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Editorial

Dear Region Members

this is the first issue of a new series of newsletters for the North Wales Region. Layout and content have changed from previous issues. The Society decided to unify the appearance of the region newsletters. While I try to follow as much as possible the template being promoted by the Society, our newsletter will deviate from this template where necessary. It's very much work in progress, and smaller or bigger changes to layout and content will occur. Feedback is encouraged, please let us know what you like and what you don't like on the newsletter.

My vision for the region newsletter is not just to spread news and keep the region informed about photography events and other matters of interest to region members, but to make it a crossover between a newsletter and a members' magazine, creating a platform for the exchange of information, ideas, suggestions and photography-related thoughts in general, and of course for images.

Ideally, the newsletter should not just be a one-way communication from me and the region committee to you, but should come alive through the participation of the region members. Have you got an experience to share? A story to tell? A particular photography related question or a problem you're seeking advice for? A suggestion for a photo walk, excursion or maybe even a trip within or outside the region? We'd like to hear it, and read about it! Or do you simply want to show us some of your pictorial work? We'd like to see it! For this, future issues of the newsletter will have a Members' section, which is

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Submissions:

We'd love to see your images and read your photography related stories.

Please send your text files in Windows or Mac format with ca. 300 – max. 1500 words, and your images as jpegs in sRGB colour mode, with the file size smaller than 5Mb to northwales@rps.org, with subject header "Newsletter".

The submission deadline for the next newsletter is:
16th September 2018.

open to sub-missions for all region members - the more the merrier, and the more diverse the better! Guidelines for submissions are given at the bottom right of the first page of this issue.

We'd also like to draw your attention to photography exhibitions in the area as well as further away.

Personally I think that visiting exhibitions and looking at images by photographers using different and sometimes unorthodox or even controversial approaches, is vital to broaden our horizon, to enliven our vision and generally further our understanding of the medium of photography. It's refreshing and enlightening to chance upon a photographer who thinks outside the box and takes pictures and visualizes concepts in new ways.

We're still in the process of setting up a program for the remainder of this year, and for next year. So far we have booked three speakers, please see the program on the next page. More talks and workshops will follow, we'll inform you through announcements via

email, and please keep an eye on the region website where the events are posted once bookings can be made.

The weather has been remarkably kind to us this summer – and I do hope that more warm and sunny days return to North Wales. There's a lot to be said to photograph in the rain, using slow shutter speed to turn the rain into a tender veil to simplify an image or to add mystery, to freeze splashing water on the road or to photograph reflections on wet surfaces or in puddles, or to capture the dramatic light when the low sun breaks through the cloud cover after heavy rain or a thunderstorm. But there'll be plenty of this in winter! Let's enjoy the still longer days, catch the sunshine, get some fresh air, and hopefully return home with good pictures!

Sincerely

Rolf Kraehenbuehl

Acting Regional Organizer
and Newsletter Editor



Event program

Talk by Michael Leach, Wildlife author and photographer

Date and time: Saturday, 15th September 2018, 2pm

Venue: Pensychnant Conservation Centre, Sychnant Pass, Conwy LL32 8BJ

Pricing: free admission for RPS members / £5 for non-members

The talk will have two parts: one half bears the title **“In the blink of an eye”**, and contains images which have been taken at short shutter speed, showing details of wildlife action which are imperceptible to the human eye.

The second part is titled **“Animals behaving badly”** and promises a lot of fun and merriment.



Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the RPS North Wales Region

Date and time: Sunday, 20th January 2019, 11.30am

Venue: Craig-y-Don Community Centre, Queen's Rd., Craig-y-Don, Llandudno LL30 1TE

Free admission, RPS North Wales Region members only

Note: this AGM is followed after a short lunch break by Sue Flood's talk:

Talk by Sue Flood, photographer and film-maker with a special passion for the wildlife and icy beauty of Antarctica

Date and time: Sunday, 20th January 2019, 2pm

Venue: Craig-y-Don Community Centre, Queen's Rd., Craig-y-Don, Llandudno LL30 1TE

Pricing: £8 / £10 (RPS members / non-members)



Talk by Rachael Talibart, Outdoor photographer with a fascination for the sea, especially in stormy weather

Date: Saturday, 11th May 2019; time: TBC

Venue: Craig-y-Don Community Centre, Queen's Rd., Craig-y-Don, Llandudno LL30 1TE

Pricing: £10 / £14 (RPS members / non-members)

Meet the Region Committee



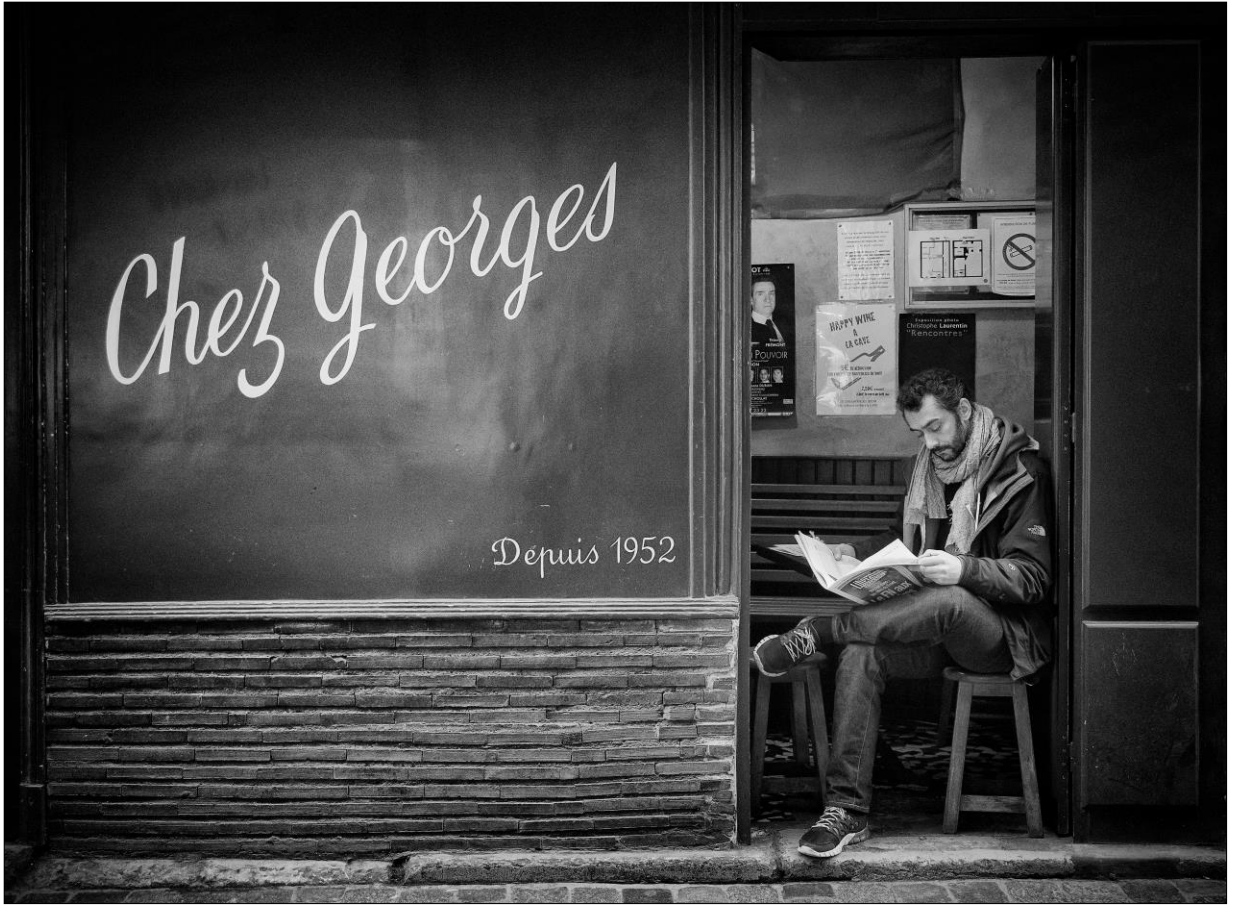
Rolf Kraehenbuehl, Acting Regional Organizer

After shooting with film as a teenager and young adult and doing my own darkroom work - both in black and white as well as in colour - I was later using exclusively colour slide film while travelling in Northern Europe, South and South East Asia, Near East, Maghreb and South America. This was followed by almost ten years of photographic inactivity due to work commitments. It's only a few years since I took up photography again, and so had some catching up to do with the digital world.

One of my current pet subjects is movement, and I try to capture it using different approaches: long exposures with fixed camera, panning with the subject, superimposing several shots of the same scene with the moving subjects in different places, or in any other possible way which gives the desired results.



I've also developed a strong interest in meaningful street photography, and on the too few occasions that I try - and I mean 'try' - to practice street photography, I feel drawn to depict the (sometimes lone) human figure in the built environment. My favourite places to shoot are big cities and art galleries and museums. All my street photographs are candid shots as I want to capture a moment in time, undisturbed by the photographer.

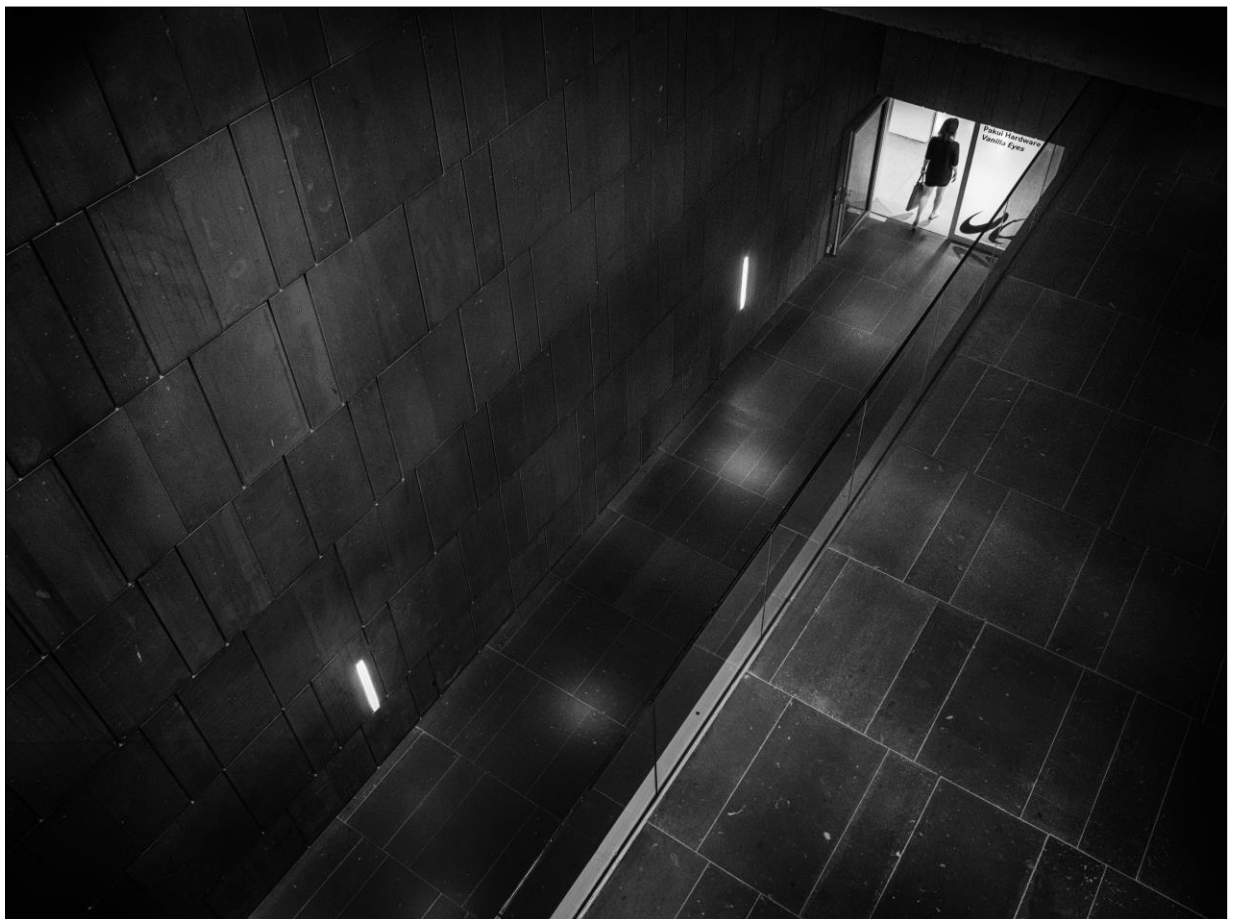
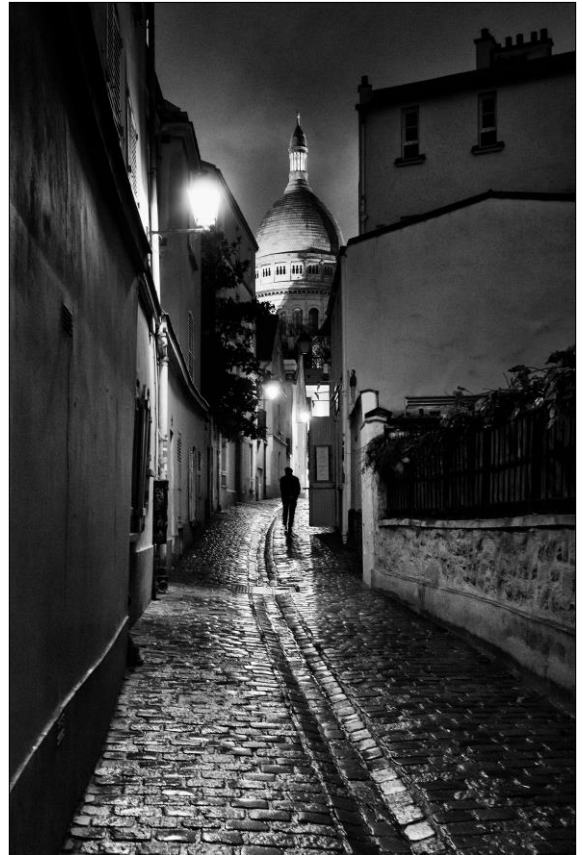


While in urban settings and photographing architecture, I focus more and more on abstract compositions, concentrating on texture, form, line and shapes, and on contrasting these elements with each other; recently I started extending this approach to landscapes and seascapes.

The driving force behind my photography is to see objects and subjects in a way which is new for me, and to expand my photographic vision, trying to progress from looking to actually seeing. I enjoy the process of working on a topic or scene (quite often I enjoy the picture taking more than the outcome) and where possible I return to the same locations several times.

If I had to give one piece of advice, it would be this: do what you like to do, no matter what the others say, no matter what the current trends are. Be yourself.

Text and Images: Rolf Kraehenbuehl





Distinctions

In this section of the newsletter we'd like to present RPS distinction panels (LRPS, ARPS and FRPS) by our region members, both for the pure enjoyment of the reader and viewer, and also to inspire and encourage future applicants to embark on the journey of working towards a distinction.

While we can certainly learn from studying the final product, I think it would be very informative to also see how a panel progressed, from the idea or concept, over an early version, towards the final version which has been submitted for assessment. It would also be instructive to learn about the comments by advisers if the applicant participated in an advisory day or a 1:1 advice session.

I'm speaking from my background as a life science researcher: with a few exceptions, only positive data (findings which show what works) are publishable; negative data (which demonstrate what experiments didn't work, and might never work) disappear in the depths of drawers. They're hardly ever published in journals or presented at conferences. The danger of not making this information readily available to other researchers lies in risking to constantly trying to reinvent the wheel and making the same mistakes.

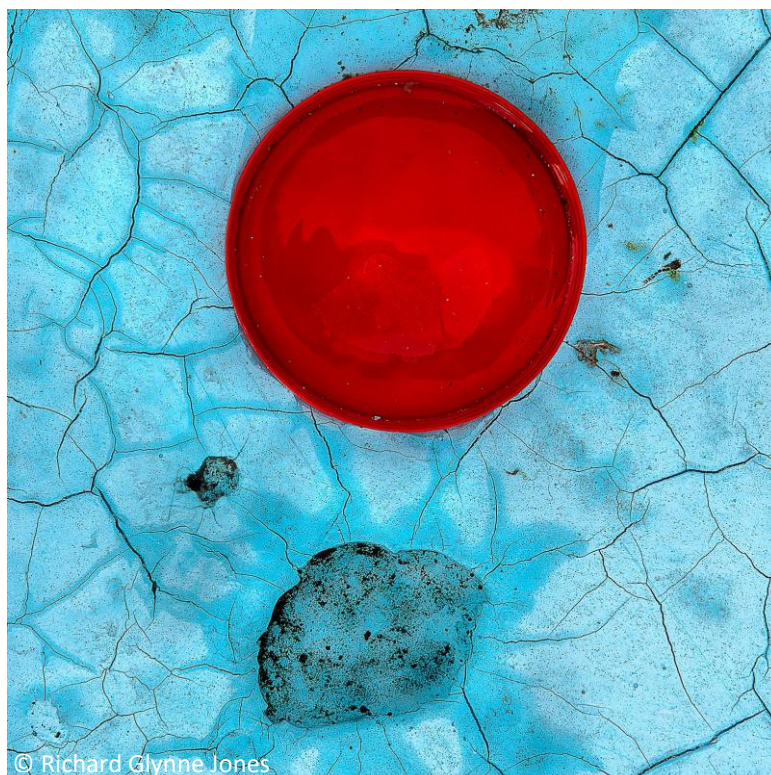
In my opinion, a lot can be gained from analysing why a particular distinction panel had to be reworked in order to be ready for submission with a successful outcome.

I am well aware that not everybody might feel comfortable about sharing this information, but I think it could be one way, next to the established ways like advisory days and 1:1 advice sessions, to expedite a prospective applicant's progress.

Besides, I personally think that everybody who put in the thought and work to build a photographic panel and summons the courage to apply for an assessment should be met with respect and congratulated to her and his efforts made. Be assured that your contribution to this section of the newsletter will be held in high esteem.

If you like to share your experience with our region members: please send your article submissions to northwales@rps.org, telling us about your motivation to apply for a distinction, the challenges you faced, how you overcame them, what informed your choice of images, showing us the images themselves of course, and everything else you would like to tell or show us in regard to your distinction.

- Rolf Kraehenbuehl



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In this issue of the newsletter, we start off with a preview of an article, which will be published in the September edition of the RPS journal, on the successful ARPS distinction panel of region member and secretary of the region committee, Richard Glynne Jones.

Richard writes about his panel: “From its inception, the panel has always been entitled “The Blue Lagoon.” The subject is a paddling pool on a promenade in Llandudno, North Wales. This small area of blueness sparkles with a Mediterranean shimmer during the summer months. However, the remaining months contrast starkly with this phenomenon. Adverse weather creates subtler shades of blue, whilst debris blown by wind and abandoned by man collects to decorate the eroding infrastructure of the pool. I have sought to capture through close-up images, the aforementioned process. With a constant blue backdrop, I have focused on the abstract shapes and accompanying textures. These are complemented by a variety of *objets trouvés* adding a variety of colour and form. As often is the case, there can be beauty in decay which is often overlooked by all who visit this location. However, despite such contrasts and challenges, the wonderful and varying blueness continues to provide an eye-catching background.

At first, I began to develop several potential panel ideas. Over a period, these were eventually distilled down to two. To give the two final ideas more identity I gave them titles which informed the creative process.

Basically, I was inspired and became obsessed with the colour blue, which seemed incongruous on a wind-swept north facing promenade. In addition, I became intrigued by the location’s ability to change on almost a daily basis. The latter became more apparent as I began to move from capturing the wider viewpoint to the more close-up aspects of the pool. Crucially, the pool lies approximately 3 miles from where I live. Thus, I was able to visit the pool daily if I so wished throughout the year. I began to get an understanding of the subject matter, and to better perceive what I wanted to create. This approach gave me a personal and emotional link with the subject impact which would perhaps not have been achievable with a faraway location.”



Exhibitions, near and far

Life In Motion: Egon Schiele/ Francesca Woodman

Liverpool: [Tate Liverpool](#)
until 23rd September

This exhibition contrasts the work of Austrian painter Egon Schiele (1890-1918) and the photographer Francesca Woodman (1958-1981). Schiele, who was associated with the Secession movement, was an important and pioneering painter at the beginning of the 20th century. In his distinctive, stark style, he portrayed people including himself, dressed or in the nude, as emaciated, strangely coloured figures, with bold brush strokes, and delineated with sharp lines.

In contrast, the style of the American Photographer Francesca Woodman is characterised by long exposures of her female models (in most cases herself, clothed or naked), leading to various degrees of motion blur and softening of the human figure. In other images she is only partially shown, and through contact with objects in the room merges with the surroundings and becomes a part of the room itself.

See the exhibition review in this newsletter.

The Great British Seaside: Photography from the 1960s to the Present

London: [National Maritime Museum](#)
until 30th September

This exhibition features work by Tony Ray-Jones, David Hurn, Simon Roberts and Martin Parr, and focuses on British life by the seaside. The photographs have been taken over several decades in various locations around the British coast including North Wales.

See the exhibition review in this newsletter.



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Women in Focus

Cardiff: [National Museum](#)
until 9th June 2019

This exhibition has two parts:

Part One: Women Behind the Lens;

5th May – 11th November 2018

Part Two: Women in Front of the Lens;

1st December 2018 – 9th June 2019

The exhibition explores the role of women in photography both behind and in front of the camera.

Dorothea Lange / Vanessa Winship - A photography double bill

London: [Barbican](#)
until 2nd September

Dorothea Lange (1895-1965) is probably best known for her image 'Migrant Mother', taken in the era of the Great Depression. This exhibition is a retrospective on this activist photographer who firmly believed that pictures can change the world. The exhibition doesn't only focus on Lange's work in the Dust Bowl, but also presents probably lesser known work like her early portraits and photos taken during a several week long journey through Ireland.

Vanessa Winship is a contemporary British photographer who does projects in portraiture, reportage and documentary photography, often combining these genres. Geographically, her main area of work is Eastern Europe and the USA. In 2011, she received the Prix Henri Cartier Bresson.

See the exhibition review in this newsletter.

Shape of Light: 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art

London: [Tate Modern](#)
until 14th October 2018

This stunning exhibition examines the history and development of abstract photography, from the beginning of the last century up to now. An enormous variety of approaches to abstract photography are presented, aiming at turning the traditionally perceived reproductive nature of photography (to show what is there) into generative photography (making an image, often of something which does not exist, or cannot be seen, as such in reality). The outcome is remarkable!

See also the exhibition review on the following pages of this newsletter.

London Nights

London: [Museum of London](#)
until 11th November 2018

Exhibition with over 200 works on the theme of 'London by night' by 60 photographers, including Alvin Langdon Coburn, Bill Brandt, and Nick Turpin.



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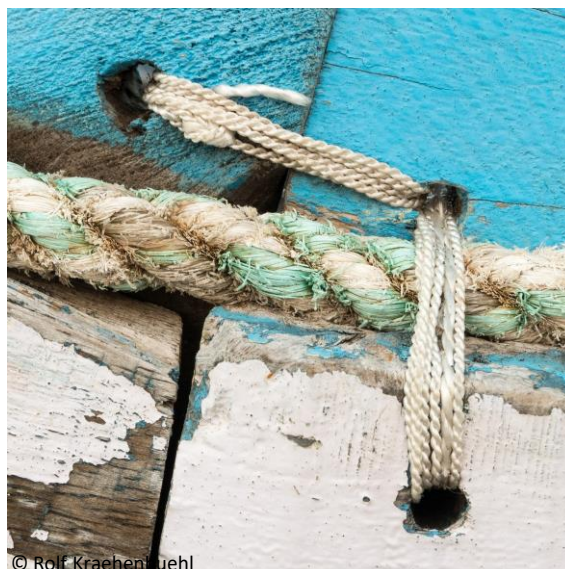
Exhibition Reviews

The Great British Seaside

The seaside is not only a distinct feature of the British landscape, but also a mirror of British society and culture in general. For a long time, the seaside has served as a leisure and recreation ground for people of all social strata, accessible to everyone, in almost all weather conditions. Its use and appearance has changed over the decades, and not only reflects changes in our culture and the way we spend our time at the seaside, but is an indicator of the economic conditions and changes associated with them. Beautiful, natural, romantic coves and beaches contrast with promenades built of concrete and being hosts to entertainment and amusement centres and consumerism. Once imposing seafronts now crumble, telling a story of a bygone era.

The displays feature the work of the four photographers Tony Ray-Jones, David Hurn, Martin Parr and Simon Roberts, over the last fifty years, with two bodies of work in black and white, and two in colour, and focuses on documenting not only the natural and social aspects of the seaside, but also on the humorous capture of the eccentricities - and sometimes absurdities - which could and still can be spotted at the British seaside.

The exhibition starts off with the work of Tony Ray-Jones (1941-1972), who said: "My aim is to communicate something of the spirit and the mentality of the English, their habits and their way of life, the ironies that exist in the way they do things." Shown are photographs taken from 1966-1969 around the English coast, but mainly in Brighton, Margate, and Broadstairs. Tony Ray-Jones' photos are infused with humour, warmth, wit, and affection for his subjects. Although some photos may look like snapshots at first glance, Ray-Jones believed in careful framing and the choreography of the elements within the frame. This is exemplified by contact sheets on display, bearing the photographer's editing marks. It's always interesting to study contact sheets, and ponder why the photographer has chosen a particular frame over another one, taken just moments earlier or later, or framed from a slightly different perspective.



"The seaside is a place for uninhibited fun. It's cheap and very democratic, full of laughter, tenderness, ridiculousness but basically a way of having a good time." These are the words by the Welsh photojournalist and Magnum photographer David Hurn, who regards photography as the most democratic form of communication. He loves, and succeeds, to document the ordinary, and make it look extraordinary. His carefully composed, dense, multilayered images tell captivating stories of seaside recreation. While most images on display have been taken in the sixties and early seventies, some are of newer date. One of his favourite images has been taken at 'Whistling Sands', Porth Oer, on the Llyn Peninsula, in 2004. It's a very evocative picture, with an almost eerie and surreal quality.

Contemporary British Magnum photographer Martin Parr, best known for his saturated colour photographs, captures the normality and the everyday aspects of life at the seaside, but also pictures the inconsistencies, ambiguities, and sometimes absurdities, of ordinary British beach life. He photographed his subjects at close range, sometimes using flash even in bright daylight, which lends the images a hyperreal touch. Some photographs from his three-year landmark project "The Last Resort", realised in New Brighton between 1983 and 1986, are on display. A section of the exhibition is dedicated to his recent project on the Essex seaside, featuring large colour prints.



Simon Roberts, the fourth photographer on show in this exhibition, employs a completely different approach: he works with a large format view camera, often from the top of his camper van. This elevated viewpoint giving expansive views is reminiscent of classic landscape paintings, and introduces a distance to the people in the frame; the focus shifts away from depicting individual persons towards rendering the people merely as a formal pattern in the landscape, combining landscape and social documentary photography. The effect of the large-scale prints in the exhibition is staggering: the viewer gets drawn into the image and submerged in the vista.

The exhibition is accompanied by four short, but very informative, films of a few minutes each, about the work of the photographers on display. David Hurn, Martin Parr and Simon Roberts share thoughts about photography in general, and talk about their photographic approaches. In the case of the late Tony Ray-Jones, information and comments are given by Simon Roberts.

A beautiful exhibition catalogue is available, with short texts about the photographers, and informative texts written by the photographers themselves (the text about Tony Ray-Jones has been written by his wife). With a few exceptions, the images are very accurately reproduced. - *Rolf Kraehenbuehl*

Jacques Henri Lartigue - c'est chic!

Because of the delayed publication of this first issue of our newsletter, this exhibition on the French painter and photographer Jacques Henri Lartigue (1894-1986) will have closed already. There's three reasons, though, why I still write and print a review. Firstly, Lartigue truly is a 'master of the caught moment', as exhibition curator Paul Smith refers to him, and with his distinct style of capturing fleeting moments produced images which are such a joy to look at. Secondly, Lartigue was only discovered late as a photographer at the age of 69 after an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and a lot of his photographic work has never been published or exhibited. And the third reason is the gallery itself: the Michael Hoppen Gallery, with its welcoming and friendly atmosphere and staff, is well worth a visit.

Lartigue is well known for his images of racing cars and aircrafts in their early days, and for his pictures of iconic Parisian fashion models. But over several decades, he also did documentary and sometimes street photography-like work, depicting friends and strangers in ordinary and sometimes not so ordinary scenes, capturing spontaneous moments in an often humoristic way.

Lartigue certainly had a keen eye and a heightened sense for the unusual - and sometimes absurd - moments in everyday life, and he managed to capture the 'decisive moment' in its truest sense, which means not only documenting something happening in a split second, but elevate the image to a visually and aesthetically pleasing piece through his choice of viewpoint and appropriate framing. Many of his images show wit, humour, and empathy for his subjects.

The exhibition focused on photos from the photographer's archive, taken from the 40s into the early 70s, in various countries including France, England and the USA. Lartigue worked in black and white and, later on, in colour. The exhibition reflected this with most photos on display being in black and white, but some intriguing colour photographs on show as well.

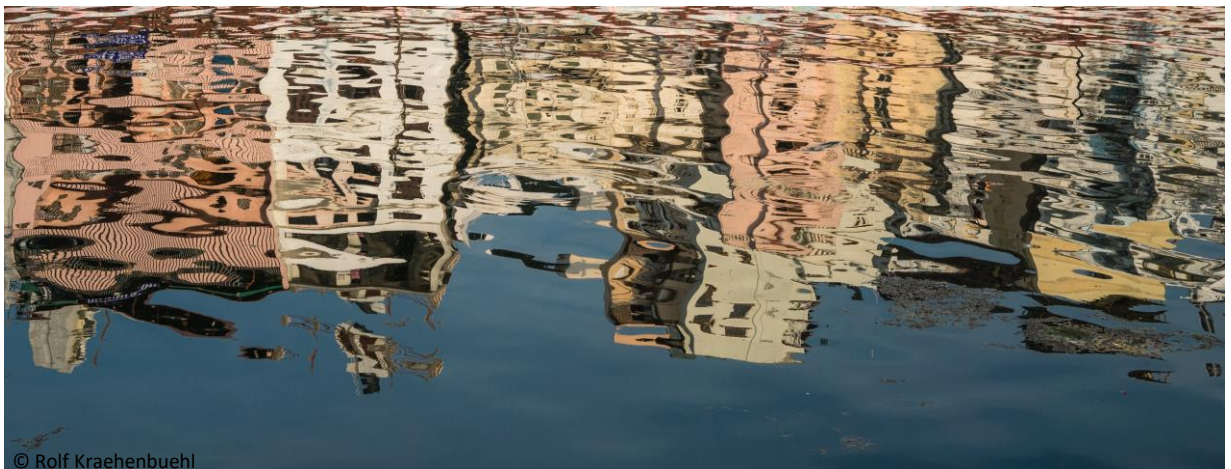
I absolutely enjoyed visiting this exhibition, and discovering a great photographer. I really hope that more of his images from the archive will be exhibited and published in the future, and I can only recommend having a closer look at Lartigue's work. - *Rolf Kraehenbuehl*

Life in Motion: Egon Schiele / Francesca Woodman

The works of a painter and a photographer exhibited alongside each other: what did Egon Schiele, and Francesca Woodman, who lived forty years apart, have in common? A quick look at their biographies tells us that, sadly, they both died young, but were very prolific and productive, and created an impressive body of work during their short lifetime. Looking at the paintings by Schiele and the photographs by Woodman, it becomes obvious that, despite their young age, they both were pioneers in the way they depicted their subject, the human body. Surely, Schiele's unusual painting style, both of portraits and full-body studies, and his sometimes rather explicit representation of the body, not sparing the intimate body parts, was frowned upon at the time, and maybe still today. His bold brush strokes, combined with the very sharp and clear cut outline of the figures, and his choice of colours were most distinctive and new in the art world. In contrast, Woodman brought motion blur into her studies of the female figure (in most cases she photographed herself), either only moving a hand, for example, at other times slowly moving the entire body to just soften the



outline, and in other images moving faster as if to create the effect of disappearance. In yet other images, she partially obscures her body with objects like an unhinged door, a large mirror, or other props - combined with the specific lighting, either soft and diffuse, or direct and harsh, she created an ambiguity: although her body is seemingly the focus of the scene, she melts into and becomes one with the surroundings. In my opinion, her black and white photographs have a very particular aesthetics and unique beauty; they have a certain calmness, but at the same time are unsettling. Although the paintings as well as some photographs in this exhibition may not appeal to everyone, I can certainly recommend a visit. - *Rolf Kraehenbuehl*



**Dorothea Lange / Vanessa Winship
- A photography double bill**

This short review only focuses on the part of the exhibition which presents the work of the American documentary photographer Dorothea Lange. The beauty of this exhibition, in my opinion, lies in the fact that it gives an overview of Lange's diverse documentary work throughout her life. Lange, who is probably best known for her image 'Migrant Mother', taken during the Great Depression, was a very versatile photographer, and the exhibition starts off with some of Lange's early work as a studio portraitist. Of course, a big part of the exhibition is then dedicated to her work in the Dust Bowl. Lange's passionate belief that pictures can effect change in politics and society was the driving force behind her pictures of destitute migrant workers, their families and the desolate camps these people often had to live in. She said about one of her pictures which shows a desperate worker, crouching against a wall, next to an upside down wheelbarrow: "Now, I wanted to take a picture of a man as he stood in the

world - in this case, a man with his head down, with his back against the wall, with his livelihood like the wheelbarrow, overturned."

Her images are very evocative and emotional, and really show her empathy with the subjects. Lange also documented the internment of Japanese Americans, a very controversial chapter in American history. Most of these photographs were censored at the time, and the exhibition displays some of these images. In another project, Lange documented the evacuation and abandonment of a village in a valley which was going to be flooded after the completion of a dam. The last section of the exhibition tells us about Lange's journey through Ireland, working on a magazine article. Again, her images of the land and its people are very evocative. In summary, this is a great exhibition on a great photographer, and a visit is highly recommended.

—Rolf Kraehenbuehl



© Rolf Kraehenbuehl

The Shape of Light: 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art

This exhibition is a revelation! It examines the various approaches by photographers around the world, from the beginning of the last century up to today, to produce abstract art with the means of photography, from using camera and lens in a traditional way, over camera-less photography, using just photosensitive emulsions and objects which leave a photographic imprint on them (or even just using light, and leaving objects out completely), to modern forms of creating images by, for example, exploring the visual effects created by pinhole structures based on algorithms. The works on display question the often conceived separation between photography and art, and rather suggest that they influenced and integrated with each other. Examples are photographs by Pierre Dubreuil and Alvin Langdon Coburn, which are reminiscent of cubism and vorticism, or a photograph by Aaron Siskind which is said to have inspired the painter Willem de Kooning. László Moholy-Nagy created geometric paintings, and later on reproduced these paintings through photograms. Paintings

by Jackson Pollock share similarities with light drawings by Nathan Lerner, Arthur Siegel and Otto Steinert.

Germaine Krull, Ed Ruscha, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Lewis Baltz, László Moholy-Nagy, Margaret Bourke-White, Peter Keetman, Iwao Yamawaki or Paulo Pires, to name but a few, gave their photographs a sense of abstraction while still keeping the subjects and elements in the frame recognizable. Paul Strand and many other followers of the 'straight photography' and 'new objectivity' movements photographed their objects close-up or from unusual viewing angles, and while accurately reproducing the scene, paradoxically created rather abstract images. Man Ray, as an exponent of the 'New Vision' movement, went a different way. Using the medium of photography not only to record and reproduce, but to make images of things which do not exist as such in reality, he produced photograms, aptly named 'Rayograms'.



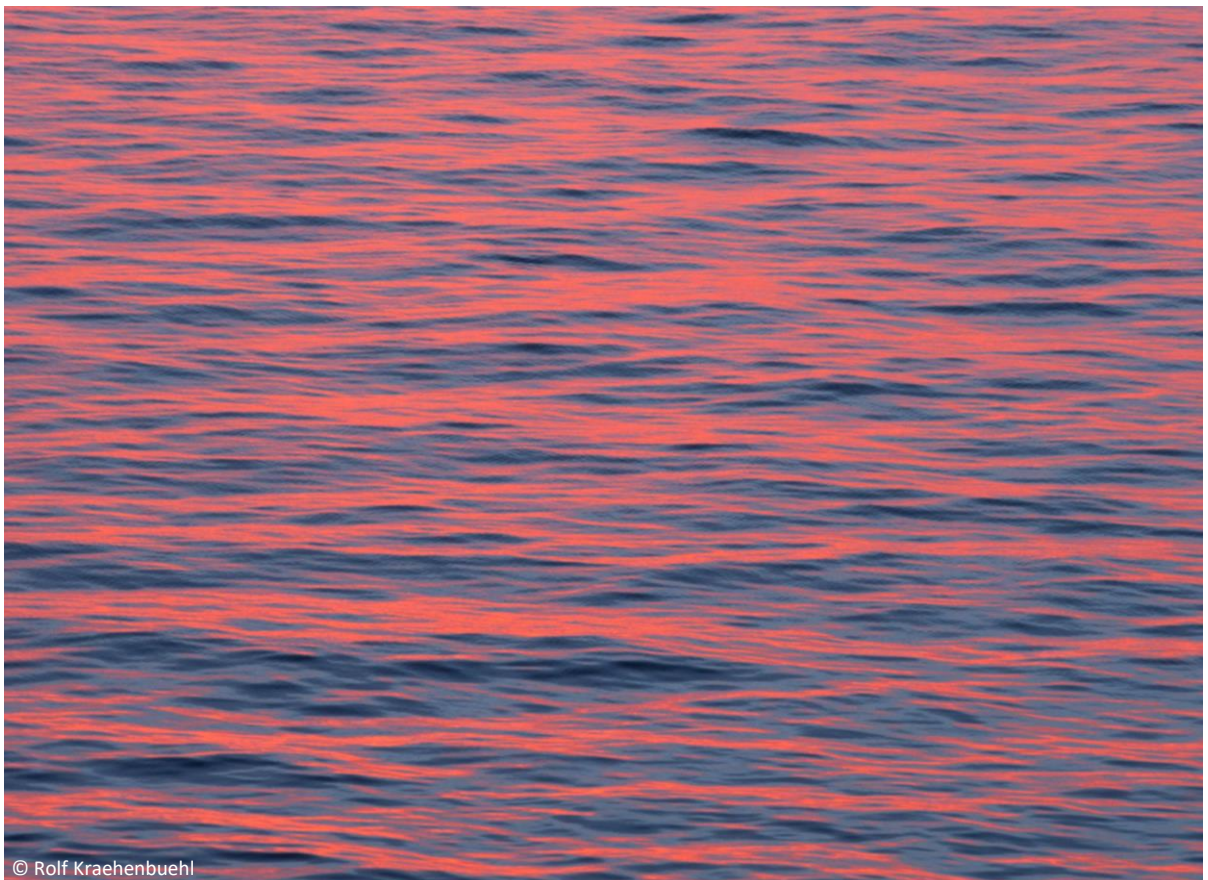
© Rolf Kraehenbuehl

In the second half of the last century, artists like Peter Keetman, Běla Kolářová, Alexandre Vitkine or Gottfried Jaeger took abstract photography yet a step further. Vitkine and Keetman created abstract photographs with oscillating light sources in the darkroom - Keetman's pictures remind us of geometrical computer graphics programmed thirty years later. By rotating the enlarger or the photographic paper, Kolářová combined photograms with recording movement, and created intriguing art works. In his 'Pinhole Series', Gottfried Jaeger employed a systematic, almost mechanical approach, to visualize his idea that the photographic process is not only reproductive (as traditionally seen), but also generative, with a predetermined nature, meaning that the outcome can be predicted as if it was programmed. Barbara Kasten, John Divola, Jay DeFeo and other artists then integrated different mediums, intersecting photography with sculpture, textiles and even buildings, to produce images, demonstrating that the line between photography and other art forms is permeable.

The recent decades have seen yet other

approaches: Alison Rossiter partially develops unexposed expired photographic paper, and by doing so even removes the light source as a photographic tool; Thomas Ruff works with a 3D visualization specialist to simulate a darkroom, and the outcome is truly surprising; Stan Douglas creates images consisting of vertical bands of colour from corrupted digital camera files; Maya Rochat and Daisuke Yokota physically rework their printed photographs with chemicals or with physical processes like burning. There's much much more to this exhibition, the bandwidth or variety of the artworks on display is astounding. They convincingly demonstrate and illustrate how abstraction, which contravenes the traditional perception of photography as an accurate and realistic reproduction of reality, became a unique movement in the history of photography and carries on until today. It's impressive to see how all these photographers pushed the limits of the medium - I certainly admire not only their ingenuity but also the audacity with which they set out to achieve their vision and goals.

- Rolf Kraehenbuehl



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