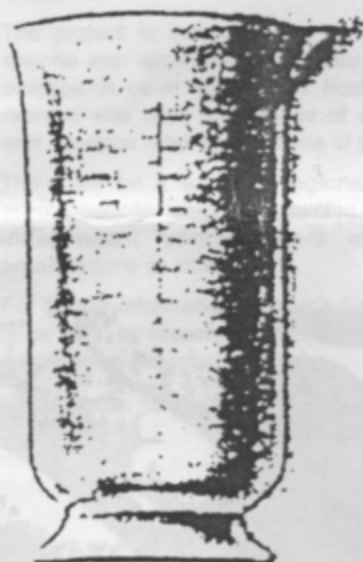
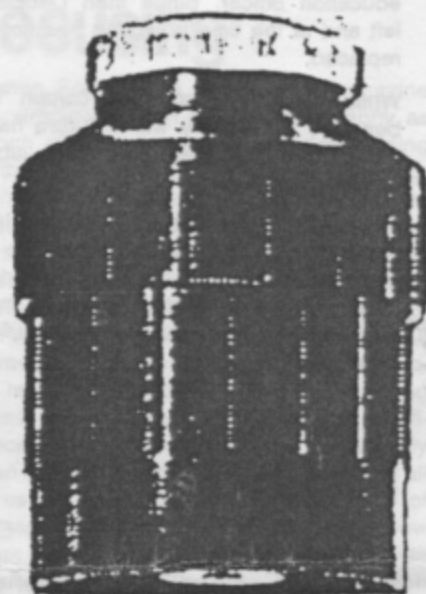
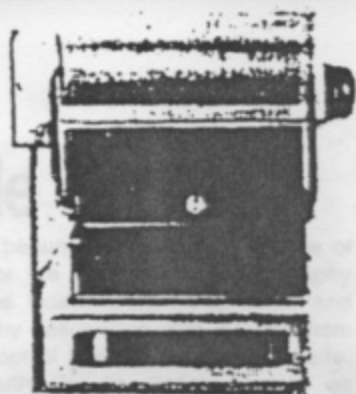
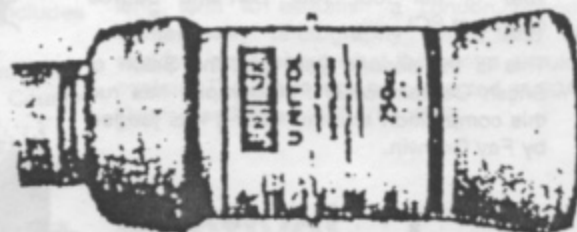


LIP SERVICE

No 3



Chestnuts In Spring



One of the reasons why photography is widely seen as a poor relation to painting is the daft idea that it is a merely mechanical process whereas the "art" in painting resides in the business of putting paint on canvas. Obviously this is a matter of craft skill, as is expertise with camera, enlarger and chemistry. Art, where it rears its troublesome head in either medium, exists in ideas and vision and the ability to give these visible, expressive form by the skilful exercise of craft. Virginia Khuri's comparison of a "fine print" to poetry (Lip Service 2) is thus, like Ansel Adams's musical analogy, a little wide of the mark - poetry is the product of a fine mind, not a fine hand.

A poem may be scribbled on the back of a Senior Service packet, daubed with lipstick on a bedroom mirror, stored on floppy disk, or even, as oral traditions the world over testify (ditto vernacular traditions in music) have no tangible, buyable, sellable form at all. Poets seldom lose much sleep over inks, type-faces, bindings, or the archival quali-

ties of papers. Perhaps it would be better to compare "fine prints" (smug-sounding term, innit?) with calligraphy. The calligrapher's hand may well reproduce, but not create, poetry, but it could also be employed in writing say, prescriptions for Valium or formulae for chemical weapons. Sophisticated darkroom skills do not preclude banality of vision.

We love to rabbit on about craft, especially when it's easier than having to say the pictures are crap, but craft in photography boils down to a matter of appropriateness. The question should not always be - is this a "fine print", as if there were academically determined absolutes of method and style to which we must all conform to gain serious consideration, but - is this the print which best communicates the photographer's ideas and intentions. Even the usually vile Cibachrome has its uses.

Returning to where I started - with photography's isolation - "serious" photography is

also unattractive/inaccessible to many people because of the aura of preciousness which surrounds it, a preciousness which resides nowhere so much as in the exclusiveness of the finely crafted print, too frequently mounted and hung with an aloof and uninviting uniformity and formality. This problem seems to be worse in Britain than in, for example, the USA, and it is interesting that, as Gerry Badger and others have recently noted, many of the "names" in camera-based work in Britain are currently not (NB these are not my categorisations) "straight" photographers, but "artists using photography" who enthusiastically transcend the hidebound parameters of photographic craft to explore wider contexts in which photographic images may be used as a vehicle for ideas. And personally, as a photographer, I do prefer to think of myself as being in the ideas business rather than as a producer of designer wallpaper to the decorating trade.

Root Cartwright

Link

London Independent Photography was originally founded on a relationship with the Photographers' Gallery which allowed the group use of the premises for one evening a month, for which it funded a lecturer. In effect LIP took over the open evenings previously run by Debbie Langton, the education officer. Since then Debbie has left and at the time of writing has not been replaced.

While we can still count on certain 'fringe benefits', the Gallery will in future have to charge us for the use of the room, albeit at half the usual rate.

The committee believes the relationship with the Gallery to be important and we have plans afoot to run a sponsored series of talks which will hopefully come to fruition. Members will of course be kept notified of developments.

First

Congratulations to LIP member Elspeth Ross who has been awarded first place in the black and white print section of the recent Salon of British Contemporary Photography's competition out of nearly 2,000 entries. Elspeth is currently in the second year of her four year part-time degree course at PCL.

This is the second year that the Salon of British Contemporary Photography has run this competition and this year it was judged by Fay Godwin.

Montage

On Monday 13th June several LIP members enjoyed an interesting discussion on Photomontage with George Blair at St Martins School of Art.

George began by outlining the history of the medium from Dada and Surrealism; through Russian constructivism and the work of Rodchenko, to the anti-Nazi propaganda of John Heartfield. Heartfield's work was discussed in detail with consideration to his clever use of juxtaposition and highly polished air brush technique.

George then went on to show us some of his own work which scrutinised advertising imagery in relation to other media items including news and current affairs. The ideas were clever and frequently amusing.

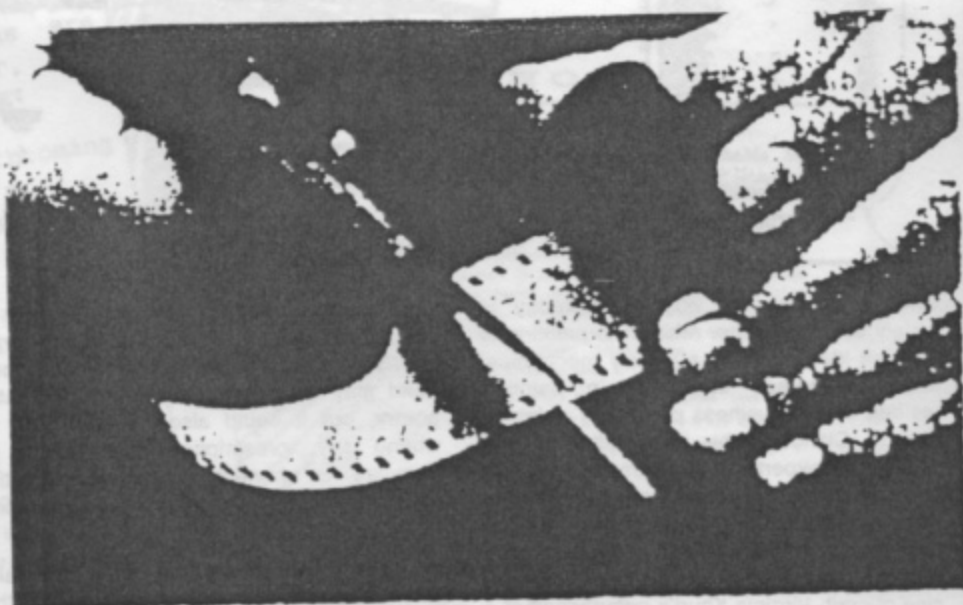
He has managed to have some work reproduced in post-card form and would be pleased to make these available to other LIP members who may wish to look or buy.

G.L.A.

Members are probably aware that we applied for a grant from Greater London Arts at the beginning of the year. Unfortunately they are not able to help us this year and we are looking elsewhere for some financial assistance. If members have any thoughts on raising funds, would they please contact any member of the committee.

Project Partner

Alison Williams would like to hear from another woman in the group who would be interested in working on a self portrait and self history project. As well as enabling discussion about the kind of images sought and development of ideas, Alison says that it would be useful to have 2 pairs of hands and mutual support on technical matters. If you are interested ring Alison on 427 0268.



To find out more about London Independent Photography please send a stamped addressed envelope to:

JANET HALL, 27 HAWKFIELD COURT, WOODLANDS GROVE, ISLEWORTH, TW7 6NU
(Tel 01-847 5989)

Weekends

The Photographers' Place has arranged a weekend workshop with Fay Godwin from Fri 21 to Sun 23 October. Fay Godwin will talk about her photographs, exhibitions and books and her recent fellowship at the National Museum of Photography. She and Paul Hill will conduct critique sessions for participants own work. The fee is £85 (12% discount if you sleep in a local B&B)

There are a few places left for the Hamish Fulton weekend from Fri 14 to Sun 17 Oct. The fee is £75.

Please contact The Photographers' Place, Bradbourne, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1PB Tel 033525 392

Paul Hill is conducting a workshop in London for IIP members later this year - see the events page.

Code

Work has begun on drawing up a code of practice for the independent photography sector. The Independent Film, Video and Photography Association with support from the Arts Council has engaged Vince Wade, formerly with Refleks Gallery, Luton, as researcher.

The project is most anxious to hear from anyone with experience of similar codes of practice in other areas, and from photographers who have experience of difficulties and solutions relating to a code of practice.

There will be a series of regional consultative meetings which will involve as many independent photographers and their organisations as possible.

For further information on these future meetings and to reserve a copy of the draft report when available contact:

Vince Wade, 57 Crayford Rd, LONDON N7 (01-609 1050)

More

The Arts Council is to double the funding of its scheme to publishers of books about and of photography. The annual allocation is increased to £60,000 for each of the next three years.

Grants will be offered towards the publication of books which contribute to the understanding and appreciation of photography in Britain. Books may feature the work of British photographers or historical, critical and theoretical writing about photography.

The Arts Council is keen to encourage the publication of work by young photographers or writers, women and individuals from ethnic minority groups.

These additional funds, part of new developments in the visual arts department, will provide the opportunity for the Arts Council to work with one or more publishers to develop and increase the number of their photography titles over the next two or three years.

Ireland

Irish Photography Workshops was set up to organise workshops in Ireland and to provide the opportunity for photographers to work and develop their skills in a creative atmosphere. They are held in Sandycove, South County Dublin and the fee includes lunch and dinner.

More information from Christine Redmond, 2 Ballygihen Avenue, Sandycove, County Dublin. Tel 0101 808911

The following workshops have been arranged:

Sept 3 -5: Colour in the City with Martin Parr.

Sept 23-25: A personal approach with Paul Hill.

Oct 22-24: Approaches to photography with Aine Nic, Giolla Choille and Kevin O'Farrell.

The fee is £70 for each workshop.

Polareyes

The magazine, **Polareyes**, is run by a nine-woman editorial group and claims to be the first photographic magazine produced exclusively by black women for black women working in photography. It is published by The Cockpit, Cultural Studies Department, Princeton Street, London WC1.

Focusing

Women Focusing is a new free magazine encouraging women to use photography as a form of self expression and campaigning for the promotion and recognition of photography taken by women. It contains articles about photographing and representing third world issues, Yorkshire Arts photography department, a profile of Nancy Bravo, the photojournalism course at London College of Printing, disability and the arts and a thorough list of workshops and photographic resources in London. Women Focusing states 'we want to give women the confidence to recapture what has traditionally been a male dominated medium. It is for all of us to redefine the representation of women in photography, for us to show how women have contributed over the years to community life in London - often in non competitive ways, and usually as an invisible force going without recognition.'

The Women Focusing group aims in the long term to establish a London based women only photography centre and is seeking ideas about what the centre should contain. The group can be contacted at 90A Camberwell Road SE5, 701 4556.

Festival

As part of an initiative sponsored by GLA, Spectrum photography group looks all set to run a woman's photography festival throughout London in October.

The festival will comprise about 50 exhibitions and tape slide screenings of photographic work by women from Britain and abroad. Venues will be all over London - gallery spaces, community centres, libraries, schools and other educational establishments.

Spectrum proposes a series of seminars targeted at women with different levels of photographic skills.

To complement the seminars, Spectrum will liaise with organisations equipped with photographic and darkroom facilities, to hold open days for women during the festival

For further information, contact Elaine Kramer at Spectrum offices, 79 Wardour Street, London W1V 3PH. Tel 01 439 3338

Forgotten Venues

Where do you go in London to look at photographs? To the Photographers' Gallery for a regular turnover of topical and historical exhibitions, the Barbican for prestige shows, the Hayward for the occasional epic, the V&A for quality, the ICA for the avant-garde. Or to the radical venues, the well known Camerawork and the lesser known Cockpit Gallery; or to the local galleries and occasional galleries.

Other venues are forgotten but are well worth looking out for and tracking down. The Goethe Institute has a small gallery and includes photography in its programme. Next year they are showing 'Photography in the Weimar Republic' and the following year 'Bauhaus Photography'. Both exhibitions have been compiled by the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations in Stuttgart and cover important areas in the history of German and European photography.

The French Institute does for France what the Goethe Institute does for Germany and it offers a glimpse of the status afforded to photography in France. The current exhibition by six French photographers is showing until July 20.

While you're over on the South bank visiting the Hayward, call in at the National Theatre. They frequently show photography in their foyer exhibitions, as does the Royal Festival Hall.

The National Portrait Gallery warrants a visit for its permanent display of photographic portraits amongst the paintings. These include notable portraits by Bill Brandt.

From time to time the commercial galleries in the Cork Street area show photography which can be missed as it is unexpected.

For exhibitions of interest and importance don't rely solely on the big galleries, but visit some of the forgotten venues as well. The scale of shows in the forgotten venues can also be more palatable.

Sarah Morley

Visible Women

In February (a poor issue) Creative Camera celebrated 20 years of existence. Its anniversary issue took the form of a look back to some of those featured in its early years.

June's issue (otherwise a good one) saw a vitriolic attack from Soo Ostler, Sara Worrall and Paul Brookes of Yorkshire Arts on this anniversary issue. Not, unfortunately because it was dull, poorly conceived and far too self-congratulatory - as it was, but on ideological grounds. I quote a little from

their letter: 'to choose to give perspectives on eight photographers who have contributed to CC during its 20 years and to only include one woman ... of the 11 people who wrote articles or were interviewed about the history of recent photography, ten were men, and of the seven interviewers all were men ...

...We also found some of the photographs you chose to show, offensive and sexist. In seven photographs of women, six portrayed nude or semi-clothed women in submissive and/or erotic and stereotypical poses.' I turned back to the issue with interest, but failed to be in any way aroused, except by the ineptness of the last comment. Firstly it seems clear to me that they have fallen into a sexist trap of assuming that any figure which is semi-clothed must be female - the only way they could possibly get the count they claim. They must also have a lower arousal threshold than me, my personal erotic geiger counter failing to flicker in the slightest.

What is interesting is to compare the differences in the visibility (and to some extent the actual work) of women then and now. In the first complete year I have of the magazine only three out of the 39 featured photographers were women, a proportion which probably accurately reflects the work available to the magazine. In fact, the CC issue under attack actually over-represents the significance of women in its twenty years ago, rather than the reverse as alleged.

How have things changed over the years? Turning to 1987 (the last complete year) I find that around 17 of the 60 photographers featured were women; surely a significant advance, although still far from an equal situation. But should we expect numerical equality? Probably not. CC largely (but not entirely) leaves certain areas of photographic practice to other magazines, and women are almost certainly over-represented in these areas (on the ground if not in publication). It also probably remains true that many women still regard photography as a male preserve, and certainly areas of sexist photographic practice assail us daily. Given the more obvious targets, one wonders why Creative Camera comes in for such an attack.

Peter Marshall

Pictures on a Page

The July issue of New Internationalist magazine is devoted to photography to provoke its readers to reflect on the way photography is used in the media, especially with respect to the third world. The bulk of the magazine consists of a number of short exercises in the 'reading' of photographs: - the pairing of symbols to make a statement; alternative images/captions of Fidel Castro to make different points. There is also a feature on Peruvian photographer Martin Chambi, photographs selected by Format photographer Jenny Matthews, and a code of behaviour for photographers visiting third world countries.

In the main article Peter Stalker describes how photography, whether in family snaps or news coverage, intensifies our vision of certain aspects of our lives while excluding others, and that through its selectivity photography is not just preservative but conservative - it keeps us happy with our lot. Photographs are two things at once - pictures of reality and symbols of reality. This gives the medium its mystery and power, but makes the job of a western photographer in the third world difficult - how to represent life there unambiguously, but also to avoid the usual stereotypes (distended bellies etc) or clichéd symbols (beggars by advert hoardings etc). Photographers would sometimes argue that ambiguity is more likely to arise from the use of the picture and captioning by editors and publishers. These arguments are familiar to most aware photographers but would be new to readers of the magazine who normally pay little regard to the photography. Peter Stalker also points out how this awareness has led to ordinary people using photography to illuminate, rather than just record, their family and community life.

It is good to see coverage of photography and representation issues in a 'real' context and outside the theoretical press.

Childs Play With Magic Boxes



Sometimes I like to think of my camera and enlarger as simple boxes where light rays of three dimensional reality enter one and then emerge transformed from the second to produce magical marks on a piece of paper. Now it is not the technology or the chemistry involved which makes this magic, but something as insubstantial and ephemeral as light. Light, the life-giving, life-sustaining essence of our universe is also the cause of the marvelous alchemy of which the photographic print is the result. It is the photographer/artist's pencil and paintbrush; and it is the most intensely metaphysical and potentially metaphoric of mediums. Through it we create fingerprints of reality which can sometimes point to or offer a glimpse of an ultimate reality, a truth, a beauty beyond our present powers of perception.

Now what you may ask does all this have to do with child's play? Well, have you ever watched, really watched, a child at play? Seen the total absorption in an unselfconscious, intuitive exploration and discovery of the world? Seen the involvement of an entire being, heart and mind united in the search for clues to the surrounding mysteries? A young child plays free from rules, from formulas for success (the concept doesn't exist) or the need to justify his activity, to appear useful, committed, relevant or creative... Instead an imagination is allowed to roam free and leads eventually to some knowledge of the world - and a pocket full of stones.

Child's play, imbued with a sense of wonder, is both light-hearted and deeply serious; it is in this spirit that one should try to work, because it is this that turns our equipment into magic boxes and involves us in rituals in which, as in childhood, time is suspended and self is dissolved as we embark on a search for something lost, a memory, or a kind of knowledge long forgotten. Some may call this approach religious, or mystical but it is not. It is not even necessarily spiritual. An adult's effort to tap the bottomless wells of memory and longing to know should be more like a child's search for buried treasure. Then, in place of a pocket of stones, we may find images which contain glimpses of that other reality, and which are affirmations of life and celebrations of wholeness.

Finally, some may argue that this is all pure escapism into the "innocence" of childhood, a turning away from the myriad problems, the suffering and chaos of our 20th century "vale of tears". I believe that on the contrary it represents a way to come to terms with this life on a deeper level, to give meaning to human existence on planet earth in 1988. We all need at times to look at (and try to make) images that will move us, will speak to us, in shouts or whispers, and be felt as songs of celebration proclaiming, "In spite of it all - YES!"

Virginia Khuri

Forthcoming Events

Workshops

10 Sept

A workshop with John Blakemore

John Blakemore is a senior lecturer at the Derbyshire College and one of the country's most renowned photographers. He is best known for his landscape work which has appeared in many publications and exhibitions worldwide, although he has also worked in photojournalism, portraiture, still life and other areas of photography.

In this workshop John will show and talk about his work and share his ideas on photography with us. He will also discuss participant's work, so come prepared, although he may not be able to see everyone's work in the time available.

The venue will be the Photo Co-op, 61 Webbs Road, SW11 (tel: 01-248 8049). The workshop will start at 10.00am and will finish late afternoon/early evening. There will be an hour's break for lunch. For those coming by public transport, buses include 49, 19, 37 and 77, or take trains or buses to Clapham Junction and walk.

Fee: £12 (£16 for non-members). To reserve a place please ring Janet Hall on 01-847 5989 and send a £6 deposit to her at 27 Hawkfield Court, Woodlands Grove, Isleworth, TW7 6NU. All cheques made payable to London Independent Photography please.

24 Sept

Rabbit Day

Many of us find it very difficult to talk about photographs. We're happy to talk, certainly, but soon steer ourselves away from our reactions towards the safer areas of equipment, film, mounting, social awareness, funding, the Photographers' Gallery, and the terrible things they're doing to Record Rapid.

We are hoping to organise a day for a small number of people to concentrate on talking about photography. Everyone attending would bring along one photograph of their own, as source material for discussion, and

the day would be constructed around these pictures. There would be no 'camera-club' style criticism. The aim would be to explore reactions to the pictures rather than the pictures themselves. We would aim to be positive.

The event will take place on Saturday 24 September. Please contact Janet Hall (847-5989) to reserve a place; venue to be arranged.

29 Oct

Making Sequences', with Paul Hill

The careful ordering of photographs on a gallery wall, or in a publication is crucial to the communication of the statement a photographer wants to make. Photographs are signs and symbols for ideas and by conscious arrangement - *sequencing* - much more can be conveyed than would be the case if one just selected ones's 'greatest hits'.

During the workshop Paul will discuss how important sequencing is to him and other photographers and artists.

Participants should bring about 20 of their own prints from which they will be asked to construct a sequence. These sequences, rather than the individual images, will then be analysed and discussed by the group to see if they fulfil the aims of each of the authors.

The venue will be the Photo Co-op, 61 Webbs Road, SW11 (tel: 01-248 8049). The workshop will start at 10.00am and will finish at 5.00pm with an hour for lunch.

Numbers will be limited, so please book your place early by ringing Janet Hall - 01-847 5989 and send a £5 deposit to her at 27 Hawkfield Court, Woodlands Grove, Isleworth, TW7 6NU.

Fee: £10 (£15 for non-members). All cheques made payable to London Independent Photography please.

12 Nov

Platinum/Palladium Printing Workshop with Eddie Ephraums

Eddie Ephraums makes a living from selling his own primarily landscape photographs. An article appeared on his work in a recent BJP. He uses the same platinum processes as Pradip Maide and Mike Ware and has done a great deal of experimenting recently with paper surfaces and film to get optimum results. He is also able to pass on tips on keeping costs to a minimum.

During the workshop Eddie will demonstrate his platinum and palladium printing processes including showing how to make a negative, how to prepare solutions and how to coat paper and prepare for printing. He will bring samples of his own work to show attendees.

The venue will be the Photo Co-op, 61 Webbs Road, SW11 (tel: 01-248 8049). The workshop will start at 10.00am and will finish at 5.00pm with an hour for lunch.

Please book your place by ringing Janet Hall - 01-847 5989 and send a £6 deposit to her at 27 Hawkfield Court, Woodlands Grove, Isleworth, TW7 6NU. The workshop will have to be cancelled if the minimum number to make the day financially viable is not reached by October 12.

Fee: £12 (£16 for non-members). All cheques made payable to London Independent Photography.

Blu-Tack

26 Nov

We will be holding a Blu-Tack show on the above date, again at the Drill Hall, 16 Chenies Street, of Tottenham Court Road, opposite Goodge Street tube station.

For those who have not been to one of these shows, it is a one-day event which allows members to get to know each other and each other's work in a relaxed atmosphere. If you have no work to bring don't be deterred from coming as it is a chance to get to meet members and share ideas on photography.

The room is booked from 2.00pm to 6.00pm. Coffee/tea will be on sale and there is a snack bar on the ground floor selling refreshments. A charge of £1.50 will be made to help cover costs.

St. Martins

ST MARTINS SCHOOL OF ART MEETINGS

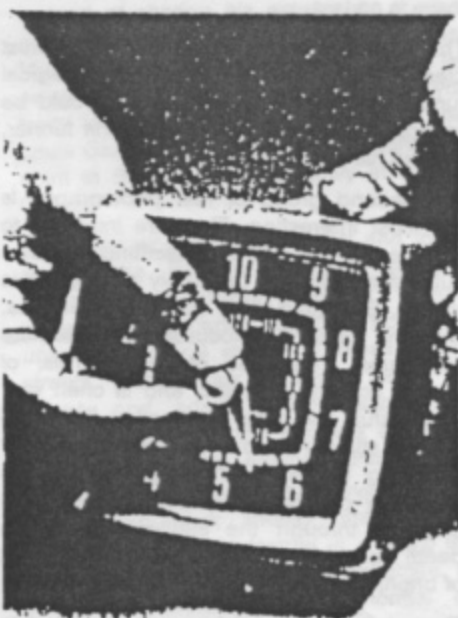
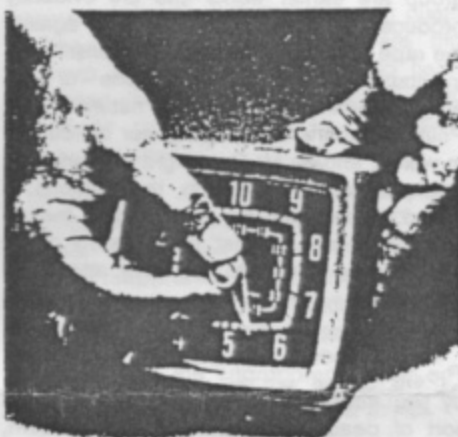
St Martins School of Art is on the left side of Charing Cross Road between Cambridge Circus and Oxford Street. Ask for the photography department. Nearest tubes: Leicester Square, Tottenham Court Road.

10 Oct

6.30 pm
Sam Tanner

Sam Tanner will show slides and prints from his exhibition **We Are Human Too**, a record of his work with disabled people.

He says: "We assume that the handicapped cannot communicate. I do not believe this. They speak with their bodies even if their handicap denies them a voice. But we need to listen. I hope my photos have captured at least some small part of their power of saying - for photography speaks the same language as one deprived of words - the language of gesture. However inarticulate nature has made a person they do speak but we need to hear with our eyes, our hearts. For me photography is the record of such listening, looking."



Critique

7 Nov 28 Nov

6.00 pm
General Meetings

All members are welcome to come - with or without work - and join in the general discussion and print viewing. The evenings may also include slide-shows/talks, and if you wish to know the contents of the meetings ring Janet Hall (01-847 5989) nearer the dates.

Don't be put off coming if you can't make the 6.00 start as these are fairly informal occasions.

Sept - May

'From Wedgewood to Bromoil' at the Richmond Adult Education College

UP-member Terry King will be conducting a series of 30 workshops at the Richmond Adult Education College, Clifden Centre, Twickenham, (near Twickenham BR station) on Saturday mornings between September 24 and May 29 '89. He has called the series 'From Wedgewood to Bromoil' and describes it as a hands on exploration of 19th century photographic printing processes, including calotype, kallitype, Daguerrotype, gum, carbon, platinum and pigment printing. The results of the course will be displayed in a public exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the announcement of photography.

There will also be an all-day gum bichromate workshop on November 5th, the cost of which will be £15. This cost, however, can be included in the overall price of the Saturday morning workshops, which will be £26.30, payable in two halves if preferred.

Enrollment will take place on September 17 at the Richmond Adult Education College. If you have any queries please contact Terry on 01-892 6823.

More Talk

If you are interested in talking about your and other people's photographs, can I remind you of the group I sort of co-ordinate called **Framework**. This meets regularly the second Thursday of every month (except August) at the St Lukes Centre, The Avenue, Kew, from 8.00 to 10.00pm. Cost £1. (Also other irregular meetings and events from time to time). Ring me if you want to know more: Peter Marshall 0784 56474.

Also there are regular meetings of several groups at the **Photo Co-op** - see details under workshops.

Pack

One of the things I've done fairly recently is prepare a page about myself for the South East Arts Association Photography Information Pack. If any of you live in the SEA area, you might like to be in it too - write to Tim Cornish, Film TV and Photography Officer, SE Arts, 10 Mount Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8AS.

He'll send you lots of useful information - some good sheets on exhibiting photographs, and lots of duplicated sheets about photographers you've mainly never heard of, such as me, with a photocopied sheet of pictures to show you why.

'Nothing is Clear'

St Martins Photography Department is currently displaying a number of photographs by Root Cartwright, who wrote a brief summary of his intentions in *Lip Service* No.2. The pictures are all in black and white neatly framed and hung, and, if Mr Cartwright's statements are to be believed are not offered as aesthetic objects. If this is so, it is a pity, because many of them can be taken as a rewarding exploration of the act of sight.

The work falls into two groups: pictures with lettering, and pictures without. The first group are earlier works and are evidently produced as some sort of protest against the rape of the environment, capitalism and, inevitable, Mrs Thatcher. None of the environments shown is a 'natural' one. Political actions are much better conducted in words, and as Mr Cartwright is an elegant and persuasive wordsmith, these efforts at mixed media must be due to some feeling that this is how 'protest' photography ought to be done. That is to say, they attempt to be fashionable. Happily, he has moved on to less derivative work.

The 'real' photographs are again divisible by two: straight pictures, generally of some sort of dead creature, each with its own, doubtless tragic story, and the whole group building a necrophilic sequence of some power. We are spared the tragic stories, as there is no text.

This repeated return to scene of death must clearly have an important psychological function for Mr Cartwright, and it would be improper to pursue this speculation further, without his explicit endorsement.

The second group of real photographs is the most interesting. They are intended to repulse the eye, not by presenting repulsive subject matter, but by purely photographic means. Essentially they are multiple images, with the camera defocussed for alternate exposures. This idea of repulsion is, of course entirely aesthetic, and is often very successful; the eye is repelled, and the mind is still attracted to the image. It is very gratifying to see such progress from the externally determined device of words and pictures, through the intellectually driven death series towards the, later involvement of brain, heart and eye.

There is a sheet of A4 paper appended to the exhibition, which contains the sort of statements about the work which photographers seem to feel obliged to make. As an example of this kind of writing it is a distinct failure, being both lucid and persuasive. Mr Cartwright may yet astonish the world with both branches of his art, provided he resists the temptation to yoke them together.

David Malarkey

Precious

**Robert Mapplethorpe:
Portraits - National Portrait
Gallery May and June 1988**

Mapplethorpe performs a McBean or Beaton for New York high life. After Avedon blasted the same set with head on realism, Mapplethorpe gives them back the shadows and reestablishes a mythological higher breed. Precious people, precious photographic objects. We are not talking demystification here.

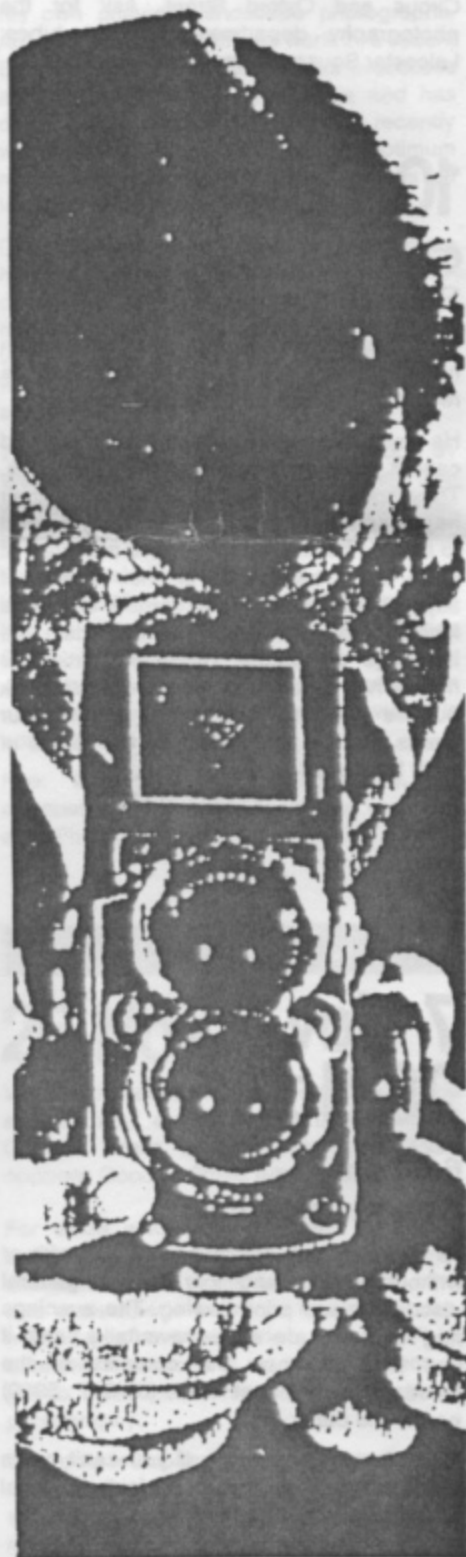
The New York art and social elite does have some interesting people but he exaggerates their pretensions and creates icons, not humans. His portraiture is considered and skilled in his control of pose, expression, lighting and printing. The formal head and shoulders against a flat background are his most memorable pictures, the snaps and room settings less interesting.

Mapplethorpe is more interested in body than soul. His sitters hardly reveal themselves, just an idealised surface; are not warm even if relaxed. In their flattering paleness people become deathly. Debbie Harry and Andy Warhol look aged. He is more interested in form than personality. Is Jasper Conran actually arrogant or is Mapplethorpe fascinated by his nose, his neck and a pair of moles, in the same way that he is more interested in Peter Gabriel's eyelashes than his music? These are sensual, exquisite and spooky images; gothic photography.

This is fine printing, the renowned pale skins are controlled and full of detail. More exciting are the dark areas. Deep tone meets deep tone with the finest difference. His flat grey backgrounds are risky but give a characteristic Mapplethorpe look.

In precious object photography materials are crucial. One print is platinum on canvas and Mapplethorpe draws attention to the surface and the photographic entity. This is valid, but the print quality is worse than paper. And if someone will pay a couple of thousand dollars more, why not?

Roger Estop



Seen

Another Objectivity:
ICA June-July 1988

This exhibition is a serious attempt to survey one strand of contemporary photography. All the work here is about the visible world - what is 'actually there'. It is therefore a perfect antidote to 'True Stories and Photo-fictions', the recent touring exhibition, which showed another current practice of staging artificial scenes.

The old question arises of whether photography is ever really objective and the ICA deliberately addresses the creative element of work which essentially describes what is seen. The objectivity of this work does not always involve the sharp, all seeing quality of the camera, some pictures are dim, unsharp and ethereal. Some could hardly be called objective at all - Suzanne Lafont's enigmatic portraits, Jean Louis Garnell's symbolic clutter.

The ICA has identified an echo of the German 'new objectivity' of the 1920's. The German sober look at life was linked to political reappraisal. Today's objectivity may find significance in the context of technological change and current moral questions. While the 1920's photographers looked in awe at the signs of the future, the ICA pictures look anxiously at familiar things.

The exhibition wants to remove the boundary between recording and creating. Thus the photographer is revealed in the work but instead of sharing his expression or statement we share the questions they ask. Much of the work on show makes you feel aware of self and personal history, your body in John Coplans, knowledge in Jean Louis Garnell, time and place in Horsefield, spirit in Suzanne Lafont, family in Hannah Collins.

The other work is more factual and topographic: the Bechers' head-on views of industrial structures, Robert Adams' sideways landscapes, Gunther Forg's big ugly architectural studies, Thomas Struth's streets and Patrick Tosani's heels and spoons and, again, John Coplans' body. Only Coplans and the Bechers make you look again, amazed. Adams is disappointing and his pictures lack that revelation that topographic work should offer. Thomas Struth's pictures are factual in a sharp lens manner but fail to question or enlighten. His conventional compositions of 'normal' city scenes contain no tension and make his work seem like a con-trick. Patrick Tosani's images have value only in their scale, he is better with his metaphorical braille and water pictures, and the ICA images are ultimately pretentious.

Garnell's colour pictures of high brow clutter entertainingly query the value of education. Coplans is morbid but very amusing and

sophisticated. Horsefield creates a melancholy contemplation of personal and national boundaries.

This exhibition is a rare opportunity to see 'large piece' photography. Horsefield's monochrome epics are pointlessly and greedily big and do harm to the contemplative nature of the content. In any case the negative can't take the degree of enlargement. Forg's huge black and white prints do create an oppressive feel appropriate for his concrete architecture, and as the ICA's notes point out, Tosani's and Coplans' images take on a sculptural significance in the gallery space.

This is a good survey exhibition and amongst many other things identifies a new and distinctly European vision in both subject and approach (apart from Robert Adams).

Roger Estop

No

An Enquiry into the nature
and meaning of the word
'Portrait'

I went to see Robert Mapplethorpe at the National Portrait Gallery yesterday. It was, of course, mostly portraits, and mostly head-and-shoulders, and mostly of people I'd never heard of. I discovered that I was asking myself "Do I want to see all these heads?" Did I care? Should I care? Who is Larry Kissing anyway? Well, I didn't care, and I don't. These were just some quite nice pictures of some possible quite nice people, quite nicely printed, and hung quite nicely, in a selection of quite nice frames. The high point for me was in the last room. A print on canvas! That fixed him.

Later that afternoon I mentioned to a friend that I'd seen the exhibition. "Was it good?" - and, without any thinking at all, I answered "No."

For those who are interested there are three willies, only two of them made of meat.

David Malarkey



Reviews of any photography exhibition in London will be very welcome.

Root Cartwright

Know

Such a lot of fuss about the Ralph Gibson circus! How many people know that barely a year ago an important retrospective of the varied, innovative, and always coolly eloquent work of Harry Callahan crept quietly into town for an underpublicised and poorly attended showing at Camden Arts Centre? We need to know about these things. There's a job for some public-spirited person with a little time on his/her hands. As all galleries plan their programmes well in advance, it should be possible to produce, perhaps quarterly or half-yearly, a comprehensive listing of all exhibitions and related events nationwide likely to be of interest to LIP members. The information ought to be forthcoming as it amounts to free publicity for the organisations involved, and could be circulated with the newsletter. Volunteers?

Atlantic

Hard to know why DM (surely Divorced of Croydon being unusually self-effacing here?) has such trouble working out what's Art and what ain't. It's simply a matter of which side of the Atlantic you operate on: Over There, art is what sells. Over Here, its art if:

- 1 you don't understand it
- 2 you can't afford it
- 3 it's a) very big, or
b) very small, and
- 4 Ian Jeffrey likes it.



Nice

OVERHEARD whilst photographing particularly gruesome housing development in Thames Ditton -

Family man (with camera round neck, thinking he's out of earshot):

"I think they're bloody 'orrible myself. I don't know why he's wasting film on them."

But of course I checked my instruction book when I got home and it states quite clearly that the camera is only to be pointed at NICE things. I suppose I'll get the hang of it ... mountains, clouds, tits, Queen Mothers ... there must be something

Destruct

Congratulations are due to Chris Killip and Secker & Warburg on producing the world's first auto-destruct photographic book. Such is the concern with printing the pix as BIG as possible, that many of them are printed across double spreads and the binding of the paperback edition makes it necessary to virtually destroy the book in order to have a look at them. Is this really the best that can be done with work that we are constantly being told is Extremely Important?

Toffs

OVERHEARD at Mapplethorpe portrait show - conversation between jobsworths:

"He's got some brilliant portrait shots but some of them wouldn't make it at Club level."

"Yeah, look at this one, it's all grainy."

"Why does he make 'em so white in the face?"

Come, come, my man, these are pictures of Toffs. If you'd read your Jane Austen you'd know that Toffs are always pasty-faced, especially the gels. It is how they are to be distinguished, rather than by their manners or intelligence, from rude mechanicals such as yourself.

Definition

the Arts Council's description of Independent Photography:

"With its base in modern technology and its place in the contemporary communications media, photography is an art form that goes beyond the traditional arts. While one small sector may be found within fine art institutions, most independent photography belongs in a far broader range of cultural, community and educational institutions. 'Independent' rather than 'creative' or 'art' is rapidly becoming the accepted term used to distinguish this work from the dominant forms of commercial and amateur practice, and it covers cultural work for publishers, archives, picture agencies, galleries, arts centres, local authorities, educational institutions, trade unions, voluntary sector organisations, community and community arts groups".

I thought you'd like to know that. And here was me naively thinking that independent meant independent!

Peter Marshall

Money

Estate agents have always taken photographs for their sales particulars, and keep the High Street 1hr print lab in business. The standard of their photography however is normally on a par with their prose.

Financed by the London property boom, some estate agents are now producing extravagant magazines to push through our letter boxes. These feature an abundance of 'taste' and 'quality'. Holden Matthews in Islington have gone a step further, producing a large format 'Ritz' style newspaper containing many large, self-conscious, arty photographs.

We may be concerned about estate agents hijacking art to sell houses, but this recent trend might be of further interest. Estate agents have got loads of money, are very image conscious, are very competitive, are getting into publishing and therefore could be a perfect sponsor for your next monograph.

Roger Estop

Big

Many photographers worry unnecessarily about the size of their photographs - naively thinking that because they can alter the size of an image they should make some sort of a decision about scale. Learn these simple rules and **RELAX**.

1 Black and white photographs should be printed 12x8 and mounted in a 16x20 aluminium frame. By sticking to the one size you can save money by buying the frames in bulk, but more importantly you can save thought. Curiously this single size works well for all film speeds and formats - if you use larger formats people will simply be impressed with how sharp your pictures are.

2 Colour photographs should be printed as big as possible. There are many reasons for this - so that people will know that you are using one of those modish Plaubel cameras, so that people won't confuse them with enprints, because the lab that is doing the printing as sponsorship-in-kind wants to show off, but the most important is that everybody else prints *theirs* big.

3 Photographs by fine artists should be printed **TOO BIG**. You are an artist, you spit in the eye of technique.

Chris Evans

150

Within days of each other in January 1839 Daguerre in Paris and Fox Talbot in London made public announcements of the inventions of their photographic processes.

The 150th anniversary of these events will be celebrated widely in Britain and elsewhere with exhibitions, publications, films and other programmes.

In London so far planned are:

Post War British Photography Aug-Oct 89, Barbican

On site large scale work on four sites organised by Camerawork in Oct-Nov 89

Magnum Photography exhibition Hayward Gallery 1990

The Art of Photography Sept-Oct 89 Royal Academy

French Photography March-April 89 Royal Festival Hall

Films on Photography throughout the year at the Photographers' Gallery

Photography Now Feb-April V&A

Lady Hawarden Summer V&A

France

Always nice to see a bit of a bash about photography, even when little if any seems particularly related to the events being celebrated. One notable exception, not in the above list, but mentioned elsewhere being the show that Terry King is organising.

I hope the French Photography is not like the current Barbican show - although it has some good points, it must take a little doing to make Cartier-Bresson seem such a boring and repetitive also ran.

One could also query whether they are celebrating in France, where they are usually quite clear that photography was invented somewhat earlier, with Niepce down in Chalon-sur-Saone producing negatives around 1816 and the first known (and still existing) photograph some ten years later. Or come to that in Brazil, but that's a longer and more murky story.

Still, any excuse for a party is a good one. Have we got any good ideas as to how LIP could jump on the band-waggon? Some sort of event that would get a lot of publicity but not take too much work would be ideal.

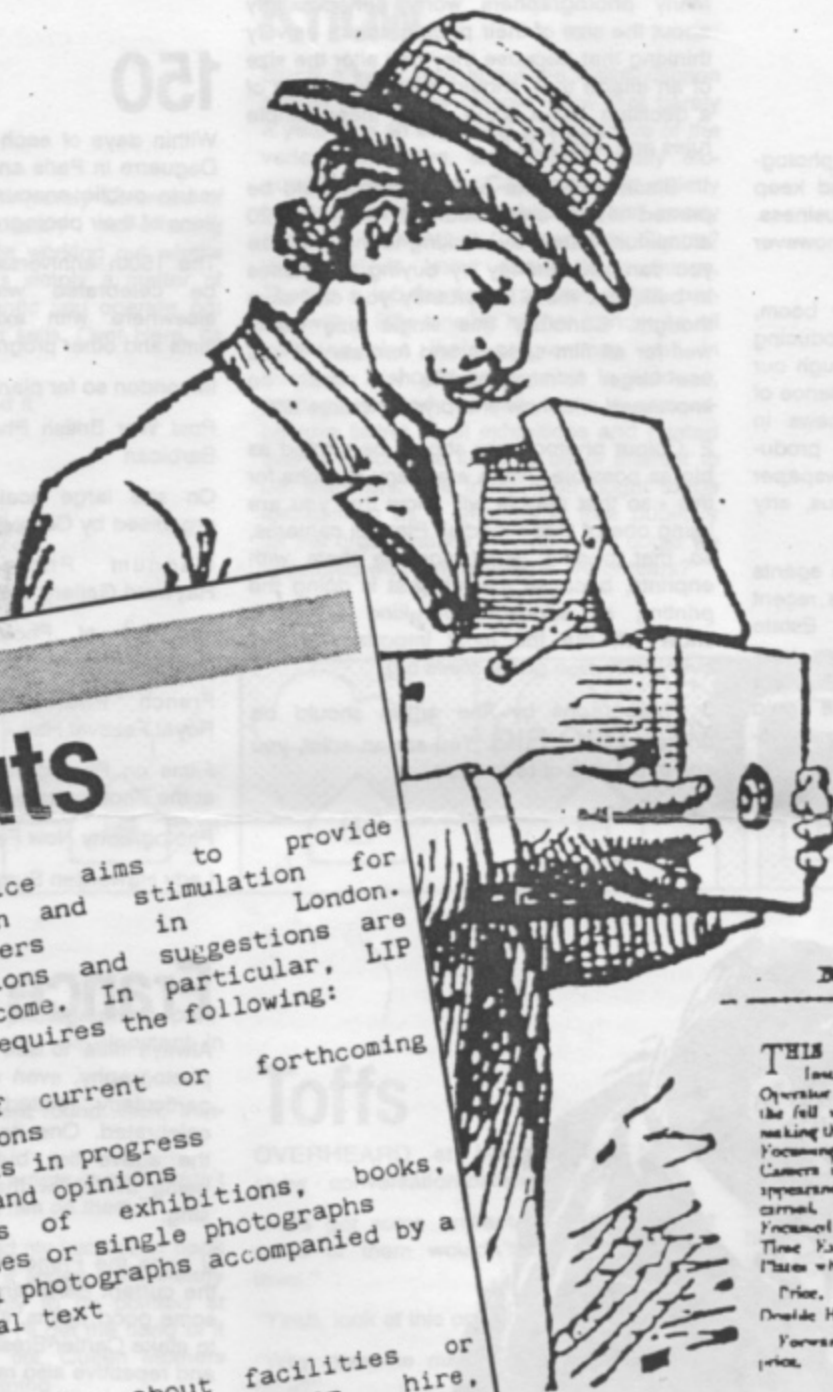
Peter Marshall



With a heavy 300mm lens attached to his camera, Silk makes use of any support he can get. "By kneeling on one knee", he says, "I can hold the lens steady. My left elbow is braced on top of my left knee and I use the thumb and finger of my left hand to hold the camera, focus and change f-stops".

THE PATENT MONOCULAR DUPLEX,

Or, ARTIST'S CAMERA.
C. E. Smith's Patent, 1884, England, France, & United States.



Inputs

LIP Service aims to provide information and stimulation for photographers in London. Contributions and suggestions are very welcome. In particular, LIP Service requires the following:

- news of current or forthcoming exhibitions
- projects in progress
- ideas and opinions
- reviews of exhibitions, books, magazines or single photographs
- actual photographs accompanied by a critical text

Also,

- information about facilities or equipment for loan or hire, especially darkrooms and studios.
- For sale or exchange advertisements
- information about possible exhibition venues.

Articles should be between 1-400 words if possible. Please send items to:

Roger Estop
23 Melford Road
London E11 4PR
Phone 556 1615

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