

The Newsletter of the
Contemporary Group of
the Royal Photographic
Society



© Douglas May FRPS

November 2022 Contents

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Letter from the Editor

Approaching the end of any year is always a great chance for reflection, and the CSIG Committee have been busy debating how we can best improve and serve the membership. I know Concept is an appreciated resource that many people look forward to receiving, and with this in mind the team have thought about how best we can build on its current design to make the most of your contributions and create a more visually stimulating newsletter. We look forward to sharing the results with you in our next issue in 2023. Along with the re-design, the Concept Team are working closely with the Journal team to ensure they are published at regular intervals, and our new publication scheduled is expanded upon in Alexandra Prescott's View from The Chair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Alexandra for her hard work on behalf of the CSIG, a sentiment I know many of you will share.

Focusing on the here and now, I hope you enjoy this issue of Concept! It's bursting at the seams, with some great images from our members, both in the form of submissions for Photo Focus – (please keep them coming!) updates from regional meetings and submissions from members. You have certainly been busy! I hope you enjoy it, and for those who want to share article ideas or images in the New Year, please do get in touch.

Wishing you all the best for the remainder of 2022 and for a happy and healthy New Year.

Suzi

Upcoming Events

21st November

Alan Cameron ARPS will be presenting a talk about his ARPS journey.

10th December

Our December Sandpit (Theme: Dream or Nightmare) remains scheduled.

17 December

Jo Bradford will present 'Darkrooms and Smartphones - Expect the Unexpected' on Zoom.

See the RPS Website for further details

View from the Chair

Concept / Journal : New Format

Following our membership survey in January this year we committed to offering a broader range of speakers and more in person and (hybrid) zoom events . Recently circumstances beyond our control have defeated us. We cancelled the Sandpit and Face to Face meeting at York on the 15th October because the RPS CRM system was not as far ahead in development as anticipated and this impacted ticket sales and the event budget. We postponed the Holly Stranks FRPS presentation as an act of respect to Queen Elizabeth II and her death. (It later took place on the 31st October). We also postponed the Christy Lee Rodgers Talk scheduled for the 17th October (new date arrangements in progress).

The December Sandpit (Theme Dream or Nightmare) will run subject to numbers plus a talk by Jo Bradford on the 19th December (subject to numbers) '*Darkrooms and Smartphones - Expect the Unexpected*'

We live in difficult times, from family budgets to Society Costs, everything is having to be stretched further at the very least and costs increased at worst. The Contemporary SIG Committee are aware of this and have a responsibility to ensure that members get the best value for money possible. We are not putting membership fees up, instead we are looking at how we can deliver more for the same.

Our biggest expenditure is the Quarterly edition of the Contemporary Journal, staying with a Quarterly edition means that there is no excess to fund other events including a wider variety of speakers without exceeding our annual income. We also have another Jewel in the Crown, our bimonthly E magazine Concept. Our plan is to enhance the content/ design and lay out of both publications with a changed publication schedule as follows:

November 2022 – E. Issue of Concept

November 2022 – Print Issue of Journal

January 2023 - Print Issue of Journal

March 2023 - E. Issue of Concept

May 2023 - Print Issue of Journal

July 2023 - E. Issue of Concept

Sept 2023 - Print Issue of Journal

November 2023 - E. Issue of Concept

January 2024 - Print Issue of Journal

We will also be adding to the Contemporary Publications with an Annual Year E Book of Distinctions successes, the first release anticipated February 2024 with the option to purchase a hard copy (by pre-order).

The gap between December and February in Concept Publication will be utilised by the

production team to design a new visual led layout for both publications, ensure we are getting best value for money with our print expenditure and to future plan content so that both publications complement each other and the Contemporary Special Interest Group philosophy and member ethos.

This will be my last communication as Chair of the Contemporary Group. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the RPS and the more who help the lighter the load. I am not able to balance the current work load with my personal life and so have decided to stand down. My last request is to encourage folk to step up so that the load is lighter for my successor – help them to deliver the things that you as members have asked for.

Alexandra Prescott. MA. FRPS

If you are interested in volunteering or would like to know more please contact the Contemporary Secretary

contemporarysecretary@rps.org

Photo Focus

As you will see from the submissions below - we have kicked off this new series with a fantastic selection of impactful and thoughtful images, which I hope you enjoy. Many thanks to those that contributed. The next issue of Concept is due out in March 2023, so please do send any images you would like to feature to me at concepteditor@rps.org



Girls and horses – André Bergmans (NL)

I took several similar shots at different events. The love of girls for horses. We may never understand but it seems deep and meaningful. This theme can be explored both conceptually and documentary.



Douglas May FRPS

Made at the Eggleston Show on the weekend of the funeral of the Queen this portrait represents the formality and tradition in showing livestock in the current changing and challenging world of farming. It also represents continuity in farming from generation to generation.



Peter Bartlett ARPS

Alone in the City. Figures isolated within the city landscape, with no connection, separated through composition, body language, brought together in a fleeting moment, captured in an instant.

Fellowship - Colin Howard

In October, Contemporary Group member Colin Howard gained a Fellowship in the Photobook category with his handmade book inspired by the poem *Lisbon Revisited* by Fernando Pessoa. His submission was considered innovative because not only did he handsew it, but also presented it in a clamshell box, having spent days training with a bookbinder. And, in addition to the photographs and his reasons for the project, his choice of typeface and paper, he wrote a *Prelude* which gives us insight into the life of the poet within Portugal's cultural celebration of poetry.

The title of Colin's book and photographs were inspired by the stanza:

*Once more I see you,
city of my youth so tragically lost ...
Oh sad but joyful city, once again in you I can dream ...
But am I the same man who lived here, and here returned,
and to here kept on returning and returning,
and once again I come to return?
Or am I all of those I's who were here,
a series of beads, held together by a thread of memory,
a series of dreams, with me looking on?*

Statement of Intent

In recent years during periods of anxiety and depression I have sought to bring a personal voice to my photography by way of anecdote. This has led me to develop a passion for interpreting poetry into visual statements.

By exploring poems and interpreting words as images I am inspired to express visually what I feel about what I see, rather than making a dispassionate photographic record. Poetry and photography have much in common; both allow the senses free range to crystallize images and an interpretation unique to those who choose to experience it.

I have selected Lisbon as the base for this body of work: it is a city I know well and offers strong links between its ambiance, its people and a poetic tradition.

Portugal is a land blessed by poetry, the only country in Europe that celebrates its most famous poet, Luis de Camões*, with an annual holiday. The poem I have chosen for this project is *Lisbon Revisited*, composed by Fernando Pessoa in the 1920s, but signed by one of his pseudonyms, Álvaro de Campos. Its words and rhythm strike a chord within me as to how I see the world. As described in the accompanying *Prelude*, Pessoa invented the term 'heteronym' rather than 'pseudonym'; Álvaro de Campos was one of his imaginary authors with personalities and characteristics distinct from Pessoa himself. In short, he lived in an imaginary world through his writings, but in a unique way that offers many layers to the interpretation of his poetry through the visual arts.

Intertwined with this unique poetic tradition is the use of poems as lyrics to the mournful song form known as fado (Portuguese for fate). This cultural heritage developed during Pessoa's lifetime and is a hallmark of Portuguese traditional folk song and is invariably accompanied by the guitar. Many of Pessoa's poems have been set to music and can be heard in numerous small bars and cafés, giving an additional layer to any visual interpretation.

I see this project as a platform to build upon through my photographic rendering of other Iberian poets whose work was written during the turmoil years of the early 20th century, for example Federico García Lorca and Antonio Machado.

**The author of The Lusiards, a poem written in the 16th century. (The font style used throughout my project is Lusitana and Crimson Text, both based on the calligraphy used in the first edition of The Lusiards, published in 1572).*





Me, my mobile and cardboard boxes!

Christine Pinnington LRPS

I greatly admire all photographers turning out stunning images on their mobiles. I'm embarrassed to say that I very rarely think of using my phone as a camera. I see people sharing their images on social media, with friends, colleagues and fellow photographers. Me? If I were to share my images you would see a collection of cardboard boxes. The only time I use my phone as a camera is to photograph my deliveries in case of any damage or if I need to return anything, (I can see how to repack).

Contemporary photography? – In my mind, absolutely.

These images are indicative to how our lives are changing since lockdown. From occasional deliveries before Covid we suddenly had to have almost everything delivered to our doorsteps. Deliveries were critical to the housebound, essential services and to keeping many businesses viable. Now things are easier we still continue to have deliveries and delivery firms are big business. Nearly all television adverts tell us “delivered to your door”. There isn't much that you cannot get delivered, from motor cars, a vast array of food to treatment for your cat's fleas! It also reflects our attitudes to climate change and sustainability as packaging is now also big business, with recycling at the very forefront. So much cardboard.

So, I will now share my selection of images from my phone, indicative of contemporary lives.

I know what you are thinking – I should get out more!!



Congratulations Bob!

Robert Gates ARPS received the Fenton Medal in this year's Awards.

His many roles in over 50 years supporting the Society included for example, Chair of the Licentiate Panel, Council Trustee, Yorkshire Regional Organiser, and for us his dedication to Contemporary Photography as Group Secretary 2008 until 2014.

The list of his achievements goes on. However, his personal thoughts on photography can be found in the RPS November/December Journal on Issue: <https://issuu.com/thinkpublishing/docs/rpsnovdec2022>. (page 658)

His current project is documenting the West End, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in a series called Westgate Road. More about Bob: <http://bobgates.uk/>

April 14th 2020



April 21st 2020



July 16th 2019



August 3rd 2022



May 2nd 2019



Newcastle-upon-Tyne


Online Exhibition

Featuring Anne Crabbe, Duncan Unsworth, Gareth Davies and Robert Davies

I belong to London Independent Photographers and together with three other RPS Contemporary Group members, Duncan Unsworth, Gareth Davies and Robert Davies, have photographs in an online exhibition.

Over the years, our small group has mounted on-the-wall exhibitions and this is our second online show. Sometimes we have had themes, such as the work of John Betjeman, a bleak Keats poem in the Lockdown, and Metroland but this time we each have a panel to choose our own theme. We would welcome comments on the page provided.

Anne Crabbe



DUNCAN UNSWORTH

Roque Bentayga viewed from Cruz de Tejeda, Gran Canaria., 2022
66.7 x 100 cm (h x w)
GBP 90
for sale

A view of the same landscape over several days as the light and weather created a series of dramas.

A3 prints (not editioned and image size 36cm by 24cm) archivally printed on Canson paper. Price excludes postage and packing - please contact Duncan for details - duncan.unsworth100@gmail.com
twitter: Duncan_Unsworth
instagram: duncanunsworthphoto

[Photographer's Website](#)

<https://artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/en/exhibition/10610427/ruislip-lip-autumn-winter-2022>

Exhibition finishes 31st January 2023

Regional Reports

East Anglia

EACG – report from the easternmost edges of the kingdom

Weekend

Our last themed exhibition [Weekend](#) went live at the beginning of September. It is being hosted on a free version of Artsteps. The free version is biased towards mobile devices so please try downloading the app for the best user experience. Please be mindful that I have very little control over timings of the show but a user may interrupt it at any time to take a longer look at an image or statement.

Our theme to interpret for the next exhibition will be based on this quote *Ralph Waldo Emerson*; “Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path, and leave a trail”.

Dates for submissions and gallery building will be discussed at our next group meeting on 3rd November 2022.

Landscape Rebels

Back in June, I exhibited in the Suffolk Show on the National Allotment stand. I had been asked if I would like to show some of my series ‘Welcome to the Funny Farm’ over the two days of the show. Social media posts of the pop-up caught the eye of the curator for Ipswich Museums and she contacted me expressing her desire to exhibit some of the images in Landscape Rebels. The exhibition has been broken down into different types of ‘rebels’. I am very pleased to be representing the ‘Local Rebels’.



Tom Owens at the preview evening of *Night at Landscape Rebels*

She selected 19 images from the series and asked me to print 4 that they then framed and hung. The show opened to the public on 22nd October 2022 and runs through to 16th April 2023. My four images are the first exhibits in the exhibition which includes one Turner, two Monets and three Constables, two Pissarros and two Steers plus a number of contemporary artists. It is a very diverse exhibition should anyone be visiting Ipswich in the next 6 months.

The curated selection of my work is viewable on the home page of my website www.tjowens.com and the full series can be seen at <https://tjowens.com/photo-essays/welcome-to-the-funny-farm/> I never imagined that when I embarked on making this series that I would be hanging with old masters. The official site for the exhibition is <https://www.landscape-rebels.co.uk>



Landscape Rebels © Tom Owens

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Tom Owens, Regional Organiser
contemporaryea@rps.org



North

Contemporary North met for a Zoom meeting on 17 September. It was good getting back together again after our Summer break. The full meeting is in our Newsletter if you'd like to read more about it.

<https://rps.org/media/35yhkf5z/cn-sept-2022.pdf>

Four members talked about current and on-going projects.

Michel Claverie was our reporter-at-large, speaking from the Photography Show at the NEC. He presented a short PDF, *A Contemporary Photography Parable*, which highlighted photos during several days in London after the Queen's death.

Simon Maddison showed us images from 2019 that he took in Ukraine. When revisiting these photos he was able to see them in a new context after the Russian invasion.



© Michel Claverie



© Simon Madison

Patricia Ruddle presented her project *Cover up and Tread Carefully*, the first Sandpit initiative *Mobile Moments* from last July. The required text and six images are in our Newsletter.



© Patricia Ruddle

André Bergmans continued with his project using photographs by famous photographers as a challenge and inspiration for members in his camera club to mimic and learn. Can you guess who's whose?



© André Bergmans

Our next meeting will be face-to-face in York, Clements Hall, 19 November, 1.30 - 5.00. Followed by our last meeting of 2022 on Zoom, 17 December, 130-400. Contact: patriciaruddle@btinternet.com

Southwest

October 2022

The Southwest Contemporary Group met on Sunday 30th October at Dartington in Devon. After a quick game of 'Name that Pier' and other conundrums, we moved on to the necessary formal business. The first half of this consisted of updates both on what is happening nationally with the Contemporary Special Interest Group and more generally within the RPS South-west Region. In the second half we looked at the possibility of holding an exhibition during 2024, more details of which will follow in due course. Business over, we then focussed on the various images and ideas brought along by members, engaging in our usual friendly and helpful blend of constructive criticism and affirmation.

Rod Fry shared two books that he had produced whilst he was awaiting hip replacement surgery. The first of these, entitled 'The Artist and The Sea' examined the history of the art and photography associated with three previous generations of his family. The second consisted of Street Photography, taken both before and after his surgery.

Adrian Hough showed a few images and ideas from his current project which resulted from an invitation to photograph the garden at The Bishop's Palace in Exeter throughout the course of a twelve month period. The project has currently reached the six month point. One of the important aspects of the work is to try and produce something which is not simply a documentary record but which also illustrates the meaning and context of the garden.

Martin Howse shared some very recent darkroom prints from images recorded on 120 format FP4 using a pinhole camera with an f stop of around 135 and taken at RHS Rosemoor. These therefore involved exposures of between 20 and 120 seconds.

Vivian Howse continued with her theme from the previous meeting, with a range of monochrome prints of Dartmoor taken using a digital camera converted to record Infra-red. The work explored something of the nature of boundaries and barriers and the technique produced images with a light and ethereal nature.



© Rod Fry



© Martin Howse



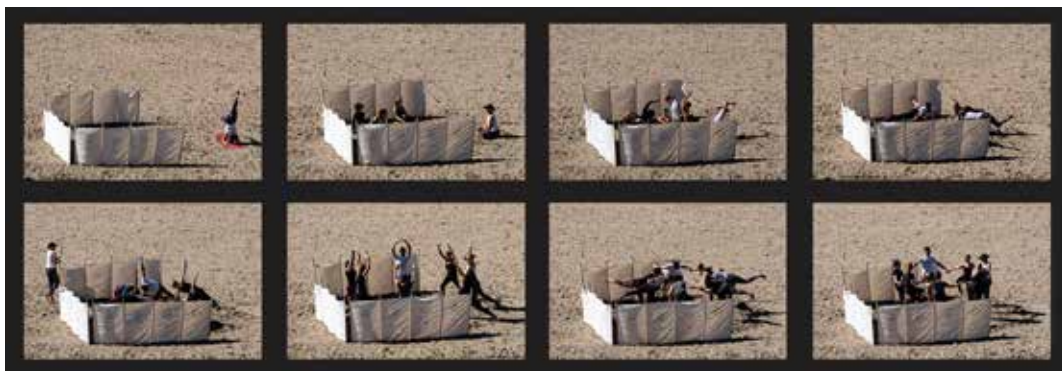
© Vivian Howse

Graham Hodgson presented a retrospective of photographic prints featuring circles, an area he has been revisiting in recent times. These included a set of mandalas based on the branch structure of deciduous trees in winter.

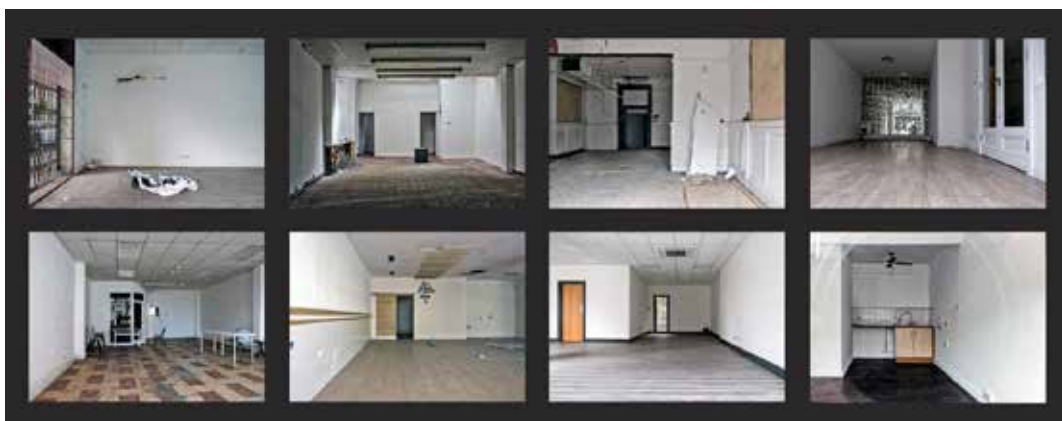
Ken Holland had brought along four panels of five images, all of which had been produced for panel competitions at his camera club. These ranged from 'Broken Memories', monochrome images of damaged memorials in the local cemetery, through colour work from the south of France and from High Cross House in Dartington to monochrome interpretations of Shepton Mallet Prison. Apparently, the visiting judge had failed to understand the link between the title 'Broken Memories' and photographs of damaged memorials in a cemetery!

Carol Ballinger resurrected the results of a project to produce colour images of her impression of Dartmoor prison, both from the outside and on the inside.

After lunch we moved on to projected images, beginning with John Evans-Jones who explored further the concept encapsulated in his books of 'All the Same but Different' that he had shared at the previous meeting. Once again these were eight or twelve images of 'the same thing' collected together to form a single image. However, each set/composite was now preceded by a single photograph as a 'visual amuse-bouche' together with a quotation, usually from a well-known photographer, chosen to say something about the subject matter concerned. As an example, one such quotation was taken from George Tyce 'As I progressed further with my project, it became obvious that it was really unimportant where I chose to photograph.' The sets included:



Yoga on the Beach
© John Evans-Jones



Empty Shops
© John Evans-Jones

twelve images of the same view of a Scottish loch but taken at different times; Empty shops; the balconies of different but identical flats; and white plastic chairs.

Ken followed this by showing the images from an illustrated talk which had been produced as a follow-on from an earlier project. Entitled, 'What's the Hurry – The Return Journey' this again showed images of people moving against an indoor setting taken with an exposure time of around one half of a second.



© Ken Holland

In line with his earlier retrospective, Graham presented a number of circle themed images.

Finally, Carol presented several sets of photographs involving a local artist, Lydia Corbett. These included images of her house in Provence and her studio in Devon. Lydia is probably familiar to most readers as Sylvette David, 'The Girl with the Pony Tail', who posed for Picasso during the spring of 1954.

The next meeting will probably be in February or March of 2023 on a date yet to be decided. Other members of the RPS Contemporary Group who live in the Southwest of the country (which need not be confined to the Southwest RPS region) and who would like to join us at the next meeting then please contact me at

Adrian Hough, Regional Organiser
email: contemporarysw@rps.org

The next issue of Concept will be available March 2023

If you have any contributions you would like to have including, news, reports, reviews, publicity, profiles, images, please email your ideas to Suzi via email concepteditor@rps.org

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



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