

concept

abstraction image conceptualisation notion thought
 impression theory view conception idea hypothesis

e-newsletter

Hi folks,

What a brilliant summer we have had. No excuses then for not getting out with our cameras and making full use of the weather. We have another great edition for you. August's Concept contains an excellent piece by Tessa Mills – very thought provoking and well worth reading. Thank you Tessa for your incisive thoughts.

We have also managed to persuade Patricia Ruddle to give us her own thoughts on her journey through photography. Patricia, as many of you know, edited the Contemporary Group Journal for 6 years. Again, a really good read.

Patricia and Tessa's contributions actually complete the project we began a year ago, to ask all of the Contemporary Group Committee to write something about themselves so the membership could get a real insight into people's approach to their work. It has been a real pleasure reading about the many and diverse ways people approach their photography and the journey they are on.

This edition actually marks the end of our contribution to Concept. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Editor of the Newsletter and it has been a real honour being able to present to members what I hope has been an interesting and useful way of keeping us all in touch. I know I speak too for Christine who has been an absolute stalwart in producing the great graphics and layout. It has been very much a team project. But now it is time to hand over the reins. We know Concept will go from strength to strength and wish you all the best in whatever way your photography takes you.

Lyn Newton
 Christine Pinnington



Holiday Snap Velez Málaga
 © Patricia Ann Ruddle

In this Issue

Spotlight on your Committee Members

Tessa Mills
 Patricia Ruddle

P is for Print

North East Sub-group Meeting

Format19

100 Heroines

What's On

Forthcoming Contemporary
 Group Meetings

Films

Exhibitions

Crete Self-Harming 2018

Tessa Mills FRPS.

As Chair of the Assessment Panel I appreciate this opportunity to discuss RPS Contemporary Distinctions Photography.

When assessing work for a Contemporary Distinction we look for a well thought through subject which is conceived and photographed with passion. We appreciate a personal approach, leading to visual exploration of the chosen subject through creative thought and imaginative use of image-making.

When assessing panels we see no 'correct' or 'incorrect' way to photograph, for work to be understood as Contemporary. Individual style is encouraged. The use of visual metaphors, humour, honesty, originality, surprise and graphic balances are amongst the tools of the Contemporary photographer.

We do not 'censor' any subject or interest. If it is important to you as a photographer, then we can understand through your statement which reflects your emotional connection. The statement needs to be supportive to the images – the images are not illustrations of the statement.

When we assess a panel, we look for a clearly stated point of view. We may not agree with that conclusion, but we understand that it is important to you, the author. So we assess how that message is explored within the given images.

In common with all the RPS groups we are within the umbrella of distinguished photography of the RPS which aims for a high technical standard appropriate to the requirements of Associate or Fellow.

I include here a short exploratory series 'Crete Self-Harming' where I have used my emotional involvement to explore the visual forms that develop my idea.

Whilst taking holiday photographs this June, I became aware of how the island of Crete has become a tourist themed destination. By piling up the buildings they aim to provide amenities for tourists but are becoming a sad pastiche of themselves, whilst losing their authenticity and history. It seemed to me that by pampering to the tourist trade they are killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

This series of images is definitely biased in its conclusion as there are many areas of Crete that are not like this. There are many people who have beautiful holidays and return year after year loving the Island. I am not saying that 'This is what Crete is'. I am presenting a group of images that explore the feelings that I personally had whilst being there.

Crete, Self Harming :

The first 3 images are straight photographs with the Mediterranean blue reminding me of the raw beauty that has been lost. The similarities of their graphic compositions link them together. No. 4, 5, & 6 are double exposures to give my visual interpretation of the boxes, hutches and overbuilt areas. These 3 are linked by the in-camera overlaying effect that makes the claustrophobic, chaotic boxes more pronounced.



1. The Excavating

Monumental inverted landscape created by removal of assets.



2. The Smothering

A wild and beautiful coastline filled in, to provide safe sunbathing areas.



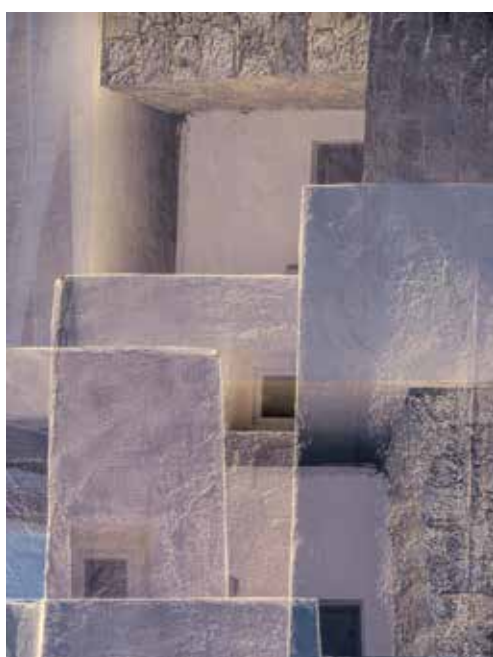
3. The Transforming

The traditional windmills are being re-built, thus losing their original stonework and aged personalities.



4. The Abusing

Many small areas along the coast are filled with 'villas' gambolling down steep slopes to the sea.



5. The Repeating

New builds often have standard Cretan architectural details without any form of progression design-wise and present stagnated, repeated patterns.



6. The Reality

Some small towns have become a mass of tourist boxes, where visitors are boxed in, between the restaurants and yet more hutches.

Patricia Ann Ruddle ARPS

I can't remember when I didn't have a camera, nor can I remember when I wasn't a member of the RPS. When I learned about it sometime in the 1980s I wanted to be a member of a Society that existed when photography began.

Initially I was caught up in the drama of achieving distinctions. An LRPS in 35mm slides was followed by an ARPS with my own darkroom colour prints in the Visual Arts category. These prints were based on a theme which began my penchant for theme-based photography. Sadly, a print submission in 2001 for a Fellowship in the Contemporary Group failed. I had joined the Group almost from its beginning in 1990 following a talk by Richard Sadler.

My RPS volunteer involvement began when I assisted Bob Gates, Yorkshire Regional Organiser, for over fourteen years. We had the good fortune to hold our meetings at the then National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. These were exciting, keen, heady years with speakers such as David Hurn and Homer Sykes, to name just two, to inspire us.

It was during this time that my husband, Michael Lee, initiated the York Contemporary Photography Group in 2000. We met for a couple of years at Impressions Gallery when it was still in York, opening what was the first Contemporary Group subgroup with Richard Sadler as our first speaker.

My photographic path changed when Paul Hill talked to us. A love of research manifested itself and after deciding not to pursue a Master's Degree at DeMont Univerity, I went on to complete an MA by Research with Distinction at the University of York. I wrote my dissertation on the Spanish photographer, Cristina García Rodero, who is now a member of Magnum.

So, I'm a member of the Historical Group as well. I believe that different periods of time can be relevant to a contemporary photographic practice, not forgetting that what is now historical was once contemporary. A couple of years ago I was awarded a travel grant to work in the archives of another Spanish photographer, José Ortiz Echagüe. The plan is to write about him for a Fellowship in the Research, Education and Application of Photography category (REAP) category.

I've had the privilege of being part of a team who for several years catalogued the RPS Collection at the National Media Museum until it was given to the V&A. (I'm delighted to say that we have stayed on despite having lost the Collection. We are currently cataloguing the Tony Ray Jones archive.)

You will know that I was Editor of our Group Journal "Contemporary Photography" for six years. Having worked on several issues as proof-reader when Bill Jackson was Editor, I was asked to take on the role. I changed the format and content and began to include not only members' work, but also that of international photographers.

The only RPS volunteer work that I do now is to organise the Contemporary North subgroup. I took over from Nigel Tooby who graciously hosted our meetings for several years in his art studio. Now we're back in York where it first began with my husband over eighteen



Sandsend Cyanotype



Spurn Point Cyanotype



Spurn Point Solarplate Etching



Holiday Snap Berlin

years ago. Our subgroup has developed into a strong group of like-minded members who have become friends over the years.

I often get teased by the group for not showing any photography now that I should have more time to devote to it. However, it seems most of what I do is on holiday. But, I like to think that the photos aren't mere holiday snaps, rather something quirky and indicative of the town or country. (P.S. I am also a member of the Documentary Group since its inception by Del Barrett.)

Some of you know that I'm interested in historical processes, especially cyanotype. This year I've begun to experiment with the gum bichromate process. I like to explore what was contemporary in the past to create my own twenty first-century view. Perhaps I can call it "historical contemporary". I can modify the historical to say something new for the now. Experimenting can lead to fresh ways of seeing.

I've always loved printmaking, especially etchings. Lately I've veered off the photographic slope to produce collagraphs. It's my goal though to join photography and printmaking; I'm experimenting with various forms like photo etching and solar plate etching.

I don't know where this will lead but my heart will always be with the Contemporary Group and the RPS – I'm proud to say that I was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in 2014.



Holiday Snap Tulsa Oklahoma

All images © Patricia A Ruddle ARPS



P is for Print

Patricia Ann Ruddle at City Screen York.

This Summer, Patricia held a successful exhibition at the City Screen in York. Contemporary images were displayed in a variety of printing techniques: vintage darkroom cyanotypes, collagraphs, and gum bichromate.

Patricia is a photographer and printmaker working with traditional techniques to produce contemporary pictures (see previous page). She describes her work as "having the freedom to develop non-representational pictures, using elements such as texture, line and colour to create images. . . . finding a rapport between old and new".

The gallery is a good space to display, and is situated by the riverside with its own café and although the exhibition is now finished, the gallery is well worth a visit.

https://www.picturehouses.com/cinema/York_Picturehouse



Patricia with Adam Keay (City Screen Exhibitions).



Christine Pinnington July 2018

A visitor admires the work

North East Contemporary Group Meeting

19th May, York

Christine Pinnington Reports

Patricia Ruddle welcomed everyone to the group's first meeting at the new venue in York.

Patricia announced that Lyn and Christine were both stepping down from Concept and thanked them for all their work. The recent special edition asking for members to organise events regionally was discussed. The group felt they would like to continue as we are with the possibility of occasionally inviting speakers. Members were also reminded about Patricia's exhibition 'P is for Print' (see later article) currently showing at City Screen, York until the 25th July.

A short discussion followed about what is contemporary. Patricia read out the definition from the Journal Contemporary Group ethos - Photography that conveys ideas, stimulates thought and encourages interpretation; photographs 'about' rather than 'of'.

In the current RPS Distinctions Procedure, Conceptual and Contemporary Photography is defined as "photography which explores, defines, illustrates or evaluates issues through photographic images." It was agreed within the group that it encompasses many genres.

Christine Pinnington began by showing a variety of her work, explaining her take on contemporary using photography as a conceptual art form to convey a message. Her work included collages, montages and set pieces ending with a recent work, a montage of images of abandoned shoes mounted in the shape of a boot (complete with laces!)



Baby Hackers © Christine Pinnington

Jane Batty brought along examples of her work and asked members to discuss whether these would be considered contemporary. The images showed some interesting techniques, such as photographing on black glass. Generally, members thought the images could be considered visual art but could also be contemporary as they seemed to have a subliminal message running through.

Lyn Newton brought along a set of black and white images taken on Brick Lane in London. These explored the impression our surroundings make on us. There were images of passers-by walking past quite powerful quotations on wall and ground without a second glance. On the other hand, pictorial graffiti generated much more reaction with people stopping to take selfies next to it.



Lyn Newton's work displayed

Robert Harris is currently doing a degree in photography with the Open College of the Arts and brought some of his work, inspired by Greg Crewdston's 'Cathedral of the Pines'. After observing people living on the streets he began looking at why we don't live in the country. His work used several techniques – Photoshop, merged and combined images, time-lapse and set pieces. <http://www.gregorycrewdsonmovie.com>.



Robert's work is discussed by the group

Jim Souper shows his images to the group



Jim Souper brought along a set of black and white images of standing stones in the Hebrides. He had taken one set then returned to follow the archaeology – his pictures looking at layers of history in the landscape. His images included churches and memorials as well the stones. He was also considering whether to develop or leave a further set of images on abandoned buildings.

Peter Bartlett showed a set of colour images from his recent trip to Australia. Some images from the Goldfields area of Victoria showed building as they are today but also reflected the affluence of the gold rush period of the 1800s. There were also images taken in Ballarat, another gold rush town, showing the dereliction of some buildings alongside the affluence of yesteryear. An image of the railway station in Maryborough, centre of the Goldfields area, showed its past glory.

Graham Low showed images, in his usual amusing style, from his recent visit to Oporto and Ponte de lima. The images were Graham's look at contemporary life there and were accompanied by his very witty observations. Images showed a red cow on a skateboard, summer graffiti with Santa's reindeer and some strange sculptures.

Finally, Wendy North showed a selection of images taken from her many gallery visits. Her images explore people's interactions with the art works and often used movement. Wendy had used the juxtaposition between people and sculptures and sculptures with sculptures. These included the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Hepworth Gallery. Wendy also brought the group's attention to Art UK. They are looking for photographers to document sculptures around the UK for a national collection. More information can be found on the RPS website.



© Wendy North

<http://rps.org/news/2018/march/art-uk-and-public-sculpture>

FORMAT19

The Group Committee is planning to take part in **FORMAT19**, the UK's pre-eminent festival for contemporary photography, which is held every other year in Derby. Next year the opening weekend is 14-17 March 2019, and the festival as a whole runs through to 14 April.

We are at the early stages of planning, though we are considering holding one or more meetings/events as part of the opening weekend, and an exhibition of group members' work over a longer period of the festival. Much will depend on the nature of the venue we can secure; we will meet with QUAD, the festival organisers, shortly to look at what our options are.

This will be a great opportunity to raise the profile of RPS Contemporary Photography to a wider audience of photographers. We anticipate that we will need volunteers to help with logistics as we approach the time. If you would like to be part of the challenge, particularly if you live within easy reach of Derby, please contact me.

Paul Ashley
(Editor, RPS Contemporary Photography Journal)
paultheashley@gmail.com

See more: www.formatfestival.com

100

Heroines



The Royal Photographic Society is running an international campaign to honour one hundred photographic heroines. 2018 is being hailed as the Year of the Woman; it marks the centenary of women's suffrage in the UK and has seen significant steps taken to highlight women's rights – from the #metoo and Times Up movements to increased awareness of the gender gap.

Brian Steptoe FRPS



Open pages from 'Your Photographs Could Be Used by Drug Dealers', by Monica Alvarez-Duarte

The campaign was initiated by Society Vice-President Del Barrett and has been reported in the media. Nominations are open to all, members and non-members of the Society. Nominations are open until 30 September, then a panel of judges chaired by Rut Brees Luxemburg, will select the top 100 nominated photographers. An award and exhibition will follow.

From the start this initiative had strong support from Group members. My own nominations are being put forward one per day, with 21 at the time of writing. Many came from being authors of some of the photobooks in my collection. I was particularly pleased to see my nomination for Laia Abril being featured on the new top page of the RPS website.

All are encouraged to put forward nominations. See <http://www.rps100heroines.org>



Page spreads from Dita Pepe's book



Selection of photobooks by several of the women I have nominated : top row from left, by Miki Soejima, Lisa Barnard, Olivia Arthur (top), Monica Alvarez-Duarte, Dita Pepe, bottom row from left by Rinko Kawachi, Teresa Eng, Susan Meiselas, Laia Abril and Yan Wang Preston.



Laia Abril page spread

What's On

Contemporary Group Meetings:

Contemporary North East Meeting 8th September

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

Contact Patricia Ruddle ARPS:
patriciaruddle@btinternet.com
Tel 01904 783850

Please note, this date has changed from the advertised date of 15th

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.

13th October

Contemporary Group AGM
Regent's University, Regent's Park, London NW1
4NS



Do Not Bend The photographic life of Bill Jay

FILM: Scottish Premiere of:

Do Not Bend: The Photographic Life of Bill Jay

Wednesday 26th September 2018

www.donotbendfilm.com/film/scottish-premiere/

Lindsay Stewart Lecture Theatre,
Craiglockhart Campus, Edinburgh Napier
University, 219 Colinton Road, EH14 1DJ
You can purchase tickets at:

<https://store.napier.ac.uk/product-catalogue/creative-industries/events/do-not-bend-the-photographic-life-of-bill-jay-26th-september-2018>

Starting at 5.45pm with a Drinks Reception, the Film Screening will be followed by Questions and Answers.

Gunnie Moberg and Margaret Tait:

The days never seem the same

27 Jul 2018 - 28 Oct 2018

Stills Centre for Photography, 23 Cockburn Street, Edinburgh EH1 1BP

The days never seem the same includes a large selection of Moberg's photographs, from portraits to aerial views of the landscape of Orkney.

www.stills.org/exhibition/future-exhibition/gunnie-moberg-and-margaret-tait-the-daysnever-seem-the-same

Please watch the website for further details of the next issue

Note: The copyright of photographs and text in this issue belongs to the author of the article of which they form part unless otherwise indicated.



Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rpscontemporary>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RSPPhotobooks>