

LIPSERVICE

JOURNAL OF LONDON
INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPHY

NOVEMBER 1995

ritva raitsalo



from the show **7 Italian Photographers** (see p 6)

Paul and Brian

Townley Cooke: 2-4
Virginia Khuri, **On Not Seeing** 4-5
Peter Marshall: **Seven Italian Photographers** 6
Ritva Raitsalo: 1, 7
Davyd Davis, 7
Tony Mayne, **A Week in Provence**, 8-10

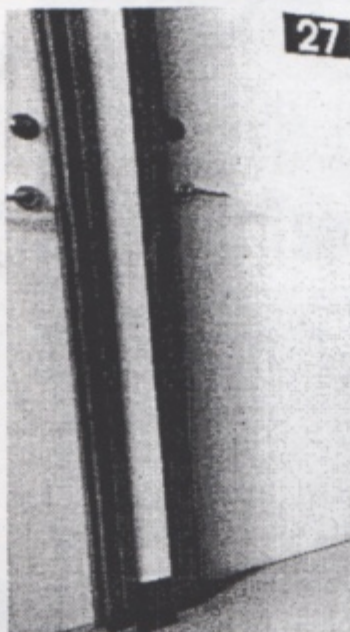
Nick Barker, 10, p16
News, 11-13
Eileen Fitzpatrick, 13
Alison Williams, 13
Carol Hudson, **Beyond Words**, 14-16
Ai Li Chia, 16

Townly Cooke

*Eye. Out-Patients
Greenwich District Hospital*

When asked to submit some of my photographs about the blind, the partially sighted and problems in seeing, I was glad and felt it a good opportunity to write and explore connections and relations between the blinded, not seeing, the visually obsessed, the traumatised, daydreaming, the emotionally distant, the stare, the camera, alienation, the shielding of eyes (of light) by the camera, by tears, by our hands in the womb and in grief, the safety of the light in the dark, in the darkroom and in the cinema (that I also loved) and that film I made in the early '70's on the persistence of vision - that we

can only see a film because we can't see it. And the relationship between photography and memory, and that essay by Jacques Derrida, "Memories of a Blind Man".



Steady. It's the wrong time, wrong space.

It's an interesting list though, in good company with old man Degas, who knew about such things, who also wrote lists and painted paintings of the blind and the blur even in his late thirties.

But look, instead let me show you my scans; come here, come close, look into my eyes, no, closer, see there - just past 12 o'clock high. Both eyes. The evidence, the proof, the pride of it.... A blessing in disguise? Well sort of. The main thing is though, after being diagnosed as having glaucoma and successful surgery, I'm painting and drawing now.

A close friend that I went to school with and then to art school with, after saying that he thought it was great and about time that I had "given up" photography and got back into painting said, "that the trouble with photography is that you just

All pictures except the first one in the article:

"Better Vision Improvement" Workshop, City Lit 1993



can't get hold of it." And the majority of my photography, the essence of it was all eyeballing, though at times a high, sophisticated form of eyeballing,

"Blind Traces: The Conversion of St Paul", the series of paintings that I have been working on over the last 2 years relate, as well as to seeing, hopefully to the body, one's body, the one to one of the work and the presence of being there, here, now. They are also very, very difficult to see!

Townly Cooke



Townly Cooke (cont)



I, like many, equate perception and knowledge with the act of sight. But what if I were blind? How then would I perceive? How would I know the world? As a child I often asked myself these questions but found no answers. And as an adult I never felt comfortable with the idea of asking a visually impaired person what his dark world was like and where in it he might find the joy which I find, for instance, in seeing light. What, I always wonder, is the true nature of perception? So it was with immense curiosity, and gratitude to the Royal National Institute for the Blind who presented it, that last June I went to see the installation, "Dialogue in the Dark" at the Royal Festival Hall.

I, unlike many, am not afraid of the dark. I haven't been conditioned to expect monsters in the night. But then, even on the darkest night I can still *see* something if only a faint outline - I am not completely vulnerable. How would I feel if I could see absolutely nothing? I was soon to find out. Now, I do realise that not all blind people are plunged into complete darkness; there are degrees of visual impairment. But this was to be a demonstration of blind perception at the extreme end of the scale.

On Not Seeing

Virginia Khuri

"The meaning of life is to see." (Hui Neng) "The seeing have the world in common." (Heraclitus) "Every poem I write is an immense intensification of what I perceived." (Joseph Brodsky) "Life itself is its meaning - I see it in buds bursting open and flowers fading; I see it in leaves; I see it in faces..." (Fredrich Frankel).

We were gathered into a group of six: my friend Jill, myself, two middle-aged ladies from outside London, a tall lanky young man, and a young woman who appeared to be an art student. We were each given a white stick, the traditional emblem of the blind, and then introduced to Mervyn, our visually impaired guide, who showed us how to use it properly. We were very quiet as we walked single file through a doorway and into sudden blackness. I strained to see something, anything, but there was nothing to see. I closed

my eyes but then there were all those distractingly colourful shapes dancing on the inside of my eyelids. If I opened my eyes I could not stop myself from trying to see. And not being able to was ... disorienting is not a strong enough word. It felt I was walking beside an abyss. Where was the edge? Desperately I moved my stick in an erratic arc on the ground before me while with my free hand I groped for the wall, for the feel of something solid. I felt extremely insecure and vulnerable. Every once in a while I heard my voice saying "Jill? Jill? Where are you?" When most of the world has disappeared, what remains assumes extra importance - such as the voice of a friend. I was not alone in feeling vulnerable; the woman behind me kept her hand on my shoulder for the entire way; I understood.

Soon however, my mind was also paying attention to other things. We were being led through a park. I could feel the gravel path beneath my feet turn to grass, and under my hand the rough stone texture of the wall and the crisp crinkly leaves near it; I could hear the sound of water from a fountain, touch the water in it; I could smell and touch the rosemary leaves beside it. As a photographer I am fascinated by the sensuousness of nature's form and texture as perceived by my eye. Now without the use of my eyes I was discovering how to see with my feet, with my hands, my ears, my nose. But then came a sound of rushing water, not the gentle fountain, but forceful dangerous water, and again the fear of the edge - where was it? I knew I'd fall in if I couldn't find it. Suddenly I felt the guide's hand on mine leading it down to feel the cool flowing water. saying "do you see the water now?" And so I could carefully grope my way across the wooden bridge, listening to the water under my feet and my footsteps on the bridge. With some

confidence restored I could delight in the waft of cool air which I suddenly felt on my face.

Next however we were led out of the park and into a confusing road, busy with the sound of traffic. Again, the overwhelming sense of insecurity as the cars and lorries sped past. Somehow we were led across the road and into a house - and a whole new world of form and texture. No longer leaves, grass, water, stone and rough cut wood, but smooth furniture wood, metal appliances, water taps, mysterious until their form was discovered and the feel of silk, velvet and leather. On a bookshelf I discovered a book in Braille and wished I could read it. Here touch was the predominant mode of perception, but again that panicky feeling of 'where is the edge?' because if one left the wall to explore the middle of the room, there was no way of orienting oneself. I tried counting my footsteps, but failed and was continually bumping into things and people. Here I discovered what it is to exist without the possibility of the idea of 'space'. 'Time', yes; but three dimensional space ceases to exist without visual perception. And for those of us who usually watch time "passing before our eyes", here there were only one's breathing and heartbeats to mark its passing.

Next, and finally, we were led into a crowded and noisy pub. Constantly bumping into chairs, tables, people and finally the bar where we asked the voice behind it for an apple juice. It was a challenge to locate the correct change and to follow the voice to locate the hand to place it in, and with the other hand receive the drink. Then drinking and talking sociably with others at the bar, speaking especially with Mervyn about how he managed to keep track of all of us through our noises. And an attempt to refute Mervyn's remark that sighted people dislike

the unsighted because they cannot make eye contact with them, a remark which I found particularly disturbing and which negated the pleasure I was feeling at having negotiated it all so successfully even if it really was very ordinary activity going to a park, being in a home, going to a pub. Then too, yes, we were a small and friendly group with a responsible guide, but what if that weren't the case? What if the strangers' hands which we encountered in all our groping in the dark were more sinister? What about the unwanted touch of an unseen stranger? What if there were no guide? I again had a sudden feeling of overpowering helplessness.

For me this dark world was felt in the details of sound and touch, but there was no perceivable overall form, pattern or what we would think of as a visual whole; that needs another way of perception and perhaps if I had thought to ask him my guide, Mervyn, could have told me about it. I did however begin to experience the increased richness with which, without the competition from sight, the other senses operate and with which they open different areas of imagination, but it would take many many more than the forty minutes worth of 'blindness' to even begin to comprehend the meaning. It is indeed a commonplace to say that blindness is another world.

June 1995

DARKLIGHT

This installation, originally devised by Andreas Heinecke of the Stiftung Blindenanstalt Frankfurt has future showings planned for Budapest and New York. Perhaps you can catch it there

SEVEN ITALIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

Peter Marshall

Works by Marco Bettani, Giovanni D'Angelo, Stefania Garlatti-Costa, Luigi Gelati, Michele Lasalandra, Ritva Raitsalo and Andy Ranshaw, Sept-Oct 1995.

One of the most international of LIP members, Ritva Raitsalo has recently had a one-person show in her native Finland (see picture below) and, as an Italian citizen taken part closer to home in a show of Italian photographers at FILEF, an Italian Cultural Centre in Finsbury. (see Front cover).

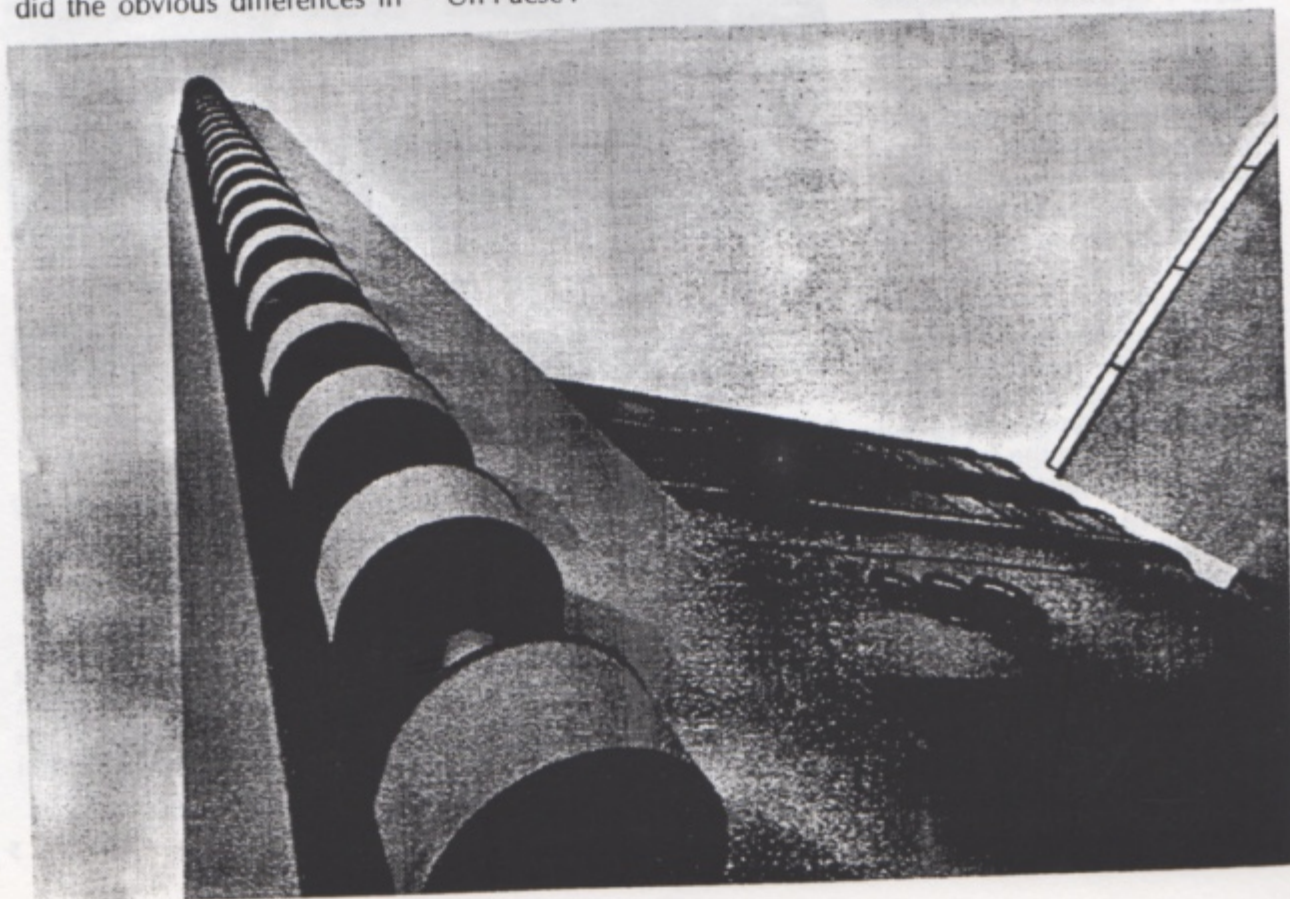
Most impressive about this later show (I didn't make Helsinki) was the range of work included by the seven participants, from studio constructions through photograms and portraiture to documentary, with subject matter ranging from a urinating infant through cinema projectionists to the totally abstract. Nor did the obvious differences in

experience and 'polish' detract from the overall impression.

Little about the work on show seemed overtly Italian, although Andy Ranshaw's pictures were firmly rooted in the peasantry of a presumably Italian village, this could have been almost anywhere in the Mediterranean area. In one of the strongest, a family group of 3 confronting the camera in a staggered formation, proud, confident, sun-aged and muscular behind each other in the interior of their home. There are echoes in these small and well-organised prints of Gene Smith's Spanish Village as well as Strand's Luzzara masterpiece 'Un Paese'.

Luigi Gelati's floor mounted colour photocopies explored the contrasting forms and texture of the human form and formlessness of sand, most strongly in a close up of a man sticking out his sand-covered tongue. Almost certainly unintended by their author were my flashbacks to seaside holidays and sandy sandwiches on cold wind rain-swept East coast beaches. How people see pictures depends so much on what they bring to them, and at least at times I am still that grubby chubby four year old dragging the broken hull of a model yacht through a sandy puddle on the beach of a family snap.

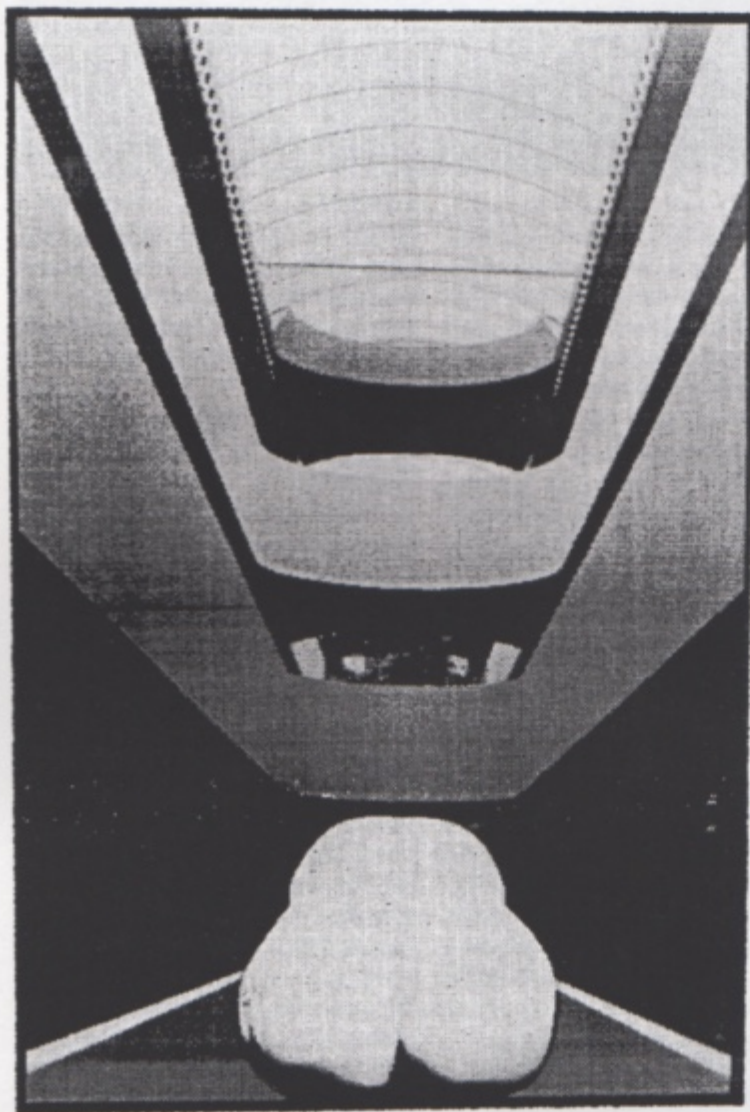
(continued on page 7)



Davyd Davis

Architectonic

This print is from a series of constructed images that Davyd has been working on. The original is approximately A2 in size and the building is Frank Lloyd Wright's Marin County Civic Center, California (1957).



original in colour.

Ritva Raitsalo Helsinki Blues

From her exhibition at the Helsinki Arts Festival, Night of the Arts, Helsinki, August 1995.

Original bluetoned and handtinted.

*Tower of the Olympic Stadium
like the stairs to the sky*

Two of Stefania Garlatti-Costa's works intrigued me, one of the backs of two men and the other a portrait format frame of a light and empty city street with, at bottom left, a dark-haired woman in dark clothes looks down, a picture which built up a powerful atmosphere, and despite its aspect had a cinematic feel, a frame from some fifties new wave film.

Ritvas eight portraits were all heads in close up, all gazing intently, and, with but a single exception, away from the camera. *'Because of their intensive / attentive looks I am tempted to give a name for this collection, Time Rules Life.'* Possibly the strongest single image is Paul and Brian (see cover), the foreground profile echoed and it's individual particularity emphasized by the shadowy background figure. The cigarette with its perfectly aligned glowing end links the two faces into a single visual unit, and the outlining of the profile by the shadow where the nearer face overlies the farther is a superb effect. Elsewhere, Ruby Wax stares out through dark glasses and a startled blonde stands next to a clock at 10.35. A man with generously luxuriant moustache seems amused to be photographed. Another of my favourites shows an attractive young woman, viewed from an unusual high angle, coils of black hair trailing down her face. Most of these pictures interest as individual works and they fit well together.

Italian? Who cares - but perhaps the show appeared to have overall that certain combination of style and a lack of organisation that might match a stereotype. The work itself was far from any stereotype and certainly it was all right on the night, a lively and enjoyable experience.

A Week in Provence

Tony Mayne

*This piece is not a critique of the exhibitions at the Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie at Arles - I have written that elsewhere - see **Inscape No 15** - but a guide for any readers that might wish to visit Arles in future years and care to learn from our experiences.*

We planned to go for a cruise down the Nile this year, but Thomas Cooks rationalised their schedules [cancelled the sailing]. As an alternative, we thought that we would achieve a long held ambition and visit the Rencontres de Photo at Arles as a couple of punters. For those who don't know, Arles, in the South of France, has held a photographic 'gathering' every summer for the last 26 years. It consists of exhibitions, workshops, lectures, debates, showing work, looking at work, and gossiping. I was delegated the task of organising the visit.

I remembered speaking some years ago to a photographic celebrity who had been to Arles, and asking him the kind of questions that I would have liked to have known the answers to before we ventured there. He said 'It's no good asking me any of those questions. I was sponsored by a photographic magazine and didn't have to organise anything. I was flown to Nice, met at the airport, and my hotel and itinerary were arranged beforehand. In exchange for this grand treatment, all that I had to do was to write a piece for them!' We discovered that this held true for almost everybody we met there. There were very few ordinary punters like us and, apart from the students and hopefuls petitioning with their portfolios,

everyone we met there was sponsored by some organisation or other. It is unlikely that anybody would accept such privilege and hospitality and write an adverse report about either the event or its sponsors. But, since I wasn't offered either

I made many mistakes and wasted a lot of time trying to set things up. Just in case anybody else is tempted to repeat our adventure, here are a few tips and warnings that should be helpful.

Getting there

There seem to me to be three principal ways of getting to Arles for the Festival:

1. by **aeroplane**: If you are only going for the long opening weekend, this is by far the best way. There are direct flights from London to Marseilles (the nearest convenient airport), e.g. Air France from Heathrow at 08.30, Gatwick at 11.10 (weekdays only) for about £185 return. Marseilles is less than a two hour journey from Arles. Once there, Arles is so compact that there is little use for a car.

2. by channel crossing (boat, tunnel or hovercraft - the last is the cheapest) and **train**. It would be possible to get to Arles in one (long) day, but a day and a half might be a more realistic goal. You can take your car on the train to the south of France.

3. by channel crossing and **car**. A day and a half to two days would be a realistic time to allow for the journey.

Because we decided to make this a three week holiday, and to bracket Arles with a trip around

France, we went in our own car, which is quite new. AA and Europe Assist membership was free with our car (otherwise I would have temporarily joined Europe Assist) and we bought a 'Green Card' for three week's insurance (about £30). We also each got a form E111 (free) from the Post Office to cover Health Care. Apart from fulfilling legal (and sensible) requirements - first aid kit, GB sticker, warning triangle, etc. - we did little else.

Finding out Rencontres details

The Rencontres has two principal sponsors:

1. A **French consortium** of Arts and local organisations. During the Rencontres they have two offices from which you can buy tickets to the exhibitions and evening events.. the Hotel de Ville (Town Hall) and 10, Rond Pont des Arenes (near the old Roman Arena). Neither of these offices is up and running much before the show starts.

To get information beforehand (dates, etc.) you can contact the Office du Tourisme in the Boulevard des Lices at Arles (0033 - 90.96.76.06). Do not expect too much from them: there are many Festivals at Arles during the summer months. Although they have a duty each morning to try to find you accommodation for one day, they will not be able to assist you to book a hotel weeks in advance. I explain how to do that later in this piece.

2. **Kodak**: They have been a major sponsor of the Rencontres for many years, and have undertaken to continue sponsorship



Tony Mayne - original in colour

for the next two years. This may sound chauvinistic on my part, but it is a hard fact that they can be of more help to you in finding out what's happening than the Arles Tourist Information Office.

But remember, Kodak are not a registered charity or free information service. If you hold a Kodak Pro Passport they should help you with information. If not, a politely worded enquiry *might* bring results.

Where to stay:

This proved to be the hardest part for me. From the France Office, 195 Piccadilly, W1V 0AL, (0891-244123), I got (free) a list of the hotels in Arles. They also gave me the address and phone number of the organisers, the dates of the Rencontres, and other useful information (not all of which I previously had). The France Office is a service of the French government and I cannot speak too highly of them. They are terribly overworked and take ages to answer the phone. If you are in town on business, it is preferable to call in.

Armed with a map of Arles and a list of hotels (plus the hotel recommendations of some guide books), I started phoning the hotels around the Place du Forum (which is the centre of all activity). But the Nord Pinus and the Forum (by far the best for the

Rencontres) and the d'Arlatan (close to the Place du Forum, and much beloved by the Rencontres crowd) seemed to have been booked by the organisers of the Festival a year beforehand. I worked my way through all the hotels listed within the city walls to no avail - and I was ringing two months before the event. To secure a hotel before you go, you really need to book it three to six months in advance.

A 2* or 3* hotel room for two with shower and breakfast in France normally costs F.300 - F.350 (about £50). During the Rencontres weekend most of the favoured hotels seemed to raise their prices by about 50%. Despite what you may hear, there *is* accommodation to be had if you simply turn up, but it is not listed in the guidebooks, it will be overpriced and not of the best.



Tony Mayne - original in colour

I booked us into a hotel outside the city walls. I only managed to get in there because I speak enough French to get by, and they didn't speak enough English to get the business. Initially I was disappointed to be so far from town, but when I got there I found that the town is much smaller than I imagined, and the hotel was only a fifteen minute walk from the town. During the busy weekend the hotel filled up with English photographers who turned up in vintage cars, and its spacious rooms and swimming pool seemed great assets in the hot weather.

During the event:

Kodak opened an office in the centre of town only on the first day of the 'event' weekend, and closed it equally quickly on the last day. It contained all the information available at the two official offices and quite a bit more. Once again, a holder of a Kodak Pro Passport would be entitled to this information, and would have had access to guided visits to the expositions and quite a few of the minor events (but not the poached salmon bash for journalists). We attended a 'press conference' complete with joke presentations of hats - "Les chapeau dans le Monde entier" - at the hotel d'Arlatan with food and wine provided. It was the closest we got to joining the international Junketeers!

During the Rencontres you can buy a 'Global Ticket' for about F.200 which will get you into all the major exhibitions (it normally costs about F.40 (£5.50) entry to each). There are also screenings at the Theatre Antique in the evenings, with discussions the following morning. Although the exhibitions are on for about six to eight weeks, the best time to visit is the 'opening' weekend

This year, our first visit, was disappointing because the Festival director had thought that video was more important than photography, and the photography suffered. He has been replaced, and future years should be worth attending. If any LIP members are contemplating going, I would be happy to speak to them about everything from accommodation to mosquito repellent. You can contact me through the editor of LIPService.



Tony Mayne - original in colour

Nick Barker

Dance #2

a Cibachrome photogram is included in 'Select one', the Special Photographer's Company Library show.

The show has been extended until Nov 11 as a tribute to Justin Benton who died unexpectedly on September 25 and played a major part in putting together the photographers and images in the library.

The Special Photographers Company is in Notting Hill, at 21 Kensington Park Rd, W11



News

Back to the 70's

Going through some papers the other day (shows how often I tidy my desk), out fell a card very familiar to our slightly older readers, with four yellow rounded bars like fingers on a red background. Those were the days of **Goldfinger** and tortuous trips to the mecca of Muswell Hill, surely the least accessible area in London. The Goldfinger legacy lives on, not least in Peter Goldfield's **Duckspool** workshops and **Silverprint**. Who have their latest Autumn 1995 price list out now, and can be contacted on 0171 620 0844, or call in at 12 Valentine Place, London SE1 8QH. Five minutes walk from Waterloo.

There may be a reader new to photography who has never been to the Silverprint cave. If it is connected with making fine black and white prints you will find it there 9.30 - 5.30 Monday to Friday.

Photographers' London 1839-94

In which you will find that someone pipped Fox-Talbot to the post so far as London was concerned, rushing over from Paris with one of those instant picture outfits from Daguerre. A splendid show organised by **Mike Seaborne** and including work by **Y Matze, P, Marshall** and a few others who LIP members may have heard of including Bill Brandt, Henri Cartier Bresson, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Roger Fenton, Bert Hardy, Thurston Hopkins, Felix Mann, Don McCullin, Tony Ray Jones, Edwin Smith.... I hope someone will contribute a proper review for the next issue - volunteers please. The show runs until Dec 31.

The book **Photographers' London 1839-1994** is if anything better than the show. ISBN 0 904818 50 0, and a heavyweight 304 pages for £35 or so.

Any exhibition covering so much ground must in its nature omit many worthy of inclusion. Looking just at one period, I was surprised to see no work by Helmut Gernsheim (see his book **Beautiful London**, Phaidon, 1950), Harold Burdekin & John Morrison (**London Night**, Pall Mall / Collins, 1934) or the architectural photographer Herbert Felton.

There is a study day on the exhibition on Saturday 25 November, with talks by Mike Seaborne, and various photographers including Paul Berkshire, Paul Trevor and John Benton-Harris. Fee £15, details from the Museum on 0171-600 3699 ext 200

Jane Reese Workshop

Several LIP members were among those who enjoyed Jane Reese's workshop on the Keith Howard method of photo-etching. This replaces the traditional and dangerous materials used for the process with such hazardous substances as ordinary washing soda. And, as we were ably shown, is capable of some very fine results.

Good news is that Jane hopes to run a further workshop, so if you missed out first time, look out for the details. You need to have had some experience of working producing film positives or of etching to get the most from this..

Bad news is that the home, workshop and business premises of Jane and Charles are currently under threat from development by one of their neighbours and Kensington & Chelsea council. LIP members recently signed a letter to the council expressing their support for Jane and Charles.

Dandelion Original art on every wall

Dandelion, formed by a group of graduate design students, aims to promote sales of high quality original art to the public through exhibitions in restaurants and health clubs and other venues through which a large number of people pass. It hopes 'to use such publications as *The Big Issue* and *Time Out* as well as more specialist art publications. Its ethos is to provide a service to artists, venues and buyers alike on a fair basis.

Its press release states: 'In conclusion Dandelion aims to exile the pretensions associated with art. By placing pieces in an everyday context Dandelion hops to initiate a conversation between art and public. Through this experience we hop that art will experience a renaissance. We would value your opinions, ideas and endorsements so that we may represent the artists we serve in the most innovative and educated way possible.'

Please contact Dandelion at 179 Old London Road, Clifton Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6PW (0181547 1397)

I-scape (not a misprint)

(I = internet = eye = ego = ...)
I-scape is the not very original title for an internet gallery for photography which I am hoping to set up shortly (I being your editor). Unlike most sites this will not be sponsored by education or industry but out of my pocket. I hope to set up a series of photo shows on the World Wide Web (WWW) for two to three months at a time. Shows would typically be around 10 to 20 pictures with accompanying text, and also a 'form' for comments and orders etc.

I intend to select work and (unless photographers wished to do their own) scan it and prepare the pages. To cover the costs of the site, exhibitors would be

charged a small fee (probably between £10 and £25). If enough people show an interest, I-scape will go ahead - let me know (address etc on back page.) Offers of partnership and/or free web space are also extremely welcome!

Inscape

Also goes from strength to strength. The latest issue includes work by **Ai Li Chia**, **Tony Mayne's** article on Arles referred to elsewhere in this issue, a piece by **Graeme Webb** called 'Is Photography Finished?' and many others, including of course the usual pontification from the **Bishop** himself. Must mention a couple of pieces by Richard Sadler - on Tim Gidal and Bryn Campbell. This issue guaranteed absolutely Peter Marshall free in case you are worried.

Rush your subscription (£10 for 5 issues in the UK - £12 institutions, £15 abroad) to William Bishop, 22a Gladwell Road, Crouch End, London N8 9AA

Alternative Photography review

A must for those with a practical interest in non-silver processes. The Autumn 1995 issue (Vol 1 Number 3) includes articles on gumoil and bromoil and a new variation to the gum bichromate by Peter Frederick. For anyone who doesn't read alt-photo-process and the other internet lists, Mike Ware's 'Fishings from the Net' can be strongly advised.

The Alternative Photography Review costs £8 per year (4 issues), payable to Altpress. Send you sub to Altpress, 1 Mabbotts Yard, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2TD. Previous issues are still available.

Meridian

The latest set of pictures by Peter Marshall available on the internet at URL: <http://fermi.clas.virginia.edu/Niepce/pm-merid.pl>

These are colour panoramas taken along the Greenwich Meridian in London, between the Greenwich Observatory and the sighting obelisk erected by the Astronomer Royal in 1824 in Chingford. While your on Fixing Shadows (the site with the pictures) take a look at the work of Bill Mattick, who has just been voted in the 'top 100 photographers' for the Haas award.

Demos

On a similar subject, at URL: <http://www.interport.net/~vento> you will also find some pictures by me - one of an anti-fascist rally last year and a dozen from a CND demo in Trafalgar Square this July.

Cornerhouse

Have a new photography books catalogue, including their own titles and those of a number of other UK and foreign publishers they distribute. Highlight of their own stable is without doubt Robert Frank's 'The Americans', and at £16 for the paperback no photographer can afford to be without this essential and seminal work. Could be a useful catalogue to highlight and leave around in the run-up to Christmas.

Cornerhouse: 70 Oxford St, Manchester M1 5NH 0161 237-9662

Shows you've missed

Magnum Cinema at the Royal Festival Hall closed October 28. 200 pictures by Magnum photographers covering a wide range from the sycophantic to the perceptive, but always of a very high standard. It was a show that convinced even the cynical that just because you are photo-

graphing stars it doesn't necessarily mean that quite ordinary pictures will be hailed as masterpieces. A popular show with some really good photography in places.

Appeal to This Age - Photography from the US Civil Rights Movement 1954-68 - brought back many memories for those of us who lived through those years, even if we did so in another country. The Civil Rights movement gained world-wide coverage through newspapers and TV, and photographic images were an important element in this. Together with Vietnam it is a clear example of how photography has had an effect on a political situation. It was also an important influence on the whole student movement of the 1960's which created a generation and a new politics. Manchester was not the Sorbonne and definitely not Montgomery, Alabama, but we felt the same zeitgeist and danced to the same tunes. I had misgivings about this show before I saw it which were totally unfounded; it showed how photography could be good in every sense of the word and also political.

So many photographic things on at the **National Portrait Gallery** when I dropped in during September that it is difficult to remember or list them all. Definitely more nostalgia for those of us who remember the sixties, with giant pictures of the British icons of that era, but the memorable photography remained the classics in the main collection. Some of the new acquisitions on show are very much not to my taste however.

Words by ai li

Ai Li Chia is probably the only member of LIP who is both now a fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and a member of the British Hauku Society. She has just brought out a 35 page handmade book of her poetry with a cover photograph, words by ai li, which I hope to write

about in the next issue. Copies are available from ai li at 0171 794 0888, or from various gallery and art bookshops including Dillons in Long Acre and Margaret St, Waterstones in Kensington, the RFH, Serpentine Gallery, Neal St East and the Japan Centre book shop at £10.99.

See pages 16 for one of the poems from the book, together with a photograph. Ai Li has had work in at least 12 shows this year, including in September and October alone the Ham & High Summer Photographic Exhibition, The Contemporary Group Annual Exhibition, The Chinese Festival Exhibition and the Ben Uri Annual Open Exhibition.

Photofusion

Among coming events are a two session series on Exploring the Photo Essay (25 Nov, 5 Dec), a 12 hour practical Fine Print Workshop spread over 4 evenings (29 Nov, 6, 13, 20 Dec) and a two day course on Montaging the Image (2,3 Dec). They are also looking for new photographers working in the areas of Family, Education, Health and Housing for their picture library.

Contact Photofusion on 0171 738 57774 - 17a Electric Lane, Brixton, SW9 8LA

Eileen Fitzpatrick

Adult Students: Basic Skills Course

An exhibition of Eileen's colour pictures of a group of adults with learning disabilities is on show at Caterham Valley Adult Education Centre, Beechwood Road, Caterham, Surrey from 3-29 Nov. It is open Mon-Fri 9.30 -3.30 and 7.30 -9.30 pm.

Eileen is now in the third year of her BA course at Farnham.



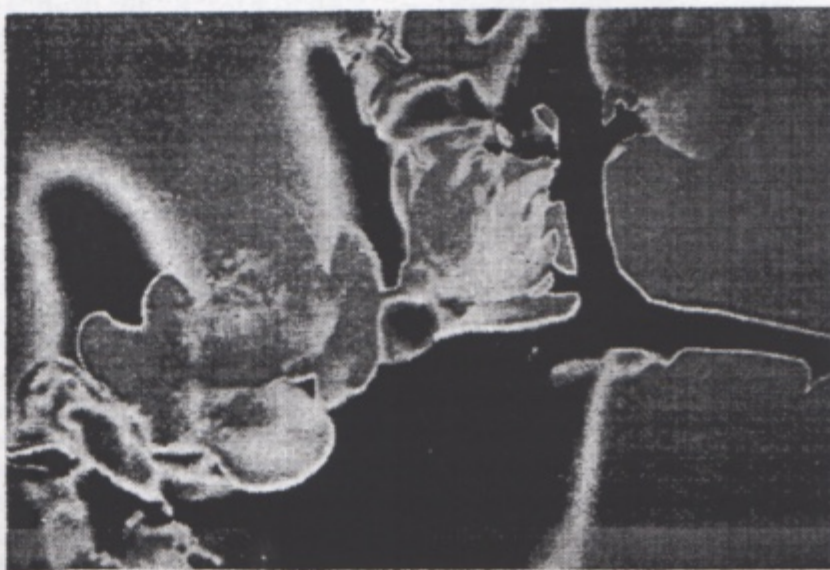
original in colour

Cards

Alison Williams

Since I began making photo Christmas cards I have started to find in them an opportunity to play and explore personal uses of photography rather than staying within the confines of fine printing.

more cards in the next issue - send yours.



Beyond Words

reviewed by Carol Hudson

I am sure that every photographer has two or three photographs that have impact and immediate appeal - the visual equivalent of Pavarotti's *Nessun Dorma*. More interesting, in the long term, are their projects exploring a photographic idea or revealing a personal vision. For this reason I was delighted when I heard that this year London Independent Photography members were to be given the opportunity, for the first time, to show sets of work. This might involve fewer contributors, but should entail a more substantial portfolio of member's work.

The exhibition space, at Swiss Cottage Central Library is large and open and the white walls and high ceilings give lots of room for inventive hanging sequences. However, this intention is barely recognised, with only one sequence of more than three prints. Maybe something went wrong with the submissions, perhaps a misunderstanding of the kinds of things it was appropriate to submit, or possibly the idea of sequences became distorted in the selection process.

This year's exhibition selectors were Mark Haworth-Booth, keeper of photographs at The Victoria and Albert Museum, and Sue Davies, former Director of The Photographers' Gallery. Looking around the exhibition it is difficult to assess exactly what criteria were used for their selection. The range of work exhibited here undeniably made the hanging of this exhibition a challenging task. However, the long, somewhat monotonous, line of photographs around the walls, perhaps inadvertently, gives the impression that the exhibition was hung so as not to disturb the equilibrium of the library users. Paradoxically, the

problem is one of perceived homogeneity - same height, similar size, similar frames, - so many precious observations snatched from context. It is for this reason that I was slightly disappointed by this exhibition.

That said, the immense enthusiasm for photography, that is always in evidence at LIP exhibitions, made up for these shortcomings. There were many photographs that I really enjoyed and many more that intrigued me. I cannot hope to mention all the work in the exhibition here. The photographs I talk about are simply the ones that caught my eye for reasons that are more likely to be subjective than not. Had I gone a week later in a different mood, it might well have been others.

Graeme Webb's *The Poetics of Space: Configuration 2* made me long to see more of his work. This image is picture making at its best - a beautiful observation of sky as being something that is as tangibly solid as the ground beneath it. Geometric shapes create illusions of depth and direction which challenge our everyday perceptions of the world around us. There is no such thing as empty space. But where is Configuration 1, and is there a Configuration 3?

Another pair of pictures that also show a fascination with the strangeness of things were to be found on the opposite wall. A pair of rich blue colour photographs, taken in Hawaii, by Len Salem, play upon the notion that things are not always be what they seem to be. One image shows white stripes painted ladder-like across a road leading to a direct drop over a cliff top, straight into a deep blue sea (or sky). The other picture is of a

white chair, half of which is seen through a semi transparent curtain. The stripes of the back of the chair form a white ladder. I was reminded of Jacob's dream ladder, but the blueness of the photographs did not so much suggest heaven as the unknown. These pictures instruct us to go and look at the world very carefully. First, we must recognise the ladder but if we ascend, we do so alone. Then again, perhaps Len is just playing a game with us. In which case he has hidden the snakes very well. I look forward to further conundrums.

Ai Li Chia's three colour pictures of steps and corrugated iron also played with the illusion of solidity suggesting that the world could be expanded or contracted like a Chinese paper lantern. By contrast Julia Dogra-Brazil's black and white photographs seemed to emphasise solidity. They are as emphatic as Dr. Johnson's kick in refutation of Bishop Berkeley's idealism.

The large colour montage images of Gandha Key also dealt with the notion of perceived space, at the same time as having no depth at all. I felt that this was a private world to which I did not have the key (no pun intended). Perhaps they were part of a larger sequence but, in any case, a few words of introduction would have helped to direct me in this very disorienting, strangely Continental, feeling of evenings misspent.

By contrast, Jim Barron's two pieces of work seem complete. I have seen the ideas in these two intensely personal images develop through a number of mutations over the past year and to suddenly see the various elements coalesce in a way that elevates the work to another

level is quite exciting. The two black and white photographs were made in Richmond Park, where Jim has been photographing for a number of years, and incorporate text taken from dedications inscribed on the park benches. Strangely, this weaving of the past and the present together has led to images which are about the future, about repetition, continuity and transformation.

Another set of pictures, which seems complete, also deals with the passing of time. 'Celebration 1, 2 and 3' by Jill Staples depicts blossom against a painted brick wall with landscape photographs and a china plate. The use of differential focus to highlight elements within the sequence echoes the selectiveness of memory. The soft shadows and golden tint suggest afternoon tea and the warmth of summer. These are the good things that we want to remember, but we are forgetting - slowly, but inexorably, our memory fades. These are gentle images with a touch of nostalgia about them.

I always seek out Virginia Khuri's work with interest. On this occasion I liked one of her seascapes very much, the delicate printing suggesting cool and tranquil waters and quiet contemplation. However, I was disappointed by the other which brought to mind a sheet of moulded plastic. I suspect that the two images were intended to be part of a larger sequence, and that the relevance of the one that I was less taken with might have been lost in the 'editing'. As I stood looking at these photographs I was convinced that I could 'hear the sea' but it was only the air conditioning that was providing such an effective sound track!

This is the first time that I have seen any of the bookworks made by Jane Reese, though I have read and heard many fine things about her work. The three pieces

exhibited here seemed to me to have a very earthy quality, and I would have liked to inspect them more closely. However, the works were rightly protected in glass cases. Work of this nature relies on surface qualities for much of its appeal and is essentially three dimensional. I felt both deprived and frustrated as I peered through the reflections of the glass, especially as some of the content was lost in folds of the paper. Nevertheless, what I could see confirmed all the good things I had heard and suggested a poetic and romantic vision married to expert craftsmanship. Jane also had the unique privilege, in this exhibition, of showing three sequences of work. There may be a lesson here for all of us.

One of the things that often distinguishes 'artists who use photography' from photographers is the size of the images—as if making a photograph big elevated it into art. All the photographs in this exhibition were domestic in size, probably for reasons which have more to do with restrictions of storage than aesthetic considerations. However, this smallness of scale does not mean that the vision of all the photographers in this exhibition is small. Peter Marshall has a grand vision. He has been documenting London for a good many years now and has built up a formidable archive. The future value of these to photo historians is undeniable, but some of the images, such as the two colour panoramas in this exhibition move beyond mere documentation. Form and content have fused together in such a way that no element can be separated without loss. I find these a particularly pleasing pair of images to view. The intertwining of shapes, lines and colours seems to run from one image into the next and back creating a helter-skelter feeling, travelling in circles and loops but always arriving back at the same place. It would have been interesting to see these as

part of a larger sequence, and I think that they would be wonderful very, very large.

I also enjoyed the playfulness of Peter Baldwin's Wall '150', the charming farmyard studies of Tina Stallard, and Peter Jennings' disembodied hands and heads that had the appearance of fading murals - the work of a nocturnal graffiti artist using a torch instead of a paint spray can. Peter's messages written on film, rather than walls, seem extraordinarily intimate, the hardness of the printing technique being no more effective as a camouflage than is the brightness of spray paint.

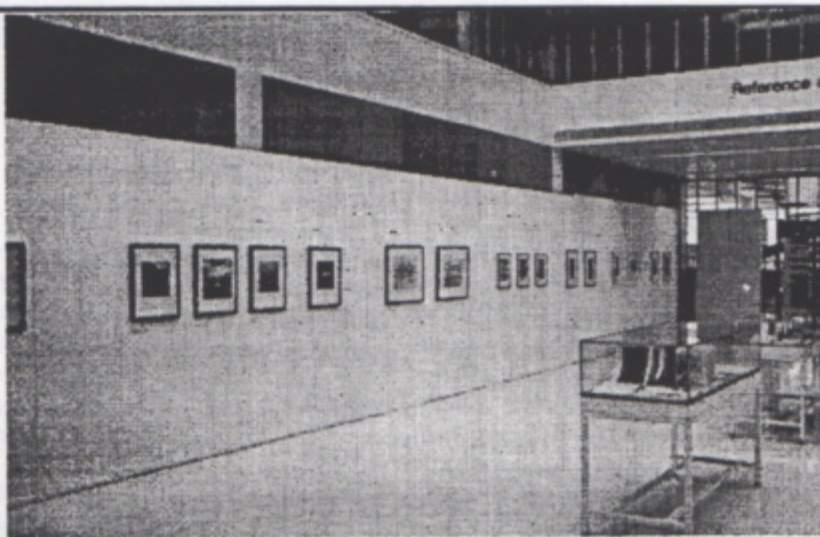
I felt that I had insufficient introduction to Matthew Rake's 'people' and wanted to know more about Quentin Ball's observations of the differences between the land of America and the land of England. Edward Bowman's visually full colour photographs give the spectator a chance to explore in a way that very few of the other photographs in this exhibition do. They are full of interesting detail and his observations on the quirkiness of the world (as opposed to his quirky observations of the world) present us with canvases that are both refreshing and amusing. This is not to say they that they do not also raise serious questions about the environment and our response to it. I find it hard to imagine the state of mind of someone who fills their garden with artificial animals.' but, on reflection, anyone looking at my garden would probably not be able to understand my state of mind!

When I was asked to review this exhibition, I was warned that I might make a few enemies. I am not sure whether this is a general reflection upon the nature of reviews, or a comment upon the kind of remarks I usually make about photography which, once committed to print, might get me into trouble. In any case, rather than read anything I have to say, it would be far better for

you go and look at the pictures themselves. Like Wittgenstein, what I cannot speak about I must pass over in silence - the exhibition is *Beyond Words*.

Photograph of part of the exhibition by Edward Bowman

This article unfortunately arrived too late for the previous issue, but the picture will serve to remind readers so far as the comments about the hanging of the show etc are concerned.



original in colour



city light

mysterious
white
light
in
the
city

quietly
captured
by
me



ai li

ai li

Letters and
Articles for next
issue to the
editor,

Peter Marshall,
31 Budebury
Rd, Staines,
Middx, TW18
2AZ,

01784-456474

by the end of
January please.