

LIPSERVICE

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INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPHY
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Andy Hammond photographed by Nick Barker - more on p24

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LIP 10th Anniversary Show



Adam Bohman

toned black and
white print.



Nick Couldy

toned black and
white print.



John Jellier

Nick Barker

Conspiracy is an experimental music group which began in 1989. Since then Nick has worked with them closely on several occasions. The pictures here are some that were used on the cover of their CD 'Intravenous'.

More of Nick Barker's work is in the Spring 1997 issue of Inscape - details on page 11 of this issue.



toned black and white print by
Nick Barker

On Bill Jay's Philosophy

by David Murray

A Criticism of Bill Jay's *Negative / Positive - A Philosophy of Photography*, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Iowa, 1979

I was first introduced to Bill Jay's book as a photography student. I read some of it and felt puzzled and not very interested. The teacher who introduced him to me was clearly much influenced by Jay's 'philosophy'. I later came to see that much of the common-sense of 'independent', 'art' photography is either informed by the sensibility of this book, or else - independently - expresses the same aesthetic. I have recently reread it and am amazed that such a dogmatic and pretentious work has had the influence which it appears to have had. The purpose of this article is to set out and criticise the central theses of Jay's book, in particular to show that its paean to the artist-as-hero is a pernicious ideology which is useless for photographic aesthetics.

I ...am amazed that such a dogmatic and pretentious work has had the influence which it appears to have had.

The starting point of *Negative/Positive* is the assertion that photography and the modern world are crippled by an absence of values and a paralysis of the will, that most people - for most of their lives - doze in banal passivity. Here are some representative remarks:

most artists have shared in the general collapse of all traditional values... when these values collapsed there were no

others readily available as replacements (p7) [quoting approvingly from the American 'humanistic' psychologist Abraham Maslow] ...much of contemporary photography is rooted in valuelessness... [this] is endemic in society at large... [it] permeates every aspect of our culture (p 8). This lack of values... is manifested in street violence, sexual frustration, juvenile crimes, overindulgence and paranoid aggression. (p10)

Now these are very large claims; the reader is entitled to expect some argument and evidence for them. None is provided. Some questions naturally occur in response to these claims: **What** were the values which supposedly collapsed? **At what time** was our world a wholesome one which was informed by values? **When** did this alleged collapse occur?

All we are offered is the above huffing and puffing about increased crime and so on. Now one doesn't need to be a *Daily Mail* fan in order to agree that over the last two decades in the UK there are many ways in which everyday life has become more unpleasant - there is clearly more street violence, more aimless aggression and so on. But for Jay's thesis to work, the 'collapse' must have occurred earlier. But **when** was this golden age of wholesome spirituality? For the grouches of the *Daily Mail* this period was - supposedly - the 1950s. But in fact, what they mean is the five years between the Conservative election victory of '51 and the Suez fiasco of '56 - not a very long golden age! Could it be the Victorian Age? Not for Jay,

because this was supposedly addicted to a train-spottery obsession with aimlessly collecting facts (p24-5). How about the Eighteenth Century? Hardly! According to a standard history text:

'Violence there was in plenty in the settled England of 1760. Riots and disorders were part of the way of life, a regular distraction from the life of the poor, a release of emotion and energy; and as such they were taken for granted by the upper classes and did little to weaken the system.'

The extent to which values have changed in a society is a difficult question; it involves the issues of whose values we are talking about, whether these are avowed or implicit, what is to count as evidence for any claims about value changes. What is utterly dishonest about Jay's treatment of this is his dogmatic refusal to consider any of the problems in this area. This is because his announcement of the collapse of values has a strategic function in his rhetoric - as it has for his master, the late Nineteenth Century herald of renaissance barbarism, Friedrich Nietzsche - to clear the ground for the appearance of the Hero, the inner-directed despoiler of the mob, the man who lusts for greatness and thus makes great things.

The Hero makes his appearance as the only way in which the philosophic-aesthetic stance of 'humanism' can be actualised. Now the word 'humanist' has many meanings. Jay attempts to use it in a precisely defined sense which avoids the associations of its other contexts. For him it is

one of the two – supposedly there are only two! – fundamental approaches which can be taken towards the making and viewing of photographs. One of these is 'naturalism'; this is to do with 'WHAT IS': it is concerned with the recording of facts in the world, with no concern for values and judgements. The paradigm of this attitude is – supposedly – Victorian empiricism¹. This attitude takes the world as a fixed collection of things, whether the world is the non-human or the human world. The other attitude, which it is Jay's project to explain, defend and promote is the 'humanist'; this is to do with 'WHAT COULD/SHOULD BE' (p22). At this point you may well be thinking that this dichotomy is an interesting idea and that you would like to see it rigorously applied to individual photographs, photographers and style of the art. Jay will disappoint you. He does not offer any serious critical application of this dichotomy to photography; he is unable to do so because the dichotomy is not really about photographs at all – it is about an attitude to the world. Jay's book is hardly at all about photographs; it uses the art of photography to promote his 'philosophy'.

You may now be feeling that this article has little to do with photography! Please don't blame me for this – I am merely following Jay's own abstractions and trying to show that they do not actually have any use in photographic aesthetics.

If the naturalist/humanist dichotomy really had any application to photographs, then Jay would be able to show the difference between photographs whose making has been informed by naturalism and by humanism. He does make very strong claims for the 'humanistic' attitude:

... the essence of humanistic photography ... [is that] ... in order to make photographs that transcend 'what is', the

photographer must make value judgements. In order to make value judgements he must have an all-pervasive personal code of values or ethics. In order to use this code of values he must make choices. In order to make choices he must be aware of the alternatives. In order to understand the alternatives he must have a sure knowledge of, and be constantly involved in, the nature of self. The humanistic photographer has a philosophy or attitude to life based on his personal relationship with reality. This is the real subject of his photographs, not the material objects as they exist ... even though they [ie the photographs] might appear to be of something, they are about the photographer as a transmitter of messages through metaphors. (p27)

There are several steps in this argument which are entirely unsupported by logic or evidence: they hover in the air like the phantasmagoric trumpet of a Victorian parlour spiritualist. Why does the making of value judgements necessitate an 'all-pervasive' code? – surely part of the interest and difficulty of practical ethics is precisely the fact that most of us actually have several codes which conflict at certain points! Why does the making of informed choices necessitate an immersion in 'the nature of self'? Just what could it mean to claim that a photograph is about its maker?

Just what could it mean to claim that a photograph is about its maker?

The nearest we get to an application of this dichotomy is in the claim that the street photographers Winogrand and Friedlander are 'naturalistic', whereas Ray-Jones and Berry are

'humanistic' (p30). Now if this were so, then it might be interesting and provide the basis for a deeper critical appreciation of their work. But – astonishingly – Jay tells us no more about them, we are not offered the hint of an argument as to why they fit into his classificatory boxes.

Consider the photograph by Nguyen Cong Ut of a Vietnamese child running screaming down a road having been burned by napalm from an American warplane². We know that he stopped photographing and went to the aid of the child; this, presumably, was an expression of his values. But would the photograph or our responses to it be any different if he had not done so? Suppose he had been either a 'neutral' observer or had approved of atrocities against Vietnamese civilians – would this really affect the power of this photograph? Would it have a different message? This is not a fanciful example. Consider the photograph of a terrified child standing with hands on his head, taken during the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto by the SS. It is very likely that the photographer approved of the actions that he was photographing³ – does this show in the photograph? It may even have been that the SS photographer had a far more 'all-pervasive' value system than did Ut. After all, he would have shared Jay's aristocratic distaste for the mob! On Jay's definition of 'humanistic', the SS snapshotter was also the greater photographer. Am I alone in finding this bizarre?

if Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Pol-Pot had been photographers then presumably they too would be humanists!

Jay does not shrink from this dreadful conclusion; for him all

that matters is the abstract form of ideals - their content is ... immaterial! Thus, he tell us that:

John Heartfield is not a 'better' photographer because one might sympathise with his anti-Nazi attitude; Leni Riefenstahl is not a 'bad' photographer because of her pro-Nazi sympathies. (p32)

So, for Jay, they are alike 'humanists'. So if Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Pol-Pot had been photographers then presumably they too would be humanists! 'Exaggerations are bound to occur' (p32). Jay tells us - a remark that could be uttered by an apologist for Nazi or Stalinist barbarism as much as by a tripped-out hippie. It is clear that much of the appeal of the approach to photographic aesthetics which finds its classic expression in Jay's book is due to its resonance with a wider hankering for the 'spiritual'. What is remarkable about this need is the irrelevance of content to it. Anything will do, just so long as it is 'spiritual'. This yearning was well expressed some time ago by U.S. President Eisenhower: 'The religion of America is religion'. More recently it appears in Prince Charles' remark that when crowned king, he wishes to not be 'defender of the faith' (ie of the Church of England) - but 'defender of faith'. It is entirely typical of the sloppiness and dishonesty with such matters are now treated that this was not met with widespread derision and ridicule.

Bill Jay's position now encounters a serious problem: in a world which is devoid of values how are the values of humanism to enter the world? Through the Hero, of course! This is how Jay introduces him:

Out of the ranks of the humanists must emerge an individual who dares to be great, who demands to be free. Photography needs a hero. ... the hero is an individual who cares not a fig for his own nakedness and vul-

nerability, and whose only passion is the search for truth ... Above all [his] single-minded objective is the desire to live more intensely. The overflow of this intensity will be shared with others in the form of photographs ... The hero will know he is great (p54).

We live, according to Jay, in a culture which is fearful of the great and the dedicated. He illustrates this by the response of a class of photography students to the question: 'Who of you here present intends to be a great photographer?'; none confessed to this intent and most of them felt embarrassed by the question. Jay thinks that this response shows that his question was too much for them, that they did not measure up to it. Well if I'd been in his class I would have burst out laughing. Conversely, if I were teaching photography then I'd want to sling out any student who wanted 'to be a photographer', never mind be a 'great' one! Surely the purpose of studying photography is to make photographs. Someone who prioritises being a photographer is a wanker; someone who wants to be a 'great photographer' is a great wanker.

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Bill Jay is quite oblivious to the bathos which pervades his call for Heroes. He is Tony Hancock in his East Cheam villa protesting that the world refuses to recognise a 'man of my calibre'. Jay acknowledges that the major influence on his outlook is Colin Wilson, especially *The Outsider* (1956). They both act out a comedy of proclaiming

their own greatness whilst whinging on and on about how they are unrecognised and belittled; how 'the critics' feel threatened by them and consequently either ignore or attack them. Astonishingly, Jay endorses Wilson's ludicrous claim that if he could live for 'another hundred years or so, he could probably solve all the problems of philosophy single handed' (p42). There are books designed to be read with one hand, Wilson and Jay seem to wish to write them with one hand!

Reading Jay's account of his classroom and lecture-hall confrontations I have the picture of John Cleese striding about barking out: 'Who wants to be a hero then? Come on, we want heroes!'. But then, perhaps we should count ourselves fortunate that we live in times when the Hero appears as a buffoon. It was not so in the high noon of those who are Jay's intellectual mentors. Nietzsche's work was aimed at preparing the way for a new order of ruthless spiritual aristocrats who lived on the forced labour of the mass of spineless slaves. George Bernard Shaw - according to Jay, the 'author of one of the most remarkable plays ever written' (p70) - could happily consider the extermination of the unfit, as long as it was done on a 'scientific basis'. H.G. Wells was torn between the sterilising and the poisoning of the dozy masses.

So what does Jay's amalgam of late Nineteenth Century fear and loathing of the masses together with Californian self-obsessiveness have to offer for the world of independent photography? Nothing but the cult of personality, obscurantism and dishonesty. I will deal with this in detail elsewhere.

David Murray

NOTES TO David Murray's article

1. J. Steven Watson, *The Reign of George III*, OUP, 1960, p. 38.

2. This is often regarded as a controversial claim. I cannot understand how anyone who has actually read Nietzsche - rather than his flocks of apologetes - can take it as anything other than a plain and undeniable description of Nietzsche's project.

3. Charles Darwin has a strong claim to be the greatest of the Victorians. He was a brilliant fact-gatherer and was an ardent naturalist, in the sense of being a patient observer of nature. He also remarked that it seemed to

him to be utterly obvious that every observation was made in the service of some particular thesis. He was also the author of what a recent commentator has called 'perhaps the best idea that anyone has ever had'. His work has transformed our comprehension of humanity, nature and destiny. These facts about Darwin are evidence against Jay's version of the history of art. I doubt that this will trouble him.

4. This has been reproduced many times, for example in *Pictures on a Page*, Harold Evans, Heinemann, 1978, p142.

5. This photo is often used in accounts of the Nazi German genocide, for example in Jean-Francois Steiner's *Treblinka*. Stuart Hood tells us that when

he was a soldier in the British Army during the Italian campaign of WW II it was not uncommon to find photographs of atrocities in the possession of German soldiers - *Photography/Politics 2*.

6. The hero always is a 'him'. For a discussion as to why this is so, see Roslyn Wallach Bologh's *Love or Greatness: Max Weber and masculine thinking*, Unwin Hyman, 1990.

7. For references to all three of these see John Carey's *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, Faber & Faber, 1992. For a comprehensive indictment of Nietzsche see Georg Lukacs, *The Destruction of Reason*, Merlin Press, 1980.

News etc (1)

Bill Jay

On May 25 at the Photographers' Gallery you have a rare chance to attend a symposium led by Bill Jay - the subject of David Murray's article above - on *Criticism in Photography*. Bill Jay was a leading figure in British Photography at the end of the sixties, with his publication *Album* and as editor of *Creative Camera* before his move to the USA where he now teaches at Arizona State University. Tickets are £12 for UIP members (£18 normal price) and you are advised to book at the gallery now as the event is limited to 20 people.

August Sander

Flock now to the National Portrait Gallery if you have not yet seen the current show on August Sander.

This show includes almost all of his best work (as well as a very representative range of the rest!)

Even the relative failures are of some interest - in the portraits these are largely those of the wealthy whose portraits are surely little different from those produced for the boardroom by the commercial photographer. The few mural size prints were also disappointing, drawing ones attention to the defects of the process and lacking the transparency of the smaller works.

The catalogue - like most not cheap at over £20 for the paperback - is good value, showing every work in the exhibition. It is designed for viewing in higher light levels than those in the show and in these the reproductions are in many cases hardly inferior to the originals.

While in the NPG there are other things of interest - as always. An exhibition of photographs of composers provides a good roundup of varied styles in portraiture, though much of the more modern stuff seems

anodyne. As often at the NPG there is a strange mixture of the amateur, the ordinary and the admirable.

Perhaps unfairly, I still think of the NPG as the most amateur of our great galleries. You get the feeling that most of their work is still acquired on the basis of someone in a cosy club of port and cigar smoke saying "Johnnie's got some awf'ly nice snaps of Margot, don't ya know!"

Klein

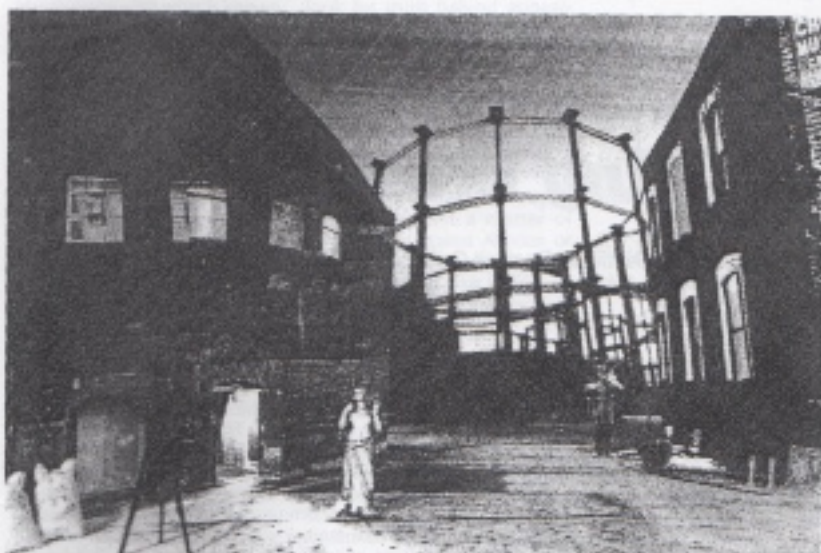
So far 1997 has been a vintage year for photo exhibitions in London. The USA bash at the V&A, the Sander show and, in February at Hamiltons a wall to wall showing of William Klein.

Here the big prints really did help the impact of the show. Almost made me forget I was at Hamiltons - where I never feel at home. Mayfair isn't me, and this certainly gets my award for ultrasnoot. Even some in Cork St are friendlier. So I don't look wealthy or famous.

Zelda Cheatle

Peter Kennard to 4 April, Col

Gandha Key



Statement

*Dream Streets IV - Barkingbridge
Night Life (original in colour)*

This surreal depiction of King's Cross's Cheney Road formed a dramatic illustration across both front and back cover of the Nov-Jan 1997 issue of **King's Cross News**, published by the King's Cross Partnership, a partnership of businesses, public bodies and local people aiming to transform the area.

Cheney Road on the west edge of King's Cross station has of course seen frequent use as a film set, so is perhaps an appropriate location for Gandha's work which "depicts the city as a surreal theatre space"

I am a London-based artist, printmaker and photographer. My work is inspired by poetry, history, mythology, stories and the City as a Surreal Theatre space. It also incorporates elements and clichés from 20th century art and photography which form my visual sketchbook.

I take photographs of places in London that have meaningful historical or literary features, which may be threatened by development - places that I want to remember when they are gone.

My work comprises constructed photographs, photo-etchings, screenprints, woodcuts, plaser prints, mixed media, postcards, T-shirts, etc.

I am a member of Iris Imaging, London Independent Photography, Photo-Alternative and regularly correspond with artists via mail art projects, and artists networks.

I am in the process of producing a series of postcards of my images for sale as alternative cityscapes.

From September I will be working with multimedia and want to introduce music and sound into my work.

Gandha Key
1996

The following essay was submitted a year or so ago for a competition on arts writing by **The Independent** newspaper which was offering a fax machine as prize. The competition seemed to disappear without trace so, as editor of *Inscape*, I still don't have a facsimile machine. (As far as I know.)

Therefore this polished piece has been entirely unpublished until now, and of course portraiture does not date since it retains its own historical and aesthetic slot in the eye of the cultured public. New acquisitions continually flow into the National Portrait Gallery, so this essay has a kind of archetypal relevance to the subject in hand.

Mediating the Real

New acquisitions at the National Portrait Gallery

by

William Bishop

The portrait photograph stills a moment: the painted portrait stills a succession of moments, while the actual subject, the living person, fills all moments in real time in which an observer is present. Yet in the age of the supremacy of the sound-bite, the image and its presentation has the immediacy of currency for the real to such an extent that for some people the image is more real than the person it represents. Although meeting with the actual person offers the potential for contact between persons, some people will in fact prefer the impact of the intense, momentary characterisation of the photograph or oil portrait to meeting the person in real life.

The image simplifies and usually presents just a facet, similar to a word or concept useful for classifying a person. We hardly need to be reminded today that image can be false and used to deceive, but on the other hand they can serve as an index to the complexity of the real person. Examples of both these types of images can currently be seen at the National Portrait Gallery in the 'New Acquisitions' display next to a temporary exhibition of the Hollywood portraits of James Fache.

Hollywood, significantly, is synonymous with fantasy where escape from the real results in

the image being blown out of all proportion to the real life person. So-called 'stars' are manufactured using all the arsenal of the arts of illusion at the disposal of the studio. The real here merely provides a point of departure for an escape into the world of dreams. The photographic portrait however, (as indeed cinema) can be a site of departure which offers a spectrum of directions ranging from fantasy right through to powerful intimations of reality. It is in this respect and for their drama and intensity that some of these newly acquired images at the NPG have the capacity to halt a wanderer in their tracks. But these new acquisitions are nothing other than sixty photographs: twenty given by Richard Avedon after his recent exhibition at the gallery, twenty donated by Annie Leibowitz following her recent exhibition and twenty by Irving Penn, purchased to complete a tripartite American viewpoint on the British social and cultural scene during the latter half of the twentieth century.

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It is satisfying to observe the way the viewpoints of these three photographers cover the range from total fantasy to painful reality. For example the eye of Irving Penn for the person behind the physical surface is acute; he captures his image of the sitter in a pose which portrays his insight in a structural way: body language and facial expressions are emphasised. The giant-size frontal head and shoulder portrait of Isaiah Berlin confronts us here as a fine example of one of Richard Avedon's modes of approach and sensitivity to the human subject. The ambiguity in this portrait, its lack of typecasting, allows the spectator to make up their own mind about the sitter. This portrait is not a caricature, but if it is mistaken for one then that is

because the man himself, in physical reality, is a caricature of himself. Indeed the photographic portrait by an artist in this genre seldom fails to fascinate because the portrayed image reacts with what is known about a 'public' person and we are drawn into participation by either reacting with a sense of recognition and acquiescence or of disappointment when the image fails to present the sitter in the light of our knowledge of them.

The general public loves fantasy and demands to be entertained..

Completing the threesome, Annie Leibowitz, concentrating on show business people and pop musicians, adapted her means to her subjects in such a way as to produce situational portraits where the sitter acts in a drama, the dramatisation of the image of themselves. And since it is the fantasy image which the sitter wishes to promote, Leibowitz, who has a living to make, co-operates as the filmic participant, directing the staged photograph. In general Leibowitz confirms the sitter's public image which has been previously carefully contrived. It would appear that she does this well enough to make a respectable living, with the addition of international touring exhibitions of her portraits.

Even if a photograph could deliver the full truth about a person we might not be able to take it,

Undoubtedly there is room in this world for all sorts of approaches, and this happily applies, as it should, to the

National Portrait Gallery. The general public loves fantasy and demands to be entertained, and many of these sixty newly acquired photographs cater for this, but at times people also look for truth behind appearances, and there is nourishment here too for them, perhaps more in Avedon than Penn - but a really powerful portrait photograph is a compound the photographer and sitter; each photographer has something of themselves to add such as their own insight or peculiar way of seeing. It is not a matter of pitting Penn against Avedon or both against Leibowitz for each has created their own individual photographic world, independent in itself.

If we seek a particular sensitivity to the depths and ambiguities of a person we might look to Avedon and if we want an insightful punchy statement we might go to Penn, while if we seek confirmation of the 'star', then Leibowitz is our photographer. Even if a photograph could deliver the full truth about a person we might not be able to take it, so the limited potential of the portrait comforts with a sense of knowledge of the person, but since the photograph also embodies the photographer (in its way of seeing) then its mediation of the real includes not only what the camera sees but also the point of view seen through the camera lens. It is this combination of seer and seen which makes the portrait of the sa person by different people so different. This is the fascinating thing about these new acquisitions as well as many of their dramatic compositions which can halt wanderer in their tracks!

Editor's note:

William Bishop is the editor, proprietor, driver and fireperson of *Inscape*, recommended reading for photographers everywhere - details in next column.

If we seek a particular sensitivity to the depths and ambiguities of a person we might look to Avedon and if we want an insightful punchy statement we might go to Penn, while if we seek confirmation of the 'star', then Leibowitz is our photographer.

COME IN FROM THE COLD - SUBSCRIBE TO INScape TODAY

The Slim pocket-size magazine of personal work in photography called *INScape* continues to keep appearing five times a year and even reproduction quality seems to be improving.

The latest issue includes a powerful portfolio by professional dance photographer Janet Hall (LIP) and casual snaps of snapping photographers by Jim Barron (LIP), as well as other contributions by four other LIP members, although a few 'outsiders' have crept in.

Copies are sold at The Photographers' Gallery and Silverprint but to ensure your regular supply take out a bargain annual subscription by sending a cheque for £11 payable to *INScape* and post today to: *Inscape*, 22a Gladwell Road, London N8 9AA.

News etc (2)

INSCAPE STUDY SESSION

20th Century American Photography

The presenters of the INSCAPE Study Session, Anne Hammond and Mike Weaver, editors of *History Of Photography*, discuss two major traditions of American Photography: The *essentialist* tradition, exemplified by such photographers as Coburn, Day, Steiglitz, Weston, Strand and Adams; and an *existentialist* tradition exemplified by Evans, Frank, Winogrand and Eggleston.

Highly recommended - book now or you may be too late.

Saturday May 3 1997

2pm-5.45pm

Steiner Theatre, Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Rd, London NW1 (Baker St tube)

£5 (student £2) from Inscape, 22a Gladwell Rd, London N8 9AA (01812921008)

Monocrone

Monocrone Photography Collective has been running for over 10 years organizing various activities in Clapham. It runs classes for beginners, intermediate and refresher course and in studio portraiture.

Some of these are women only but many are mixed. They are held at Clapham Pool and further details can be obtained from Monocrone there. The latest issue of their quarterly newsletter includes reviews of several London exhibitions and news about photography and a portfolio of work on the Sumner estate in Peckham by Janine Lal, but fails to give a phone number!

Monocrone is also active in encouraging members to exhibit their work and participate in national and international exhibitions.

Darkroom hire is extremely cheap at only £2.00 an hour, or £4.50 for a three hour session, and membership is only £20 a year. They also have a range of cameras from simple autofocus 35 mm to 5"x4", along with tripods, lights, also for hire, and a copystand and dry mounting press for use on site.

Worth investigating if you need the facilities and are within easy reach of Clapham Pool.

IPSE

Contact Jill Staples on 01444 881891 for further details and bookings of all events mentioned in this section.

As usual, IPSE has a busy programme, with a meeting on 15 March at Micklepage with Mark Power, a Do-it-yourself weekend on 10/11 May, and a weekend with Mick Williamson on 11/12 October.

The IPSE exhibition is at Horsham Art Centre from 6 April to 3 May.

IPSE groups still meet regularly in Speldhurst, the Midhurst area and Portsmouth as well as at Jill's house in Bolney

Two New Galleries

Two new photography galleries have recently opened within a few miles of each other on the South Coast. No doubt the healthy activity of IPSE and other groups in the Brighton area have contributed to this.

number 10 is four miles to the east of Brighton in Rottingdean, in High Street Seaford, (01273 390310). Its first show 'Bound to Hope - an East European Diary' by French photographer Gerard Pleyne opens on Saturday March 8.

Many readers will know of Williams of Hove, famous for as Leica dealers. More years ago than I care to work out I bought a second-hand Leica M2 from them for the then fairly large sum of £160, and it is still going strong.

They have now moved into a new shop at 58 Western Rd, with a large basement area which is in use as a gallery.

Should I take up gardening?

Lee Gale in *Amateur Photographer*, 25/1/97 'You could very easily have missed this small but perfectly formed exhibition and although there are only a few days left, anyone interested in urban photography or who adores images of London should make an effort to see this. All the shots were taken in the capital by four photographers, Peter Marshall, Mike Seabome, David Trainer and Paul Baldesare. If you want to produce collectable images for the future, study the photography here, tell-tale signs of date - advertising hoardings and road traffic - have carefully been included in many of the compositions. Trainer's work is slightly different, featuring images of people visiting the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, but it indicates much talent behind the camera. Its a great little show.'

LIP LOTTERY BID -

PROPOSAL FOR A MILLENNIUM PROJECT

There was lively discussion on the meeting to discuss a possible bid for lottery money at the end of January. Most of it centred around a proposal from Quentin Ball for a Millennium project. Quite a few suggestions and amendments were made to this - and there is still time for further discussion, although the first deadline for a bid is some time in April.

In making this report I shall try to summarise the stage reached in discussions by the end of the meeting.

The basic idea

LIP members would be organised so that pictures were taken on every day during 1999. The pictures need not necessarily be documentary but they must in some way reflect the fact that they were produced on that particular day. It was also a point of agreement that they should in some way be London pictures.

proposal from

Quentin Ball for a Millennium project

These pictures - or rather a selected single image for each day - would be used in a series of monthly exhibitions to be held in the year 2000. Each exhibition would comprise the 28, 30 or 31 pictures selected from those taken in the same month of the previous year.

It might also be possible to produce a book including these pictures.

Organising the taking

Some central organisation would be needed to ensure that there were several photographers taking pictures on each day of the year. There was considerable discussion about the number of photographers likely to take part and the degree of commitment needed from each of them. All would be current LIP members, though it may be that the project would arouse enough interest for some people to join LIP so that they could take part.

It was held firmly and almost unanimously that it would not work if we relied on only one photographer for each day. Assuming that we tried to ensure at least 3 photographers were covering each day, this gives a total of approximately a thousand days. With 50 photographers taking part this would mean each one taking pictures on roughly twenty days. Obviously if more wanted to participate, each would need to do less days and vice-versa.

Rather than assign dates randomly, members could be given a calendar on which they could indicate (a) 5 to 10 days which they wanted to put forward, and (b) those days they were unavailable on (perhaps with circles and crosses respectively.) The remaining days could then be allocated by an organiser or organising committee.

Selection

For such a lengthy and continuing project it would not be feasible to have external selection. Some people thought it would

in any case not be desirable, but that the project group should evolve ways of working as a group to make a selection. Another suggestion was that a panel from within the group should be set up - perhaps one for each month - to select.

The Shows

One suggestion was that a number of London boroughs with exhibition space in Libraries or civic centre should be approached.

It was generally felt that some central organisation would be essential at this stage, with LIP providing two sets of frames to be used for alternate months. This would mean that all work would need to be mounted to a common size (probably 16" x 20"). (Another possibility would be the use of laminated prints rather than framed work.)

One problem foreseen was the lack of availability of space for storage of these frames - and for the framing of work. If the mounted work is to be kept after these shows - perhaps for a future full-year show - storage space for 365 mounted prints would also be needed.

The Theme

There was general agreement that as well as reflecting the date on which they were taken, work should also in some way relate to London. There was no consensus as to whether some further theme or selection of themes would be needed to produce a coherent project, with some feel- 13

ing this essential and others wanting to allow as much diversity of work as possible.

The Book etc.

There were considerable doubts about the possible financial viability of a book - we would certainly need to attract either a publisher or a sponsor. (Money is not available for this purpose.) 365 pictures is too many for a normal photographic book, and a tighter theme would probably be essential.

One related possibility was the production of a CD-ROM. Here the production costs could be significantly lower than for book production and relatively low 'print' runs were possible. There is also no problem with the number of pictures.

It would also be possible to publish the work on the Internet, probably at no cost to LIP.

Sponsorship

A project of this magnitude would have a good chance of attracting sponsorship from one of more of the major photographic companies.

This would most probably be in terms of supplying materials such as film or photographic paper. Again there were some difficulties with this so far as a group project was concerned, as some participants might prefer to use other materials. Again, some manufacturers might only be interested in colour film and paper (or b/w).

Arts 4 Everyone Grant

The proposal could be seen to meet at least two of the criteria for 'Arts 4 Everyone' funding - in 'encouraging people to take part in the arts' and it 'stimulates production of new work and an audience for it.' However some scepticism was expressed in that it only encouraged current LIP members, and it was felt that the question of promoting an audience for the work would be very

dependent on how and where it was shown. However there seemed to be little to be lost in making an application, and so long as the forms are completed properly there seems to be a good chance of any appropriate project getting funding as there has apparently so far been fewer valid applications than anticipated.

It is necessary to ask what any money from a grant would be used for; there has also to be other funding for any project, which would largely in this case come from those involved.

One possible expense would be the provision of two sets of 30 frames (20x16) for the proposed series of exhibitions. These cost of these might be in the order of £1800.

Assuming that sponsorship in terms of materials might be available from the manufacturers, and that most LIP members would do their own processing, but otherwise would be met by participants, two other areas of possible expense might be materials for mounting.

Where next?

The next stage in the discussions will be at the Blatak on March 15 at the Drill Hall. I hope this LIPService will be available then. Of course further discussion and refinement (probably mainly after the application!) will in any case be vital and local groups may play an important part both this and the implementation of the project.

In the meantime, it would be useful to get ideas from members about the proposed project, and in particular to try to get an idea of how many people are likely to want to be involved in it.

Please send any comments you have to Janet Hall not to the editor of LIPService, as the next edition is not due until much later in the year.

Responses so far received...

From Helen Griffiths

I would like to add my support of Quentin Ball's suggestion of a project to celebrate the millennium. I can understand the reluctance on the part of some LIP members to become involved, but I feel that the project would prove to be very worthwhile.

Recently I visited the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery and saw Mark Power's "The Shipping Forecast". This is the fruition of a two year project. I enjoyed the way the work was presented with the use of Roberts radios broadcasting the shipping forecast for the day and the place where the photograph was taken. He had visited all the areas covered by the forecast.

The daily Met Office shipping forecast is heard by millions; but it means little to most of us. Most of us are not directly affected by the forecast and few know or care about Dogger, German Bight or Malin etc. The exhibition succeeded in taking an everyday event and giving it a life in photographs. The show excitingly combined photography, written words and sound.

LOCAL GROUPS

Perhaps we might consider some theme and give it a life in photographs; rather produce an ad hoc collection of photographs.

I look forward to LIP's discussion of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Griffiths

From Anne Crabbe

I welcome the idea of a LIP venture funded by Arts Council /Lottery money and would like to participate in the photography.

However, before committing myself, I'd need to know (for this project) how many days I would be involved. And who is selecting work?

Sincerely

Anne Crabbe

Anne sent me her comments on the back of 'TWO GOOD WOMEN' and it is too good a chance to miss reproducing this!

Don't forget to send me your letters, articles and pictures for the next issue. Deadline is mid August.

Anne Crabbe
'Two Good Women'

LIP local groups continue to meet - if you haven't been to at least one then phone your most convenient group leader and ask for details. These now replace the central monthly meetings.

At these meetings members will be free to talk about each others work or to plan a local exhibition, or work towards a major LIP exhibition for the Millennium if this materialises. Exactly how will the local groups fit in with the proposed project - or will they!

The next meeting in Kingston (Sarah Thelwall) is on Tues April 22 at 7.00pm The nearest BR station is Surbiton.

Quentin Ball,

1 Summerland Gardens,
N10 3QN
0181 444-5505

Yoke Matze,

11 Thorncombe Rd,
E. Dulwich, SE22
0181 693-8107

Sarah Thelwall,

36 King's Keep, Beaufort Rd,
Kingston
0181 255-1309

Graeme Webb,

37 Cadwallon Rd, SE9 3PX
0181 850-4771

Alison Williams,

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



CELEBRATING IMAGES

LIP's 10th ANNUAL EXHIBITION

The selection for this show is now complete and we now look forward to seeing it on the wall.

Swiss Cottage Library is a fine building designed by Sir Basil Spence and built in 1964 with very generous circulation areas providing the exhibition space we are using - one of the best art exhibition spaces in London.

The **PREVIEW PARTY** is on 18th April 6.30-8.30pm, and we hope all members will come - you will soon receive an invitation. Please contact Sarah Thelwall on 0181-255-1309 if you want more invitations. Camden Arts will be inviting the specialist and local press as well the gallery's own list of regular exhibition attenders and clients. A number of well-known figures in photography living in the London area have also been invited.

The LIP preview party is a great opportunity to meet other members and see and discuss their work, as well as providing the opportunity to meet other photographers, journalists, gallery owners etc.

This opening is a very special one as it is also a party for our 10th anniversary - so please come and join in the celebrations.



Another Party - Notting Hill Carnival 1996 - Peter Marshall

LIPSERVICE appears three times yearly, normally in March, September and November.

Please send details of any events or projects you are involved in, articles of photographic interest, gossip, humour, comment, reviews or books for review, bribes, backhanders, bribe-a-brac and small ads etc to the editor.

Peter Marshall 31 Budebury Rd STAINES Middx TW18 2AZ 01784 496474

email: petermarshall@cc.computelink.co.uk

Text should preferably be submitted either on disk (PC disk format, Word, RTF or text files) or as good typed/laser printed copy.

16 Original prints, colour photocopies or good quality printed reproductions are acceptable but must be smaller than A4.