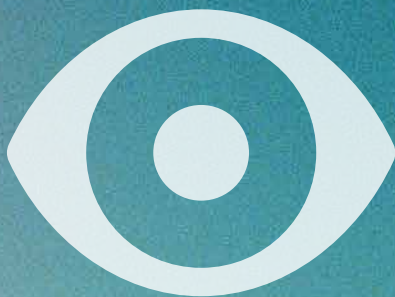




LONDON
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THE
IMPERFECT
ISSUE



Jane Ross

THE IMPERFECT ISSUE

Issue 61

What does imperfect, in photography, mean to you?

A fault, a mistake, a miscalculation? Does the imperfect image become a 'bad photo'? Do you recoil from it? Do you discard it? Or, do you accept its agency of chance? Maybe you notice the collateral beauty in the unhappy accident. Maybe it becomes a *happy accident* ... or maybe it was intentional?

Ansel Adams has been quoted as saying that a photograph can be an instrument of revelation. By that, I think he meant that not only does the act of photographing teach us to see things we may not otherwise see, but that it can open us to experience photography in a way that is not rooted in predictability and knowing.

Sometimes this can mean that the world we capture reveals itself to be imperfect and ugly, full of contradictions, desperately lacking in idealised beauty. Yet, image-making can be the vehicle that allows us to face up to this mirror and reconcile with it.

Sometimes imperfection is what we embrace, and it becomes part of our practice, whether through experiments with images or the happenstance that emerges through the process of making. It may be a reflection of our psychology and life experience; it may be a manifestation of our desire to rebel against authority, prescribed ideas and established practices.

Imperfection also lies at the heart of the Japanese aesthetic concept of wabi-sabi, rooted in Zen Buddhism, whose underlying idea is that things are more beautiful because they are simple, flawed, and ephemeral. Wabi-sabi invites us to experience and appreciate imperfection so that the world can reveal itself to us, echoing the words of Ansel Adams.

So, let us allow ourselves to let go, and open ourselves up to the imperfect.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue and to our guest selector Chloë Sastry. You make it what it is.

Kasia Kowalska
editor



THE IMPERFECT ISSUE

Issue 61

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Frankie McAllister



Lauris Morgan-Griffiths

No photograph is *perfect*

by Reza Tavakol

Since its inception the idea of perfection has, for some, been an important criterion in judging photographs, especially in comparison with other forms of representation of the world such as painting.

Here, rather than asking what the criteria for *perfect* photographs may be and whether they would even be desirable, I like to ask a more fundamental question, namely whether perfect photographs are even in principle possible? This amounts to asking whether the key constituents of any photograph - its subject as a part of the world, the photographic processes involved, and the viewer required for its perception - could all be (made) *perfect*?

But what is *perfection*? A glance at the listings in dictionaries shows *flawless*, *complete*, and *finished*, all concepts that often imply *finality*, *permanence* and *closure*. Interestingly, none of these features correspond to our modern understanding of the world which is thought to be changing, open, and possessing of irregularities. In other words, a world that by its impermanence and openness defies finality and closure - and hence perfection. In fact, the idea of perfection never corresponded to any features of the real world, but was invented by our ancestors, through a long historical process of abstraction, to fit an idealised world, home to perfect (geometrical) shapes (*On im(perfection)* (*Sobre la (im)perfección*), Reza Tavakol, 2005).

The question then becomes, can we conceive of *perfect* photographs of an imperfect world, which in turn raises two important related questions: what is the relationship between photographs and their subjects; and what are the processes involved in making photographs?



It is now clear that whatever this relationship may be photographs are far from perfect representations of the world. Furthermore, the photographic processes inevitably involve a large number of choices - some intentional, others accidental - from the type of camera used, to its position relative to

the subject photographed; the choices in the camera's settings, as well as those made in the development and fixing (in analogue photographs) and post processing (in digital photographs), and in the way images are printed and displayed.

image: Amanda Eatwell

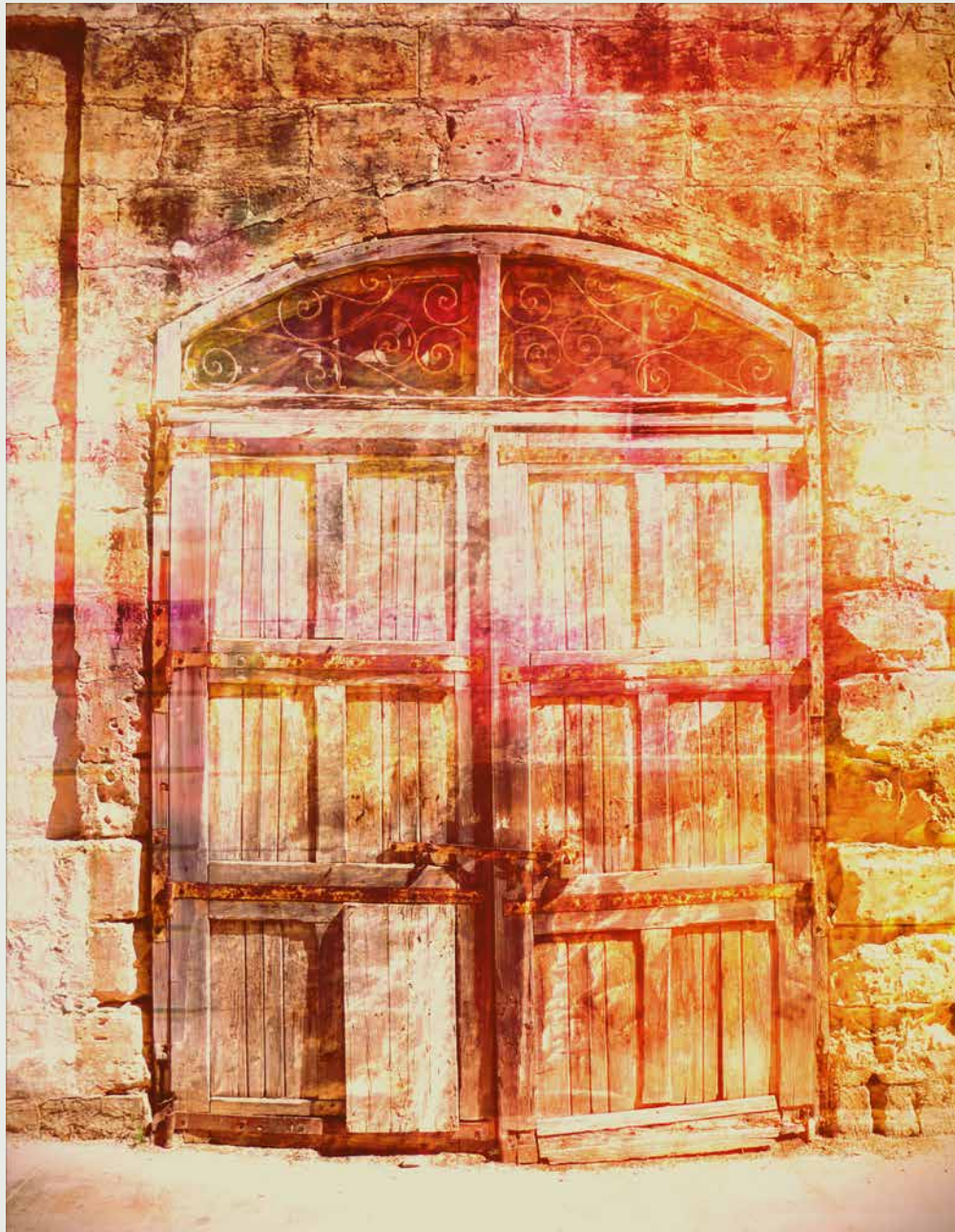


The key point is that all these choices are *non-unique*, a reminder of the innumerable ways a photograph could have turned out differently - intentionally or accidentally - thus bestowing a potential openness to the processes involved in photography which is counter to the closure and finality required by *perfection*. Similarly, the perception of photographs requires a viewer who is non-unique and whose judgement, besides their personal choices, is bound to be differently impacted by the dominant values, tastes and ideologies of the times. In this sense, photographs could be said to be *imperfect* representations of imperfect subjects - more generally of the world - which makes them *multiply imperfect*.

So far, I have mainly focused on the objective and physical aspects of photographs. Alternatively, photographs could be considered aesthetically or socio-politically, in which case they may be judged as *perfect* according to some chosen criteria. Even in such cases considerations of imperfection can still be relevant. For example, aesthetically there are traditions - as in the Japanese aesthetics of imperfection - that privilege the appreciation of the aged, the obscured, the impoverished, and the defective (*The Japanese Aesthetics of Imperfection and Insufficiency*, Yuriko Saito, 1997). Similarly, a great deal of photographs dealing with, for instance, social and environmental issues could be viewed as *imperfect* representations of the unjust - and hence *imperfect* - world we live in.



left: Arun Misra
above: Paul Morris



above: Sarah Wilkie
right: Samuel Nicholls



In addition to the inevitable imperfections implicit in all photographs discussed above, many photographers introduce additional and intentional 'imperfections' in their practices through, for example, intentional camera movement, the employment of a variety of filters, as well as post processing transformations in digital photography. Similarly, there has been what could be termed as an 'analogue turn' which privileges analogue photography partly because it allows certain features, such as colour washes, light leaks, vignettes and blurs, which speak to the materiality of film and print, that used to be looked down upon as failings (*"Failing" Photographs: Evoking analogue imperfection in vernacular photography*, Dagmar Dirks, 2015), as well as allowing contingencies through experimentations with alternative choices of developers, fixers, and so on. There has also been a great deal of recent interest in alternative photographic processes which open a plethora of avenues for experimentation - and thus the introduction of imperfections.

We may ask how can this realisation of the inevitability of *imperfection* in the photographic processes impact and enrich our practice? Apart from providing an alternative, and a far wider conceptual framework to conceive and judge photographs, it can free us from unnecessary idealised restrictions in both our choices of subjects and techniques, thus allowing greater freedom for photographic creativity. And more generally, by accommodating openness, transience, and contingency, it hints at the possibility of conceptualising a wider notion of aesthetics which can embrace the imperfections of the real world and its multiple modes of representation.



left: Yoke Matze
above: Naomi James



Exploring the imperfect: breaking the rules with chemigram printing

by Jo Stapleton

Using traditional printing methods to produce good quality silver gelatine prints is all about precision; from the choice of paper, filters, chemicals and exposure times to techniques such as **dodging and burning**. At the point the exposed paper hits the development tray, darkroom chemistry is often used in a very controlled and regimented way. In contrast, chemigram printing uses the attributes of black and white darkroom chemistry as an alternative process and a creative tool.

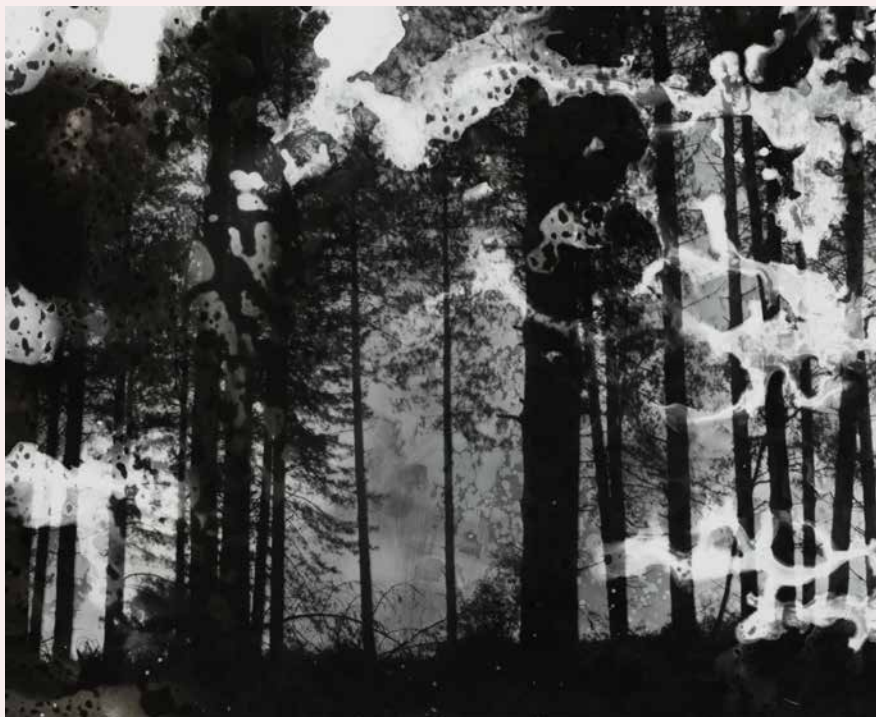
For me, as a film and darkroom photographer, what happens in the camera is only a part of the process to create an image; it's in the darkroom where the real creativity and construction of the image comes to life. Whilst many artists use chemigram printing to produce abstract and cameraless photography, for me it's a way of exploring and constructing

images working with negatives shot on film.

Using an enlarger in the darkroom I project and expose my negatives on to black and white photographic paper, but then I break away from the traditional developing sequence of developer-stop bath-fixer and apply the chemistry out of sequence. For example, I start by selectively applying a fixer to block or slow down the development of areas within the image, or I only apply a developer to specific areas of exposed paper. I also use a range of tools and techniques to apply the chemicals including spraying, pouring, rubbing, scratching or painting. It's not unusual for prints to move between the stop bath, developer and fixer and back again, or for my tools and developing trays to become cross-contaminated and produce unexpected tones, effects and patina within the final



both images:
Jo Stapleton



print. Whilst this might sound and feel counterintuitive to traditional silver gelatine printing, I find it liberating. No longer worrying about 'getting it right' or creating a technically perfect print, the process becomes creative and responsive. To quote the composer and artist John Cage, 'We're breaking all of the rules, even our own rules, and how do we do that? By leaving plenty of room for X quantities'.

The fluidity and imprecise nature of chemigram printing enables me to explore and create images with an expressionist sensibility. Working with the negatives in the darkroom is an opportunity to remember and creatively reflect upon the emotional or sensory experience behind the original negative image. My aim is to use the chemigram process to construct and make visible the unseen. This can be a reflection of my own mental state and emotional response, or a sense of

awe, interpreted in a number of ways. It may give expression to an atmosphere or a memory, or reflect environmental conditions, such as wind, temperature, or pollution. It may speak of the passage of time or the natural world, such as a dissolving forest and the sensation of standing beside a waterfall, or the heaviness of the night sky glimpsed through trees.

Chemigram printing is imperfect and imprecise. It's seldom that I create a print and feel satisfied with it at the first attempt; there are usually several working versions before the final image is produced, and even then, it's impossible to control exactly how and where the chemicals will fall and interact. It is a liquid process which often overflows the borders created by the print easel on the photographic paper. Rather than an error, these 'X quantities', or elements of chance, become moments of imperfect, wabi-sabi beauty.



both images:
Jo Stapleton



above: Astrid Schulz
right: Sue McGilveray



The New Accelerator

by Peter Jennings



image:
Peter Jennings

A year ago, I started to casually photograph Folkestone. Then I read *The New Accelerator*, a futuristic short story by H.G. Wells, published in 1901 and set in Folkestone. It gave me an inspiration for a project.

The story is about a scientist, Professor Gibberne, who invents a drug called the Accelerator which enables one to think and move at an incredible speed while those around them appear to move in slow motion. In the story, both Wells as the narrator and Professor Gibberne take the drug. Their adventures are amusing but profoundly disturbing.

Although I have called my project *The New Accelerator*, I realised that I did not want to illustrate the story but to abstract its concepts of time and space and show how we use and abuse them, fictionalising them on my own terms - often with humour.

As an artist and a photographer of the 'metaphorical school' my images are personal and not critical - yet a documentary element does come in. When I set out to create photographs, I like my mind clear of preconceived image ideas and, as Raymond Moore - a post-war English art photographer who inspires me - said, let the images come through unfettered. But personally, I believe a tad of fettering doesn't go amiss!



I set out with Wells' futuristic vision on my mind to photograph Folkestone which has seen better days. Shops in the town centre have closed; the imposing houses of the Victorian middle classes are now flats; the 'Old Town' is now 'The Creative Quarter'; street art proliferates. Folkestone blends, often uneasily, the new with the old. The question whether change is always beneficial played on my mind as I photographed the town.

Wells lived near Folkestone in Sandgate between 1898 and 1909. Written in that period, *The New Accelerator* has prescience. When Wells and Gibberne take the drug it is almost as if they project themselves into our world which moves at a much faster pace than 1901 and has the technology to, questionably, help us cope. Did Wells prevision our age? It is an intriguing thought, but my images - and I feel this is more important - pose questions rather than provide answers.

all images:
Peter Jennings





Richard Spencer



Jane Ross



Chris Bellinger



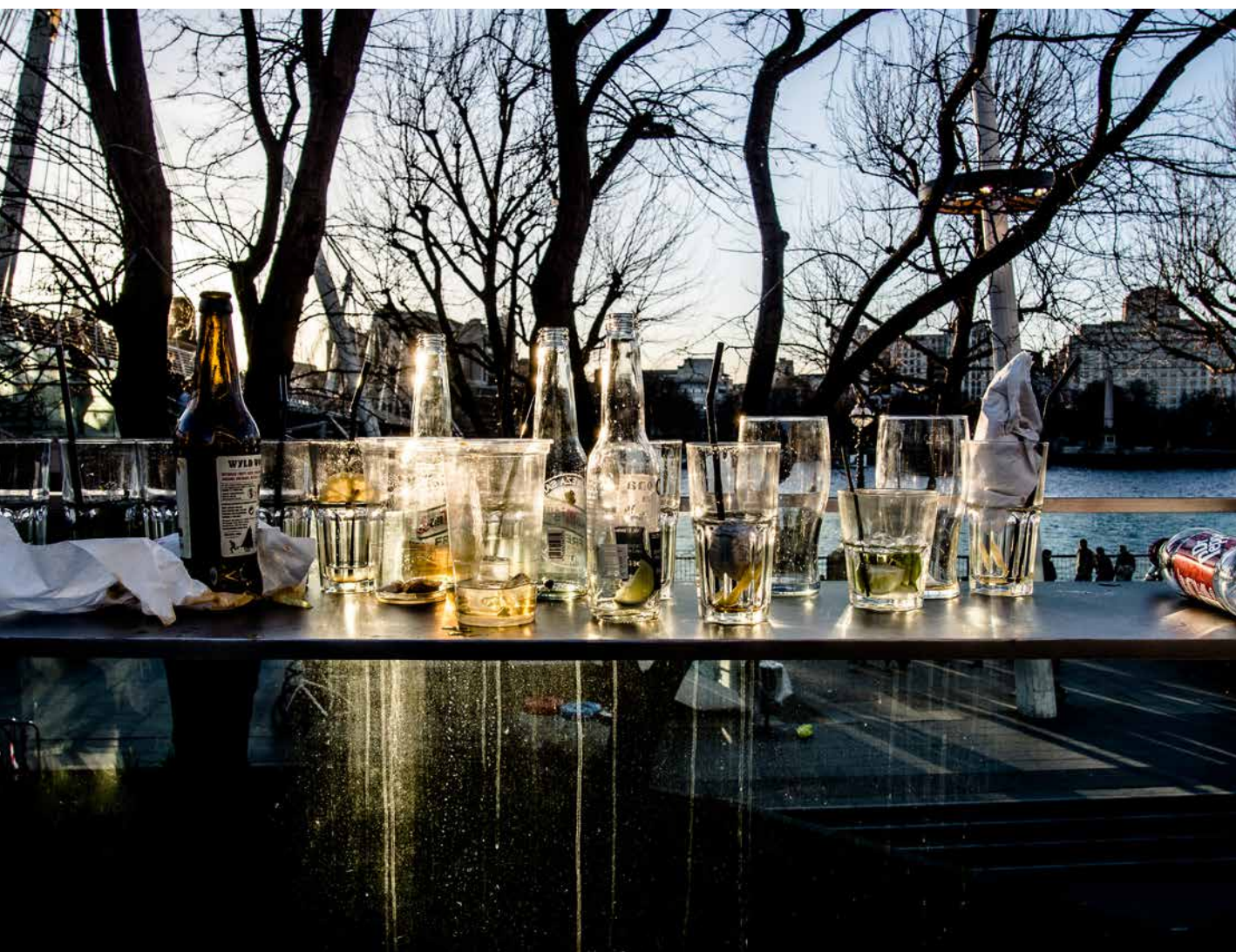
Anne Crabbe



Bill Christie



Chloë Sastry



CJ Crosland



Sam Tanner





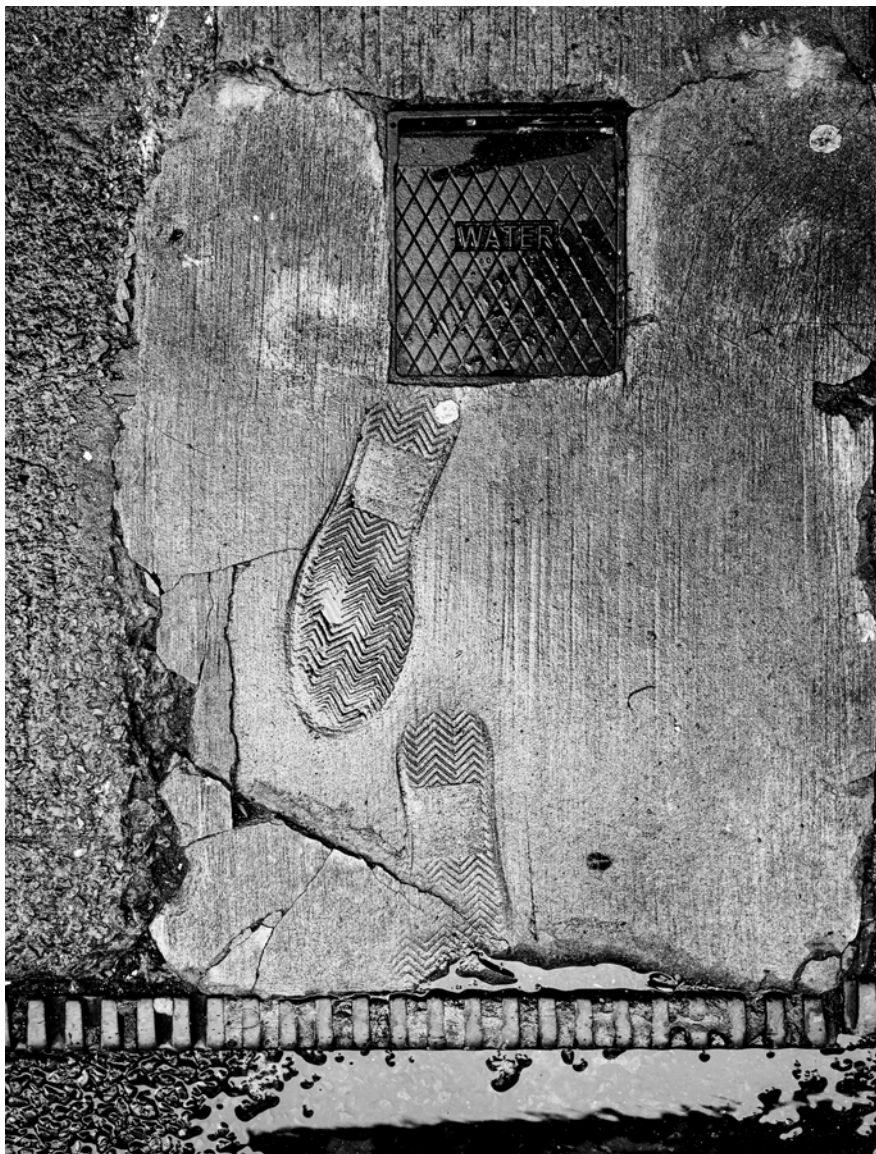
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Mark Friend



above: Mike Cookson
right: Frankie McAllister



above: Jayne Selvaggio
right: Sarah Ainsley



Steve Jones



Alan Larsen



left: Reza Tavakol
above: Fred Barrington

Past imperfect, present continuous

by Heather McDonough

Learning and teaching are bound into one for me - they weave into each other until there's no seam.

I can recite my times tables. The Massachusetts nuns who taught me reinforced learning by frightening seven-year-old girls. As a result, I really can't be told how to do anything; I have to understand it for myself by creating something that makes sense to me from the inside out.

At the age of seven I refused to be told how to ski. I got to the bottom, somehow, never looked back. I tucked in against the wind, head down, and went. This is an image I've carried into my photographic journey.



I was taught by some exceptionally kind and skilled practitioners. Peter Goldfield tried the zone system on me and the important parts stuck. Peter Fraser understood my image-making and guided me towards the unpredictability of a Lubitel camera. Sharon Kivland unlocked something new; she was integral to my learning about conceptual work and the importance of conveying ideas. Mick Williamson gave me the space and time over many years to see with integrity.

Mostly, I have found myself not knowing. Not knowing how to use a plate camera; not knowing how to print; not knowing how to use flash; not being able to make a book or fold paper shapes. Not waiting until something is perfect, I have pushed on, found the tuck and have gone with it - occasionally off-piste but then, once in a while, executing a spectacular slalom turn along the way.

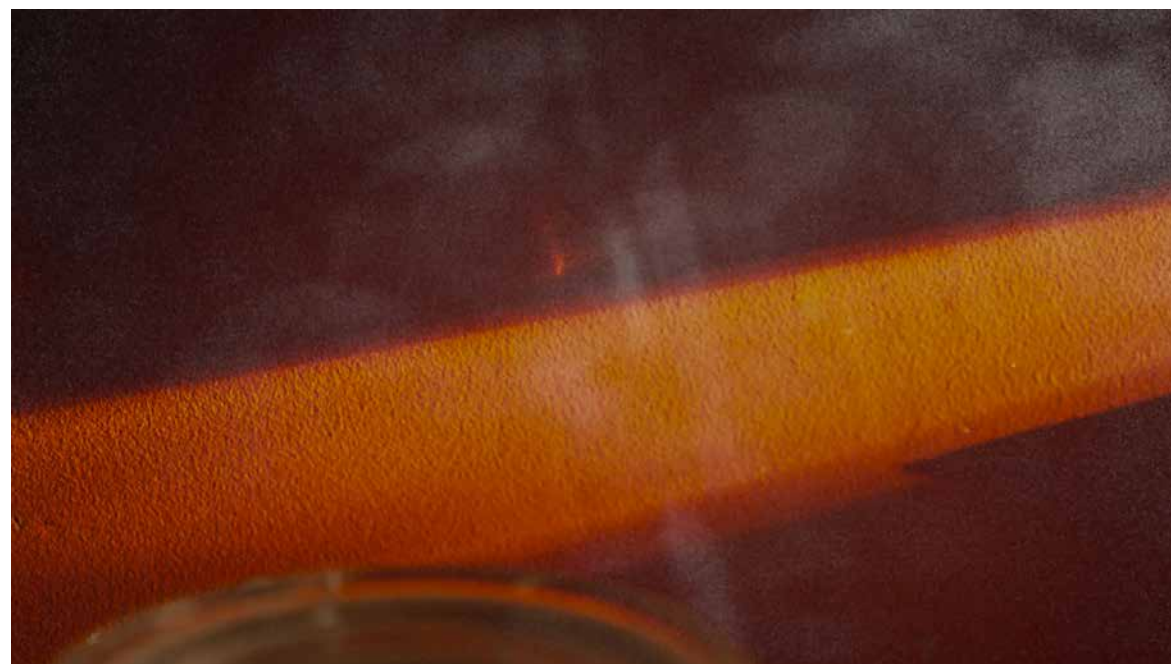
While recently making some work for a staff exhibition at London Metropolitan University, I began to prepare some of my files for editing a short film and it occurred to me that I don't finish or complete anything. I make a new piece that somehow dovetails into the last, and there is always an element of incompleteness. However, it is precisely the not knowing and embracing the happenstance that is indispensable; using the happy accidents of process to weave ideas together.

both images from
the series: Light
Heather McDonough

For one of my films, I included some existing footage: stills of old snapshots of me as a child, being projected on my studio wall, with the sound of the projector a ready-made soundtrack. Another of the films came from almost 500 phone images that I took unwittingly while my phone was in the pocket of my jacket, lightweight enough to allow light in and fire off while I was blissfully unaware that I was making a series of photographs. The images animated together echo the shadows that I have intentionally photographed for decades, and evoke memories of houses, rooms I have played in, eaten in, drawn in.

A red velvet curtain, beyond which the dry leaves swirl in a summer vortex, recollecting my far-off 1960s family. *Mister Ed*, a childhood favourite TV sitcom, playing in a distant living room while outside the rumbling trains bring New Holland tractors on the beds of the open cars.

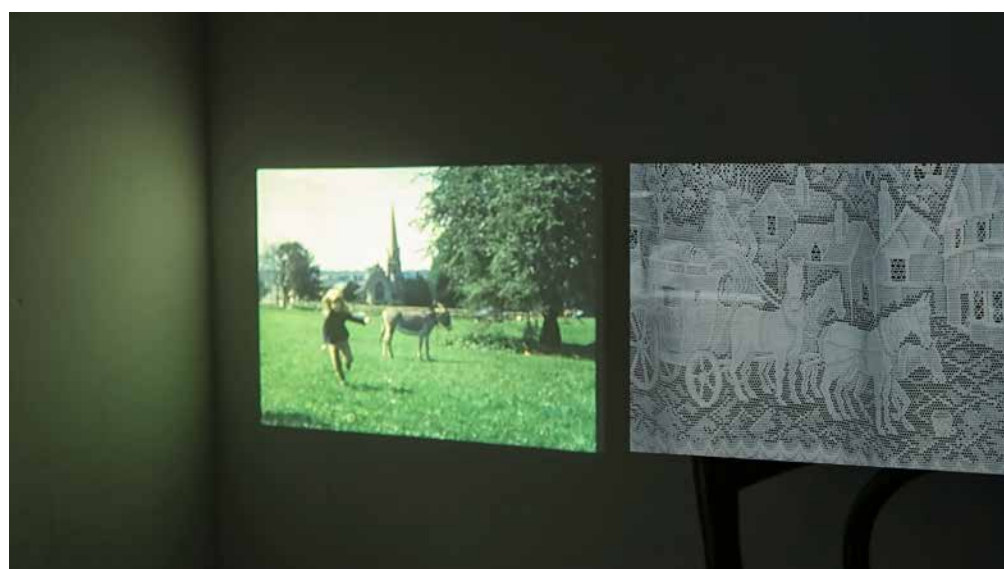
My themes and concerns are consistent: family and memory. The photographs I make are often in response to specific memories. The work meanders and connects.



I examine the space that photographs occupy and what occurs in the space between photographs: how moving and still images can connect, how they can create a sense of environment. The space between photographs is devoid of meaning, it serves to separate the images and provides a breath, but in this place the narrative begins to form; a vibrant threshold in which connections between images are allowed to come into being.

The moment in which I photograph often triggers in my mind another moment - a memory, or a fragment of a story - that then informs the current image until what is in the frame is not only the sight in front of me but also the involuntary memory that has come sharply into view.

Printed photography is a suggestive two-dimensional space. I enjoy playing with landscape, interior, and time; I move fluidly between the past imperfect and the present continuous.



above & right from the series: *Shadow*
left from the series: *Play*
Heather McDonough



Kunkumam exhibition by Sabes Sugunasabesan

review by **Austin Guest**

Sabes Sugunasabesan's war memory project explored the end of Sri Lanka's long civil war in 2009 and its aftermath. The title of the exhibition refers to the bright red, turmeric-based powder commonly applied as a dot on the forehead by married Tamil women.

The exhibition highlighted how memories of conflict overshadow parts of the country, particularly along a narrow coastal strip of land southeast of Jaffna, the capital of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, where a shallow lagoon, a single road and a narrow bridge impose limitations on movement. Hundreds of thousands of Tamil civilians became trapped within this area late in the conflict, many becoming victims of a notorious massacre around the village of Mullivaikkal. Brutal clearances and internments followed the fighting, with villages fenced off for over three years while bonfires erased evidence of the violent past. Mass graves have since been discovered during new construction works, and it is said that only the soil knows what happened there.

Sugunasabesan photographed the area in 2018 and 2024 and collected artefacts which hinted at past horrors: pottery fragments, shrapnel, water-damaged photographs whose colours had dissolved into abstract patterns. At one point, he realised that he may have strolled through a minefield.

Having suffered harassment and interrogation from the local military when walking through these tragic, once-familiar landscapes, he experienced psychological dislocation from his homeland.

During one of his visits to Mullivaikkal, Sugunasabesan performed a personal ritual on the beach, scattering the kunkuma powder on the sand at sunrise in an act of remembrance - a film of which by the Sri Lankan photographer and visual storyteller, Tharmapalan Tilaxan, played at the exhibition continuously next to the images of the shore, abstract and aerial, beside a display of domestic utensils on loan from The Tamil Information Centre.

The exhibition specifically chose not to overexplain, leading the viewer to personally engage with its narrative and allow them to recognise the scale and the lasting impact of a shocking and tragic time in Sri Lanka's recent history.

'Kunkumam' by Sabes Sugunasabesan was exhibited at Harrow Arts Centre, from 15th April to 1st May 2025



above: Nanthi Kadal Lagoon
below: Broken Road at Mullivaikkal Village
Sabes Sugunasabesan



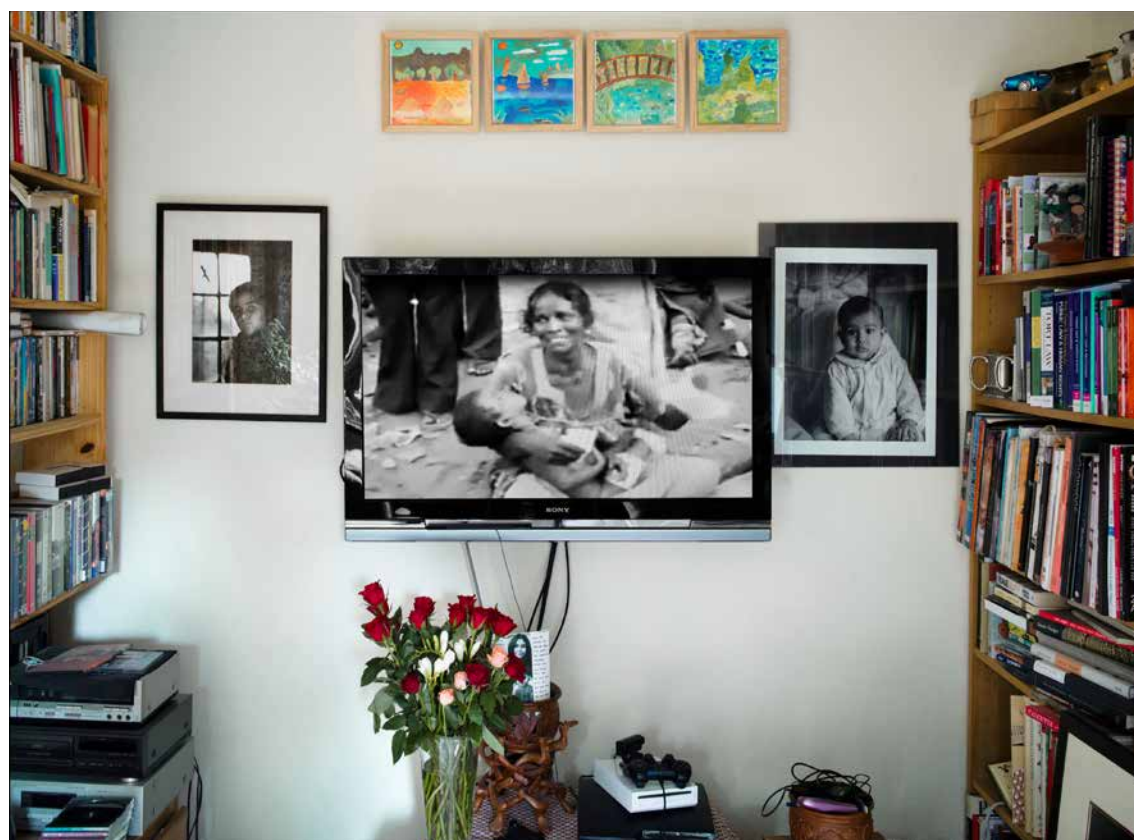
How does the land endure in its grief? How does the ocean mourn?

by Vindhya Buthpitiya

To accompany the *Kunkumam* exhibition, on 27th April 2025 Harrow Arts Centre hosted a conversation between Sabes Sugunasabesan and Dr Vindhya Buthpitiya, a lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews and a specialist in the interconnection between photography and political violence in Sri Lanka.

Kunkumam, குங்குமம் ஐக்கூதல் is an elegiac invocation of home, war, loss and dispersal. Sabes Sugunasabesan's composition of photography, film, words and tactile ephemera reconstructs the landscape of northern Sri Lanka. In visual splinters and expanses, a terrain fractured by decades of armed conflict emerges out of sand, saltwater, the spiny matter of ongoing militarisation and stymied justice, grainy satellite screenshots stamped with coordinates and interrupted diasporic domesticity.

Kunkumam gestures to women who have survived the deaths of their beloveds. The crimson-coloured mark of wisdom and blessings faintly trails through the exhibition in intermittent images. Wives, permanently marked by death, metamorphosed into the widows of insurgency, state terror, war, and natural disaster, are scattered through the landscape like dust. The language of bereavement fails those who are not widows or orphans. There are no words for these complex scales of death and grief. Even so, they are transmitted by each image and object carefully gathered by the artist's practised hand.



left above: Vadduvakal Bridge
left below: from the series 'View from The Living Room'
all: Sabes Sugunasabesan

above: Cotton Reel
below: Bowl



In a looping film by Jaffna-based photographer Tharmapalan Tilaxan, Sugunasabesan summons the old magic of the ritual medium in a small act of penance to the land and water at the Mullivaikkal beach. These are the silent, immovable witnesses to the 2009 massacre of thousands of Tamils by the Sri Lankan armed forces before they declared the thirty-year war 'won.' At sunrise, the artist casts the scarlet kunkumam powder into the Bay of Bengal, like the ashes of the dead. These are the traces of a private wake that can never be gathered again, but are intended to be held as truth always in the deep recesses of the sea. Where land has been fought and slaughtered over, the waters still tether us islanders, at home and in exile, together in our vast hurt. In the tradition of *oppari* or Tamil funerary dirges, Shavena Vigneswara Kumar's stunning, melancholic hum builds on the timeless melodic symmetry of the Carnatic Hamsanadam raga, and fills and stills the room like the ocean itself. The soundscape beckons the viewers to lament for themselves and for others they do not know and have not met.

The screen is the focal point of a makeshift altar framed by fresh-cut flowers, envelopes and boxes containing photographs and stories by the artist and his interlocutors. We catch glimpses into conversations and encounters captured in words and pictures. A collection of snapshots contained in a box stands out, revealing a series of ruined houses from across the Jaffna peninsula, remarkable for their architectural distinction but abandoned



or soon to be built over. Home, here, is broken but reassembled by our hands. This installation incorporates the artist's series *View From The Living Room* (2011-16) and encompasses the anxious longing of watching and wishing for home from afar. Each home bleeds into the other, carried through the conduits of news, screens, pictures, words and matter, engendering a kind of restlessness all too familiar to those of us dispersed from the island.

The only portrait in the show is of an elderly woman in a bright pink sari, partially framed by the plastic chairs of a roadside eatery. With her back to a stack of Sri Lanka's *Elephant House*™ soft drinks crates, she peers out into the road. Displayed outside the main exhibition space, it signals sharp separation. War, loss, longing and grief continue to spill across plain and tacit demarcations. Years later, they continue to sever and shock. The island is a home that haunts. It is a home that haunts across oceans.

top & bottom: Stills from video shot at Mullivaikkal Beach Tharmapalan Tilaxan
centre: Sabes Sugunasabesan

above: Old Lady in the Shop
Sabes Sugunasabesan

The Janet Hall Memorial Lecture 2025

interview with **Christiane Monarchi**
by **Jacqueline Ennis-Cole**

Over the past 20 years, LIP has organised the annual Janet Hall Memorial Lecture as a tribute to the memory and legacy of Janet Hall, one of LIP founding members, who passed away in 2005. Previous speakers who shared their unique insights into their practice have included Martin Parr, Brian Griffin, Simon Norfolk, Tom Hunter and Laura Pannack.

This year, LIP invited Christiane Monarchi, a co-director of HAPAX Magazine and the creator of Photomonitor, to deliver the lecture on 5th June 2025 at Photofusion. Jacqueline Ennis-Cole, LIP Curator of Talks and Events who organised the event, caught up with Monarchi after the lecture.

Jacqueline Ennis-Cole (JEC): What was your response to receiving the invitation to deliver the Janet Hall Memorial Lecture 2025?

Christiane Monarchi (CM): I was surprised to have received this invitation, given that the previous speakers were all notable photographers with long careers. But, with encouragement, I realised that the work I do now, supporting and commissioning new photographic ideas, has grown from twenty years of engagement with artists at all stages of their careers. I have learned a lot about so many different artist practices over the years and I love to share that knowledge. I have enjoyed creating space for new ideas and projects on Photomonitor, and now also in HAPAX Magazine.

In researching Janet Hall and her many contributions to LIP and photography, I also wanted to pay tribute to her legacy; she's remembered as working with so much energy and enthusiasm with LIP and its members. In this lecture, I wanted to craft a discussion about enabling and facilitating new ideas from many people's viewpoints rather than a solo artist's trajectory.



JEC: What choices did you make about how you were going to deliver the presentation?

CM: I wanted to create a talk which held the potential to touch and interest both LIP members and other guests, who are at various stages in their careers. Through sharing some insights from more than 270 artist interviews on Photomonitor, I wanted to inspire and uncover how artists source new ideas. Such as, for example, Hellen van Meene has wonderful ideas on interpersonal chemistry and Susan Derges speaks movingly about her instinctive creative practice. Interviews with those two artists are part of the 1400 plus online features which are available to access for free at Photomonitor.

I discussed a myriad of different themes emerging from ways that artists have started a new project. In the second half of the talk, I invited Ali Mobasser, Laura El-Tantawy and Alexander Mourant to speak about how they initiated their new projects that we featured in HAPAX, having chosen these three artists as they had also been featured on Photomonitor in the past.

*all images pages 55-57:
Kasia Kowalska*

JEC: How do you imagine and situate your place within the wider photographic infrastructure?

CM: I am happy working in a way that helps facilitate and nurture new ideas, whether as an editor and publisher of online and print publications, or in my committed time mentoring artists. Also, now in HAPAX Living Room assisting artists to take over a small project space with a physical presentation. I find many people like and need this support in their creative journey. In a broader sense, I feel my role is in creating new spaces within the photographic infrastructure of Photomonitor or, with my co-director Gordon MacDonald, HAPAX Magazine and the HAPAX Living Room, which now seems to have a cosy place within the photography ecosystem.

JEC: What was your vision behind Photomonitor and what was your recent partnership with University for the Creative Arts Farnham about?

CM: Since 2011, Photomonitor has supported photography and lens-based media, publishing images and texts from artists and writers around the world on the online platform. As founding editor, I have enjoyed commissioning new thoughts on photography and promoting artists and writers in all stages of their careers, looking at and commissioning reviews in spaces that weren't getting a lot of mainstream press, or books created by smaller publishers. The online archive now includes portfolios, exhibitions and book reviews, word+image experiments, essays and interviews with artists working in the UK and internationally. Recently, Photomonitor has been working in partnership with the Photography Department and bookRoom, an experimental post-digital research and publishing platform, at UCA Farnham where a team of academic creatives has been 'in residence' at Photomonitor since 2023. As part of this residency, we have commissioned 60 new online features together and offered opportunities to emerging photography voices. As UCA Farnham collaboration and funding is now complete, I look forward to publishing the last few features in the coming weeks, after which we will consider where a future collaboration may arise.



JEC: How did HAPAX emerge and how does it serve diverse photographic communities?

CM: A few years ago, I had a discussion with the artist, editor and writer Gordon MacDonald about how much we would love to see a photography

magazine where everything inside is new, the content isn't shared online, and the photographers were remunerated for publishing their new work. Something with a good alignment of ethics and nurturing new ideas. We know it is a very rare thing to be paid to start a new and previously unpublished project in a magazine, and we are aware that so often artists have to pay to enter open calls to be published or may only be featured if their project is already well known and seen. It was time for something

new, democratic and supportive. We created this publication for artists to try out new ideas inside a beautifully printed magazine with gatefolds and stitched binding, with each issue developing six new projects.



The name HAPAX comes from the literary term 'hapax legomenon' describing a one-off, creative departure from an author's *oeuvre* - something unique and new and 'said only once' in their practice. HAPAX makes this idea visual by commissioning international lens-based artists and curators who are keen to test new ideas which depart from their previously established creative practice. It's something we've found is very popular, judging by the hundreds of ideas we are receiving for each of our free open calls. It's been amazing meeting artists from all over the world, and we

have enjoyed the opportunity to commission more than 50 new project ideas so far.

JEC: What is the focus of your latest HAPAX issue and where can we find the publication?

CM: Gordon and I really enjoy our encounters with artists and photographers at book fairs, such as Peckham24, including the opportunity to connect with artists who may just be ready to begin a new idea. Each magazine is a sum of the features within, as such there is no theme except that all of the ideas inside are new and have not previously been published. The latest issue has just been published and we can't wait to show it to you. There are more than 30 stockists including Tate Modern, Serpentine and The Photographers' Gallery, to name a few. They are also available for purchase through our website, and via an annual subscription.

We want to thank you and LIP members for your interest in this project and hope that everyone in London will make the time to stop in the HAPAX Living Room during one of our upcoming artist takeovers, to engage with our projects in a physical sense, and come to a talk or peer-to-peer discussion session.

Can you listen to photography?

LIP Central London Group
exhibition review by **Imogen Bloor**

LIP Central London Group presented their exhibition titled 'Listen' at Espacio Gallery between 15th and 20th April 2025 and invited us to listen in a cohesive show, with a diversity of styles and approaches to the theme. But how do you make listening visible?

Most artists showed small series of works which added depth to the exhibition. The presentation of the work was well spaced and led the viewer through variations of the theme in a nuanced way, spanning from the more literal to the metaphorical or conceptual, reflecting the eclectic talent of LIP membership. Here I highlight some of the artists and photographers.

One approach to the theme was the sound of landscapes: the silence and a weightless hush evoked by Dorota Boisot's snowscape or the sea wind and crunch of shingle in Mark Friend's expansive gloomy landscapes of the Suffolk Coast. By contrast, Heather Martin's monochrome market photographs summon the ambient bustle of a city.

Another strand of interpretation was audience, musicians or dancers, in various iterations, such as Jim Paterson's *Not Hearing but Listening*, portraits of performers enrapt in concentration, their eyes closed. Julian Sainsbury, in turn, focused on music itself, using intentional camera movement to evoke the moods of specific musical pieces.



above: Dorota Boisot
below: Mark Friend



above: Eve Milner
right: Jane Ross

Eve Milner's work alludes to listening to our bodies and minds, as she tells us how the process of creating her images is a means to process her cancer journey and mastectomy. She does this with a series of unsentimental and, perhaps deceptively, confident monochrome portraits and self-portraits, incorporating red stitching; the colour palette movingly and starkly highlights 'x marks the spot', echoing the self-portraits of Jo Spence.

Echoes from history and sounds of the past played a part in several other works. Steve Jones shared black and white travel photos, understated yet impactful 'dark tourism' images of Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia and of Auschwitz, asking us to listen to the 'silenced voices'. Similarly, Jane Ross asked us to listen to the history of struggle and injustice by showing a composite image from a series derived from her visits to legacy slavery sites in Alabama.

Overall, the variety of thought-provoking responses to the challenge of visualising listening made for a stimulating and successful show.





Northern Eye Festival to champion photography and widen its reach

by Astrid Zweynert

Driven by the desire to do things a little differently, the Northern Eye International Photography Festival in Colwyn Bay kicks off in October 2025 with a mix of talks and free exhibitions, using empty shops and outside spaces to draw in audiences.

Northern Eye wants to make visual art accessible to a wide audience and help revitalise the coastal town, in one of the most deprived areas in Wales, says curator Paul Sampson. In the past, the festival has even used a train station platform and run-down shelters along the seafront promenade as exhibition spaces.

'It's always been our aim to be as inclusive as possible,' says Sampson. 'Bringing visual culture to the public realm is a very important part of the festival. It really breaks down barriers if you're a person unsure about going inside a gallery if the art is outside.'

While a paid-for Speaker's Weekend on 4th and 5th of October is hosted in the historic Theatr Colwyn, the oldest working theatre in Wales and home of the Oriel Colwyn gallery, the exhibitions are spread across the town throughout the whole month.

To keep the festival fluid, Sampson deliberately does not choose a theme and presents a mix of photography about Wales and other places, including well-known artists and emerging talents.

The Speaker's Weekend includes Martin Parr, renowned for projects that take an intimate and often satirical look at modern life, and Derek Ridgers, best-known for his photographs of London's streets and club scene.

Among exhibitors is Mike Abrahams with a project down memory lane portraying two northern Welsh towns where he spent time as a child after his mother fled the WWII bombing of Liverpool, while Aled Rhys Hughes examines the impact of a disaster in 1925 when a wall built through a lake in Snowdonia to provide hydro-power collapsed and killed 16 people.

Amateur photographers will also have their chance to showcase work and get feedback in a Pecha Kucha session open to anybody. And afterwards everybody is encouraged to get together for a meal and a drink, another way to break down barriers between audiences and artists at the festival which started as a biennial event in 2017.

Northern Eye was conceived in collaboration with Glenn Edwards, director of the EYE International Photography Festival, created in 2012. The EYE festival, which will take place from 14th to 17th October 2025 at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre, focuses on documentary, rather than conceptual, photography with a programme centered on speakers, including photographers Harry Borden and Simon Norfolk.

For more information visit www.northerneyefestival.co.uk. fLIP readers can use the code LIP25 to get a £10 discount on full-price tickets, or a £5 discount on day tickets.



above: Aled Rhys Hughes

below: Mike Abrahams

images courtesy of Northern Eye festival

Contributors

Sarah Ainslie is a freelance photographer based in London's East End. The area is an inspiration for her work whether on the streets, down the river or in the strip pubs, alongside working with theatre companies, collaborating and facilitating community projects.

Robin Maurice Barr's primary interest is taking square format abstract photographs of buildings. He also photographs overlooked aspects of towns and cities in the north of England where he now lives. Robin occasionally takes obscured images of people.
instagram: @NoGreatHurry and @robin_maurice_barr

Fred Barrington has been taking pictures since he first went to college, back in the good old days of 1971, but has been far more prolific since he retired (early!) in 2008, at the ripe old age of 55.
www.fredbarrington.com

Chris Bellinger is a photographer who lives in West London. He is interested in street and candid photography, mainly in black and white, and making abstract images usually in colour.
instagram: @mr.bellinger

Imogen Bloor's practice focuses on details of her everyday environment and chance encounters, the incidental, the ordinary and the 'in between'. Whilst ostensibly 'mundane', her images are often imbued with allusions and metaphors, hinting at emotional experiences, biographical, social and political concerns.

Bill Christie lives in southwest London and photographs in digital and analogue formats. He travels randomly and widely, finding plenty of inspiration for his puerile sense of humour.

Mike Cookson is an East Lothian-based photographic artist. His work explores change, dissonance and traces. He has an MA in Photographic Arts from the University of Westminster.
www.mikecookson.com

Anne Crabbe's photography is mainly still life and portraiture collected into themes. These have included memory, history and everyday things.

CJ Crosland is a self-taught photographer and member of international collective Full Frontal Flash. He became hooked on photography in 2010 and is best known for the flash street photography series "Fishing With Dynamite".
www.cjcrosland.com

Amanda Eatwell is a fine art and documentary photographer, with a deeply observational approach. People, place, and their interactions are at the heart of her work.
www.amandaeatwell.com

Jacqueline Ennis-Cole works as an interdependent editor, curator, writer and artist. She serves as LIP's Curator of Talks and Events and facilitates the LIP Photo Book/Zine Satellite Group.

Cristina Filimon is a Romanian visual artist based in London. Working with analogue, digital, and moving images, she explores the tension between the ordinary and the uncanny through street photography, psychogeography, and documentary. She is an AOP Student Awards Gold winner.

Mark Friend is an aspiring amateur street, documentary and portrait photographer based in London and Suffolk. In 2023 he completed the professional photography course at the London Institute of Photography.
www.markfriendphotography.com

Austin Guest photographs urban and suburban scenes, particularly in the London area, seeking out interesting architecture, street situations, green spaces and maritime heritage. Carrying a camera often steers his attention towards unexpected details and moments.
instagram: @austinthuthelens

Don Holtum eschews the conceptual in favour of the actualities of the everyday world, oftentimes the urban, the worn, overlooked or derelict. A casual photographer, he seeks no narrative, only the transient sense of a place at a moment in time.

Naomi James is an MA Photography student at the University of Brighton. She is particularly interested in Polaroid photography and alternative processes.



Peter Jennings studied Graphic Design and Photography at Portsmouth College of Art and worked as a media photographer for 20 years. He has published and exhibited widely, including at The Photographers' Gallery. A long-time member of LIP, he was Chair from 1998-2000. As a composer/musician, music and literature inspire his photography.

Alan Larsen is a London-based photographer whose work explores our relationship to place, and how it reflects and connects to memory, identity, and belonging. He is studying MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at London College of Communication.
instagram: @alanplarsen

Yoke Matze has worked, for the last 50 years, as a photographer, tutor and curator of exhibitions. The pleasure of looking and making connections is an important element of her work. Yoke's work revolves around Life Cycles, life's everlasting flow of continuity, a positive force.

Frankie McAllister is a London-based Irish photographer whose practice sits between conceptual and documentary photography. She has a particular interest in altered landscapes and the evidence of

our human footprint on them, shown through impressionist and representational imagery.



Heather McDonough is an artist, photographer, and educator. She is a lecturer on the BA Photography at London Metropolitan University. Heather holds workshops on bookmaking and alternative processes. She runs Urbanlens, a photographer collective guiding monthly photo-walks in Hackney.
instagram: @hevphoto @urbanlens3 www.heathermcdonough.com

Sue McGilveray will photograph anything that catches her eye but long-term concentrates on the historical and sociological perspectives of landscape.

Arun Misra is a London based photographer using photography as an art form to explore the spectrum of human experiences through abstract, conceptual and conventional methods and draws inspiration from poetry, paintings and sculpture. He is a founder member of the FIKA book and zine collective.
instagram: @arunmisraphoto www.arunmisraphotography.com

Lauris Morgan-Griffiths, a former journalist, has always been interested in photography. Attracted to idiosyncratic and eccentric images, she works in an instinctive and organic way. Storytelling, she thinks of her images as portraits whether of buildings or chairs.

Paul Morris has been a fine artist for over thirty years. His first book *A Toby in the Lane, A History of London's East End Markets* was published in 2014. His artistic interest is a fervent love of photography, based mainly in London and coastal England.

Sam Nicholls is a street photographer based in London. Working primarily in 35mm, he enjoys capturing the chaos and calm of the city. You can find him hunting for photos in Soho on weekends.
instagram: @s.c.nicholls

Jane Ross is interested in discovering the overlooked, discarded and forgotten, and exploring how photography can help us capture memory, retrieve the past and deal with loss. An interest in how we respond, relate to and commemorate death informs much of her photographic practice.

Chloë Sastry is a London-based photographer with a particular interest in socially engaged photography. Her current projects explore themes of family origin, loss and memorialisation.
instagram: @chloesastry

Astrid Schulz is an award-winning photographer with a costume design background for film & TV. Known for creative portraits and documentary images, both her careers feed each other perfectly. Internationally recognized, her work has been featured in solo-shows, festivals, book publications and magazines.
www.astridschulz.com

Jayne Selvaggio is on a constant quest to explore the world, as a visionary, researcher and traveller. Her photographic eye seeks to capture the ephemeral beauty of life's fleeting moments, freezing those snatching seconds otherwise lost in the relentless fury of time.
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Richard Spencer is a recently retired architect who has rekindled his decades-old love of monochrome analogue photography and making prints in the darkroom. He is drawn to landscapes on the margins, and the affordances of decaying structures.

Jo Stapleton is a film and darkroom photographer, focusing on constructed realities, printmaking and alternative processes. Jo

is an active member of London Independent Photography and Shutter Hub. She has exhibited in the UK and internationally and has received grants from the Richard and Siobhan Coward Foundation.

Sabes Sugunasabesan is a photographer and mixed media artist who migrated from Sri Lanka and now lives and works in England. His art explores land, war, dispossession and memory. Prior to *Kunkumam* he exhibited *Last Walk to the Beach* (2016) and *Invisible Threads* (2023).

Sam Tanner has been a documentary photographer since the late 1980s. Projects he worked on include the NHS, Carers, Poverty in England in the 1990s and the Jewish community in the East End. Today he works on personal projects.



Reza Tavakol is professor emeritus at Queen Mary University of London, with current interests in art, philosophy and cosmology. His art practice is concerned with the aesthetic and conceptual explorations of the real, employing various art forms, including photography.

Sarah Wilkie loves to combine her twin passions of photography and travel, approaching wildlife, street and landscape photography with equal enthusiasm. She is more interested in the creative process than in equipment and enjoys experimental editing of her images.

Astrid Zweynert explores visual narratives that reflect the interplay between the real and the imaginary in urban and rural landscapes, often during walks with her dog Roxie.
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Community
for the
visually curious



THE LAST LOOK



Don Holtum

London Independent Photography is a community of photographers. We come from a wide range of backgrounds but each of us share the visual curiosity of looking and seeing. We are a community for the visually curious.

Since its foundation in 1987, LIP has offered the opportunity to informally show and discuss its members' work and the wider photographic world at various satellite groups which are listed below. Events are held throughout the year, including talks and workshops. Many satellite groups hold an annual exhibition and all members are invited to enter our judged and curated Annual Exhibition in London. **FLIP** magazine is published three times a year and distributed to members as part of their membership fee.

FLIP aims to showcase primarily members' work and to engage readers in a wider photographic dialogue. It contains no advertising, so we can use all the space for quality content.

Membership:
Annual membership subscription: £35 UK/ £39 non-UK
www.londonphotography.org.uk
instagram: london_independent_photography

Current Satellite Groups:

Alternative Process	London & Beyond
Central London	Photo & Text
Crouch End	Photobooks & Zines
Crossing Lines	Putney
Ealing	Ruislip
Film & Darkroom	Street & Documentary
Greenwich	

For further satellite group information:
londonphotography.org.uk/satellites/about2

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