

# L I P   S E R V I C E

P H O T O G R A P H Y

No 6



## State of independence

London, Late 1989: subsidies squeezed, enterprise cultivated. Diverse activity, production and discussion. Autograph exhibit in the Photographers Gallery, CLIC show at Jacksons Lane Community Centre, Women Photographers at B4 Studios. The Photo Co-op introduces a new membership scheme, Camerwork exhibitions innovate, IFVPA drops the P but gives us a code of practice, Cockpit reorganises. LIP announces new programmes of workshops, Framework goes public at Watermans and the RPS prepare for a Contemporary group. A conference in Canterbury looms, London Photographic History workshops emerge, a London documentary group is mooted and the Barbican runs a series of workshops.

Photographs in the Whitechapel Open, a 20 ft. print on the river bank at low tide, a Hackney hotbed of artists using photography, 'Zoom' Magazaine opens a Gallery and 'Modern Painters' publishes a debate on photography. 'Women Focussing' newsletter matures, complemented by 'Women Artists Slide Library Journal' publishing a photography special issue, 'Wide Angle' 4 puts the rest of the SE on the

map, 'Network' 6 with directory is published and Photo Co-op launch their newsletter, 'Photo'.

And people take photographs.

The Royal Academy acknowledges photography and the Barbican acknowledges independent photography. We've arrived at last! Good luck to the RA, in another hundred years someone can introduce them to video, or performance. While the tedious "is it Art" arguments peter out, photography moves on. As one critic quite rightly said, "photography is photography" and as "Photography Now" proclaimed, photography is interesting.

1989 is less important for being the 150th year, more important for being the end of the 1980s, a remarkable decade in which photographic activity has increased in parallel with a new scepticism about the nature and use of the photograph. Now, there is a tension between 'the photograph' and 'photography';

Jo Spence and Roger Scruton can both gain an audience for their views; diagrams, standpoints, and criticisms are as important as the image. The concept of independence has grown to escape from the photographic bog, to enable alternative, experimental, critical and personal work to emerge.

What would have happened if 150 years had happened 10 years ago? Probably nothing, maybe millions of uncropped 35mm on grade 3. Most of this years celebrations would have happened anyway because things are active; 150 years is a secondary excuse. Both 'Photography Now' and 'Through the Looking Glass' are of course really celebrations of photography in the 1980s.

In any case we have three blockbuster exhibitions of which the RA's is most truly an historical assessment. Yet the really significant one will turn out to be 'Photography Now' in which the medium is shown as a complex and stimulating phenomenon, an exhibition which looks ahead, will inspire students, and where the 'Art' is taken for granted.

Roger Estop



Chris Boot, Co-ordinator of the Photo Co-op, addresses issues deferred by the National Photography Conference

# Independent photography and enterprise

This year's National Photography Conference, held in Newcastle in July, was a tame affair. Meticulously hosted and organised, it never got to grips with its central issue: the place of independent photography in an enterprise culture.

What held the conference together, it seemed, (and excepting a few dissonant voices), was a feeling of being isolated and locked out of enterprise, like it was ploughing ahead without us: we'd try to get in only we don't know whether we want to, if we can, or how to do it. Enterprise culture was usually characterised as an ideological agenda (with good arguments for and against), rather than the results of a myriad of individuals, businesses and groups trying and finding ways of making their projects work, with income from a variety of sources. Implicitly accepting the proposition that independent photography is distinct from photography as trade, individuals or groups who are finding ways of supporting themselves with reduced or no funding seemed effectively defined out of the equation.

The closing session of the conference was particularly dispiriting. The idea that funding bodies could and should bail independent photography out of a economic depression prevailed. There was limited appreciation of the declining resources of the funding bodies to support activity, and no sense that it is now up to us, as producers and administrators, to build our work outside any exclusive

dependence of funders.

I led one of the many workshops, addressing the Photo Co-op's work within a mixed economy. I expected what I was saying to be controversial; I spoke with enthusiasm about processes of commodification, a market base, about the fact that administrators are actually in the business of business, way above being photographic ideologues. I talked about the necessity of building conventional business, financial planning and marketing skill, and the desirability of profit for an organisation seeking autonomy. I referred to funding bodies not as distinct from market forces, but as one of the many market forces: the clients of funded groups, rather than the reverse, inevitably operating a buyers' market as grant funds decline. I thought this approach would jar with the overall character of conference, which seemed satisfied with a moral and political agenda that overrode considerations of photographers' real or potential effectiveness, or their income earning ability. As it was, nothing happened. I wasn't challenged, and none of it filtered into the main body of conference discussion.

Two premises lay behind my contribution: firstly, that seeking a sound economic base for the values and practice of independent photography is a compromise that those earning a living at it must make. Its not a choice between integrity and greed; if we believe in our work, and it's good enough, people will be interested and it will pay. The second related premise is

that independent photography cannot conceive itself as noncommercial. That the Photo Co-op does (producing exhibitions, undertaking commissioned photography, running a picture library and an education programme) is independent in all sorts of ways, but it is a professional business and it supports eleven photographers, with about a third of its resources from grant funds. If independent photography believes too hard in a moral or political purity of motivation, and rejects earned income as unclean, then we cease to be independent photographers, and we start identifying with another part of the photography world.

To LIP readers, it may seem strange to consider independent photography in these terms. I have the idea the LIP is a federation of photographers, working without finance for their independent work, operating outside the boundaries of the Arts Council's or Regional Arts Association's funds, policies and priorities. If this is true, you are distinct from those other independents: the galleries, producers and magazines who are supported by funding. The differences are limited, but funding does serve to divide us into camps. The conference seemed to accept such divisions as implacable: there was no sense that there is a huge, enthusiastic and growing base of interest for established projects to let in and grow with; no sense that we are mutually dependent (now that the state patron does mind whether a gallery gets more than a handful of visitors each day or not). The new



agenda is clear, however much funding institutions project themselves as confused, they will help those groups who learn to help themselves. Photography organisations' relationship to a user/consumer base for their support, and to other forms of material popular interest and support, will have to change and grow.

And this involves LIP. It seems that independent photography organisations, including yourselves as well as funded groups, have two main options. Either to develop a base dependent on freely-given time and enthusiasm for shared values and objectives: federating mutual interest and commitment where the only money changing hands is to service the network. Alternatively, and this is what the Photo Co-op is doing, you find ways of investing your independent values in a practice for which clients of various kinds want to pay - whether sponsors, funding bodies, exhibition clients, or individuals. In

reality the two options are very close. Any enterprise is going to depend on the enthusiasm of participants and must make basic economic sense for anyone involved, whether people are paying for something they want or being paid for something they do.

There is a particular option for LIP, I think. If you are an association of individuals largely excluded from the benefit of arts funds except as consumers of gallery exhibitions, workshops etc, then this is something you can build on. Funding bodies now require funded projects to justify their provision in terms of its take up in a far more detailed way than ever before. If you represent an important part of this consumption, then you can use it (as individuals or on an organised basis) as a point of leverage to see improvements in what is available. I'm not suggesting that this division between the funded and unfunded independents should grow, but the opposite. The funded sector needs you, and

will do so increasingly in future.

And we should work together, because an enormous opportunity is at hand; one which was largely by-passed at the conference. Photography in Britain is a colossal interest; half the population are photographic producers and consumers. There are distinct signs that, culturally, we are dissatisfied with the templates of amateur photography and a limited use of photography at home. Now that we can shoot a roll of colour prints for a pittance, we are waking to the possibilities of using cameras more imaginatively in our everyday production of meaning. The potential interest in independent work seems phenomenal.

Independent photographers can and do offer a form of leadership here. We should welcome this role, and sell ourselves and use our own buying power to generate a market - whether its for prints, or magazines, or darkroom facilities, or participatory activities. With the reduced influence of funding bodies, the onus is on us. If we want the thing to really take off we have to stop being so consciously forlorn and alienated. We should feel good about making money, and make lots of it.

Chris Boot

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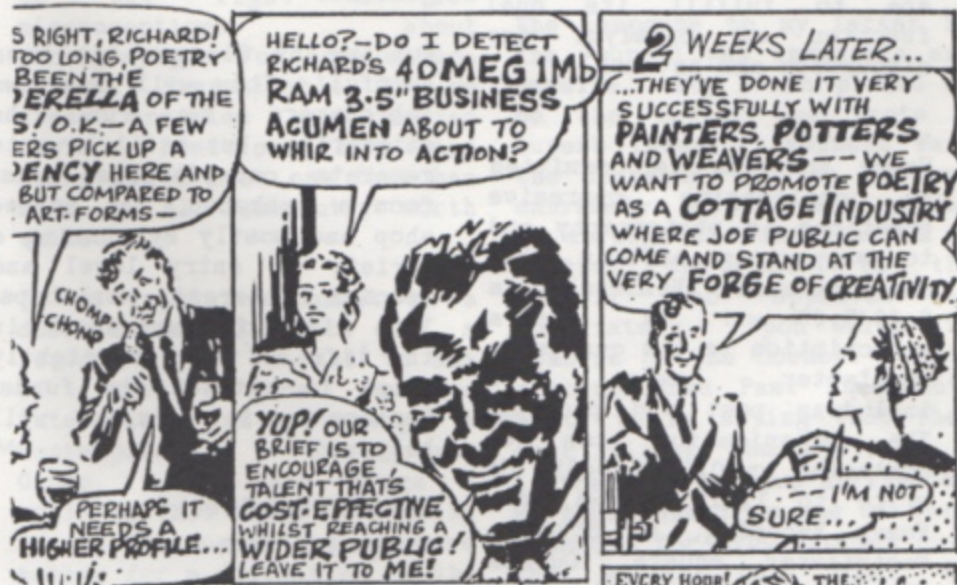
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## Focusing on the future

Women Focusing, Britain's first and only national women's photography association, is settling down into its third year of existence. Surviving, despite the odds, on a meagre grant of £15,000, the organisation has come a long way since its inception during the gloomy cost-cutting days which heralded the demise of the GLC when major funding bodies were forced to tighten their purse strings.

Fortunately for us, the Greater London Arts visual department supported the idea of a women's photography initiative and agreed to fund us for a trial period of six months, then a year. We're still here, but we're still very much on trial.

Even so, we're optimistic about the future because we have a lot to offer every conceivable woman photographer and what we do has gained a lot of recognition. We get letters from women just starting out in photography who want basic information about resources or colleges and few exist to provide a networking grapevine for more experienced or established photographers hoping to contact women who might be interested in what they are doing or for information exchange.

The Journal we produce has proved very popular and is a potential arena of ethical debate which is yet to be fully explored. We'd like to encourage women to challenge their own and other people's photographic practices from a moral as well as a visual

standpoint. Our main aim is to establish a London-based national woman's media centre. This would provide a focal point for women all over the UK interested in the communications media. It's important that women in all kinds of disciplines interact and debate art because interpretations and meanings are always shifting focus. It's important too, that we see what we do in a contemporary social context.

This means we are looking at a centre for the 1990s with good exhibition space, excellent facilities and guaranteed women-only space.

In the meantime, we are looking to adequately promote Women Focusing as an organisation through exhibitions, talks and seminars, media exposure, advertising and of course, increased membership. Because the more people we have as members, the more impact Women Focusing will have; the more women are aware of Women Focusing, the more the organisation will be able to fulfill its dual function as catalyst for discussion and network.

Women Focusing is committed to challenging oppressive practices in photography and to supporting anybody that does the same. Membership is 8.00/5.00. A year's subscription to the quarterly newsletter costs 6.00 including post and packing. The organisation can be contacted on 01 793 0487. Or write to Tilly Suadwa, c/o Women Focusing, B4 Studios, Westminster Square, Durham Street London SE11 5JH.

## Streetlevel

Glasgow Photography Group has been running for rather longer than LIP. Naturally they have moved further in that time and have now opened their own gallery called Streetlevel.

They have converted what had been a gardening shop (High Street Landscapes!) into an exhibition space with about 100 linear feet of wall, a smaller, intimate gallery, with a good view from the street, a small coffee area, offices, workroom and a darkroom. Happily, one of their members is an architect. Three exhibitions are already planned.

This sounds wonderful, and it is, but all the work of conversion is being done by volunteers, in their limited spare time. It is an enormous task, and sacrifices are being made, even to the extent of eroding personal work. Perhaps because of the dedication and enthusiasm, some manufacturers and suppliers have been very generous.

Funding by Glasgow has been helpful. They will have two job-sharers to run the enterprise, but still have to generate considerable sums, from a bookshop, the coffee shop and mostly by running a variety of entry level and special interest workshops. This kind of involvement in the life of the city rightly helps to attract the funds. Perhaps print sales will help, too. DM.

279-281 High Street,  
Glasgow G4 0QS.  
Tel. (041) 552 2151



# Contemporary Society

Ed Bowman on his quest to ease the RPS into the 20th century.

Although I appreciate the work carried out by the Royal Photographic Society in such fields as Education, Medicine, Architecture and photographic research for which the RPS publish a specialist journal (available free to members), I have nonetheless always felt that the Society was a little bit under represented in those areas concerned with the use of photography as a creative medium.

There is a Pictorial group within the Society but I must confess that I now have little interest in photographing the picturesque (apart from sunsets of course). At the same time I must say that the Pictorial Group is a popular one with many amateur members and if they enjoy that sort of thing then jolly good luck to them - after all they do support the work of the society by paying their subscriptions and I would not like that to change.

Over the last few years I have been writing articles for the RPS Journal basically trying to put right a few misconceptions about photography. For some reason totally inexplicable to me these articles have caused furious reactions here and there and I must say that has made it all eminently worth while.

In an impulsive moment on a dull Sunday I wrote off a letter to the Journal to ask if there were members interested in forming a Contemporary Photography Group. At this stage I realised that there were going to be a number of members asking for a definition of the word Contemporary. My response

tends to be that whatever it is, it's not Pictorialism and would they like to define that, or even the word Art? On second thoughts I think the new group should be concerned with what is happening in photography at the present time, and to study how photographers are using the process as a medium of self expression and personal vision and indeed how far we can take the medium to communicate ideas and feelings.

I would like to see this new group getting together with other groups (like LIP) so that they can exchange ideas and show work. The Society's Galleries should also hopefully be available.

The group I feel should have activities in the Midlands as well as in London and Bath. I hope that some of the members of this group will be encouraged to start collecting photographs perhaps from some of the invited speakers who will be of world class standard, that is, provided we get the support.

The response to my letter in the Journal was immediate and massive. Roy Green picked up on the letter and wrote a superb leader. Kenneth Warr, the Secretary of the RPS was extremely helpful and guided me through the intricacies of putting the case to the Council who approved it immediately. Upon which two members of the Council (one a distinguished Past President) wrote to me saying that they were joining. Hooray! A stream of letters arrived at my house and from one of them a cheque for £100 dropped out. The writer said that he thought that I might have

expenses. I wrote back thanking him and sent the cheque off to Bath (to impress the Secretary).

I received another letter from this generous donor offering to help and mentioning that he was a Chartered Accountant and that he was on a two year photographic course at Derby Polytechnic. Right, said I, you can stand for Treasurer. Michael Colclough turned out to be a real ball of fire and like a true executive he contacted people right left and centre.

I went away to a workshop with Paul Hill and Fay Godwin. It was terrific and it evolved that Paul was interested and has agreed to be nominated to stand for Chairman. With this sort of good news I went back to London and got on the phone. Colin Osman agreed to stand for committee. Michael got Peter Turner and I got Roy Green to have his name put forward.

We were now into the big time. Michael is talking to someone else and Paul has given us other ideas. We are on our way; all we need is enough members so as to be able to pay for good lecturers and workshops. We need an editor to publish a newsletter as good as that of LIP. We need enthusiasm.

The inaugural meeting will be at the Challoner Club, 61 Pont Street, London SW1 on Tuesday 7th November 1989 at 6.30 pm. Do please note that non members of the Society will be cordially welcomed by the President and by the Secretary. How about coming along?

Edward Bowman



## Malarkey at large

### Colour in south London

Those of us who live in Croyden are blessed in two ways: we have seen the future and we have the RPS colour group exhibition at the Fairfield Halls. I have been to see it twice, and as the RPS is kind enough to put titles on the work ...you would like to share the experience.

LATE EVENING LIGHT, Roger Reynolds FRPS (Late evening light. Hills etc.)

AUTUMN GRAZING, Hazel Hayward FRPS (Sheep, grass, walls etc. I had thought that this was the worst colour print I'd ever seen until I turned out an old drawer of mine, but it is certainly the worst I have ever seen exhibited.

SUNRISE IN THE ALPS, A Raymond ARPS (Sunrise in the Alps).

I think you begin to get the picture. There were also a large number of pictures with titles such as: Grey Goose, African Bush Elephant, Cheetah and so on, which were exactly what they say, that is Goose, elephant, cheetah. Although they were in colour, it was difficult to see why they were included in the Colour Group. Does the RPS have no wildlife group for these people? The aims of the group must be so diffused. One would guess that, as the mantle of forward-looking photography has fallen on the shoulders of colour photographers that the

colour Group would be particularly eager to embrace new attitudes and practices. Alas, I saw no sign of this at all.

### Phone show

Passing through Kendal, it seemed a good idea to stop at the Brewery Arts Centre for a walk, a stroll and a look around.

Upstairs, in the gallery, was a huge exhibition "The Great 'Telephobne Exchange'" an examination of the place of the red telephone box in our lives, and its replacement by something which is no doubt much better.

Terrific - All kinds of views, all kinds of shots, all in colour. The colour was integral to the work (red boxes, after all) but not its major excuse for living: that was in fact the quality of observation.

Technically there were no faults, and yet, when the group formed around this project only two members were photographers of any experience. It wasn't possible to make any such distinction by examining the work, and although the pictures were not individually credited it was possible to see that several "eyes" were at work.

This work was by the Brewery Women's Group: outward looking and confident. This was no transcript of graffiti on the inside of

the ghetto door. I have no doubt that the group's members do, in fact have their own political and philosophical view points, and may well express them elsewhere, but on this occasion they had subordinated themselves in a coherent involvement with their project, which is all the more powerful because of what is not stated.

They seem to have obtained quite substantial sponsorship, from British Telecom (who deserve a pat on the back - they are not always shown in a good light) and others.

### For a change

Try these easy, fun-filled high-fibre exercises - see how many you can manage.

Buy a copy of A.P.

Read all the text in an exhibition.

Look at the pictures in an exhibition.

Organise an exhibition that only men can enter.

Mount a picture on black card.

Come out of the closet with a cokin filter.

Say something nice about Victor Burgin.

Say something nice about the Arts Council.

Print on Resin Coated Paper.

Say something horrid about Lee Friedlander.



# Looking at pictures

## Shifting gear

Shifting Focus - Serpentine Gallery

This show demonstrates very thoroughly, that women are at the fore front of forward thinking in photography. If you like work to be, above all, avant garde, this is for you.

For a single-sex show it's remarkably mixed, and the change of gear needed every few yards made it difficult to respond to anything. After a while, I gave up. Whatever the merits of the works - and they are not without merit, value or interest - the whole show seemed to me to be rather a failure. This is a pity, but more so because some fuss is made about the curator and selectors.

The posters though are wonderful. A glass model of the male genitalia with wings (perhaps a metaphor for cherub, perhaps not) was officially not liked, and where it appears in public places is covered by little stickers. A fascinating and democratic collage, perhaps a new art-form.

On the day of my visit, three young women were building a camera obscura on the porch. Quite unreservedly, I enjoyed watching that.

David Malarkey

How do you look at a picture, understand what it says, how it works? There are no absolute rules - experience and intuition count for most, but guidelines are useful. Peter Marshall proposes a simple schema which avoids unnecessary technical terms and provides a comprehensive approach without emphasis on any particular theoretical basis. Originally prepared for students it has a general usefulness.

## VIEWPOINT

### DESCRIPTION

This deals with the physical relationship of the camera/viewer to the subject.

Is the picture seen from the same level as the subject?

Is the picture a distant view, a close up etc?

What direction is the main lighting from?

### ASSOCIATIONS

What associations or implications for the viewer does this viewpoint have?

## STRUCTURE

### DESCRIPTION

Medium:

Use of space:

(does it represent a 2D object, or a scene stretching from close objects to infinity; are there clearly defined subject planes etc.)

Perspective:

(eg, exaggerated perspective as with a wide angle lens, flattened as with a long focal length etc.)

Quality of lighting:

(are there cast shadows - if so are these hard or soft? Is more than one light source implied? Does the lighting bring out textures?)

Tonal scale:

(does it use a full or a restricted range of tones? Mainly using light tones - high key; mainly using dark tones - low key. Use of tonal contrast within scene to separate / emphasize various elements.)

General composition/framing:

(vertical / horizontal / diagonal lines, masses, division of frame, placement of main points of interest, use made of the edge of picture etc.)

### Control of sharpness

(Focus, depth of field, movement blur etc.)

### Use of colour:

(For monochrome pictures this would include use of colour other than black. For colour pictures - warm / cold colours, colour contrasts, colour harmonies etc.)

## ASSOCIATIONS

### Mood

### Implied Movement

(Is the picture dynamic or static)

### Colour and tonal associations

### Styles

(and references to styles)

### Visual analogies

(eg resemblance between a shape of clouds or hills and part of the human anatomy.)

### Visual references

(ie references to other pictures - possibly using different subject matter.)

## CONTENT

### DESCRIPTION

Objects in picture:

Relations between objects:

### ASSOCIATIONS

Associations of objects

## USE OF PICTURES

### ORIGINAL USE

Medium of publication:

Audience:

Intention of use:

### LATER USES (if any)

As above

## PERSONAL RESPONSES

This section is largely concerned with the relationship between particular events in the individual's experience and the picture.

## OVERALL SUMMARY

It may often be necessary to bring together and relate insights from different parts of the analysis to arrive at an overall view.



# A weave of momentary occurrence

Raymond Moore is one of the few British greats but very little has been written about his work. Robert Claxton traces Moore's influences and appraises his unique vision.

Originally Raymond Moore practised as a painter at a time when British landscape art was experiencing a period of intense rejuvenation. He studied at the Royal College immediately after the second war; where he was taught by John Nash, brother of the excellent landscape artist Paul Nash.

Amongst his peers Paul Nash must have exerted considerable influence. Raymond Moore's early endeavors with pigment reveal a struggle toward the ideals that Nash so eloquently realised. Nash's landscapes contain a search for painterly forms that clarify a world vision; enhancing and refining traditional methods in his effort to express the transitional energy he felt at the essence of existence. This is particularly evident in the remarkable "Sunflower" series he produced in the 1940s. The flowers symbolise the resplendent energy of nature; stressed and replenished by the elements, the painterly tensions ring with spontaneous rhapsody. The subject is subordinated in realisation of this great natural force which is embodied in the fullness of the composition. Nash worked fluently with the plasticity of pigment and exercised great freedom in the formation of image structure.

This personal 'tachiste' eluded Raymond Moore. Things he felt and saw could not be captured in the processes of paint. It has been argued that Graham Sutherland experienced similar problems, that his instinct was graphic, and his finest talent lay in his abilities as a printmaker. This is evident to me in the

magical etchings Sutherland made during the 1920s; particularly the sad twilight scenes of Peckin Wood and St Mary's Hatch which echo the romantic landscapes of Samuel Palmer. There is a powerful sense of mystery in these tiny images that has been related to Sutherland's desire for spiritual understanding. Raymond Moore's early drawings show the same penchant for personal detail and undemonstrative subject. His later photographs, against the low evening light, often including the setting sun, betray a similar love of temporal wonder.

Significantly, Nash had worked intermittently with photography, questioning the fundamental origins of the landscape; Celtic monoliths rise from seas of dense foliage, historic transformation pervades. The images seek expression for the potent natural rhythms which characterise his paintings and prints, reminiscent of themes explored by William Blake more than a century before. These somewhat naive photographic studies provided Raymond Moore with a departure to a medium that was to prove a life-long obsession.

Photography in Britain during the late 1950s occupied a comparatively minor role in the realm of fine art. Of those working in a personal expressive mode Bill Brandt and Edwin Smith were luminaries. Their careers began in the inter-war years and owed much to the poetics of 'Neo-Romanticism'. Smith had been a student of architecture with a passion for easel painting. A London exhibition of the work of Eugene Atget motivated him to photograph

architectural details and manifestations of popular art. Brandt was a student of Man Ray and lived in Paris at the height of the 'Surrealist' period, which perhaps accounts for his more theatrical approach to the medium. Not surprisingly, it was Paul Nash who first recognised Edwin Smith's ability and enabled him to gain the necessary dark room experience through facilities he organised at the publishers Lund Humphries.

Both Brandt and Smith photographed the landscape with reverence for its ancient mystery; but Smith's careful eye for the fine detail of ephemera and the gentle rather than magnificent qualities of light, left a lasting impression.



Initially, Raymond Moore photographed natural form and architectural detail both in colour and in black and white. Much of his early work was done in Pembrokeshire and other parts of Wales. He returned frequently to the coastline to make studies of rock pools and tactile stretches of sand, where the emphasis of light is distinct yet subtle. Human activity is acknowledged but never obtrusively. Figures find their space in the composition alongside the other elements that construct an ever changing

landscape.

The 1960s were a formative period in his understanding of the medium. Well produced magazines brought previously unseen images to public attention. The works of major American photographers were seen in Britain for the first time. Images by Paul Strand, Edward Weston, Minor White, and Harry Callahan provoked a deep response. The prints by these artists revealed a full expression of photographic form. The negative was capable of providing a range of tones that allowed the subject to assert itself with greater clarity. It was this realisation that prompted Raymond Moore to visit America in 1970. The assimilation of a new understanding illuminated his work in the forthcoming decade. Many earlier images were reprinted, achieving a subtle compositional balance.

After 1970 the work is more personally defined; a geographical change from Wales to north-west England and southern Scotland belies a search for an open minimal landscape. Themes of transience are explored with renewed vigour. Sudden movements of light cross slanting masses of land or sea emphasising temporal shift. The sea acts as a regenerative yet redeeming energy: commonplace coastal subjects take on its remoteness and suffer partial identity loss; rendered unfamiliar they release a hidden inward nature.

The earth passively receives marks and tracings left by movements that shape its surface; performing temporary



heiroglyphs as the transitional light dictates. Passing time is evoked by association of place; often the pictures prevail upon a common nostalgia. Seaside holidays, days in the country, children's games on sandy beaches, or bicycle tracks on a wet road, remind us of a vanished past. Other images make use of spatial openness, which stretches before us signaling an unknown future.



Compositional relationships are realised in immaculate proportion, rhythmic correlations build to stunning visual rhymes. In 'Allonby' 1981 (in *Every So Often* p. 19) an Alsatian dog is momentarily transfixed; in the immediate background a line of washing is activated by a gust of wind. Two small garments conspire to mirror the animal's profile, the fleeting movement is echoed by the waves on the sea. An intersecting web of linear forms provides an architecture of graphic confinement.

Space extends hypnotically in the kerbside revelation 'A596', 1981. The setting sun glints through a thin belt of conifers; in the foreground a diminishing procession of bare deciduous trees approaches the converging horizon. To the offside a young fir plantation takes on a paler tonality in the

retreating light. It has been raining and the shadow cast by the nearside wood has left a continuous damp residue at the kerb. As the road slowly dries, a broken line divides its surface achieving a wonderful tripartite simile. The skyling effected by the receding branches of both woodlands is endorsed by the intermittent progression of the line on the road. All three proceed in quiet collaboration to the point where the road turns, and collectively they vanish against the sky.

Sensations of movement and flow are approached by varying means. In 'Maryport' 1982 (*Every So Often* p.25) the space the image provides is restricted by a veil of mist. The foreground takes on a fabric appearance; a polythene bag is woven into the sand and stones, pursuing a ragged piece of sackcloth. The undulating surface carries the two as if by current or thread; a lifting, sideways movement suddenly engages them. The low mist is a perfect accent on the subtle upward movement. Parallels of tonality heighten the feeling of interconnection.

The snowscapes at 'Forest Town', 'Galloway' and 'Ras Knave' appear almost embroidered. Tonal blending of snow and sky invites textural comparison. Both ends of the film scale are explored simultaneously; the inherent granularity of the film assists the needle tight precision of the remote trees and bushes. In 'Ras Knave' the sheep become a potent metaphor in the fabric motif, their protective fleece counterpoints the blanket of textured snow.

Spatial considerations are subordinated in realisation of a cartographic relation of forms.

The road or fenceline which acts as an unfolding axis in many pictures symbolises a journey; a projection in space and time. Painted road markings, jet trails and suspended telegraph wires provide linear accompaniment. 'Galloway' 1980 shows similar development but introduces a second theme of reflection. A scrap of litter on the verge stands like a reverse imprint of a paint splash on the road, together they frame a wet portion of tarmac lit by the silverlined clouds above the horizon. The dampness yields to the oblique light that lifts its centre, then darkens towards its outer edge. It echoes its origin, enacting a negative parody to the departing rain clouds.

Raymond Moore's photographs consistently stress the interdependency of existence, highlighting the unconscious energy that impells transition. Space and time, light and form, separate only to merge. Life is seen as a weave of momentary occurrence in which all things are inextricably linked, each taking its respective part in the mystery of universal continuum. These images cannot be rationalised entirely. As symbols of compound meaning, they are multifaceted and obdurate. They exert a fascinating perhaps numinous effect, which can be realised only in experience. The most powerful message lies therein, each gives a renewed freshness to the world of appearance.

## Flatholm 1959

One Reading of "Flatholm, 1959", a Photograph by Raymond Moore now on exhibit at the Barbican in Through the Looking Glass, and also found on page 17 of *Murmurs at Every Turn*.

This picture is one of a series of interior studies that were part of Raymond Moore's earliest work. It signifies many of the central concerns that were to permeate his later landscapes.

Sunlight shines through a broken and boarded window onto a blistered wall. The lower half of which has been painted in a dark tone that effects a lateral division much like a distant horizon. The sunlit forms in the lower section take on a bold relief; they suggest an illustrated mountain range or the open pages of an atlas. The upper portion is flecked with tiny segments of light from the damaged window board. As they ascend they echo the amorphous quality of the pale forms in the section below. A diffuse light gives a sensation of atmosphere. The broken pane that forms the uppermost segment resembles a bird in flight, calling attention to the fleeting qualities of light. The smaller segments beneath take on the appearance of an increasingly remote flock.

The image is a powerful metaphor for the relation of ether to firmament and ocean, and the development of life therein. It contains an expression of vast movement and space, symbolising evolution.

Robert Claxton



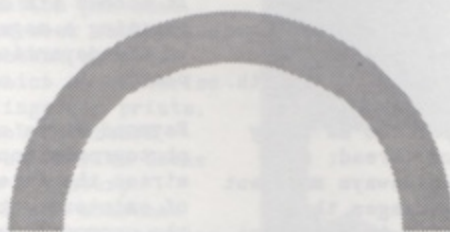
# The play of volumes under light

What happened to architectural photography? John Holmwood reflects.

"We did not ...find any architectural photography that seemed to fit our purposes" was Mark Haworth-Booth's comment in his introduction to 'Photography Now'. Since 'Photography Now', we've had 'Through the Looking Glass' and again, I don't recall seeing any exhibits for which the subject matter was pure architecture (except possibly one Edwin Smith from 1956). Mark Haworth-Booth went on to say that much good work was found that was "topographical, or environmental rather than architectural" indicating that photographers are apparently, at present, more concerned with the nature of the built environment than with the expressive qualities of buildings. It's perhaps no coincidence that architects too, think more in these terms now than they did say twenty years ago. Richard Rogers frequently refers to "the grain" of his buildings in relation to their urban context, and also refers to the "exterior space" created by a building to which architecture should have as much regard as interior space, or the facade of the building itself.

I think that photographers however have always sensed an affinity with architecture - Le Corbusier's description of architecture as "the magnificent, knowledgeable and correct play of volumes under light" could easily be the language of a photographer - but for some reason, it

appears that photographers have lost interest in this long standing affinity. If Susan Sontag is right when she says the "what moves people to take photographs is finding something beautiful" then it follows that photographers have ceased to find visual stimulation in architecture. Whilst you would be hard put to find a living soul who is unmoved by the interior of Kings College Chapel in Cambridge, it's a totally different matter when it comes to the new Lloyds building (unless moved to indignation). Perhaps this is where the problem lies - all the nice old stuff has been done to death (didn't Fredrick Evans say it all anyway?) and the new stuff is rather hard to come to terms with.



Like fine architecture itself, architectural photography, of course, is not entirely dead. Whilst I cannot think of a photographer of note in the independent sector working purely with architectural subject matter, I can think of several in the commercial and editorial sectors. A steady stream of commissions from architectural practices and building firms result in many new buildings being photographed, but this usually has more to do with promoting architects and builders' services than with architecture or photography. Arguably, the specialist

architectural press has most to offer in terms of meaningful architectural photography - all the important new buildings covered by publications such as the 'Architectural Journal' and 'The Architectural Review' with the monthly 'Blueprint' occupying a position slightly more towards the fringe but, in my view, outstripping the others in both the quality and presentation of its photography. The photographs in these publications are mostly pure illustration but are invariably impressive; occasionally a photograph does appear that transcends the ordinary illustration to renew belief in the creative potential of architectural photography. Of all the photographers contributing to these publications the name of Richard Bryant is the one to look out for - like many of the best photographers, it's hard to say precisely why he stands out from the crowd but I think it has something to do with economy, perhaps directness or legibility, but always the 'play of volumes under light'.

Good architectural photography I guess needs good architecture, and if we want to do more than keep going back to Durham Cathedral, then inspiration has to come from our own time. This may involve some effort in understanding the complexities of 20th century



# Notes from an exhibition

architectural thought - like contemporary music, such architecture requires effort and open-mindedness on the part of the observer to first make sense of it, then to understand and enjoy it. Its not just gothic versus classical any more. It also requires searching off the regular tourist beat, but I suggest that there are photographic rewards waiting to be claimed. In domestic architecture especially, the pickings are rich, 14-16 Hans Road by C.F.A. Voysey containing more than a hint of what was to come during the 20th century. Maxwell Fry's quintessentially modern house in Frognal Way, Hampstead and Michael Hopkin's 'High Tech' house in Downshire Hill are all worth visiting. Bedford Park, Merton Park and Hampstead Garden Suburb are all packed with examples of the best domestic architecture. Other buildings that come to mind are Denys Lasdun's Royal College of Physicians in Regents Park, the exquisite Penguin Pool, London Zoo, and not forgetting the infamous but genuinely imaginative Lloyds building. What photographer can fail to notice the tactile quality of the metallic surfaces and recall Le Corbusier's 'volumes under light.'

John Holmwood

Two years ago I helped to start the Urban Landscape Group at the Camera Club to specifically explore urban imagery. My recent exhibition at the Camera Club was drawn from a broad subject range but remained, essentially, the work of a town dweller. The exhibition title, 'Itinerant Images' contains some poetic licence and should really be 'Images by an itinerant photographer'. It is natural to consider one's own approach to an art form as a particularly pure one but I would make a case for the itinerant, one who moves or passes from place to place, who relies on the purely photographic skills for subject recognition, angle of view and use of available light. The work exhibited was contemporary, or at least in keeping with my views on photographic modernism.

The ultimate aim in setting up an exhibition is to arrive at some form of 'total aesthetic'. The difficulties are such that the most that can usually be hoped for is a 'good try'. I didn't really expect to learn much from the Camera Club show but as it turned out, I think I did. The direct physical constraint on the planning of the exhibition was the fixed panels in the Camera Club gallery space. I think the use of panels is deeply entrenched in Club photography, probably due to RPS distinction requirements. I feel the visual experience obtained from a panel differs in certain respects from exposure to a series of single images where the viewers attention to each is likely to be closer. It is however true that a well constructed panel

can come across very strongly although I suspect at the expense of lost detail. I sought to present the material in an acceptable if not entirely logical sequence. I think legibility is helped when the pictures harmonise with each other as well as forming some sort of sequence. To my mind some the factors affecting harmony include subject, contrast, period, quality, associated pathos, humour etc. quality being the most important. It is easy to forget the viewer when presenting ones own work.

Having explained my personal approach and the constraints of the gallery, I will now describe exactly what I did to organise the show.

1. Selected pictures for each panels, trying to reconcile the factors referred to above.
2. Prepared drawings roughly to scale with accurate space arrangement.
3. Attempted to prepare lists for viewer guidance, i.e. titles, captions etc. but gave up after several attempts.
4. Positioned the pictures as planned. Only one minor change was found necessary, i.e. to adjust overall contrast balance in one panel. (The number of on site changes varies inversely with the care taken at the planning stage).
5. Prepared exhibition notes.

Robin Williams



# Looking glass wars

"Things flow about so here!" she said at last in a plaintive tone, after she has spent a minute or so in vainly pursuing a large bright thing..." Lewis Carroll

Though perhaps tame and tricky compared to Wonderland's catalogue of beastlinesses, a lot of dodgy stuff still went down on the wrong side of the Rev Dodgson's Looking Glass. It is appropriate to find, therefore, that in holding a mirror up to the world - one idea of photography's function - over the last forty-odd years, photographers in Britain have found a lot more reflected there than the timeless pastorate and quotidian irony to which some would limit the medium's scope. Encouraging, too, to observe that despite the deafening murmur of evangelical hyperbole which greets us at every turn, many of the most interesting couldn't give a toss about Bill Brandt or Tony Ray-Jones, and that, saving a few notable exceptions, the insufferable abracadabra of the Minor White tendency never made much of a dent in the native genius for narrative, map-making and unforeseen invention.

Broad church, honest doubts, do your own thing. Like the gal said, We don't need another hero. Indeed, if John Benton-Harris's tabloid voyeurism and the endlessly repetitive technicolor facetiousness of Martin Parr have their origins in Ray-Jones's scoutings or Brandt's 'social anatomy' (that miner sitting down to tea in his pit black is still a problem) then the debate about 'then' and 'now' expounded by Peter Turner in his catalogue essay takes a different twist. The application of new critical perspectives to work produced before such ideas

were current can produce some eccentric results: for recent examples see Roberta McGrath on Edward Weston (Ten-8) or David Bate on Thomas Annan (Portfolio). But considerations of gender, race and class, inputs from Leftist, psychanalytical, feminist and structuralist discourses, and the continuing discussion of the ethical problems surrounding documentary photography, all of which have transformed photographic criticism during the last twenty years, may obviously, legitimately applied, not only cast a different light on a previous generation's greatest hits, but leave the likes of Parr and his disciples naked save for the unimpeachable production values.

This exhibition is haunted by notions of tradition. Peter Turner argues for a 'tradition of opposing camps'. I'll buy opposition. Gerry Badger quotes John Szarkowski on the death of the British tradition around the turn of the century (the last, not the next we should be so lucky). Richard Erlich begins by declaring that photography does not breed national schools and ends by ironically anticipating the announcement of a 'British School.' Put out more flags. A British school as opposed to what? It is one of the major nonsenses of British photographic culture that we pay more attention to the work of dead Americans than to that of our European contemporaries (as for the remaining Dark Continents...) Money's a problem, as ever - our curators and editors simply don't have the resources to show us the stuff. This mis-orientation (those poshly printed monographs by Heminwayesque heroes can be intimidating) is one of a number of factors contributing to the

inferiority complex which in turn gives rise to the need to demonstrate the existence of a continuing tradition. But at best it's an inadequate and even reactionary way of legitimising, vouching for, the quality of work, and at worst may seriously hinder, by its nostalgic determinism, the widening of critical sympathies towards the medium.

As the selectors suggest, this is one survey of the subject and others, informed by different priorities, are also possible. Taking a draft of his catalogue essay for a walk round the block in Creative Camera last year, Badger puzzled: "Why has the independent field produced so few British photographers worthy of international repute - to my mind only Ray-Jones, Moore and possibly Chris Killip? Why have Britain's most renowned utilisers of our medium like Long, Fulton, Burgin, Chadwick, Hillard - emanated from a wholly different tradition?" It's usually the photography mob who pull up the drawbridge on the art/photography issue, so it is very much to Badger's and Benton-Harris's credit that they were not afraid to boldly go through the thorny thickets of Cork Street and Academe to explore these crucial questions. And although the result is an exhibition that seems almost divided in two the selection is very much what one would expect. (Quibbling can be fun though: I'd swap Mari Mahr for Hannah Collins, half the McKenzies for a couple of Macdonalds - Ian, not Ronald - and Elizabeth Williams and Ingrid Pollard for just about anything). Perhaps the most controversial note is struck by Badger's rejection of Cecil Beaton as "that throwback to fey Edwardian



bohemianism, all chintz and phantasmagorical backdrop."

Having decided who, the next problem is what. Perhaps it's more important in terms of widening the audience than pleasing the established fans, but some people seem oddly represented, or even rather undersold by what's on show: Edwin Smith, for instance or Roger Mayne whose Southam Street pictures, combining documentary content, graphic sense and empathy in a way that's all too rare in street photography, constitute one of the few forgivable examples of the genre. Again, are the contributions from Webb, Doherty, Hamilton, Goto, sufficient to establish the 'language' of each artist? Availability is a factor of course - perhaps this is why there is no Gilbert & George, despite honourable mention in the catalogue as pivotal figures in the on-going art/photography argy-bargy. Conversely, whilst the war pictures of Hardy, Jones-Griffiths and McCullin are, from one point of view, the only really indispensable works on show here, do McCullin's landscapes and still lifes have an equivalent claim to greatness?

How far is it the job of the curator of an exhibition like this to let the viewer know of the life that some of the work might lead away from the gallery wall? As educational, or archive material, for instance, as journalism, corporate self-celebration or simple career manoeuvre? Equally hard to convey is that the web of relationships between the photographer, the

work, its distribution and the idea of an audience is not in every case the same. Consider for example Chris Killip's dogged refusal to caption or date his images: does this denial of documentary transparency point us towards notions of timelessness and universality, or does it constitute a more hard-nosed pre-emptive retaliation against certain easy readings? Or compare Maxine Walker's interiors, houseproud emporia of plastic tropicana, with Ron O'Donnell's magnificent 'The Scotsman', an hilarious nightmare of tatty tartanalia and consumable Scotchness surrounding hairy-kneed, footba' headed Jimmy: in both, though different strategies are in play, the artist's intentions may be disastrously mis-read if we do not have essential information about the identity of the work's maker. The quantitative idea of the 'good photograph' - as if such a notion could in itself amount to an adequate and meaningful critical discourse viable in isolation from all others - won't do at all here, or anywhere else in the second half of the show. The idea of the photograph as a self-defining product has given way to the photograph as vessel, component, gesture, problem.

Reasons to be cheerful, reasons to be careful. Paul Graham forges ahead: personal gong for the picture-in-the-show-I-most-wish-I'd-done to his 'Wire on Post, Belfast'. Colour photographers widen the palette beyond blue and red. Fay Godwin promises a 'more political' look at the landscape. McCormick, Chadwick, Goldsworthy, Palmer surprise, confuse, delight, perplex, but all are clear where they're coming from without looking constantly

over their shoulders.

There are no doubt partisans here and there eager to salute Through The Looking Glass as the swan-song of a white, largely male, critical hegemony, while others will note with satisfaction that 'crossover', from minority to mainstream acceptance, is open to any work that transcends parochial concerns and is encouraged by curatorial attitudes that positively resist special pleading. And certainly all critical precepts based upon the notion of 'straight' photography (as opposed to...?) face a gathering onslaught not so much from Art and ideology but from technology. The exhibition I most look forward to, when the imminent millenium prompts the next burst of anthologising, is the one that neither has us genuflecting before the denizens of the Hall of Fame, nor ticking off My Hundred Best Snaps, but instead explores the idea of 'the photographic' and its impact upon our perceptions, communications and artistic production.

Footnote: Cheaper by the Gross

Whatever the shortcomings of Through the Looking Glass it's worth going to almost any lengths to defend it and many of the areas of work it represents against the puerile, bigotted, uninformed, prejudiced, mindless crap passed off as serious criticism by Brian Sewell in the Standard and Jozef Gross in Photography magazine. Somewhere out there is a lost generation of dance band musicians still muttering into their Mackesons that rock'n'roll is just a nine days' wonder...

Root Cartwright



## Shaw's shots

### Hanging at the Mermaid

How we laboured in the sweltering heat, each adopting a preferred role: Rob Claxton was wall-painter extraordinaire (visitors to the exhibition may not realise that the wall was specially white-washed); Yoke Matze was supervisor and liner-upper; Virginia Khuri and Janet Hall were screw-inners, Virginia wielding the awl and Janet the screwdriver, and later the windolene; while David Malarky was proof-reader. I was chief holder-upper (apart from Roger Estop's "Hedges" which Rob was required to hold up). You do get to know the pictures quite well as holder-upper (from about 2 inches away), so I feel each one is printed on my memory...

After the lunch-time diners had left, the "hanging machine" sprang into action - lining up, holding up, awling and screwing in from one panel to the next. Then up with the names, numbers and statements - all taking place with a good deal of fun, so that there was no sense of "task" - in fact rather a good time was being had by all...

### Head for the hills

Wondering what to photograph next? Why not take yourself and your camera on a magical walking tour with 'Head for the Hills'? These "ambles through Paradise" are

organised by Laurence Golding. He researches each walk carefully and leads the walkers over the moors through hidden valleys and along forgotten streams, to camp in delightful locations. All your baggage is carried for you, so you just take a little knapsack for your packed lunch - and of course your camera (SLR or compact, recommended).

Having been on five of the walks, I have come to appreciate Laurence's gift for orchestrating the variations of terrain like a symphony - a crescendo on the hills, unexpected trills to a picnic at a beautiful reed-fringed pool and pleasing codas of arrival at the next campsite (usually a farmer's field, but selected for the view and atmosphere).

Enquiries to: Head for the Hills, Garth, Builth, Powys  
Tel: 05912 - 388

### Lighting fires

Mick Williamson, head of the photography department at the Sir John Cass School of Art, Whitechapel, threw himself into the one day LIP workshop with such energy that it seemed he was aiming to pack a whole term's course into 6 hours. Yet his enthusiasm was balanced with a calm manner and a receptive approach to the work brought by the participants which created a relaxed and stimulating atmosphere for us to learn in.

As well as comments on printing and viewpoint, I was

struck by his encouragement to us to develop photography that had particular strong meaning for us (above all to eschew imitation) - a refreshingly photographer-centered approach. Mick helped us with the preparation of our portfolios for exhibitions, as well as fitting in a demonstration of dry mounting and hints on mount cutting.

By the end of the day, I felt not only had my personal work benefitted, but that I'd witnessed an inspiring tour de force on "how to teach photography" in the manner of "lighting fires" rather than "filling pots".

### Teaching off the cuff

I recently taught a fourday course in slide photography on a Dance Week at Lower Shaw Farm in Wiltshire. My friend, Ross Wallis, an art teacher, said "Beth, you do the art bit, I'll do the technical". Given my well-known disdain for the technical aspects of our craft, I didn't quite realise how ambitious we were being in planning to distribute slide film which we would develop by E6 processing, mount and exhibit in a slide show before the end of the week.

Our photographers' group of eight students were sent off with the brief to take "patterns" rather than reportage, to make paintings of what they saw and to try to incorporate what they saw in three dimensions into a 2-D frame. We encouraged the



'considered' approach to photography as students only recieved about 20 slides each to work with.

At sunset on the first day we collected up the various canisters in order to process them. Our first attempt at the E6 processing was rather disastrous, chiefly because we tried to involve the students in it, so we started all over again. I was determined that the second developing session would succeed so I enlisted the help of Pierre Courtanche, formerly of Half Moon Photography, sea-captain, drama-teacher and photography boffin. With Pierre at the helm we got all 8 films successfully processed in the farm dairy. Leaving the strips of film to harden while we had supper, the photographers then went to mount them into frames. Two people had been using half frames but as we had few half frame mounts, readily agreed to cut them into two and mount them two at a time in regular mounts. In each case it proved very effective to

mount two half frames together.

We then had a selectors slide show just for the photographers. The selection committee, which consisted of myself and two of the students, followed Pierre Courtanche's advice to "bracket" ie to put the second best photographer on first and the best last. Similarly within each photographer's work, the second best slide was put first and the best one at the end. Towards the end of the selection session, the bulb blew on the projector, so there was another fast pedal on a borrowed bicycle to the camera shop in Swindon to obtain a replacement bulb. In fact some crisis on the technical side had

necessitated a fast pedal into Swindon every day so far. By this time the camera shop were getting quite pally with us.

That evening we held the much awaited Slide Show in a packed hayloft to the whole group. Each photographer was given a chance to say something about their work and to answer questions. The residents said they enjoyed seeing the farm through the photographers' eyes.

Lower Shaw Farm hopes to organise a series of photography workshops led by Pierre Courtanche in 1990. For details of this and their other activities, phone 0793-771080.

Beth Shaw

## Sterling on trial

You may be interested in my very brief trial of Sterling Paper. This is very superficial as all I tried to do was compare Sterling grade 2 with Galerie grade 2, which is my normal choice.

Sterling seems well packed in a foil lined inner bag, double folded to light seal it. The paper base itself seemed more brittle than Galerie and tore much more easily. It did lie much flatter on the easel (more important than you think until you've had a pack of really curly paper).

In printing, Sterling seemed

about 20% faster than Galerie. This is less than a third of a stop, so speed isn't a problem. Sterling seemed just a bit more contrasty, but by increasing development time by 25-50% I was able to produce a match with Galerie. The exposure adjustment for the extra development now gave both papers the same effective speed. Nothing to choose between them really, two excellent papers.

The dry prints showed other differences. Sterling seemed to have a slightly whiter base and Galerie a yellower print colour. The surprising difference was

that Sterling seemed to render fine texture more crisply. Not more sharply, there was no loss of information, but with just a little more punch. I can only assume that the curve, between, say zones IV and VI is a little steeper than Galerie. Blacks were black in both cases and I thought that the paper base of Sterling was a little brighter than Galerie. Image colour of Sterling seemed a little more neutral. All in all, a welcome addition. I look forward to doing some more testing and printing with it.

David Malarkey



## In the eyes

The Young Ones, Chris Swift, Delroy Bent, Tessa Holmes, Townly Cooke, Wood Green Library, September 89

In 'Carew Brothers' by Tessa Holmes you can see the horizon reflected in the child's eyes. In a metaphorical sense this what is powerful about all child portraits, large eyes which say as much about their world and their future as about their unformed personality.

Delroy Bent's 'Waiting' demonstrates this through the long suffering gaze of a boy resting his head on a pub table, a look that can be read and which is amplified by the peripheral subject matter in the photograph: the mother's anxious look towards the distance indistinct bar.

Unselfconsciousness of a child which makes their gaze so telling also characterises their attitude at play. In Chris Swift's 'Water Fountain, Playtime' we watch a young boy's hands feet and look each tell a separate story, a moment in which everything is happening in several places in and out of the picture simultaneously. And in Townly Cooke's 'Laughing Girls' the unrestrained mirth of the children immediately infects the viewer and leaves you giggling.

All photographs of children tend to have immediate appeal through their powers of association, and incitement to reflection. But this does not make them any easier to take, especially when there is so much cliché and bathos to counter in popular photography. Each of the four photographers in this exhibition adopts a distinct approach reflecting their own particular attitude.

Townly Cooke sees children as an active part of a dynamic landscape and coordinates form and content in a startling way producing individual pictures, each a small meal in itself. Chris Swift's sympathetic and perceptive school studies are direct and understated managing to locate the movement and the feeling from the chaos of a playground or classroom.

Delroy Bent is a story teller, each picture and title starts you off on a speculative adventure based on the suggestiveness of the characters and their settings.

Tessa Holmes' studies are personal explorations, forming a family document containing personal reflection, and forming a sequence of images. This exhibition of photographs of Children is very accessible and entertaining to the passing viewer but enables four very different approaches to photography to be demonstrated. This exhibition succeeds in presenting a popular and accessible show, appropriate for a shopping centre location without compromising the seriousness of the photographers' intentions. RE.

## Dreams in colour

Peter Fraser at Interim Art, July 89

Two pieces (six images), albeit big, make this the smallest exhibition I've seen, yet one of the most refreshing. Interim Art is the most delightful exhibition space in London and quite appropriate for Peter Fraser's sophisticated and considered latest work. He shows two triptychs of huge square images each inscrutable as they are compelling; they ask many questions and the clues are complicated. But

they don't trouble with their mystery; one regards them like a dream - registering the signs but not necessarily requiring explanation. Here are photographs in which symbol and personal association, form and colour all interact, and of which colour is of preeminent importance. Peter Fraser uses colour in a way which sets him apart from the brat pack of new documentarians, his colour and subject matter and meaning are poetically interlinked and keep his work unique among contemporary photographers. RE.

## On the street

Chris Evans 'In the Money' Creative Camera 7/89

Street photography is really an American phenomenon. In Britain we have beach photography and, latterly, car park and hypermarket photography in which colour is integral to capture the glint of carrier bags and synthetic ski jackets. Contemporary colour photography can only be done in the suburbs and the new towns.

For his Oxford Street Christmas shoppers, Chris Evans uses black and white. This is because he is in central London and, at heart, is an American. Yet his photography remains contemporary and British because he has correctly identified and located consumer culture, including self interest, carrier bags and anoraks, as the relevant arena for his work. Most importantly black and white is the only medium for a war photographer and these are battle zone photographs. Taken on the run, in the thick of the action with a combination of long exposure and daylight flash, a frozen look of obsession, fear or

vacantness is encased in the emulsion: 'Did I spend enough on Grandad's present?'

The title and captions show money as a central theme: not the funny money of the yuppie city we are familiar with, but dirty hard cash, or precious plastic credit. These harsh and revealing photographs are the antidote to the slick advertising, TV and magazine images that motivated these people through the drizzle, through the crowds. Yet these arrested moments become transformed in the surface of the print into a dance of marks, lights, raindrops, a blur of a shopping bag. Photography again translating a base subject matter into a fascinating object of light and shape. RE.

## Style catalogue

Annual Exhibition of the London Salon of Photography: Hays Galleria

The London Salon has a history rather longer than half of photography, and started as the most forward thinking group of photographers in the world. The torch has since passed through other hands, but the Salon continues as a sort of Upper Chamber to the RPS.

Hay's Galleria is a rather intimidating space for any exhibition and last year it overwhelmed the pictures completely. This year an increase in street level activity has ameliorated the effect of the huge volume and the prints can be viewed more easily.

It's something of a catalogue of all the styles - real pictorial; soot-and-whitewash; Hamilton soft; darkroom clever-clogs; leica wearer; and so on. This



sounds dismissive but it's meant kindly. The salon has no single, or perhaps simply stated, philosophy. Coherence is generated by the indirect process of membership which is by invitation only, and the invitation is based presumably, on the potential member's work. The selection committee, of course has to notice the work before it approaches the worker, and from this singularity arises the one uniting factor in the display.

Impact. The works are all hard-hitting, visually straightforward even when apparently about mystery, and in these days of the single issue, heavily curated exhibition, it makes for rather incoherent viewing. Nevertheless, it's a jolly romp through other people's enthusiasms, and I'm glad I saw it.

DM.

## Cubist camera

Pearblossom Highway  
(second version) 1989 by  
David Hockney

(in Hockney on  
Photography, by Paul  
Joyce, p.148)

Pearblossom Highway represents the culmination of Hockney's experiments with photography. Shortly afterwards he returned to painting and used some of the lessons he learned about viewpoint and perspective. Pearblossom Highway is a landscape, purely photographic, deceptively simple, but wholly radical, in which painterly technique and tradition play a part. It is a 'joiner' but the colour prints are arranged within a conventional rectangular frame. The image makes an impact as a cubist representation of a desert landscape but is unneringly real. While adhering to a broadly

correct overall perspective, Hockney has moved around the landscape considerably, taking closer shots of signposts or bushes, wandering off to provide a more studied representation of certain specific details. Hence, looking closely, the viewer can examine a minute detail, while standing back enjoy an entirely subjective representation.

Hockney has asked questions about photographic truth, but instead of making the questions the main point of the work, he has found a solution that makes sense within a fascinating image. And despite some criticism from the photographic world, Hockney has developed our understanding of photographic vision.

Hockney's single joiner in the Barbican exhibition does not do him justice, being a rather indulgent joiner of a single subject from an essentially single viewpoint; Pearblossom Highway by contrast is a stimulating photographic landscape which is unambiguous and enjoyable while still provoking curiosity and argument.

RE.

## Zoo time

Tim Slader photographs,  
the Elephant House, London  
Zoo.

This isn't the name of a trendy gallery, this is your actual elephant house in the zoo complete with smell, trumpet sounds and dropped ice creams.

Zoo pictures seem too easy and a bit unsound: the subject is too obviously unusual and totally captive. Yet good zoo pictures compel (and Tim Slader's are good) and entertain beyond your better judgement. And if G. Winogrand did it, it must be OK.

RE.

## Pausing in E11

IN PASSING

Leytonstone Observed:  
Recent Photographs by  
Roger Estop

Shown at the Vestry House  
Museum London E17,  
7 Sept. - 2 Oct.

Familiarity, as we all know, breeds the peculiar blindness of taking everything for granted. Roger Estop, as his introduction states, has tried to get beyond this and see Leytonstone as it really is, not from the rose-tinted vantage point of a tourist (possibly an unlikely concept in E11 - a strange land to those of us who live in more civilised parts) but as a resident of some years.

The best of his work certainly captures a freshness of viewing and occasionally challenges our visual preconceptions. The work is quite varied; among personal favorites were a view from the street into a front room (Mayville Rd), a series of frames whose point is reached where the low projected sunlight from the window strikes a bust on the inside wall; an unusually truncated (couldn't resist it) tree stump whose point is echoed by the gable of a garage and the rear extension of a house; and the clearly defined dark leaf which contrasts with the pale and indistinct reflection of a church in Kirkdale Rd (this could perhaps be entitled 'One for Ray'?)

Titles were perhaps the weakest aspect of this part of the exhibition, often showing a dead-pan and prosaic pedestrianism, verging towards Pinter or Peter Cook; viewers should be trusted to think the obvious on their own. It was a strange contrast with the subtlety and

sensitivity of the pictures.

Gallic-wise, (in deference to 1789?) the show was divided into three parts, the unifying thread being that all were taken on the streets of Leytonstone. Related to the above were several groups of small prints. A colour set explored the art of coarse topiary; another bandaging and another first aid to cars. A further set showed wrapped objects (probably not sewing machines not umbrellas and definitely no sign of an operating table, but equally certainly a nod in the direction of Decasse and Ray). Most interesting to me, perhaps because of the wider range of subjects, were a set united by their vertical division into two halves, similar but tellingly not identical. A face on a moulding between neighboring properties where one owner prefers black and other white paint (are the overtones of racialism or racial harmony?). Two hedges, again the dividing line between properties, one neatly trimmed, the other somewhat wilder, each apparently trying to impose its personality on its neighbour. Many more of these pictures were fun too.

Lastly, a set of pictures of various workers on and around the streets. Some succeed admirably - the purposeful bustle of the Community Midwife, the shopkeeper behind his counter with its elaborate assembly of rectangular shapes and the repeating details of the wrappers of the sweets. This detail, however, provided one of the few points in the show where I longed for the superior definition of large format. Although these pictures could be a valuable piece of local history, I feel they lack both the personal view and the consistency of the rest of Roger's work.

I look forward to his next exhibition.

PM.



After Walter Benjamin and Susan Sontag some quotations for the end of the 1980's.

The term "photography" is now so well known that an explanation of it is perhaps superfluous.

VH Fox Talbot, 'Pencil of Nature' Vol.1

...photography is a purely mechanical process into which the artist does not enter.

Sir Leigh Ashton,  
Director of the V&A to  
Roger Mayne, 1954

The world is going to pieces and people like Adams and Weston are photographing rocks!

H Cartier-Bresson 1930's

New technologies have started revolutions that need not frighten us. They can be humanised by artists.

David Hockney

What you see is what you get.

Anon

The independent photography sector comprises a wide range of groups and individuals, photographers, educationalists, community workers, publishers and administrators engaged in one way or another in photographic work that operates outside of the dominant representational practices of our culture.

Sara Vorrall, National Phototgraphy Conference

Our emphasis on the straight photographic tradition produces a tendency for us to laud such virtues as 'authenticity', 'honesty', and 'truth', whilst disparaging artifice and what we perceive to be deviations from the moral code prescribed by that weighty and culturally loaded term 'straight'. Our common background leads us to view the medium as a humanistic discipline, practiced by those who hopefully bring special qualities of perception to their exploration of experience.

Gerry Badger/Peter Turner  
"Photo Texts" (Travelling Light 1988)

The most enjoyable display of confidence in 'Photography Now' is John Baldessari's The Fallen Easel, a cluster of framed images, like a thriller unbound... This delivers a complete treatise on photographic means: the framing, the freezing, the editing, the angling, the montage or narrative; the facility to plot, to stare, to contemplate and indeed to use one's imagination.

William Feaver, Observer

It seems to be extensively believed by photographers that meanings are to be found in the world much in the way that rabbits are found on downs, and that all that is required is the talent to spot them and the skill to shoot them. However the naturalness of the world ostensibly open before the camera is a deceit. Objects present to the camera are already in use in the production of meanings, and photography has no choice but to operate upon such meanings.

Victor Burgin

The interest now is in persuading people to take a part in presenting themselves rather than allowing the image of themselves to be dictated by others... In this sort of argument 'community photography' is regarded as a means to informal adult education, a pin-hole version of Educating Rita... Such is the aim of the newest workers with photography in the community. Heaven alone knows whether it will make any impact, but it presents an interesting challenge to the Arts Council, which will be asked more frequently to subsidise small groups whose work is not the production of sumptuous 10 x8 prints but encouraging people to redress the balance of debate in society.

Peter Dormer, New Statesman May 1983

If, as has been argued elsewhere, we are on the brink of an over arching theory of representation, linking media, film and cultural studies to art history, we must now take seriously the signs and symbols that people chose to use from their everyday lives to represent themselves. In short the snapshots and family albums produced within what has been called 'popular Photography', and any of the professional modes of photography which we choose to commission privately.

Jo Spence, WASL Journal  
July 1989

New art historians seek to explain the picture (now called the image) within parameters of context (now called discourse) which transgress the boundaries of the visual and establish its function within structures which partake of various hegemonies. If this sounds difficult, it is.

Anita Brookner quoted in  
"Poto Texts"  
Turner/Badger 1988.

Given the seemingly inevitable lack of a coherent critical discourse which can take account (not necessarily approve) of plurality of practice and motivation - ... we have the persistent tripartite slanging match between the art-historical, the ideological/structuralist and the photo-purist/modernist - what else should we expect?

Root Cartwright CC 4/1989

Art is an experience, not the formulation of a problem.

Lindsay Anderson

Its as if photography was born old and grew to become juvenile.'

Tim Hilton, Guardian.