

**Regional Study Day
29th September 2018
Streetlevel Photoworks
103 Trongate, Glasgow**

Dr. Wendy McMurdo, Neil Gallacher, Laurie Bradshaw, Ian Cathro.



The group along with Wendy McMurdo and Iseult Timmerman in discussion with the artist Melanie Letore

Having got past the usual greetings and catch-ups, first up for discussion was the current position of the group with regards to planned funding applications and study visits etc. Due to changes in the way the OCA manages funding applications the transition had caused some confusion but it seems we are on the right road again.

We discussed access to Lynda as a way to learn software and develop skills and for tutorials related to the work we are currently engaged in. I myself need to look into Adobe Premiere Pro as video may start to feature more heavily in my studies. Laurie has already been experimenting with this with great results.

Wendy mentioned SCONUL – access to university libraries and their resources. Individuals have been asked to contact OCA through email to enquire about access requirements and to ask OCA through email. Access to library resources can be most beneficial such as access to works and books by Anna Atkins. She was the first person to publish a book illustrated with photographs. The message here was USE LIBRARIES!

Neil Gallacher

I presented my submission for Assignment 2 in the PH2 Landscape course. I had divided my train journey into equal segments to give twelve images and had taken Wendy's advice of accompanying the presentation with the sounds recorded on the train journey. The audio was viewed as excellent and the only issue was that the transitions between images (15 seconds) were felt to be too long.

The presentation generated some discussion around the differences that would be apparent with travelling during the week at peak travel times – the rat race, or as I suggested, the last train home. Images of Brexit sprung to mind and the range of nationalities travelling by rail, the accents and conversations all contributing to a much more intense development.

Wendy mentioned the 'I Am Innocent' exhibition that the group had visited some time ago. She also mentioned The Listening Post – Ben Rubin and Mark Hansen that consists of a digital installation. We also discussed eavesdropping, technical challenges, artists such as Tacita Dean who works primarily in film, the BBC documentary Imagine, and also about sound editing. David Campanys book Photography and Cinema was given a mention, as was Roberta McGrath of the OCA. I was also advised to check out Hamish Fulton a walking artist who works in mixed media.

We then discussed the teaching of students that have full time employment and the discipline that can be required to include studies. Ian was wondering about finding the time for studies at this level and holding down a full time job. Most of us at one time or the other have gone through this so pointers were shared about open learning, challenges that the student may come up against and about structuring your learning.

We then moved onto Photomonitor – the website for listings, reviews, interviews, essays, books and talks etc. covering the British Isles and Ireland. We also discussed the founding editor Christiane Monarchi who after 7-8 years as a stockbroker is now dedicated to photography and lens-based media. We also discussed 1000 Words, a leading online contemporary photography magazine founded by Tim Clark.

Ian Cathro

Ian is currently undertaking the Foundation in Photography with the OCA. He presented a series of images to the group some of which were related to the portrait part of his coursework and others that were personal favourites. He had been taking photographs of a studio model hired by a friend who has lights. The images were very well presented and exposed. Studio and model Wendy mentioned Robin Gillanders the Edinburgh based photographic artist and his portraiture work. Lighting tutorials on Lynda were also seen as an option to experiment. Ian was having difficulty in recruiting family members to sit for him and it was suggested that friends could also be approached. The artist Sian Davey was mentioned as someone to check out. Her family photography using just natural window light was exceptional. Ian also presented some nice landscapes and again Robin Gillanders was mentioned with Little Sparta – Portrait of a Garden being of particular interest. He presented an image of the Red Arrows in formation with smoke trails which Wendy thought might look good if the aircraft themselves were removed using Photoshop thus leaving only the trails. This was followed by some night shots of the V&A in Dundee.

Returning to his OCA coursework Ian explained that he was to produce a portrait and it was suggested that he look at the typographical portrait work of Gabriella Sancisi. He was also advised to research the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize for inspiration.

Laurie mentioned an image depicting the customers of a chip shop through the window at night as being of particular interest. Neil mentioned *Five Girls* by David Stewart and an Australian father who photographs his young daughter in the style of the old masters paintings. Laurie looked this up and the result was Bill Gekas. This led us to discuss ideas about study visits with perhaps a visit to a studio or artists talks being on the agenda for next year.

Laurie Bradshaw

Laurie's presentation was as part of an assignment consisting of a box with heartbeat drawings that was presented at the last study day. She also mentioned her project with her favourite jumper and used the density of the drawn line to represent the level of sensitivity from the jumper to her skin. She has made a concertina sketchbook and uses a fabric for the cover, which is a 12%, blended wool giving a 'spikey' sensation. The title of this work is 12% Wool.

Laurie mentioned the influence from the Christine Borland – Sim Baby video and a talk by Borland about this work on a Vimeo video called "Sim Bodies, Nobodies, and Me". We discussed the use of video and this is Laurie's first attempt at using this medium using (and learning) Premier Pro by Adobe. She presented her video Laurie Heart Beats (1) accompanied by the sound of Laurie's own heartbeats and showed her opening the box and removing the heartbeat drawings one by one.

The camera was initially above the box with a light source either side of the subject to avoid shadows but the table the subject was on was white and she felt it gave too clinical a feel to the work. It lacked the intimacy and the warmth she sought so eventually used an iPhone and a single lamp as a light source.

She has followed this up with a breathing exercise where the pressure of the pencil is increased as the breathing increases and intensifies, making 60 cards. Her inspiration was derived from the work of Mark Wallinger and his I Am Innocent influenced the final presentation. This installation was hung from the ceiling and so Laurie suspended her images from the ceiling. She presented a second video on Vimeo entitled "Breathe." A by-product of the process was shadows from the hangings and a slow spiraling movement from the images presumably from the air movement in the room thought to be due to the heat from the lights.

We discussed working with different materials and working in different mediums and artists mentioned were Susan Philipsz known for her sound installations, William Ketteridge for his drawings and animated films, and Joan Jonas an experimental film maker and pioneer of video and performance art.

The importance of the study days was reiterated as we highlighted the benefits of student contact and face-to-face conversations.

In discussing the face-to-face contact we mentioned hangouts, Skype and Facetime but Wendy mentioned the software Appear.in (open up in Google Chrome) as an excellent way to carry out video conversations. She uses this with her students.

The students showed great interest in having a talk from Arpita Shah the artist who works in film and video. Wendy will get in touch with Arpita to see if she can arrange for us to attend either a study day, an artists talk or a workshop. There is also the hope that she may offer a studio portraiture workshop or a technical session. Wendy will feed back at the next study day.

We agreed that we had reached the end of the day and that as Wendy was presenting on 8th December at Streetlevel Photoworks we would arrange the next study day to correspond with this, allowing students a single journey instead of a repeat one. We also decided to give an option for the next study day being held alternatively on the 15th December and Neil will run a poll on the groups Facebook page as later dates were felt to be too near Xmas. Dates for next year would be agreed at that study day.