Scottish Photographers

Notes Spring 2006

Sandy Sharp Tree at Crossford 1998

A fallen leaf returning to the
branch?

Butterfly!

(Moritake)

NOTES for *Scottish Photographers*

In its short existence *Scottish Photographers* has made many friends. Our intention is to reach parts that other organisations do not reach and to do this without official funding or institutional backing - the Spring *Notes* appears entirely thanks to members' subscriptions and donations. We focus on 'imagination rather than imitation' and aim to promote photography beyond mere craft - catering for those who care about *why* pictures are made as well as *how* they are made.

Although a number of our members are professionals, *Scottish Photographers* is not a commercial organisation. We exist to encourage the making, exhibiting and enjoyment of personal work. The growing network of free spirits includes traditional and contemporary workers who are generally unimpressed by time honoured influences and obsessions and who enjoy looking at pictures without concern for fashions. We hope that this latest edition does not disappoint.

Thomas Joshua Cooper is a photographer for whom aesthetics and technique are equal partners and he is one of the few contemporary workers who can genuinely be said to have moved landscape photography forward since the heroic days of Ansel Adams. Anne Crabbe makes her family (models) work hard. No sitting in a comfortable studio for them, rather they are made to dress up and act. Her work is an example of where well chosen words form an essential part of the image. So too for James Porter whose lengthy time exposures make an ironic mockery of his hand written 'diary' comments. Stewart Shaw could easily fill a number of copies of the *Notes* with his pictures. His review of KKK (*St Mungo Museum* is to be congratulated for its enterprising exhibitions) and folios, *A Belang tae Glesca* (*Civis Glasuensis sum*) and *War Correspondent,* continue the theme of 'documentary' photography.

It can hardly have escaped notice that many *Scottish Photographers* are not Scottish at all - whatever 'Scottish' may mean, but neither, of course, are members of *Scottish Opera* or other organisations. Our members are Scots, ex-patriot Scots and adopted Scots. Lenka Sedlackova is from Brno in the Czech Republic. Her work impressed at a recent portfolio session in Glasgow, especially the images of her parents watching television. Many *Scottish Photographers* have work appearing in exhibitions (see p. 22) and the press. Iain Maclean often has pictures in the *Herald* most recently a topical 'photomontage' tribute to Jimmy Johnstone - *'Walk on Jinky R.I.P.".* Finally, although he is not a member, we congratulate David Gillanders, featured in the Autumn *Notes*, on winning the Unicef Photo of the Year award.

The work that we show in the *Notes* is by (but not exclusively) our members. Folios are always sought, of a personal nature and individual style please - different from images seen in the photo press. There is space for 'comment' and if you have a comment to make, preferably controversial, then put pen to paper and submit it. The facing page featuring a Haiku image by the editor is available for single images - Haiku or not.
Copy date for the Summer Notes is July 1st.

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***Subscriptions**. If you find a renewal form enclosed then your subscription is due to be renewed. Please renew!*

While donations are no substitute for new members they are very welcome. There is a list of members on the back cover. Please report any errors or omissions and accept sincere apologies. Some members request anonymity.

Notes is published three time a year. Individuals £10.00; Concessions £5.00; Overseas £15.00.

Goodnight and good luck! Sandy Sharp

Cover: Silver Birch tree at Manse Road Church, Motherwell: Sandy Sharp 2003

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there"

L.P.Hartley *The Go-Between.*

Most of my photography has been of people. I started, as many do, with family and friends, recording gatherings, outings and holidays.

From there, it was a natural progression to capturing my children's early life. I didn't realize how easy things had been! Teenagers didn't welcome the embarrassment of a Mum with a camera and I, at that time, had started on a photography course where I was forced to approach strangers to fulfil some of the set projects. I soon learnt the risks involved .

Some people are afraid, suspicious, downright hostile, others worried that you won't get it right for their own self-image. Often the most interesting, the most revealing pictures are the result. Some people are relaxed and unconcerned about the whole procedure. But there are others who look on the process of being photographed as a two-way working effort - and that's wonderful for me! Ideas spark between us ; there is excitement in the air.

The 'Foreign Country' series is my attempt to recreate some of the pictures that are in my mind, those that are there so vividly with the memories of smell and taste and sound.

Perhaps they are part of a composite self-portrait? However, my two granddaughters entered into the make-believe with vigour and sweetness. Will this venture be part of the web of memories making up their own 'Foreign Country'?

Anne Crabbe

"Play with me!"

"Sally Hewitt did it!"

"At the Fete, no one listened to her poem"

"Hanging out the washing, she sang 'Down Mexico Way'"

"Once a month they waited for their parents at the bridge"

James S. Porter: Dissolved Within a Large Measure of Life

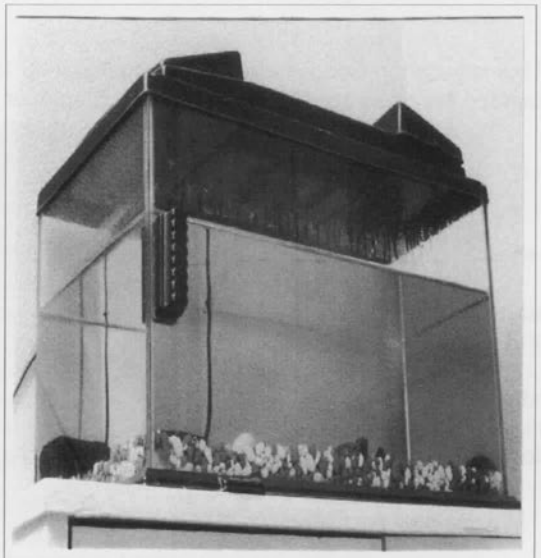
My intention in this project is to demonstrate how the still image is only able to capture an instant moment, and addresses the nature of time specific to the still image. If a still image camera is set-up in such a manner as to record a long transitional sequence in time, information that passes through the frame may not be recorded in the image, only the information that is static will remain.

With this idea in mind I decided to produce a series of images where there has been activity, taken with long exposures of around an hour. The result of this was that the whole event became if you like a non-event, all information that had taken place in the actuality of taking the photograph had disappeared. I decided then to represent the activity not recorded on the still image with a hand written entry underneath the photograph to replicate a diary entry.

On the reading of this work at first glance you may feel that it's a bad attempt at humour as you are presented with a set of images and text entries that are in juxtaposition to each other in such an obvious way. However you may then look at the title and recognise a slight indication of a blurred formation in some of the images and realise that there is more to the work. I see this work as an example of medium specific conceptual work very similar in technique to Suigimoto's cinema screens; however his work can be viewed as very spiritual in nature. In my work I concentrate on an absence rather than a presence, the feeling of ambiguity where you are not entirely sure as to place trust on the artist's intention to represent accurately and where perception is the only means of interpreting its motive. You are put in a position where you must be detached from the belief that the camera always faithfully records, where the photograph becomes as questionable as text and vice-versa, and where the still image kills the signs of life on its attempt to record it unfolding.

This is still a work in progress that I wish to explore further. Since the discontinuation of Kodak Technical Pan Film this project will have to continue being shot on an alternative film. This film had the appropriate characteristics to achieve this project and it will be difficult to find an effective replacement. I now hope to attempt this project on a colour film and look for more examples to further illustrate this idea.

James S. Porter



6.30pm - Feeding time for my two goldfish.

12.30pm - The meadows comes alive with crowds of people passing through.

A Conversation with Thomas Joshua Cooper

Thomas Joshua Cooper was born in California in 1946. He came to Britain and in the eighties moved to Glasgow where he founded the department of Fine Art Photography at *Glasgow School of Art*. He is currently immersed in an epic project, photographing the extreme edges of the Atlantic Ocean. Work from the project may be seen in his most recent books - *Some Rivers, Some Trees, Some Rocks*, *Some Seas* and in *Point of No Return*.

When and how did you start to make photographs?

I had never made a photograph in my life until I was a student. When I was at university I read history, literature and philosophy and I read, read, read until it was finally time to graduate. But I found that in order to graduate I was required to take an art course. Now it happened that I had a friend who had taken a photography class and when I checked it out I found that it was

> *"My tutor said 'Mr Cooper. Photography is clearly not for you!'"*

listed as an art course. Well I thought - anyone can take photographs - I can count it as an art class and graduate! My first photography assignment was to go out and *isolate visual form* and I made twenty five films of the most goddam boring things on God's earth only to be failed on the first project. My tutor said "Mr Cooper. Photography is clearly not for you!". However to my eternal gratitude he gave me another chance. My next assignment was photographing people, informally, something I felt made more sense and somehow I passed. And in 1965 that was the start of things.

How did you begin making landscape photographs?

I only made photographs of people in the first five years. I was besotted by making pictures of people . . .

. . . even their weddings . . .?

. . . in the beginning, yes! But mostly my clients got divorced about six months later so I gave it up! By 1969 I had never made a landscape picture but then a friend named Pete McArthur showed me his pictures of landscapes which were of a kind I'd never seen before. I was completely gobsmacked and thought "My God - I know something about the land. I've been involved in it all my life". In 1969 I went to a place called See Canyon in California with my camera - in the hope that something might happen! Maybe I had the wrong idea for I walked right through and out of that eight mile canyon without taking a picture. But then I turned round and at the very end of it I saw a picture in my head and for the very first time consciously in my life I thought that *I know something* and I made a picture I called *Indication See Canyon*.

I made a vow that I'd never do anything but make pictures outdoors and I've never done a single figure since. At that time I only made contact prints which were difficult to see but I had a feeling right from the beginning that the kind of picture I wanted to make was not anything that anyone would want to look at so I figured that I'd make it as hard as possible - by making them as dark as possible!

Were these photographs made with the camera that you now use?

Yes. I've one, only ever used one camera. *[An ancient Agfa 5x7 view camera is lying on the chair beside us, modestly covered by its dark cloth. The modern lens has about the same angle of view as a 35mm lens in a miniature camera]*. I bought this camera in 1967 from the seventy year son of the original owner. It was made in 1898 and I looked at it for two years before figuring out how to make it work. At that time I was

> *"I found a way of making pictures that looked like my pictures and nobody elses. . . ."*

studying photography with, amongst others, Beaumont Newhall, but because the leader of the course believed that basically the era of landscape picture making was over I left and was fortunate enough to be invited to Britain to teach. It was a wonderful thing to do because in England at that time there was a basic receptivity - except for the fact that nobody actually thought that photography was an art form! I couldn't believe that. In America at that time, the 70's, at least photography was considered as an independent art form if not part of fine art. But in Britain people like Hamish Fulton and Richard Long were making photographs as fine art and yet the medium itself was not even recognised!

Furthest West
The North Atlantic Ocean

Point Ardnamurchan
Scotland 1990 - 1997
The West-most point of mainland Britain

At that time, in England, you were making landscape photographs of woods, forests, rocks . . . . .

. . . and quarries! Paul Hill, the wonderful, very beloved Paul Hill showed me a quarry near the Welsh border in Shropshire called Nesscliffe which I fell in love with and where I worked every weekend for three years. Clearly, when I look back, I had a need for places that were enclosed and somehow not so expansive that I had to work flat out. I love the pictures that I made at that time but they were young pictures - though I had quickly found a way of making pictures that look like my pictures and no one elses.

When did water begin to appear?

England was my rock and tree period, the first fifteen years. You can't work outdoors and not work with water but I thought - I'm not going to touch that subject. I thought I wasn't up to it. I knew about trees and rocks but had no clue how to deal with the formlessness of water. It didn't stand still for long enough for me to figure out what to do with it! Then, in 1984, I made two water pictures

"Dreaming the Gokstadt . . . is an enormous youthful gush, a young book"

one of a creek in California and one on the Island of Hoy, looking straight down. The waves in the Hoy picture became sky and clouds *[the last picture,* 'Dreaming the Old Man' *in Dreaming the Gokstadt].* I thought about these two pictures for years. These two pictures did something with water. Then, in 1987, when I was having problems with living here, I made a decision that I would go to a place I had enjoyed off the coast of Oban. I would wade into the water up to the top my chest and for some reason (it made sense to me then!) I would try to find a way to make a picture. If I made a picture looking towards America then I would return to America. If I made a picture looking towards Scotland I would stay in Scotland. I was freezing cold, cold and unhappy. Then I saw the picture - it was looking to Scotland! I thought, OK, I'll stay! I started after that to make the series of pictures which became part of *Dreaming the Gokstadt*. I put everything I knew into that book, it's an enormous youthful gush, a young book. After the *Gokstadt* I thought I'd have to toughen up and I've never stopped. *Dreaming the Gokstadt* begins to talk about relating water to rock but the Oban picture was the first completely water filled picture that made me feel that I could do it.

How did your interest in Magellan and circumnavigation come about?

It was a book called *The World Lit by Fire* by William Manchester that led me to Magellan and made me start thinking about circumnavigation. I started a series of circumnavigations, the first one being Glasgow, which is over 390 miles in circumference. Then in 1990 I decided I would circumnavigate what I consider to be the 'island' of Scotland. The first picture I made was *Point Ardnamurchan, the Westernmost Point of Mainland Britain* [page 9] and that was the start of a drive to make pictures from extreme points of land masses.

When I went North I found that there is a furthest North of all Britain at Dunnett Head, but there were other Norths that were exciting and so altogether I made five Norths. True East is Peterhead but Buchan Ness is two seconds of compass less East and I made that too. In the South, there were three Souths. There is a South East South, then South West Souths at both sides of the Mull of Galloway and the Solway Firth so I finally made about twelve pictures of furthest extreme points in circumnavigating Scotland in 1990 - that's how it started.

Scotland is a land surrounded by water, by the sea. Then you moved on to the Atlantic Ocean - a sea surrounded by land!

In 1994 I was asked to do my 25th anniversary exhibition in the *Gulbenkian Foundation* in Lisbon. This gave me an opportunity to do more pin pointing because Portugal has the West most point and South West most point of Europe, Cala de Rocca and Cala S Vicente, and from there all of the great explorers had to go. I suddenly realised that this is where Western culture leaves to go to the New World and I wanted to find out what the consequences were.

Did that have importance to you as a North American?

I started the whole *[Atlantic Ocean]* project from a North American point of view because after making local circumnavigations, of Glasgow, Scotland and the Portuguese coast. I went to another North, in North America, to Newfoundland where everything in the world that could happen did happen! The Northern tip of the island is so significant because, for example, Lief Erikson discovered, for Europeans at least, the New World four hundred years before Columbus got there.

Many of your pictures contain barely recognisable features. Some of them are almost abstract yet they all are very precisely located - though they might have been made of the canal in Maryhill!

Yes I've made pictures in Maryhill! But I don't give a godamm whether anybody thinks that I've really been to any place that I've made a picture of or not. I have a very awkward relationship with trying to figure out what a place means to me. I've been reading a book called *Wisdom Sits in Places* which says that the condition of a place is refreshed each time you say its name. That idea really touches me. I'm claustrophobic in jungles, I'm scared of bugs and snakes and insects, but when I'm under the dark cloth I become deeply a part of the place. After a while it would be true to say that all my pictures look alike, one wave looks like another - but what I've learned is

> *"Yes I've made pictures in Maryhill . . .!"*

that not only does each wave have its own fingerprint but each wave can be identified as being part of a place though in general everything that one is unfamiliar with does look similar and therefore alike.

Why do you risk making only one single exposure?

Because I believe in both the excitement and the immediacy of the first take. I love the immediacy . . .

. . . but if you go to a remote, place and you don't like it . . .

. . . if I don't like it that's my problem. I've screwed it up. If I kick the tripod I'll do it again, I won't bear a technical mistake because it ruins me. I try to make as many pictures as possible from as many sites as possible. Recently I was gone for just under seventy days in two trips and made eighty six negatives. I couldn't make enough and didn't have enough film on the last ones, it was two holders short - bad planning! On another trip the weather beat me and I brought back five holders unused. Once when I was making photographs at a location in Northern Columbia I saw on the map that the place was called *Punta Agua*. I don't speak Spanish but when I figured what it meant I nearly fell off the cliff. *The Eye of the Water!* That's going to be the title of the book and the show. But I can't get that feeling without being close to a place.

Some places require that I have identifying touchstones, usually a rock or some location. Some few require horizons and some need the enclosure of a horizonless space where there is no opportunity to pinpoint direction or to know where you are, not that you are lost - but you have to remain uncertain.

When we talked about making only one exposure I wasn't thinking about the processing but more about time, about knowing, especially in wave pictures, when to open and close the shutter. Under the dark cloth everything is upside down, left to right and where will that wave go?

Time. That's the thing I've become most interested in. When I did the Portuguese work in 1994 I made one picture at midnight with a four hour exposure, midnight till 4am. It was pitch black but I got enough exposure to get a horizon. I exhibited it and then for the first time saw in a book - long after making this work - who else but Sugimoto! Sugimoto's night picture - he aced me! I only made that one very dark picture but it's seminal. Time is so crucial. I have both an obvious intuition and an increasingly clear understanding through practice of the time it takes for certain marks to take place. How to actually roll the waves and then what happens with bird flight through pictures - a kind of mark that makes me joyful! I think I've become more playful in my

> *"I break my rules . . . because I want to . . . have the pleasure of making the picture and I believe I'm making better pictures as a result, and it's remarkably good fun!*

pictures. In the earlier work I had my own internal rule book and I never broke my own rules. Now I break my rules whenever I can because all I want to do is to have the pleasure of making the picture and I believe I'm making better pictures as a result, and it's remarkably good fun!

Can I remind you of words which you once quoted?

"To a man with no knowledge - trees are just trees . . .

But to a man with some knowledge - trees are no longer just trees . . .

Yet, to a man with full knowledge - trees are once again just trees . . . . ."

Well I'll quote one back at you! The stages of life are: Bewilderment. Need. Union. Bewilderment . . .!!

. . . and where are you . . . ?

. . . I'm bewildered! Whether it's in the first or that last stage I'm not sure but I'm always bewildered!!!

In the age of Unmade Beds and Pickled Sharks when photographs win the Turner Prize, where do you come in the great contemporary scheme of things?

There are probably two or three answers to your question. I believe that art at its very best is incredibly generous, though incredibly mercenary as well, but what we've seen in the last twenty years has been a period of remarkable disinterest in generosity. Other interests have taken a strong stand. Andras Gursky and Wolfgang Tillmans are examples of two extraordinary contemporary photographers. Unfortunately for my bank account and my well being I've never achieved the provenance

"Art at its best is incredibly generous."

or the financial security of these two very fine picture makers. But there is room for everything in the art world. What I find truly fascinating is that there is a kind of surface preoccupation with style that may never disappear but I think that it is finally giving way to an inclination to need to see if there is something else. At moments of extreme security in a major society a certain kind of decorative condition entertains itself. We've been involved in that for twenty to thirty years. There has been no antidote or real alternative to what has fashionably been called late modernism. The scene just now is so homogeneous that there is no way to tell not only what form it is or where it is. There are traditionalists like myself who might be seen as antithetical to anybody working in new media. The fact is that what I am interested in is picture making. It strikes me that maybe there's no new scene, maybe it's diversified into every corner. In the issue of picture making photography is now such a natural phenomenon whereas people of our age can remember just the opposite when photography wasn't considered an art form at all let alone a fine art form.

Not so long ago there seemed to be so many diverse shows of photography - but not nearly so many now.

Very little singular photography yet every art exhibition has photography - and video. My heart belongs to a particular type of photographic scene but my brain says that you have to live where you are in the time where you are and not just accept it but understand it. I think that there will always be great Scottish picture makers. What is both alarming and exciting is that maybe people have such confidence in the process and the such ability that they no longer need to band together to propagate their views and consequently not just groups and scenes but even places like art schools may no longer have the function that they had earlier.

Has photography lost some kind of innocence now that it has become part of the fine art scene?

Of course it has, no question. Ages of innocence only last for so long and then they head to need and union and - bewilderment and the sooner we get to bewilderment the better! It could be that we are seeing the end in photography not only in terms of materials but also conceptually. The new medium of digital art making is taking over and doing things that photography never could. And I'm very very curious and that's exciting. You're taking upon yourselves the responsibility of ensuring the continuance of a thought process in *Scottish Photographers,* that's a great thing!

Scottish National Photography Centre

In December 2006 the £4.8n bid for National Lottery funding was withdrawn following concerns, partly about the proposed venue, expressed by the Scottish Executive. As a result other sites and options for the development are currently being considered.

'Following the decision to withdraw their application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, *mainly on the grounds that the* Scottish Executive *had given no formal indication of support, SNPC is now re-assessing its options. Crucially, the board of SNPC has made it clear that the project to set up the* National Photography Centre *remains very much alive and, as evidence, they have secured more private and commercial money for the project since, and despite of, the withdrawal.*

An 'options appraisal' exercise has been commissioned from a London agency and a reviewing subcommittee of the board is expected to make recommendations later this spring.'

James Edward Bates during a public talk at the opening of the exhibition on November 19th 2005. Photograph by Stewart Shaw

A long line of black frames snakes round the gallery wall, each containing a classic documentary black and white print, enlarged from the 35mm negative. The people in the photographs are virtually all members of the Ku Klux Klan, and look almost timeless in their robes and hoods, some shown at night in the light of burning crosses. The viewer could be excused for thinking this is an historic exhibition, dating perhaps from the 1960's or even earlier, so it comes as a shock to learn they were all taken within the last seven years.

The message of the exhibition is that the KKK is still very much in existence today, and one of the main themes is how their attitudes and prejudices are passed on from one generation to another. The subject matter is still considered controversial by many, and in fact Glasgow's St Mungo Museum is the first gallery to show the work since its initial outing at Visa Pour L'Image in 2003 in Perpignan, France. James Edward Bates, speaking in Glasgow at the opening of the exhibition, explained that the forty prints on show had been selected from an archive of many hundreds of frames, built up over the seven year life of the project. Born into a white family in Southern Mississippi thirty-seven years ago, he acknowledged the presence of racial prejudice in his home town, and even to some extent in his own home while growing up. The project was made possible through contact with some key Klan members who chose to trust Bates (perhaps for their own reasons) and with whom he formed a sort of relationship. He spoke of the difficulties encountered in a documentary project such as this; getting close enough to people to get access to events, while simultaneously maintaining the distance necessary to retain an objective view, but not betraying the

trust given to him by his subjects. Part of Bates' reason for getting closer to some members was to understand where they got their opinions and influences. But this proximity meant that at times he had to take breaks from the project to "gain focus" (his words) and ensure his impartiality was not jeopardised, and occasionally to ensure his personal safety. The dispassionate, neutral documentary approach is clearly important to Bates, "It is not my place to judge either side of this or any other issue. Certainly I have an opinion, but it is my responsibility to document life as it appears before me. The work should speak for itself. These images stir emotions, from which comes awareness."

How neutral is the work shown in the exhibition? As with any issue-led documentary project a degree of selection is necessary in deciding what and when to photograph, and the subsequent editing and captioning provide another layer of imposed meaning. Bates reported that the majority of his subjects were happy, indeed proud, to be portrayed in that context but to this viewer at least, most of the images are disturbing and often chilling. The sub-title of the exhibition, "Passing the Torch," refers to the passing on of attitudes and opinions from one generation to another, and this is one of the most disturbing aspects of the exhibition.

Although numbering only around 6,000 in the whole country, the members are visible and active, organising their parades, rallies and other events quite openly. The tolerance of the rest of the community, especially in the South, is clearly illustrated by a photograph of a Klan member in full robes, nonchalantly buying a pack of cigarettes in a corner shop without raising any surprise from the shopkeeper and other customer. The photographs showing children are the most disturbing; a parent teaching his son how to light a burning cross and perhaps most chilling a boy standing by a tree where a small black doll has been strung up with a noose - a striking lesson by his father.

Bates' photography was inspired by that of Charles Moore, a photojournalist of the 1950's and 1960's who focused on the civil rights movement. But other influences can be detected; a photograph of a little girl watching the funeral of a KKK leader and unconsciously standing on the grave of a WW11 veteran (Bates' favourite image of the project) looks to me at least like it could have been taken by the late W. Eugene Smith. Like Smith, James Edward Bates' commitment to his project and his personal integrity are undoubted. Photographic exhibitions of this type are fairly rare today, particularly featuring contemporary work and it is recommended to all who value and enjoy the documentary approach.

The exhibition runs at the delightful St Mungo Museum in Glasgow until 9th April 2006 (free entry).

Those interested but unable to visit Glasgow can see the images online at the website www.Generation KKK.com.

Web Site www.scottish-photographers.com and Scottish Photographers E Mail (SPEM)

Our **website** gets a lot of praise. So much so that George Logan, the webmaster, has been getting enquiries about designing sites for other organisations. The site endeavours to be genuinely 'current' unlike many others which are set up and then go to sleep. Do look us up!

We seek news and gallery material - material which is different from that seen on the usual photography sites which pedal selenium toned pears ('art' photography) and heritage, Scotland-in-the-Sun. If you are submitting work then please send it as generous sized files on CD even though the screen files will be smaller. We can scan paper copies.

The *Contact Sheet* was discontinued last year in order to increase the frequency of the *Notes* . In its place is **SPEM** Scottish Photographers' E-Mail - not to be confused with SPAM. News is regularly received from members and institutions and its is remarkably easy to copy and paste this into a monthly e-mail. Unfortunately there are just too many members who are shy of e-mail to enable us to print and post copies. Contact Sandy Sharp at the address on the back page with news or if you have e-mail and do not already receive SPEM.

SPEM is sent as 'blind copies' so your e mail address will remain confidential.

My interest in photography arose when I attended secondary school. In those days I found the main inspiration in travelling, meeting friends and in ordinary everyday situations.

I first took photographs with an old Beiertte camera which belonged to my father. In 1995 my interest seemed to be serious so I decided to invest in an SLR Yashica TL-ELECTRO from a second hand shop. With this camera I started taking photographs of architecture and urban sites. My pictures then were artistic rather than documentary. However a strong inspiration came from my studies of Art and Aesthetics at the Faculty of Arts of Masayk University in Brno which I entered in 1996.

Within the scope of my studies there was an opportunity to attend a photographic course led by the photographer of the Moravian Gallery in Brno - Irena Armutidisová. She provided me with invaluable practical and theoretical knowledge of photography and her appreciation of my work led to my even deeper interest in this kind of creation. One of the outcomes of the course was an exhibition of participants' photographs of modern and contemporary architecture at the department of Art History.

Sometime before that I also exhibited some photographs of architecture and city quiet corners in another area of the Faculty of Arts - at a student gallery called Crystal Diamond. This exhibition was well appreciated not only by students but by the academic staff too.

In 1999 some of my photographs were chosen for a group exhibition which was thematically dedicated to the castle Veveri near Brno. Photographs of the castle and other cultural activities related to it were intended to bring about larger intrerest in this monument and its reconstruction.

At that time I started to photograph with a Nikon F65 and during my further studies at the faculty the themes of my photos were enriched by motifs of landscape, still life, portraits of my family and friends, estates of pre-fab blocks of flats and everyday situations photographed mostly as a diary. In 2003 my prints were published as illustrations of poems in an issue of the independent cultural magazine MyšMaš Gazeta (number 21, 5/22 January 2003)

In those days I also started taking documentary photographs which were charged with emotions and subjectivity. I continued to explore this direction of my work thanks to the support and professional guidance of the well known photographer Ev□en Sobek whose photocourse I attended from January till June 2003. Within this time I created a few minimalistic female nudes and a whole range of those above mentioned documentary photos of folk events (eg "Riding of the Kings" in Vicnov near Uherské Hradište), or of a religious event at a well known place of pilgrimage Velehrad. Nevertheless I finished the evening course with a series of conceptual photographs which was later exhibited at the Department of Art History again.

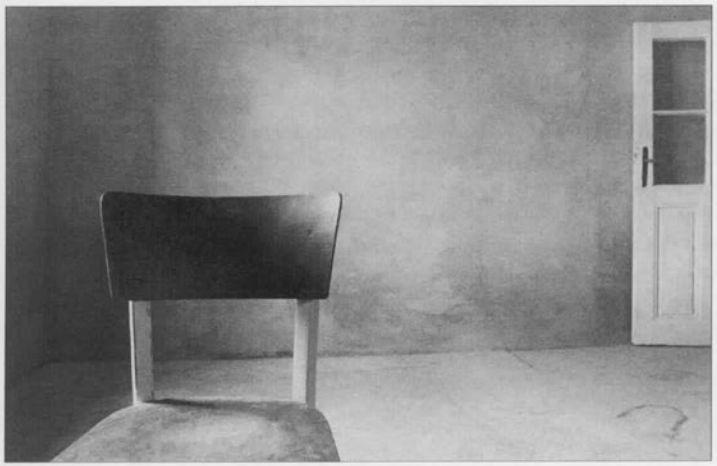
Lenka Sedlácková

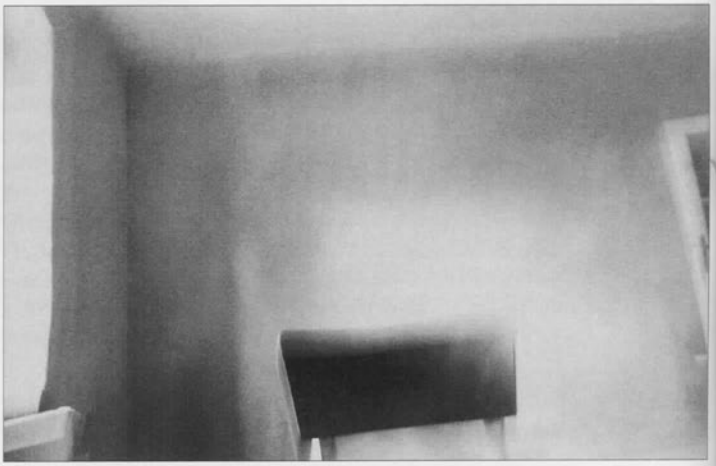
Lenka Sedlácková

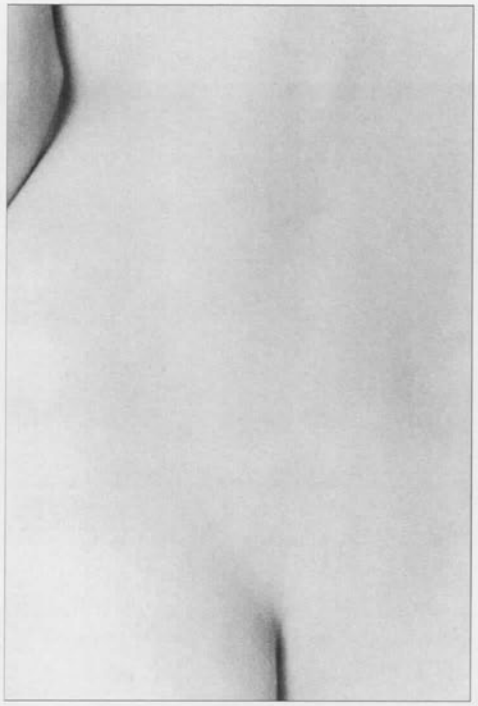
Lenka Sedlackova lives in the Czech Republic and has spent a considerable amount of time in Scotland where she has studied, worked as an au pair and spent time as a gallery assistant in *Street Level*.

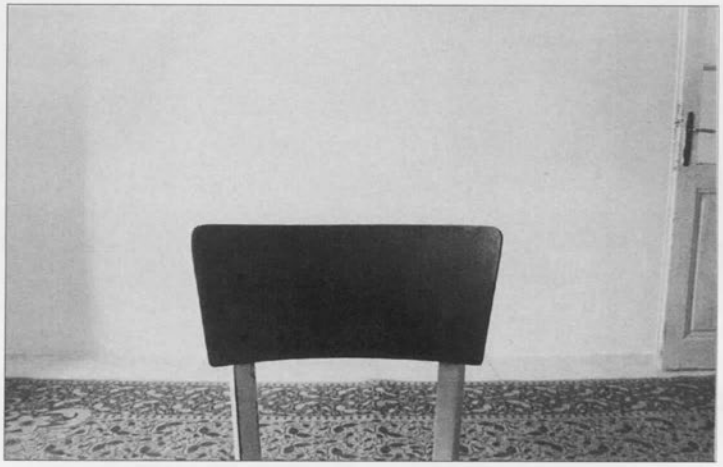
It was there that we saw her work at a *Scottish Photographers* portfolio session last year. She has now returned to Brno where she is intends to work with refugees and is our only Czech member (so far).

Lenka's English is embarrassingly good and the depths of Microsoft Word were ransacked to (almost) reproduce the subtle accents of her beautiful Czech language.







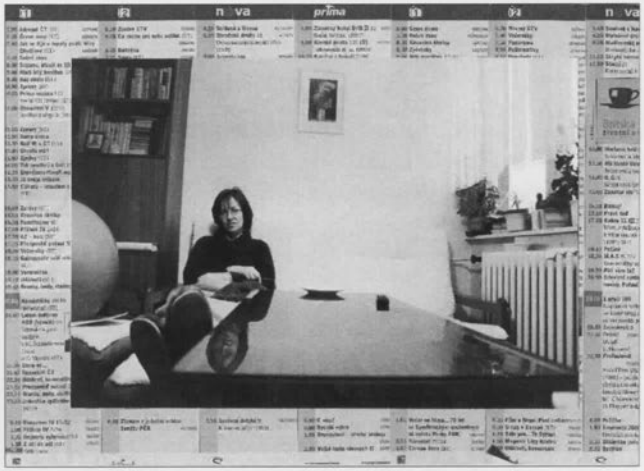


Above: "Minimalist Nudes"

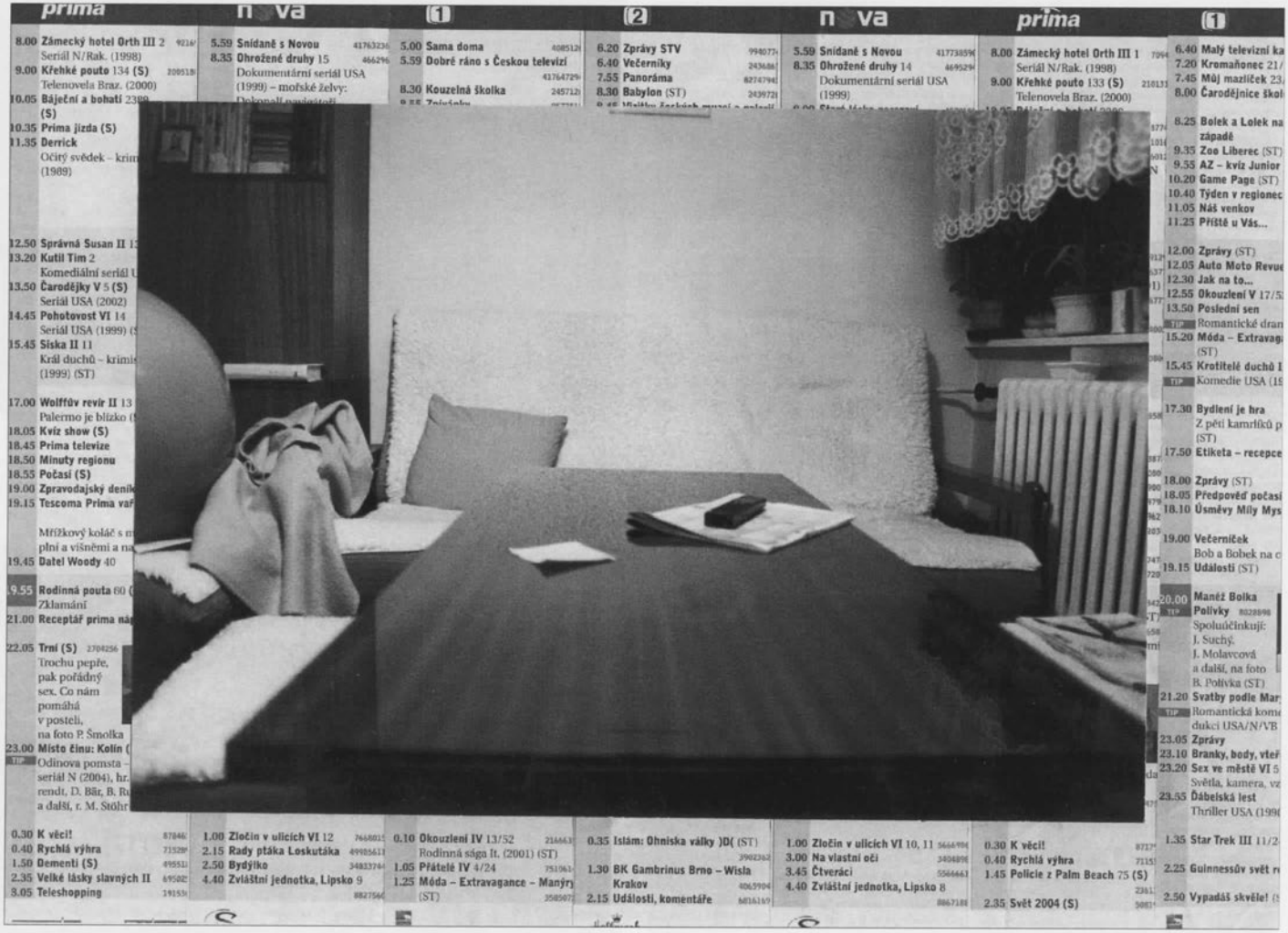
Below: The Room

Overleaf: Sequence -
My Parents watching television

All images copyright Lenka Sedlackova



Lenka Sedlackova: My Parents watching Television



Lenka Sedlackova: My Parents watching Television

Once upon a time Stewart Shaw wrote:

"The streets of Glasgow are often like a theatrical event and I would like to thank the many passers-by who have been allocated walk-on parts in my photographs".

Stewart is an adopted Glaswegian who often returns to his native Dundee where, once upon a time he found himself in war torn Berlin. War torn Berlin? Read on . . . . .

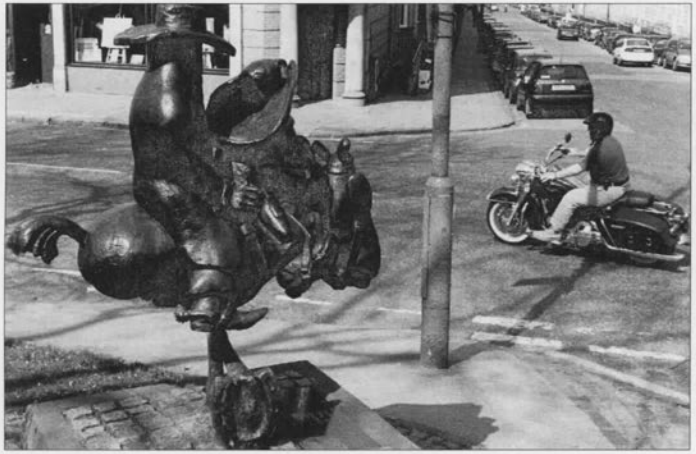
War Correspondent

Slowly and carefully we edged our way down the bombed-out Rixdorfer Strasse, stepping carefully over the rubble spilled out onto the road. The bright spring sunshine lit the eerily silent scene; we were completely alone amongst the abandoned buildings and vehicles of war-torn Berlin. The scene was all the more remarkable because the year was 1988, and we were in Dundee - we were on a film set. The BBC were making a dramatization of Christabel Bielenberg's wartime biography, "The past is Myself" (adapted by Dennis Potter).

After the collapse of the jute industry in the city, the large Cox's mill complex in Lochee was lying empty and abandoned and its internal streets and buildings were skilfully transformed into wartime Berlin by the set builders. My parents lived nearby, and on a weekend visit we had to go and have a look at what was going on. On a March Sunday morning the sets lay empty and unguarded (OK - we climbed through a hole in a fence) and we were free to wander about unhindered. The site has once again been transformed, this time more permanently into housing, shops and leisure buildings, but I will always remember the nearest thing to time travel I have experienced.

Stewart Shaw

Stewart Shaw 1988



Clockwise from top right: Caged Perdestrians; George Square; The Indecisive Moment; Statue of "Lobey Dosser"

Stewart Shaw 2006

Portfolio Sessions

Portfolio sessions are held several times a year in each of a number of centres but apart from the one in the North they have not yet acquired lives of their own. Try to come along to a session at a centre near you.

North: Eileen Fitzpatrick eileen@woodheadcom.org

Edinburgh: Douglas May 0131 447 1410 and Alicia Bruce aliciamonkey79@hotmail.com and Madeleine Shepherd madeleine@tapirland.co.uk

Glasgow: Carl Radford carl@scottishmonochrome.co.uk

Fife: Donald Stewart donaldtstewart@aol.com **Next session in Crawford Arts Centre St. Andrews 2pm Sunday, 23rd April.**

Birnam: Watch this space for an event in early summer.

Exhibitions (*Always check details with venues)*

Douglas McBride has an exhibition of his superb theatrical photography in the Howard Bar of the Lyceum Theatre (Grinlay Street Edinburgh) during the run of **Faust** in March and April. See more of Douglas's work at at www.douglasmcbride.com and www.douglasmcbridephotographer.co.uk

David Julian Leonard is a protege of William Eggleston. A show of his colour photography, including images from Hurrican Katrina, is at Amber Roome in Edinburgh's genteel new town until April 6th

BLACK & WHITE @ The WHITE Gallery 30 South Tay Street Dundee. Saturday April 1st to Saturday 29th April Monday to Friday 10.00am till 1pm. Including members Ian King, Martin Reekie, Donald Stewart and Colin Wishart.

Face A Faces Contemporary portraits/self portraits. City Art Centre Market Street Edinburgh. Free. Till April 23rd. Free.

Northern Light 'Contemporary Scottish Photography' including Calum Colvin and Joseph McKenzie. L'Institut Francais Randolph Crescent Edinburgh. Until 29th April. Free

Human/Nature Thomas Joshua Cooper, Patricia Macdonald, Sebastian Salgado at GOMA Glasgow till April 30th. Free

John H Rhodes **Beyond the Obvious** Photographs from the Scottish Highlands at The Dissenters' Gallery, Kensal Green Cemetery, London from Saturday June 3 until Sunday June 25,

The **Inversnaid Weekend** booked up quickly this year. The *New Generation* complimentary place has been given to Alicia Bruce who is in her final year at Napier University. We are grateful to Inversnaid for once again generously funding our student place. Courses at Inversnaid run throughout the year. Contact: www.inversnaid photo.com and (01899) 386254

Island of Rum A residential weekend led by George Logan will run from Friday 1st - Monday 4th September. There are 12 places, self catering with Bistro meal on the last night. Rum is a wonderful island and the castle is quite magical, opening lots of possibilities for photography and a brilliant place to meet and discuss the medium. Specially designed for *Scottish Photographers* - especially if you find regular workshop locations beyond reach. Contact George Logan, 01250 883211 george@scottish-photography.co.uk for further information and to book a place. Already filling up.

Fiona Porteus: Littoral Images

Several members have had exhibitions recently. Fiona Porteous was at the Smith Institute in Stirling with **Littoral Images**, an extensive and moving exhibition celebrating the sea shore in a personal way and made in Canada and Scotland. Fiona seeks other venues. **Not Looking but Noticing** was the title of an exhibition of new photographs by Keith Ingham, at Stirling University. Robin Gillanders showed **The Philosopher's Garden** in Edinburgh and Roddy Simpson, Simon Crofts, David Buchanan, Aase and Peter Goldsmith all had shows. Alastair Cochrane from Avoch (both whose name and town we got wrong last time - sorry!) points out that, contrary to advertising in Artwork, his exhibition in Fortrose Library has long since been taken down!

A **directory of exhibition spaces in Scotland** which are sympathetic to photography is being compiled. Contact Sandy Sharp with details of galleries and other spaces you can recommend. If you have an exhibition let us know in time so that it can be advertised in the web site, Notes and SPEM.

Comment: Time to Extract the Digit(al)?

Sandy Sharp

Some obvious things first. Digital photography is a perfectly logical and respectable successor to conventional photography, it has revolutionised press and commercial practice and has further democratised lens based image making by freeing users of the need to learn often arcane processing skills. Digital photography is here to stay!

Antipathy is fading. Reluctance to embrace 'digital' (and even resentment) has been for many reasons. For many workers the process of making prints using laboriously acquired skills has always given them as much pleasure as the aesthetic value of their images. Perhaps these laddies (usually laddies) cannot see the trees for the wood but for them the print is always the thing. Of course making a 'fine print' is a perfectly valid, though rather limited, way of engaging in photography and it is perfectly understandable that workers should be upset with its relegation. For others the tyranny of the computer is the drawback. Whether a PC or a cuddly Mac, a computer is, literally, a pain in the neck for many of us. A mysterious, incomprehensible, and demanding master. And connecting a flash card to a USB port can never have any of the magic of pouring Rodinal into a developing tank!

The question is whether the new digital medium is making any difference to the aesthetic practice of lens based image making. So far the answer is that apart from convenience it has made not made very much difference. Aesthetically there is hardly any change. A print is a print is a print. For most workers an ink-jet printer is nothing more than a lazy way of making prints. In a recent exhibition in the *Glasgow Royal Concert Hall* there appeared row upon row of window mounted prints in identical frames, almost every one being an ink jet print on A3 paper. Apart from the fact that they had taken less time and effort to produce there was hardly any change from images that were seen in such exhibitions years ago. Although digital has made life easier for workers it is hardly being exploited at all in any creative way. Of course there is outrageous fun to be had in special effect filters - but (sadly) these have little more artistic value than the flocks of china ducks which once flew across floral wallpaper on sitting room walls. Or might these tacky filter techniques perhaps become the new aesthetic!

In its early days photographers spent much of their time imitating painters. Prints were often fuzzy, posed, presented in elaborate mounts and passed off as 'art'. It was possibly Edward Weston who declared that photographs ought to look like - photographs! Photographs, Weston declared, should be sharp, untoned and unmanipulated. And they might be images of the most commonplace and everyday scenes and objects. This dictum, together with the reverence for printing propogated by Ansel Adams, largely held sway for the rest of the twentieth century. The digital revolution ought to be, once again, raising aesthetic questions regarding the medium. But just as early photographers found themselves making photographs that looked like paintings we now find digital-imagers striving to make digital images that look like - photographs! Making digital prints with any evidence of digital printing is deemed to be a crime. In next to no time manufacturers have produced printers and papers and inks that can produce imitation sepia toned images, ersatz split selenium tones and quasi infra-red creations. A multi billion pound industry which has made conventional photography all but obsolete is now producing materials which aim to pretend that it still exists! In a recent magazine article you might have learned how to transform an image from your £3000 Digital *Nikon* and make it look as if it had been taken with a £5 throw away (film) camera from Tesco. Cyanotype lookalikes can be made that have never been near ferricyanide and soon there may be software to produce prints with built in camera shake, dust marks and fake fixer stains. Photography is dead - long live photography!

Tuba Player Sandy Sharp

Galleries such as *Glasgow Print Studio* and *Peacock* have always been a source of hugely imaginative images and printing techniques. Perhaps it is to workers in these media that photographers should look to find out if digital imaging is to be more than simply a convenience-medium. Meanwhile there must be someone out there who is using digital imaging to do more than simply imitate its predecessor. Mastering a new medium and technique, learning its limitations, accepting these limitations and transcending them is the challenge. It has happened before in Hockney's (underestimated) inventions, Mari Mahr's constructed photographs and the inspired paper cuts of Matisse. Submissions and responses to *Notes* please.

The writer confesses that he has yet to buy his first digital camera and uses the lazy way of making colour prints - with an Epson printer. Like the Duke of Plazo-Toro he prefers to lead his regiment from behind - but in the hope of stirring things up!

Scottish Photographers 2005
Life Member Thomas Joshua Cooper

Anke Addy Aboyne Chris Adie North Berwick Alan Aitchison Lochwinnoch John Alexander Broughty Ferry Allan Allison Glasgow Denis Alyshev Glasgow Jane Angel Alloa Roland Ashcroft Longforgan Geoff Banks Aberdeen Ian Biggar Dumfries Andy Biggs Stoke on Trent Richard Bigham Bonnyrigg Alan Borthwick Perth Sheila Borthwick Perth Alan Bovill Edinburgh Frank Bradford South Ronaldsay Keith Brame Edinburgh Katie Brooke Edinburgh Alicia Bruce Edinburgh David Bruce Helensburgh David Buchanan Edinburgh Ronald Burns Upton Robert Burns Glasgow Gordon Cairns Glasgow Lord Caplan Edinburgh Richard Carrey London Colin Cavers Lauder Cynthia Chen Edinburgh Al Clark Abernethy Alastair Cochrane Avoch Bob Collins Glasgow Joel Conn Glasgow Scott Cook Dunfermline Anne Crabbe Chesham Gordon Croft Lower Largo Simon Crofts Haddington Caroline Dear Portree Margaret Diamond Glasgow Alan Dimmick Glasgow Stan Dodd Chelmsford William Doig Glasgow Catherine Drain Kilsyth Bill Ellis Warrington Ian Fairgrieve Inverness Roger Farnham Glasgow Stan Farrow Gauldry Jane Fenton Edinburgh William Fisher Glasgow Eileen Fitzpatrick Kinloss Sam Gardener Staffin Tony Gardner Aberfeldy Robin Gillanders Edinburgh Aase Goldsmith Largoward Peter Goldsmith Largoward Andre Goulaincourt Inversnaid Suzy Gray Kilmuir Peter Hallam Morton Gordon Harrison Achnasheen Janet Healy Cumbernauld Joyce Henry Giffnock Nick Holmes Mull Keith Ingham Glasgow Colin Jago Glenelg Eric Judlin Glasgow Virginia Khuri London Ian King Inversnaid Alina Kisina Edinburgh Peter Koch-Osborne Penrith Rosemary Koch-Osborne Penrith Peter LaneForrest Town Thomas Law Bearsden Nikki Leadbetter Menstrie Michael Lee York Gordon Lemant Falkirk Gordon Lennox Cumbernauld Suzie Long Edinburgh George Logan Cargill Patricia Macdonald Mussleburgh Douglas Mackie Edinburgh Gwen Mackie Edinburgh Douglas McBride Edinburgh Graeme Magee Edinburgh Frances McCourt Irvine Sarah Mackay Glasgow Peter McCulloch Glasgow Bryony McIntyre Edinburgh Ray McKenzie Milton of Campsie Iain McLean Glasgow Jim Mailer Cupar Graham Marsden Nairn Don Marsh Glasgow Fergus Mather Wick Stephen Mather Glasgow Douglas May Edinburgh Clare Maynard Guardbridge Ian Melville Glasgow Michael Mercer Dalgety Bay Tony Middleton Cannock Carole Miller Livingston Robin Miller Drumnadrochit Bill Millett Rutherglen David Mitchell Dunfermline Bob Moore Avoch Chris Morris Bishops Waltham Roy Myers East Linton David Ogden Balmullo Caroline Parkinson Edinburgh Alan Paterson Glasgow Peacock Visual Arts Aberdeen Michael Peterson Lerwick Fiona Porteous Alva James Stuart Porter Edinburgh Stephen Pounder Dundee Keith Price Sutherland Carl Radford Blantyre Hazel Raee Portree Bruce Rattray Camberley Eric Rhodes Coatbridge John Rhodes Lairg Jonathan Robertson Cupar Roy Robertson Newport on Tay Mairi Robertson London Richard Sadler Derby Beth Sandison Edinburgh Lenka Sedlackova Brno Czech Republic Stewart Shaw Glasgow Sandy Sharp Motherwell Madelaine Shepherd Edinburgh Matt Sillars Dingwall Roddy Simpson Linlithgow Gavin Smith Edinburgh Craig Snedden Glenrothes Philip Spain Glasgow Jill Staples Bolney Shelagh Steele West Calder Alex Stephen Prestwick Donald Stewart Kinross Stills Gallery Edinburgh Stefan Syrowatka Aberdeen David Third Keith Anne Thomson Forres Michael Thomson Hamilton Elisabet Thorin Linlithgow Ian Trushell Kilbarchan Tom Urie Motherwell Hugh Walker Glasgow Robert Walker Kinross Stuart Walker Kemnay David Wallace Perth Vanessa Wenweiser Glasgow Colin Wishart Pittenweem Veronika Woodroffe Victoria BC Canada Paul Wotton Killearn Sandy Wotton Killearn Russ Young Tetzooco Sante Fe USA

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