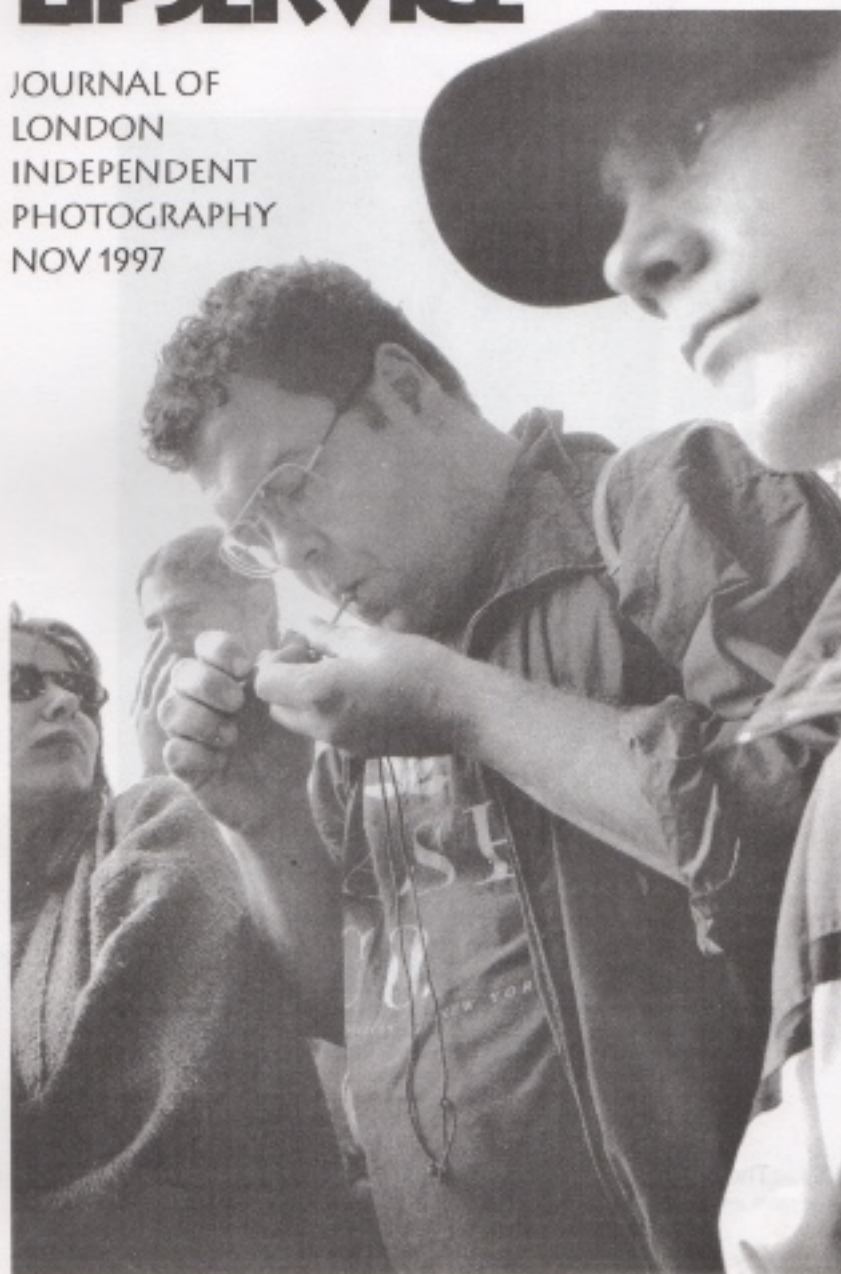


LIPSERVICE

JOURNAL OF
LONDON
INDEPENDENT
PHOTOGRAPHY
NOV 1997



Peter Marshall. Audience participation during a speech in favour of the legalisation of cannabis. Hyde Park. 1997.

Quentin Ball



These 3 images are from a series on these Scottish islands where Quentin spent a very peaceful, very isolated week this Summer.

Iona and Staffa

Truths - An Independent View

David A. ...



Iona is where Christianity arrived in the British Isles for the first time many, many years ago.



Quentin Ball

Realising Personal Truths - An Independent View

David Murray

William Bishop, author of the book *Realising Personal Truths in Photography* publishes the journal *Inscape*. This is named after a word coined by Gerard Manley Hopkins. A commentator on Hopkins writes that 'he stresses "inscape" as the ontological secret behind a thing'(1) Is there then, a secret behind this book?

Indeed, there is. It appears to celebrate the diversity of 'the personal'. In reality it pulls-up the importance of a small coterie of photographers and hurls into the abyss a multitude who do not utter the shibboleths approved by Bishop (WB).

Is there then, a secret behind this book?

WB valorises a tradition which he contrasts unfavourably with 'the hobbyist's search for single images ... (who are) amusing themselves and their fellow enthusiasts' (p53). That which supposedly distinguishes 'creative photographers' is their pursuit of something called 'personal truths' - a phrase which occurs no less than 53 times in the book! This phrase is explained partly by listing those photographers whose work supposedly shows the process of realising 'personal truths'. The phrase appears to be synonymous with the 'creative photography' movement which came to flower during the 1970s (2) and which WB distinguishes from the 'colour or staged photography' of the 1980's (p11). Now why it should be that the use of colour

or staging disqualifies work from being 'personal' is never made clear. Why are the black and white 'staged' bondage photos of Irving Klaw or the colour photos of Nan Golding not 'personal'? I'd have thought they were about as 'personal' as you can get.

Now I have no quarrel with WB or anyone else saying: 'Here are the photographers who I like, and that's all there is to it'. But that is not enough for WB - strangely, given his emphasis on the personal and the subjective. His canon is of photographers who 'realise personal truths'. But what does this mean?(3)

Chapter 5 'Defining Personal Truths' begins as follows:

'A photograph can be considered as an equation which includes the two factors of subjectivity and objectivity. This idea has been neatly expressed by John Blakemore: "The photograph occupies a space, makes connection between our interior and exterior worlds."' (p40)

Leaving aside the typical equivocation of 'can be considered' - what does this tell us? It is, sort of, true. But the quote remains as true if we substitute 'fried egg' for 'photograph'. After all, a fried egg is a thing in the world of a particular composition, but also a thing in my world - I think of other fried eggs, of how a fried egg occupies a different gastronomic space to a boiled egg ... and so on. But if the same can be said of a fried egg as of a photograph then we have an equation: A fried egg is the same as a photograph (this is what 'equation' means).

So this banality does not help us much. WB then moves on to a claim which is clear, straightforward and utterly false. He points out that different people see the world somewhat differently - not a surprising claim. He goes on to discuss the work of Raymond Moore and observes that without him (Moore) his work would not exist - again, not surprising. But WB goes on to claim that this is: 'true in a way that would not be true for "objective documentary photographs" which anyone conversant with the relevant conventions could produce.' (p42)

This is a truly staggering and insulting way to define 'personal photography'. Its purpose is to elevate the kind of work reproduced in *Realising Personal Truths* from ... well ... from everything else.

It is - at best - dubious as to whether 'anyone conversant with the relevant conventions' could produce the work of [replace the blank with anyone who could be called a producer of 'objective documentary photographs']. But it is absolutely true that 'anyone conversant with the relevant conventions' can produce the sort of work which constitutes WB's canon. Just look at the works reproduced in his book, look at the photographs in the recent Swiss Cottage exhibition! Then consider the following, from Ch7 'Exploring Personal Truths':

'Competitive exhibitions and certain club activities do tend to encourage and support a kind of predatory one-upmanship which leads, if anywhere, to personal stagnation rather than growth ... 5

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[it] is more like visual game-playing ... [in which they are] amusing themselves and their fellow enthusiasts' (p53). If this applies to the kind of work produced in, for example, *The British Journal of Photography Annual* then on what grounds does it not apply to the tradition valorised by WB?

For this tradition there is actually only one convention. This fact was the most important thing which I learnt at art school. There was an implicit ethic that you can produce what you like. But behind this there was a secret convention - only mentioned when flouted: a work must be open to many or any interpretations, it must not make definite and unequivocal statements, it must not impose on the viewer, it must be 'personal'. This was forcefully brought home to me by a well-known entrepreneur and teacher in the world of 'independent' photography, who appears in WB's book. I had presented a slide-show of objects which were important to me. Some of them

were books. He asked me rhetorically, in the outraged tone of a sit-com 'Jewish mother': 'Have you ever heard of any important photographer taking pictures of books?!' This, from a man who would say to seminar groups that: 'What matters is what you want!' WB - in a way - accepts this in his comment that a quotation from Minor White 'sounds like a licence to print photographs of apparently nothing in particular' (p42). WB accepts this in that his concern is not really at all with photographs as objects; it is with



the process of making them. One of the most astonishing features of this book, written as it is by a photography critic, is the complete absence of the category of the aesthetic(4). The purpose of 'personal photography' is not about a result, it is about a process: self-transformation.

I've no problem with the idea that making photographs can be a means of self-transformation. But if this is all there is to the question of value in photography then the specificity of photography evaporates. Because the same is true of the act of frying eggs (in terms of what is actually offered in the self-transformation supermarket it is not much of a parody to imagine a guru offering workshops on 'Zen and the Art of Frying Eggs').

WB compares the attendance at a photography workshop (not, of course, what your 'hobbyists' do) with 'a visit to a psychoanalyst'. Here, he is correct in two ways. Firstly, neither Bishopian

proponents of photography as self-transformative, nor shrinkery in its many varieties see any need to produce evidence for their claims of transformativeness. Secondly, the worlds of 'creative' photography and of shrinkery pretend to openness and tolerance - they actually, ontologically, have hidden judgmental criteria which are all the more rigid and authoritarian for being secret.

Now there's a 'personal truth' for you.



NOTES

1)Gerard Manley Hopkins, John Pick, OUP, 1966, p 33

2)A mythologised version of the 70s plays an important part in the 'history' of this book (see especially p13). The version is so grotesquely one-sided, so massively omisive, as to suggest that the author nuked his brain with acid in 1969 and spent the next decade mumbling mantras in an Indian ashram.

3)I leave aside the philosophical problem as to whether a truth could - definitionally - be personal. There is a vast and divers body of work which holds that a truth, by definition, is objective. But in time present, to go on about this would be thought a 'personal' eccentricity.

4)But then, perhaps we should expect anything from a 'critic' who can write - with no explanation or argument - that 'by the early 1980s ... An advanced mood of Existentialism .. had filtered into photography' (p79).

Realising Personal Truths.
William Bishop, Inscape 1977,
ISBN 0-9530290-0-X

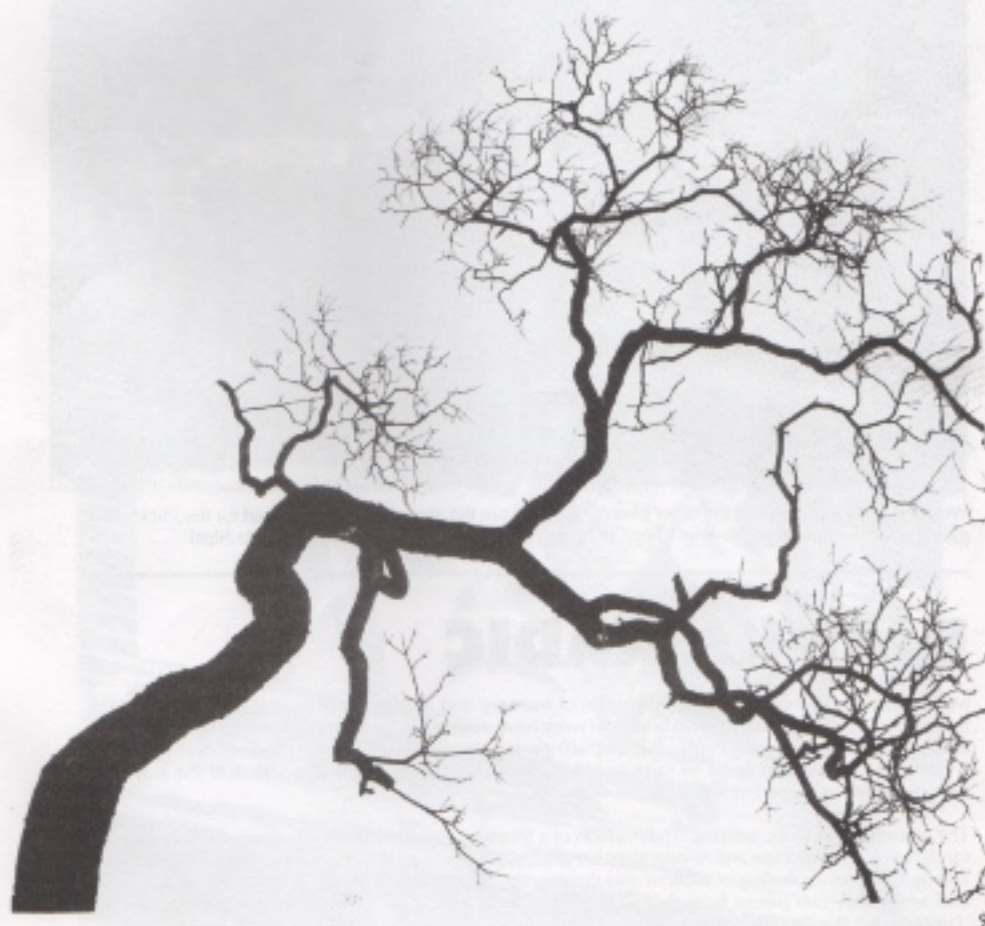
Available from:
Inscape, 22a Gladwell Rd, London N8 9AA, £10.00



photographs by

**David
Murray**

LIP SERVICE NOV 1997



Light Tree

Nick Barker

Original in colour

Light Tree is one of two hand manipulated photographs of trees that were recently shown at the Photo-Arte gallery in Southgate. Twenty two photographers took part, exploring a wide range of techniques & subjects.

This image, photographed along one of my many walking routes in Cheshire, is heavily hand manipulated and there is little left of the original photograph apart from some blue from the sky, yellow from the field, branches from the tree and general outline; so photograph is probably an inappropriate description, the photograph having been more of a springboard for the manipulation.



Work from Nick and four of the other photographers from the show has been selected for the Photo-Arte gallery website due to go on-line 1 Nov at: <http://www.lupecunha.co.uk/photo-arte.html>

BJANKA KADIC

My current practice concerns an exploration of memory and displacement against the background of theories on cultural pluralism. Two bodies of work have evolved so far from these preoccupations. One, entitled 'Unnaturally Foreign', uses the (English) garden as a mise-en-scene for objects which belong to a foreigner's suitcase in order to raise questions about belonging, cultural norms and the ways our memory helps to shape our identity.

The other body of work, entitled 'The Position of a Stranger' uses the city as the site in which a (female) foreigner has to negotiate and re-negotiate her precarious position. While the first series of photographs attempts to evoke a feeling of wonder and dreams, the second highlights the reality marked by tension and ambiguity. Two pieces from this series have been included in the book by Marsha Meskinmon 'Engendering the City : Women artists and urban space'. Scarlet Press, 1997



Confrontation, from 'The Position of the Stranger'

BJANKA KADIC

Disjunction in Time, from 'The Position of the Stranger'



Three Wishes

Virginia Khuri

When I was a child one of our invented games consisted of each player making up a list of three wishes a week, wishes which though not impossible were deemed by the group improbable - such as being discovered as a new musical genius, being offered a trip on a raft down the Mississippi, or getting top marks for penmanship. The one to whom most wishes were granted during the course of the school year was declared the winner. I don't remember who won, or even if any of the wishes ever did 'come true', but I was thinking of this game recently in connection with thoughts of the future of LIP. What would be my three possible, but improbable wishes for it as it enters the 21st century? What would be yours?

Top of my list would be a central meeting place, occupied if not owned by LIP on a more or less permanent basis, a place like my studio where members could drop by for a cup of tea, but where, unlike my studio, there would be ample space for monthly meetings of at least twenty people and wallspace for 12-16 individual exhibitions a year. Ideally, it would also have enough space to run workshops and host small talks. But its most important function would be as the hub of our dispersed LIP community, its centre of being. Where does one find such a place? Improbably, but not impossibly, I imagine someone 'out there' with space to spare, a shop owner, perhaps with extra unused storage space who would like to put it to good use, or a landlord with a vacant premises who would like a responsible 'building-sitter' to occupy it for a time, or best of all alone occupant of a large house

who would like some daytime company ...! Well, it can't hurt to wish - especially if there is a chance that just one of you knows of someone who knows someone who might just know of just such a place.

My second wish would be an avuncular, generous patron who out of love of photography would sponsor either this newsletter, or an annual publication in which members work could be published to a high standard. We did have such a sponsor once to whom we owe the production of *Show* several years ago. It would be a good gamble for someone who might wish to go down in photographic history. Is there anyone 'out there' who knows someone who knows someone who might know...?

And lastly but not least, I would like to see an exhibition of LIP work hung in a 'proper' gallery space and granted the public attention which it deserves. I would like to know that such an exhibition could take place every five years or so. It would be an exhibition in which the values on which LIP exists would be proclaimed, the result of co-operation rather than competition and 'showcasing' not simply 'creativity', but the honest responses to life experience by truly individual imaginations which LIP exists to foster. I have the feeling that such 'human' work would be an antidote to the sensational but alienating work with which we are all too familiar. Are there any gallery owners, museum curators etc. 'out there' who know...?

If any of you know anyone who might know someone who ... please contact the Editor!

W(h)ither

Peter

Wither photography (1)

Last week on the way to hear Pam Roberts talking about the value of the RPS collection I was ambushed by a group of photographers in the bar of the Royal Festival Hall where I spent an interesting evening looking at work and talking about photography, life, the universe etc. On show in the RFH were the winners from the 40th World Press Photo contest, a rather depressing experience. Not only was it a reminder of mans' (yes, almost entirely mans') inhumanity to man (and at times women) but so much of the photography and events could have been from the 39th or 38th or 37th... show. All this in a print quality not much if any better than this magazine - why ever don't they use real photos - or is the idea to mimic newspaper quality?

One thing that stood out more than anything else was the power of the black and white work compared to the colour, almost all of which could usefully have been omitted.

Despite my chagrin at having missed the talk, the place to go to see the worth of the RPS collection is undoubtedly Bath - currently showing some 120 original prints reproduced in *Camera Work*, Steiglitz's seminal publication of the early years of this century, perhaps the last great period of this collection. Pam Roberts' book: *Alfred Steiglitz, Camera Work: The Complete Illustrations 1903-1917*, Taschen £16.99, would be a useful addition to your Xmas present lists.

I spent a very interesting and enjoyable day some years back at

photography (1)

Marshall

Bath in the back rooms handling some of their unique collection of work (prints and negatives) by Frederick Evans, Roger Fenton and other great British photographers and was sorry to miss the chance too see and hear Pam Roberts again.

It is not that long since the view of the majority of the RPS heirachs appeared to be that the collection was a millstone around their necks, expensive to maintain (even poorly), of no value (as they could not sell it) and of no interest. I suggested to some of them that it might form the basis of a National Museum of Photography (on long-term loan from the Society), but no interest was shown in this. Various other collections could have contributed to this (for example the Hulton collection - I was almost thrown off the Hulton-Deutsch stand at a Creative Show a couple of years ago for suggesting in as polite a way as I could muster that this might be exploited more as a cultural resource than a money-making exercise) and the seriously underfunded and resourced photography section (despite the valiant efforts of its curator and staff - which are finally resulting in a little more space for permanent display) of the V&A.

Personally I regard the lack of a National Museum of Photography as a national scandal and would hope that Chris Smith might be persuaded to find some lottery money towards such a project. Of course I know about Bradford and that museum there - least said is best. Photography, Film and Television really have very little of consequence in common.

Whither photography (2)

Foto98 proclaims itself as the 1998 Year of Photography and the Electronic Image and sounds an exciting time for those living in Yorkshire.

It does seem a great missed opportunity that this appears not to have been organised as a national event. A few crumbs outside of Bradford, Barnsley, Halifax, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York, but that's it. Or is this the first real success for the Yorkshire Nationalists - including as it does extensive programmes in all three ridings?

I can only hope that the full programme reveals rather more outside of Yorkshire and Humberside Arts than the glossy Canon-sponsored advance brochure.

Whither Photography (3)

Idly thinking of buying a Leica M6 now that prices are down a little, or at least trading in a few older bits of Leitz gear for one, and mentioning this to the little group in the bar led to much discussion on the technical future of photography and electronic imaging.

It is already clear that large-format is fast on the way out so far as film is concerned, already being replaced by digital backs for much studio work and increasingly by medium format where the simple movements provided by newer medium format cameras/lenses suffice. Recent improvements in colour film technology make it possible to get results from even 545 that would have previously demanded 4x5.

However for portraiture and non-static subjects digital still has some way to go in this area - perhaps as long as 5 or 10 years - before it can compare with the quality on film.

With 35mm, things are different. Digital cameras are rapidly replacing film for both rapid news-gathering and through the tills of Dixons for the amateur snap. Current momentum suggests it may well be dead before the Millennium.

So perhaps 35mm is no longer a wise choice for the user, but equipment could soon gain greatly in its value as antiques!

Whither photography? (4)

I've always been doubtful when photographers get too worried about archival properties. How many pictures are worth keeping for that long anyway? What percentage of prints that the photographer calls 'archival' have actually been strictly archivally processed - what tests have they carried out on their procedures? Is there such a thing as an archival colour print (except perhaps in trichrome Carbro or Dye Transfer black and white negatives?)

One acknowledged expert on such things is Henry Wilhelm, and in October he presented some of his results to the International Association of Fine Art Digital Printmakers meeting in San Francisco. These make interesting reading, shattering much received wisdom. If you want your colour prints to last you should be printing on Fuji Super FA Type 5, with an estimated life of 71 years compared to Ilfochrome (long considered the most stable of colour materials) at 29 years.

Apart from one system using special pigment based inks and some special archival inks from Ilford, ink jets get a poorer rating, particularly those available at reasonable price. The Epson Stylus range (currently winning

all the computer magazine printer comparative print quality tests), and used to print the master copy of this publication gives estimates from 6 months to 5 years dependent on paper type, figures which if anything seem high compared to my own experience.

There is no doubt that the photo paper manufacturers now see ink jet papers as their future market. I spent some time at Silverprint looking through a number of test prints on different papers, including a couple from Kentmere, one with an interesting textured finish. Elsewhere I was told that Kentmere are no longer carrying out any research into silver papers, only developing their ink jet range.

There seems to be very little advice on the current papers available; and I suspect it will not be long before Martin Reed - a welcome visitor to the print show following the AGM - will have some sample prints and comments in a new catalogue.

Anyone without a copy of their current catalogue should visit 12 Valentine Place SE1 8QH (5 minutes walk from Waterloo) and collect one. They do have more or less everything you could ever need in terms of photographic materials, certainly for archival processing.

Whither LIP?

Much of above left me musing about LIP and its future in and beyond our Millennium project, a discussion that I hope others will contribute to for future issues of LipService.

At least the committee meeting shortly before the AGM made it clear that members - including committee members and the editor - were entitled to contribute freely to LipService - despite some arguments to the contrary.

As a strong believer in the value of criticism to a free and independent society and Society I'm pleased to have this clearly stated. Healthy organisations thrive on criticism,

which I hope will generally be positively intended.

The editor certainly does not agree with everything that is written in the magazine (not always even with everything that he himself contributes - I've always thought consistency a sign of limited imagination.)

As always I welcome contributions on any subject of likely interest to readers related to photography, including the activities (past and future) of LIP. Feel free to call and discuss any ideas you have, though you can just send the articles and pictures. Of course occasionally I can make suggestions for improvements as well as putting some things into our normal formats.

It makes my job easier if you can send work both as printed copy and on computer disk. Preferred format is Microsoft Word, otherwise text (ascii) files are a safe alternative. I can read both PC and Mac disks. Email is another good method, but I will even cope with most handwriting!

At our recent AGM (an interesting event for those who missed it - unfortunately the minutes have yet to be circulated) there were a few signs of future change as well as a few changes in personalities. Our new Chair is Peter Jennings, Roger Estop having decided not to continue. Several of us were elected for a further term, including those we would be lost without - Janet and Ginny. There are a number of new members of the committee; one post, that of Exhibitions Organiser remains unfilled, and I'm sure that volunteers are still welcome.

LipService Online

At last I hope to get this issue (or most of it) available on-line (where the pictures should look better) as well as in print. Try pointing your web browser to: <http://www.spelthorne.ac.uk/pm/lip/> shortly and you should find either the real thing or a link to it.

Knowing

Roger Estop

Who belongs to LIP, what is their photographic background and why did they join? What kind of activities do members want from LIP? A year and a half ago, when the LIP committee was thinking about the future direction of the group and the need to attract and keep members, a questionnaire survey seemed to be a good way of finding out what members motivations and aspirations were and how well LIP was serving them. Although it was a fairly long and onerous questionnaire, there was a good and interested response from about 30% of members.

Education and Experience

The majority of members are in professional or specialist technical occupations. Just under half of the respondents are professional photographers, photography teachers or writers. Including photography students, well over half devote their working time to photography. The wealth of photographic expertise within the group is demonstrated in two other ways: firstly, 70% of respondents have undertaken courses in photography, 50% at further or higher education level. Secondly 66% have exhibition experience, many at prestigious venues.

There is a willingness to share this knowledge, interest and experience with 49% saying they are prepared to arrange or lead events. This is the first thing that the LIP committee can take up in future events programming.

The value of sharing and exchanging experience cannot be underestimated. The majority of people joined LIP to be able to meet, discuss with and learn from

you - knowing LIP

like-you, minded people, and as well as the people with experience and expertise, LIP has members who are hungry for discovery, guidance, inspiration and interaction; and people new to or reviving their interest in photography.

Cash and commitment

The larger proportion of respondents are recent members of 1 or 2 years, with a predictable steadily decreasing number of members for 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8 years, but then a surprisingly large proportion who joined at the start 9-10 years ago; LIP is still supported by an important rump of loyal original members. When people join they seem to do so deliberately and with some commitment as is shown in the responses to questions of fees and charges. The vast majority consider the £12 subscription 'just right'; no one thought it was too high. In addition 83% would stay as members if the subscription was raised by £5 to enable LIP to do more and all but one was prepared to pay small separate charges for individual events. This level of financial commitment gives a certain responsibility to the committee: although it can contemplate an increase in subscriptions with some equanimity, there is the keen importance of providing the events to satisfy and retain members in the long term.

two thirds of us belong to another photographic organisation

Interests and affiliations

There are other ways to obtain clues about the kind of photog-

raphers LIP serves. Members summarised their main interests. The more commonly used words were 'landscape' and 'people' (just under a quarter each). If these interests occupy about half of LIP members, the rest are evenly divided between the following rough categorisations: documenting the real world; exploring the poetic and conceptual potential of the medium; constructing and manipulating images; the relationship of photography to fine art; reading about and viewing and studying photography.

Members' photographic standpoints are also reflected by the fact that two thirds of us belong to another photographic organisation and read other photographic magazines apart from LIPService. LIP members are most likely to have some association with the Royal Photographic Society (23%), the Photographers' Gallery (15%) or amateur camera clubs (15%). Roughly 15% belong to other independent or informal groups (for example IPSE, TIPP). At their breakfast tables, LIP members will be found browsing either B&P, Inscape or Creative Camera.

Reading these responses between the lines, there is a sense that there is a dominant core of members who are in the pure photography mainstream. There is an important, less well defined body whose interests are motivated by art and for whom photography is a means to a visual or conceptual end. There is an absence of stated interest in political or campaigning photography; only one respondent belongs to Camerawork, only one goes to Photofusion.

Doing and talking

What do members expect from LIP? The answer from the ques-

tionnaire is basically: what LIP is already providing. The loose make up of discussions, print viewing, talks and advice which characterises LIP is what members want. The only thing we haven't really taken on is promoting contemporary photography to a wider audience which most respondents believe LIP should be doing, but leads the 'how' question unanswered. People did suggest interesting possible additional functions for LIP to consider, for example providing help for photography students, acting as a national focus for independent photography, providing information about open exhibitions, acting as a campaigning force for change by harassing the Arts Council, running its own darkroom, studio and gallery. The questionnaire has also provided a range of good ideas of specific events topics and speakers which the committee can work with. Some ideas plucked from the returns: guidance on applying for grants and commissions; how to sell work; digital imaging; organisation of a print selling fair; visits and critical discussions about exhibitions; provision of contracts for services and sources; feminist approaches to photography; ways of tackling difficult or challenging subjects. There was only limited enthusiasm for events related to the Millennium, together with some very negative comments.

Sharing and communicating

74% of respondents had submitted work for an LIP exhibition and felt it had given a sense of participation and increased confidence. There were criticisms about the venues, about the unfocussed variety and predictability of work and that too little of each individual's work was visible. An equal number of respondents wished to see annual group shows and exhibitions of larger bodies of work by a smaller number of people, and there were some useful exhibition ideas.

LipService was recognised as being important for communicating with and stimulating members, providing information about events, a platform for debate and a place to show original work - in short what LipService is doing, though improved picture quality would of course be nice. Respondents felt that a LIP world wide web site would also be a source of information but also attract new members, show work and provide links to other organisations.

Fix and rinse

The questionnaire revealed that LIP has a well-informed and experienced membership wishing to share, exchange and grow in their work. There is support for LIP's general purpose and approach but lots of ideas for activities and a willingness to be more directly involved. There is significant interest amongst members in an art orientated photography and technological change as well as the fundamental love of picture making and debate that lies at the heart of LIP.

In the next issue I will report on the results of members' favourite photographers, writers and reading.

Picture by William Bishop from his series 'Water Side Ways' in the group exhibition at St Martin's-in-the-Fields in September

Cryptic Visions

Peter Jennings

Personal work can often be just that - personal, rather than individual. The exhibition 'Seven Photographers and a Poet' had great strengths - well presented, well printed work showing commitment and vision. The cracks showed when self retreated into self - rather than communicating with others. You may gain your soul, but you can lose the whole World.

Yet the exhibition was a showcase for some of the most talented members of LIP and a genuine and concerted attempt to introduce, to a largely untutored public, an unfamiliar aspect of photography. I realised this as I crept into the Crypt of St. Martin's Church and found a composite of framed prints, one from each of the seven photographers: including a framed poem from John Powls - the poet. As an overview of the exhibition, it seemed to have been designed to welcome the viewer and prepare them for what was to come.

Carol Ballenger and poet, John Powls collaborated and divided

words and images of Dartmoor - sometimes to effect, but generally this partnership did not gel. Admittedly poems, set against strong photographic images, do not marry. Even with the 'Ruins of Elmet', Ted Hughes's very visual poetry, etched from the land, and his own experience of working it, sat oppositely alongside Fay Godwin's compact, self-contained images. Illustration is an art in itself: with Ballenger and Powls, neither effectively illustrated the other - with the exception of two collaborative works 'Onions' and 'Shorelines' in which poems and images were complementary. Ballenger's 'Dartmoor Dreams' stood apart as well crafted examples of a genre of English landscape photography - although there was nothing new there, in terms of a new vision, and Powls's poetry as a good example of contemporary poetry. Ballenger's photographs of sand (Earth Signs) shown as a separate group, showed bold graphic patterns which are, on first sight, striking - at second, form overrides content. With this series, less (form) could mean more (content).



Words seemed to be necessary to preface Carol Hudson's images of parkland (*Boundaries of Recognition*) but the angst/pleasure she confesses to feel in these areas, when walking alone, is not apparent without the support of words. In the woodland shots, she displayed, dark shadows, seemed too much of a cliché. Most successful and communicative were photographs showing earth mounds - there were few visual clues as to what lays around, or beyond this bleak landscape - here is unknown and intimidating territory. An interesting departure from Hudson's previous work - with some obvious links to it.

There was an inevitable link between Carol Hudson's parkland series and Graham Hodgson's 'Shadows in the Park.' Looking at Hodgson's pictures I felt a sense of déjà vu, as if I had opened up a mid-seventies edition of *Creative Camera*. Using a marked amount of space, in his photographs of public open spaces, Hodgson gave his own interpretation of alienation - if that is his intention: the absence of people, even as figures in a landscape, seemed determined. An introspective vision, which could gain with some extroversion.

Sam Gardener exhibited clean uncomplicated images of the untamed landscape of Iceland. 'Whooper Swans Returning' showed a delicate pattern of birds in formation against subtle greys of the sky while 'Austerhorn, Afternoon High Tide' was a photo-collage of vignettes of birds' feathers and stones found on a beach - the centrepiece being a photograph of an effervescent sea. But surely there is more cruelty in this landscape than the death of birds - nature in Iceland is not into conservation but ever changing destruction. Like Ballenger, Gardner has a superb command of the medium, but could have looked a little deeper into his chosen metaphor.

One of the most impressive contributions to the exhibition was Virginia Khuri's series of sea pictures titled 'From the Edge of the Deep.' These showed the very edge of the sea in light, vibrant, 16" x 20" prints. Size was everything in this collection of seascapes and maximised the spacious poetry of these quiet, yet dynamic images. Thankfully, no lengthy statement was attached - leaving the pictures to speak for themselves. Immediately impressive was one photograph (untitled) where the shingle, in the foreground at the bottom of the print, faded away into an almost bleached out horizon. There is the feeling that heavy decisions were made on all aspects of the making of these prints - and that they were the right ones.

Water and spaces, like Khuri's, are also important to William Bishop in his 'Water Side Ways' series of panoramic waterside views - though the photographs concerned the urban, rather than the rural environment. His 'phenomenological' (the science of phenomena) study investigates water as communications channel, amenity, phenomenon and the human relationships with it - it also includes an 'aspect of the photographer'. What aspect that is, we are not sure; but the openness and expansiveness of a photograph of the Thames at Greenwich contrasted strangely with the some of the other images which were visually busy - almost claustrophobic. Perhaps this is a phenomenon, or perhaps not, but there seems a genuine search for something by Bishop in this series, not yet fully realised beyond an interesting examination of space and structures around waterways - within a well chosen photographic format. I look forward to (hopefully) seeing more of this series in the future, as it develops, and to forming a more objective judgement.

To look into a photographers work and draw visual conclusions often puts you in a minefield of subjective no-no's. Jill Staples 'Memo-

ries of Jim' is a series of images created for the death of a friend - a gardener by profession. We see deserted greenhouses, overgrown with delicate strands of dead creepers - fragile lifelines perhaps? And broken panes of glass - a life/lives shattered? These are easy metaphors, but may be erroneous; these visual connections may have deeper meanings for the photographer - but if a 'personal' statement is intended for public viewing in some way, clarity of feeling should push through. Perhaps there are more varied images in the series? Expressions of mortality, evoked by the medium of photography are possible; Manuel Alvarez Bravo's rich metaphorical testaments of his culture, with its awareness of death and the transience of life, are evidence enough.

A word on John Powls - though I feel woefully under-qualified to comment on his poetry as I don't possess a BSc Eng Lit. Powls, like his visual companions, exhibits his work framed - so one can, presumably, as with Victorian epithets to good conduct and morality, imbibe his good thoughts each day. Powls's poetry has an empathy with the land of surprising sensitivity for a prison governor (Powls is an ex Governor of Dartmoor) but seems to lack the edge that one might associate from someone who has held that position.

The Curate's Egg Award for this exhibition then - good in parts, very good in others. But with any well intentioned attempt to show the public that photography can go beyond the calendar picture and symbolise individual concerns, photographers have to be very sure what those concerns are. All the greatest art is of course personal even when it is difficult, at first sight, to comprehend - requiring real work on the part of the viewer but it eventually reaches out to touch many. That is the achievement, if not the initial intention. It is that universality that is worth striving for when you close and lock your front door.

News

IPSE Evening Meetings

Windmill House, Top St, Bolney
27 Nov
Jill Staples 01444 88189

Inner Light, St Johns Vicarage,
Purbrook
26 Nov 7.00pm
Robin Coutts 01705 262307

Beacon Group, Chromos, 58
High St, Tunbridge Wells
First Monday of each month, 8pm
Ian 01892 536986 or Julie 01892
525704

Pyrenees in Spring

Sam Gardenewill be leading a week long photographic tour in the Spanish Pyrenees April 12-19 1998. It will be based at The Painting School in the little hill-top village of Berdun. Details from Sam on 01892 852133

The Samaritans

Colour or monochrome submissions are invited for the second annual photographic competition organised by the Samaritans, which will culminate in an exhibition at the Association Gallery in May 1998.

For details contact Justin Irwin, Communications Assistant, The Samaritans, 10 the Grove, SLOUGH SL1 1QP. The closing date for entries is 30 Jan 1998.

Photo Art International

Congratulations to Jim Barron for being featured in Issue 4, Aug/Sep 1997 issue of Photo Art International. This bears no relationship to the earlier publication of the same name but is produced by Creative Monochrome, well known for their publication of books by club photographers. Photo Art International has also published work by more generally recognised photographers such as Paul Trevor (Issue 1) and,

London contemporary photography fair'97



SUNDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1997

OPEN 12 PM TO 6 PM

STRAND PALACE HOTEL, STRAND, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON WC2

in the same issue as Jim, a preview of the current Don McCullin retrospective at the Barbican. As well as well-printed photographs the magazine also has technical articles. Single issues are available for £5 from Creative Monochrome Ltd, 20 St Peters Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1HD, 0181 686 3283.

Photo UK and Prizes and Awards

Two books published by Dewi Lewis Publishing, 8 Broomfield Rd, Heaton Moor, Stockport. Photo UK at £12.95 (post free or from bookshops) gives listings of galleries, workshops, festivals, educational and training institutions, magazines and periodicals, prizes and awards, funding bodies and professional associations for photographers.

Prizes and Awards gives details of these available for photographers, artists, writers and poets and is also £12.95

LIP Local Groups

Several of these have now had a number of successful meetings. As well as talking about photography and discussing your current work, we hope that local groups will be planning other activities, including possible exhibitions. All members are welcome at any group - contact the following for details:

Quentin Ball, 1 Summerland Gdns, N10 3QN, 0181 444-5505

Sarah Thelwall, 36 Kings Keep, Beaufort Rd, Kingston 0181 255-1309

Yoke Matze, 11 Throncombe Rd, E Dulwich, SE22 0181 693-8107

Graeme Webb, 377 Cadwallon Rd, SE9 3PX 0181 850-4771

Alison Williams, 21b Greenhill Rd, Harrow, HA1 1LD 0181 427-0268

What are YOU going to do?

Quentin Ball

I am a member of a peace and justice group which meets monthly. We discuss appropriate topics. An overlying theme has been how are we going to 'celebrate' or mark the Millennium. There has been much said about what should be done, like cancelling Third World debt, for example. But when it comes to something tangible that 'I' can do, as an individual, the ideas disappear. I also belong to LIP. We are a product of London, one of the world's great cities. Another common thread is photography, which in its most basic terms, really is about capturing moments in time on silver halide. That's what we all 'do'. It's our passion. There you have it - London, capturing moments, passion. How can we combine these three aspects into something meaningful for the Millennium, something 'I' can do? Do we have a choice but to assist in making a record of 1999, the last year of the decade, century, millennium? With just over a year until 1999, it is time to start gathering members together and getting the show on the road. At the AGM, most of the 25-30 members able to attend thought the proposed Millennium project was sound, logistics aside (there was a lot of debate about how it would actually happen, details - significant but not insurmountable). The Committee will decide at their next meeting whether to approve it. Members considering taking part in the project should consider that at the moment, with no sponsorship, all costs for materials, etc. will need to be covered by themselves. It will cost you time and money. But for anything worth doing, that is usually the case, is it not? So what

now? If the project goes ahead, it could be not only one of the most important projects LIP has ever undertaken, but could even end up being the unique photographic record of London on the threshold of the next 1,000 years. What an opportunity for all of us to be part of photographic history.

So... what are YOU going to do?

Editors comment

As I understand it, at least two committee meetings have already decided we should go ahead in principle with this project even if no sponsorship is available. What the committee have yet to do is to confirm this by setting up the mechanism for it to happen.

For those not at the AGM it is currently envisaged that the work from the project will be selected to give a picture from every day of the year which would be shown both on the World Wide Web as new daily picture in the year 2000 and also as a physical exhibition with perhaps 50-100 selected photographs and the remaining days as smaller reproductions - and hopefully a printed catalogue.

European Publishers Award for Photography

This is a collaboration between five European photographic publishers who will each publish the winning book project. It must be a substantial, completed and unpublished project. Details A5 SAE to Dewi Lewis Publishing, 8 Broomfield Rd, Heaton Moor, Stockport SK4 4ND. Deadline 30 Jan 1998

A Pinch of Salt

Members may like to know that Roger provided Committee members with a more comprehensive breakdown of the responses (a few details from which I have taken the liberty of adding to Roger's article) which is too long to publish - interested members should ask any of last year's committee for a copy.

I've never been a great fan of such surveys, though I don't think we should ignore the results and should read them - and Roger's summaries very carefully. However there are some things which need to be borne in mind.

Firstly, only existing members returned the survey. Any who had already left because they had not found what they wanted in LIP are not represented, nor indeed those many photographers in the London area who have yet to join us. Then of course, some of us are not very good at filling in and returning such things (I still haven't done mine!) and those who did are not necessarily representative of the more than two-thirds of us who didn't quite manage it.

Two things struck me as of particular interest in Roger's piece in this issue; first the large number of 'original' members still with us, and secondly the characterisation he makes of two groups within LIP, although I am not quite sure whether I know what the 'pure photography mainstream' is. David Murray's piece I think illustrates that it is certainly not monolithic.

One statistic I personally found gratifying was the 66% of you who read all of LipService and 32% who read at least some of it. Of course I'd like to get the percentage that submit work for it up to 100%, so please make an effort for February's issue. Portrait format prints suitable for the cover are particularly invited, but everything is welcome.

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LIP Exhibition 1998

Sarah Thelwall, LIP Exhibition Organiser until last month's AGM writes:

Thank you to all the exhibitors and those who attended the Private View and made it such a success. There were a couple of things that need changing next time around but overall I was pleased with the way it went. You will shortly be receiving a letter giving you details of the show for 1998 but I thought I would take this opportunity to tell you a little more about the gallery space LIP has been offered.

International House is a top English Language Schools in London with a world-wide reputation. On the ground floor they have a permanent gallery space which is open to the public. Whilst this gallery has been showing work of both known and unknown artists for several years they have not yet had a photographic exhibition. LIP will be the first photographic exhibition in this space. International House is situated in the heart of Mayfair so the combination of reputation & location should mean that more people will have the chance to see our work than ever before. In addition this is a working space - whilst the reception and coffee room have been fitted as a gallery they are also key rooms in the day to day lives of the students and staff.

You may be interested to know that not only is this a prime location but as we have been offered the space we will not be charged to exhibit our work - a saving of approximately £500. We will in fact incur very little costs for this show and will benefit from Michelle Danan's (Exhibitions selector & Gallery Director) gallery experience and knowledge of this space in particular in the selection of the 1998 show.

20 Items for next issue by 15 Feb to, Peter Marshall, 31 Budebury Rd, Staines, Middx, TW18 2AZ, 01784-456474

Diary

For details of these events see the programme leaflet.

- 13 Nov**
LIP meeting, St Anne's Church Community Hall, 55 Dean St 6.30-8.30
£3 no booking necessary
- 16 Nov**
London Contemporary Photography Fair - see p18
- 23 Nov**
Making an Expanding Display Book-Folio - workshop with Jane Reese, Photographers Gallery 10.00-5.00
- 25 Nov**
Ian Jeffrey - Photography, Postmodernism and the Disappearance of the Past
PG 7.00
- 2 Dec**
Mark Haworth-Booth: Photography - an Independent Art
PG 7.00
- 6-7 Dec**
An approach to Contemporary Portraiture - workshop with Richard Sadler, Brunel 10.30
- 14 Dec**
Two contrasting approaches to the use of Digital Imagery.
PG 12.00
- 18 Dec**
LIP Christmas Party
Bring family, friends, prints to show and prints to sell
7.30 The Drill Hall