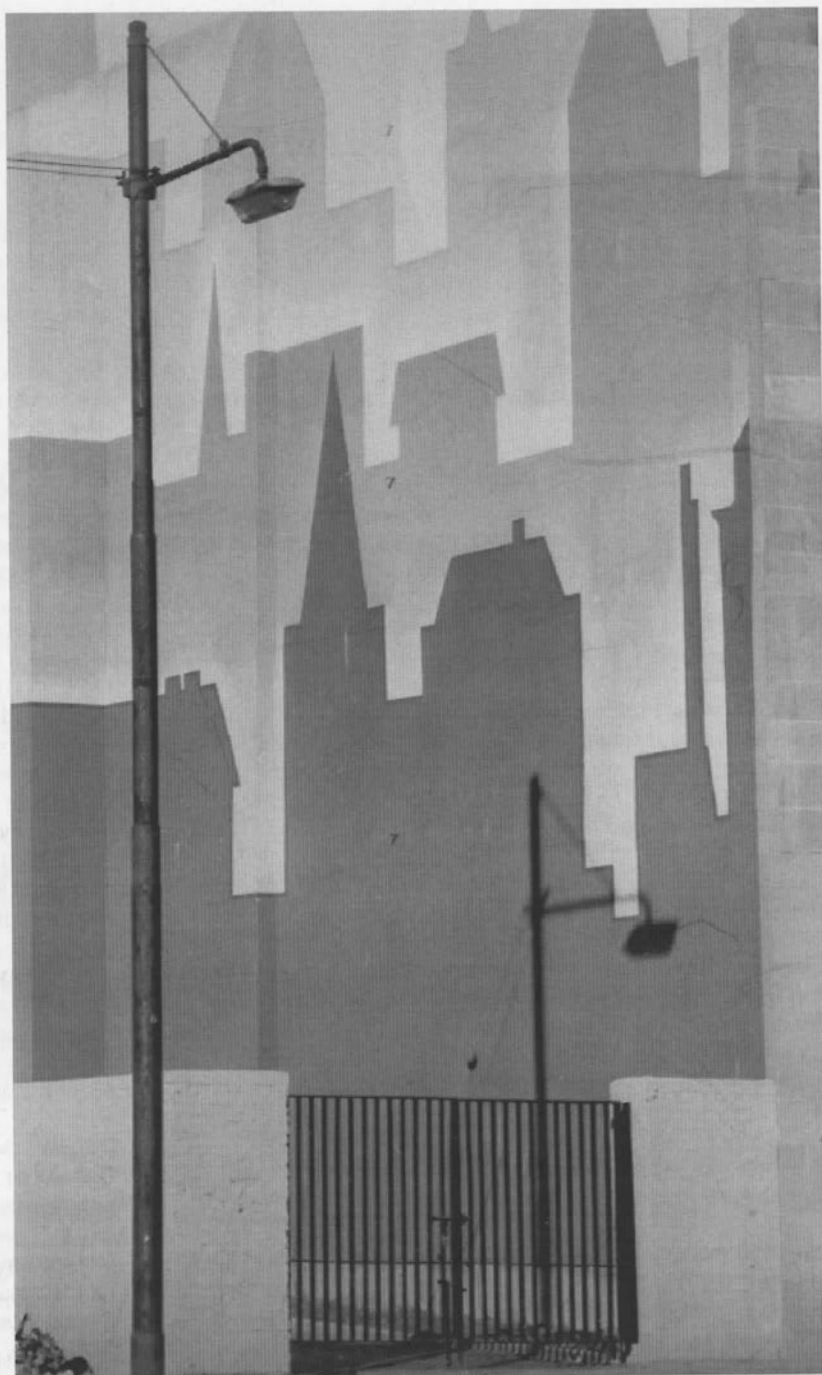


● Scottish ● Photographers



Notes Spring 2005

NOTES

For *Scottish Photographers* Spring 2005

Welcome to a new edition of *Scottish Photographers' Notes*. New year. New format. But the more things change the more things stay the same for there are hints in the pages which follow suggest that Scottish photography is in good shape, something that should be trumpeted from the rooftops.

Scottish Photographers is a forum for those who use photography for their own pleasure rather as a means of persuading others of their expertise. It is loosely organised with no constitution, clubrooms or regular meetings, simply trying to promote contacts between photographers without entering into cliques or coteries. A group for those who don't like joining groups. A crazy idea of course. Like a *Society for the Abolition of Bad Weather*. Why not?

You'll have had your Festival?

There must now be few 'art' forms in Scotland which do not run to a Festival. Jazz, cinema, folk song, poetry, probably origami, you name it. Well you probably can, except for one - photography. Of course we've been there before. *Fotofeis*, that monster jamboree, was twice foisted on us before vanishing. There are festivals in Arles and Paris and Dieppe and Bratislava and Hereford. So why not Millport or Kilmacolm? There should be a space for a big one in Scotland which is the cradle, if not the birthplace, of photography, but there must also be plenty of spaces for small ones, requiring basic resources and of course non profit-making (sic!). There are music festivals all over Scotland (in the most unlikely places) so why not photography? Occasional seasons in informal spaces using all the improvised resources that *Ikea* and *HomeBase* can muster - and sponsor. Is there any enthusiasm for this? Are there enlightened enterprising sponsors out there? Any sponsors? Any takers?

Farewell to Photography?

This was the alarming headline on the cover of a recent edition of *artWORK*. Had we missed something? Of course Ilford is in trouble but what other catastrophe is in the air? Inside that feisty tabloid all was revealed. The Dundee based group *Lightworks* has finally put out the light. Or rather it was a report of 'possibly

the last exhibition' by *Lightworks*. So there you have it - it is definitely maybe the end of photography. On a serious note we hope that it is not the end of *Lightworks* which has made a valuable contribution to photography in Scotland. A thoroughly professional though somewhat exclusive group, their exhibitions were always a delight even if they rarely strayed from the traditional art of fine printing. Thank you *Lightworks* and don't go away!

As for *artWORK* - we would urge you to refrain from sensational headlines! The death of photography, like the death of painting, has been greatly exaggerated. 'Digital' is not the end of the affair but only the start of the latest way of making photographs.

Holyrood News

Love it or hate it, you must accept that 'that building' is here to stay. Readers of *Scotland on Sunday* will have noticed that many of their photographs of Holyrood have been provided by one (Lord) Murray Elder who has a career in both politics and the visual arts - is there a book to come? Members of the visual arts' community will have been pleased to see that commissioned, gifted and purchased pictures have been hung, not without alarums and excursions, about the parliament building. Photography plays a prominent role in this collection, a tribute to the place of Scotland in the history of photography. Thomas Joshua Cooper, Owen Logan, Gunnie Moberg, Maud Sulter and Claire Wheeldon are represented on the list of artists. An illustrated review of the collection would be welcome.

Munch comes to Glasgow

Douglas May's pictures inspired by Edward Munch (in the December *Notes*) must have created a stir. Or so it seemed if a recent edition of the *Herald* was to be believed. Under the heading of 'Things To Do' was an event at the People's Palace. A Munch Day! Before phoning Douglas to tip him off I read that the topics included making toffee apples and chips and boiling eggs. It was, however, not a day about Munch but only a day about Munching.

Awards

Colin Mearns, a photographer with *The Herald*, has been short-listed (February 2005) for a prize at the prestigious British Press Awards. Mearns is one of a superb stable of press photographers whose work appears on our breakfast tables every morning. Good luck to Emma Hamilton and Sarah Lynch who are winners of the 2004 Jerwood Awards. Exhibition in Stills shortly.

Contributions

Send text with photographs for scanning or scans and text on disk. Files should be a reasonable size, e-mail attachments possible but can often be of disappointing quality. Prints will be returned - return postage is always appreciated. Items on any aspect of (Scottish) photography are welcome. Contributions to date have been uncontroversial. A reader (P.H. England) advises: "what you need are a few controversial items to inject some vitriol from time to time". Above all you are invited to *enthuse*. I am grateful to all the contributors to this edition. Contact me if you can any advice or assistance to improve the production of the *Notes*.

Mailbox

Some of you may have attended the *Creative Camera* conference at the NMPFT in Bradford last year. Paul Hill sent a transcript of his lecture. John Rhodes has sent a photocopy of 'Photograms of the Year 1925'. It contains a list of photographic societies of the time and also a portrait by one A. Swan Watson of J.C. Fenton who was the solicitor-general for Scotland. Let me know if you want a copy of either of these. Correction: the picture of the Inverness Group in the last *Notes* should have been credited to Alastair Cochrane

Eric Thorburn

It was sad to read of the death, at the early age of sixty four, of Eric Thorburn, one of Scotland's best known photographers of the faces and places of Scotland. His son, Paul, a graduate of Glasgow School of Art, continues in his father's footsteps - in New York.

Inversnaid Portfolio Weekend

Friday 29th April - Sunday 1st May

Dinner bed and breakfast starting with the evening meal on Friday and finishing with lunch on Sunday.

Price £102.00 *inc vat* per person - no surcharge for non members. Deposit £45.00.

Cheques payable to 'Inversnaid Photography Ltd'.

Bring along work *at any stage of development*. Folio sessions to show and discuss work, free time (to make photographs?) and superb food. If you have never been to portfolio session or to Inversnaid before then this may be what you need to wind you up!

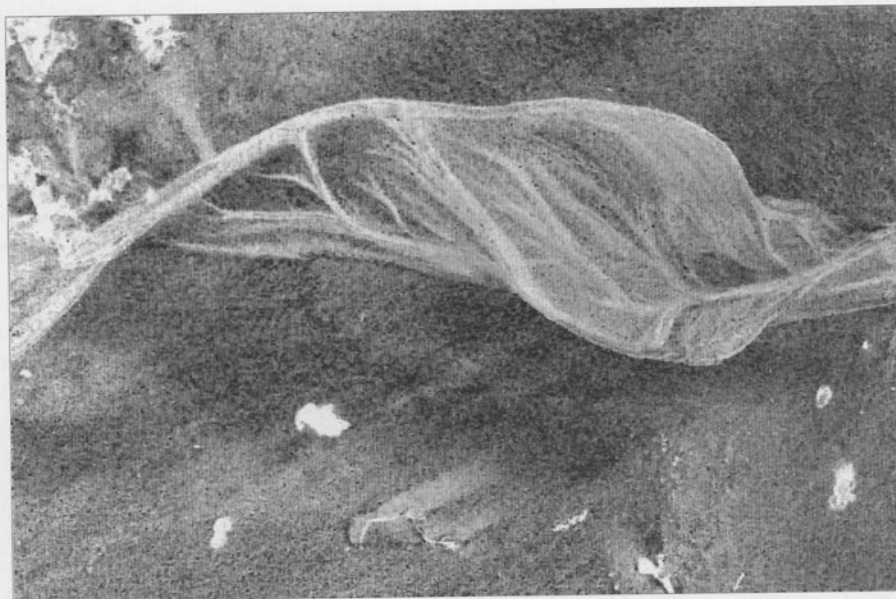
The weekend is a little later than usual but always popular so please contact me (addresses on back page) as soon as possible to book a place.
www.inversnaidphoto.com

Subscriptions

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your subscriptions for 2005. If you have not already done so then I hope that you will. Photography is still a poor relation of the arts in general and visual arts in particular. Exhibitions and associated events are few and far between and financial help such as bequests or grants are rare. True there is a National Centre mooted, there are splendid schools of photography and two dedicated galleries. But that is not enough and *Scottish Photographers* exists to encourage independent photography at all levels. We are pleased to welcome subscriptions from *Stills Gallery* and *Peacock Visual Arts* who had enquired about becoming corporate members. £10.00 is the present rate for this - until Stewart Shaw thinks of a better one. We have been delighted to receive generous donations from several members renewing their subscription. Sponsorship in any form is sought from individuals, organisations or firms.

Now please take a moment to switch off all mobile phones, pagers and digital alarms so that you can enjoy a taste of Scottish photography.

Sandy Sharp



Sandmarks in Space

My first photographic exhibition was in the early '90's when I was asked to show drawings at a multi-media Arts Festival on Mull. When another artist pulled out at the last minute I filled the venue with blown-up photographs taken in Applecross where I was then living. The newspaper write-ups were good. I was hooked.

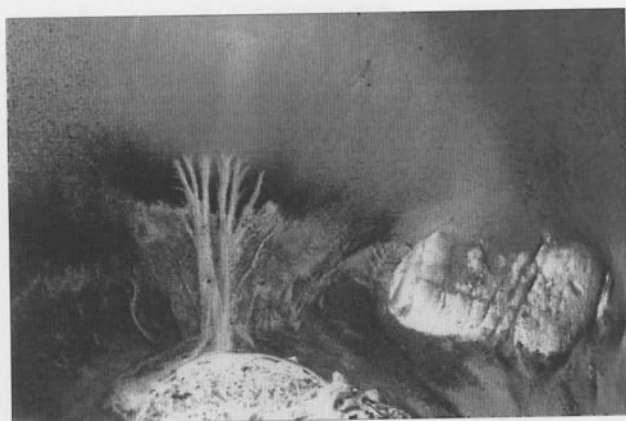
Then I moved to Skye. These photographs were taken on the beach below my cottage over a year. The low-tide springs had to be visible and the shadows were long and strong. The first ones I developed and printed in the dark-room of a neighbour, David Bursill. When my youngest son got leukaemia I left the island.

Some years later I was able to develop and print that remainder in the dark-room of another friend, Don Burnett. He did all the technical stuff and was able to reverse the sand-colour into the illusion of dark outer-space in some of them. We experimented with various photographic papers. The black and white ones were made on Ilford Multigrade paper with selenium toner added afterwards. This [March 2005] is the first time they have been shown.

I have now returned to my roots on the Ochil Hills near Stirling where as a child I was part of the landscape, observing nature. At the Glasgow School of Art I specialised in Textile Design.

Fiona Porteous







Anne Crabbe: Boy with bird's nest

Scottish National Photography Centre

www.snpc.org.uk

George Logan

www.scottishphotography.com

Beyond Words Photo Bookshop

www.beyondwords.co.uk

John Cooper: Architecture, Glasgow

www.architecturalimage.co.uk

Chris Close: Landscapes

www.chrisclose.co.uk

David Darling Fashion Flora Fauna

www.bigphoto.co.uk

Craig McMaster: B&W Landscapes

www.craigmcmaster.co.uk

David Caratacus Clark: Marketing

www.Fotografique.com

Stills Edinburgh Gallery

www.stills.org

Street Level Photoworks Glasgow

www.sl-photoworks.demon.co.uk

Tillman Crane: Alternative American

www.tillmancrane.com

Inversnaid: Photography Centre

www.inversnaidphoto.com

Ellen Carey American Abstracts

www.ellencarey.com

Elisabetta Gargagli Italian publisher

www.whitestar.it

Our web site, www.scottish-photographers.com has been a splendid success in presenting work and advertising events. Several members have their own sites one of which is featured here. Putting your pictures on to a web site means mounting a little exhibition without the need for printing or framing - or even a gallery. There are thousands of hits every month - more viewers than any gallery gets. Anne Crabbe's site, below, contains several portfolios of her work.

www.annecrabbe.co.uk

Anne's family hails from the Dingwall area although she now lives in the soft underbelly of England. She is one of a hugely talented group of women producing inventive and thought provoking work. In Anne's case this often involves family and friends who are often persuaded to model, and even dress up, and act out little cameo roles. These are sometimes amusing but often can have an uneasy edge to them. The images on her web site are taken from several bodies of work. 'Girton People' is a particularly satisfying folio of portraits of students and staff of Girton College, Cambridge which were published by the college in 1997.



Anne Crabbe: U.S.A From her web site

www.scottish-photographers.com

The current gallery contains work by Nikki Leadbetter, Roy Myers, Fiona Porteus and Alina Dobryden. It is intended to make another refreshment in early summer. Meanwhile previous Galleries can be viewed in the archive. Refreshment keeps the web site up to date - but at a huge cost to George Logan's nerves for finding new materials is a constant occupation. Visit the web site, promote it and consider sending material.

George is a professional photographer who lives near Perth. He designs web sites and welcomes commissions. Telephone 01250 883211 or contact his own e-mail address, george@scottish-photography.co.uk

Donald Stewart

PAUL STRAND SOUTHWEST Rebecca Busselle and Trudy Wilner Stack

"It is this very lack of understanding and respect for their material, on the part of photographers themselves which directly accounts for the consequent lack of respect on the part of the intelligent public and the notion that photography is but a poor excuse for an inability to do anything else.

The photographer's problem therefore, is to see clearly the limitations and at the same time the potential qualities of his medium, for it is precisely here that honesty, no less than intensity of vision, is the prerequisite of a living expression."

Paul Strand.

Anyone who knows me well will know the following two facts - firstly one of my photographic heroes is Paul Strand whom I consider to be one of the greatest, most innovative and thoughtful photographers to have graced our art and secondly my love for the high desert country of the American Southwest. So when I learned that a book of Strand's Southwest photographs was to be published at the end of 2004 you can imagine what went immediately to the top of my Christmas list. Fortunately my wife read this list so on Christmas morning with great anticipation I tore off the wrapping paper. Were my expectations met? Oh, yes!

Over the past twenty years I have been delighted by the steady and continuing improvement in the quality of reproduction in photographic books. The prints in this book which are all presented in original negative size and format are probably as good as current technology allows which is good indeed! However although these superb reproductions give a fine idea of Strand's technical skill it is the quality of the images themselves that is breathtaking. These images taken in 1930-32 would put many modern "cutting edge" photographers to shame. While I had seen one or two of the photographs Strand took of his first wife, Rebecca, I was not aware that they stretched to a whole series, and though not as comprehensive as Stieglitz's series on Georgia O'Keefe, do contain some stunning portraits. And this intense and uncompromising vision is equally visible in his images of the Southwest landscape and architecture for which he clearly felt a great affinity as well as a passion. For me there is always an aching quality about Strand's best work. Not aching in the "beautiful" sense though many of his photographs are such but the feeling of transience, of impermanence. It is that thing that photography does best of all capturing that fleeting

moment, that transitory look or that fabulous fraction of a second when either the light was "just right" or every element came into perfect coincidence. All of these Strand does to perfection but more than that he leaves the viewer with the clear knowledge that no matter how perfect the image it is a tiny fraction of time caught unable to be repeated and unable to be revisited.



Hazel Kingsbury: Paul Strand

Although a book of Strand's photographs would in itself be cause enough for celebration this book is further enhanced by a truly superb essay on Strand's early career, the art scene in 1930's Santa Fe and Taos and Strand's place in that plus some very perceptive comments on the convoluted, confused and often confusing relationships of Strand, Rebecca, Stieglitz and O'Keefe.

Perhaps the best way to end is to quote from the book's Introduction:

"Paul Strand Southwest presents a portfolio of images from 1930 to 1932, reproduced in the original negative size and followed by a narrative montage of primary sources. These letters, texts, art and historical ephemera construct a biographical and cultural context which compliments Strand's experience of the Southwest through photographs. They summon the man, and other voices and visions surrounding Paul Strand at the time, separate but material to his own vivid evocation of the spirit of place"



Bill Doig: November

I'll just take my camera with me. You never know what you might see'. He was only going for a cup of coffee in the shop across the road. It offered a photographic safari of about 250 yards."

Thus William Hunter in an article in the eighties which accompanied the picture above. Bill Doig was the photo-librarian of the *Glasgow Herald* (as it then was) and a regular contributor to the salons. In fact *November* had just been on show in the 'Salon of Photography of the Republic of China' when Hunter wrote these words. Bill has always represented the acceptable face of salon photography. Eschewing fashion and gimmicks he has produced a considerable folio of work which manages to bridge the many gaps between the different branches of the medium. If Sudek can be called the 'Poet of Prague' then the same might be said of Bill Doig - of Glasgow.

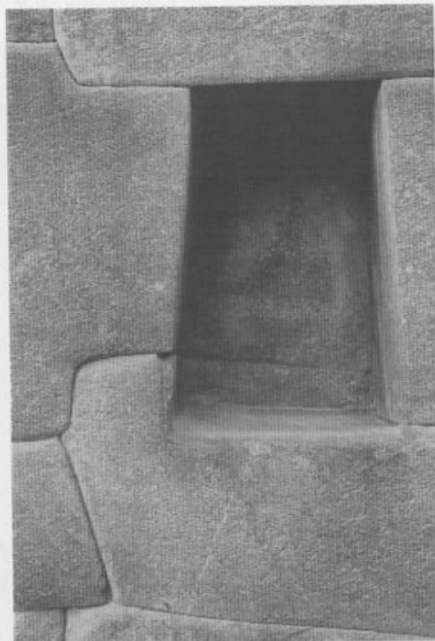
Small Books

The name of William Bishop will be familiar to many readers. In the early nineties he founded a little journal all of his own called *Inscape*, perhaps after the inspiring book that John Blakemore had just published or perhaps with more than a side glance at the poet Gerald Manley Hopkins who (may have) coined the word. It is a title which hints at the editorial direction of the magazine, for *Inscape* takes no prisoners and often sends its readers off to find a dictionary or a reference book. You see *Inscape* refers as much to the inner landscape of the mind as the outer one. From the start it has had a stable of writers and contributors which makes the editor of *Notes* green with envy.

A few years ago there was a notice of Bill Bishop's latest venture, *Inscape Small Books*. The first of these was an edition of fifty copies of a hand made book by Virginia Khuri. *Deeds of light* was a set of twelve abstract images of flowers, printed digitally and tipped on to rough watercolour paper. The images accompanied quotations from Goethe's *Theory of Colour* which Virginia had used for her MA in photographic studies with Paul Hill.

Virginia Khuri has recently published another *Inscape Small Book*, this time a commercial edition of 500 called *Macchu Picchu, book of stone*.

This fascinating book is by one of the sympathetic 'foreign' photographers who supported *Scottish Photographers* in its start up. It is ostensibly a visual account of a visit to that enigmatic ruined city of the High Andes. I have seen photographs by two other visitors to Macchu Picchu, one approached from



Virginia Khuri: Macchu Picchu ultimate geometry.

the Peru side, the other, a Dane, came from the otherside by canoeing up the Amazon and then hiking through the jungle to the Andes. In both cases the problem was with the hordes of tourists. The Dane even slept there overnight and still had difficulty trying to convey the silence of the place. Virginia Khuri has largely succeeded in avoiding the hoardes. When they do appear they seem to add something rather than detract. But the book is more than a pictorial record, it is a meditation on the myth of this place of stone, the religious and, one supposes, political forces which inspired it and also its meaning for us. Well worth getting!

Peter Goldsmith

Inscape is published four times a year. Subscription, £13.00. Contact:

William Bishop, 22a Gladwell Road London N8 9AA. Macchu Picchu is available from the above address for £15.00 including p&p (£17.00 overseas). Cheques payable to *Inscape*. Not available from Amazon!

A Place Apart

It is worth mentioning another inspirational little book. *A Place Apart* is available from Maggie's Centre in Dundee. It is a joint venture containing photographs by Colin Wishart and words by Thomas Clark. Thoroughly recommended - and you will be supporting Maggie's Centre. Send cheque for £7.00 to:

Maggie's Centre
Ninewells Hospital Tom McDonald Avenue
Dundee DD2 1ZV

Contact the editor if you have a small book, artists book or publication to review or promote.

Events Events Events Events Events

Park Gallery Callendar Park Falkirk

www.theparkgallery.com

Fiona Porteus Natural Beauties (see page 4)

March 5th - April 3rd

World Pinhole Camera Day

Sunday 24th April

Contact Sandy Sharp if you would like to host an event or to get in touch with other anoraks!!

Try www.pinholeday.org if you don't believe it!

RPS Photography in the Landscape

Lauder College Dunfermline Weekend of May 21-22nd

John Blakemore, Russ Young, Tillman Crane, Tom Stoddart and more. Open to non RPS members.

Contact Roy Robertson 01382 542446 (evenings)

roy.robertson@virgin.net

Touchstones Tillman Crane

Street Level Glasgow Thursday 12th May at 7pm Free

Tillman will introduce his latest book of 31 palladium images made in Scotland over the last three years.

Book Launches Stills and Beyond Words

Still Gallery Cockburn Street Edinburgh

John Blakemore *Black and White Photography Workshop*

Tuesday 3rd May 6.30-8.30pm Free.

Also in the pipeline: Andrew Nadolski (March), Tillman Crane May), Martin Parr (August). Contact *Beyond Words* info@beyondwords.co.uk or 0131 226 6636

Street Level

26 King Street Glasgow 0141 552 2151

www.sl-photoworks.demon.co.uk

Denis Doran Common Ground. Images of 'marginal landscapes' 4th May -11th June

Stills

Cockburn Street Edinburgh

MIR Dreams of Space. Video, installation and photography

Opens Saturday 19th March

Events Events Events Events Events

Alina Kisina

Alina will be showing work in Edinburgh. Cargo, Edinburgh Quay, Fountainbridge March and Cameo Cinema April. Her work can be seen on the current web site gallery.

Philosopher's Garden

March 3rd - May 8th Free

Gallery of Modern Art Queen Street Glasgow

Includes work by Robin Gillanders and Ian Hamilton Finlay.

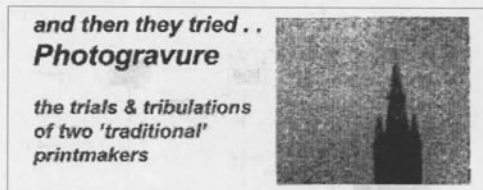
GKN

St Andrews Street (near St Andrew in the Square) Glasgow. Changing interesting programme of exhibitions.

Events

Scottish Photographers encourages members to initiate, lead or organise events. Once set up every effort will be made to publicise and support these. We regret that losses cannot be underwritten. Pinhole cameras and artists' books have been suggested for events - any organisers? Roy Myers has found a comfortable venue at East Fortune Airfield, a suitable spot for documentary?

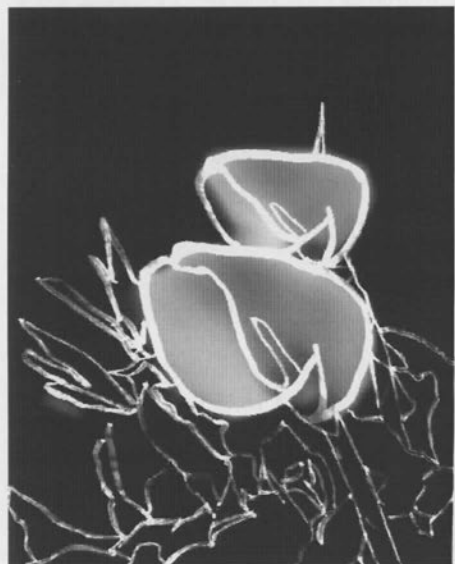
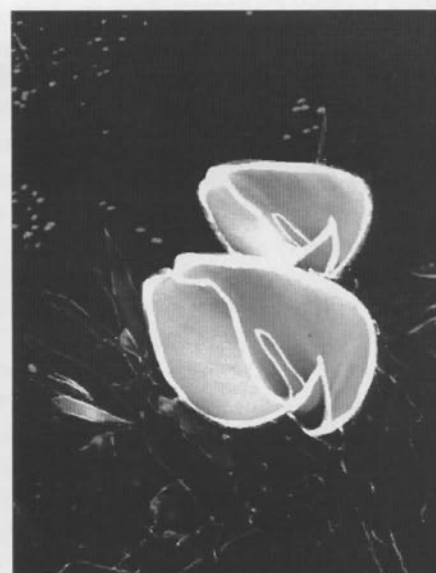
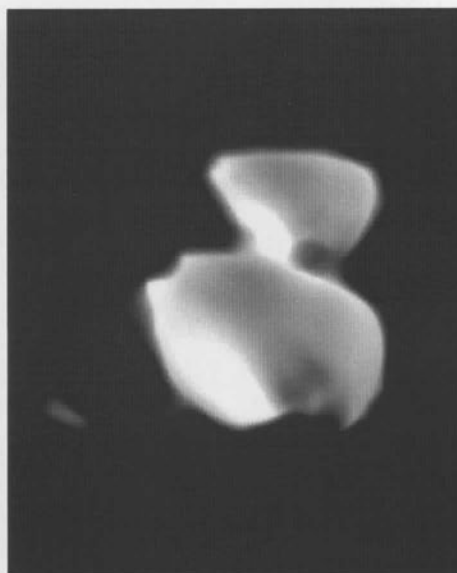
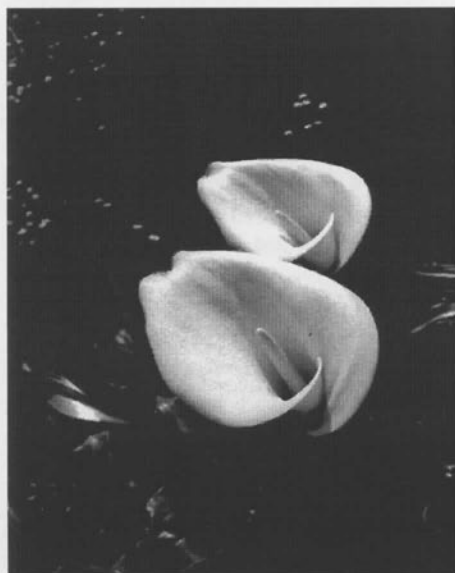
Photogravure at The Glasgow Print Studio



A dozen Glasgow *Scottish Photographers* were enthralled on a cold January evening with Roger Farnham and Harry Magee, not necessarily in that order, in January. We left, full of admiration for our chief demonstrator but also for James Craig Annan (of whom more anon) who made thousands of them for Alfred Stieglitz who then tipped the gorgeous things into his '*Camera Notes*', after which our own *Notes* are (of course?) titled.

See page 17 for other Events. Always check with galleries before making a visit.

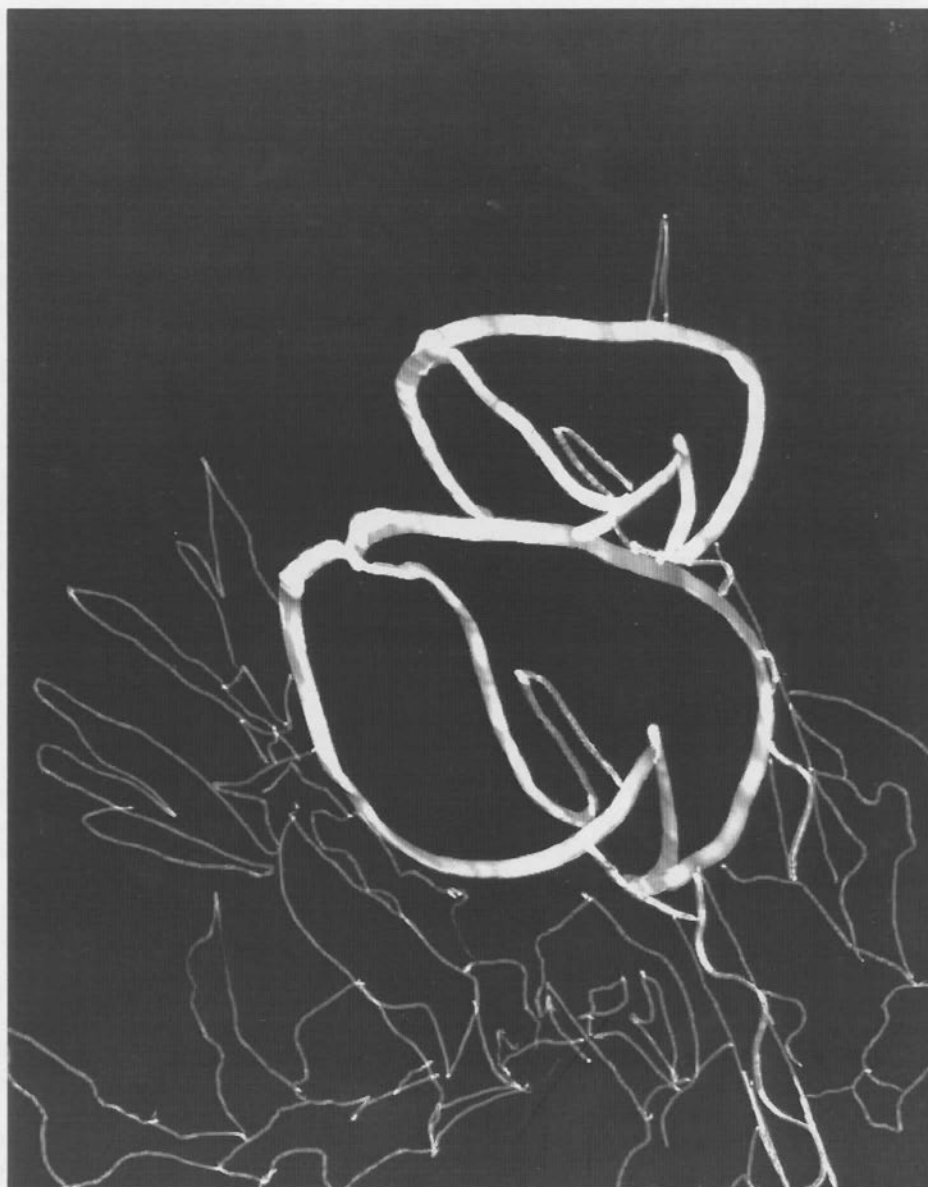
Joel Conn
Flower Sequence



Starting as an attempt to try out a macro function on a new lens I have used a number of black and white photographs of flowers with heavy contrast as the basis for sequences using photogram techniques and intentional blurring. Hiroshi Sugimoto said of his blurred images that they represented the impression of the building in the architect's mind when he first envisioned it. If the blurred images of flowers represent God's impression of the plant before he started to craft it - I like that it looks like a galaxy.

I would not suggest that my photograms represent God's blueprint for the flower because, if I believed in God, I would hope that his drafting would be better than mine. The use of the photogram, especially when printed itself, does bring forward the question as to whether a close tracing of a photograph is the actual flower or an impression of a flower. If an impression, is it less of an impression than if I had drawn from life? I remain acutely aware that being a photographer of only two years standing I should not be comparing myself to Hiroshi Sugimoto or God, just yet, but perhaps concentrate more on not putting thumbprints on my negs.

Joel Conn



Sudek Survey

Peter Goldsmith

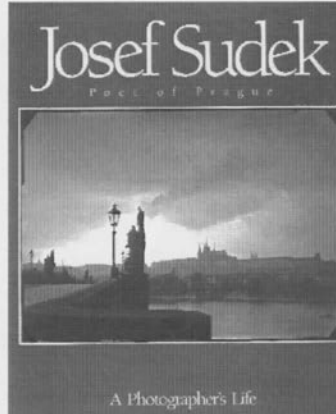
Sudek Poet of Prague (Published by Aperture)

in 1977 a touring retrospective of Sudek's work was shown in the unlikely venue of The Falkland Suite in Glenrothes. Without going into the story of how that happened it suffices to say that the Goldsmiths found themselves 'gallery sitters' and I had the rare opportunity of living with the work of a great photographer for a month.

Sudek, who lost an arm in the first World War, was one of the major photographers of the 20th century. A critic visiting the Glenrothes show said, when he entered, 'Of course his work reflects the principal interests of central European art in the 1930's' and so on. When he left he said 'I've been studying the dates - he is the key influence on Central European art of that era!' A Fine Art professor from Prague told me subsequently 'Sudek almost single-handed (!) held together the cultural identity of the Czech lands for nearly 40 years.' And the fact that he never compromised his integrity or vision forced the respect of the various political regimes of the period. These gave Sudek a very special place in the history of photography.

Much of his work looks perhaps romantic in a slightly wistful way but there is always a depth behind that romanticism. He printed usually in a restricted range of tones which is in sharp contrast to the Western American influence which has dominated most of world photography from the middle of the 20th century. However much of his work is highly complex and requires a perceptive understanding of his life to follow it. This book includes a biography by the authoritative Anna Favrova who was both his friend and executor and helps greatly to work out the background to much of his work and deepens one's understanding.

However all the photographs are printed in the same tones on a white surround whereas Sudek frequently toned his work either directly or by careful selection of paper and also, importantly, because he always used contact printing much of his work is meant to be seen with a black surround. He did not usually matte his work. This means that many of his photographs lose their impact or feeling in this publication. Nevertheless it shows and excellent cross section of his work.



Sudek by Sonja Bullaty (Published by Potter)

Bullaty, who is a concentration camp survivor and who became Sudek's apprentice, emigrated to the USA where she became a well known photographer in her own right and worked hard to promote Sudek's work. The selection of work is, in effect, by Sudek himself and is similar to the retrospective exhibition. It is presented in the manner in which he, himself, worked and together with Bullaty's very personal account of his life, is in many ways much more revealing of Sudek the person and of his work.

Joseph Sudek PhotoPoche

This book contains a limited selection but does print them in something like the original tones (rather overdone I feel), but does give a better idea of the real prints. The text is in French but those readers who are a bit closer to their school days than me should manage it.

Joseph Sudek (Phaidon 55 series)

An even smaller pocket book, mainly a different selection and fills out on one's view of his work, but to me the Photo Poche is the better of the two.

Jopseph Sudek by Zdenek Kirschner (Panorama)

This is a Czech publication although there is an English summary of the text. This has the largest selection of work and is properly presented where appropriate with a black background. However it is not as well printed as the others. It would appear that Sudek's sister, who worked with him and was a professional photographer herself, collaborated with this publication. It might be possible to get a second copy - in Prague.

Although my personal preference is for the Bullaty book, it is probably no longer available. The ideal is to buy 'Sudek - Poet of Prague' and the Photo Poche edition.

Neil McIlwraith
Photographic Books of the Year

Todd Hido's Roaming (Nazraeli £50) features superb American roadscapes in filmic colour, many of them (apparently?) photographed through a rain-smeared windscreen.

Bernhard Edmaier: Earthsong (Phaidon £35) - many publishers have jumped on the Earth from the Air bandwagon, but this is undoubtedly a significant contribution to the genre of aerial photography, focussing more specifically on landforms and less on human culture than Arthus-Bertrand's work. It's been published with a choice of four covers.

Sylvia Plachy: Self-Portrait with Cows Going Home (Aperture £22.50) - in my humble opinion, Plachy is one of the most interesting photographers alive, making autobiography into photographic art. She's also - the blurb for this book reveals - the mother of actor Adrien Brody, and some of the photos were taken on the set of his film *The Pianist*.

Edouard Boubat: A Gentle Eye (Thames & Hudson £45) - perhaps the gentleness explains why his reputation has been eclipsed by French contemporaries such as Cartier-Bresson, Doisneau and Ronis, but he thoroughly deserves this substantial retrospective

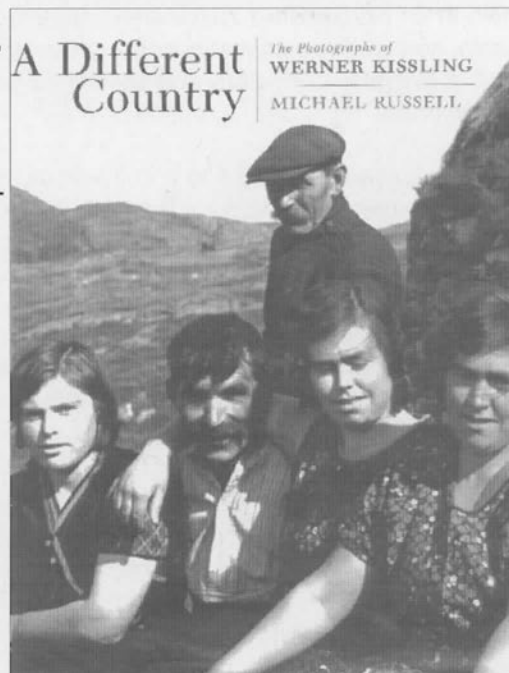
Michael Kenna: Retrospective Two (Nazraeli £50) - just published; English, but now living in the US, Kenna is unafraid to put beauty and mystery back into contemporary landscape photography. This retrospective of the last ten years includes 130 sepia-toned silver gelatin photos, mostly of France, England and Japan.

Available from Beyond Words photographic bookshop, 42-44 Cockburn Street, Edinburgh EH1 1PB, tel: 0131 226 6636, email: info@beyondwords.co.uk

Neil points out that Poet of Prague is reprinting, more stock soon. The others on Peter's list available. New books of interest include **Simon Denison: Quarry Land**: impermanent landscapes of the Clee Hills £14.95. Simon is currently at Edinburgh College of Art. **Thomas Joshua Cooper: Point of No Return**. Haunch of Venison hardback of his goddam Atlantic extremities £40.00.

Scottish landscape and other work well worth looking at. **Patricia McDonald: Shadow of Heaven** (scarce) £33.00 **Gunnie Moberg and George Mackay Brown: Orkney Pictures and Poems** £20.00 **Gus Wylie: Hebridean Light** £9.99 **Paul Strand: Tir a' Mhurain** £22.95 **Werner Kissling and Michael Russell: A Different Country** £25.00 I hope that Mike Russell can be persuaded to write something for us about this fascinating character.

Remainder bargain . . . **Louis Stettner: Wisdom Cries out in the Streets** £10.00 (reduced from £30.00!)



Stewart Shaw Friends Reunited

As the person who collects the subscriptions for *Scottish Photographers*, I am always pleased to welcome new members to our group. Often they discover us through the website, and this was the case last year when I was contacted by a photographer, Bruce Rattray, now resident in England. The thing that gave me particular pleasure was the accompanying letter, which tentatively asked if I was the Stewart Shaw who had taken his wedding photographs in 1970. I was, and I had rediscovered an old friend and colleague from Dundee thanks to the *Scottish Photographers* website.

I should say right away that I am not, and never have been, a professional photographer of weddings though I have done the honours on one or two occasions for friends who were having small-scale weddings. A search in the archives (sounds fancier than it is) turned up a set of black and white negatives (FP4 film in an old battered Yashicamat) that were still mostly printable, so I was recently able to send Bruce and Jennifer a new set of prints of that happy day almost 35 years ago in Pontypridd.

I was pleased to be able to find these old negatives and still have the means to produce prints, but it made me think about work done entirely digitally. Of course there will always be means to store digital images, and these will be capable of being copied on to each new future storage system as these become available, but I wonder if it will always be done. The time and effort involved in copying all those digital files on hard drives, memory cards and CD's onto the next available technology will inevitably mean decisions will be made as to which to keep, and which to discard. Future perspectives on these old images may mean regret over some pushes of the "delete" button, or images marooned on old technology that is no longer readable.



Stewart Shaw: Bruce and Jennifer, Wales, 1970

Informal Portfolio Sessions are a way of bringing *Scottish Photographers* and their work together. They are *not* intended to be presentations of finished work (though a session can easily be adapted to accommodate this) nor is work meant to be accompanied by an academic lecture. Some members may have been put off by the term 'Portfolio Session' thinking that it gave the impression of a presentation of a portfolio for an Art School entrance examination. It is not!

It was Robert Adams who said: *"Your own photography is never enough. Every photographer who has lasted has depended on other people's pictures too."*

If you enjoy working on your own and are not a member of an established photographic community then be encouraged to pack up some of your work and bring it along. Some might react to their first 'public' showing with a mixture of pride and embarrassment but photographs, unless they are made for a form of therapy, are meant to be shown to others just as music is meant to be listened to by an audience. The response of others adds another dimension to the work that you are making and your own response to other people's work can be supportive to them too. It was Minor White who talked about a 'creative audience'.

How do you respond to seeing the sixty ninth tiny gold toned picture of a pear or dead tulip? What do you think of badly marked prints made by someone who doesn't care that they are badly marked? How do you reply to someone who wonders what kind of film you used when the subject of the pictures is overwhelmingly emotional? There are those for whom the content of the picture is the be all and end all. And there are others for whom the only points of interest are technical things, like whether you can see 'detail in the shadows'. All this might be too much for those of you who prefer a good old fashioned lecture where you can sit down and be entertained (and even close your eyes) but why not come along and give it a try?



Douglas May: Alicia Bruce and friends at an Edinburgh portfolio session.

Portfolio Afternoons

Come along with photographs *at any stage of development*. Work in progress is welcomed. Finished work or lectures are not expected!

Inverness 10.30am till afternoon Saturday 7th May at Kinloss Contact Eileen Fitzpatrick 01309 671918

Edinburgh 7pm Thursday April 14th at Stills Contact Douglas May 0131 447 1410

Glasgow 7pm Thursday 24th March at Street Level Will include work by Street Level's Basharat Khan. Contact Sandy Sharp 01698 262313

St Andrews Spring meeting at Crawford Centre Contact Peter Goldsmith 01334 840402

Details of sessions are advertised by e mailing.

Scottish Photographers gratefully acknowledges continuing support from **The Crawford Centre, Street Level, Stills** and members in the Inverness area. We look forward to working with **Peacock Visual Arts** in Aberdeen and other interested organisations in the future.

Sandy Sharp
Scottish Landscape Photography



Sandy Sharp: A Prospect of Scotland

The above view, a 'Prospect of Scotland', may be a bit unusual. If you comb book shops and tourist centres you will find images of blue skies, purple heather, majestic snow capped mountains and colourful glens and could be forgiven for thinking that Scotland was situated in the tropics warmed by balmy breezes and basking in sunshine.

The truth is different - so what? If you sell books and postcards then you must get your act together. Sit in your 4x4 with your box of cameras waiting for the best sunrise ever or the biggest splash of atlantic waves (yet) to break on the shores of Lewis. Or the most impossibly cloudless sky over Ben Nevis. The *cliche* says, 'the camera never lies'. Of course it never lies - but the photographer does. And the photographer had better go on lying or there will be a massive slump in the sale of calendars and postcards. It is a fact that the technical quality of images on view in bookshops and tourist centres has never been better. The likes of Colin Baxter and Colin Prior are superbly accomplished photographers and are complemented by equally talented black and white (yes!) workers like Craig McMaster and Iain Roy. There are prints, calendars and books in every format including the

ubiquitous panorama. Stunning work from a group of hugely talented operators whose hold on the technicalities of their craft means that the days of the 'boring post-card' beloved by Martin Parr may be, sadly, numbered. What has this to do with landscape photography? Very little!

Landscape photography has a serious pedigree from its inception. From the nineteenth century pioneers in the American Mid West to the New Topographics and the British Land movement, there have always been attempts to represent *and* comment on the landscape rather than merely to idealise it. In Scotland only workers like Patricia and Angus Macdonald have gone away beyond the heritage industry's view of the land (although they make post cards too!). It is a fact that many challenging 'Scottish' landscape photographs have not been made by Scots. Think of work by Fay Godwin, Paul Strand, Ray Moore and Thomas Cooper. Is it perhaps a truism that we are unable properly to comment on things that we are too familiar with? Might that be why Iain Brownlie Roy has produced such a valuable body of work in Iceland and the American Thomas Cooper made such a memorable body of work in Staffa?

Scotland, with its enviable public relations material provided by the novels of Walter Scott, photo albums of Fox Talbot and the patronage of Queen Victoria, was a testing ground for landscape photography. But much work passed off as Scottish landscape photography nowadays is seductive, soft porn, tourist fodder. The landscape equivalents of the paintings of Jack Vettriano. Is there a Jem Southam out there? Or a Robert Adams? If there is then speak up. Don't let landscape spin doctors have it all their own way. You are invited to identify and enthuse about grown up non-pretty-picture Scottish landscape photography. *Beyond Words* has produced a few tentative hints - see page 15.



Image by Chris Morris

● Scottish
● Photographers

info@scottish-photographers.com

www.scottish-photographers.com

Scottish Photographers 33 Avon Street Motherwell ML1 3AA

01698 262313 sandesharp@compuserve.com