

concept

abstraction image conceptualisation notion thought
 impression theory view conception idea hypothesis

e-newsletter

Hi folks

I hope everybody is making the most of the intermittent appearance of the sun and the slightly more clement weather. Strawberries and cream and Concept to read in the garden – what could be better!

In June's edition of Concept we are pleased to feature not one but two successful Associate Panels in the Conceptual and Contemporary category. Our congratulations go to both Carol Olerud and Sharon Wales. Their journey towards producing successful panels makes very good reading and is an inspiration.

In our series on Contemporary Group committee members we also feature the pen portraits of Paul Ashley, editor of the excellent Contemporary Group Journal and North west Co-ordinator Alan Cameron.

The Gallery pages, dedicated to the work of our members, this month focuses on Alan Organ's exhibition. If you would like to feature on this page, just drop me an email.

You can contact me on lynconcept@btinternet.com. The deadline for our next edition will be August 12th.

Lyn Newton

Editor



End of an Era. The NE group have their final meeting at Nigel Tooby's studio

In this Issue

Spotlight on your Committee Members

Paul Ashley
 Alan Cameron

Our Day with Bill Jackson and Chloe Dewe Matthews

Distinction Success with Carol Olerud

Immersion - Exhibition of Alan Organ

Distinction Success with Sharan Wales

North East Sub-group Meeting

What's On

P is for Print
 A Talented Trio
 MEUS
 Forthcoming Contemporary
 Group Meetings

Paul Ashley

Journal Editor and Contemporary Group Committee Member

I have been a photographer all my life, starting with a box camera aged 10, and introduced to the darkroom by my father soon after. I could claim that that was the start of a steady upward trend to glittering heights - but I can't! Photography has always been a part of my life, but sometimes a small part. As a geologist, my work took me to live in remote parts of Africa, the Middle East and south east Asia, and I sometimes wince at the opportunities I missed. Just occasionally, though, I look at an old photograph and reckon I sometimes got it right!

I started to pay more attention about ten years ago; the instant feedback and correction loop of digital is something that film can never give. Like most amateurs, I take photos of everything: holiday snaps and landscapes, children and, now, grandchildren. But I get most pleasure interacting with people, both as single portraits and as documentaries of their own personalities and interests. As a singer, with links into other musical and performance groups in the Cambridge area, I get most enjoyment out of trying to show what motivates them and drives them to perform.

A year ago, I put my hand up to be the new journal editor. I have been on a steep learning curve ever since, which would have been impossible to negotiate without the help of my predecessor, Patricia Ruddle, and Brian Steptoe as designer and layout manager. I volunteered because I wanted an excuse to explore what contemporary photographers are working on, and that is undoubtedly the most enjoyable part of my job: seeking out new work and persuading its authors to contribute to the journal (for no fee!) It is gratifying that most of those I ask have been willing to do so.



Tobacco farmer, Madura Island, Indonesia, 1980



Portrait of a fenland midwife, 2012



XSLatin dance team: making up before the UK Dance Championships, Stoke-on-Trent, 2016



Cambridge Youth Musical Theatre: rehearsals for a new production, May 2018

Alan Cameron

Co-ordinator of the North West Sub-group and Co-opted Committee Member

A magpie. That's me in photographic terms. When I was asked to write a pen portrait of myself I found that I was hesitating about putting pen to paper as I couldn't really define my style, but a chance conversation at my club's exhibition made me answer the question and magpie seemed to be the answer. Over twenty years ago, when my Dad died, I had an urge to write a poem that turned out to be a sonnet and four of the lines sum up my feelings about photography and capturing the world around me:

"Peoples creatures, flowers and trees,
High mountains, plains and the restless seas,
With wonders there to meet my sight,
The world was always my delight."

I was given my first camera at the age of 17 when Kodachrome was the in-film and I guessed exposure based on the leaflet in the box. The camera was a Zeiss Contina and I really learned the fundamentals of photography from the ingenious coupled shutter and aperture mechanism on the fixed lens. I've been snapping away ever since, and I now have gone completely digital. I love new technology and really don't want to go back to film and its vagaries.

I am without doubt a photographic magpie and here are a few images of mine from the last 9 months with some idea of how I approach life with a camera. I love walking and the higher the better. This was taken on the Tour du Mt Blanc on the stretch up to the pass into Italy and at something more than 2,500m.



A cloud inversion in the Alps



A geometric still life created from a series taken daily to follow the development of a Hippeastrum flower. My wife was very understanding as our conservatory became a study for several weeks.



The view from the bridge above the Ribeira in Porto in May 2018. Many of the views in Porto are of the bridge, but I thought I'd get to the top and see what the view down was like. I like the shadows and I think that this really works best as monochrome image.



A few days before I took the image below we were in Salamanca for the day and were entertained at lunch by some Flamenco dancers and singers. The main light in the room was through a high window and I was able to use the extreme contrast to capture the movement of the shawl at the expense of a few blown highlights.



A week after Portugal I was with some friends in Spain to catch the classic car racing. It's a fun weekend with the opportunity to practice my panning technique. This car was averaging over 100mph around the circuit and was probably doing around 130mph as it passed.



Last week I went with a friend to Northumberland and out to the Farne Islands and the bird colonies. I got this shot at 24mm (with a small crop to about 28mm) as this little beauty came in to hit me on the head! I was glad of the padded hat, but it was worth it and illustrates the dynamic range of modern cameras - I have a fantastic Canon 5D MkIV.



Lastly, courtesy of Nigel Richards in the Contemporary NW group I acquired a compact camera converted for infra-red, and I'm enjoying the experience of learning a new tool. This is another image of Porto taken late afternoon. It gives me a different view of my art.

I mostly process everything in Lightroom, though from time to time I use Photoshop for complex layers and cloning - e.g. the Flamenco dancer had a very messy background. I think that the subscription for Lightroom and Photoshop is excellent value when we think back to the cost of slide films and the software has impressive capabilities. Once processed I enjoy creating photo books. I use Blurb where quality has improved over the years, though I'm so busy taking and processing images that I'm several holidays behind.

Over the last nearly 50 years I've been in a number of local clubs and at present I'm about to take over as Chairman in Poulton-le-Fylde. I've been in the Royal for about 20 years and I'm a member of the Contemporary and Visual Arts groups. I achieved my L a long time ago, but my magpie tendencies have got in the way of pulling together an A submission. I'm hoping to get that sorted out later this year.

Alan Cameron

A Grand Day Out with Bill Jackson and Chloe Dewe Mathews

The big event this year took place at Regents University on an ideal day for photography, grey then drizzle but that did not bother the full house of attendees and we watched spellbound in the dark as two excellent photographers give us an insight into how they make their work.

First up was Bill Jackson. I needed no introduction to Bill's work or indeed the journey he is on as I have actively engaged with Bill since I first became aware of his presence in East Anglia in 2012. It was indeed a journey, quite a journey and one that really has no clear destination.

Bill took us through his formative years as a student in the Midlands and his desire to get stuff out of technology that his tutors did not understand. It finished with the latest aspect of his still photography but produced as videos with responding artists talking over his night time imagery. We saw and listened to;

North Sea Drawings
In search of Gretel
East Wind Drawings
Mapping the unseen.

I attended a performance in Halesworth several years ago where Bill had this desire not only to make images in little or no perceived light, but also to perform in the images and produce the soundtrack to present them as a rounded body of work affecting several senses. He certainly did this and no doubt left many of the audience wondering where he gets the energy to be so creative.

Our second photographer was Chloe Dewe Mathews. I was lucky to hear her present at PhotoEast 2016 when she talked us through 'Shot at Dawn', which she did this time also but she started off with her seminal body of work, Caspian. This was the lucky break for Chloe. She had been hitch-hiking from China to the UK and got transfixed by the goings on in the oil-rich Caspian Sea, noting that Marco Polo had documented activities such as bathing in hot crude oil, which were still taking place today. That resulted in editorial work. She then moved on to a commission to produce something for the centenary of WWI.

It was the execution of troops for desertion and cowardice by their own armies, including decimation, a Roman form of execution, by the French army on some of their North African soldiers, that she found so traumatising. This resulted in her researching the times and places of the executions and it was these present-day locations that portrayed an almost silent horror in their seemingly banal spaces. She also covered 'In search of Frankenstein' and 'Thames Log'.

Towards the end of her presentation the dedicated tea porter clattered his cups, saucers and spoons but Chloe persevered, very much in the manner of how she makes her work and then it was Q&As followed by reviews of various attendee's work. A damp journey home took nothing away from a bright day of stimulating photography.



Bill Jackson



Chloe Dewe Mathews



Attendees gathering



Christopher Morris with work

Silent Jailhouse

Successful ARPS Panel by

Carol Olerud



I'm an Australian Dutch woman living in The Netherlands now for 24 years. I've been taking photos since I was 12 years old, like it's recording my life for me. What I see, what I do, where I am etc. I have 3 (grown) kids and after the youngest was born – 21 years ago – I joined my first photo club. A whole world opened up for me! I met new like-minded people and I could discover more about my photography. I went to workshops, courses and groups to learn more about my Canon camera.

I was always curious as to why some photos were better appreciated than others in competitions, so I went to meetings where the jury explained their choices. This way I learned to see more, understand the different genres and find what makes certain photos more interesting for a larger audience.

My style is documentary/journalistic. I like to tell stories of people, or what I see on the streets. I document my family and friends and usually take series of photos.

I joined the RPS in 2017 after going to several study group meetings firstly in Den Haag, then Rotterdam. The group was always inspirational, and work brought was on making panels, be it L, A or even F. There was no pressure at all. I enjoyed these meetings and found it a challenge to come up with something that may turn into a successful A panel. It was great talking photo talk in English, I even learnt new terminology as I was used to the Dutch jargon. Also, super nice was meeting expats and other Dutch people who have travelled widely.

I went straight for an A panel as I already photograph in series and themes.

My plan was to be alert to making a new series - something that could be a good subject for 15 photos.

The old jail in Utrecht was allowing people inside to see how it was, so I went with my camera and a 50mm lens. Immediately I felt the silence and wondered how it would have been to be locked up here. It was a high security prison, so no one was allowed to see each other, nor share rooms nor go outside. The exercise room was even a barred cage.

My letter of intent was not yet on paper at the time of photographing, but I had a clear idea of what I was seeing and what I wanted. Also, I took very many photos!

Then came the challenge of putting them all together. This process I let happen over a longer period of time and each visit to the study group new layouts were tried. I even went back to the original photos to search for missing viewpoints. I did not get the opportunity to photograph again in the jail, so it really was hit and miss, a one chance only type of thing. Slowly the panel took shape, my letter of intent was edited several times and in the end, I felt I had something good.

I used the availability of getting an online advice, which came back quite positively, with a few suggestions on what to change. Which I did.

Then in February this year we had a Celebration of Distinctions weekend in Ghent, where Ray Spence attended. We saw fabulous successful panels and then we showed our own work for his advice. My panel again got a positive review, I had to add the word 'sterile' to my letter of intent and then it was as ready as it ever could be to go to Bath. Since the jail is not abandoned and is very clean inside, this may have been confusing, or thought of as an Urbex type of situation.

Photography means a lot to me, I am forever seeing the world through the lens of my eyes. Even when I don't have my Canon with me, I use my iPhone, so I can take photos at any time wherever I am.

My Letter of Intent:

"Silence, I discover, is something you can actually hear." Haruki Murakami

As I walked inside this old empty sterile jail I felt the silence.

My intention was to try and capture this feeling which overcame me.

I have never been inside a jail before, so I had no idea of what to expect. The silence was eerie. It would be depressing to be locked up, with bars on your windows, confined and surrounded by darkness with limited or no access to life outside. Always alone in your cell, being watched over and never feeling free.

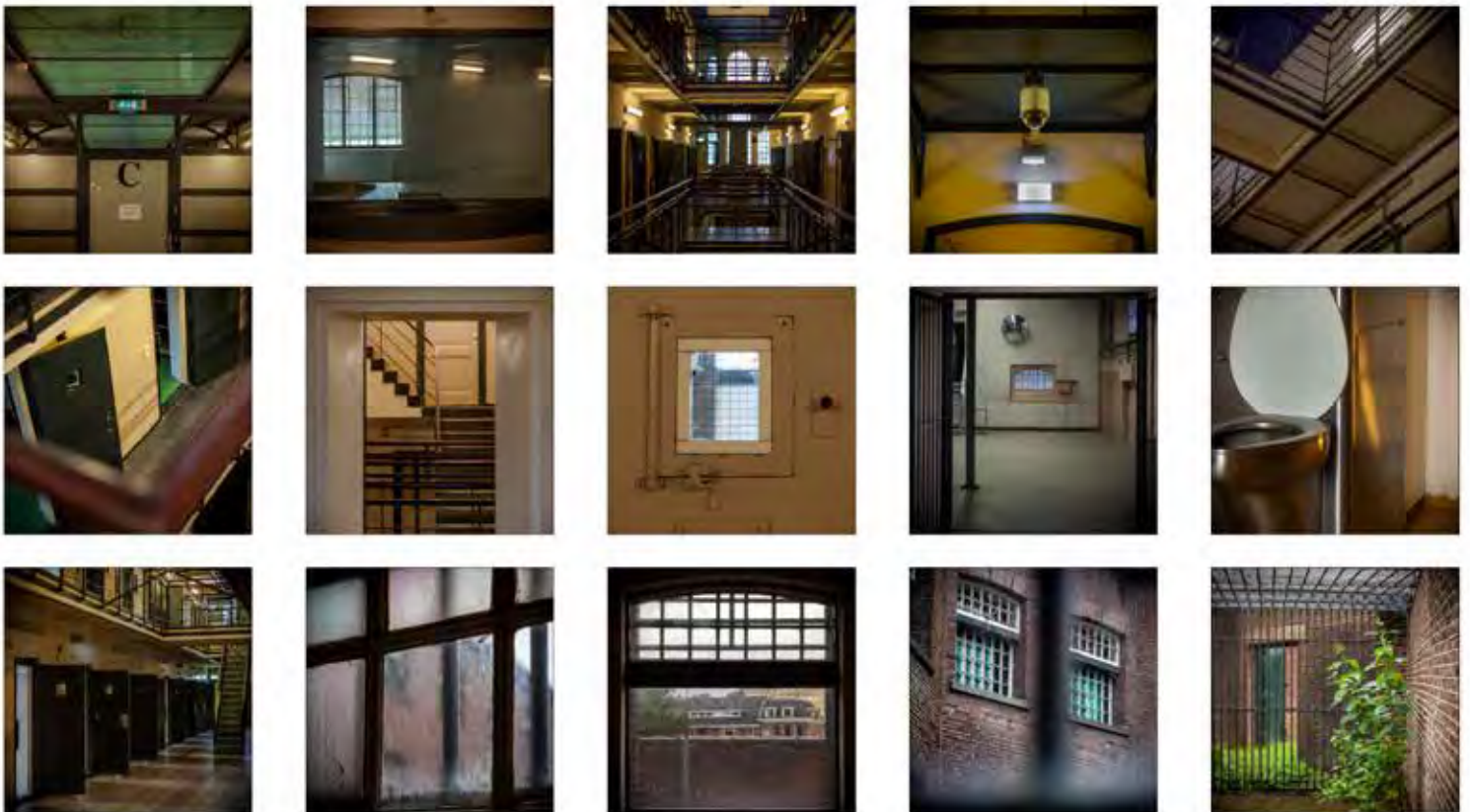
Searching for the light, missing the freedom you had, quietness and loneliness surrounding you.

I left, glad not to have had to stay for long.

Carol Olerud 120 words.

2018

ARPS Panel : Conceptual & Contemporary Category



2018 ARPS - Silent Jailhouse - Carol Olerud

Immersion

by Alan Organ LRPS

At the end of last summer I was chatting to my artist painter friend, Rina, telling her that I was looking for a new photo project to see me through the winter. I was at the time totally out of ideas. Our conversation had included me telling her that I was usually drowning in all kinds of thoughts about various themes, but that there was nothing that currently stood out to take on as a new project. I'm not sure whether it was she or I who first said that it was unusual for me that I was not currently 'immersed' in a particular theme. I slept on our conversation and the idea came to me. I wrote down the following brief statement of intent:

"Immersion: When your whole presence is submerged; a state of being deeply engaged and absorbed in just one subject, oblivious to anything else."

There and then I decided to choose a number of subjects that people can be immersed in and to literally try to capture each of those themes sinking in a fish tank. Before setting to work, I went on to write the following:

"People can become immersed in all kinds of subjects. Whether those subjects are good, bad, fun or sad is another matter, but it is a fact that a human can from time to time let one thing become his/her entire focus until he/she becomes totally submerged."

So that was it, the stage was set. I purchased a fish tank, carried out some brief experiments with my studio flash kit and then between November 2017 and March 2018 made my twenty image immersion project. I covered a wide range of themes that people can become immersed in, some serious and some not.

I thanked my friend Rina (follow [Rinaartist](#) on Instagram) for inspiring me to complete a project that had kept my arms in a tank of water through the winter (thank goodness for central heating) then she challenged me to exhibit them, which I did in Coventry's CET pop-up exhibition venue from April to June. It has been a fun journey so next time a friend of yours inspires you with a new photographic idea my advice is to jump right in – the water will be fine!



Beauty



Cars



Christmas



Environment



Love



Religion



Sport



Time

Alan's Immersion Project covered

Environment, Time, Love, Beauty, Gambling, Chess, Christmas, Religion, Cars, Art, Phones, Photography, Books, Money, Crime, Politics, Drugs, Fast Food, Music, Sport

Sharon Wales

on her recent ARPS Distinction Success

The journey to gaining my Associateship with the RPS was one of mixed emotion. I lost my husband to cancer eighteen months prior and my life was the proverbial rollercoaster. I had met him through the RPS online forum. Soon after his passing I felt that throwing myself into work on my panel would be the focus that I needed. This was in fact the worse thing I could have done and six months later with only one photo taken I sold my camera and grief took over. I didn't want to think about photography and the memories attached to it.

Another six months passed and I couldn't concentrate on anything, my body felt like it was covered in a heavy mud and everything was an effort. In the last eleven years since I had gained my LRPS I had lost a leg and lost a husband, I felt broken. I had also let grief take my creative side and the camera that I had used to express myself. I really didn't know what to do or how to move forward. But the pull of photography was great and drying my tears I decided I would buy another camera and just enjoy taking pictures.

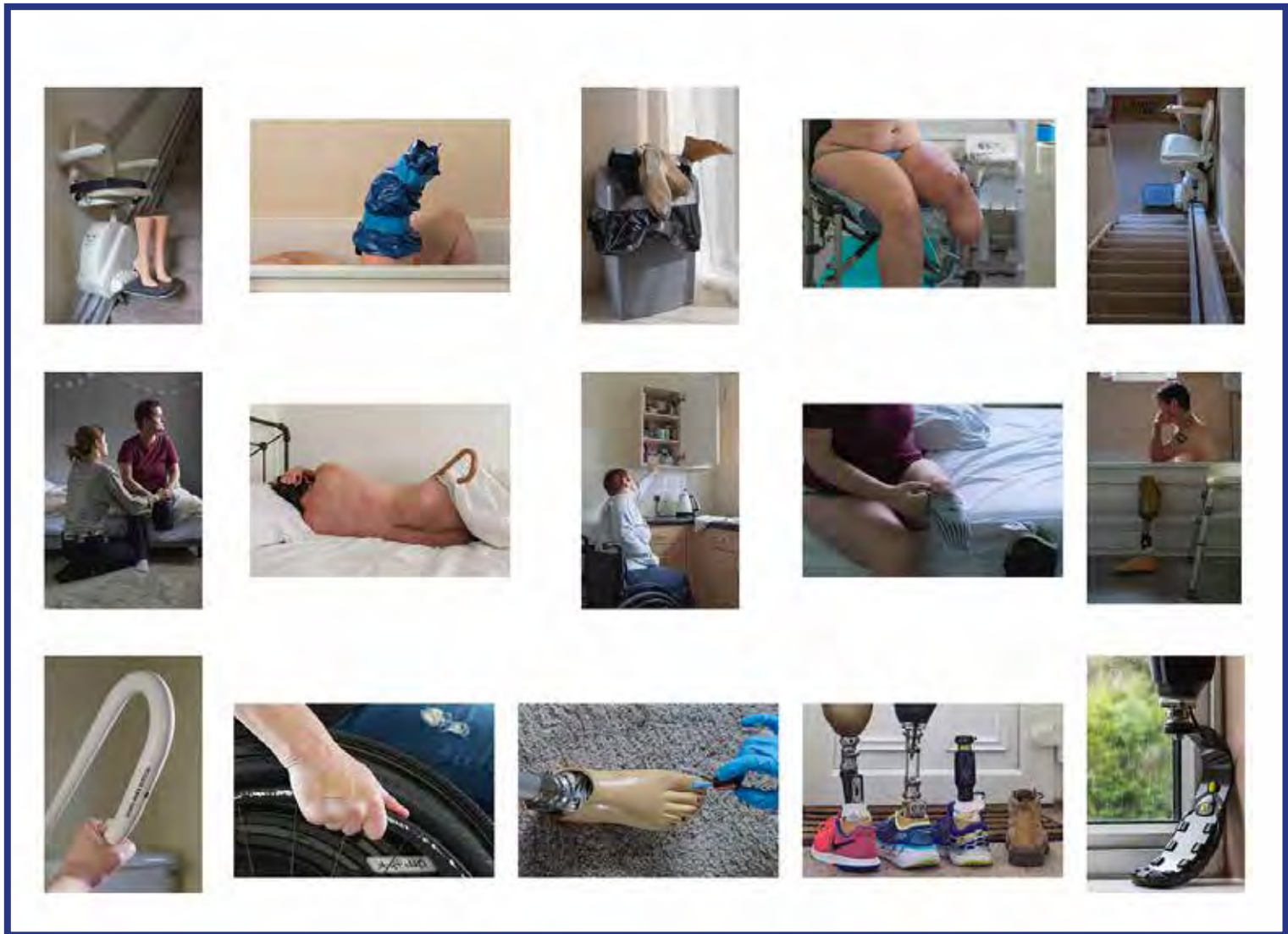
Once I had the camera back in my hands I promised myself I would go forward with an 'A' panel. I knew that I wanted to experiment with my feelings around my body and the many surgeries that I had endured. I didn't want the subject matter to bring me down again, to take me back to a dark place. But I had something to say and as I thought more about it I realised that what was coming through to me was a great strength. It was this inner strength that had kept me upright in some of the most trying life experiences. I felt that to show this stoicism I would also need to allow viewers to see a vulnerability. Not a filter heavy, happy social media image but the bruises and the extra weight I carried. The scars both physically and mentally were where the toughness of spirit resides.

So before I took another picture I began to write. I wrote my feelings about my situation and I also wrote a statement of intent. I then drew the images that I had in my mind. It was only then that I put down the pen and picked up the camera. I used a remote to control the equipment, tethered to a laptop and at times controlled from my phone. Some days were very long and painful as I would have to return to the camera and computer after each shot to see if it was what I wanted. Images could take a while and I had to rest between them. But as I continued with the panel my creativity returned not only in my photography but also other art that I am interested in. The fog of grief lifted, it was truly cathartic in every way.

I had the images printed at Printspace in London. Unable to use my prosthetic leg I had to stand on one leg to mount them. I find mounting your photos a breath holding moment at the best of times let alone trying the flamingo method!

I was unable to attend the assessment day as I am between leg surgeries and Bath is a little hilly. I didn't think a wheelchair and a panel of fifteen images up a hill was a good combination! Consequently, I do not know the comments that were made about my panel on the day. But when I received the email of the recommendation and then the ratification by the council I had a little tear and then a wave of happiness.

I have moved forward now, things are easier. I have another year of surgery and rehabilitation, but I face that with renewed strength. The Royal Photographic Society has been a constant throughout my life journey and having the Associateship is rather special.



Statement of Intent

The Sum of Parts

For most of my life doctors have worked on the damaged 'parts' of me. The ankle joint, the spine and the amputated stump. I have undergone medical assessments and at times had to prove my disability by listing the mobility aids that I have needed and surgical operations I have endured. All of these things seen as separate, as an inventory to my person.

However, if you took my prosthetic leg or wheelchair away I couldn't compete with you. I would probably crawl after you but I wouldn't be able to catch you. I need those mobility aids and I am at a disadvantage without them.

With this work I offer a view of an evolving relationship, one of acceptance and sufferance of this body and the extra assistance that I require. Whilst also considering a raw beauty in the imperfections and shapes of my body and aids.

My disability is personal and at the same time public and very permanent.

I am the sum of many parts, both missing and present.

Sharon Wales

North East Contemporary Group Meeting 19th May, Wakefield

Peter Bartlett Reports

Twelve members of the group met at Nigel Tooby's studio in Wakefield on 19 May. There was an air of sadness as this was our last meeting at this location and we are all very grateful to Nigel and Elaine for their hospitality over the last couple of years.

A number of members had brought work:

Graham Evans showed a Blurb book entitled "Remember Them". He explained that the book had been inspired by the story of his great uncle, Harry Smallwood, who served with the South Staffordshire Regiment in WW1 and died of his wounds in July 1916. Graham's book contained images made at Commonwealth War cemeteries in Europe, war memorials in the UK, German war cemeteries and perhaps most poignantly war graves of servicemen who had died in the UK and that often stand alone, apparently isolated amongst the memorials in a domestic cemetery.

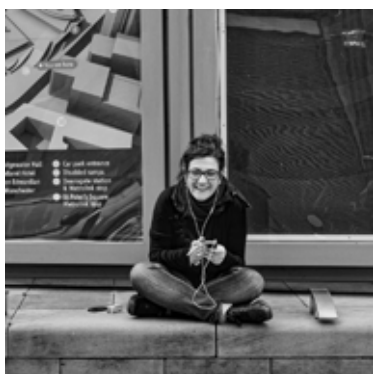
Avijit Datta's book "Conquest of Suffering - Clash of Faiths in a Secular State" explores the decline of British Christianity drawing parallels between Christian symbolism and rough sleepers adjacent to cathedrals, rural images of children learning to kill animals and the desire for accumulation and the furore in the national press about Christian clerics establishing a zen sangha .



© Avajit Datta

Neil Whittmann has turned his successful ARPS panel into an artist's book entitled "Its All About Me". Neil talked us through the fifteen images explaining the thinking behind some of them and the practicalities around their creation. Neil also showed several images he is currently working on that will form part of his planned Fellowship panel. Later in the meeting Neil talked about his experience as an attendee at the Aesthetica Art Prize Symposium that took place in York earlier in the month.

Over the last few months, Peter Bartlett has made several books using the Blurb platform, he explained that he had been "catching up" with several projects during the winter. His latest book "Twenty-six Facial Expressions" is the last of these projects and is inspired by the American artist, Ed Ruscha's, "Twenty-six Gasoline Stations".



© Peter Bartlett

The 26 images were selected from street photography images made over a number of years. The whole book can be viewed by following this link:

<https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.blurb.co.uk%2F-b%2F8636780-twentysix-facial-expressions&data=02%7C01%7C%7C0ac1d20b900f44f5964008d5c184cb-5c%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636627698439996280&sdata=pAZHq4qiggkxbT-J5DGRmEcFuiPPkSfYW25oy7VkwDs4%3D&reserved=0>

As part of his preparations for closing down his studio, Nigel Tooby had found a box of photo albums dating back to before his involvement with the RPS. Many of the images were personal, relating to holidays, his 1999 honeymoon and family portraits. As always with Nigel's images, the quality was excellent and it was agreed that even as long ago as the images were taken, several displayed pointers to his current unique style.

Janet Cook's contribution also involved looking back and she showed several prints of images made of Kathakali dancers some 23 years ago in Kerala. Included were a couple of commercially made contemporary prints, but the others had been made digitally from recent scans. Janet explained the process used to build up the dancers' makeup in a fascinating discussion.

Janet also showed the images of her visit to the Zeitz Mocca gallery in Cape Town that she had been unable to show at our last meeting and which is covered in an article in the April 2018 edition of "Concept"

Robert Harris was attending a CNE meeting for the first time and he introduced himself by explaining that he is currently working on a degree in photography. Self analysis has shown him to be a natural "debater" and when presented with an issue he will tend to explore all sides of an argument before reaching a conclusion. He showed a fascinating collection of images from a recent "context narrative" module, explaining the thinking behind them and practical issues around how each image was made. He commented that the work had only been submitted in the last few days and he had yet to receive feedback.

This seemed to be a meeting for old images as Lyn Newton opened her slot by showing a number of 70 year old images of Redcar dating back to the days when the town was a thriving holiday resort. She then contrasted these with some recent images of the town showing the signs of post-industrial decline following Tata Steel's mothballing of the steel works in late 2015 and the longer term decline of the town's seaside economy.

Celine Alexander-Brown had recently attended a workshop with Paul Hill and Maria Faulkner and had been advised to use metaphors in her images when developing a series. She has taken this advice on board whilst developing an ongoing project on "Solitude". She showed a very interesting selection of images that she acknowledged still needed more work. It was agreed that the series had considerable potential.



© Janet Cook



© Celine Alexander-Brown

The next meeting will be on 14 July at our new venue in York.

What's On



Member of York Printmakers

P is for P RINT

An exhibition of
historical and contemporary
printing processes

by
Patricia Ann Ruddle

photographer and printmaker

27 June - 25 July 2018

The Sun Lounge Gallery
City Screen
the Riverside Arthouse Cinema
13-17 Coney Street, York YO1 9QL
(opening hours: Mon - Sun 11am - 10pm)



July 2018 Exhibition by A Talented Trio.

Three women photographers, Christine Carr LRPS, Georgina Brown BA (Hons), and Sarah Kellett LRPS take different approaches to their images.

Stillingfleet Lodge Gardens will exhibit their individual interpretation of the gardens as seen, even in the wind and rain, on visits during April 2018.

Art in the café, Stillingfleet Lodge Gardens, is open between 13:00 and 17:00 every Wednesday and Friday and on the first and third Saturday and Sundays of each month.

Stillingfleet Lodge Gardens & Nurseries
Stewart Lane, Stillingfleet, York, YO19 6HP

Contemporary Group Meetings:

7th July

Contemporary North West Meeting

Samlesbury War Memorial Hall, Cuerdale Lane, Preston PR5 0UY 1 – 4 pm.

Theme for the meeting is 'Three Images that inspire you and your responses to them'.

Contact Alan Cameron:

alan.cameron@me.com

Tel 01253 829114, Mobile 07825 271344

8th July

Contemporary South West Meeting

Carnon Downs Hall, Carnon Downs, nr Truro, Cornwall. 10.30 – 4.00 pm.

Contact Rod Fry:

rod@rodry.eclipse.co.uk

Tel 01803 844721

14th July

Contemporary North East Meeting

New venue at Clements Hall, Nunthorpe Road, York YO23 1BW. 1.30 – 5 pm.

Contact Patricia Ruddle ARPS:

patriciaruddle@btinternet.com

Tel 01904 783850

Full details of directions and details of parking will be sent out to all attendees.

19th September Conceptual and Contemporary Photography Distinction Assessments

10.30 – 4.30 pm Fenton House, 122 Wells Road, Bath BA2 3AH. Open to applicants and observers.

MEUS



Contributing artists:

Peter Ellis LRPS

Keith Locke ARPS

Kevin Marrable

Tom Owens ARPS

Wednesday 4th - Saturday 28th July 2018

Frame Workshop & Gallery

St Nicholas Street, Ipswich, IP1 1TJ

Opening Hours 10:00 - 17:00 Monday - Saturday

Closed on Sundays

Organised by The East Anglia
Contemporary Group of:



Deadline for contributions for inclusion in the next Issue is 12th August 2018

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: lynconcept@btinternet.com

Concept The e-newsletter of the RPS Contemporary Group

Lyn Newton LRPS, Newsletter Editor

Christine Pinnington LRPS, Design and Layout Editor

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