

# L'IPSERVICE



Photograph by Janet Hall

journal of london  
independent photography  
january 2000

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*Copydate:* 1 March 2000

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Janet Hall



# Editorial

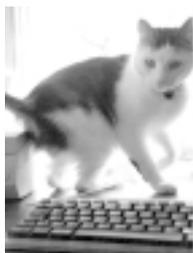
Welcome to the new style LIPSERVICE. After several years of dedication to the production of this journal, Peter Marshall decided that he would like to hand it over to somebody else in order to spend more time with the website. He has done an excellent job and is a hard act to follow!

Always up for a challenge, we thought we would take it on and, having been totally impressed by the Millennium project leaflet, we asked its designer Tony Wallis to join us. Fortunately he accepted, and if you think this looks good then he must take 90% of the credit. That just left the matter of content. The last thing we wanted was to be writing it ourselves! We need not have worried, however, as work has been pouring in and we must extend our heartfelt thanks for that - just keep it up for April, July and October. As you can work out, from now on LIPSERVICE will be a quarterly publication and it really is *your* magazine. Please send in *anything* that you think might be of interest. Our new printers will be able to reproduce your pictures to a good standard and we hope to recruit more members as a result. One day we may be able to afford some colour as well. Now that should be an incentive to get cracking!

We are particularly keen to develop LIPSERVICE as a discussion forum and will publish your letters and comments, so please send some!

Finally, we understand that it is very important for the co-editors of a magazine to have at least *something* in common but try as we might, we have been able to come up with only one thing: each of us has a cat called Sam! So, instead of a couple of dreary snaps of us, here are some jolly ones of them.

Jennifer Hurstfield



Clare Glenister



## STOP PRESS

A recent article in the British Journal of Photography reported the imminent **closure** of the foyer and ballroom exhibition spaces at the **Royal Festival Hall**. This news was confirmed when enquiries were made there on behalf of the Millennium project. We were told that the closure was to make way for more catering facilities. What a pity that one of the most popular free spaces in London, (a truly multi-media one at that), has taken this decision.

How many concert goers (and indeed performers!) have been inspired to explore an interest in the visual arts and especially photography as a result of the excellent shows that have been put on there? (And how many visual arts fans have been inspired to go to concerts?)

All the more reason then to visit the final event: Anthony Suau's 'Beyond the Fall' and make one's feelings known. (Details are on the listings page).

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# SHEDS OF EVIDENCE

Peter  
Jennings

Two years ago, I came across an extremely important news item in a national newspaper. A fifteen year old boy had been given the use of a small shed in his parents' garden in which he had indulged a passion for the eighteenth century. He had decorated the interior - slightly bigger than a dog kennel - in the fashion of the period, designing and making the wallpaper and furniture himself. A photograph showed him sitting in this miniature rococo room living his fantasy, his interior life. Although the newspaper did not say he was an artist - even mention the word - there was no doubt in my mind that he was.

This item was not front page news, in fact it was tucked away in the middle of the paper. But I saw it as significant: an individual voice who refused to conform. The media had treated the young man as a freak. So, it appeared, did his immediate world - at school he was laughed at, told he was effeminate, called names. He had stepped out of line. He was different. He was an individual. Few tried to understand his real wish to explore his own imagination. Even the journalist who wrote the article became apologetic, trying to assure us that the boy *really was normal*, went out with girls, liked sport and the latest pop music. Not being stereotypical, he was difficult to categorise in a media world where the young are forced towards a corporate

identity fashioned by the totalitarianism of commerce. His story has implications for any creative artist of any age, today.

The young man and his shed were uppermost in my mind when I viewed some more conceptual interior visions at a preview of MA final-year work at the Oxo Gallery. Here there were many sheds but the owners were at least amongst friends. So was I. After a huge handshake from Professor Paul Hill I was thrust into the milieu. Wine glass in hand, I tried to enter the interior worlds of the MA students surrounded by the protecting hum of appreciative chit-chat from the graduate students, lecturers and LIP members.

As a reviewer of the Oxo exhibition, I had an advantage. On a cold, wet December day last year, I had visited De Montfort University at Leicester to do an interview on the MA course subsequently published in *Inscape*. I also attended a seminar where some of the photographers in the Oxo show were at the initial stages of their projects. I had heard and taped the outlines, the first steps. Now at the Oxo I was to see if they had achieved what they set out to do - if it had amounted to anything. The first work I spotted was 'The Simpsons'.

Robin Anderson, I had recorded at the de Montfort interview. He had outlined his concept - that

of finding and photographing anyone called Simpson. Excited at the time by this bold idea, I was now going to see the results. Had he inadvertently discovered aliens from another planet who, masquerading under the name of Simpson, were planning to take over the world? Were all Simpsons like their American cartoon counterparts? Had he discovered that anyone called Simpson had one eye lower than the other? What had Anderson visually revealed?

The answer seemed to be nothing. Anderson seemed to have built not a shed, but a house of cards. If he had revealed anything, it was that there was nothing to reveal. That points to a blank space on the wall - very conceptual - but I guess he was required to fill it with something. The photographs - arranged in a straight 'on the walls in your face' display - some by Anderson, some by Simpsons - showed just people called Simpson. The only revelations were possibly about Robin Anderson.

Disappointed I moved on. Fiona Muir was 'In Search of Love', arranging blind dates and photographing the encounters with the help of another photographer. Letters of introduction - with names blanked out to protect what seemed more like the guilty than the innocent - were heaped below the pictures. This still-photo-docu-soap had a cloak and dagger covetousness



Kim Aplin - The Picturesque - A Gentle Melancholy

with pathos beneath the cloak. Paul Hill had remarked when examining Muir's initial idea at a de Montfort critique: "photography represents the deep area between the film and the novel". Stuck between a short story and a video, Muir's project seemed to have just made it out of the shallows with a different, if not furtive, glance at the blind date industry. Similar in theme and intention was Josie Bourne's journey of a bag-lady: her storyboard stills pointed, interestingly, towards a new way to take this form of preparation for video or film out of context and re-invent it. But it remained in limbo - neither Bourne nor Muir had reached the deep area.

I would have given Jayne Evans a bit more than 20% for her series of the same name. These photo series seemed to pine for Picture Post and Life and used - as these magazines did - a few selected images. Here again, Evans is on the verge of an idea: becoming post-modernist. Dispensing with the frame could have freed the concept to take flight - maybe even a thousand images jostling for attention, all jammed together and mounted on blockboard?

Beginning to feel lost between media, I came via a trajectory of conversations to John Maillard's work 'Hands That Touch the Sun'. Glancing around to see if any post-modernists were lurking, I indulged modernistically in these sensuous images. Maillard was moving towards a true *photographic* vision and if there were a

few Blakemore and other influences - fine. The story, concept, vision, existed in the pictures - begging to be 'read' again and again.

The same could be said of Peter Wilson's work and to a certain extent Kim Aplin's. But with Aplin the pictures - fine prints and 'beautiful' in a traditional sense - seemed to argue more for a new pictorialist approach to landscape, rather than - as Aplin's text presupposes - against it. Comments of others

around me looking at Aplin's prints seemed to support my thoughts: the picture is worth a thousand words but not necessarily those of the creator. The viewers will undoubtedly carry their own texts around in their conscious minds.

This was certainly true of the work of Jenny Peet who encourages the viewers to read their own impressions into the series of monochrome pictures of a child's face lightened or darkened along the grey-scale to suggest cultural identities. An idea realised: a true photographic vision with no need for word support encouraging debate. Here was a shed.

Of the other students, some were easier to access than others. Landscape became exciting with Michael Newgass' monochrome visions of animals territorial movements. Do - I wondered - animals actually see like this? Mary Weinberger's 'Hearing Aids' were those of her father. Her records of the artefacts of deafness obviously spoke of a deeply felt personal message but this had not transcended the



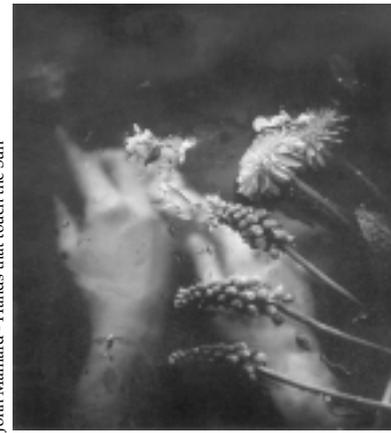
Fiona Muir - from the series 'In Search of Love'

personal to become individual. David Brims, Henry Iddon and Andrew Lewis all produced interesting images which somehow failed to convey the initial, positive ideas. Conceptual, maybe, but not photographic.

The Oxo show had highlighted questions I already had in my mind. When I visited Leicester, I had been both fascinated and disturbed at the conceptual approach of the MA course and wondered how many students had been diverted from their original visions by this approach. Ideas, ideas - but whose? The young man with his shed, however, could not be a conceptual artist. He had not justified, nor criticised, his work in no less than a thousand words as Greg Lucas, a forceful tutor on the de Montfort course, had told me that

he and his friends (and presumably his students?) felt duty bound to do. As anyone who has any love of the medium *knows*, photography can and must stand up without words or face losing a hundred and fifty years of progress. It is a wordless medium. Those who use words to support their photographs lack confidence in themselves and the medium. Or are they trying subconsciously to justify being an artist to the 'marketplace'? To hell with that! If you are a frustrated writer or film director go elsewhere.

The young man and his shed: where is he now? Has he traded in his vision for an easy life? He had created the shed for himself, exactly as he wanted it and without lip service to anybody. There were some sheds at the



John Maillard - Hands that touch the Sun

Oxo. Hopefully the owners realise that they must work *outside* society, are not accountable to it by a thousand words to the art establishment or by the earning power of their work to commerce. However, if they do create a shed, they should not lock themselves in

## Countdown to Countdown 2000

Quentin Ball

Since the September 1999 LIPSERVICE, it is all good news for Countdown 2000. In case you've been off the planet this year, Countdown 2000 is LIP's Millennium Project during which over 40 photographers - all LIP members - have been photographing London, inside the M25, on every day of 1999.

As of this writing (December 1) we have an image for every day through 30 November. The monthly selection meetings being held at The Grafton Hotel continue to be very well

attended with usually 12 to 15 members.

We were successful with our application to the Lottery's Millennium Festival Awards for All programme, and out of a maximum £5000 grant, have received £4,950 for our showcase exhibition where all selected images will be shown in various formats.

Another feature of Countdown 2000 will be a website on which each day's image will be shown on the corresponding day in 2000. A CD Rom and a

book are still under discussion as further outcomes.

The £250 donated by John Glenister (thanks to Clare Glenister) came to fruition with the printing of the colourful publicity tri-fold, which is being found in many good locations - Zwemmer's, Silverprint, etc. Non-members of Countdown 2000 should find a copy enclosed with this LIPSERVICE to give them a flavour of the project.

By the time you are reading this all the images will have been taken, the website will be live and we will be preparing for the exhibition. We feel confident that an appropriate venue will be found soon. It is going to be an exciting year - watch this space! s

STOP PRESS! 1 January Countdown 2000 Project Website live [www.spelthorne.ac.uk/mp/](http://www.spelthorne.ac.uk/mp/)  
Congratulations to Peter Marshall who made this happen!!

# LIP Exhibition Review

Tony Wallis

The LIP Exhibition private view that took place last October at the Optima Gallery in the Chocolate Factory, Wood Green was an exciting evening for me, and I will try to explain why. I had joined LIP a year before, on the strength of a visit to the previous exhibition. On that occasion the exhibition space, somewhere off Piccadilly, was empty, and the names captioning the images were unfamiliar. But the photographs spoke a language that I could understand. I recognised the quality of tone and texture, the care and concern for the final image, and of being able to catch the instant and present it as timeless. I needed to meet these people, to ask questions, and to listen to what they had to say. So I joined LIP.

One year later, another LIP Exhibition. This time I could link most of the names attached to photographs to friends and acquaintances. And because of my involvement with Countdown 2000, the styles and specialisms of members were becoming familiar. Thus, the wish of a year before was being fulfilled, that of interacting with people whose work I admire.

But what of the 1999 exhibition? Firstly the venue. The Optima Gallery has masses of wall space, a long and wide corridor with studios and reception areas off, excellent lighting and welcoming and enthusiastic resident staff. On this evening many LIP members were present, plus guests, and there was still room to view pictures comfortably.

The people made the evening, but



Clare Glenister



Quentin Ball

the enormous range of images made the show. The entire spectrum of fine art photography seemed to be represented. Edward Bowman's exquisitely detailed impression of ancient civilisations, using digital techniques, contrasted with the use of cyanotype by Jill Staples, Alison Williams and Hatsumi Dybdahl to create superbly ethereal images from nature.

Candid and instantaneous photography of the Picture Post variety was presented by Peter Marshall with his impressions of the Notting Hill Carnival; by Clare Glenister with some remarkable images from inside a symphony orchestra looking out, as well as images capturing the dogginess of dogs; and by Jim Barron's candid portraits of city gents. The energy and vibrancy of children was portrayed in three contrasting styles by Tina Stallard, Anne Crabbe and Fabienna Fosser; the dignity and grace of elderly people was presented by Sam Tanner; and Maria de Fatima Campos had two glorious pictures celebrating pregnancy. Batool Showghi's superb portraits and Mary Dunkins' introspective boxers show people with a story to tell.

Aspects of still life included Gordon Raisin's closely observed architectural detail, Michael Bradley's cityscapes, Janet Hall's vernacular architecture from

New Mexico, and Quentin Ball's rocks and canyons from Arizona. Avril Harris was nearer home with some excellent compositions of locks and boats on the river Lea (I think), and Bill Bishop showed images from his superb 'Fluid Visions' series. Tony Mayne's images contrasted Nelson's Column with sky cranes. Michael Crawford-Hick's bridge was a study in gradation of tones.

Nature and landscape were represented by Lucy O'Mearn, Mary Davis and John Rhodes with contrasting images of grass and field and mummified petrol pumps, and by Yoke Matze's three abstractions from nature, and Martin Bowman's winter landscapes with trees cartwheeling across the horizon. Virginia Khuri gave us rocks, ice, and four prints of stones, profound in their simplicity.

Eva Maria Regler continued the introspective theme with a trio of images that strongly suggested personal associations and biographical detail. Alan Forgan's images capture motion and time by means of shadows and movement of people. Len Salem's original image tipped its hat to conceptual art: a giant collage of screenshots of programmes on multi-channel television, taken within a short space of time.

Is there such a thing as an LIP house style? I rather think not. There is however an LIP spirit that makes for great companionship and excellent photography.



Clare Glenister

# LIP Profile

*In the first of a new series of LIP profiles, Janet Hall, founder member of LIP, talked to Clare Glenister about how she became involved in photography, her interests and the origins of LIP.*

**A**s a child I only had a Box Brownie. To me then a camera was just there to take pictures of your relatives. I never thought of it as a tool of expression. I danced for expression. I had a friend who was always snapping away – and I thought "How boring!". Eventually a boyfriend of mine lent me a very nice camera and that got me really interested. It was just a little press and point. I had been to one or two exhibitions I thought were absolutely wonderful, such as Cartier-Bresson at the Hayward in the 70s, but I hadn't really taken much notice of photography as such because I hadn't been exposed to much really good and interesting work.

When I decided to move from the press and point camera to something that would give me more flexibility I cogitated for ages and finally decided on a Nikon because it has such a wide range of lenses, I haven't regretted that choice at all. By this time I was working for a public relations company who had clients such as P&O, Holiday Inn and Cunard and I started doing some of these really crummy photographs for the trade press. You get people doing funny things and you would always think up a gimmick to try and capture the front page of the Travel Trade Gazette. For example, if for some reason a company was giving a cheque to some worthy cause, you would get a great big cheque made up and photograph the people

going "HURRAH" over the top of it. Pretty naff stuff.

I was between one job and another and I had a week out. I thought of going to a slimming place – as one does! – but it was very expensive. By that time I had a darkroom and was printing quite avidly. I saw an advert in Amateur Photographer for a workshop in Derbyshire with Paul Hill. I'd never heard of Paul Hill. He told me that the person taking the workshop was someone called Raymond Moore. I'd never heard of Raymond Moore. He said "He has just had a retrospective at the Hayward Gallery". I think he wanted to fill the workshop up so I thought I'd go.

And I was totally out of my depth.

I didn't know what they were talking about. Fibre-based paper, what's that? But it was just fantastic and really it blew my mind. Raymond Moore was one of the great artists of the 20th Century and he was absolutely lovely and Paul was the funniest person I think I'd met. We never stopped laughing and had a wonderful time for a whole week.

We were living in two little cottages right in the Peak District and there were thousands of books and drawers full of wonderful people's work – Paul Caponigro, Lewis Baltz – people I'd never heard of. I used to whisper to people, "What's that mean?". But that experience made me dead keen. I decided that this was the direction I would like to go in. So I took a big leap in the dark and left my PR company with a view to becoming a freelance photographer. I kept doing some work for them as well as everything else I could think of – actor's portraits, children's playgroups, architecture, and dance photography.

You think you know a bit but when you leap into the world of the professional, you can come a cropper. I just had to get some more technique.

So I did a BTEC at Richmond



Janet Hall

College which was three years part-time. It was all a bit hairy as far as money was concerned but I felt I had to complete because you learn so much. Things that you might think are not totally necessary but somehow they sit in the back of your mind and you have a certain feeling of confidence.

I was doing a lot of weddings, too. Weddings are a nightmare! I used to do them every Saturday. I worked for somebody out in Hertfordshire who had a stable of 17 photographers – I was the only woman. He'd want you to go first to the bride's home and take her with her family, and the bridesmaids. Then photograph the groom with his parents, with his best man and with the ushers. Sometimes you would get a nice small wedding, 50-60 people, pretty little church and they were all cooperative, instead of trying to talk to Auntie Doris and forgetting about the photographs. I'd pick up the film, go out, do the work and drop back the exposed film, and only get £60. Once, only, did I do two weddings in one day. I tore up the A1. I knew I did a really bad job.

I really learnt about wedding photography. How to get people to laugh and smile. It's always thought of as the bottom of the market but it's one of the most difficult things. You've got to be able to manage people, first and foremost, and make yourself heard, get people organised and not upset them. I got to the point where I thought I don't really need this. I don't do any now.

Then I got interested in architectural photography and do a lot now for the RIBA. This came about purely fortuitously. I was wanting to build up my portfolio and it was very difficult to get into interesting and important buildings. A friend of mine, who is married to an architect, suggested I go to the RIBA and see if the curator of photographs could give me some ideas. He said "Didn't you bring a portfolio?" I said "no", not knowing I was going to be auditioned. I decided to follow it up and he asked me to do work for them. I do 5x4 transparencies which I really

enjoy, except for having to carry the gear.

I did a degree in the history of photography about four years ago at the London College of Printing. My dissertation was on Raymond Moore who was way before his time in the late 1940s and 50s. He started out as a painter and decided to switch to photography. He had the most dreadful struggle because no one was showing exhibitions of photography – it was unheard of – until the 60s. At that time the thinking was that photography was to convey information or facts. It wasn't to express. The idea of having photographs on the wall was alien to the British people.

LIP started via the great Paul Hill. 1981 was the year I first went to Derbyshire. You learn so much from all the other people there as well as from the tutor and you go to the pub in the evening and talk photography. Then you come away and just feel in limbo. Life

gets in the way and you haven't got anybody there to turn to and to say "Ah, what do you think about this?". You lose the feedback.

Virginia Khuri and I had been once or twice together and thought we could get a few people together locally. We asked Paul for his London mailing list. I thought we would get half a dozen people and meet in each other's rooms. What happened was I got 48 people showing interest so we went to the Photographers Gallery and had a series of talks and events. We had a meeting there which was full to the doors and various ideas came out of that, including the Blue-Tack shows.

We started in 1987 and people used to say "You'll never keep it going, nothing like this has ever lasted". Twelve years later, here we still are. s



Janet Hall (original in colour)

# SHOOTBACK

Gordon  
Raisin

*Photos by kids from the Nairobi slums, exhibited at the Barbican September 1999*

You are a black teenager living in Nathare – that poorest and most notorious of Nairobi's slums. You live with your family of seven or even 10 in a house made of sticks, stones, polythene bags and metal tins, all stuck together with mud.

Maybe you are Collins Omondi age (17), Peter Ndolo (14) or Susan Muthoni (12). Few white people ever come here: they are afraid. Some of your friends sniff glue so that they do not feel so ashamed when they go out begging. You belong to the Mathare Youth Sports Association, a bright beacon of hope among the squalor and despair, and join in clean-up projects instead of paying fees. You are truly obsessed with football – even if the ball is home made.

The American photographer Lana Wong got to know Nathare over two years and was safe as her Chinese appearance led people to believe she was a black-belt master of kung fu. She started work with Frances Kimanzi, a social worker and top striker for Mathare United, to teach writing and photography to a group of boys and girls aged 12 to 17. They were given cheap plastic cameras to go out and photograph their world. Would you do that?

What do you think happened? Shy young kids bewildered by these strange plastic machines transformed into self-confident photographers displaying unsuspected talents. Collins Osondi (17) said: "There is no difference between us and other photographers . . . they shoot and we shoot back", giving the team its name.

And "shoot back" indeed they did. The work on display would sit comfortably alongside Magnum reportage. There was a feel for composition and design which would grace any exhibition. The technical quality of these large prints made with cheap thirty dollar cameras left nothing at all to be desired. No apologies whatsoever were necessary.

We may be involved "with" our subject, but tend to look at things from the outside, assessing and judging, whereas these young people are fully part of the scene themselves, deeply emotionally involved, yet with a clarity of vision and control, thanks to Laura Wong.

A "slum eye voice" is a good but obvious starting point. It is a group of general shots of the shacks they call home by seven of the children. "Whatever you have", they write, "thank God. If you don't have shoes, thank God, because there are some people without legs." That is not passive acceptance, however, but the beginning through self-knowledge and self-help of a way forward, at least for this small nucleus of 31 out of many tens of thousands.

We see the poverty of the houses as in the photos by George Otieno (15), Julius Mwelu (14) and others. We see the wretched lifestyles as shown to us by VinickMuhanji (13), Charles Odhiam (15) to pick out two. But we also see the smiles and cheerfulness of the people in such pictures as those by Beldine Achieng (14) and James Njuguno (15). We see tragedy striking as in the street floods brought by El Nino and captured so movingly and dramatically by Nicholas Mathenge (16).

It is such an alien world from

ours revealed to us in full by those who live their lives in it. The sheer width and depth of talent brought out and nourished by "Shootback" is most humbling. Every page of the book must make us wonder why, if youngsters with all their disadvantages can do this, why we can't do that and so much more with all our advantages.

Nevertheless, "Shootback" started from an incredibly low base with limited aims, not primarily photographic at all, but to do with developing positive self-image and a healthy attitude to life. We must hope that it is more than a pinprick in the monstrous size and desperate poverty of Nathare. Even the photographic aim is limited. For to display one's own lifestyle is only a part of photography, but Shootback naturally cannot go beyond that.

It could be that the obsession with football is even more cathartic. "Everyone in the slum apart from a few plays football and prays to be world stars" (Mohammed Dakir, 17). Get out – or change society? The photographic results of Shootback are clearly justification in themselves for the project, but that there were very valuable and worthwhile non-photographic outcomes may be even more important.

We ourselves gain so much in non-photographic ways from photography. Some form of art activity is so important in life. Shootback – may the force be with you.<sup>s</sup>

*Book of the project: "Shootback", edited by Lana Wong. Published by Booth-Clibborn Editions (London) 1999. ISBN 1 86154 1325.*

# Inventing Meanings

Sarah  
Thelwall

Sarah Thelwall



I've made a lot of new work this year, more than any so far. Aside from the Millennium Project I've made pictures in fairgrounds, about rowing and why I row, of my ill, dying and dead grandmother, about surfing, of the eclipse, in Eastern Europe and portraits of friends. Until recently, however, I've been unclear as to what I was making pictures about. As if by magic the "shopkeeper" (Thomas Joshua Cooper) appeared and was swiftly followed by a book called 'The Faber book of Utopias' by John Carey.

There are two important things that I've discovered recently. Firstly, I'm making images where there is a story or tale behind the making of the image. Whilst there is a separate story for each image, the subject matter is related. They are all depictions of an imaginary world where the normal rules/regulations/laws of physics etc are not absolute and are largely irrelevant. That is to say that just because something is impossible in our reality/normality does not mean that this is the case in my imaginary world.

Secondly, although I'm wholly in agreement with Stieglitz in terms of not expecting that the viewer will see my reason for making the image, the fact I saw it is vital. I'm also very interested in the stories or

ideas that others see in the work and it's very important that my work allows/enables the viewer's imagination to run wild. What I'd like to do with some of my new pictures is to gather several stories to complement them – either written in response to the image or indeed images that I make in response to other people's stories – and put them into a format where the viewers can choose which stories they read.

One of the things I like least about many of the gallery environments in which one encounters 'Art' is the elitism that says "if you don't know the meaning of the piece already

I'm not going to tell you". I'd like to encourage the people who look at and think about my work not just to look for the meaning I've imbued into the piece but also to look for their own interpretation. Okay, so once you get confident about looking at art you do this naturally, but I want to make art that my non-artistic friends can enjoy as well.

The reason for writing this piece was not that I have any great desire to be overly evangelical about my ideas, but that I'm looking for stories. The text books tell me that Magritte and friends used to gather at his house and make up titles for his pictures. My thinking is much the same. If the images strike a chord and you (or your friends!) have a burning desire to write a short story about them then please send it either to me or to the editors and (assuming we get any responses at all) we'll publish them along with my stories for these images in the next issue. s



Sarah Thelwall

# Bodies in Question

Tony Mayne

Exterior of Oxo Gallery



Leicester's M.A. course recently exhibited at the Oxo Tower. The fourteen students each had to produce a coherent *body* of work. Shortage of space restricted the amount of work shown, and the compromise choice was made to include a sample of everybody's work. Members of the Contemporary Group of the R.P.S. (also associated with Professor Paul Hill) will recognise this problem.

If certain photographic work is about a *set* of images, rather than a collection of random images, then completeness is *de rigueur* for the full and rounded meaning to be assessed. At the Leicester show I would personally have preferred to see *all* the work of 25% of the students, rather than 25% of the work of *all* the students.



Leicester MA exhibition

I can see the political reasons for not wishing to leave anybody out, and there are always hard decisions to be made, but just about *every* exhibition of *bodies* of work seems to end up defeating its objectives. Within LIP, the recent exhibition restricted almost everybody as to the number of images that would be chosen. (The number of submissions was restricted, and most people suspected that

they wouldn't get all of their images chosen.) LIP has many members who are also members of the Contemporary Group, indeed, they sometimes mount co-productions involving lectures and seminars.

The only times that I have seen a *complete* body of a photographer's work exhibited have been in one-person shows, or group shows of not more than three photographers.

So, where does the problem lie? Is it the case that in a group of over 100 people, the same talented/favoured few would always prevail? Is it time for the Contemporary Group of the R.P.S. to disband and join the Pictorial group? Is there any future for photographers who believe that a *body* of work counts for more than a few random images, loosely strung together?

Those LIP members committed to bodies of work - rather than a loose collection of images - seemed destined not to exhibit them all

together within the framework of LIP. I was only aware of the scale of some members' work through Local Groups (usually spread out all over a table) and Steiner House lectures (usually illustrated by slides).

It seems to me that Edward Davies' offer of space for members to exhibit up to twenty pictures each at the Optima Photographic Studios\* is a golden opportunity. Not just for excellent pioneers like Peter Marshall and Jim Barron, but for all those members who have been quietly building up a body of work without the rest of us even realising it.



Paul Hill and cameraman

LIPSERVICE's new editors are looking for new styles of content. I have chosen to express an opinion which, I suspect, may not strike a sympathetic chord in many members. However, if this provokes disagreement or a debate, or encourages someone else to get something unrelated off their chest, then I shall be happy.

\* Tel: 0181 881 0064

Jeanine Billington with work



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# PHOTOGRAPHY IN PROVENCE

Michael Crawford-Hick



I went on a photography workshop in Provence for two reasons. As a colour photographer I wanted to explore the medium in black and white and to have a week's concentrated effort in which to do it. The course was very intensive. From breakfast to late in the evening we were either taking photographs or printing them. Our tutor Andrew Squires is an expert on the region and took us on assignments to see if we could capture the essence of "Provence and its history."

*e-mail for workshop:  
andrew.squires@wanadoo.fr*

Photographs by Michael Crawford-Hick -  
scenes from a mountain village in the Luberon  
region of France

