contributors volunteered. Christine Pinnington has offered to co-ordinate the book and will contact all members over the summer to move this forward.

There will be a summer break and meetings will resume in September. The next meeting will be held in Wakefield.

#### Peter Bartlett's Photobooks

Empty Premises

<http://www.blurb.co.uk/b/4627769-empty-premises>

Sixteen Facades Near Plunkett Road

<http://www.blurb.co.uk/b/6065340-sixteen-facades-near-plunkett-road>

Main Street

<http://www.blurb.co.uk/b/6916290-main-street>

ISBN: 978-1-36-431767-6)

## **We are looking for a New Group Organiser for the NE Contemporary Group**

Our current organiser Patricia Ruddle will be stepping down in the Summer and we are looking for a new organiser for the NE Group starting in September. It is not an onerous task and Patricia will be willing to give support. If you are interested or would like further information please contact Patricia

patriciaruddle@btinternet.com  
tel: 01904 783850



# What's On

## RPS Open International Photobook Exhibition 2016

Winners and short-listed entries for the RPS Open International Photobook Exhibition 2016, together with an associated print exhibition. Books can be browsed by visitors.

**18 October 2016 - 23 October 2016**

**13:00 - 19:00**

Espacio Gallery  
159 Bethnal Green Road  
London  
United Kingdom  
E2 7DG

<http://www.rps.org/events/2016/october/18/rps-open-international-photobook-exhibition-2016#sthash.a9RG5khf.dpuf>

**12 November 2016**

**10:30 - 16:30**

Impressions Gallery Bradford  
Impressions Gallery  
Centenary Square  
Bradford  
United Kingdom  
BD1 1SD

<http://www.rps.org/events/2016/november/12/international-photobook-exhibition#sthash.UROmXS2R.dpuf>

**25 July 2016**

**North West Contemporary Group**

19:30 - 22:00 Days Inn Charnock Richard Services  
Jct 27-28 M6 North Bound  
Chorley Lancs  
United Kingdom  
PR7 5LR  
Contact: Alan Cameron  
email: [alan.cameron@me.com](mailto:alan.cameron@me.com) tel: 07825 271344

**17th September 2016**

**Contemporary North East Meeting.**

To be held in Wakefield. Full details will be posted on the website and sent out to the group members.

**FRPS Conceptual & Contemporary Assessment**

21 September 2016

10:30 - 16:00

RPS HQ, Bath  
Fenton House  
122 Wells Road  
Bath BA2 3AH

**ARPS Conceptual & Contemporary Assessment  
( Print & Images for Screen Submissions)**

21 September 2016

10:30 - 16:00

RPS HQ, Bath  
Fenton House  
122 Wells Road  
Bath BA2 3AH

Tel: 01225 325733

<http://www.rps.org/distinctions/events>

**Deadline for contributions for inclusion in the July issue is 20th July 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](mailto:photopinni@btinternet.com)**

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

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