

L I P S E R V I C E

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

No 1

Getting Exposed

A survey of the state of photography gives rather dismal results. It is still widely regarded as a second rate medium, with no money and few showcases for serious work; art photography means old photographs; London compares badly with other capital cities in its support.

On the other hand, more people are taking photographs for their own sake; published photographs are increasingly used for a wide variety of purposes; there are more local resource centres and more self-organized projects. This activity is largely dispersed, isolated and unnoticed to the extent that excellent work is being produced in vastly different forms, but remains unseen. This has meant that branches of photographic practice have developed oblivious of each other. Craft (fine-print) photography, social landscape photography and photo-therapy for example may as well be on different planets. An aware documentary photographer at the Salford ACCB Photography Conference may have been astounded at the intensity of race and gender issues that inspires much current practice. Current photographic activity is concentrated in disparate groups and individuals who frequently lack the support and stimulation of like-minded people and are unaware of the challenges presented by photographers with entirely different concerns.

The London Independent Photography group has been formed to enable such discussion and exchange between practicing photographers in London, and to promote the status of the medium. Everyone has his own idea of what "independent" means, and this usually has something to do with being unattached, unsupported and in pursuit of a personal vision. But it is a conveniently wooly term and embraces a

very wide range of photographic practice, and the group will aim to promote fruitful exchange between all kinds of photography.

Whatever "independent" means, it will not exclude the influence of non-independents - the technical and visual excellence of the commercial sector, or the radical ideas of community and 'political' photography for instance, all of which benefit the medium as a whole.

As this newsletter shows, the range of activities being organized lays an emphasis on workshop learning and discussion, sharing of skills and resources, and most importantly, showing and viewing photographs.

Janet Hall and the steering committee have planned an extensive range of events into the New Year; ideas for future activities would be welcomed by Janet. Events held so far have been very successful. Membership in the group is a way to help raise the profile of photography and to help London benefit from the high quality work now being produced.

Roger Estop

Blu-Tack Show

On Saturday, 26th September London Independent Photography staged its first "Blu-Tack" show at Hammersmith and West London College. As is the case with most first time events, plans were made with the fullest response in mind; and it was decided to hire the large staff common room which could, if necessary, house the entire membership. As it turned out forty-six photographers arrived with work, representing some fifty percent of those presently listed as members; a response which we are told is very good. A wide variety of work was shown, with

many of photography's central themes under examination; Landscape, still-life, portraiture and social documentary were all well represented, together with more individual concerns in image making. Standards varied from the capable to the highly accomplished with regard to both technique and content, and the initial atmosphere of apprehension soon became enthusiastic and relaxed as people began to circulate and to discuss each others work.

The primary motive behind this first showing was to bear witness to the diversity within the group's structure and to help members gain a sense of "place". It has subsequently been suggested that we continue to organise these shows on a quarterly basis in order to gain a fuller understanding of each others aims and working methods; such interaction should help to lift the general photographic awareness of the group, as well as provide opportunity for members to work with one another on projects of their own design. It must be stressed that the quality and character of future public exhibitions will rest largely on our ability to make use of this platform for communicating and evaluating ideas.

The event also provided us with a further opportunity to discuss the process by which the work for our first "public" exhibition should be selected. It had previously been argued that a self-selection process could be operated, but on reflection most members seemed to agree that "external" selection would be preferable at this early stage in the group's development. Various names have been put forward as potential selectors such as Peter Turner, Editor of Creative Camera.

The next "Blu-Tack" show is due to be staged at the Drill Hall on the 23rd of January 1988. Janet Hall has full details.

Robert Claxton

Constitution

To ensure credibility and stability the group needs to have a constitution. Thus, a draft is set out below which will be ratified at the first Annual General Meeting on the 23rd of January.

The constitution sets out an essential administrative framework for the group, but there are advantages to keeping it as brief and simple as possible. Detailed discussion about activities and organization will take place as part of the life of the group and need not be fixed in the constitution.

If you wish to suggest changes to this draft, please put your proposals to Janet Hall as soon as possible, preferably in writing, so that a final draft can be prepared before the meeting.

Aims

To support and promote independent photography in London.

To create opportunities for exhibition, debate and fundraising for projects.

To raise the status of photography as a visual art.

To cooperate with existing nation-wide independent photography groups, galleries and photographic publications.

Membership

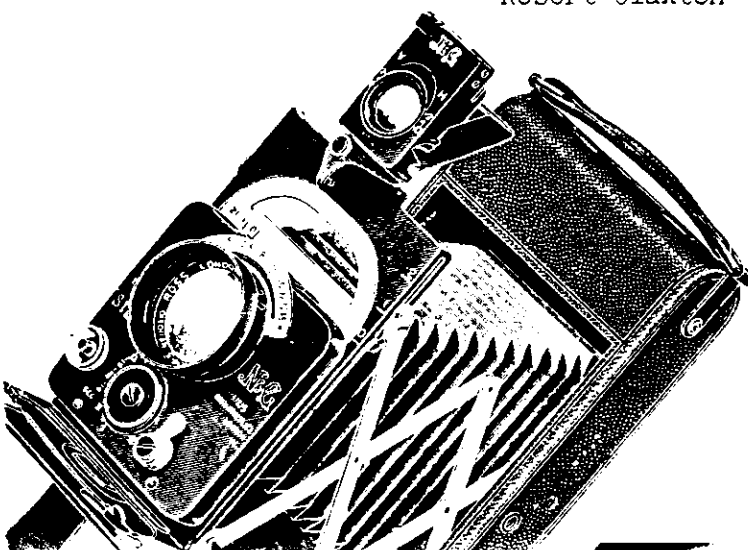
Individual membership is open to anyone living in the London region.

Institutional membership will be available to galleries and educational establishments.

Subscription rates shall be determined by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the recommendations of the steering Committee.

Steering Committee

The affairs of the group shall be coordinated by a steering committee consisting of a secretary, a treasurer and a membership secretary. Postholders will be elected by the membership. Other members may be co-opted onto the steering committee for specific tasks. The secretary shall be entitled to make press and public statements on behalf of the



group. All steering committee decisions will be subject to the concurrence of the members.

Elections

Postholders will be elected by a majority of votes cast at the AGM, or, in the event of a resignation, at a pre-advertised group meeting.

Meetings

Meetings and activities organized by L.I.P. shall be open to members and non-members, though a charge will be made on non-members to be determined by the steering committee. Members will receive notification of all L.I.P. meetings and events.

Amendment of Constitution

The constitution may be amended by the membership at the AGM.

NETWORK

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPHY NETWORK ISSUE ONE JULY 1987

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

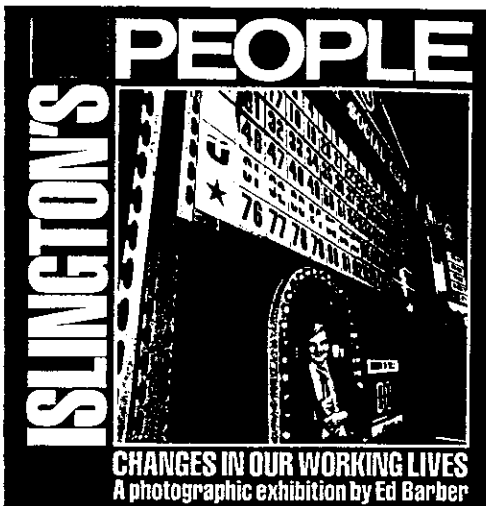
We received answers from about 150 individuals scattered between Africa and Iceland. Some are working professionals, others are amateurs, and some are just starting out. The results are as follows:

Obviously, London was a major concern at all levels. Many other specific suggestions were made for photo projects, most open to all. The results are as follows:

WHERE TO NOW?

All respondents will now have a list of everyone's addresses. We suggest you make contact with those nearest to you, and meet to form groups or subgroups. This will help you to have a more regular meeting, and to have a more regular meeting, and to have a more regular meeting.

The East London photography group, the 'Box Brownies' are publishing the second 'Network' newsletter after Christmas. A directory of names and addresses arranged by region across the whole country encourages links between photographers and groups and promotes photographic activity. The newsletter is made up of feedback from people who are involved in groups and projects. If you would like a copy and inclusion in the directory send your details to Sean Cusack, Flat 2 Highbury New Park, N5, with a pound if possible to help production of the next one.



Notes

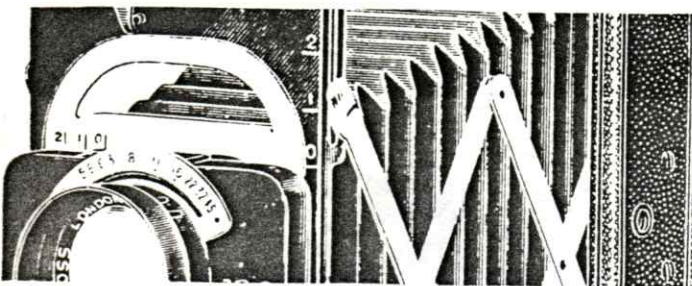
'Islington's People' (Islington Council Press Campaign and Publicity Unit L.I.50) is a book showing people at work in Islington Borough. The square format pictures are environmental portraits of people within their workspace, posed rather than active, and thoughtfully composed. This is not an original approach but it works well and creates a warm human feel. Though supported and used by Islington Council for campaign purposes, the pictures nevertheless create a fine historic document of employment in an inner city area and Ed Barber has produced a personal work. The picture quality is good and the design balances pictures and text well. The book of 52 photographs which supports a touring exhibition is good value and helps to get good photography seen by the general public.

Photographic education is now commonplace in schools and may help to create a photographically literate audience for the future. The November 1987 Issue of 'Junior Education' has a media studies topic pack for junior teachers which includes guidance notes on looking at and reading photographs as well as taking photographs. The advice is absolutely basic and good, and is concerned with looking and seeing on one hand and with the exploration of meaning in photographs on the other. The snag is in how to maintain this spirit when the kids, growing up, are lured into the exotic world of photographic equipment. Indeed many grown-up photographers would benefit from this sort of school teaching minus a few starburst filters.

Display the images with captions. Children may like to crop their photographs to show that they could fit in more than one section. Show them how to do this by covering parts of the image with paper. Using their own photographs in this way helps children to realise how images can be manipulated. Take the activity further by asking the children to think about what they left out of their photos and whether or not this changes the reading of them. as well. The variety of choices highlights how we can construct an image in a particular way by including or excluding certain things in the frame.

Mag. Check

Apart from new books, exhibitions and your favorite subsidised photogrpahy magazine, where is the greatest source of stimulating photography? Perhaps in the magazine racks of WH Smith. Several magazines now commission photographers to produce high standard work to support articles. It is an interesting exercise to locate and critically examine the photographs, among which can found the best, and the assumed best, of current day 'photojournalism' which certainly can feed the inspiration of all photographers whatever their particular concerns. The most reliable publications to find photographs to surprise are: 'Business', 'Wire', 'Car', 'Spare Rib', 'Management Today', 'Nursing Times', 'Interiors', 'ID', 'National Geographic', 'Vogue', 'Architects Journal' covers, and the quality Sunday supplements. Other magazines use photographs to assist a striking page design, but the pictures themselves rarely display particular originality. 'Wire' specifically showcases photographs occasionally. 'Landscape' magazine (an environmentally aware 'Country Life') in its November '87 issue showcases a portfolio which is much less interesting than photographs elsewhere in the issue. Fashion magazines show continual originality if you can stand the implicit values, and for sheer scale of photogrpahic reproduction 'W' delivers (24"x 18"max.). Many magazines now use illustration extensively. Does this mean that photographers can't meet the creative demands? No magazine yet exhibits art photography except very small ones like 'The Fred' or 'London' magazine. That's the next step maybe.



'LIP Service' will aim to provide information and stimulation for photographers in London. Please send contributions and suggestions to:

Roger Estop
LIP Service
23 Melford Road,
Leytonstone, E114PR

Confusion can easily arise within a disparate group of people because of the various terminologies used. This short glossary is intended to assist the process

- A Arts Council**
Philanthropic body, devoted to providing cheap music and dancing for tourists
- B Book**
Sequence of images which invite the spectator to participate by rotating the pages about their left-hand marginal axis
- C Concept**
See Text
- D Democratic Medium**
Photography by ballot
- E Exhibition**
Job creation scheme for framers
- F Formalist**
Person who looks through view finder before taking picture
- G Gallery**
Room with hand-printed paper on walls
- H Halide**
The root of it all
- I Independent**
Free, or, at least very cheap
- J Japan**
Japan
- K**
Whats, big, yellow and owes Polaroid a lot of money?
- L Landscape**
Picture with no people in foreground
- M Money**
Substance which flows in one direction only
- N Negative**
'No'
- O Objective**
What foreigners call a lens
- P Photographer**
You
- Q Question**
Are you still reading this?
- R Role Reversal**
Winding the film the wrong way
- S Semiotic**
Very useful word
- T Text**
See concept
- U Untitled**
Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms
- V**
18%
- W Workshop**
Photographers' play group
- X**
A flash of affection
- Y**
There are no words beginning with Y
- Z Zone System**
Precise method of exposure and development by matching symbols of figures, mountains etc.

Forthcoming Events

Jan.20

Photographers' Gallery

Zelda Cheattle, who runs the Print Room at the Photographers' Gallery, and Lindsey Stewart, who auctions photographic prints at Christies, will talk about selling prints. They will discuss presentation, how to approach the market, what prints do and do not sell etc., and generally share their knowledge and experience with the group.

Jan.23

Blu-tack exhibition

As the Blu-tack exhibition proved to be a popular idea, and many members were unable to attend the event in September, another will be held on the above date.

For those who were not members when we ran the last exhibition, it is a one-day event, not open to the public, which allows members to get to know each other and each other's work in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. All are invited to bring unframed prints which can be "blu-tacked" or pinned up, and/or portfolios if they wish to show a larger body of work as wall space will be limited.

This time the venue is the Drill Hall, 16 Chenies Street, WC1. This is off Tottenham Court Road, opposite Goodge Street tube station. The room is booked between 12 noon and 7:00 PM, and there will again be a charge of £1.50 to help cover costs. Coffee/tea will be on sale and there is a snack bar on the ground floor which will be open until at least 6:00.

In order to get a better idea of the range and standard of work within the group, would all members who are interested in exhibiting in the group representative show, and in particular those who did not attend the last Blu-Tack, try to bring some work to this event. We hope the exhibition will take place in '88 and are at present looking for a suitable venue.

General Meeting

As London Independent Photography will be six months old at the end of January, the committee has decided to hold a general meeting during the Blu-Tack exhibition. This will take place at 2:30 pm and the re-election of the committee will be one of the points on the agenda. This occasion will also be used to decide on the introduction of a membership subscription in 1988. Please attend if you are interested in the future of L.I.P.

Feb.27

"What's a Fine Print, Anyway?" Workshop with Peter Goldfried

As Peter said in his book, Craft book for the Creative Photographer, "Photography as represented by the photographic print has two components of equal importance: aesthetic vision and fine craftsmanship. One without the other is less than perfect."

In this workshop Peter, one of this country's most experienced teachers in the craft of fine printing, will demonstrate how the craft can add to the artistic end result. He will explore the zone system, demonstrate and discuss his working methods as well as examine students work with a view to helping them arrive at the most expressive print.

The workshop will start at 10:AM and continue to approximately 5:00 PM, with an hour's break for lunch.

The venue has still to be finalised but Janet Hall will notify those attending.

Please book as early as possible by ringing Janet on 01-847-5989. If the minimum number necessary to make the event financially viable has not been reached by January 31, it will have to be cancelled.

Fee: L.10 (£.15 non-members). Attendees will be asked to send a deposit of £.5 on booking.

Maximum attendance: 15

Mar.19

Large format workshop with Paul Lipscombe

Paul Lipscombe, an L.I.P. member, will hold a one-day workshop in Large format work at the Drill Hall on the above date. Paul is a landscape photographer who has conducted this course at various places such as the Watershed in Bristol and Brunel University in Uxbridge. He will demonstrate on both monorail and folding MPP cameras and suggests that members who own large format cameras should bring them along.

The workshop will start at 12 noon and finish at 7:00 PM with an hour's break in the middle. Please book by February 20 at the latest. It will be necessary to reach a minimum number to make the event financially viable and to avoid cancellation.

Fee: £.10 (15 for non-members).

Maximum number of attendees: 12.

Please send a deposit of £.5 with your booking to Janet Hall.

Jan.18 Feb.15 Mar.14

Critique/work-in-Progress sessions

The above events will all be held at St Martins School of Art in Charing Cross Road. This is on the left travelling between Cambridge Circus and Oxford Street. The sessions will start at 6:00PM and finish by 8:30PM, and will take place in the Photography Department - ask for it at the main entrance.

All are welcome to bring work or come as onlookers. No guarantee can be given that all work will be looked at in an evening, but those who are overlooked will go to the head of the queue for the next session if they wish. To find out who will be heading each session, please ring Janet Hall nearer the dates.

Many thanks are due to both Graham Murrell for kindly allowing L.I.P. to use the premises at St Martins, and to Mick

Williamson for his generosity in donating his valuable time and experience to members at the two evenings in November. These two events produced some varied work and very interesting discussions. Hopefully these sessions at St Martins will become a regular part of the L.I.P. program and prove beneficial to members.

Finance

Since the inaugural meeting of L.I.P. on July 29, the group expenditure for general running costs, including telephone, postage, photocopying etc. has averaged £.35 per month. This has so far been provided by contributions from members and the goodwill of the committee who are lending financial support until the group finances are sorted out. The Photographers' Gallery is of course coping with major mail-outs for which help we are very grateful.

The only sizeable expenditure incurred so far, on top of general running costs, has been the payments for the Blu-Tack exhibition venue. We were just about able to cover the hire cost of £.84 by contributions at the door and coffee and tea sales.

During the next Blu-Tack exhibition on January 23 next year we will be holding a general meeting as the group will then be six months old. One of the points under discussion will be group financing and the introduction of a formal membership with annual subscription, which should at least cover running costs with some left over for special events.

However, in order to carry out plans for the production of a quarterly newsletter, workshops and group exhibitions which we hope will take place in 1988, it will be necessary to seek further funding. The committee is at the moment preparing a proposal to present to Greater London Arts, and plan to explore other sources of funding. Any suggestions are welcome.

Please Note:

Janet Hall's New Address:
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01 847-5989