

● Scottish
● Photographers

George Logan: Eagle Eye



Notes Summer 2006



Fiona Porteous.

'... swirling kelp, vibrant and bouncy.'

From her recent exhibition *Littoral Images*.

4 **TONY GARDNER** has journeyed from the South of England to Aberfeldy and from growing vegetables for supermarkets to making his high key award winning folio: *Ceramic Manifestations*.



6 **MATT SILLARS** is a northern iconoclast with a hands on approach to weddings.



7 **SUSAN BAKER** *The Path of the Clyde* presented Susan with a journey with a purpose. A graduate of GSA, she printed her show in *Street Level* and now works free lance. Susan is our *New Generation* representative in the Summer Notes.

12 **HUGH WALKER** If there be music in Hugh's images that will be because his father was a composer and his grandfather was Elgar's banker. He journeyed to Mexico to be a photojournalist in the countryside. Disappointed, he returned to the city and discovered colour. No music perhaps, but colour in spades.



15 **ICONS OF SCOTTISH PHOTOGRAPHY** Joseph McKenzie created one of the most exceptional bodies of work by any Scottish photographer. Our ICON is one of the images made in Dundee in the sixties.

16 **COLIN JAGO** is a blog writer who lives in Glenelg. He responded to the suggestion in the Spring Notes that digital has changed nothing.

17 **AWARDS** Gillanders, Gillanders and Neville. Three enterprising photographers whose exploits go far beyond merely exhibiting . . .

18 **PETER GOLDSMITH** is a regular contributor to Notes. He reflects on the beloved *Corridor Gallery* where a goodly number of Scottish photographers cut their teeth and wonders if *Scottish Photographers* might learn a thing or two from its philosophy.



20 **STEWART SHAW** is a regular reviewer. He recently returned from London with a copy of *Refractions*, Ralph Gibson's new book. Read this and give your photography a shot in the arm.

22 **NEWS AND EVENTS** Large numbers of *Scottish Photographers* have been exhibiting. There are big names at the Edinburgh Festival - but are these the exhibitions that we really want to see?

'The qualities that are essential for a great photographer are: an insatiable curiosity about the world and a precise sense of form'.

Brassai - writing of Kertesz

WELCOME TO THE Summer Notes. An 'insatiable curiosity about the world' might suggest a desire to travel and there is a travel theme in this edition though it was not planned. Susan Baker and Hugh Walker can literally claim to have made journeys even if those of others are more metaphorical. Whether, in the days of mass travel, it really is still better to journey in hope than to arrive is debatable, but we all go on doing it.

The travels of Robin Gillanders are quite a different thing and the Scottish photographic community waits with bated breath to see what his five month, Edwin Muir inspired, photographic tour of Scotland will bring. Knowing Robin's work it is an exciting prospect. With honourable exceptions there is a dearth of contemporary Scottish landscape photography. The postcard industry is well served by Baxter, Prior and others but when it comes to books what is to be found is the same writ larger and glossier. Painting enthusiasts must make do with blue-and-yellow-paint-by-numbers pictures by the self styled JoLoMo and his imitators. Perhaps too many visual artists have lost their nerve and retreated to commercial galleries, art schools and private little groups. But there is no need to journey far. Kertesz made a whole book from his New York flat. Be curious!

Sandy Sharp

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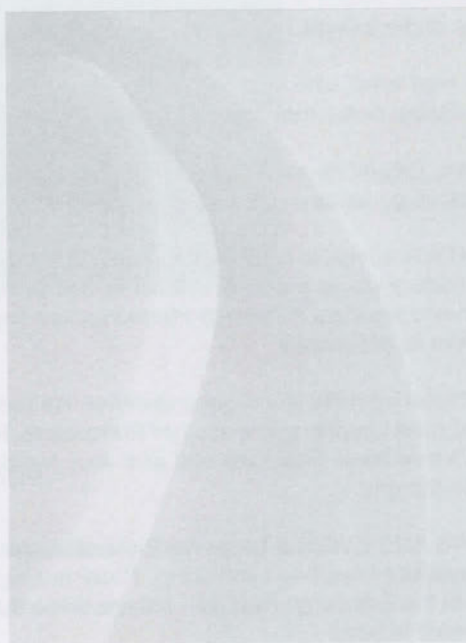
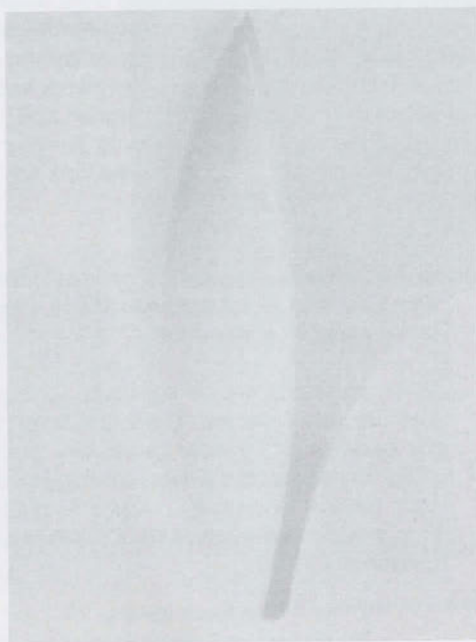
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Health Warning:

This product should contain traces of nuts. Enjoy!

My first flower pictures were tulips graduating to arum lilies. Over a period of two years I started collecting negatives with a view to presenting an RPS Fellowship panel, eventually deciding to make close up semi abstract compositions. I felt it needed something else to stop it becoming boring and when I came upon the work of Alison Watt I consequently made fabric pictures, about 6 of the images. My ceramic pictures came about after looking at the handle of a teapot and moving on from that to exploring the curves of other pieces. Last year I entered a competition in Black and White Photography and was fortunate in gaining awards in all sections and winning the still life. Presently I am looking at rectangles and straight lines. What next? I don't know. It hasn't bitten me yet.

Tony Gardner







I was at a wedding recently and discovered a theme of 'hands'

A bit weddingy, but fun. Mildly amusing.

Not really like me at all!

Matt Sillars



"FOLLOW THE CLYDE from its source to where it flows into the Clyde estuary near Bowling". This was the artists' brief presented to Susan Baker in the cold month of October 2005.

Armed with a couple of books written about the path of the Clyde Susan began her journey. There was some dispute about the exact source of the Clyde. "After Elvanfoot, near Little Clyde Farm" Susan read, "the Clyde at first is easy to follow but then the river narrows and splits, it can finally be traced to a place where it bubbles freely from the ground." This was the general description in the book *The Clyde River and Firth* by Neil Munro, [of Para Handy fame] which was published in 1907. The more recent consensus is that the Clyde can be traced to the Daer Reservoir. The reservoir was built where the Clyde had 'bubbled from the hill', as described in Neil Munro's book.

A Polaroid pinhole photograph of the Clyde, as it runs from the reservoir, marks the beginning of the photographic series. The long exposure time required with the pinhole camera accounts for the glass like quality of the river. The river then snakes peacefully through the countryside of Crawford, Thankerton and Lamington; the placidity of this journey is reflected in the photographs, as is the season, crisp snow covers fields and frost attaches itself to the grasses along the banks.

The Clyde then races on over the Falls of Clyde, cascading down 'Corra Linn'. The river then broadens and once again adopts a more tranquil pace as it bypasses Motherwell. The pictures of the river as it flows through Glasgow's city centre are a far cry from the past images of a once industrial Clyde. The cranes are there to facilitate the Clyde's current industry of building modern appartments and office buildings. The Clyde is used as a visionary tool by architects; light off the river is reflected from the mirrored buildings, bringing a new beauty to Glasgow's city centre.

The journey ends with rather rustic images as the river enters the estuary near Dumbarton Rock, leaving the modern city centre behind. The small broken bridge at the 'source' is also a distant memory as the Erskine Bridge is viewed from Bowling stretching mightily across the Clyde.

A BIT ABOUT the process. I print black and white photographic images on to traditional 'silver gelatin' paper, the images are normally processed through the usual means until I reach the wash stage. This is when the painter mark-maker begins to override the process. The chemical potassium ferricyanide, normally used with ferric ammonium citrate to make up a working cyanotype solution, is added to

the printing process. The potassium ferricyanide is added to the print in a variety of different ways depending on the desired effect I wish to achieve. The chemical strips away at the image, as hair bleach strips away at a darker hair colour, the bleaching process goes through several tones of brown/orange and reds before a bleached white is achieved, the same applies with potassium ferricyanide.

I manipulate this range of colour changes and possible marks, to help achieve a more finished image, an image that re-creates the mood or feel of the place or simply to echo external conditions, that may not be represented or even exist in the original image. Often I am not in control of the final result, the process can be very unpredictable. After years of experimenting I have gained a small amount of control, this control is based on the means of applying the chemical, the temperature of the water and how the water is used.

The potassium ferricyanide is mixed with water before application, the hotter the water the more reds & browns can be produced. When the water is hot it also works faster sometimes too fast often totally reducing the image. When more control is required a colder water solution is used; the solution is often sponged onto the image or applied by a trigger spray container. This part of the process always takes place once the original image has been fixed and washed; the chemical is applied when the image is still wet. For a more dramatic effect the chemical can be applied to a dry image, this can result in a more unnatural look to the print. A hose or tray of clean water is always at hand to stop the process when the desired result has been created.

Alternatively no water is mixed with the 'Potassium Ferricyanide', the crystals are placed directly onto the surface of the damp image, the crystals begin to soak up liquid from the surface, directly effecting the image often creating interesting marks. I then manipulate this image further by hosing hot water onto the crystals spreading them quickly across the surface often with beautiful results and often resulting in a ruined image.

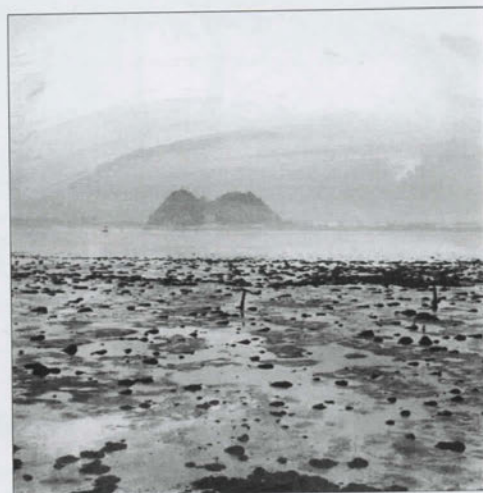
That's the fun of the process, not being in full control and the anticipation of what's going to happen this time. Even after years of experimenting I still find I'm in awe of some of the marks and colours produced and on occasion find myself jumping with joy when the marks that appear enhance, complement and make a picture.

Susan Baker

You can contact Susan Baker at
susiedragon@hotmail.com.



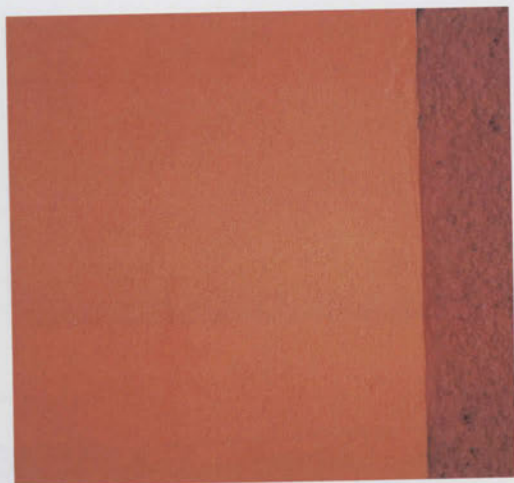




Page 8 Daer Water; Page 9 Lamington Tower: Above, clockwise from top left: Birds, Motherwell; Bothwell Castle; Dumbarton Rock; River Kelvin Glasgow Opposite: Erskine Bridge



MEXICO



On reflection, the thing about the Mexican trip was . . . something to do with travelling and seeing. We saw plenty, but not what I was looking for. What I found in the back streets was deeply satisfying because it was like the endpoint of another internal journey, something towards which I had been feeling my way in many previous images.

Hugh Walker



IN 2004 I travelled through Mexico with the luxury of 3 grown up children acting as occasional porters. So a chunky Pentax 67 and 35mm with various lenses, attachments and tripod were no problem. What were unforeseen however were the official constraints on using such gear at the major and some more remote archaeological sites which I thought I was going to photograph. Subsequently back in Mexico City with many rolls of unexposed Velvia 50, one was free to wander through the streets but with different risks and very different subject matter. The juxtaposition of poverty and wealth in the city initially suggested a documentary realist approach. But it felt wrong to photograph young mothers and children begging, even more so than I usually find anyway with people, and I wasn't looking for that kind of literalism.

We had seen amazing richness in artefacts and costumes on our travels, but in those back streets there was unplanned pattern, shape and colour. Shadows cast by strong overhead sun often added another element. What struck me was the

abstraction all around. Not vegetal or human, but walls, plumbing and wiring - the everyday of an urban environment. I had already made some studies of weathered surfaces and degraded industrial structures, but here were painted flat surfaces, some freshly so, others needing renewal. They were like textured canvases, often broken up and shaped by line. I did wonder why I was so intrigued by them and what the point might be of photographing flat walls.

In retrospect I see relationships with modernist painters that have appealed, Mondrian, later Americans like Yves Klein, Barnett Newman and Rothko, and contemporary figures such as Sean Scully and Callum Innes. And the experience had led me to try painting itself at a challenging but stimulating and supportive Saturday morning class. What I discovered there was that I couldn't replicate or paint those photographic images, that there are new processes and ways of seeing to engage in, and a good few inhibitions to overcome.

Hugh Walker



Joseph McKenzie

A WINDOW ON THE HAWKHILL

From "Women of Dundee", *Dundee - City in Transition* 1964/66

Reproduced with tacit permission of Joseph McKenzie.

This is an extract of a longer article on my blog (www.auspiciousdragon.net/photostream/recent.html) which was written in response to Time to Extract the Digital by Sandy Sharp in the Spring Notes.

The author observed that inkjet prints at a recent exhibition 'were hardly any different from images that were seen in such exhibitions years ago' and wondered why digital was not having more of an impact on photo aesthetics. I had two reactions to this. Firstly, why would a change in technology alter the aesthetic practices of artists (after all, there was little that silver could be not made to do given time and patience); and secondly, I thought that maybe it had, but wall based exhibitions would not be where I looked.

I think that I'm seeing two changes. Firstly I think that people using digital are less accepting of the foibles of their media. Photographs are expected to be grain free, smooth toned perfections. Pictures taken on fast colour film now look plain old fashioned. The second change that I think I'm seeing is a greater experimentation with colour. Things that were difficult with silver such as a partial desaturation, or a mixing of monochrome and colour in the same image, are now easy. People are using these techniques effectively. Slightly less new, but definitely a trend encouraged by digital, is the photo style where colour photographs are over-saturated and given a very high contrast. There is no pretence that these photos are realistic, even if they have content matter associated with documentary photography.

I do not go to many exhibitions of the sort that the author was discussing, but I can imagine that these new digital images do not feature very highly. This will be partly because print technology is not keeping pace. The subtlety that can be achieved on screen makes big demands on inkjet printers with their more limited colour gamut. Mixed colour and monochrome images are particularly difficult on paper. The main reason though, I would argue, is that the people experimenting fastest and most effectively with digital are not seeing the gallery hall as the destination for their work. They are online. I know of one photoblog which receives 4000 visitors a day where the artist doesn't print all his work. To see the new digital aesthetic evolve I think you need to be looking at photoblogs.

Colin Jago

www.scottish-photographers.com

At times the web site experiences a frustrating lack of submissions. Although web sites are hardly novelties any more there is still a reluctance among photographers to go on-line. Colin Jago here makes a persuasive case for galleries going on-line and elsewhere Peter Goldsmith goes so far as to suggest that our web gallery might be a reincarnation of the *Corridor Gallery*. You can submit news or a small folio of prints on a theme with text. SPEM too needs a flow of information. Submissions to the web site on a CD with good sized files (around 5Mb).

The *Scottish Photographers* web site is run by George Logan who has set up many sites and can undertake commissions for web site designs. You can contact him at george@scottish-photography.co.uk.

HOLIDAY SNAPS

Summer time. Time for holidays and for holiday snaps. When did you last look at holiday snaps? Remember the mind numbing sensation of viewing a hundred (two hundred?) forgettable enprints from your neighbour's holiday in Florida (Spain?). And do you still have old family photograph albums, perhaps black and white photographs, maybe taken with a Box Brownie? Fast forward now to the present day. Your neighbours have been on holiday in Florida (Spain?). You wonder if they have holiday snaps (will you never learn!). Neighbour returns with a mobile phone or a digital camera and presents you with a slide show. You peer at a miniscule screen and view a hundred (two hundred?) forgettable images, or you may be asked to gather round their TV or computer (amazing what a zoom tool can do) and be prepared to be amazed, and you probably will be.

Less than half of all photographs 'taken' are now printed. If the traditional family album is doomed what will be left for posterity, a CD, a flash card? No more hotels with 'our room' marked with a cross. No more cryptic notes, *David at 8 months April 1943*. No more delicious leather bound albums for SSHoP members to pull on cotton gloves and study. It is called evolution.

Enjoy the summer - and why not drop into Asda and make some prints?

Sandy Sharp

David Gillanders

has won the Unicef Photo of the year award with his picture of Yana, 13, a street child in the Ukraine which featured in the *Notes* last year. David received his award



David Gillanders

Yana

at a ceremony in Berlin. Some 87 of the world's best photographers submitted 894 pictures. Sadly it is reported that Yana, who was addicted to drugs and infected with the HIV virus, died shortly after this photograph was taken. David is currently working on a project on knife culture in Glasgow.

"I've been picked as one of 12 photographers from around the world to take part in this years Joop Swart World Press Photo Masterclass in the Fotografiemuseum in Amsterdam [4 - 9 November], and am actually going to use my knife crime work as my project for this. They gave us the theme of "risk" and it fits the bill so well. I've taken a full time sabbatical from paid work to concentrate on it and it's coming together.

I also had a great assignment earlier this year to Malawi, you can see some galleries of this work on my new website, nearing completion." www.davidgillanders.co.uk



Mark Neville Port Glasgow

Last year **Mark Neville** raised £100,000 from the lottery and the SAC to photograph in Port Glasgow. The brief was to produce eight thousand coffee table books which he gave away, one to each household in the town.

The books were then delivered by members of the local boys' football team. There will be an exhibition of images from the project in the *Dick Institute* in Kilmarnock from 26 August until 21 October followed by a showing in Oxford. Yes, Oxford! The show is supported by *Street Level*. A report of *Port Glasgow* can be read in the current edition of *Source* magazine. Published in Belfast, it is one of the very few photography magazines that attempts to present serious critiques of the medium.

Robin Gillanders has set off on a five month photographic tour of the Scottish Highlands and Orkney.

"This is intended to be a major body of work involving approximately 4 months continuous photography. In 1934/5 the Scottish writer and poet Edwin Muir travelled throughout Scotland, resulting in his book 'Scottish Journey', published in 1935, and described by Professor T. C. Smout in his introduction to the 1979 edition as having 'the clarity and impact of a brilliant photograph'.

I intend to retrace Muir's footsteps in the Scottish highlands and Orkney to produce an extended body of photographic work, with text, as a 'snapshot' of Scotland in 2006. To quote Muir: 'my intention in beginning it was to give my impression of contemporary Scotland; not the romantic Scotland of the past nor the Scotland of the tourist, but the Scotland which presents itself to one who is not looking for anything in particular, and is willing to believe what his eyes and ears tell him . . . basically I've bought a campervan and converted the shower into a darkroom for loading sheet film and processing. I have a scanner with me and a laptop, so I can review work in situ. So far so good, but my output is slow..."

In case Robin's landscape technique is rusty we are sending him a postcard (below) to remind him of how the Scottish Highlands ought to be portrayed.



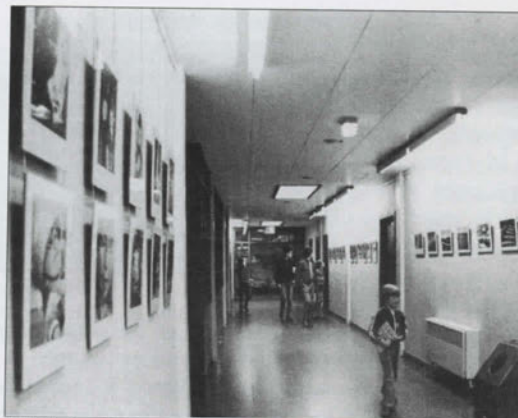
Postcard: Woolworths Oban c1999 Original in (glorious) Technicolor

Peter Goldsmith reflects on the Corridor Gallery

In 1985 Peter Goldsmith wrote the following foreword (edited) to the catalogue of an exhibition celebrating the 100th show at the Corridor Gallery. Many of our members will have fond memories of the gallery.

"When non-commercial artist-organised galleries start, there usually seem to be many all-night/smoke/beer-laden discussions when committee enthusiasts thrash out their ideas and finally issue a manifesto and open the gallery to uproar from the critics. Ah well, the Corridor Gallery wasn't quite like that. It was just that a few local enthusiasts got fed up with waiting for Glenrothes' long-promised Art Centre to get off the ground so that they could show their work. As the Camera Club had previously shown an exhibition of Danish photography at the Fife Institute they approached Mr. Penman [the Principal] about using the Library walls. He suggested using the corridor instead, roped in Arts in Fife to help out, and there we were, "SPORT FOR ALL" on the walls! Nobody pinched the pictures or broke the glass, and the general reaction seemed favourable. So month by month it continued - at first the work of local photographers but gradually the horizons expanded.

After a second year the first article about the gallery appeared in a photographic magazine, and it now features regularly in Gallery Notices in most leading photographic journals. The manifesto, such as it is, developed over the years. Photography is almost unique amongst the arts in that the majority of people own a camera and are familiar with photographs in magazines - photographs of a high standard. As an art form it does not have a barrier of mystique that some of the other arts have. Placed in a public area it reaches the audience directly and without the other barrier of the museum brass door. Over the years we seem to have built up a sophisticated audience for photography. Documentary and landscape were obvious starting points because of their relationship with work with which everyone is familiar from magazines. Now, even very unfamiliar work such as that by Odd Moe or Pradip Malde is given a serious viewing whilst romantic pictorialism gets short-shrift from the younger generation. One aspect which we had not anticipated is the role in Scottish photography as a whole. The Corridor Gallery is still the only place regularly showing work from contemporary Scottish photographers, particularly those seeking a first one-man exhibition. Demands are overwhelming, with some 30 or so photographers already lined up for the future. With requests for exhibitions coming from as far apart as Shetland and Kent there is a major need for other such spaces to be established, both to enable the better shows to be toured and also to cater for this widely popular art form."



Val Bissland: The Corridor Gallery

That was written in 1985. It is now 2006 and Peter reflects . . .

THE CORRIDOR GALLERY continued for another four years, and eventually showed over 150 exhibitions. The Goldsmiths move to Perth, followed by redundancy, and the Arts Council's conditions for increased funding, meant its closure in 1989. The Lochgelly Centre continues with a 'Corridor Gallery' but, although the Director strongly supports photography, it also caters for most other types of visual art. Sadly, there was little follow-up elsewhere, and today the opportunity for photographers to show their work is extremely limited. Photography having been subsumed into the other visual arts, by the Scottish Arts Council, means that there is in reality no support for the broad church of Photographic Art, only those areas deemed "cutting edge" or where photography is "used" by other artists, often inappropriately, is there any chance of showing in a major gallery.

The problem with Scottish photography, which certainly did, and probably still has, a distinctive character, is that Scots are reluctant to promote themselves. One would have hoped that, by now, photographers in Scotland would have realised the need to make themselves and their work known. The disappointing number of submissions to the Gallery of our Web Site suggests this is still the case, it had been hoped that the web-site Gallery could be an on-line successor to the Corridor Gallery. IF YOU WANT THINGS TO HAPPEN, YOU HAVE TO DO IT YOURSELF - NOT LEAVE IT TO OTHERS !

Peter Goldsmith



PEACEFUL PROTEST: Police officers band together to carry the Rev Angus Smith away from the demonstrations against the introduction in 1965 of a Sunday service from the Outer Hebrides to Skye. Ultimately the protests were successful. Picture: Harry Moyes Reproduced by kind permission of the Herald.

THERE MAY BE many ways of appraising photographs but it can be useful to reduce them to just two types. For example good and boring. The test is that if a picture is not boring then it is good. Quite simple.

It is not always true to say that a boring picture is not good because everyone has a different idea of what good means. Once in a Moroccan campsite, an American confided that he was "going to have to redefine good and bad". A good photograph used to be one which followed the zone system. But that was a different kind of good, *technically* good, not *really* good. A picture which is not boring can be good regardless of technical or even aesthetic merits.

Take, for example, the Rev. Angus Smith. The photograph of the Rev. Smith is not boring. It is a good photograph. It was taken with some camera or other using some film or other which was developed in a

press tank and developed in some developer or other. None of that matters, the picture is the thing and it is not a boring picture.

Almost certainly the Rev. Angus Smith (did his friends call him Gus?) had had his picture taken before, probably when he was a baby or when he was at school. But this one is a bit unusual for here he is being carried away by, of all people, police officers. Nevertheless he manages to look at the camera (for that is what you do) even though he doesn't quite manage a smile. One fine day he took it upon himself to protest about the Sunday ferries and the next thing he was being removed by four (count the feet, legs, shoulders) policemen. He must have been determined not to move for it has taken four of them. His gaunt face and rather thin legs, unaccustomed to the fresh air, showing a flash of white flesh above the wrinkled socks, suggest that this is not the stuffiest of ministers. Yet there is a dignity about it all. He has managed to keep on his hat and shoes and does manage that dutiful look towards the camera.

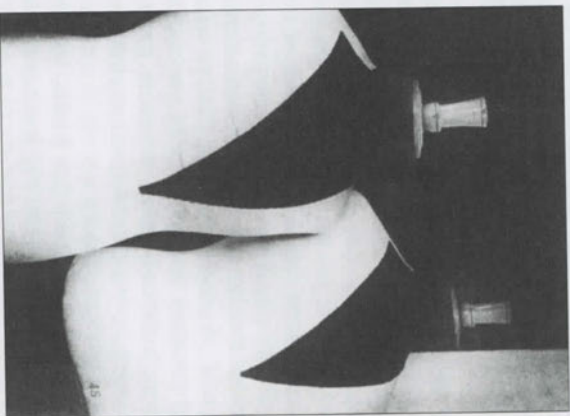
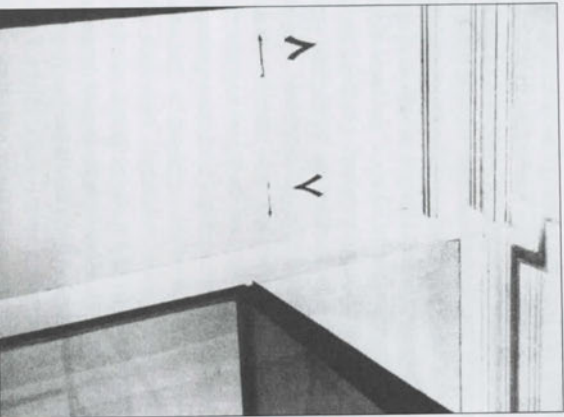
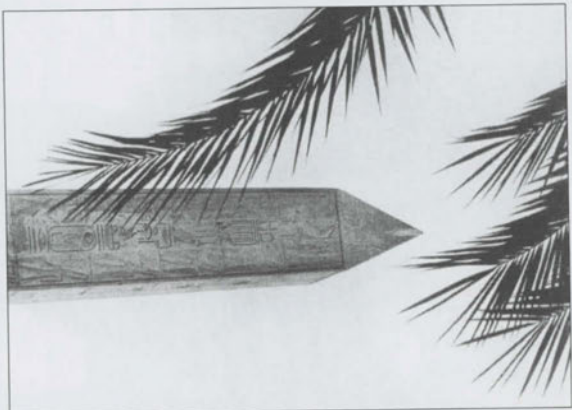
The composition is hardly classical. In fact, compared with any Cartier-Bresson image you might name it is all a bit of a shambles. But the eye goes straight to the minister's face and hat which makes a little pattern with the police hats. Then the eye moves to his feet and we catch a glimpse of onlookers, for there are always onlookers. A rather uninvolved man and a child who, unseen by the man, may be seeing the amusing side to the event.

Compared with images of modern protests at Faslane this 1965 one is very sedate, almost having the detachment of a wedding photograph. Modern images have a brutal degree of involvement which was impossible with older cameras and favour an over intimate perspective that has become rather predictable (boring?). It is a sign of the times that the writer too echoes the photographer's respectful standpoint. The Rev. Angus Smith was not arrested but 'carried away' by police officers who had decided to 'band together'.

The image, with missing toes and disorganisation, exhibits a little craziness which appeals to this viewer. Perhaps it shows a gentle madness. Hancock rather than Kafka. But above all, it is a good photograph because it is not boring. Now in how many other ways might a good photograph might be described?

Sandy Sharp

Ralph Gibson: Refractions



"I believe that there is more compositional tension available in a vertical format" Ralph Gibson

THE NAME OF photographer Ralph Gibson may be unfamiliar to some of our readers. Despite pursuing his craft for over forty years he has never, as far as I can tell, exhibited in the U.K. He has shown his images in galleries all round the world, including his native U.S.A., but he is best known for his published photographic monographs, a medium at which he excels for getting his work "out there." The books rely on Gibson's skill at sequencing his trademark high-contrast and mainly close-up vertical photographs with only a book title and perhaps a short epigraph to guide the viewer to their meaning. There can be many levels of meaning and connection between two of his images shown side-by-side, and between those in one of his non-verbal series; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

According to the bibliography this is his thirty-first publication though it differs from the others because, although profusely illustrated, this short volume (48 pages) is mainly concerned with expounding his philosophy and methodology - the thoughts and practical lessons of a working photographer, gained over his sixty-seven years of life. It is not however an instructional manual: "In describing my creative process I am defining what has worked for me. This should not imply that it would become the manner of working for anyone else."

With an economy of means (in the main a Leica camera, standard lens, and Tri-X film developed in Rodinal) he has worked over the years at developing a unique and characteristic vision of the world. Always striving to simplify his compositions, he describes his approach as "subtractive", first by framing to exclude that which is extraneous to the subject but also by exposing and developing his film to ensure deep black shadows (no shadow detail here!) to further delete unwanted information. The result is a unique look to his images; his own photographic "voice" which he seems to have created fairly early in his career and which he has continued to develop up to the present.

He often makes his images in countries other than his own; France and Italy seem particular favourites. No doubt the presence of strong sunlight, essential for many of his contrasty images, is useful but the culture of these countries is also important to him, "The reason I turn towards rich cultures as a place to make photographs is because the learning vector is for me an upward one. The things I want to understand are found more readily in the complexity of developed, older social fabrics." A good example of his approach to other civilisations is a set of four photographs taken in Egypt, with a recurring triangular motif echoing the "pointed shapes of the palm leaves which have inspired the forms of tools, letters and other objects of their semiology."

The thoughts expressed in *Refractions* are not completely new ones. Some of our more mature readers may be familiar with a series of theoretical books published by Gibson's own publishing company, Lustrum Press in the 1970's, including *Darkroom* (1977) and *Nude:Theory* (1979) in which he expresses some of the thoughts and opinions expressed in this latest volume. Nevertheless, this is an interesting and thought-provoking book which is nicely printed and presented, and in an age when an average monthly photographic magazine, half full of advertising, costs around four pounds it represents good value for a tenner.

For those interested in Gibson's work but unable or unwilling to buy this book, you can see more of his images on his own website at www.ralphgibson.com, and there is an interesting interview with him from 2001, originally printed in the US magazine at bermangraphics.com/press/ralphgibson.htm.

Refractions: thoughts on aesthetics and photography by Ralph Gibson, edited by Mark Davidson is published by Steidl/MEP at £9.99. ISBN 3-86521-079-1.

(*Refractions* is stocked by *Beyond Words* Edinburgh)

THE LAST FEW months saw a flurry of exhibitions by *Scottish Photographers* and their friends. No less than ten are exhibiting over the summer months. It seems unlikely that there will ever be a group exhibition by *Scottish Photographers*. As there are over a hundred and fifty members scattered about the world, this would be a challenging enterprise. But the main reason is that *Scottish Photographers* is committed to the idea of the body-of-work as the ideal exhibition model. The thought of a show of 'greatest hits' from individuals is not on our agenda and we prefer to encourage members to put on their own themed exhibitions, either individually or in small groups. It is not uncommon for visitors to exhibitions to contact us later in order to locate members with a view to purchases, commissions or further exhibitions. So do, please, for our mutual benefit, mention *Scottish Photographers* in your printed material.

Anne Crabbe showed her work at the international *Arles Festival* in July. Anne writes:

"I saw a note asking for submissions of bodies of work and sent off twenty two of my collection of *Chesham People* and it was one of the sixty accepted from 850 entries from 36 countries. My photographs were projected during the festival which ran from July 4-8th in Arles during the main *Arles Photographic Festival*."



Anne Crabbe Mr Humphrey Cobbler



Keith Ingham Shanghai

In May in Glasgow **Keith Ingham** exhibited colour street scenes which he had made in Shanghai on a spare Sunday afternoon, as you do. Keith's folio will appear (in colour) in the *December Notes*.

Robert Burns, **Alina Kisina** and **Douglas May** were invited to exhibit with the *Glasgow Group*, an organisation of artists, mainly painters, in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall during the Scottish Proms. It was interesting to see photography hung alongside paintings and it must be said that they more than held their own with the other somewhat mixed bag of artwork.

Susan Baker (page 7) exhibited in *Motherwell Heritage Centre* and *New Lanark*, **Suzy Gray** made a body of work around bus shelters in Skye which she presented in *An Tuireann Arts Centre* in Portree while **John Rhodes** and **Caroline Dear** were in London and **Peter Goldsmith**, (there had to be a Goldsmith!) had six of the best in Lochgelly.

In Glasgow **Vanessa Wenweisser** took part in a group show in the City Inn, in Dundee, **Ian King**, **Martin Reekie**, **Donald Stewart** and **Colin Wishart** were part of a Black and White (remember black and white?) exhibition and at the Lyceum in Edinburgh **Douglas McBride** had a show of his remarkable theatre work during the run of *Faust*.



Douglas McBride Faust

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL



Robert Mapplethorpe

Three blockbuster exhibitions will be held during the Festival. Pride of place goes to **Robert Mapplethorpe** whose work can impress and outrage, often both at the same time. *The Scotsman* can look forward to mailbags of letters from 'Disgusted Morningside'. Also appearing are local lads, **Albert Watson** and **Harry Benson**, two highly hyped and clever commercial photographers whose connections with the rich and famous do them no harm. Benson is still remembered with some distaste in Scotland for his inane contributions (with John Byrne and Colin Ford) to the *Scottish Photography Awards* presented by *BBC Scotland* some years ago. Meanwhile, for those who still enjoy hard core *salon* photography, *Edinburgh Photographic Society* presents its annual cornucopia of clichés old and new. There are always some splendid images on view if only the society could present something more meaningful than the same old *salon* formula.

EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Check with venues for current details and times.

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE *Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art* 29 July - 5 November. '75 photographs encompassing all his major themes - male and female nudes, portraits, children and flowers'.

ALBERT WATSON *Frozen at City Arts Centre Market Street Edinburgh* 29 July - 22 October.

HARRY BENSON *Being There: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Queen Street Edinburgh* 4th August - 7th January.

BILL MILLETT *Phoenix in H2O, LUV Gallery 1226 Govan Road, Glasgow.* 7th August - 25th August. Images in the exhibition can be seen at www.visual-osmosis.com

JOHN RHODES *Beyond the Obvious: Photographs from the Scottish Highlands at Kincardine Old Church, Ardgay, Sutherland IV24 3DJ* from Saturday 30 September until Wednesday 4 October 2006. Opening times: Saturday 12.00-20.00hrs. Sunday 14.00-18.00hrs. Monday Tuesday & Wednesday 11.00-18.00hrs.

JOHN ALEXANDER *Sixteen Years in Forties.* 29 July - 26 October. *Discovery Point Dundee.*

BARRIERS *Birnam Institute* 9 August - 31 August. A group exhibition on theme of 'Barriers' by members of *Perth Photographic Society.*



John Alexander

PORT GLASGOW MARK NEVILLE (see page 17) at the *Dick Institute Kilmarnock.* 26 August - 21 October. An off-site collaboration with *Street Level.*

SANDY SHARP *Cameo Roles. 'Thirty years of street photography' Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow.* October 1 - October 31.

STILLS *Cockburn Street Edinburgh.* Tracey Moffat 28th July - 29th October.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHY *Edinburgh Photographic Society* 68 Great King Street. Monday -Saturday 10.00am - 8.00pm Sunday 1.00pm - 5.00pm

RUM

The Rum weekend has proved to be very popular and is fully booked. Fourteen *Scottish Photographers* will head to Rum in September. Images from this fascinating environment will be finding their way on to the Web Site.



George Logan Kinloch Castle

INVERNSNAID



The Inversnaid photograph 2006 Robert Burns.

The *Inversnaid* weekend was as popular and varied as ever. An hour at this fixture quickly dispels any notion of defining a typical *Scottish Photographer!* Douglas May was master of ceremonies, Keith Ingham presented stunning colour street photography and Bill Ellis again demonstrated his sheer professionalism in the jazz scene. Denis Alishev gave us 3D specs on Saturday night, Alicia Bruce made the skin creep and James Porter challenged our identities. The idea that bodies of work are preferred to greatest hits and technical prowess is growing. We are fortunate to have *Inversnaid* on our doorstep and are grateful to Andre, Linda and Ian for their hospitality and for again generously sponsoring a new generation *Scottish Photographer* - Alicia Bruce this year. Courses run at *Inversnaid* until October.

Contact Inversnaid: 01877 386254 www.inversnaidphoto.com

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Scottish Photographers 2005
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