

LIPSERVICE

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PHOTOGRAPHY
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Film Stills - Graeme Webb p1-3: LIP Show Review - Tony Mayne p4-5: Jazz Festival - Jim Barron p6-8
Letter to Editor - p9: Ai Li Chia - p10-11: Lipservice Online p11: Trilogy p11: Quentin Ball - p12-13
Nick Barker - p14; Sarah Thelwall - p15-17: IPSE News p17: Small Adds p17: Never Walk Alone - review by
Roger Estop p18: Great & Little - Peter Marshall p19: LIP Local Groups p20: Notes for Contributors p20.

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Film Stills -



11P exhibition, Barbican

Graeme Webb

Encounters with Aliens



IMAGINATIVE RELATIONS

I saw much work that I admired, and some that I envied, at this year's LIP exhibition. Some work I felt to be early explorations in a project - incompletely realised, but showing great promise of future development. This seems to me to be what LIP should be about. It is fascinating to see a photographer's work growing from monthly meetings to exhibition. The selection of 61 works by 27 exhibitors (about half of the work submitted), by Mari Mahr and Julian Rodriguez, was of a generally high standard. LIP exists to promote and encourage photographers in London from beginners onwards, and the chance to exhibit one's work at such a prestigious venue ought to stimulate LIP members work and encourage growth in standards.

The compact space of the Barbican Library, creating a busy intimate atmosphere, proved an excellent shop window for LIP's rich and disparate talents - more like a souk than a supermarket. The stipulation of a minimum of two 'Related Images' created some consistency in the sort of mixed exhibition that can sometimes seem too eclectic.

The three photographers whose 'related' pictures worked best for me were Julia Dogra-Brazell, Edward Bowman, and Graeme Webb. The latter's 'Film Stills Encounters with Aliens' were 'fun' pictures. Two involved an artificial 'monster's' hand - one in a forest, one silhouetted against a shocked man lit from below (classic 'Horror' lighting). One used a real hand (and head) backlit and silhouetted behind water-spattered glass. The fourth involved a man at breakfast reading about UFOs whilst ignoring

a UFO in the sky behind him. The presentation of the four photographs resembled the presentation of film stills outside a cinema. They made a very pleasing and amusing whole.

Julia Dogra-Brazell showed three colour self-portraits and revealed her manipulation of the camera-taking-the-photograph. In other words, they were self-consciously self-referential. Each picture was illuminated by strong cross-lighting from the right using window light (or artificial light projected through a window, or a frame). Her uses of mirrors and props, plus her own dress, were literate, stylish, and well-executed. Each background had a different colour - cyan, magenta, or cream. All were 'constructed' images. I felt that the idea behind these photographs - Victor Burgin's identification of the subject with the camera position as 'the primary suturing instance of the discourse of still photography' - had probably been exploited to the limits of its effectiveness; but I am prepared to be surprised by further explorations.

Edward Bowman's contribution, 'Self-Portrait *4', on the other hand, seemed prodigiously fertile. Good though this work was, I felt that its possibilities for further improvement were boundless. "It's photography, Jim, but not as we know it." His two fascinating, computer-generated images on textured paper, featuring colour manipulation, oblique image-presentation, overlaying, collage, and many more technical tricks, revealed influences ranging from the Bauhaus to Kurt Schwitters. These perfectly contrived and executed pictures were capable

"Related Images"

of many interpretations. They suggested to this reviewer German student life, lost love, struggle, sorrow, and fear. These ambiguous images were executed with style and grace and constituted the exhibit I most coveted. Having since read Eddie's article in *The Photographic Journal*, May 1996, 1 now realise that many of my interpretations were incorrect - what I took to be his university degree is his birth certificate, and so on. However, my point about ambiguity still holds!

Virginia Khuri's and Len Salem's 'Related Images' did not give the appearance of being especially taken for that exhibition - serendipity seemed to play a part in their inclusion. Len's 'Charing Cross Road' and 'Bourbon Street' were, in essence, two blown-up contact strips. The individual frames were fine, giving a flavour of the areas depicted - New Orleans by night, London by day - and their presentation together enhanced both. These were a one-off - the only way to take the idea further would be to approach two subjects with a strong shopping-list. If the matching of the images was a shotgun marriage, then it was a happy one.

Virginia Khuri's 'Negeezi/ Guilin China' consisted of four of the photographs which she double-exposed on two separate trips. Three of them were reproduced in the last LipService, but it was worth the tube fare to the Barbican to see the originals. With one chance in eight of the pictures superimposing with the frame bars lined up, they were more than a happy accident. Ironically, some of the pictures that worked so well superimposed might not have been

LIP exhibition, Barbican Library, 1996

reviewed by

Tony Mayne

remarkable on their own. It might be worth extending this idea by printing two negatives bound together if they worked. It would be almost impossible to repeat the original experiment successfully but I am grateful that Virginia shared her experience with us all. The pictures looked like stills from a science fiction film (take note, Graeme Webb) - giant tortoises eating up the desert, a mythical lion gasping for air, the Manchurian silo, and a man and his lion materialising in a car park. Virginia's most creative contribution was the editing of the faulty material.

Several exhibitors used landscape.. Carol Hudson had four pictures of sand hills, which reminded me of my childhood, with bumps and shadows flowing from one into another. Clare Glenister showed two pictures full of energy consisting of time exposures of grass blowing in the wind, which seemed to be in the tradition of John Blakemore. Such work needs some sort of anchor and I was disappointed that in one of her pictures *nothing* is sharp. Having said that, these pictures had promise, and I look forward to seeing more of her work in next year's LIP exhibition. Yoke Matze showed two black and white images of skeletal trees against the sky - one row lining a river, the other row lining a road. They were classic, simple photographs, well-crafted and well-printed, worthy of display anywhere.

Several evocative still lives included Ann Marie Colbert's 'Time Pieces', which seemed to be about decay Using elements ranging from scrolled metal work (reminiscent of a church door hinge) to a cogged watch-spring,

an acorn to three insect wings (or dead leaves). Both compositions were well-balanced and pleasing. Tina Stallard's 'Uninhabited' showed close-ups of two small items - a rusty key hanging on a nail, and a cobwebbed tap - which indicated that no one lived here anymore. The idea behind these observations was excellent, but I personally felt uneasy with the balance within the frames. Jill Staples' 'Memories of Jim' was a collection of four black and white photographs, seemingly taken in a garden shed, simply composed, all beautifully lit and exposed, well-crafted and surprisingly evocative. They were still lives of the mundane, and yet speak of care and attention to detail, both by the gardener and the photographer.

Portrait work included Anne Crabbe's 'Lynn and Alexi', whom I took to be mother and daughter. The backlit portrait of the mother (seated) and daughter (standing) in a garden proved to be a deceptively simple image. It represented for me the best portrait in the exhibition. Both subjects addressed the camera with openness. Both exemplified style and simplicity, but this sympathetic portrait showed the generational difference between them in clothing (the daughter, barefoot, for example) and posture. Her '4th of July' it would be safest to regard as Post-modern. It is probably a failing in me, but that picture left me as deeply unimpressed as the portrait left me impressed.

Ritva Raitsalo was represented by blue toned or cyanotype depictions of upper body parts, strongly sidelit and exposed for the highlights. Much that was

going on was (deliberately) rendered too dark to see, which suggested more than was shown though not necessarily 'Fear' and 'Mystery'. The latter seemed to be a male torso and was quite erotic - on its way to being a Levi jeans ad. Allison Williams's three vignettted, abstract body parts provided the exhibition's poster shot. In one way they worked as puzzle pictures - given the absence of scale, is that a neck and shoulder?, is that a back and arm? The most certain picture depicted a forearm with chest and face, where I felt that the wrist watch and rings were incongruous with the mood of the pictures. My final impression was that these images were still at an interesting exploratory stage.

Sam Tanner's compassionate work and masterly printing technique are always something to look forward too. He is a true heir of Eugene Smith. His strongest image was of a premature baby, not much bigger than the hand of the doctor placing a stethoscope over its trembling heart.

Two of Jeanine Billington's three coloured pictures of Varanasi, India contained classic renditions of pattern - strong horizontals broken by people and goats. Both of these photographs could find a place in any travel book. My favourite, the third picture, seemed stylistically unrelated, depicting a strong blue wall - its uniformity broken by brown wires, windows and washing. All of this haphazard mixture balanced cleverly within the frame, and was reminiscent of the work of the French photographer and film director, Agnes Varda.

Line of sight was important to Lawrence Impey's two eponymous images of empty market barrows (in Shepherd's Market, if I am not mistaken). Both compositions contained strong rectangular elements (doors, barrows, etc.), but were photographed from a viewpoint which introduced diagonal strength in one and tonal variety in the other-

The prolific Ai Li did it again! Using the simple elements of a couple of red posts, paving slabs, shadows, and some puddles, she created three Cinemascope pictures where pattern and colour worked together to make balanced, pleasing, impactful images.

The overall impression of the exhibition was of much competence, a measure of creativity, and some new blood experimenting with the medium.

Editors Note:

Thanks to Tony for such a painstaking review of this year's exhibition.

Writing about LIP annual exhibitions is (as I have found previously) a high-risk task. Obviously we each have different views on the work shown (particularly on our own if we took part). Equally, with around 30 people taking part, any reviewer can only comment on a selection of the work shown.

Most people I've talked to agree that it was one of the better LIP shows (no-one yet has actually said this was because none of my work was submitted!) Notable for me was the amount and strength of work by people in LIP whose work I had not seen before - for example Maria de Valencia's hand coloured tableaux, and the work by Anne Crabbe and Ann Marie Colbert mentioned by Tony.

Unfortunately much of the work I would have liked to reproduce in connection with the show was in colour - still I assume that most readers will have seen it. PM

PICTURES at a JAZZ FESTIVAL

One of the more pleasant openings that I've attended over the past few months was for Jim Barron's show in May-June at Richmond Town Hall's Riverside Room.

Until recently Jim was a British Government film maker and photographer on the staff with the Foreign Office, working in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and UNICEF, travelling to many of the remoter areas of the world.

Since retirement his work has centred around the Richmond area - as we have seen in his contributions to exhibitions for LIP and, previously, Framework. Over 30 years ago, he was also photographing in the area, at the fifth and last Richmond National Jazz and Blues Festival in 1965. At the time I was a penniless student and despite a keen interest in the music unable to afford the ticket price. Despite the name the event was musically a mixed bill, featuring some of the top rock bands of the time - the Who, the Animals, Manfred Mann, the Yardbirds and the Moody Blues along with the established names of Trad such as Chris Barber and Kenny Ball as well as modern jazzers such as tenorman (and club owner) Ronnie Scott and the great British original of piano, Stan Tracey, shown here.

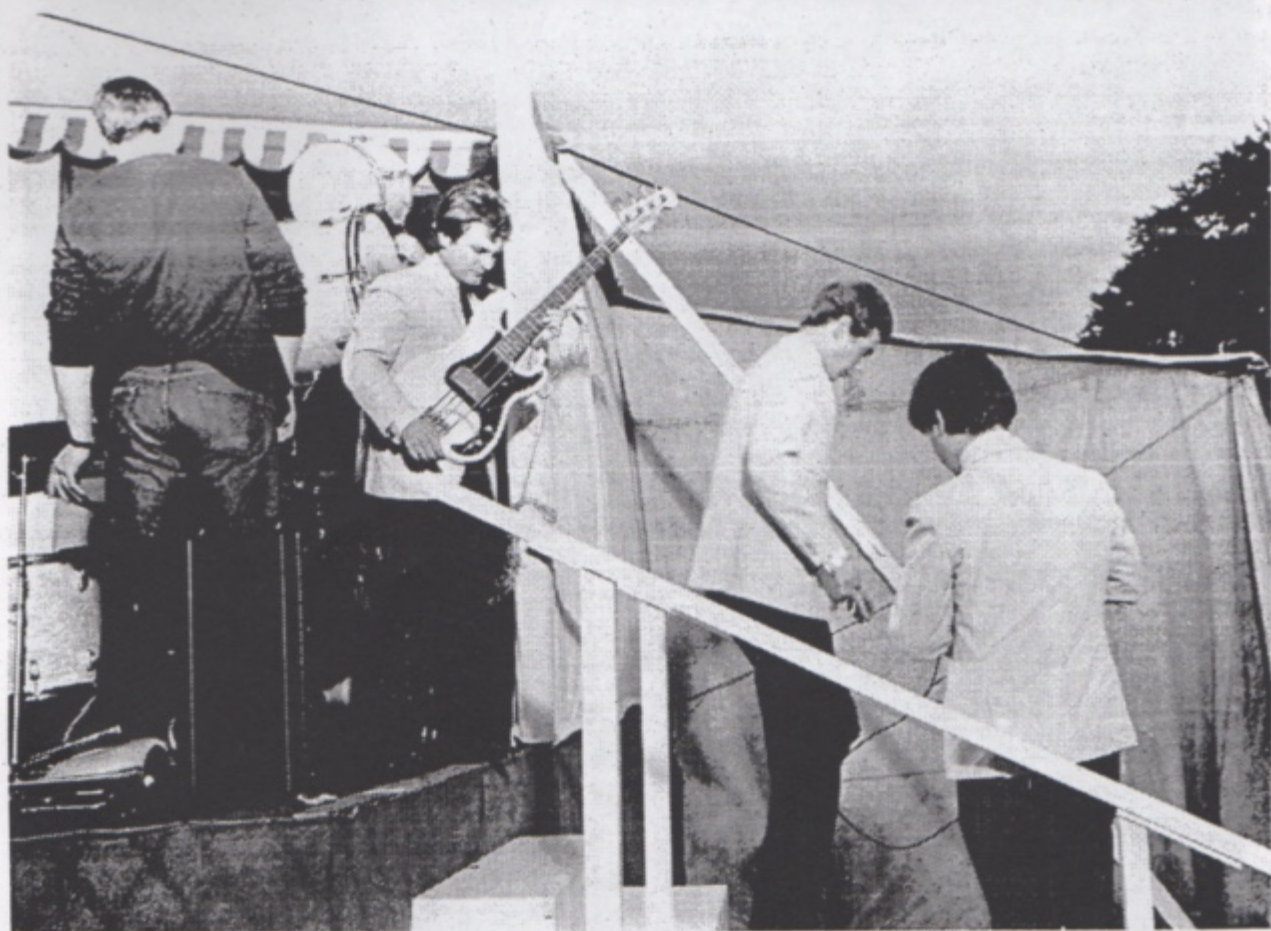
Original photographs from the 1965 Richmond Jazz and Blues Festival by

Jim's pictures on the next couple of pages really speak for themselves. Though I missed this particular festival they capture for me something of the favour of a mis-spent (but certainly not regretted) youth. They also show Jim's technical prowess and the ability to recognise and capture significant moments and a sure eye for composition.

Like all other things I have known him do, Jim appears to have approached the show thoroughly and methodically. As well as the thirty or so prints on the walls it was a pleasure to be able to look through many sheets of small prints of his other pictures from the festival - from which at least one of those here was selected. As always the work was finely printed, in this case on Ilford fibre-base material donated by Ilford Ltd and Silverprint Ltd.

The opening was enlivened by a little entertainment in a jazz vein, and among those attending it was a pleasure to renew the acquaintance of a couple of other ex-Framework photographers, Peter Symes, now an established jazz photographer and Randal Webb who many will know for his alternative process and other classes. The London Borough of Richmond on Thames are to be congratulated for their staging of this event, and should book the photographer again for his next show - perhaps including his Henley pictures? Peter Marshall.

**JIM
BARRON**



Edward R. Ruppel

Foto



Letter to the Editor: From Edward Bowman

Whilst greatly appreciating Peter Marshall's contribution to LIP through his production of LIPSERVICE, I have to take issue with him on his Leader.

I joined LIP quite some time after it had been started by Virginia Khuri and Janet Hall and I have always admired the wonderful way they have organised the workshops and events. Without their contribution to LIP the group would, in my opinion, cease to exist.

For some years LIP met in Ginny's lovely studio. We were a small group of people, and even though we had about 100 members, there was always enough room to sit around Ginny's table, talk photography and informally show work. Members were often too polite to make comments on work but somehow we did get feedback in an indirect kind of way. Eventually LIP became too successful and the numbers coming to the studio increased to such an extent that we had to find other premises. This has proved difficult and expensive for us.

What Peter wants is perfection, an LIP empire even and I am afraid it is not realistic. There are no grants even for the most worthy of causes such as the major charities, so we will just have to manage without them. I think that at this LIP provides an informal and friendly atmosphere and meeting place for people seriously interested in the medium. It provides workshops, lectures and other events and I believe that is what the membership want. Naturally there is always room for improvement but ideas must be firmly ground in practicality.

I also agree with Graeme Webb who writes about the RPS attitude to the Contemporary group. The Rotarians who have the most influence within that Society have made difficulties for the group since its inception (control freaks being pretty common in this country) but all the Contemporary group want to do is to provide RPS members with an approach to photographic practice found amongst LIP members and we think that if we can help some RPS member to find their way and to broaden their horizons then the effort will have been worthwhile.

So we don't really need Peter to add to our problems by also attacking the Contemporary group's co-operation with LIP. The only difference in philosophy between the two groups is that the Contemporary group tries to attract people from all around the country. It makes sense to have joint programmes with LIP and with other groups such as IPSE, because without all the groups combining it would be financially impossible to hold the workshops and lectures that we do. I think Peter should think very hard about that. We really all need to work together in a common cause and avoid post modern fracturing and cliques. It is the informality of LIP which adds to its charm and attraction and not quasi legal constitutional documents. We should look at the many achievements of LIP and the proof is that people continue to join the group and that it is held in high regard by the art world as a whole. We should thank those who have dedicated themselves to making the group the success that it is.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Bowman.

Reply

Peter Marshall is very unsure who or what his leader is. Lip-Service is a magazine composed of submissions by members, of which I am one.

Events since the last issue, especially at the AGM and the new blood on the committee have I think proved the timely nature of the various comments in the last issue. Things are starting to happen and I sure we can now feel much more optimistic about the future of LIP. Some signs of this renewal of activity are in the program which all members have already received. Elsewhere in this mailing are further details of the local group meetings which are also a part of this process.

One of the key points remains a need to establish a clear identity for LIP. It would also be nice to halt and even reverse the relatively large drop in membership recently of which you are apparently not aware. But the most important thing is to see and produce better photography at what I have always regarded as LIP's key events - its discussions, blutaks and exhibitions.

LIP does not exist to support the RPS or any group of it. We should co-operate so far as it suits LIP interests to do so, as is clearly the case for some events and workshops, although we could certainly - as the example of IPSE shows - go it alone. I have no interest in the internal politics of the RPS.

LIP now has a clear constitution, more and new members involved in the committee (together with most or all of those long-serving stalwarts who I also thanked for their past efforts), a new chair person and I hope a renewed sense of direction. I welcome this and hope for a successful future. I hope you are with us.

Peter



haiku and picture (original in colour) © ai li chia 1996

fork in repose
painted feet
at play

ai li chia

1st prize winner
'Open Category'

Ham & High / Lloyds
Bank
Summer Photographic
Exhibition

31 Aug-30 Sept 1996
Exhibition Hall
Swiss Cottage Central
Library
Avenue Rd
London NW3

Ai Li has been busy both with her pictures and haiku since the last issue. As well as winning the open category in the Ham & High show, she has been busy organising haiku evenings at the Spinning Room in Hampstead and reading at various events including the Design Museum and a commemorative event in Regent's Park for the Day of Time in Japan. Her work has also been read in San Francisco and she has been a guest haiku post on the Hai-Rise Urban Haiku home page on the internet.

The UK Haiku Championships '96 attracted over 3000 entries from 709 poets. Ai Li's entry :

widowed shutter : wind

was awarded 2nd prize and is published together with the other winners and highly recommended entries in the Competition Anthology *Haiku '96 (Poetry Postcard Quartely, Issue 3)*, available at £5.99 from PPQ, PO Box 1435, London W1A 9LB

LIPSERVICE

NET version

LIP - as those readers who have web access will know - now has its pages on the internet, giving details of LIP and LIP events. Graeme Webb is currently looking after this page which is at Vision-net (<http://www.vision-net.co.uk>).

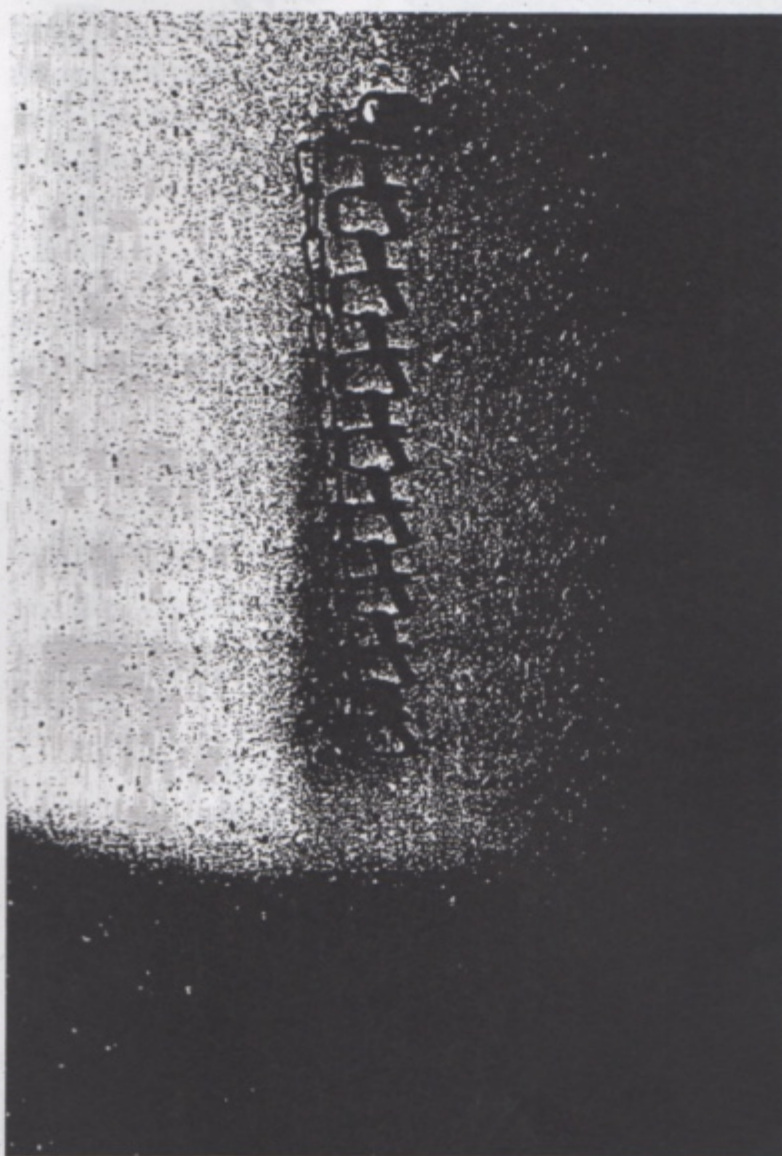
We hope from the next issue to make most or all of LipService contents available to the world on-line either on this site or elsewhere (although the printed version will continue as before). Other LIP items such as exhibitions of members work may also go on to the net.

Some LIP members may be concerned about the possibility of copyright violation if their work is posted on the internet. Pictures carried on the web site will be relatively small in size - perhaps 30 Kb. This is roughly one thousandth of the size used for high quality reproduction (not even large enough for the stunning quality we get in LipService). So any work copied in this way can not be used for normal printed publication. There is probably more real risk of financial loss in having your work published conventionally.

Published work - whether in the printed version or on the net - is automatically copyright, in the UK and most countries. Where work submitted to LipService includes a copyright notice this is usually reproduced, despite being superfluous. Any web site containing articles or pictures from LipService will contain a clear overall copyright message, and, where requested a copyright message will be shown with individual items.

If you are submitting work for LipService and are not prepared to have it reproduced in the internet edition, please make this clear on the work.

haiku and picture (original in colour) © ai li chia 1996



at one
with its imperfect shadow
rusty chain

Trilogy

- three collaborations
- three years

Photographs by Carol Ballenger and Poems by John Powis on show at St Martin's Gallery, St Martin in the Fields Church, Trafalgar Square from 23-28 Sept. 10am-6pm. **Dartmoor Dreams** (now also a book) combines black and white pictures and lyric poetry. **This Time Around Love** uses impressionist colour pictures and poems. **Fragemnts** or colour images and poems depict Hungerford Bridge. Readings by John Powis at 1pm each weekday.

Quentin Ball



This May found me on a 14-day trekking holiday, courtesy of GQ Magazine and Gillette. All expenses paid except film and extras, it was a camping holiday starting in San Francisco, then Yosemite three nights, Zion National Park two nights, Bryce Canyon, Lake Powell (Antelope Canyon), Monument Valley, Grand Canyon, Las Vegas and finishing at Venice Beach, Los Angeles. It was an awesome trip, even though I had visited many of the places before, when I used to live in Texas.

No cameras failed, no lenses got dropped in the sand or broken against the rocks - even when I stumbled and fell flat on my face on rocks and my camera bag went flying, it was zipped shut. Three Nikons, a Mamiya 21/4, and a 'point-and-shoot' took care of my requirements.

I didn't run out of film either, 25 rolls exposed, no casualties (double exposure, no exposure). Most what I shot, as is normal for me, was Kodak Infra-red, plus a lot of 120 Ektachrome, some Techpan, and some 35mm lith film.

Now, it is all proof sheets and proof prints, and I have decided I have three 'movements.'

Firstly, Yosemite: granite, valley, abundance of water, growth, living.

Secondly, Bryce/Monument Valley: desert sandstone formations that have been transformed by the wind and elements.

And thirdly, Antelope/Corkscrew Canyons: again, the sandstone, but which has been transformed by water.

Now comes the hard and time-consuming part: clean 11 x 14 archival prints with the right detail and tone ...



original in colour



Nick Barker

Poems on Buses

Poems on Buses is a collaboration between **Friends of the Earth** and **Big Wide Words**.

For sixth months a number of poems are being displayed on London buses on routes 38 and 73, including the one below by Nick, **To Walk**.

The hand manipulated photograph (original in colour), **Tree No. 1, 1995**, was taken in Marbury Cheshire, an area where Nick regularly photographs and where he had the original inspiration for his poem.

To walk

To dream

In morning mist
on fields of green

Then swept away
like autumn leaves
Burned

and healed



Sarah Thelwall

Paradise Syndrome (and related illnesses) or hospitals I have known - Dave Stewart

Four lectures in & I've learnt from each of them. Despite disliking Elliott Erwitt's photos and not being over enamoured by Ed McCabe's kitsch American adverts I loved David Carson's 'End of Print' and was bitterly disappointed to miss Malcolm McClaren's 'Living Yesterday Tomorrow' in favour of a conference in Blackpool on blood transfusion (new job, no choice!). Most of them have been plugging books but tonight the wood panelled auditorium is filled with guitars, amps and all that you would expect to accompany a lecture by Dave Stewart - the obvious bevy of photographers as some blonde haired bloke (I later discover to be Daryl Hall) climbs out of a black cab & I swear Jerry Hall is sitting about six seats down (she was, I just don't know my superstars very well - so I don't recognise Carrie Fisher either). How come this writing is so relaxed I've barely mentioned the man himself? Well it feels that way despite the hordes of roadies & added extras, even Graham Fink (D&AD president for the uninitiated) is in a T-shirt (well two actually, the long one underneath) and shorts.

So when was the last time you sat in on a lecture by Dave Stewart which was equally a gig & an overview of his links between art, music & film? Why the hell didn't I bring my camera. "I think I might be manic-depressive except I don't get the depressive bits" Lesson 1 - create chaos, oh yes & Carrie Fisher is here - how do I know DS has just pointed it out - I am an ignoramus! Lesson 2 - have a party with friends every day.

So when was the last time you felt tortured? Here am I sitting through one of the best evenings since exams started ruling my life again and where is my camera? - at home. We've got BMW ads, stories about Paul Verhoeven pretending to be 36 semi-naked showgirls dancing badly in DS's room. He keeps mentioning his school careers officer, well are you surprised the man was a little bemused.

Peter Postlethwaite taking eyeballs out of the fridge & swinging them round by the optic nerve to romantic music, 'No worries' - didn't quite understand this one but I liked it & it one awards at the Berlin film festival, "it's a bit random".

A Eurythmics album in 3 weeks, it can only have taken so long because he was doing so much other stuff. The whole thing is like partaking in a high speed chase when stoned. Renditions of 'Like lovers do' with a voice "between Harry Connick & Lou Reed" (to pick up DS on his own comment).

His commercial breaks - the one for Cadbury's Drinking Chocolate is inspired - four similar looking ballet dancers (reminding me of the Beatles with the voice-over) "I wonder where she is now".

This is not a review but a reaction to a stimulus & if this is reading weird then it's a true reflection of the evening "I'm just splurging it all out to try and sort out the mess" - well here it is. PS As for the people who ask dumb questions about the type of computer software used - GET A LIFE, the question about whether he cooks his own dinner was far more interesting - yes he does. Next lectures: Speakers to be announced - call me on 0181 255 1309 for more information.

Lee Carter - Icons, Angels & some imagination

I first came across Lee & her work at the far end of Portobello Road about three years ago, sitting in a doorway surrounded by a variety of colour photocopies and large collages. At this point Lee was sponsored by Canon to promote the Canon 500 colour copier. Recognisable objects & forms in a sea of folds & shades, calm yet disquieting because although it is obvious what the main subject is there is only a fine line between this and the rest of the picture which encroaches upon it.

Last week, having finished my final exam and waiting for my car to pass its MOT I wandered down Newburgh St (next to Carnaby St but much more interesting) and at the end was a gallery. The style was familiar & the hand made frames clinched it. Lee Carter is alive, well & thriving. Her current exhibition shares space with work by S.C. Banks (friend & photographer) & shows two distinct styles. The Brazil series are to me the less interesting - fine, documentary prints of people & places she encountered during her seven month Pacific voyage sponsored by Christies Contemporary Art Gallery. The rest of her work - Icons, Angels & Medallions shows the link to the work I saw three years ago. Fuzzy figures in mid greys. However unlike previous work where the work has no fixed border the view is channelled by metallic leaf creating a more blatant image. I'm not quite sure where my preference lies, I like the simplicity of her current work but enjoy the disarray of the earlier pieces. I find Lee's techniques interesting & different to that of other photographers, partly because she uses other media in conjunction with

photography - colour copiers, metallic leaf, hand made frames etc & speaking personally I find this style of work far more thought provoking than the Brazil series. Lee Carter is currently working with SC Banks (primarily a painter) & her raison d'être is to create her own style & get the public to come to her which is exactly what you will have to do should you wish to see more of her work as the exhibition which I saw has just finished. Lee Carter may be contacted on 0181-960-3274

Something - an expansion

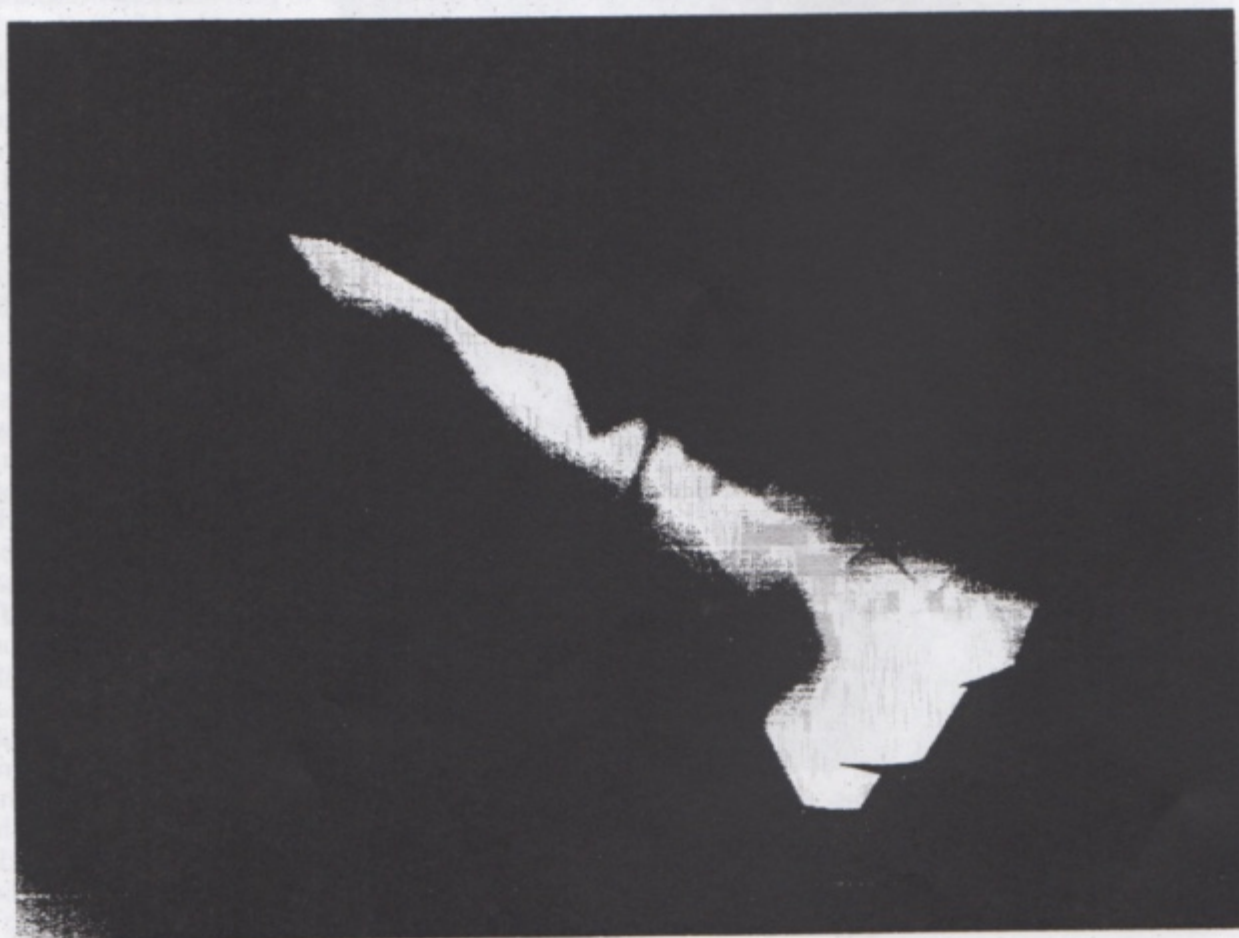
Something opened in September '93 as the brainchild of ex-accountants Martin, Abdul & Bashir. An oasis in the sea of high street, mass produced fashion Something promotes young (but

wearable!) designers such as Martin Reid & Giant alongside more well known names such as Bella Freud, Lezley George & Abe Hamilton. Recent expansion giving space to coffee tables has also freed up wall space for exhibitions. The first show was a series of sculptures in chicken wire, playing with the human form in the majority of cases - put a smile on my face & wouldn't dent one's wallet too badly. The second show is photographic work by Marilyn Deegan and Louise Heinink, People & Places and is a group of photos taken in New York, Paris & the Middle East. I have to say that I preferred the first exhibition & didn't feel that these pictures held together terribly well (if I was being harsh I might suggest that these are framed, black & white holiday pictures but perhaps people in glass houses shouldn't throw

stones!). The next exhibition is a painter called Mik from Sheffield & as this bunch have a knack of picking successors I recommend a detour next time you're passing, when you do so make the effort to find some of Martin Reid's clothes, all one offs & very sculptural.

Something, 33 Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6AA, 01865-59782, 10-7 Mon-Thurs, 10-12 Fri & Sat

The more of this I write the more it feels like an art version of the Good Food Guide, not so much describing the art as the reactions it provoked. Perhaps I can illuminate this further by including a couple of my more recent photographs & perhaps show ways in which exhibitions & artists have been influencing the way I think & work with my camera.





Ipse News

IPSE continues its normal busy schedule in the South East.

Paul Hill Workshop, Micklepage
20/21 Sept (£65)

Mari Mahr at Micklepage Sat 9th
November. (£12, £15 non-IPSE
members)

Also a Blutak with Mick
Williamson on Saturday 12 Oct
at Clair Hall, Parrymount Rd,
Haywards Heath. (£12, £15
non-IPSE members)

Contact Jill Staples, Windmill
House, Top Street, Bolney, West
Sussex (01444 881891) for
details and bookings of these.

Like LIP, IPSE now holds a
number of regular monthly meet-
ings, at:

Windmill House (last Wed in
month) - contact Jill as above.

Speldhurst, nr Tunbridge Wells
(2nd Mon) - contact Paul Burgess
(01892 863362) or Sam Gardener
(01892 852133)

Midhurst/Haslemere area - con-
tact Mike Shanahan (01428
653659)

Portsmouth (last Wed) - contact
Robin Coutts (01705 262307)

SMALL ADS

Any short adverts for things pho-
tographic by members - books,
materials, equipment for sale,
requests for project partners,
etc., can be included free of
charge - if space is available.
Send them to the editor. No box
numbers or anything silly.

FOR SALE

10 rolls **Fuji NPS 120** daylight
colour neg film (160ASA). Date
1997-5. Sitting in my fridge. No
sensible offer refused

Olympus Zuiko 200mm f4 lens,
some marks on barrel/lens hood,
optics unmarked £80
Peter Marshall 01784 456474

Never Walk Alone

The Photographers' Gallery, London, 18 May to 13 July 1996

Reviewed by Roger Estop

As a town planner, I have always been interested in the use of photography for representing and interpreting the experience of living in cities. A valuable body of photographic work, distinct from architectural photography, has provided insights into the urban landscape and life on the street since the mid-1800s. Eugene Atget, the meticulous recorder of pre-Haussmann Paris streets, and Walker Evans, who described 1930's small town America, established a documentary approach to photographing the urban landscape. This evolved into a subjective and ironic response to a more frenetic city experienced by Lee Friedlander and Gary Winogrand in the 1960s and 70s. The spreading suburban landscape of west coast USA was coolly dissected by the New Topographic photographers while in the 1980s, John Davies produced highly legible landscape photographs of British industrial towns at an economic cross-roads. In recent years, German photographers have shown urban space and urban inhabitants in a stark neutrality probing the historic and symbolic mysteries haunting inner city spaces.

Never Walk Alone, a recent exhibition at the Photographers' Gallery brought together the

work of nineteen photographers taking the contemporary city as their subject. The exhibition acknowledged Atget's and Evan's continuing influence but demonstrated that contemporary photographers set out to ask questions and challenge assumptions about city life, rather than to make visual statements.

Michael Schmidt's photographs of Berlin housing and Hans Aarsman's views of deserted Amsterdam streets reveal ordinary, unpicturesque places; typical and familiar but presented for detailed scrutiny. Social history seeps in behind the signs of routine use and daily wear and tear overlaid by strangely alien environmental improvements. On the other hand, images by Beat Christophe Streuli and Philip-Lorca diCorcia of people on the streets of New York are urgent, immediate and all about the flux of urban life. In these pictures, private aspirations and anxieties are made visible as strangers make fleeting contact. And in a giant, two metre long photograph, Andreas Gursky shows a full elevation of a Montparnasse slab block, each interior and some occupants visible, diverse lives stacked in a modern megastructure.

These photographs are not only visual records but also, of course, containers for narratives: the stories of the individuals shown in the photographs and the stories we, the viewers, construct to fill the empty spaces of city streets. The stories here are about surveillance and voyeurism encroaching private boundaries; people creating personal territories on the street; besieged private lives on the margins of the commercial city; all of them in the damaged heart of the modernist city, now regarded in the light of an expanding virtual realm.

In this exhibition, the photographers are *flâneurs*, idle observers of the urban scene, through whose eyes we encounter city spaces and who draw our atten-

tion to the marginal, the mundane and the overlooked. We are shown images of the city that are recognisable but at the same time detached from reality, setting up a pulse between the real and the imagined. This is in the nature of all photography but it is what enables urban landscape and street photography to be a critical practice reflecting and complimenting theoretical writing on the planning and design of urban places.

During a period when the visual experience of urban life is highly topical, this exhibition was a timely reminder that photography offers stimulating insights into urban experience and that planners can gain a lot by simply looking at pictures.

Roger Estop

Editor's note:

By coincidence two articles appear on the Photographers' Gallery shows in this issue.

The Photographers' Gallery in Great Newport St is a major UK venue for photography. Many LIP members are already members of the Gallery - and I would encourage any non-members to join. Although I often complain about some of the work it shows, I have been a member since the mid 1970's.

The gallery also played an important part in the founding of LIP - for it was here that the meeting to launch it was held. One of the groups that LIP drew its initial membership - including me - from was a group that through the mid-80's held meetings at the gallery similar to those of LI monthly meetings..

LIP still of course works together with the Photographers' Gallery with regular talks and workshops held there. The Photographers' Gallery deserves our support - though this need not always be unqualified.

Great and little

Peter Marshall

Shows at the Photographers' Gallery in recent months have generally confounded all my expectations. Those I have looked forward to have left me disappointed while those I had dismissed in advance have sometimes made me think again.

Michael Schmidt is a photographer whose work I have long known and admired in reproduction, for example his Berlin-Wedding series of the late 70's. Normally when coming to the actual work in a show one expects to see more either in terms of actually more images or greater appreciation of the actual prints, but here this show had nothing to offer - in some cases the prints seemed inferior to their reproduction. His most recent book *U-NI-TY* based around the unification of Germany makes extensive use of close-up fragments of books and magazines, though there are occasional glimpses of his own abilities as a photographer. Here I have to recognise one of my biases - that the photographer should in general be out confronting the world rather than re-photographing existing images. Of course Schmidt generally transforms the images he photographs by cropping and often by the use of extreme close-up on the half-tone, but I still see it as an essentially secondary and parasitic activity. Of course it has a part in the traditions of photography - for example in Moholy-Nagy's *Painting, Photography, Film* and in some of the work I found most

boring from the late 70's and 80's. Schmidt's work - even from the 90's - did indeed seem dated in this sense.

The City having been one of my pre-occupations for many years, *Never Walk Alone*, which claimed to be 'a major new exhibition which considers how contemporary photographers are responding to the city' was naturally of interest. At least it was until I entered the building. Curators seem to feel the need to make it clear they are cleverer than the rest of us and this can lead to some disastrous consequences, particularly for a photography gallery when this seems to be allied to an anti-photographic stance. Among the few works worth a second glance were some Atget prints, but even these served largely to demonstrate that even the greatest of photographers have their off days. One wall of the gallery was the most memorable, largely occupied by a single picture of a large block of flats, whose occupants where in some cases visible at windows or on balconies; however the strongly voyeuristic pleasure of observing these ordinary people caught by the camera would perhaps have been more adequately satisfied by aiming your binoculars at your local council estate.

Third in my series of disappointments was Larry Clark's *Kids*. His *Tulsa* and *Teenage Lust* had given us a unique view of teenage culture, fitting somewhere in the US tradition between the autobiographical (as for example the quirky Oscar Gaylord Herron's *Vagabond* and Nan Goldin's *Ballad of Sexual Dependency*) and the committed but at times judgmental documentary of Danny Lyons. The latest work is a spin-off from the film project that Clark directed. It consists of largely dull and often repetitive snapshots of a number of young men and their friends, resembling - with one or two notable exceptions - the kind of empty and unthinking snaps such people might make

of themselves given a camera, free film and a lack of direction. It looks more like an initial roll or two while Clark was trying to find some way into the subject rather than a finished product, but then making a film is generally and entirely consuming business. Jeremy Miller in *Great* writes of it: 'In many of these pictures it appears that nothing is happening, but that would be to miss the myriad signals which these pictures contain, in terms of dress, stance, the micro-gestures which compose any social organism.' I'm sorry Jeremy, but this show is definitely my nomination for the 1996 Emperor's New Clothes award.

I expected little of Philip-Lorca Dicorcia having seen he was a contributor to *Never Walk Alone*. Dicorcia with his assistant arranged a number of 'stills' at locations around an area of Hollywood 'frequented by male prostitutes, drifters and drug addicts' - the dropouts and underside of the city. He then went to find these people on the street to pose in them, recording their names, age, place of birth and the amount they were paid (usually 20 or 30 dollars) for posing. The results are a fascinating cast of characters recorded as Hollywood fiction in a true Hollywood style - compositionally strong, excellent colour and somewhat overlit! Technically splendid, an intriguing relation between fact and fiction and also perhaps asks questions on a whole school of photographic portraiture. Just don't misjudge it as a documentary exercise. If you've not seen it, Hollywood closes 7 September so if we get this issue out on time you can rush and do so.

Often in the Photographers' Gallery the real stuff is hidden away in the Print Room, and one such gem of particular personal significance to me was Shirley Baker's *Manchester*. I too walked those sixties streets, though without a camera or her evident rapport for many of the young subjects.

LIP LOCAL GROUPS etc

If you haven't yet been to a local meeting, then you are missing out.

LIP members are welcome to go to as many of the local meetings as they wish to. Take your work in progress if you have some, otherwise go along to get ideas and directions from others in the group and see the work that they are doing.

The local meetings are not meant to replace a London wide structure for LIP but to complement and energise it. Through these meetings we aim to build up our experience of looking at, appreciating and criticising our own work and that of others. Smaller groups should also help in getting to know people and increasing confidence.

From the local group you will be encouraged to take your work to the Blutaks and other meetings to show the rest of the membership and also to submit work for exhibitions.

As well as the annual LIP exhibition we hope that the local groups will arrange their own shows in local venues - much easier to find than the prime inner London sites we need for the LIP show.

However we also intend that the local groups will come up with ideas and themes that can be pursued for future LIP events including exhibitions. One particular future event for which a LIP response may be appropriate is of course the Millennium.

KINGSTON

Wed 2 Oct, 7.30pm
Sarah Thelwall, 36 Kings Keep,
 Beaufort Rd, Kingston
 0181 255-1309 (home)
 0973 114601 (work)

MUSWELL HILL

North London LIP (No.LIP)

First Tuesday of each month:
 Sept 3, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3
 Start 7.30 pm
 Call **Quentin Bell**
 0181 444-5505 for directions.

CROYDON

Call **David Malarkey**
 0181 686 4294 for details

EAST DULWICH

Call **Yoke Matze**
 0181 693 8107 for details

NEW ELTHAM

Call **Graeme Webb**
 0181 850-4771 for details

HARROW

Call **Alison Williams**
 0181 427-0268 for details.

OTHER EVENTS

For details of all these see the programme leaflet sent to you earlier.

- 10 Sept Selected Movements
- X 14 Sept Blutak Show, Drill Hall 2.00pm
- 17 Sept Polish Photography, PG 7.00pm
- 24 Sept Selected Movements
- X 29 Sept Architectural Photo, PG 11.00am
- 8 Oct Selected Movements
- 13 Oct Landscape with a difference, PG 11.00am
- X 15 Oct Dutch Photography, PG, 7.00pm
- 22 Oct Selected Movements
- 2-3 Nov John Blakemore, Brunel Univ
- 12 Nov Selected Movements
- 17 Nov Peter Goldfield, PG 11.00am
- 19 Nov Irish Photography, PG, 7.00pm
- 23 Nov Blutak Show, Drill Hall 2.00pm
- 3 Dec Italian Photography, PG, 7.00pm
- 17 Dec Christmas Party Drill Hall 7.30pm

Make your diary entries and bookings now and don't miss out.

INSCAPE

Inscape is still going strong - now onto issue 19 - **Land and Mind**. Jane Routh contributes a thoughtful essay comparing photography and poetry, various articles and pictures about landscape (including John Rhodes, Paul Kenny, John Holloway, Pete Davies. Among LIP members noticed is a review of Virginia Khuri and Carol Hudson's show in the Members Gallery at Bath.

Five issues a year for the ridiculously low cost of £11 from: William Bishop, 22a Gladwell Rd, Crouch End London N8 9AA

Note for contributors to LIP SERVICE

Apologies for some problems in reproducing photographs in this issue. If anyone has access to a suitable computer system with scanner and printer and would like to help in the production of LipService please contact me.

Lip Service is your magazine - so send it your work - pictures, writing, anything related to photography is welcome. Although primarily a members' magazine, work from non-members is also considered for publication if of interest to members. Photos should be **less than A4 in size**, preferably unmounted - no overmats.

Send all work to: Peter Marshall, 31 Budebury Rd, Staines, Middx, TW18 2AZ.
 01784-456474
 Deadline for next issue:

25 October 1996

Enclose suitable stamped envelope if you want your work returned by post - otherwise I will return things at Blutaks etc.