

L I N D E N D E N T
P H O T O G R A P H Y

LIP SERVICE

No 7



S I Witkiewicz, Anna Oderfeld, Zakopane 1912. From the exhibition recently at the Photographers' Gallery and touring.

I'm staring in your face, you'll photograph mine

I'm staring in your face

The portrait session

We are often asked why we take photographs. I feel that such a question is impossible to answer. Or I reply that I *have* to take a picture; thus prolonging the impossible dialogue. When I produce a portrait, I feel I must know the person I am dealing with. I find it essential to approach someone and show them my work before the session, to find their interests and their intelligence and their reaction to my work.

I feel that I have a duty to record not only the face but also the spirit of the person. I do that by the frame, the attitude and the expression of the sitter. I work my subjects hard and my friends harder. One was asked to wear a much worn jacket and then told to look away from the camera, so obscuring his face. Another was told to look at the camera with his face twisted away, his chin on his shoulder.

My work is considered to be 'hard' and I do not flatter, but I do create an impression of the person rather than an objective view. The portrait is a document of importance. The photographer has to have faith in his ability and in the process of extracting the personality of the sitter. When I produce a portrait I have to enter this personality. I force the conversation to extract insight and demand stories, information, anything to get the subject to open up. I see the session as a performance, the sitter is rarely relaxed unless in media and used to this strange confrontation. I try to visualise and to 'see' the picture in the viewfinder. I am aware that the slightest movement will change the picture, that the smallest change in the aspect of light will alter the effect and that to lose concentration will break the spell. The hardest part of the session is to have a break and to interrupt the tension.

Remember, to take a portrait is to steal the soul. Not for ever, but this moment is being extracted for use later. I have to take over the session and impose my photographic will in order to get what I want. The best portraits in my view are the ones that are the cleanest. By that I mean an intelligent attitude toward the subject, an awareness of balance and

graphic space and hopefully honest approach toward the subject.

The photographic session is an area of trust and fidelity.

Richard Coward

Head hunting

The act or art of portrait photography has become something that I have approached with increasing trepidation. Having mastered the simpler aspects of focusing, exposure, lighting, then followed them up with some clever trickery, artful devices and mannered poses, tossed in a few famous faces and stirred moderately in a warm portfolio I emerged with something that can only be described as stew.

Taking someone's photograph, transforming the everyday, technicolour, moving world into the cool tones of black and white posterity no longer gives pleasure. I got sick of the god-like power of the camera, the willful striving towards beauty or truth or strength, the terrible guilt of taking a photograph that was ultimately mute. The sense of 'head-hunting', so that the only message that came across was one of poverty or age or youth or intellect or fame. In other words I came to believe that a photograph has nothing to do with a person and that to believe that the linear structure of their skin and lips and eyes and muscle is somehow imperative to understanding that whole person is absurd.

The portraits I took, feel to me now, more like the trophies of a big game hunter, somehow dead and stuffed and only worthwhile as proof of having been there. Yet looking at them, I also feel painfully absent. My memories of each sitting have been diluted to the photograph itself and without it I remember precious little. It makes me wonder what I learned, or earned or gained from the act. Did I become a 'good' photographer, did I steal some souls, flatter or deflate an ego (mine or my subjects) provide an insight or merely record what was there, dully, flatly, two dimensionally for ever and almost ever?

The reasons for my doubt were in part due to my questioning what I was creating. Each photograph seemed more an ikon to the sacred god of photography than a simple fact giving image. The pictures I was taking had become increasingly romantic and my approach in tackling each 'subject' was coloured by an almost religious set of disciplines. I followed the tenets of 'pure photography', never used flash, never cropped an image in printing and always printed on fibre based paper.

A turning point was a portrait I did of my nine month old daughter. I approached it with the same seriousness that I would an adult portrait, so that in it she is endowed with all the iconography and symbolism more commonly associated with maturity.

David Hurn wrote that 'A mother taking a picture of her baby has most of the characteristics of the great photographer: love and knowledge of the subject matter, an unthinking control of her camera (probably an Instamatic), and a total disinterest in any form of gimmick.' In saying this he assumes, of course, that these 'mothers' are not photographers in the skilled and professional sense of the word and clearly highlights all the pompous and self serving snobbery that can afflict those who seek to pursue photography as art and feel the need to set themselves apart from the takers of 'snapshots'.

Having said this I still feel caught between two schools of thought and practice. Jo Spence's work leaves me cold, while I love Irving Penn, early Mapplethorpe, Brandt, Cameron. I am drawn to their images, I desire them and harbour dark wishes to emulate them. I say 'dark wishes' because as a feminist I feel guilt at my wanting to embrace rather than contradict stereotypes.

My photographic practice seemed to me (and still seems to) thwarted by some lack within myself; an inability to bring together my politics and my art compounded by a sometimes stubborn refusal to change; a clinging to the old romantic values. Again and again the question 'why am I taking photographs?' was raised. And the answers were as diverse as photography itself, reflecting in some ways the metamorphosis art practice and theory was undergoing.

It seemed to me that if my illness was ignorance then the cure might lie in reading. The medicine was at first sight a huge and unpalatable pill, that could only be swallowed after the body was thoroughly purged of its precious belief and even then it was a slow and painful process. Reading Freud, Lacan, Jung, Raymond Williams, Kant, Benjamin, Julia Frisleva, Laura McLvey, Peter Wollen, Victor Burgin. Each name became another brick in the wall of my misunderstanding. I was tempted to scream and shout and stamp my feet, to whisper the accusing word, 'Elitism'. I felt shut out of some vast and glorious temple. I felt like I had had some small succulent taste of something, yet I was excluded from the feast and having had that taste I knew I couldn't return to the bland food of old. So I gave up.

Or rather I should say I stopped taking photographs. Or perhaps like an actress I'm 'resting'.

Jo Hughes

Matters of life and death

Nicholas Nixon: Pictures of People

The camera, so often an unyielding lump of hardware between photographer and subject, is made into a gentle and sympathetic revealer of human presence. Remarkable, therefore, that it is a 10x8 inch view camera, more suited to the high level urban landscapes Nixon started with (with dull results) than private and poignant portraits.

Nicholas Nixon started to compose pictures of groups of people within the local neighbourhood, spontaneous and natural, some self consciousness in the people but with satisfying balanced compositions and a sense of interaction between the individuals. Later he focussed his concerns. The exhibition has four major works - old people, people with AIDS, the Brown sisters, his wife and baby.

With old age and AIDS Nixon approaches the margin of life before death, an avoided and taboo area of portrait photography. The famous Brown sisters series is also concerned with mortality: we see time passing, the simplicity and inevitability of the series is shocking, yet the fluctuations and subtlety of change through

these single annual photographs is revealing, almost reassuring. The familiar and obvious become a revelation.

In his *Pictures of people*, such an unassuming title, people emerge as much more important than the picture. This cannot happen automatically. People will be suspicious or put up barriers. Nixon's pictures speak of love, in its broadest sense. This is his most important contribution as photographer and that self denying attitude generates the trust of his vulnerable subjects.

This kind of photography does not need 10x8. It could be done more quickly on medium or small format. Indeed, technical virtuosity is the least of the concerns of this work. The big camera, however, demanding a discipline that smaller cameras do not, carries a greater significance. The camera is a kind of altar upon which Nixon reveres his subject and by which he humbles himself. Alternatively, the camera is his albatross carrying the burden of suffering and frailty that his work penetrates. 10x8 is the most exciting negative size and the most boring print size and, constrained by the contact print, the subject benefits entirely from the technical quality and the photographer receives no artificial glamour from the modest presentation.

Universal questions of humanity are dealt with within the confined world of Nixon's home and neighbourhood. Wife and baby, sisters-in-law, local street life. The pictures speak to one's deepest instincts, they

are often painful and difficult, yet he keeps sentimentality at bay and he avoids overt political statement. They are of the individuals they depict but they are about our own vulnerability and transience.

So how can we reconcile his own statement (quoted in *Photography Now*), 'I love to photograph people, their skin, their stances, the space around them. The picture is the point: the clearer and more beautiful the better.' Here his interest in the physical representation seems to run counter to the impressions the pictures make on the viewer which are essentially emotional. His pictures of his wife and baby are most obviously to do with the beauty of skin, space and stance but are nevertheless more than this. In other photographs he uses a splash of sunshine, not simply in a dramatic pictorial manner but, however consciously or not, to assert his optimism about human spirit.

Roger Estop

Photographing people

A symposium on 15 September with Marketa Lusckacova, Sam Tanner and Yoke Matze. Plus, Portraiture workshop with Richard Coward on 6 October. See page 16 for details.



Sam Tanner. From his exhibition on carers - *Is love enough?* Lily with her husband John who had suffered both a stroke and a brain tumour. As well as caring for John full-time, Lily ran a carers support group and taught a keep fit class.

The return of Frank & Klein

Christopher Evans

The last year has seen books published by two photographers, Robert Frank and William Klein, whose activities have always mirrored each other in a curious way. Frank's book, *The Lines of My Hand*, is an expanded edition of a book originally published in 1972 and out of print since then. The additions are mostly reworkings of old images or pieces from the 1970s, many of which were shown in the Paris retrospective of three years ago. The book is preoccupied with his earlier book, *The Americans*, referring to it in various ways throughout.

Klein's book, *Close Up*, contains mostly new material, some of it seen in various retrospective publications and shows during the last ten years, but much of it unseen. In fact the book contains a very high proportion of photographs taken during 1989, including some of the Bicentennial of the French Revolution, only 12 weeks before the book was published. Like Frank though, he refers to his famous books of the late 1950s and early 1960s; each of the book's sections is centered on a photograph from one of the old books.

Both men originally became famous in the late 1950s with a book about America - Klein's *New York* and Frank's *The Americans*. Klein, a New Yorker, had returned to America after living in Paris since 1948. Frank, a Swiss, had come to America to live in 1947, having spent some time in Paris.

Both men were also working for American fashion magazines, Frank working mostly for *Harpers* under Brodovitch. Klein was photographing for *Vogue* under Lieberman. In fact both were sent by *Vogue* to photograph the same event, Elsa Maxwell's Toy Ball of 1955, and both later included photographs of the event in their books, characteristically Klein used two, and Frank one.

Klein photographed for his book over a period of 3 months, while working for *Vogue*, shooting a total of 420 rolls of film and publishing 264 photographs in his book. Frank took a year working more or less full time to photograph for his, shooting about 800 rolls of film throughout America, and publishing 83 photographs in his book.

Neither was able to find an American publisher for their books at

first, and both were eventually published in Paris; Frank by Delpire, and Klein by Chris Marker. *New York* has never been published in America, while *The Americans* has now had two American editions. Klein is now working on a new edition of his book for a Japanese publisher. The original version of *The Lines Of My Hand* was commissioned by a Japanese publisher.

Comparing those two books is instructive; although both were published within a year of each other, it's hard to see them as products of the same time. Klein's seems to look forward to the 1960s, the printing is quite brutal, with few tones other than pure black and white registering (it was this book that influenced Brandt, one of Frank's acknowledged influences, to change his printing



Robert Frank, Elsa Maxwell's Toy Ball at the Waldorf Astoria. From *The Americans*.

style). The book apes the look of a tabloid paper, and is a forerunner of pop art, with its concern with slogans and advertising hoardings. It has a manic energy, the author's presence is felt throughout mostly via eye contact with the subjects.

Frank's is very much a product of the 1950s, at least in retrospect. The photographs show America to be a drab, sad place with little happening, the flag, car and jukebox are the icons of the time. There is very little eye contact throughout the book, Frank's seems to be always on the edge of things, fading into the background. Above all the book is concerned with feeling, with a certain emotional tone, whereas Klein's concerns are much more to do with the organisation and orchestration of visual elements.

Both then went on to renounce photography for film, Klein in 1962 after producing books on Rome, Moscow and Tokyo, Frank after starting work on a project on buses, echoing Walker Evans' subway series of 20 years earlier. Klein continued to work as a fashion photographer until 1966 when he parodied the industry in the film *Qui Etes-Vous, Polly Maggoo!* His fashion work was highly influential; compare Bailey's photographs of the mid sixties with Klein's of a few years earlier.

Klein had always been interested in films, making his first, *Broadway By Light*, in 1958. Frank had not shown any previous interest in film. Both were sick of photography for different reasons. Klein because almost no one was interested in the medium, and it was impossible to make a living, Frank because he was tired of the loneliness and depression out of which he usually worked.

In truth, given the precedents they had set for themselves, it is hard to see how either of them could continue in photography at that time. Frank had made a book about an entire nation, Klein had covered four major cities. Where could they go from there?

Frank's book was highly influential on the design of other books, the format (copied from Walker Evans), photograph with a short caption on otherwise blank facing pages, has become a standard to the extent that photographic books are set out like this without any apparent thought about other possibilities. The design of Klein's book has had little influence.

Frank inspired an entire school of younger photographers in America. His influence being mainly in terms of the content and mood - the early



William Klein, *Elsa Maxwell's Toy Ball at the Waldorf Astoria*.
From *Life is good and good for you in New York*.

photographs of Ralph Gibson give an indication of how strongly he influenced even photographers with quite different outlook. The result was that America was photographed by Americans during the 1960s as if they were disaffected Europeans.

By contrast, Klein's photographs have not been influential in America, and within the American histories of the medium he is treated as a maveric, outside the main thrust of history. In France, by contrast, he has been highly influential (for an example see Francois Hers' *A Tale*), and is a very well known figure who is featured in all major collections and publications. He also appears in Leica adverts in camera magazines, making a point to a well equipped group of 'students' - in fact he does not teach. Outside of France his influence has been technical rather than aesthetic, leading to the 1970s craze for high contrast printing and extreme wide-angle lenses. In the introduction to *Close Up* he claims to have invented the 'open flash' technique, but the technique is not visible in any of the four city books.

Both photographers made a kind of return to photography in the 1970s, riding, in their own ways, the wave of photography's success in a period when painters were producing museum art, not suitable for private collectors. Frank began to produce some autobiographical work, using photographs that he'd scratched or written on, these sometimes included

some of his older, famous images. Due to a contract that he had signed with a gallery at the end of the 1960s he was not able to sell prints from *The Americans* - some of this work may have been a sly reference to this deal.

Increasing interest in Klein's work in the 1970s culminated in a Museum of Modern Art touring exhibition and an Aperture monograph. The printing of the book was botched (many of the photos were too dark), and Klein opposed its distribution, Aperture attempted to sue him for a million dollars in lost revenue. It is typical of Klein's ambivalent attitude to his work that despite this, if asked he will sign copies of this monograph, protesting all the while about the dreadful printing. As interest in his old work grew, so he began to take more photographs. *Close Up* is a gathering together of this work.

When you talk to Klein he rarely looks you in the eye. He told John Heilpern that this was because he has always been under the impression that his eyes frighten people. A clever piece of image management, but looking at the photographs and remembering his comment that a camera allowed him to look at people he wouldn't have dared to as a kid (who are you looking at?), it seems more likely that he is acutely sensitive to eye-contact. Eye contact has always been a major feature of Klein's work, and it dominates in *Close Up*.

With *Close Up* Klein seems to have lapsed into a mannerist repetition of his original work, producing 'Klein photos' in various situations. The book is laid out with each photograph bleeding across a spread, the effect of this, and of the scale of the prints is to rapidly bludgeon you into submission, after about ten pages you have to put the book down to recover. The layouts have been simplified until they are as plain as Frank's in *The Americans*, although the effect is quite different.

Frank meantime is moving in the opposite direction with *The Lines Of My Hand*, putting photographs together with text, showing images he originally rejected for *The Americans*, and generally roughing up his iconographic images, trying to break down the wall that their fame has thrown

up around them. The book is a kind of autobiography, concerned with his feelings, with pain, and occasional joy, looking for truth - Klein would reject this search as naive, everything's relative, the camera isn't an X-ray machine, it can only deal with surfaces, and what is truth anyway?

After the autobiographical work of the 1970s, Frank's work in the 1980s is more public. He produced a small set of photos for an exhibition on his political work, and a more substantial and interesting set for a commission by the city of Birmingham, Alabama. These were shown at Arles last year, along with *The Lines of My Hand* show. The work consists of 9 panels, containing a total of 27 photographs. The photographs are like the record of a performance piece - a three day trip over Christmas 1987, hanging around

in a motel, on the street, in a bus station - nothing happens. The most interesting aspect of this work is what he does with the photographs, putting them together in groups of three, four and six, re-photographing some of them on the wall of a diner. He continues to push at the limits of what photographs can do or say.

Klein's new work may result in him being given his proper place in the history of photography - although amazingly he was not included in the American compiled *Art of Photography* show at the Royal Academy. Frank's new work however seems to suggest new directions for photography. Given his age, and other interests, it's unlikely that he will pursue them himself, and this may mean that his new work will have an influence that Klein's will not.

On being an amateur

An amateur photographer

I think of myself as an amateur only in the sense of the latin root of the word, 'amator', meaning lover: photography becomes a passion. For me this passion can never be a hobby, a mere pastime. It is a vocation, and has become my chosen work.

Because I have no authority to answer to, no employer, no commercial sponsor, no arts council, I can work to please myself. Of course, I am always happy when my work pleases others as it first pleased me, but I am first of all my own demanding critic.

I used to speak of photography as an obsession, but now find that word too limiting as it involves a self-indulgent preoccupation which tends to exclude all else. Obsession is engrossing but excludes sharing; it is directed but excludes openness; it is passionate but excludes love. And so I happily remain an old-fashioned 'amator' of photography.

Virginia Khuri

The 'I' which sees

'Personal work! You never hear of painters doing personal work, so why all this fuss about personal work with photographers?' boomed a deep voice from the back of the church hall. The speaker was the artistically bearded Terry King, LRPS, and the setting was the first London lecture of the Contemporary Group of the RPS. Peak District Paul (Hill), the lecturer at the front, defended the goal surprisingly well; and who better than he?

Personal work, like anything of value, can be painful in that it is demanding, but there must be some joy or vital personal meaning along the way otherwise the effort is hardly worth it. But everyone is different, so no two people are going to find completely identical satisfactions.

In general for LIPers, photography is not a means of livelihood, nor does it come entirely into the category of a hobby - for some it is an obsession, and for others a means towards a greater knowledge of self and life. For others still it is a means for social work. For some few even it has a religious dimension. And whether a per-

son is registered with a particular religion or sect matters little for the point is that photography can be employed by anyone so inclined, as a medium for manifesting the non-material verities which glint through the manifest world - at least that is my belief. Indeed one's personal beliefs and stance come out in truly personal work and herein lies its value.

For myself, the medium is able to connect with a deep longing to see and be held by a truth - for me a truth of the natural world. This applies to the first ever body of work I wanted to exhibit (Sun Drawings).

It was through going to one particular workshop with Thomas Joshua Cooper that I was encouraged along the road towards serious personal work - and indeed the work is as much on oneself as on light-sensitive materials - it is the 'I' which sees. At that time I had read somewhere that a workshop represented better value for money than buying another piece of photographic equipment. It was certainly true. Whether or not the pictures achieved what was felt to be a natural truth (a way of seeing a truth), the important thing is that it was a

try or an attempt and the attempt gave me a deeper quality of personal meaning. It is the personal element which gave the work great importance to me at the time.

Mainstream Western society, for a reason which is worth researching into, is organized on a market place basis with money as the basic measure of all things. People born into this society are expected to conform in one way or another - to take a job or to fit in in a comfortable way with the system. There is great inequality in the system and some people's lives are virtually taken away from them through soul-destroying environments and occupations. Some others grow materially fat but often their souls have already been distanced from its vital source from an early age. Many other people defy this rather simplistic categorization, but evidence reveals that a mass of human potential is destroyed or nipped in the bud by a system which, taken to its extreme, works against the evolution of the spirit in man. In other words, gross materialism is the system's objective and this is a dead-end which side-tracks away from the evolutionary path for the development of those qualities by which we define humanity. We have before us in Britain in the last ten years a brilliant example of the crass destructiveness of the blind dogmatic forcing of the extremes of this system on an unwilling public - the very basis of education in the humanities has been savaged to the extent that it is at present fighting for its very survival!

Within such a system people like us have to, or choose to live, breathe and have our being. Some of us do not easily fit into a slot which earns our cost of living. That is not what we were born for. Although while such a slot may be necessary for a time, it can still threaten to destroy the delicate bud of creativity which might otherwise flower and add evolutionary energy and beauty to the common fund of humanity. Those who can co-operate or compromise with the system and still carry on their personal work are then true amateurs who photograph for the love of the activity or the subject matter and owe no proprietary funding body allegiance.

Solving the dilemma between 'personal work' and personal financial support is key to one's survival as a creative person striving to contribute valuably to human culture. No situation is ideal, and the 'successful' independent photographer often has had to compromise self with active self-

promotion in order to survive financially before reaching a state of viable momentum, and even then commercial work which is usefully taken on can feed through to affect the values of the so-called Independent work. The loveable Martin Parr is an instructive case here, but he may yet prove to have the rare quality of creative survivability.

My own personal photography is again done as a true amateur - as and when the motivation and inspiration strikes. At such moments one is an artist again - a free spirit, and at such a time, the appropriate gesture to THE SYSTEM is a four-letter-word!

William Bishop



Issue or distraction?

What does it mean to be an amateur photographer? Many amateurs identify with the independent sector - people who are amateur by choice (yet still regard their work as more than a hobby) or because of lack of external financial support for their projects. 'Amateur' is a stigma-laden word. We spit it out, it represents photography being dragged down to the level of bankrupt imagination and velvet stipple paper. So we avoid using it, 'independent' is better. But we can still run up against discrimination against 'amateurs' in commissions and awards.

The freedom and independence enjoyed by an amateur undoubtedly leads to some of the best photographic work around. It is well known, for example, that Andy Weiner has another career. On the other hand, time and money constraints associated with other commitments can prevent mature work from emerging from otherwise talented people.

The Arts Council has to develop a national strategy for photography which must also deal with amateur and leisure photography. This could be a minefield. How can distinctions between different kinds of amateur and leisure photographic activities or between different aims and motivations be made without implying an arrogant elite or missing people out? And how does 'community' photography fit in? Should distinctions be made between people using photography within community projects and other amateur photographers?

Chris Boot in *LIP Service 6* raised interesting questions about how photographers might respond to a harsher financial climate. He suggested that amateur groups should find ways to invest their independent values in a practice for which various kinds of clients will pay. And he also suggested that amateurs have power as consumers which could be used to achieve improvements in what resources, exhibition publications etc are available. A challenging idea.

Is there an amateur issue? Perhaps the less attention paid to individual economic status, and the more attention to the work, the better. But if the Arts Council are going to look at it, it's another matter. If you have any views send them to *LIP Service*.

Roger Estop

Malarkey on the loose

David Malarkey

Poster poser

You will have seen a series of posters advertising First Direct, a kind of incorporeal bank. By now, we are all used to the extraordinary posters used to advertise cigarettes, and perhaps thought that these very elaborate visual games could go no further.

The First Direct pictures are quite different - A row of milk bottles, a laundry basket, are presented clearly and competently but otherwise with the general feel of a snapshot, that is, without technical or visual sophistication. Clearly this is not true. The pictures do have a power which puzzles me. Am I reacting to the effect of a small object magnified, which is commonplace in advertising? Perhaps it is the shock of seeing such ordinary ordinariness used in advertising.

There seems to be more than this. The photographer has somehow made these objects 'more than themselves' and given them significance (in the ordinary sense of that word). I may, of course be the only person to react this way, but that seems unlikely. An advertising campaign must pass through many hands before it reaches us. So, I'm left with the puzzle. What in fact am I reacting to?

Salgado a-go-go

I went to the private view, so I also saw an awful lot of people. There are an awful lot of pictures too. It really is difficult to believe that the people in the pictures belong to the same species as the people looking at them. Some will distress you, but see it anyway.

Parr's class

The Bourgeoisie of course don't splash mustard and ketchup all over themselves, but Martin Parr's hand has lost none of its cunning in snapping up their ill-considered trifles of behaviour. *The Cost of Living* abandons the working classes (seen them anyway) and moves into Mr Parr's

own class, the middle one.

You will probably know the kind of thing to expect, and stylistically, you will get it, a sort of relentless setting in aspic of moments of indignity. If you are a middle-class-ish person yourself you will decide, as I did, that these moments are, of course, (of course) not, well, really quite typical at all.

There are very welcome signs that Mr Parr is beginning to explore the difficult art of removing flash guns from cameras, or perhaps, the easier art of using dud batteries. There are also signs that he's learnt to tilt the camera the other way. Sometimes he forgets and holds it level.

My objection to so much flash-on-camera and so much tilting is not that they are obnoxious in themselves, but that, repeated so frequently they draw attention away from the pictures and towards the manner of their making.

The exhibition itself is a revelation. The Photographers' Gallery has completely failed to turn the exhibition space into some sort of maze, with pictures here and there. There's a big open space with pictures all round it, at eye level. Unless there are very good reasons, this is the way to display pictures, without tricks or curator's cleverness.

In the talk he gave, Mr Parr suggested that this project was, for him a sort of self exploration. He is now, I think, reasonably prosperous, settled in life and a parent. He has bought a new car. He is, perhaps, the new establishment.

More colour in south London

The RPS Colour Group is in Croydon again. Naturally I wanted to see it, and I'm happy to report great leaps forward. The simple incompetence of last year has gone. All the prints are perfectly adequate. All but three are well displayed and framed (no. 46 is by an FRPS, who should know better).

Well, that's the faint praise, what about the damns? The Lake District is very popular, in fact anything with water is very popular. The favorite

category is clearly, 'what I did in the hols', and, on the evidence of this show, they do get around. Perhaps they could form a travel-and-wildlife-in-colour group.

So, a welcome improvement in technique. This is a good foundation, but foundations are not the whole house. What are they going to build?

Equipment review

(Oh no, we'll have glamour next!)

I carry a tripod quite a lot, and although it's good for the image and the image, useful for clearing brambles, as a walking stick, and to frighten savage dogs, the actual carrying of it can be quite a nuisance. A strap would be useful but only Manfotro make one, and only to fit Manfotro tripods.

Now I've discovered something called a Tripod Tamer. It has a short strap to go round the tripod's neck and a longer one to carry it on your shoulder. It works, and it's only £8.50. (Tripod Tamer, Vital Equipment, Colwyn Bay, Clwyd, LL20 8AL).

A bit of a shock

As part of the day-job, I was looking through a book called 'Contact - Photographers and Illustrators', which is a reference book for art directors and designers. There is no selection procedure, and so no exclusions. The people in the book simply pay for space and put in whatever they want as examples of their work. Consequently you would guess that it gives a fairly representative view of commercial work today.

I happened to think, as I looked through, that in quality of work there was no way to distinguish male from female. This was encouraging, and with a view to writing a little propaganda about people being people (etc etc) I counted up names in the index, using first names as a guide to gender. Where a name was ambiguous, or initials only, I excluded it.

There were 183 male photographers, and only 8 female, whereas the illus-

trators scored 268 male and 142 female. This is extraordinary. In a similar market, and often working through agents, only 4% of photographers were women, and 35% of illustrators. I can't explain this at all, but I am discouraged. We do still expect that some women will drop out of paid work for family reasons, which may account for the differences in illustration, but why such a large difference between the two groups? Any ideas? Can we, [and should we...] do any thing about it?

Fenland detour

Peter Goldfield is now as well known for Duckspool as he was, in a previous phase, as a pusher for Record Rapid junkies, at Goldfinger. *Fearful Symmetry* is his extended essay on the fenlands, constructed as a sort of parallel to, but not an illustration, of a poem by Adrian Mitchell which deals with the reaction to a nuclear strike of a middle-class, middle aged, middle-management sort of chap. 'I am standing on the beach at Cambridge', he says, and describes the scene...

Quotations from the poem are delicately engraved on glass (a great relief from Letraset), and form a visual punctuation to the extended visual sentence of the pictures. It is therefore important, if Mr Goldfield's intentions are to be realised, to view the works in their proper order. Having said this, it's quite possible to view the exhibition as a collection of single prints. This will be quite rewarding, but the full impact is gained by taking more trouble and care over your viewing habits. You will need your subjectivity. Let's steal a phrase from Michelin and say 'worth a detour', with crossed tripods.

A use for your disused items

I had walked downstairs, and was driving myself to a workshop in a comfortable darkroom, up three flights of stairs, when the radio carried an appeal for the Disabled Photographers Society, with the usual touching stories, which I do not need to repeat. They want, need, and deserve some help. We need and deserve to give it. They ask for any-

thing photographic. If its worn or broken, they'll repair it. And there's always money. If you have only the bare essentials, which you must use every day, send money, otherwise, can you look in the cupboard for those little disused items? Perhaps you have more film or paper than you really need?

If you want to, bring them to the LIP meetings in Lexham Gardens, and we will arrange delivery.

The address is: The Disabled Photographers' Society, PO Box 41, Wallington, Surrey SM6 9SG.

Pipers and tunes

Methodism, you may know, is a non conformist Christian Church founded by John Wesley, with a heritage of fine expressive hymns, a distinctive theology and a reputation for teetotalism.

But why method-ism? It sounds more like acting than evangelism. The answer is simple. The founders of Methodism were in fact, extremely methodical in their daily lives (render unto, etc) and the name was both derogatory and literal.

Like the 'New' in New York the method in Methodism has ceased to convey its own meaning and become part of something larger. In this spirit, we are able to examine the use of the phrase 'independent photographer'.

The Arts Council says that this is neither amateur nor professional, nor, so far as I can see, good red meat, but what it doesn't say is what the dependence is that the photographer hasn't got. In practice, independent means non-dependent, whereas the Independent Photographer seems to be largely dependent on funding, sponsorship, and grants. I suggest that the words 'piper' and 'tune' still retain much of their original meaning even today, and although we'd expect, wouldn't we, that the funders, granters, and sponsors, being perfectly fair, reasonable, and generally nice, would not interfere with what their chosen photographer chose to do, they do have to choose.

Control of money is usually in the hands of the politically active and they all, of whatever flavour have 'larger' issues in mind, don't they? And will they not pursue these issues in everything they do?

In the crypt

It is well known that the Royal Photographic Society was founded by Henry VIII to provide his court with pictures of thatched cottages, sunsets, pretty wenches, and thirds.

On Tuesday 7 November 1989, at about 7.30 pm the RPS decided to abandon bluff King Hal, and move into the late twentieth century.

There is a new Contemporary Group. The name was put to the vote and Contemporary won, very clearly, against 'experimental' and 'creative'. The sense of the meeting was that of course the group would be both creative and experimental, but that contemporary embraced both terms and had the extra connotation of 'today'.

In the discussion three significant questions were asked: firstly, was there any philosophical or theoretical structure embodied in the Group, and secondly, the same, but expressed in Marxist language. The third question was 'will this stuff last as long as Edward Weston?' The Group, which, it must be remembered, was meeting for the first time, produced no ready-made answers but they are pointers to the issues which it will have to tackle if it is to escape being seen as a born-again Pictorial Group. Let's all wish them success.

Killip's workers

This work is the result of a commission from Pirelli, to photograph in one of their factories. It is not quite the same sort of 'found' image that Mr Killip has shown before, and we may assume that his subjects, (for all the pictures are of people) have co-operated with him.

These workers are shown with respect, but unglamorized, involved with their machines, sometimes appearing almost integral with them. This respect for the process of working shows in the craftsmanship of the prints. They are very fine.

Although I often find it difficult to enjoy things called portraits, I did enjoy these pictures, which seem to be attempting to say more than 'ear, nose, eye, hand, lever, cogwheel', but I was very surprised to discover, when recollecting the show, that I had learned nothing at all about the making of tyres.

Urban camera

Roger Estop

Documenting the city

The new London Documentary Group, twenty-five members strong, held its first exhibition at the Museum of London in March. The exhibition was selected by members of the group themselves, after discussion and resulted in a varied show held together by a tight format of two images each, all the same size. There was an emphasis on topographic work, mainly unpeopled, but a good mix of colour and black and white.

This introductory exhibition consisted mainly of existing work by the new group members. The group has a sense of purpose, however, and aims to produce worthwhile new documentary work. The photographers work independently, but are focussing their attention in particular on the changing Kings Cross area. The group has an informal association with the Museum of London through its Curator of photographs, Mike Seaborne. His involvement is mainly as a photographer, though his experience of running a photographic collection is bound to be an important contribution to the group.

The exhibition contained some familiar names from other recent exhibitions with an art photography slant. The question arises: how does landscape work with strong aesthetic aims translate to a documentary context? And in general, what are these 'documentary' photographs trying to show? There is a dilemma with documentary photography: historical relevance and actuality is important but not everything, a balance has to be found between factual record and poetic interpretation.

The danger in over diligently suppressing one's own artistry in the interests of veracity is the production of very dull photographs. Mike Seaborne was critical of Paul Barkshire's *Unexplored London*, reviewed in Creative Camera 12/1987, for being too devoid of vitality, too detached, indeed too familiar, let alone unexplored.

On the other hand, the photographer can be too heavy handed. It is too easy to make some fairly crude value judgement by juxtaposing emotive urban images, indeed, all too often, this is done accidentally.

There are various pitfalls awaiting the urban documentary photographer, not least fairness of representation. A block of flats shown as a surreal composition of concrete stains and cracks, or as a symbol of 1950s bureaucracy can severely misrepresent the place as home, now, to people and perhaps a vital community spirit. Another hazard is the ease with which urban landscape photographs, with their multiplicity of information, can be misinterpreted by the viewer and whether explanatory or clarifying text is helpful, as used by John Davies for example.

It is a difficult challenge to photograph the 'process' of change in the city. When photographing Kings Cross, how can the intangible processes of flux be represented? The financial, political, town planning and architectural decision making, the arguments and campaigns, the memories and aspirations of the local people?

Process can be seen, with care, in the physical manifestation of the place over the course of months or years, but it may tend towards a

simplistic account. Perhaps it might be more accurately conveyed by the people who live and work there, given cameras. Perhaps new forms of presentation are relevant with a move away from the single image.

The London Documentary Group will be tackling these and other issues using a variety of individual photographic approaches. Judging from their first exhibition, they are likely to come up with interesting results.

City of dreams

One artist can sometimes help us to appreciate another better. I have connected five urban landscape photographers with lines from Talking Heads songs which seem to echo or illuminate the photographers work. Why Talking Heads? Other poets may do it better. I happen to know the music and David Byrne's lyrics. But there is more than that - like some of today's photographers, David Byrne is a semi-detached observer of modern life. Through music and film he looks at the worlds of home, family, work, media, and consumption in their everyday complexity, making a sort of post modern critique without the theoretical jargon. He also enjoys the paradoxes of representing the world through art familiar to photographers:

Facts all come with points of view
Facts don't do what I want them to
Facts just twist the truth around
Facts are living turned inside out

And as well as this, his view of the world is highly visual. He sees like a photographer and makes visual connections:

I see the pinecones that fall by the highway

That's the highway that goes to the building

That's the building that I'm going to live in...

David Byrne writes songs about everyday experience, particularly urban experience, using similar stimuli and subject matter as some photographers. And so I make the following risky associations.

LIP open submission

John Davies

I see the shapes I remember from maps
I see the shoreline, I see the white clouds
A baseball diamond, nice weather down there
I see the school and the houses where the kids are
Places to park by the factories and buildings
Restaurants and bars for later in the evening
Then we come to the farm lands and the undeveloped areas
and I have learned how these things work together
I see the parkway that passes through them all
and I have learned how they look at these things
I wouldn't live there if you paid me to
I wouldn't do the things the way those people do...

Lewis Baltz

Here we stand like an Adam and Eve...
From the age of the dinosaurs / cars have run on gasoline
Where, where have they gone / now its nothing but flowers
There was a factory / now there are mountains and rivers
There was a shopping mall / now its all covered with flowers
This used to be real estate / now its only fields and trees
Where, where is the town / now its nothing but flowers
The highways and cars / were sacrificed for agriculture
I thought that we'd start over / but I guess I was wrong
Once there were parking lots / now its a peaceful oasis
This was a Pizza Hut / now its all covered with daisies
And as things fell apart / nobody paid much attention
Don't leave me stranded here / I can't get used to this life style

Lee Friedlander

And you may find yourself living in a shotgun shack
and you may find yourself in another part of the world
and you may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile
and you may find yourself in a beautiful house with a beautiful wife
and you may ask yourself - well how did I get here?

And you may ask yourself how do I work this?
and you may ask yourself where is that large automobile?
and you may tell yourself that is not my beautiful house!
and you may tell yourself this is not my beautiful wife!

And you may ask yourself what is that beautiful house?
and you may ask yourself where does that highway go to?
and you may ask yourself am I right? Am I wrong?
and you may say to yourself MY GOD ... WHAT HAVE I DONE?

Michael Schmidt

Here where you are standing the dinosaurs did a dance
Indians told a story now it has come to pass
the children of the white man saw Indians on TV
and heard about the legend how their city was a dream
underneath the concrete the dream is still alive
a hundred million life times a world that never dies
we live in the city of dreams we drive on a highway of fire
should we awake and find it gone remember this our favourite town

Raymond Moore

When I first come to a place, I notice all the little details. I notice the way the sky looks, the colour of white paper, the way people walk, door knobs, everything. Then I get used to the place and I don't notice these things any more. So only by forgetting can I see the place again as it really is.

Lyrics and quotations by David Byrne and Talking Heads from: Crosseyed and Painless (Remain in Light), Don't worry about the Government (Talking Heads 77), The Big Country (More Songs about Buildings and Food), Nothing but Flowers (Naked), Once in a Lifetime (Remain in Light), City of Dreams (True Stories), True Stories (film script).

Double Vision

Look beyond the single image, explore the power of pairs. What new insights can be achieved from the juxtaposition and interplay of two images?

In its second exhibition later this year, London Independent Photography will mount pair-pieces selected from an open submission and entries are now invited.

All submissions should take the form of two separate photographic images to be shown as a single work. There is no other restriction on content or subject matter.

The exhibition will be shown at the Metro Cinema, Rupert Street, London, W1 from 1 November to 1 December this year. The exhibition will be shown in two parts of two weeks each, enabling a greater variety of work to be shown.

Submissions should be brought to the Clapham Community Project, Venn Street, London SW4 (very near Clapham Common tube station) on Saturday 22 September between 10am and 12 noon. They should be mounted, but not framed, to fit 40x50cm frames which will be available for members to use. Entrants wishing to submit larger works will be responsible for their own framing, but each of the two images must not exceed 36" diagonal measurement.

If you cannot get to Clapham on 22 September, you can post work to arrive on 19, 20 or 21 September to: Double Vision, 29 Pembroke Place, London W9.

All submissions must be marked on the back with your name, address, telephone number, title (if any), top-side and hanging instructions.

A charge of £6 will be made for each entrant and each member may submit up to three pairs.

All submissions must be collected after 5pm and before 6pm on the day of submission, 22 September. If any items are not collected they will be left at the Clapham Community Project at owner's risk.

Selection will be made by LIP members on the day of submission, from 1.30pm and will be open to all members whether or not they submit work. Selection will be organized around a blue-tak exhibition. Members whose work has been selected will receive instructions for delivery to the Metro Cinema when they collect their work.

For further information ring Janet Hall on 081 847 8959.

Complementary elements

Framework at Watermans

If variety is the spice of life then this is a lively show, ranging from classic architecture to still life, executed in both old and new techniques. From Marcel Marceau to down and outs in cardboard city, they were all covered by 15 photographers from the independent group, Framework, in its first show since becoming established at the Watermans Arts Centre, Brentford.

The work was chosen from submissions by group members and the show set out to establish Framework's identity as a group of photographers from a wide spectrum of practices and skill. Obviously the main pitfall to avoid when mounting a body of work as diverse as this is to make sure the elements complement rather than fight each other, which has been achieved very successfully here. The show did not occupy the gallery at Watermans but utilised the stairway and a large space in the public area facing the river. Personally I am in favour of using public spaces to mount exhibitions - surely one way of winning over a potential audience - and Framework are to be congratulated on their enterprise in procuring this prime position.

Unfortunately the hanging areas were not designed for exhibition purposes and the lighting leaves something to be desired. This is particularly noticeable on the stairway where the first exhibits are hung, and these include some of the strongest in the show. The organisers were wise to introduce us to the exhibition with Carol Hudson's elegant high key black and white still lifes entitled *Six Evanescent Studies*. Flowers, petals and leaves are used to produce enigmatic and intriguing shapes and the prints show a true sensitivity to the subject matter and a lightness of touch in interpretation.

Robin Mudge's seven prints are hung at intervals throughout the show. This is one more than any other exhibitor and makes up a strong and interesting body of work. Called *Parys Mountain 2000BC - 1989* it

includes a variety of desolate and deserted subjects in subdued, carefully controlled colours, the strongest of which are landscapes containing blue/green swamps and rocky brown outcrops. I also liked his two empty interiors with peeling walls and empty fireplaces, also using the same colour scheme of subdued browns and blues. The work has a haunting quality and Robin Mudge seems to be showing us time before man arrived and a time after he has gone.

The large format corner was held by James Bartholomew and Richard Ingle each showing six classic black and white prints, and both photographers showing a masterful use of the format. James Bartholomew shows the lushness of both plantlife and architecture at Kew Gardens in an affectionate portrayal of the Royal Gardens, while Richard Ingle's church interiors showed extraordinary print control in this difficult area of work. The gentlest tone gradations truthfully interpreted the stillness at the heart of the subject matter.

Peter Marshall also showed a masterly use of his format in his two 35mm large black and white photographs taken in the Great West Road in which shapes and angles are cleverly juxtaposed most successfully.

Alternative methods were also well represented in this show. Liz Ashton-Hill showed variations on an original flower still life using a Quantel Paint Box. There were three kallitype nudes by Christopher Joyce, three heliochrome still lifes by Dunstan Pereria and two gum bichromates by Terry King. My preference is usually for the subtler use of colours in these uses of the photographic medium. In particular I liked Terry King's *Suburban Sunday Afternoon* - an enigmatic silver-blue image, and Dunstan Pereria's blue still life with lilies in a vase.

William Bishop took us back to nature with his six *Studies of Trees*. These were sections of trees rather than whole trees and some were particularly successful in evoking a feeling of movement unusual for objects so rooted in the ground. One appeared as a running figure and another showed felled branches bisecting the frame laterally in parallel formation. Another image seemed to encompass mother earth in its gnarled and swollen belly.

As well as exhibiting at the Watermans Arts Centre, Framework hold bi-monthly meetings there on the first and third Wednesday evenings of each month at which a guest speaker talks about his/her area of photographic specialization. Attendees are invited to bring work with them. The group operates on an informal basis - no subscription or membership. This formula works well and provides a useful platform for photographers in this part of London to meet up and discuss their work. For more information please ring Terry King on 081 892 6823.

Janet Hall

Wandering and wondering

Paul Hill: White Peak, Dark Peak

New work by Paul Hill went on show in March at the Untitled Gallery in Sheffield and will be touring through 1991. The title of the work, *White Peak, Dark Peak*, is derived from the names given to the two areas of the Peak District near where Paul lives and where the work was made: White Peak is limestone country and Dark Peak is dominated by gritstone. But also implied in the title are the light to dark photographic qualities of a black and white print as well as its possible metaphoric meanings. These images, however, are not moody, contrasty, romanticized visions of the landscape, and contain no forced metaphors. In terms of printing, most of them fall into the middle of the tonal range (light to dark grey) and as such have a quiet, dispassionate understatedness which belies the strength and importance of the work.

The viewer is introduced to the work with a quote by Virginia Woolf, 'Most people need contact with the countryside and access to open spaces to survive in a world which seems dead set on harming them.' Following is an image of a field with an arrow sign in the centre on which is written 'To Open Country' and pointing out to the next image in which a wide

path of eroded gritstone leads one through the image and onto Higgart Tor in the distance.

And so we are invited to join the photographer on a journey through this land, and to see it as he sees it. The quality of his observation will be of crucial importance to our appreciation, and we are fortunate to be led by an acute, involved (mind and heart), and respectful observer of the natural world. Paul is a naturalist (a wanderer and wonderer) as well as a photographer, who has spent much time attentively exploring, looking, then seeing, and finally bringing his experience to account in images which are poetic observations, not in terms of a William Wordsworth, but more like a Seamus Heaney, spare, unsentimental and unassuming.

There are observations of what is underfoot, marks on the land made by natural processes, animals and man, of the result of man's interaction with the land, of seasonal cycles, of the animals which inhabit the land and thus of life and death, and sparkling here and there an inimitable wit.

Some of the most subtle observations are related to marks on the land which transform into almost abstract marks on paper; a field divided by only the slightest gradation of grey down the centre of field (and print) over which tracks run unimpeded; mole hills crossing in a field; badger runs making a delicately traced X; stronger animal tracks cross fields, converge at a break in a wall, or radiate out from a water trough. There are man made patterns too, stone walls, a stone barn, planted trees all as natural to the land as the animal tracks.

However man's interaction with the land is not always (or not now) so benign and a jarring note enters with the intrusion of man in images of the debris of a B-29 bomber scattered in a gully; in the unnatural cracked, baked mud of the Derwent reservoir during last year's drought, made all the more poignant by pairing it (twice) with an image of the reservoir full of shining water; and in a military warning sign saying 'Danger anything you touch may kill you'. Such land made unsafe is actually the third image confronted on our journey.

We are made aware of a numinous quality to much of what is observed. Circles are noted; in a dewpond, perfection perhaps; in animal feeding circles, strangeness; in a flat oval stone radiating felled tree trunks, mystery. There are shadows too, one ominously cast across most of a field which is itself divided by a rock fence snaking

its way diagonally across. The shadow is cast by a hill behind the photographer and viewer on which are bare trees also casting their shadows on the land. Is there perhaps a larger, more threatening shadow we should be considering? And there is an arrow made of stones arranged on and pointing over the top of a mist covered hill. This is a dense, mysterious, image; one is not quite sure where the arrow points to or why - what lies just over the hill?

Shall we journey on alone? This image takes us full circle back to the countryside pointer and is the last image in the first of two galleries.

Understanding and respect is shown for natural processes: seasonal cycles are marked by a pair of winter-summer images of Haven Hill, white snow, dark trees in leaf. More strongly felt is the cycle of life and death and decay which is revealed in a sequence of images of a dead badger taken over the course of a year, and in the sequence of five dead mountain hares. These matter-of-fact images speak eloquently of the vulnerability and mortality inherent in all life. Even at the center of the sequence of live Wallabies (yes, some got loose from a local park in the 1930s; nature is adaptable and unpredictable) there is an image of one lying dead, small and far away in the bottom of a deep gully. It has been said that great art shows that you know what it is to be alive and it confronts you with the fact of death.

There is finally observation with a twinkle in the eye and a sly grin; a wallaby stares back unperturbed at the camera seemingly only a hop away; a small dog investigates and in the process 'humanizes' a forbidding black hill; a 'condom tree' suggests collaboration of a kind between man and nature; precariously balanced boulders, a possible metaphor for the finely balanced forces of nature, become something else when it is known that the local name for them is 'Woolsacks'.

Now beyond the fact that these are excellent photographs, what I find so important about this work is that it is witness and testimony to one individual's very special kind of relationship with the land (or nature), one based on man as an intimate observer, different but not separate from it, rather than as an alienated, selfish user (and abuser) of it. These images are for me unspoken pleas for us all to begin to observe our natural environment with such respect, even reverence, to look attentively at it for what it is rather

than for how it can benefit us, and then to see in a deeper sense 'wherein one dwelleth'. Very simply, that is the message and great relevance of this work to the ecological crisis which now confronts us all.

Virginia Khuri

The exhibition can be seen at Stills Gallery, Edinburgh for the Festival (11 August - 5 September); the RPS Centre, Bath (January/February 1991) and the V&A, London later in 1991.

Choreographed workers

Townly Cooke: Work in progress.
Woodlands Art Gallery, Blackheath
13 Jan - 6 Feb 1990.

Four one-person shows shared the gallery: photography, etching, sculpture and painting, each to its room. Without any common theme, the only discernible link a connection with the human form and gesture in much of the work. Certainly taking photography out of its ghetto, such a conjunction revived and partially answered questions in my mind about the nature of the art of photography. There is something inherently more ordinary, more 'natural' about the photograph, a more direct link to the world it transforms. It has a domestic quality, a tendency emphasized by the typically low-key presentation of photography shows (including this), with relatively small prints of roughly uniform size, tone and colour in small frames. Comparing Townly's work with the etchings of Wojcieck Pakowski in the adjoining space, the choice was between elegant gradation and graphic drama, between intimacy and a striking presence. But of course we can admire both (and perhaps we can all learn a bit about presentation?).

Work in Progress is pictures of people (mainly men) working; also perhaps work in progress in the other sense. Certainly from the varied dates of the work on show it has been in labour for a very long time, and this is perhaps an explanation for the stylistic variations it contains. Townly's work seems to stem largely from the 'decisive moment' tradition, with a good measure of the more scattered framing and choreographic observa-

tion of Tony Ray-Jones, leavened by a liking for dramatic shadow which just occasionally lurches too far to the picturesque for my taste. There is however much to admire, and perhaps the best way to proceed is to describe a few of my personal favourites.

Workers in the Snow, Greenwich Park, shows three men shovelling to clear Blackheath Avenue. Sub-titled *Homage to Edvard Munch*, who produced a series of pictures of workers around 1915, it reminds me more of Kafka, the two men closer to the camera linked by their shoulders, overlapping legs, shovels and shadows into some monstrous six legged insect. Behind them the third man shovels away, the lines of trees receding from each side of the frame towards the distant statue (General James Wolfe I think).

In *Villiers Street*, two men stripped to the waist get down near to horizontal to push a massive load disappearing to stage left, looking, aside from the jeans, like extras in a low budget building of the pyramids movie. At right a young man oblivious strums an electric guitar. Perched above the scene like a tennis umpire - or an overseer, though he holds a cigarette in place of a whip - a fourth man watches the workers (or perhaps the photographer) while tucked in near the left edge a young woman takes an interest from the background.

Then there are the asphalters outside the Royal Society of Chemistry, steam rising from the 'ground' they have just laid between them and the camera like some mysterious chemical process; the chucking-out time at the British Museum with the custodian shutting the door with moral support from an ancient Egyptian friend (or is it his mummy?), while in the background another warder studies his watch and the last is already carrying a bag on his way out. A postman emerges from a newsagents into the rain or snow smudging across the picture, he is framed by the shop door, and two figures arranged symmetrically on each side of it; glaziers cope with invisible panes, railwaymen walk down the lines...

Work is, as the sayings go, for those who don't know how to fish, the curse of the drinking classes... It certainly is high on that list of invisible subjects so far as photography is concerned. We could all stand and watch it all day, but perhaps we too would be better occupied photographing it.

Peter Marshall

Darkroom enlightenment

Fine Printing workshop with Robert Claxton and David Malarkey.

This recent initiative, extending over two weekends, provided four whole days of practical work and wide-ranging discussion. In the way of all good workshops, the combined effect was renewed interest and a fresh stimulus to further individual effort.

The direction taken varied from day to day but typically included theoretical considerations such as size and scale, print quality criteria, materials, etc, leading to practical demonstrations in the darkroom. These emphasised the importance of careful initial evaluation and adherence to a controlled and logical sequence throughout. This in no way detracts from the aesthetics of the result, but rather the opposite, with improved economy. It was possible to combine this work with a series of problem solving exercises using negatives supplied by various participants. The effect was doubly useful, as the methods used, and results obtained, were subject to group observation and discussion.

The use of resin-coated variable contrast paper allowed maximal use of the time available, ie, in addition to raising searching questions of grade-choice (and a drastic re-think on the part of at least one participant). The system in use sought to envisage the essential processing requirements at an early, strip print stage. Pre-flashing was found of value in solving difficult contrast problems, and was sometimes used selectively to provide regional contrast control across the print surface.

Nobody could fail to be impressed by the practical facilities. The darkroom and adjoining wet processing area provided controlled conditions for use at each stage, and the resulting prints were examined in a separate studio/viewing room.

This was also used for looking at work brought by individuals for discussion. Informal comments from peers can be of value in predicting viewer-responses, ie, when contemplating publication or exhibition.

Tea and coffee emerged frequently during the proceedings, and the lunches, prepared by Clare, were excellent.

Robin Williams

Creative Camera

Creative Camera has been undergoing a painful few months of financial crisis, self-analysis, pleas for donations, new staff and finally a redesign and relaunch as a bi-monthly.

Creative Camera is the foremost art-oriented photography magazine in Britain, providing pictures, informed criticism, debate and articles. It is the best way of finding out what new work is where, for getting inspired and not feeling isolated and for getting thoroughly incensed by what work is getting most attention. Despite all of its recent problems it has an impressive history and has plotted the changing concerns of photographers over the years.

To subscribe (£21 for one year), contact *Creative Camera* at Battersea Arts Centre, Old Town Hall, Lavender Hill, London SW11 5TF. Telephone 071 924 3017.

Independent directory

The Independent Photography Directory, edited by Michael Hallett and Barry Lane, is the essential reference manual for those working in the independent photography sector, listing over 250 photography organisations in Britain.

The directory assesses the size of the independent sector from a survey of arts organisations. It includes information on photography provision in national museums, local authority venues, art galleries, arts centres and community arts projects.

Each entry surveys the organisation's exhibition spaces, darkroom, studio and workshop facilities.

The directory also contains the Arts Council's own policy for Independent Photography, details of available financial support for photographers, a press mailing list and the names of touring exhibition organisers.

Special offer

The Independent Photography Directory and *A Code of Practice for Independent Photographers* both for only £9. Send this advert with your order to: AN Publications, FREE-POST, PO Box 23, Sunderland, SR4 6DG (cheques to AN Publications).

Information

Relationships

IRIS and the Canterbury Festival invite submissions of up to four works for a major exhibition on the theme of Relationships. Anyone may enter and all photography based entries, which may be multiple image, will be welcome.

The work will be selected by a panel comprising, Mark Deller, Artistic Director of Canterbury Festival; Sandra Drew, Director of the Drew Gallery; Mike Goldwater, photojournalist; Sharon Kivland, artist; Elaine Kramer, Regional Photography co-ordinator and Jo Nelson, co-organiser of IRIS.

This will be the first national open submission exhibition for IRIS and Canterbury's seventh festival.

IRIS is a co-operative venture of artists and photographers seeking to address current issues.

Throughout the Canterbury Festival, from 6 to 20 October 1990, the exhibition will be hung in the Gulbenkian Theatre foyer gallery at the University of Kent and the foyer of Invicta Radio.

Entry forms, which should be completed and returned by 16 August, are available from IRIS, c/o Festival Office, 59 Ivy Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1TU. Telephone 0227 452853.

Contemporary Group events

RPS Contemporary Group talks at St Martin in the Fields, McCormick Hall, 6.30pm

The best access is via the vestry restaurant and past the catering area, and ask for the McCormick Hall. Entrance fees: RPS members £2, non-members £3. (The fee for Martin Parr's talk may be more.)

27 September

William Bishop, Significant movements in photography

To know where we are going it is useful to know where we have come from! This illustrated talk identifies

movements within photography's history which have relevance to creative photography today. It also offers a foundation for interpreting trends in contemporary photography.

William Bishop is a writer on photography, art historian, and photographer.

4 October

Documentary photographer Martin Parr will give a slide lecture chronicling his photographic career, and concentrating on his most recent exhibited project *The cost of living*.

8 November

Professor Anthony Golden, Associate Professor in photography at Syracuse University, New York. The technical changes in photo illustration, 1950 to 2000

Professor Golden will give a slide lecture chronicling how technology and marketplace demands have changed the look of photo illustrations, and speculating on how new technology might change photography in the next ten years.

13 December

Peter Turner, Modern 'isms'

This illustrated lecture will give a not altogether reverent examination of some of the newer pieces in photography's jigsaw puzzle.

Peter Turner is editor of *Creative Camera* and distinguished writer on photography.

27 October

Workshop with Eamonn McCabe

Eamonn will show slides of his work and talk about photography in newspapers and the press generally calling on his extensive experience working for *The Observer* and more recently as picture editor of *The Guardian*. Participants are invited to bring work and Eamonn will look at as much as time will allow.

(RPS workshop)

Venue: Clapham Community Project

Time: 10am to 5pm

Fee: £15 (£18 non-members)

LIP evenings

19 September

17 October

14 November

12 December

Informal meetings to discuss photographs and ideas. Ring Janet Hall for details of time and venue.

For sale

Archival print washers, acrylic with separate compartments. Custom made to any size. For example, 20x16 inch, £250. Telephone Linda Chapman 071 627 1208.

LIP Service

The newsletter of London Independent Photography

Editor Roger Estop

Production Chris Evans, Janet Hall, Virginia Khuri, Sarah Morley

Inputs

Contributions and suggestions are invited. 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 explanatory or critical texts
- information about facilities or equipment for loan or hire, especially darkrooms and studios
- for sale or exchange advertisements
- information on possible exhibition venues

Please send material to

Roger Estop

23 Melford Road

London E11 4PR.

Telephone 081 556 1615.

LIP diary

Darkroom
enlightenment

Creative Camera
workshops

Booking

To reserve a place on any of these workshops ring Janet Hall on 081 847 5989 and send a deposit of £6 (£8 non-members) payable to LIP to her at 27 Hawkfield Court, Woodlands Grove, Isleworth, TW7 6NU.

15 September

Photographing People. A symposium with Marketa Luskacova, Sam Tanner and Yoke Matze.

The intention of this symposium is to generate the free exchange of ideas between the three leaders and the participants on various issues relating to the photographing of people in the documentary tradition.

Marketa Luskacova was a well established photographer in Czechoslovakia before coming to this country where she has made a considerable reputation with her documentary photography. Her subjects have included a study of pilgrims, street markets and most recently primary school children.

Sam Tanner practised as a sculptor before turning to photography. His most recent and well known projects include *We are human too*, involving work with the disabled and *Is love enough?*, work with families and patients of carers in London.

Yoke Matze has been involved in various aspects of photography including landscape, architectural and still life. The people pictures she will be showing and discussing are those which form part of her study of Kensal Green Cemetery - *Within and beyond boundaries*.

Venue: Clapham Community Project
Time: 10am to 5pm
Fee: £8

22 September

Double Vision exhibition submission and selection, Clapham Community Project. 10am to 12pm submission of entries. 1.30pm Blue-Tak exhibition and selection of work. Open to all members. See page 11 for details.

6 October

Portraiture workshop with Richard Coward

Starting with a resume with slides on portraiture in photography past and present, Richard Coward will go on to show and talk about his own work and approach to portraiture. Practical demonstrations will follow on Polaroid film using a live model and Richard will cover lighting techniques, contrast ratios, black and white and colour, film format and cameras as well as dealing with people, creating a mood, selecting from contacts and printing.

A very experienced portrait photographer, Richard Coward numbers amongst his subjects Bernard Levin and George Melly. His work has been published in *Vogue* and *Harpers Bazaar* and been used on both classical and pop record covers. He taught photography for ten years at the City Polytechnic in Whitechapel.

Venue: Clapham Community Project
Time: 10am to 5pm
Fee: £15 (£18 non-members)

3 November

Photo-etching on hand made papers. Workshop with Randall Webb and Jane Reese.

This workshop presents an opportunity to expand the photographic medium and combine with fine art techniques.

You will be invited to make paper, prepare film and a plate with your photographic image, etch, possibly work into the plate further with traditional methods, then print on hand made paper which you either make yourself or purchase on site.

Randall Webb specialises in alternative photographic processes. Jane Reese is a photographer/book artist with skills in hand papermaking and bookbinding and also practices extended photo media techniques. Nautilus Press member Glen Marston, will tutor and assist in the print studio.

Venue: Nautilus Press and Paper mill, 77 Southern Row, W10 5AL

Time: 9am to 12 noon, 1pm to 4pm
(tea and coffee served)
Fee: £20 tuition plus materials not to exceed £3.

1 December

Gum Bichromate workshop with Terry King.

This will be a hands-on workshop from which participants will be able to take home their own print at the end of the day. Materials will be provided including film, pigment, gum etc., but participants should bring their own negative or transparency.

The day will start with an explanation of the process by Terry King referring to materials and selection of appropriate images followed by practical work including coating paper, preparation of contact negative and exposure and development of the print.

Venue: Clapham Community Project
Time: 10am to 5pm
Fee: £19 (£22 non-members)

19 January

Producing a fine print. A workshop with John Blakemore.

(Repeat of last June's workshop which could not accommodate all who wanted to attend.)

John Blakemore, one of this country's leading exponents in the art and craft of fine printing will demonstrate his skills in this darkroom based workshop using his own and participants' black and white negatives. Long established as a leading landscape photographer with work appearing in many publications and exhibitions worldwide, John Blakemore's work has now diversified to include still life, documentary and colour Polaroid, based on his uniquely elegant photographic style. Please bring 35mm black and white negatives.

Venue: 2 Ferrestone Road, Hornsey, London, N8
Time: 10am to 5pm
Fee: £20 (£25 non-members)