

● Scottish
● Photographers

NOTES

SUMMER 2003

Scottish Photographers

Christopher Aidie	North Berwick	Douglas Mackie	Edinburgh
Alan Aitchison	Lochwinnoch	Gwen Mackie	Edinburgh
Roland Ashcroft	Meigle	James Mailer	Ladybank
Douglas Bell	Coulter	Don Marsh	Glasgow
Ian Biggar	Dunscore	Fergus Mather	Wick
Andy Biggs	Stoke on Trent	Douglas May	Edinburgh
William Bishop	London	Clare Maynard	Guardbridge
David Bruce	Helensburgh	Danny McClure	Penicuik
Stewart Burns	Glasgow	Ray McKenzie	Milton of Campsie
Robert Burns	Glasgow	Ian Melville	Glasgow
Gordon Cairns	Glasgow	Tony Middleton	Cannock
Colin Cavers	Lauder	David Mitchell	Dunfermline
Anne Crabbe	Shesham	Bob Moore	Avoch
Caroline Dear	Skye	Linn-Camilla Muskaug	Edinburgh
William Doig	Glasgow	Roy Myers	East Saltoun
Catherine Drain	Kilsyth	Keith Price	Lairg
Bill Ellis	Tretham	James Renny	Rumbling Bridge
Ian Fairgrieve	Inverness	John Rhodes	Lairg
Jane Fenton	Edinburgh	Roy Robertson	Newport on Tay
Eileen Fitzpatrick	Kinloss	Sandy Sharp	Motherwell
Aase Goldsmith	Largoward	Stewart Shaw	Glasgow
Peter Goldsmith	Largoward	Rossy Simpson	Linlithgow
Andre Goulaincourt	Inversnaid	Craig Snedden	Glenrothes
Nick Holmes	Mull	Philip Spain	Glasgow
Virginia Khuri	London	Jill Staples	Bolney
Ian King	Inversnaid	Donald Stewart	Kinross
Peter Lane	Forest Town	David Third	Keith
Thomas Law	Bearsden	Ian Trushell	Kilbarchan
Michael Lee	York	Tom Urie	Motherwell
George Logan	Cargill	Veronika Woodroffe	Victoria BC
Patricia Macdonald	Musselburgh	Russ Young	Cupar
Sarah Mackay	Glasgow		

Please let us know if your name
has been omitted

Notes Summer 2003

Welcome to our first edition.

There was an encouraging response to the call for members and as well as the *Notes* the web site is on line. This has been a particular success but it does need a regular supply of news and notices. Material for consideration for the web-gallery should be a coherent little body of work with brief text and any amount of relevant news and views of exhibitions and events are being sought. George Logan designs and operates the site.

www.scottish-photographers.com

There were also a good number of submissions of material for the *Notes* though a bit of arm twisting did take place. Please respond to the articles and items, the worst response of all is - no response!

Although there is a huge amount of photography going on in art schools, clubs and commercially, there is, with notable exceptions, an equally huge dearth of events for those not involved in these categories and many exhibitions that take place are not even widely advertised. Was the flurry of independent activity in the early nineties a false dawn? We hope not but it sometimes seems as if independent photography may have gone underground again. Russ Young regrets a lack of activity - yet when Street Level put out a call for

entries to its Open exhibition there was no shortage of entrants. Hopefully the existence of *Scottish Photographers* may encourage independent photographers to surface again. Our membership stands at over sixty just now and by each recruiting one more member the numbers will (of course) double.

Contributors

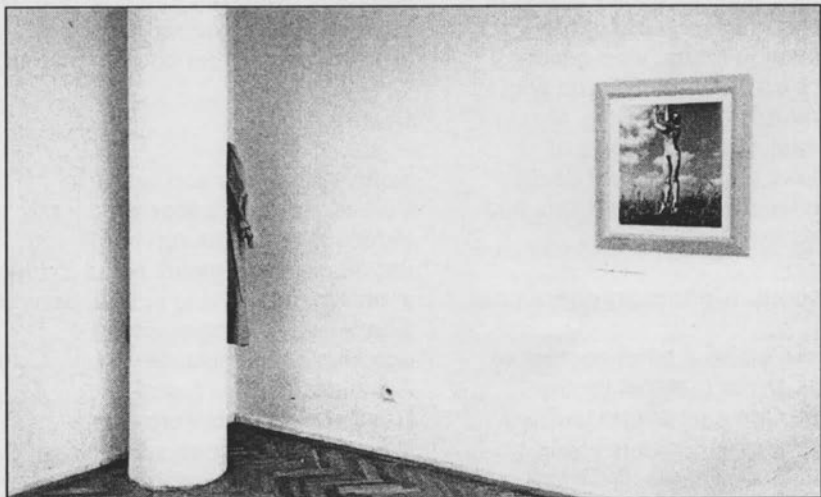
Keith Price lives and works in Sutherland, **Chris Morris** recently moved from Edinburgh to the soft underbelly of England. **Russ Young** is an American living in Fife, **Stewart Shaw** a psychologist turned accountant from Dundee while **Alan Aitchison** can be found in Renfrewshire and **Veronika Woodroffe** is our sole overseas member. We are indebted to **David Williams** for his permission to use one of his images to launch 'Icons of Scottish Photography'. David is Head of Photography at Edinburgh College of Art.

Contact Sheet will appear in September and the next *Notes* in December. Material is needed for these. Note especially the offer to young *Scottish Photographers* on page 13

The views expressed by contributors are strictly their own and may not reflect the views of other members.

Sandy Sharp

Bratislava month of photography, November 2002



Bratislava

© Chris Morris

Bratislava is not the most spiritually uplifting of places, especially in the rain.

Four lane highways carve their way around and through the centre of the city separating the castle from the old town with a noisy smelly expanse of tarmac.

This was the venue for the Bratislava month of photography. Starting with two days of portfolio viewing marked, just like your favourite camera club, with a prize for the winner. Exhibitions began on Nov 1st; an interesting choice as this was a local holiday and just about everything was closed - including many of the galleries. A frustrating experience for the visitor, exacerbated by an almost universal lack of signage. Perhaps this was not the best three days to have chosen.

One consolation: it being the very start of the festival we were there for the exhibition Openings. Events that, with the rest of Bratislava being effectively closed, were attended by just about everyone. And much to the surprise of the organisers, who clearly were only expecting a handful to turn up, but were faced with a throng of eager, mostly young, photographers, packing the galleries and spilling out onto the pavements. The few bottles of wine and little bowls of snacks disappeared in minutes.

There were some thirty exhibitions including two which were, inexplicably, in Vienna and Berlin. Some I did not visit, including the inspirationally entitled *Olympus digital - pictures taken with an Olympus digital camera*, and Keith Carter's "Expanding Universe", which I tried to get into on three occasions, but always seemed to be closed.

A Conference too: an apparently random half dozen lectures, presented in an order that bore no resemblance to the programme, by speakers whose ability to keep to time could vary by more than one hundred percent, just like South West Trains. The one I attended addressed the question: "What does it mean to be a modern artist *now?*" – meaning post-communism. The conclusion was, in part, that there has always been a need for *fury* to drive a new movement - to create something that is radically new. Today it is hard for artists to find a source of *fury*, so post-modernism has needed to refer back to an old *fury*. Which, it appears, has been the excuse for photographers revisiting and re-interpreting work they created years before. For those with the time to spare, there were pre-conference workshops ranging from one-day sessions to full week tours.

Two big exhibition formed the heart of the festival: an extensive collection of Russian Pictorialism at the Slav National Gallery, and a major retrospective of Henri Cartier-Bresson. The former presented room after room of soft-focussed classically composed bromoils. Beautiful to look at, but after the first hundred or so I longed for something with a bit more bite. HCB delivered this alright, crisp little prints hung in a seemingly endless row through the corridors and rooms of the Galéria Mesa Bratislavy. Many familiar, many not, but if only from the sheer number of familiar images one could not help thinking how this man had single-handedly defined a whole genre of photographic practice; a distinctive style that is at once both identifiable his and the template for an entire era of *reportage*. Two particular points struck me: first, many of these pictures were made during the same decade (1925-35) as the bromoils at the SNG. A small fact that underlined how the medium of photography, already then approaching the centenary of its invention, could in some hands be looking steadfastly back to a previous century, while elsewhere the excitement of its intrinsic characteristics were producing a truly new art form. It is in this context that the second point is relevant, most of HCB's prints had been matted to show a fine black border indicating (or at least implying) that what you saw was the entire negative. There was a pattern to this, these full frame pictures were the carefully framed scenes where the photographer had waited patiently for the action to unfold. The others, cropped one infers, were incidents where he had needed to act quickly to capture the moment.

Together these two shows provided a good foundation for the festival, demonstrating two of the main influences on the development of photography - the desire to be acknowledged as an artistic medium through emulation of established forms and the excitement engendered by the power of its immediacy.

The third major venue, the Dom umínia, housed several shows. Karel Cudlín, a photographer in the HCB tradition, whose gritty monochrome observations of life in eastern Europe encapsulated both the pathos and humour of people making the best of their lives under difficult conditions. Pictures imbued with a genuine feeling for the human condition, a quality that shines through any intended or imposed political context.

In the adjacent room was one of two exhibitions by Tono Stano. Large

prints of slim, young and beautiful people gambolling naked in the big outdoors. Health and Efficiency with artistic pretensions. No warmth of humanity here, rather a cold aestheticism; and the unmistakable hint of totalitarian art under the gloss of commercialism. The second exhibition by Stano was housed, or rather hidden, in the Czech embassy. If you failed to be deterred by the lack of any posters or signs, opened the heavy blue-painted wooden doors, turned on the lights, wandered up a couple of flights of marble stairs (wondering if the Czechs ever considered security), turned on the lights again (the timer by now having switched them off), you might have found a large room with large pictures of slim, young and beautiful people apparently drowning (naked of course).

Back in the Dom uminía, Boaz Tal, an Israeli photographer I first met in Edinburgh in 1995, was showing his new work. Half was the series of theatrical reconstructions (mostly of religious themes) staged with his own family (mostly naked, of course), that I had seen in Fotofeis 95. Now enlarged much, much bigger and framed heavily in black with a brass title plaque in Hebrew and English. The rest of his show was along similar themes, more of the naked self, big pictures heavily orange toned. He has claimed that this exhibition is a tribute to the process of ageing, but one cannot help noticing that the more recent photographs of his own body, in contrast to some of his female subjects, are noticeably more out of focus than those from 1995. The images that stood out were two delightfully characterful portraits of his (now "first") wife, and, exceptionally, a sharply focussed life-sized reclining nude study of a mastectomy subject.

In the next room the Dutch photographer Bert Teunissen presented his view of the generation who had "given birth to Europe". Individuals and couples of an older generation pictured in their own homes. Strong, experienced faces that reflected the rooms around them. Rooms that they had each in some way made their own. It was an illustration of a generation for whom the concept of home and place was important; they had an identity that was as much tied up in these simple rooms and the small objects that life had accumulated as it was in national culture. Like Karel Cudlín, Teunissen has found a distinctive way of showing us humanity. How a desire for unity does not have to mean uniformity.

The one exhibition that drew me back to the Dom uminía every day was the eclectic retrospective – Czech and Slovak Photography of the 1980s and 1990s. Here was some of the best of contemporary photography from eastern Europe; 230 prints by 83 photographers. Work covering a

wide variety of genres, and in contrast to contemporary work in the West, largely in monochrome. There was too much here to even begin to describe, and I can only suggest that you seek out the excellent illustrated catalogue published by the Olomouc Museum of Art. It was inspiring to find such a wide ranging collection that contained little that was either derivative or pretentious.

It was while trying to find the opening of the exhibition by Nata Pirtskhlava that I met Peeter Maria Laurits. This charming Estonian artist had his own exhibition, "Flood", work, "made in my head and re-mastered on my computer". Naked bodies under water, frequently in foetal positions and superimposed on other images like bags of tadpoles. It is a body of work that invites extensive analysis, with references to Biblical floods, Atlantis and the origins of life. Beyond all of which they are quite stunning pictures.

I won't try to discuss the Pirtskhlava's work which, the catalogue tells me, "connects the visible in the form of photography with the imaginary through dramatization of the exhibited space." As I stumbled around the darkened gallery trying to figure out why "orientalism is very close to perceptible polysemantics" I came to the conclusion that this needed more time to absorb; it was the end of a long day and I was already suffering from image overload.

Galéria Profil had a retrospective of work by the Slovak photographer Ivan Matejka. Born in 1942 and trained as a photographer in Bratislava, Matejka has been making photographs since he was thirteen. His work is distinctive, simple and balanced, with a sense of abstract form that is occasionally reminiscent of Kertész. This was one of the exhibitions that made the trip worthwhile, discovering a photographer with a lifetime of work that I had previously been totally ignorant of.

In a claustrophobic, window-less cellar, I found the work of William Ropp. Photographs of children, nearly all using a technique that throws everything, except the eyes, out of focus. A disturbing view of the strangeness of childhood. Jan Saudek, in his catalogue notes, is reminded of Balthus – "those children are seemingly adults, old as the world ... everything is there, past and future – but above all, our presence, a presence full of doubts and loss of faith." The technique irritated me but there was no denying the potency of the images. Around the corner, the Café Mayer, provided me with a welcome beer and a sustaining plate of potato pancakes, soured cream and caviar as,

once again, I watched the rain bounce off the pavements outside.

Elsewhere there was work where the concept seemed, at first, too limited to justify exhibition. An example was "Suspects" by AES+F. Fourteen large colour head and shoulder pictures of girls; seven, we are told, have been imprisoned for murder, the other seven are "normal". By implication the viewer is invited to try and decide which are which. It was not possible and I was tempted to think that I didn't need the photographs to know that, or to understand the point. However, on reflection, I did need the photographs to *prove the point*. What is more intriguing, I think, is to consider this work in the context of arguments about the authenticity of images. Is it absolutely critical to the concept of this work that the seven murderers really are such? Or is it sufficient that we believe that they are? If they are fakes, then the images cannot "prove the point", but the artists have still posed a valid question. A different viewer could have decided that they knew which were the murderers. Whether they were right or wrong, whether the images were authentic or not, the question posed by the artists remains valid: – not "can you tell?" but "do you think you can tell?"

Now in its twelfth year, the Bratislava Month of Photography offered a welcome view of pre and post-communist photography not often seen in the West. Well selected, with sufficient significant work from outside of the eastern bloc to provide some context, it was worth the trip.

Christopher William Morris, Jan 2002

Cole Weston

Cole Weston, one of the dynasty of internationally known California photographers, died on Sunday 20th April 2003 at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. He was 84. Fourth son of legendary photographer Edward Weston, Cole was born in Los Angeles. He graduated with a degree in theatre from the Cornish School in Seattle in 1937 and served in the navy during World War II as photographer. He worked for Life magazine in Los Angeles. Although known as the printer of Edward's negatives, he was an outstanding landscape and seascape photographer working with both colour and black and white.

Kevin Howe (khowe@montereyherald)

An American in Paris, eh, Cupar

The author suffers no delusions; your erstwhile editor requested me to write this article only because there are no other American light catchers amongst the Scottish Photographers' membership. Likewise, the reader should suffer no illusions regarding the author's writing abilities or knowledge! Living for two years in a medieval Fife town may or may not qualify him to compose a treatise on any topic, no less this one. But I can promise and swear to never again take an American photographic condition for granted again! We are awed by some of the work of the *Scottish Photographers* we have met - all the more so because of the adverse environment in which they have created their art.

The very first thing that struck me in Scotland was the relative paucity of photographers; even more so when digital and 35mm users are removed from the totals. To a great extent, most of the other observations contained herein are caused, directly or indirectly, by the lack of absolute numbers of photographers here.

Probably the second major realization (or I should say 'shock') was the price of equipment and supplies in the UK. For the most part, the prices are in the vicinity of 30% above US costs, with a few notable exceptions. There are far fewer retailers of photo supplies here, and therefore immensely less price competition. I very quickly realized how spoiled we are in America. But again, some of this is a function of sheer numbers - millions of photographers support thousands of retailers; thousands of photographers can only support a few hundred dealers, most of whom cannot buy in large quantities at low prices.

The lack of competition extends to the used equipment market as well, and once more the raw numbers of shooters causes part of the problem. Millions of photographers re-sell a lot of equipment, either directly or through stores. there are probably hundreds of equipment dealers in the USA and at least in some cases, their inventories are immense. Midwest Photo Exchange (MPEX) in Columbus, Ohio, has 40 or more view cameras in stock with a commensurate number of lenses and accessories. The View Camera Store near Phoenix, Arizona, only sells large format cameras and accessories (such as 8x20 film); with such a large potential market, this degree of specialization (along with its benefits for the buyer) is possible. These two dealers (and others) are also photographers with broad

experience in a large format practice and exotica and can give priceless advice; both have convinced me *not* to buy equipment which they felt would not suit my needs!

I feel a tremendous lack of technical support and resources here. In the northern half of our home state, New Mexico, there are probably 200+ large format photographers; of those, maybe 75 practice alternative processes. When I ran into a problem, help was just around the corner. With such a support network, it is far easier to make significant progress in the art. You also get to see (and borrow) other people's equipment, learning for free what might prevent costly mistakes, and learn from their working methods in the studio and classroom.

The 'numbers game' also limits other categories of resources, such as workshop availability. Inversnaid Workshop clearly is a cornerstone of serious photography in Scotland and there are a couple of other permanent workshop locations here, as well as a few in England. Although very dedicated to the art, they are small and cannot offer dozens of workshops or ones on obscure topics because there simply are not enough bums to fill seats. In America there are a remarkable number of well exhibited photographers who have no education whatsoever apart from workshops; the Maine Photographic Workshops even offer degrees in photography in co-operative programs with universities. The Sante Fe Photo Workshops educate hundreds of photographers each year, and we all benefit from the broader base of practitioners; it generates an excitement and momentum that eventually can take on a life of its own and propel photography forward.

The United States has never had the equivalent of the Royal Photographic Society (for better or worse). I am aware of the criticisms of the R.P.S. but it is quite active in Scotland. The Scottish organizer, Roy Robertson, is indefatigable in his efforts on behalf of photography. His programs have brought many folks out of the woodwork, and exposed many a Scot to quality photographic exhibits. I have benefited considerably from their Scottish gatherings. The weakness of the R.P.S. is that it tries to cover the entire range of photographic pursuits and not enough emphasis goes to the art of photography.

Alternative processes seem relatively unknown in the U.K. and indeed might be so in the U.S. as well except for the workshops which teach thousands of new practitioners each year. Roy Robertson has done a

great deal to introduce them to Scottish R.P.S. members but the total numbers are still minute (please prove me wrong!). Much of the large format revival in the U.S is directly due to the interest in these wonderful printing methods.

Camera clubs, which seem to rule the photographic roost here, were once prominent in American photography but now there are relatively few surviving clubs - they simply outlived their usefulness in most locations and gracefully faded away. Although valuable to bring new people to photography and serving social needs within a community, their aesthetics are rather staid and long behind the times, both aesthetically and technically. Nonetheless they form the foundation of photography in the U.K. which *should* feed active and curious amateurs into higher levels of the art. Your author enjoys being a member of a wee club; if we do not lead by example, they will not change from their nineteenth century roles. 'Fresh and daring' should be heard far more often in the clubs rather than encouragement of digital imitations of the successes of past generations.

April and I participated in the Scottish Photographers' meeting at Saint Andrews a couple of months ago. Peter and Aase Goldsmith organized an intimate exchange between about a dozen photographers. We saw lots of prints, exchanged some heady thoughts and met some fine folks. April made an interesting observation: there were no people in any photograph, quite contrary to the U.K. photo magazines' content. Scotland is certainly blessed by topographic beauty and it was good to see that indigenous artists recognized it as well.

The most troubling aspect of photography in Scotland has nothing to do with the costs, however, but the low esteem in which photography is held, both among the general public and other artists. Scottish photographers are still fighting the battle for the recognition of their medium; at least in the museum and gallery arenas, this is a dead issue in America. It is shocking to find that most people I meet cannot conceive of a photograph having monetary value or being displayed as art. Very few would even begrudge it the status of a minor craft. The 'happy snapper' seems to be the sole category of amateur photographers in most people's minds. You are either a 'snapper' or a 'professional' (meaning portrait photographer) with no other divisions made in the public's thinking. Those photographers who love the medium and practice it seriously for personal pleasure simply don't show on the radar screens, and they (we) constitute the group that will

benefit from *Scottish Photographers*.

At our New Mexico home, April & I have hosted many a photo-party, with curators, collectors, photographers and students all eating salsa laden hot dogs and downing cheap beer while conducting the most serious discourses on photography and its condition. In one night two years ago, nearly a thousand platinum and palladium prints were displayed between 5pm and midnight in the living room, with an audience of forty or fifty of whom showed their work. The end result was a cross fertilization which always proves invaluable for all concerned - and photography as a whole benefits immensely. we all gain from such informal judgement - free exchanges between folk seriously interested in the medium. The role of *Scottish Photographers* in promoting such gatherings here cannot be overstated; Roy Robertson is also moving the Scottish branch of the R.P.S. in this direction. Together we can make a difference!

The possibility of a Scottish Photograph Centre is very exciting. It *could* provide the focal point for all serious photography in Scotland, and indeed England (which seems to me ill served by Bradford's emphasis on film). A permanent home for Scottish photography would guarantee the progress of photography as a whole. It is important, I think, to not become too bogged down in small criticisms and lose sight of the potential even if the final plan is less than ideal. It beats the hell out of nothing.

If photography is to ever make significant advances in Scotland, we must gather ourselves together to work in a unified body towards that end. Scotland is still benefiting from last year's Hill and Adamson events but the momentum will soon be lost if nothing else occurs soon. The time seems especially ripe now; if we do not take full advantage of it the time will not come again for decades and a unique opportunity will have been squandered.

Russ Young April 2003

Wanted - Young *Scottish Photographers*

Are you a young, say under thirty, *Scottish Photographer*? If so then we would like to feature your work. Please send some (about six) of your images together with a brief statement about your work. Or, if you are over thirty, then send us an item about a young *Scottish Photographer* you know. We are offering a reward of £50.00 spending money for *Beyond Words* book shop to the young photographer featured. If there are a number of submissions then the editor's selection will apply. This offer is jointly sponsored by *Beyond Words* and *Scottish Photographers*.

Thank you to ***Beyond Words*** 42-44 Cockburn Street Edinburgh
0131 226 6636 - open from 'ten to ten' during the Edinburgh Festival.

Icons of Scottish Photography

David Williams

Sixth Form Girl/Primary One Girl

From the series *Pictures From No Man's Land* (1984)



'Pinblad' - A Hasselblad-based pinhole camera

The very idea of a Hasselblad-based pinhole camera must seem like a contradiction in terms. After all it's the stunning quality of Hasselblad lenses and the mind boggling build quality of their cameras which has kept the marque at the top of the tree for over half a century.

Virtually anyone connected with or involved seriously in photography will know the Hasselblad name. And virtually all these same people will have heard about pinhole photography. However, to put Hasselblad and pinhole photography



together is rather like ripping the guts out of a top-of-the-range Volvo and hoping to power it with an elastic band.

The Pinblad has no batteries, no viewfinder, no lens, no apertures to set needs no focusing and yet has a depth of field virtually from zero to infinity. It is compact, extremely wide angle and has the convenience of a medium format camera's interchangeable film magazine. There is nothing here to get between you and your photography.

This camera is silent. It absorbs images on to film like honey running from a spoon. During the lengthy exposure times, due to the incredibly small aperture, you can almost feel it happening. You feel that it is such a pleasure to assist the camera in doing its job and the results are so exciting that you wonder how your photography ever lost these qualities. How can anything so basically simple be so much fun to use?

Early attempts

Building a relationship with anything as unsophisticated as a pinhole takes time. there is a lot of 'unlearning' to do. All the normal mechanical operations of operating a camera can be discarded. An image can be created with a light tight container, a tiny hole in a piece of aluminium foil and a small piece of photographic paper in about 45 seconds in bright sunshine.

In the development of the Pinblad the first camera was a 35mm film cassette container (the black type is perfect). This grew into the use

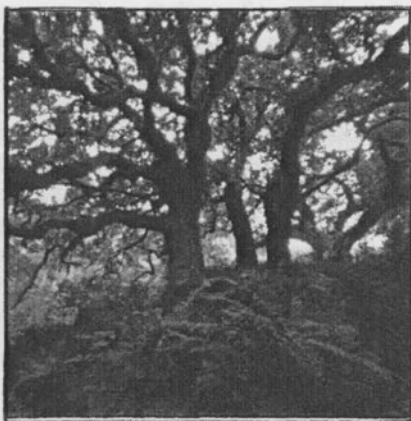
of biscuit tin and boxes of various sizes including a very large cardboard camera built from scratch, producing a 12x16 inch paper negative. Using these experimental cameras was limited by the obvious disadvantage of only one-shot use and the need to be near a darkroom for loading, unloading and developing. A multiple shot, easily portable and darkroom independent camera was required. The Pinblad was soon to become a reality.

With pinhole photography you either love it or hate it. And those who love seem to have one of two distinct approaches to the technique. The first is to use any kind of container, not bother too much about the actual size of the 'pinhole' and use approximate exposure times based on guesswork and (late) experience. With this approach the 'poor' quality of the final image is seen as an integral part of the whole process. The second method is to create cameras which are probably more recognisable as such, or to modify existing cameras to take a precisely calculated pinhole in order to get the best 'quality' image possible.

This second approach usually involves an accurate method of assessing light values for consistent negative quality. The Pinblad falls into the second category. The aim being to have a pinhole camera with the convenience and flexibility of an interchangeable film magazine, the use of a Polaroid back when necessary and the ability to produce prints of reasonable quality when making modest enlargements.

Focal Length

The 'normal' focal length for any negative size is equivalent to the diagonal of the negative. It's the same for a pinhole camera. So for a 6x6cm negative the diagonal is 80mm and a 'normal' or 'standard' focal length would be 80mm. Anything less than 80mm would be wide angle and anything more would be telephoto. Tables are available in books on the subject (and some on the internet) which give the optimum pinhole sizes for any focal length. The Pinblad's is



0.22mm for the 38mm focal length (an equivalent f stop of f168). Its angle of view is 83 degrees and it produces an image circle of 133mm which easily covers the film size without cut-off. Image circle diameter is calculated as three and a half times the focal length.

Making the camera

The camera is built around an early 12-on Hasselblad film magazine (these can be found pre-owned for around £100). It has to be the early type magazine with a viewing flap on the back cover as later A12 types have a locking mechanism that kicks in once the film is wound on to the first exposure. Manual advancement is then not possible. The older magazine can be hand wound after each exposure using the viewing window and the pre printed numbers on the film's paper backing. Just like the good old days!

Building a simple wooden box to fit a standard Hasselblad film magazine is not a major construction job. The only ticklish bit is making the studs which lock the magazine to the camera. This can be achieved with patience, some very basic woodworking experience and a lot of ingenuity. It is worth remembering that this is a very simple and fairly crude piece of equipment. It is built first and foremost for enjoyment both in the making and the using - but it has a job to do. The pinhole, or more accurately the needle hole, because a needle is used, is drilled in a small piece of aluminium foil (the kind that holds your Chinese take-away). The intricate detail of the process is for another time but its importance should not be underestimated. The quality of the final image is totally dependent on the accuracy of this tiny hole. It is well worth the effort to get this part right and it's totally astounding that in a high-tech age, wonderful photography can be made by such primitive means.

The finished pinhole is simply taped to the inside (or outside) of the camera, over a larger predrilled hole. In order to be able to vary the exposure a simple method of uncovering and covering the pinhole is needed. This could be as simple as a piece of black tape, but in this case a step down ring with matching lens cap was purchased and glued to the camera body. Exposures are then simply made by removing and replacing the cap. A further refinement was the addition of an accessory shoe taken from a junk camera to enable the use of a spirit level.

Exposure

Reading into the subject of pinhole photography it soon becomes

apparent that everyone develops their own method of exposure measurement. The exposure times used with pinhole cameras can be seconds, often minutes and even hours (days and months are not unknown in extreme cases!). This raises the problem of severe reciprocity failure. Which sounds like a dreadful disease afflicting only pinhole photographers, but in fact is quite simply the inability of the film to cope logically with long exposure times in the same way as it does with short exposures. In other words, once you get past the one second threshold, exposure times have to increase significantly beyond any metered value. My personal approach to exposure measurement has proven to be extremely accurate and surprisingly reliable.

This method assumes that you are going to use an exposure meter. Remembering that the f stop is fixed for the camera's focal length. All that is needed is the exposure time in seconds. Simply meter your subject, choose f22, read off the shutter speed and multiply by 300 (allows for reciprocity) which gives you the exposure in seconds. For example. Metering for f22 gives a quarter of a second on your lightmeter's shutter speed scale. Multiply one quarter by 300 (which is the same as dividing 300 by 4) gives 75 seconds. Easy. And surprisingly accurate. This should be followed by a test film using the formula for every first exposure and then two more exposures, bracketing either side of the time by halving it and then doubling it. It works so well it can even be applied to colour trannie film which is notoriously unforgiving of incorrect exposure.

Composition

With a pinhole camera you are working blind. You can't check the composition before making an exposure. The best you can do is to mark sighting lines on the camera body from the film plane to the pinhole (one line from each side of the film aperture meeting at the pinhole). This gives a rough idea of the field of view. In practice it is the surprises you get when you see the negatives that make the whole process so absorbing. There are rarely any disappointments. the advantage of this method of working is that the barrier between photographer and subject (having to look through the camera) is removed. The experience is unforgettable.

The 38mm focal length camera is great fun. It is so compact it can be place virtually anywhere. And being silent it doesn't intrude. Hours of fun and not a lens in sight!

Keith Price March 2003

Event: Glasgow Through the Lens
A talk on the Annan Collection by Douglas Annan.

Around two dozen attended this free event at Glasgow's Street Level Photoworks on 5th December. Douglas Annan is the fifth generation of his family to market artworks and a unique series of historic photographic images of Glasgow (and elsewhere), many of them taken by his illustrious ancestors. A direct descendent of world-famous photographers Thomas Annan (1829 - 1887) and James Craig Annan (1864 - 1946), Douglas is heir to and keeper of the rich photographic heritage which they have left. During his entertaining and knowledgeable talk he showed slides illustrating vintage images drawn from the extensive Annan archives. There were examples from Thomas Annan's celebrated "Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow" (1868) and many other scenes of the city in past times. He also talked about the Annans' pioneering use in Scotland of the carbon and photogravure printing process.

Following the talk, Douglas invited the audience to examine the collection of original plate cameras he had laid out on display together with some vintage prints and a 10 x 12 inch glass negative. They could also hold and examine an impressive photogravure print on Japanese tissue paper of the sort produced by J. Craig Annan and which had influenced Alfred Stieglitz to use the same method for producing his seminal "Camera Work."

There was a mixed audience for this event, ranging from those interested in the history of Glasgow, through many practicing photographers, to a world authority on Fox Talbot and his processes. The thing they all had in common was an enjoyment of the evening and a feeling that there was something in it catering for their particular interest.

The Annan Gallery at 164 Woodland Road, Glasgow
G3 6LL or visit the website at www.annangallery.co.uk

Jazzzzzzzzzz in Glasgow

If you are a jazz lover, or just enjoy looking at juicy black and white prints like they used to make, then visit the exhibitions of jazz portraits by *Scottish Photographers* Robert Burns and Bill Ellis. Their work can be seen in Merchant Square, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and Pivotal Art, Parnie Street during the Glasgow Jazz Festival in July this year. Full details from our web site.

From The Douglas Annan Talk



Negative © Stewart Shaw



Worshipping at the shrine © Stewart Shaw

Inversnaid in the the Spring

Another pleasant portfolio weekend was held in April at Inversnaid. The usual astonishing amount and quality of work turned up, including a still life of amaryllis and tinned black pudding. Robert Burns, Ian Biggar, Roy Myers, Bill Ellis, Eileen Fitzpatrick, Ian Fairgrieve, Ian King, Sandy Sharp, Caroline Dear and Andre Goulaincourt feature in the team photograph as well as sundry members of the Inversnaid kitchen staff. We were



Inversnaid April 2003

© Robert Burns

especially grateful to the organiser of the sunny weather. *Scottish Photographers* is grateful to Inversnaid for continued support.

On Photography

I am hesitant when asked to define my own style, definitions seem too restrictive and permanent.

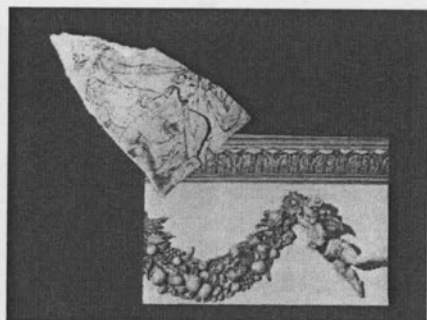
My current 'style' is certainly nothing like it was five years ago and I hope that in time it will grow to something new and different again.



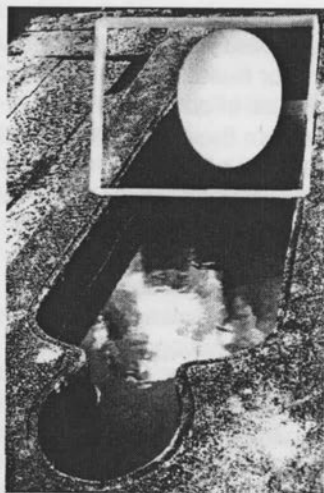
At this point in time I am not too concerned about photographic craftsmanship. Other elements seem important now. Sometimes I even fear that overly emphasized concerns about craftsmanship will result in a fear of being spontaneous or free.

Why is it necessary for a photograph to look like what we expect a photograph to look like for it to be a successful picture? And why, if the photograph is visibly successful as a picture, is it necessary to find out what the photographer intended in making it? We need not formulate any rules about what a photograph should look like in order to consider it as art. It makes no difference what the subject is. The idea, the statement, is the only thing that counts.

Veronika Woodroffe



All photos © Veronika Woodroffe



One of the main aims of Scottish Photographers is the encouragement of photographers to pursue personal expression rather than through set rules or competition. But what is personal work? A professional photographer/artist trained at college or university has a structured *modus operandi* on which to base his or her personal development. One way this may be followed is through study and self generated ideas with some influence from the published work of others, not necessarily photographers.

The keen amateur has an excellent route via populist weekend or residential courses run by gurus of our time and benefits from their experience and expertise in a particular field. These lecturer/photographers have usually achieved their knowledge and work quality genuinely and invariably give excellent value by way of freely imparted information, guidance and enthusiasm. By all means go home refreshed, bursting with ideas, building on the experience but without copying what has been related in the previous weekend or five day event. Of course personal work and self expression may be traduced by a new experience or glossy book into something which is not wholly your own. At its extreme it may become only a shadow of a new influence

which has come into your photography, until the next new influence comes along.

It has been said that 'personal' work is really only made up of many external factors or influences anyway and that personal expression is the sum of these experiences. This is true to some extent but personal work (and I can only give my own aims here) is something which essentially comes from within - those sensory and/or intellectual experiences which are uniquely your own. What have you felt on being confronted by a new landscape, its history, its mood? Has an atmosphere evoked by poetry, fable, still life, modern minimalist composition, pure perfect profile been satisfyingly captured? Have you conveyed the depth of wonder, amazement, awe, love, excitement, even fear which this, or any experience has produced. It may be that that mood has not been achieved but the personal insight gained in the attempts surely worthy the effort and may accumulate into the next project.

So, by all means take on board those 'external' influences' at least in moderation or at a subliminal level and add them to your own broad canvas of experience and let the rest of *Scottish Photographers* see the unique results produced.

Alan Aitchison March 2003

Anent: The Scottish National Photography Centre

Progress continues towards the cherished dream of a Scottish National Photography Centre on Edinburgh's Calton Hill. SPNC Ltd, the company chaired by Michael Shea has already raised sufficient funds to appoint Graeme Murdoch as Chief Executive to pilot the development and begin the twin processes of determining a vision for, and tackling the practicalities of, such an ambitious project.

The first element, which in effect began with the Forum in the former Royal High School in November has continued with research visits to New York, Holland and Belgium, as well as within the UK, and by extensive correspondence and websurfing not to mention much individual consultation and debate. Certain key ambitions and features are beginning to emerge, relating to exhibitions, education and conservation and the intention is to put these before a series of forums for discussion.

In parallel, the hard graft of fund-raising and making the case, the appointment of consultants, the completion of feasibility studies, and all the other vital elements needed to run one of Europe's outstanding neo-classical buildings into a world-class photography centre, is ongoing. It will be a long haul but the project is enjoying huge support at local, national and international level, not least within the photographic community, and there is a genuine belief that it can be brought to fruition. An Office for the project has now been established in the former R.H.S. and a website will be operational soon.

David Bruce

In Print - the magazine scene

There are several photographic magazines to be found on the shelves of larger bookshops such as Borders in Glasgow. **Source** is published in Belfast and must be one of the best bargains at £4.00. *Source* gave *Scottish Photographers* a mention in their last edition and we look forward to recruiting our first Irish member.

Portfolio is produced by in Edinburgh and is edited by the indefatigable Gloria Chalmers. Classy, glossy and dearer than *Source* it has its own instantly recognisable agenda. The latest edition carries news of the Jerwood Photography Award - actually five awards each of £2000, open to recent photography graduates. Information from info@portfoliocatalogue.com and www.portfoliocatalogue.com

News and Events

Douglas May and Philip Caplin are having an exhibition, in the Faculty of Advocates, in Edinburgh during August.

Aase and Peter Goldsmith are exhibiting in St Monans during June.

Portfolio Afternoon Crawford Gallery St Andrews June 8th 2pm

Check the web site for details.

A Day with the Contemporary Group

An event led by Andy Biggs which *Scottish Photographers* is co-hosting with the RPS Contemporary Group. Andy is a photographer with several portfolios to his name including stunning landscape work made in Iceland. He will show work from Tradition turned to Heritage, a project initiated by an article in the Sunday Times naming Stoke on Trent as one of the towns in England with the poorest quality of life. He recently completed an MA with Paul Hill at De Montford University. Ink jet images and traditional black and white work will be shown together with hand made books which Andy makes. Part of the afternoon may be given over to portfolio advice but you needn't feel obliged to bring work.

Sunday June 29th 10.00-17.00
Visitor Centre at Mugdock
Country Park Milngave.

Use the enclosed form to book.

Portfolio Sessions

Although you are encouraged to bring and show work you can come along just to enjoy looking at work of others. Minor White talked about a 'creative audience' and this is as important as the work on show. Usually e-mail announcements of local portfolio sessions.

Inverness

Eileen Fitzpatrick 01309 671918

St Andrews

Peter Goldsmith 01334 840402

Glasgow

Stewart Shaw 0141 632 8926

Edinburgh

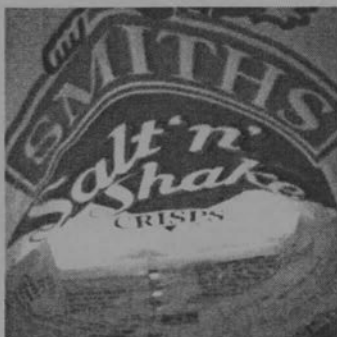
Volunteer?

Little Sparta **Sunday 31st August**

Robin Gillanders will lead a visit to the unique and inspirational garden created by Ian Hamilton Finlay at Dunsyre (near Carnwath). Meet at Little Sparta at 2pm. Numbers are unlikely to be limited but please use the enclosed form to indicate if you would like to come - directions will be available.

The Back Page

'PINBLAD' pinhole camera photograph. The inside of a crisp packet, taped to the front of the camera. Monochrome print from a colour transparency. Exposed under low light conditions for 1 hour 50 minutes.



Salt 'n' Shake

© Keith Price

One reader rose to the challenge to report on the **Testino** exhibition.

My ancient Briton's entry fee was £3.50, enough in my opinion for the pre-set work of just one photographer. The super poster sizes, sorted into individual groups, put me off somewhat because such frames, appropriate with advertisements, came over in my mind rather like so called modern 'pop' music. First comes a business plan, then a means of providing the substance, the presentation to be used within the budget and then the designer of it. The provider/s of the subject materials are then selected so the whole idea can be reviewed planned and co-ordinated prior to go ahead . . . so this was Testino's showing. In my squint ridden moisture starved dry eyes I quickly appreciated the work as good made not so good by the methods of display. So many fashion and personality photographers have impressed and amazed the masses for many years and I hadn't come to the gallery to see the work of competent tradesmen's mounts of overblown and oversize 'challenged' latitude prints such as these. I walked round twice and came to feel that Testino hadn't been the maker of decisions when it came to cropping the crowns of so many well known heads unless that is he was showing a little arrogance towards the public. Had originals been available to compare over lit details et al, which although seems rather silly, perhaps I would have a clear view whether or not the shots had become a committee product of Testino's work. Fine you might say that Roy Myers who has hardly ever tried a hand at such work can contrive such amateur views. Well now; what was my £3.50 for?

Roy Myers

● Scottish
● Photographers

Scottish Photographers

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