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Contents

LIP Members' Exhibitions	4
Review of Joy Gregory	4
Workshop Helen Griffiths	
Personal Ads	4
The Photographers' Gallery	5
Bookshop Choice Laura Knight and Sarah Fordham	
Review of Homer Sykes' <i>On The Road Again</i> Peter Marshall	6
Wonders of Photoshop	10
Leyla Hassan	
Trees	11
Noël Kingsley	
Laundry Day	14
Roberto Leone	
A Field Trip to the Docklands	18
Gordon Raisin	
Photo Events	20
IPSE Events	22
LIP Programme	23

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Homer Sykes - p. 6



Noël Kingsley - p. 11



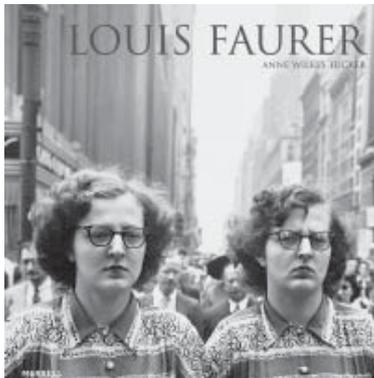
Roberto Leone - p. 14



Gordon Raisin - p. 18

The Photographers' Gallery Bookshop Choice

Laura Noble and Sarah Fordham present the pick of recently published books. LIP members receive a 10% discount on these. You need to show your LIP membership card when purchasing.



LOUIS FAURER

Anne Wilkes Tucker

Merrell: £39.95 (£35.95 LIP members)

Published to coincide with an exhibition held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, earlier this year, this book is the first to look at Louis Faurer's work in depth and contains previously unpublished material. Faurer was known for his documentary-style portraits of New York and Philadelphia and in particular Times Square in the 1940s and 1950s. He worked as a commercial photographer, but his main contribution to the development of photography was his street portraits, which were hugely influential on Robert Frank, Diane Arbus and many others. In her essay *Louis Faurer and Film Noir*, Lisa Hostetler writes that it was not just his frequent depiction of cinema theatres, movie-goers and film posters, but also the dramatic lighting, unusual camera angles, combined with Faurer's tendency to isolate individuals from a crowd, that suggest his preoccupation with film noir. This stunning book is a valuable addition to any photography enthusiast's book shelf.

SF

VISIONS FROM AMERICA

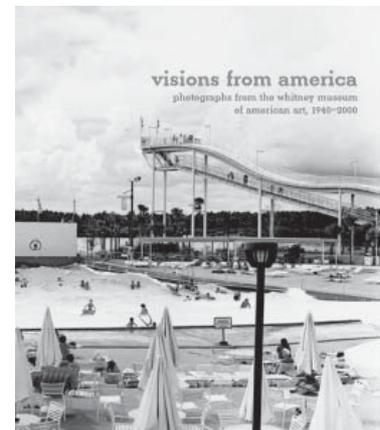
Photographs from the Whitney Museum of American Art 1940-2001

Prestel: £30 (£27 LIP members)

This comprehensive glimpse at the Whitney Museum's collection of post-war American photography displays the commitment of its founder, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, to American Art. The museum houses some two thousand photographic artworks and strongly emphasises street photography, challenging imagery and investigations into human behaviour.

The works featured in this anthology of 85 colour and 134 duotone illustrations vary considerably from era to era. The cast list reads like a dream— Gordon Parks, Lee Friedlander, Joel Meyerowitz, William Christenberry, Larry Clarke, Nan Goldin, Sally Mann and Irving Penn, to name but a few. Works are chronologically presented for easy access. This book is about the work, not the biased views of a curator but a celebration of photographic achievement at its very best.

LN



WINDOW WITH A SEA VIEW

Ninnea Larsson

£10 (£9 LIP members)

Linnea Larsson resides between the Three Cliffs Bay and Rhossili on South Gower, Wales, and dedicates her book to those "who are, have been and will be living on Gower." Her sensitive and poetic approach to interior illumination and space from existing exterior light celebrates her surroundings. The resultant book is a beautiful collection of colour photography with attention to detail that emphasizes the sublime of the ordinary.

Dappled rays filter through a blouse hung against the window, softening the edges of the jug and bottle on its sill, as the flower pattern on the net curtains become visible only on the blouse, as if imprinting its pattern on the fabric. Larsson's use of available light both saturates and bleaches colour, creating a harmony with the shapes and textures in each room; further enhanced by the square format. The intimacy of her vantage points are reminiscent of a child's view of the world where even the smallest of things are fascinating.

Already a bookshop bestseller, *Window with a Sea View* comes highly recommended.

LN



These book reviews are written by freelance writers Sarah Fordham and Laura Noble, who are also staff at The Photographers' Gallery bookshop in central London. Many more reviews can be found on the Photographers' Gallery website, www.photonet.org.uk

Cowboys, Cars and the Road

Peter Marshall
on
Homer Sykes'
On The Road Again

Bell Road, Hounslow was where I narrowly failed to buy the electric guitar that might have taken me in quite different directions, and also where in the early 1960s, spotty post O-levels, I found a copy of Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* and paid my sixpence for a book with a sexy redhead staring out from a cover which described it as "this Explosive Epic of the Beat Generation", a thinly veiled autobiographical account of the travels of Sal Paradise, driving across America with his friends in the late 1940s in (again from the blurb) "a wild desperate search for Kicks and Truth".



Homer Sykes

New York, New York (1969)

Kerouac expressed the mood of a generation that included the young ex-Swiss Robert Frank, a mood of nervous restlessness and energy that drove Frank across the USA a few years later. *The Americans*, finally published in the USA, a couple of years after *On the Road* had an introduction by Kerouac, in which he said that Frank with his camera had sucked a sad poem from the soul of America.

Homer Sykes was born in Vancouver, Canada, in 1949, but he was raised in England, studying photography in London. Two books that made a great impression on him as a student were Henri Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment* and Robert Frank's *The Americans*. They made him decide he just had to see America. In the long summer vacation of 1969, he travelled to New York, then worked for a



Homer Sykes

Mingus, Texas (1999)

month in New Jersey before travelling by Greyhound bus around the USA, returning with 30 rolls of Tri-X exposed with his Leica M3 and 50mm lens. After graduating, Sykes began work as a freelance in London, and a year or two later made a second trip to America.

In England he had become interested in the work of Tony Ray-Jones, who died tragically in 1972 aged only 30. In the late 1960s, Ray-Jones had photographed at a number of 'traditional' English events such as the Broadstairs Dickens Festival, Parents Day at Eton and the Bacup Coconut Dancers, producing pictures that showed surreal disconnections usually in essentially mundane events.

Sykes was inspired to start his own project on *Calendar Customs* in 1970, and this was eventually published as the book *Once A Year – Some Traditional British Customs* by Gordon Fraser in 1977. Earlier published portfolios of this work included *Calendar Customs* in *British Image 1* (Arts Council, 1975)

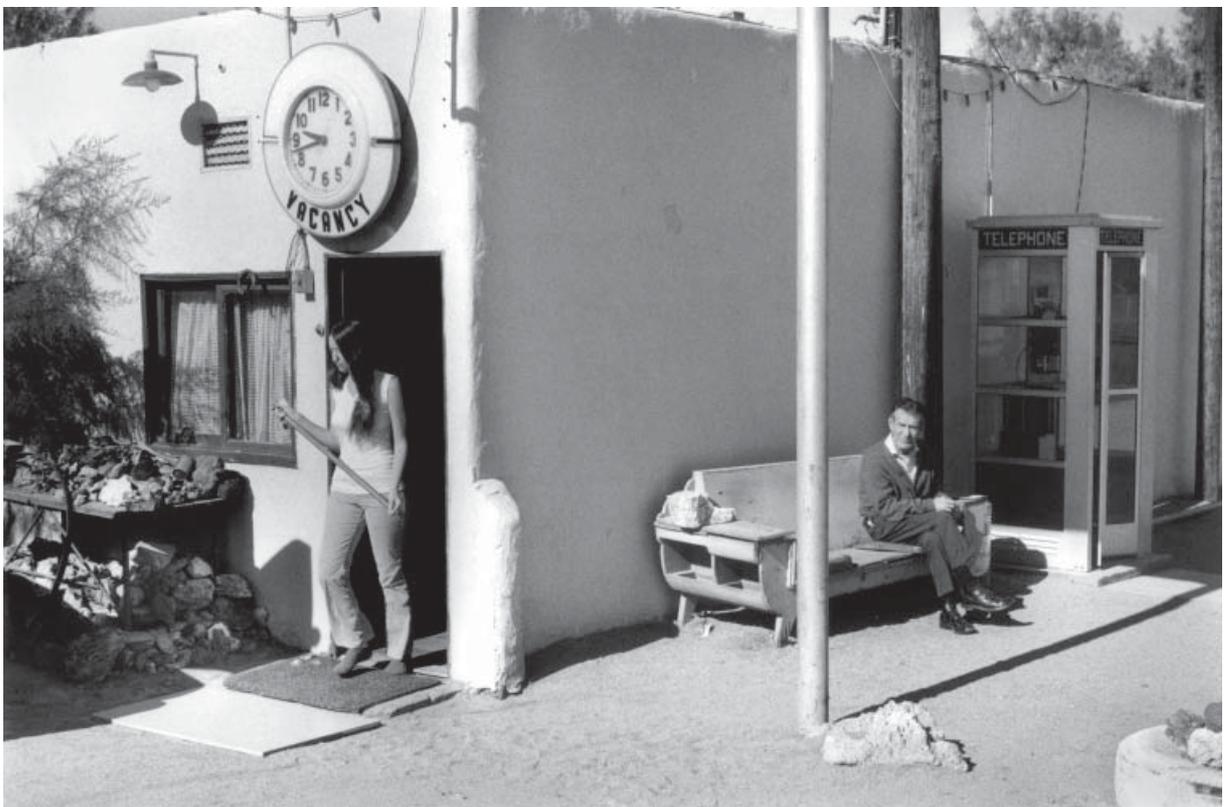
and *Customs and Traditions* in *Creative Camera International Year Book 1975*. He was in distinguished company in the 'Year Book', with the others in the portfolio section being Ralph Gibson, Chris Killip and Les Krims.

Homer Sykes certainly has the advantage of a memorable name, combining the classical and the down to earth. It is a very suitable name for the author of *On the Road Again*, a book about journeys. The connection is made even more obvious in his other new book this year, *Shanghai Odyssey*.

In 1999, Sykes showed his work from America to his colleagues at Network Photographers (take a look at their web site at www.networkphotographers.com to see some of the finest photojournalism around), who encouraged him to take up the project again. He revisited America for three weeks in 1999 and again in 2001 to take further pictures. Almost a third of the pictures in the book are from the 1999 trip, and about a fifth from 2001.

On the Road Again combines Sykes' photographs with text from the journal he kept during his two more recent visits, *Chance Encounters, an American Journal*. It is interesting to read these vignettes of meetings with various strangers (some stranger than others) but I'm not sure they add anything to the photographs. Some are presented in a section at the front of the book, with a few interspersed with the images, which seems to suggest that there was some indecision as to how they complement the pictures. Frank is a very hard act to follow, and *On the Road Again* lacks the narrative and filmic structure of Frank's work, although there are images that are reminiscent of works by Frank, as well as of other photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Walker Evans, Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander.

An empty gas or petrol station at Denton, Texas (shown over page) is a stage for a man in a cowboy hat, boots, waistcoat and dark shirt. Unlike Frank's New York



Calico, California (1971)

Homer Sykes



Homer Sykes

Denton, Texas (1999)



Homer Sykes

New York, New York (1999)

cowboy lounging on a street, he looks ill at ease, hands thrust into pockets, looking down at the desolate forecourt, hiding from the photographer behind the brim of his hat. The flat landscape stretches into the distance, empty, with just a gate, a stretch of fence, scrubby trees and grass. Not a horse in sight.

Mingus, Texas (1999) (see p.6) shows decaying buildings around a road junction in a small town. A sign for 'Johnnie's Liquor Store' dominates the picture, fragments of its neon tubes still hanging; the store no doubt is as dead as the boarded-up shops across the road. Cables from a central telephone pole break the sky in best Walker Evans tradition. It's a desolate scene, enlivened by a floral sign on the corrugated iron shack at left and the stripes of the awnings on the first floor windows at right.

The book's cover picture, taken in New York in 1999 (see p.8) shows three people on the roadway at a street corner. Centre of frame, a dark-suited black man walks away from the camera, filling the height of the frame, looking up and away from camera. At his left an old woman, strangely squat, makes her determined path towards the edge of the frame, fur hatted head gazing down. Right of frame, a woman in a head scarf squirms uneasily around the rear of a taxi, white trainers emerging oddly from her long dark skirt as she apparently pushes her rear at the camera. In the background, cars pass through the intersection and the traffic opposite prepares to

rush toward the scene when the lights change.

Another image from New York in 1999 catches a woman apparently in ecstatic communion as sunlight finds its way into a corner outside some massive building. She leans back into the corner, fingers interlaced in front of her stomach, head back and eyes closed. In the shade at bottom left a pigeon stands prosaically.

Sykes made four visits to America, but was not equally blessed with pictures. Most of the best come from the 1999 trip, with some from 1971, and a few from his first 1969 adventure – particularly a double page with a white boy between two parked cars at left (Trenton, NJ, 1969), a black girl reaching up to a man, head thrown back fully horizontal in Washington DC, and another picture of two kids on the street in New York, one raising a knife as the other runs laughing past the photographer (see p.6). Perhaps on his final visit he concentrated more on the writing.

My favourite image was taken in Calico, California, in 1971 (see p.7). It is a picture which is full of clues but with no solutions, a fine degree of tension but no resolution. There are many prominent verticals and two strong diagonal elements – a rod held by the woman coming out of the doorway at left and a shadow of a foreground post on the sandy path. I like the photographic quality of the textures from the strong side lighting, the kind of 1930s ambience of the buildings and

fittings, and the mystery, like something straight out of Raymond Chandler.

The book looks attractive and is designed for 35mm landscape format images, many of which are presented full page, and some with a small border. A few are printed too small – and the shape makes this inevitable for the few portrait format frames.

I'd have liked a few more details – page numbers, a list of photographs, and more information on the photographer – but these are minor annoyances in what is a great book, and at £20 it seems reasonably priced. Like Frank's *The Americans*, this is not a book that sets out to show a positive image of America, but to show it how it was, or at least how the photographer saw it. Sykes is a vision that repays interest and close attention.

On The Road Again Homer Sykes
Mansion Editions, London, UK
ISBN 0-9542233-0-6
Softcover, £20.00 / \$35.00

A longer review of this work will appear shortly on the 'About Photography' website
<http://photography.about.com>.
Homer Sykes will be giving a talk on Thursday 19 September on his two new books, *On the Road Again* and *Shanghai Odyssey* (see LIP Programme p. 24).
There is a retrospective exhibition of Tony Ray-Jones work at the Focus Gallery. Please see Events (p. 20) for further details.

Seeking to enhance your landscape portfolio?

This is your opportunity to spend two weeks in March 2003 absorbed in the awesome and dramatic landscape of the American Southwest. The itinerary is currently not finalised, but definite areas are Capitol Reef National Park, Canyonlands National Park and Monument Valley.

Total cost approximately £1500 (includes airfares, all 4WD transport, lodging, food, experienced guide). Your only concern is what kind of camera and film to use! Group is limited to a maximum of six people.

Interested? Contact Quentin Ball on 020 8444 5505 or quentinball@aol.com

Experiments with Photoshop

Leyla Hassan

These images were taken nearly two years ago, when I had to go into hospital for major surgery. I thought I would take my mind off the trauma of it by taking a throwaway camera into hospital to document what was happening to me. I was also about to finish my degree at London Guildhall University where I specialised in photography, so it was a very stressful time for me.

During my stay in hospital I managed to take some images – some before and some after the operation. The other patients thought I was mad at first, but later they wanted me to take photographs of them too. I had complications so I stayed in hospital longer than I should have. Nonetheless I tried very hard to keep my spirits high and managed to take these images. The throwaway camera had a flash and Kodak Ultra film. But nearly two years on I looked at the images and scanned them into Photoshop and changed the colour mode to black and white. I have worked on them and think that the images have become more ambiguous and have more of an impact in black and white. I teach Photoshop now and find it to be a very useful tool in my photography. The possibilities are endless for creating artwork but I still like working in the conventional methods. I really enjoy combining the two.



Leyla Hassan

Call for help



Leyla Hassan

Untitled



Leyla Hassan

Pre med

Trees

Noël Kingsley

I have loved trees for as long as I can remember, and have been photographing them virtually exclusively for about eight years. I worked in colour for two years but soon turned to monochrome, preferring its subtle expressive mood. I'm no botanist, but really enjoy being among trees, and I seek to show through my work how trees add beauty and a sense of place to a location. I also want to convey some of their character and how they permeate their surroundings with a calming energy and stillness. I photograph trees that can be found in any park or woodland, and I am particularly drawn to situations where the light helps to create a special atmosphere, particularly in the very early morning.

I primarily use medium format with interchangeable film backs and employ N, N+1 N-1 and N-2 development to precisely control development for varying contrast situations. I seek to achieve high quality negatives in the first place, so minimising manipulation in the darkroom. The photographs illustrated here are virtually straight prints with minimal dodging or burning in, although the contrast range may be as wide as 9 stops. I also enjoy portraiture, both candid and formal, mostly using natural light and controlling shadows with reflectors.

Noël has had two solo exhibitions of his tree photography in central London - Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W1, in 2000, and Gallery 1885, Kennington, in 2001. His images are frequently in demand by organisations including The Woodland Trust and the Tree Council.

More of his work, including his portrait work, can be seen on www.noelkingsley.com. Noël welcomes contact from any like-minded photographer – his email address is noel@noelkingsley.com



Noël Kingsley

morning light



Noël Kingsley

snowy lane, Grindaleford, Yorkshire



Noël Kingsley

Birch and morning mist



Noël Kingsley

Trees under Liam Rock, Dovedale, Derbyshire



Noël Kingsley

Le Corboulo, Brittany, France



Noël Kingsley

Le Corboulo, Brittany, France

Giorno di bucato

(Laundry day)

*Roberto
Leone*

It happened one day, some time ago, while I was going through my photo archive. Trying to put some order in my chaotic collection of prints, negatives and slides, I suddenly realized that most of my pictures had a very distinctive trait in common, some sort of *fil rouge* linking them all. I had never noticed before that, wherever I was, whatever I was photographing, most of the time the scene would include a clothes line with laundry hanging up to dry! That was no coincidence. Obviously, there was something attracting me in that simple, apparently insignificant background detail. It was not just a pleasant, yet casual, composition matter. Although it was occurring at a subconscious level, I sensed there was more to it than mere decorative merits.

Then it all came to me. Laundry, hung to dry... Don't get misled by the apparent normality of such a common sight and gesture. Think about it: laundry is one of the few "rituals" that we all share. Something that really goes beyond culture, class or religion. A common gesture depicting the human nature in one of its rare moments of relaxed intimacy. Personal pieces of one's existence exposed right there and then, exhibited outside one's home as a flag to be proud of and not ashamed of! Some sort of absolute exhibitionism, intriguing and still completely naive.

I always loved seeing these clothes lines. They are a real life kaleidoscope, improvised ribbons of a colorful domestic celebration. They give me a sense of peace and hope, like a truce in today's belligerent, harsh, frenzied world.

Whether sociologically interesting or just plain funny, these pictures are meant to remind us of how life is



Roberto Leone

Gli Scarponcini

simpler than we see it, with much more things in common than we think.

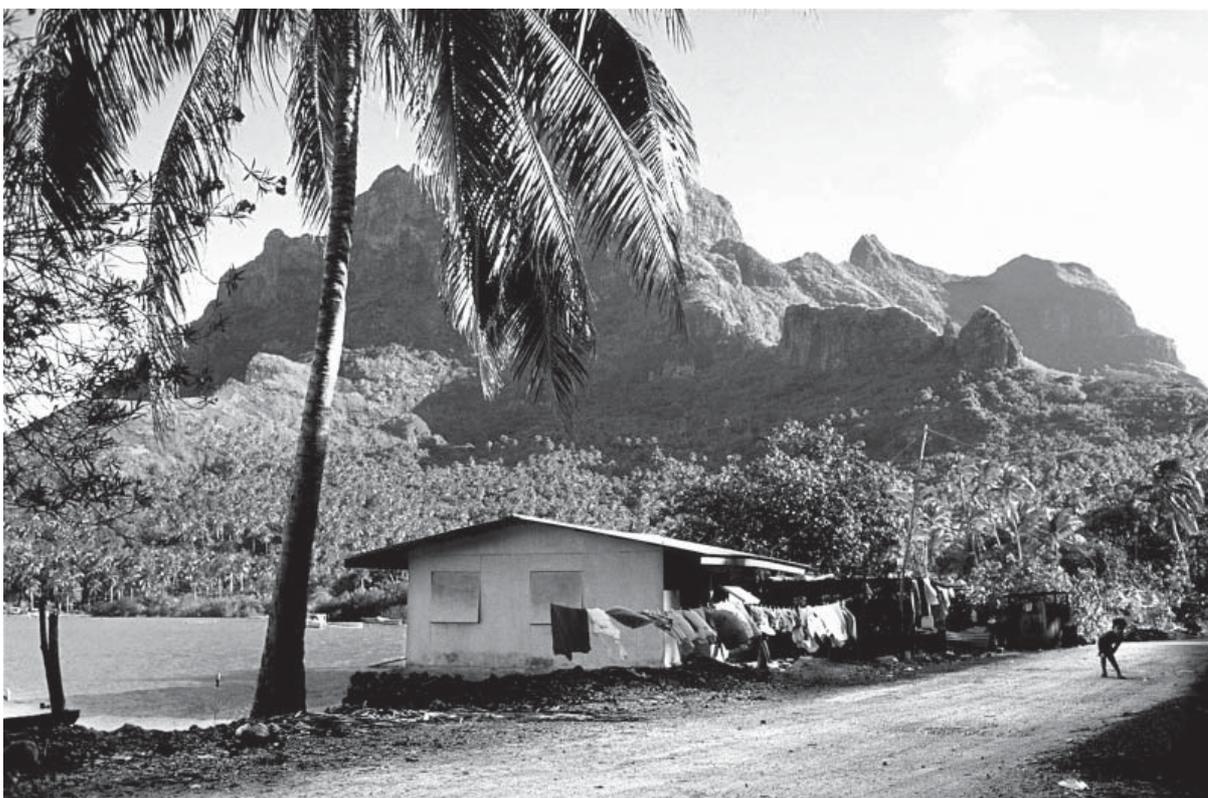
Roberto Leone was born in Florence, Italy, in 1956 and has been taking pictures since he was young. After his studies, inspired by the great masters of both still photography and moving pictures, he created his own video production company and produced several successful documentary videos such as Pasta!, The World of Chianti, Florence and its history.

Since moving to London from Italy at the end of year 2000, Roberto has resumed his activity as a photographer, focusing his creativity on portraying people and their life in a whole variety of contexts. Far from pursuing the "conceptual" way so popular these

days, his photography and subjects may be classified as "traditional". His work reflects a desire to share the feeling of his pictures, while not requiring the viewer to guess the meaning hidden in them.

He works with both medium format and 35mm cameras, usually with 400ASA film. Given the significant improvement in emulsion performance of today's films, he believes there is no reason to prefer transparencies to negative material. He acknowledges digital photography as a fascinating option : it provides new tools and can expand the creativity of the artist/photographer.

To contact Roberto Leone phone (UK) 0781 6175846 or email: info@leonephoto.com



Roberto Leone

Polinesia



Roberto Leone

New York



Roberto Leone

Holland



Roberto Leone

La Mutanda



Roberto Leone

Il Rammendo



Roberto Leone

La Topolino



Roberto Leone

Il Vicolo

A Field Trip to the Docklands *Gordon Raisin*

Sometimes I see lengthy crocodiles of tourists moving slowly along London pavements behind their harassed leaders. That is not what happens on LIP field trips.

The last one I was fortunate to join was led by Peter Marshall to the Docklands, that futuristic dinosaur park in London's 'gateway'. Peter met us at Canary Wharf station, all of us draped with cameras at the ready, convenient compacts on some, full bags on others. He knows the district well, past and present, and had prepared the tour thoroughly, handing out sheets with the itinerary and street plans, even one based on aerial survey (in case we got lost?). This was supplemented by appropriate background and comments, but not too much, as we went round enjoying the sunshine and exercising our cameras more or less together and definitely not as one of those crocodiles. After all, we were 'independents' – though with shared interests and outlooks.

These field trips introduce us to fresh environments or possibly to ones we already know but can see with fresh eyes. There is the company of other photographers, the chat and the comparison of approaches and picture-capturing styles, which can extend one's own vision.

We had brought packed lunches with us so as not to waste time – and to revive our hard-working feet. Even so there was not really time to stand and stare, as I like to, and consider carefully possible subjects and how they should be treated. It was certainly a way of working I am not used to, but that probably made it a valuable experience, sharpening responses. Much the same applied to Carol Ballenger's workshop at Richmond, where we had not much more than an hour to picture the Park before our films were whisked away to be processed.

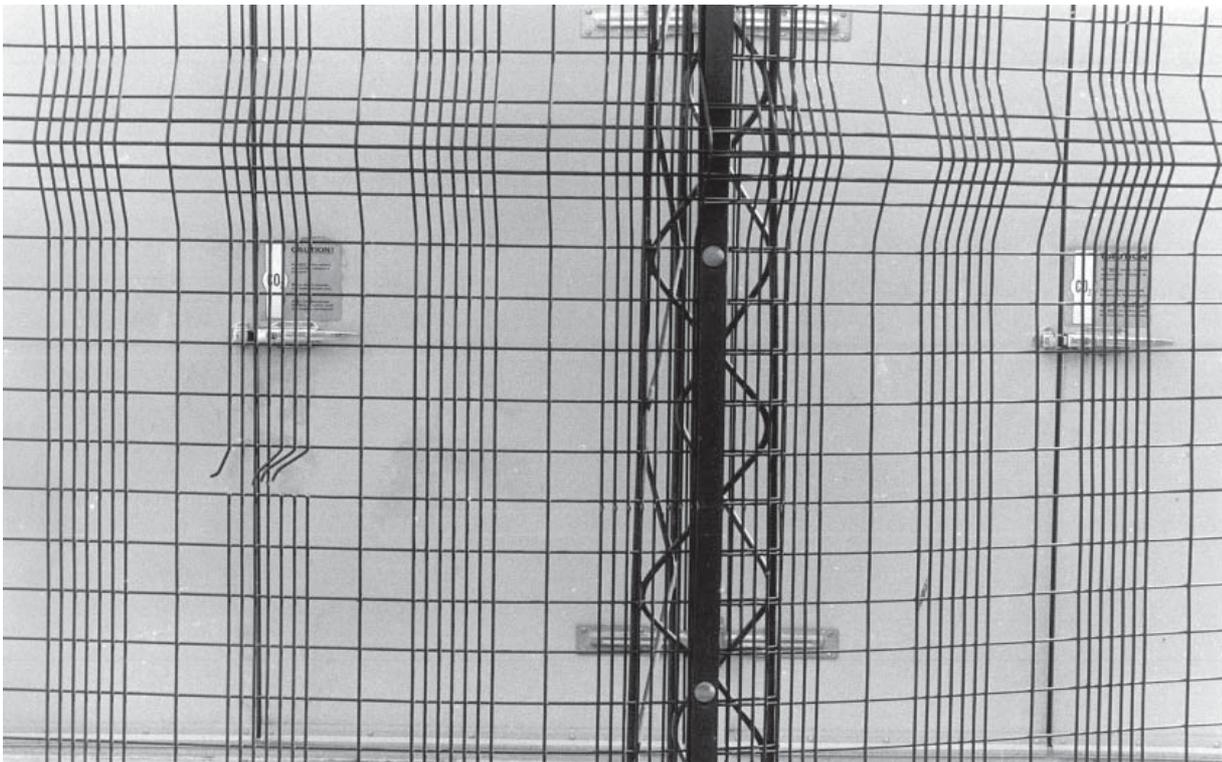
I have the amateur attitude that time is made for man, but it may have been a good thing to have to produce at that faster pace at least for a bit before reverting to old habits. Sometimes I feel that things need time to sink in before surfacing again, without in any

way claiming a Wordsworthian 'emotion recalled in tranquillity'. So a faster pace was a healthy experience.

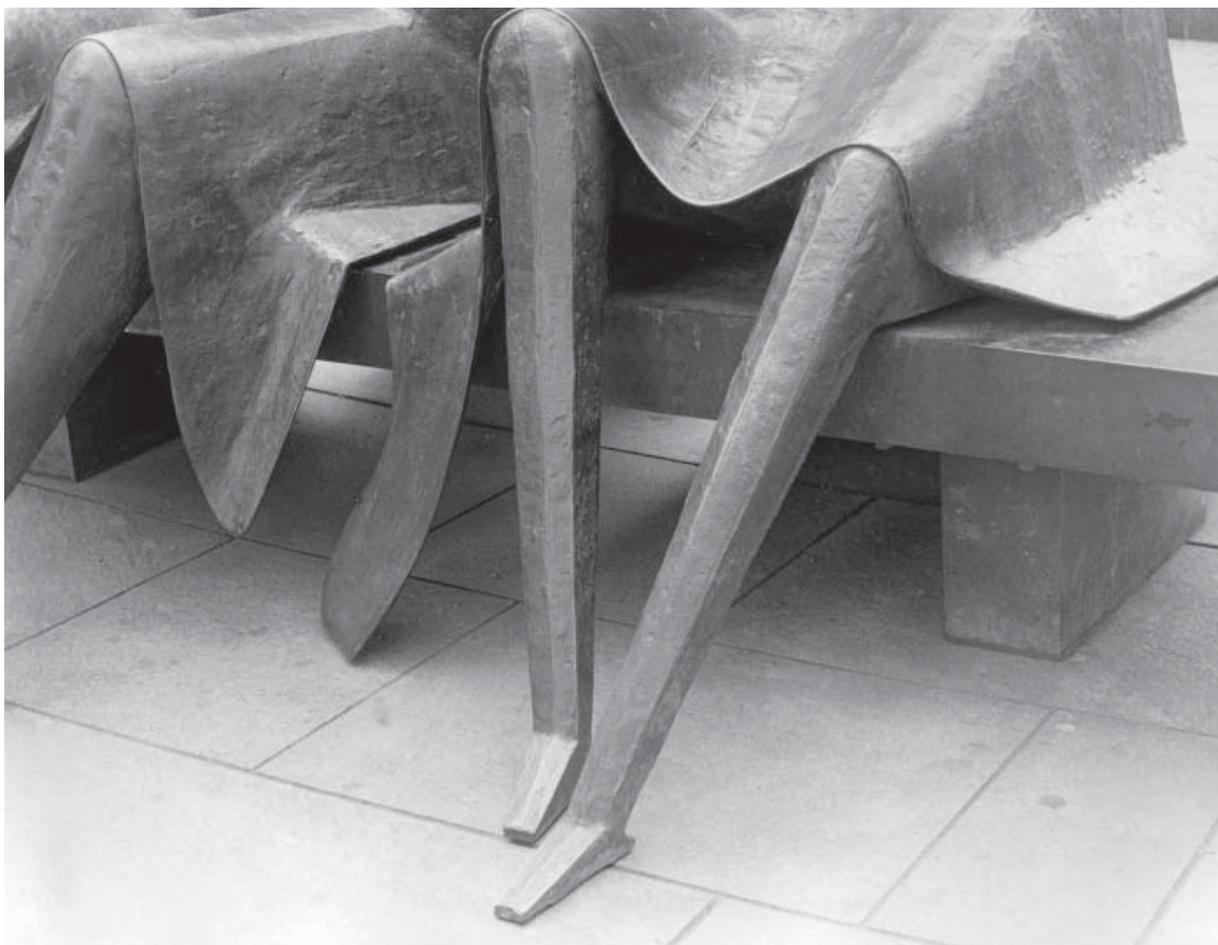
It was only to be expected that our results showed a variety of responses, but Peter was quite right to comment in particular that my photos may not portray the Docklands as such. One reason is that I found the place had little human dimension and found it difficult to come to terms with that photographically in the time, short of cliché. I am far from being a Paul Strand, but I doubt whether even he could have produced 'Wall Street' from emotional scratch without prior feelings about it.

The fisherman seemed incongruous sitting there patiently, dominated by massive building works and industry, with 'That Dome' lurking behind; but the water, often dirty and refuse-strewn, kept up a connection to the real world. Nevertheless I found plenty of interest to me in my own sphere and I am going back knowing and feeling much more. And, like the fisherman, I shall have time.

So come along to field trips – but not so many of you that I might be crowded out.



Gordon Raisin



Gordon Ratsinn



Gordon Ratsinn