

CPS December 2008 - Pictures of the Year

The annual event that concludes our year of CPS meetings was well attended, and to judge the submitted pictures we had David Reid for colour prints, and Bronwyn Hendy for Monochrome and Projected Images. David originally studied photography at RMIT, and has worked as a professional photographer for many years, including being head photographer at the National Library. Bronwyn is one of our past members of CPS, active in our competitions for many years, and a CPS Photographer of the Year a few years ago.

David provided a detailed commentary with anecdotes interspersed; he included ideas for picture making - filters to use, how the camera was employed, composition. He often asked of a picture "what are people doing or looking at" - many pictures need to provide more information. The pictures he praised particularly were not all of a kind, but showed a variety of approaches, techniques, and manipulations.

In judging Monochrome, Bronwyn said that the picture of the year should be expected to be technically good as well as interesting. She commented on both the composition and the "feeling" of pictures (not all judges do), and noted that photographers should try different compositions of the same image to decide the best. In commenting on the Projected Images she remarked of one picture that it was too ethereal to be effective as a projection - it would be better (more solid?) as a print. Composition and technique were remarked on quite fully here.

Winners of the categories were -
Colour Print of the year - Dave Bassett
Projected Image of the year - Graeme Watson
Monochrome Print of the year - Julie Garran

The night also saw the award of "Photographer of the Year", based on a mix of factors - success in competitions, exhibitions both with CPS and elsewhere, and other photographic activities deemed relevant. For 2008 the award, well contested by several members, went to Steven Shaw and Judy Parker.

The evening finished with the usual end of year special supper over which members could socialise and discuss.

RG



Changes to "The Cassette"

Starting next month, March 2009, the Editorial responsibility for *The Cassette* passes to Russell Hunt. The new journal of the CPS will include not only items previously included but material of other kinds as well, including the Photon news items that Murray Foote has previously sent out as an email to members.

Contributions by CPS members on the subject of photography will be gratefully received by the new Editor.

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Photographers' Rights

The best summary of "photographers' rights" for Australia, with some State-by-State notes, and information on various other countries, is still the website run by Andrew Nemeth, called 4020 NSW Photo Rights. It covers a lot more than specifically NSW legal issues regarding photography.

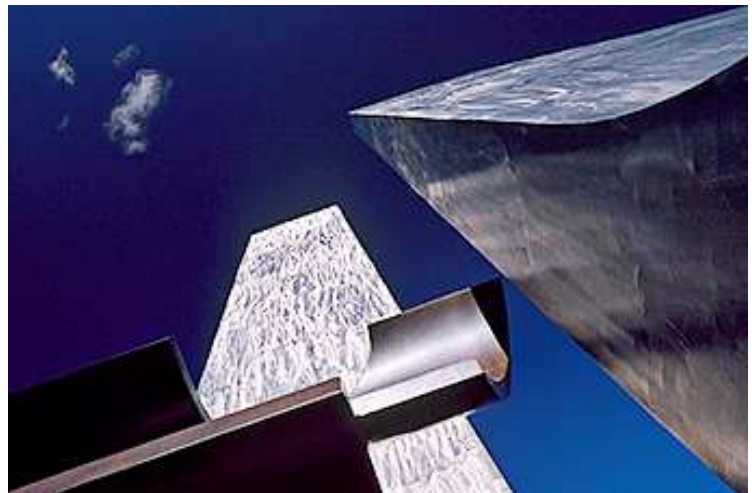
So if you have worries about your right to do street photography, whether police can confiscate your camera or order photos deleted, whether you can be part of the great tradition of beach photography, or when copyright issues do and do not apply under Australian law - it's all here, with plenty of references, other web sites linked, etc.

You'll find it at:

<http://www.4020.net/words/photorights.php>



Photograph by Russell Hunt



Air Force Memorial, by Brian Jones

CPS Competition Topics 2009

- February 2009: Open
- March 2009: Open plus *Water*
- April 2009: Open plus *Illusion*
- May 2009: Hedda Morrison Trophy
(Print Portfolio Competition)
- June 2009: Open plus *Environmental Portrait*
- July 2009: Open plus *Food*
- August 2009: Projected Image Portfolio
Competition
- September 2009: Open plus *Abstract*
- October 2009: Open plus *Light and Shadow*
- November 2009: Open plus voting
- December 2009: Images of the Year

Entries for Hedda Morrison and Projected Image Portfolio Trophies should follow a general theme to encourage coherent groups of images (historically, random images don't do well anyway)

Photographs Wanted for Reproduction in The Cassette

Have some of your photographs received a 4 or 5 score from the judge in the CPS monthly competition? If so, we'd like to reproduce a small version of these pictures in The Cassette.

Digital versions in jpg format can be emailed to the Editor at—
russell.hunt.au@gmail.com

Files should be no larger than the size for our projected images competition—that is, 1024 x 768 pixels. Sizes down to half of that (512 x 384) are sufficient for Cassette use.

Why Photograph the World? Some thoughts on CGI and photography

We can begin with someone who was not a photographer, the French 19th century painter Gustave Courbet. He was one of the founders of "Realist" painting, in contrast to the Academy-preferred "idealist" (as in idealised) forms of art. Reality was too harsh in many respects for the refined sensibilities of the fashionable painters of his time - one should smooth it over, and paint perfected versions of people and places. It was not unlike the photoshopped images we see on the covers of women's magazines these days - a sterile perfectionism that glosses whatever it represents.

Courbet would have none of that. Like the modernist photographers of the early 20th century, who rejected the idealised fuzzy images of pictorialism, Courbet wanted painting to be grounded in the real world. Courbet's work was often rejected as "ugly" - but he thought beauty resided in reality, and was not dependent on modifying the world into idealised similitudes of Platonic "Forms".

To quote Courbet:

Painting is an essentially concrete art [and] can only consist of the presentation of real and existing things. It is a completely physical language, the words of which consist of all visible objects; an object which is abstract, not visible, non-existent, is not within the realm of painting.

And again:

The beautiful is in nature, and it is encountered under the most diverse forms of reality. Once it is found it belongs to art, or rather to the artist who discovers it.

And of the artist:

The expression of beauty is in direct ratio to the power of conception the artist has acquired.

The power of photography has usually been thought to reside in those of its qualities which resemble Courbet's description of what painting is about: "the presentation of real and existing things". Obviously, painters since Courbet, as well as many before, have not entirely agreed with him about the basis of painting, though the greatest of them - Van Gogh, Cezanne, Picasso and Matisse, for example - remained firmly rooted in figurative rather than abstract art. But in considering photography we can be on firmer ground - the strength of photography comes from perceptive seeing of things in the world around us.

This is why the new photo-shopped versions of the world so often fail - they reflect the limited perceptions and sensibilities of photographers who use photographs as raw material for their fanciful creations. Fanciful, because these creations don't have the imaginative integrity and strength that comes from dealing with the real world.

And so to the step beyond photoshop, to CGI - computer generated imagery. Anyone who saw the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, or various movies featuring "special effects", will be familiar with this. But the more prosaic versions are now being promoted as an alternative to photography - a replacement for it. These commonly are generated within CAD software, which is intended for engineers, architects and designers. I was recently looking at a blog item by Tony Sleep, a UK-based photographer, who had something to say on this.

He first described what he'd been told by a friend who works in photographing new cars for advertising. The new technique doesn't involve photographs at all -

Imagine being able to take a CAD model, drop it into a photo of a landscape or virtual studio, and have it rendered to look exactly real. We see this sort of thing often enough,

in movies and computer games, so this isn't surprising, but in those contexts we expect such trickery. According to my friend Graham Ford, who has spent a lifetime shooting still-life on 10x8, that is how some car advertising photography is now being done. He says it is expected to become the standard method.

The car never exists, it is rendered from the manufacturer's CAD model, the vectored design drawings used for making the thing. Graham says he has closely inspected the resulting images and cannot tell the difference between the rendered ones and a real photo except where retouchers have decided they can improve on what nature would have done, and been a bit clumsy because they don't have a photographer's experience of how things really look... Of course you can locate the 'car' in places you'd never be able to place a real car. So there you have it : imaginary photographs of products that need not ever exist, in places they have never been....

Is it photography? Well, it is drawing-with-light alright, or drawing-with-electrons, but it's fiction, or even a pack of lies. I can't help but wonder if it will leak poison, corroding the value of photographs of the real world.

The contrast of course is with the use of photography as based on some aspect of reality, by reproducing that reality in an imaged form, interpreted by the photographer's seeing at the time. Roland Barthes's "this was there". Courbet is reported to have said, when asked to paint angels, "show me an angel and I will paint it." (An angel, after all, is a religious metaphor, not an object in the everyday world).

Sleep goes on to remark, of two professional photographer friends,
Guys like Graham and David worked very much in the tradition of the photographer as insightful observer of reality. I remember looking at Ansel Adams and Edward Weston prints with them and their excitement and the

inspiration they drew from the quality of seeing. But the distinction between fibs and truth seldom matters to anyone who doesn't care, and by and large the public will not. In a few years, most people will have little awareness that Adams' 'Moonrise over Hernandez' was not comped up on a Mac, or that Weston spent days searching for the perfect pepper. [These days] he could simply have knocked up a CAD capsicum in Autodesk. CGI photography has nothing to say about the world or the beauty of nature, nor even the human spirit that observes it and says 'look at this!'. Instead it's fakery, illusory eye-candy.....

As he notes, this new fakery will inevitably be described as 'creative'. I think that we have a society that confuses 'novelty' with 'creativity' and highly values novelty. A society which generally looks superficially at pictures. Because of what can be called MTV-syndrome - viewing things as a series of impressions, never looking long enough to allow the image to work, if it can - pictures become devalued because they're all viewed with the same few seconds of looking without seeing. What we have is an increase not in visual literacy but in visual superficiality, the action of the surface skimmer, who looks for immediate "impact". So the CAD car, the photo-shopped film star, and the Adams landscape all become much the same. They're all "photography" despite their real and considerable differences. And regarded as being on the same level.

Someone has remarked that "a good picture has impact, a great picture has resonance" - and despite some reservations I think that it points us to something true. But resonance requires paying attention, and going beyond the surface, and allowing ourselves to be entranced. The best of photography can still do that.

Ross Gould

Art Gallery of NSW

Half Light

Portraits from Black Australia

21 November 2008 - 22 February 2009
Rudy Komon gallery, Upper Level

This is the first major survey of the work of Australian Indigenous artists engaging with the photographic medium and the portrait. Showcasing a range of techniques from classical black-and-white portraiture to digital imagery, the exhibition offers an unprecedented insight into the black experience that transcends national borders and the harsh reality of the everyday.



Destiny Deacon Where's Mickey? 2003 light jet print from Polaroid. Private collection, Sydney © Destiny Deacon. Licensed by Viscopy, Sydney

State Library of New South Wales

Bondi Jitterbug: George Caddy and his Camera

The work of amateur photographer, champion Jitterbug dancer and Bondi local George Caddy is displayed for the first time in this exhibition of 60 photographs. These distinctive photographs document Bondi Beach during the late 1930s and early 1940s and feature parading lifesavers, leisure seekers wearing the latest beach fashions and the astonishing gymnastic feats known as 'beachobatics'.

Open: 29 November 2008 – 22 February 2009
Galleries, Mitchell Wing

[State Library opening hours](#)

Admission: Free

George Caddy, 25 September 1938
a2391018

Alf Stanbrough supports Bonnie Nixon and Hazel with Wal Balmus hand-balancing on top, in a stunt known locally as 'Scales'. Most Graham Gymnasium stunts were practised at the southern end of Bondi Beach, away from the crowds, but gymnast Jack Goldberg can be seen watching from the shoreline. Bonnie Nixon had appeared in *Truth* twice during the year, being described on 14 December 1938 as 'a typical example of Australian beauty'.



NGV International

180 St Kilda Road

Andreas Gursky

21 November 2008 to 22 February 09

Temporary Exhibition Space 2,

Ground Level

Admission Fees Apply

Andreas Gursky (born 1955) is one of the world's leading contemporary international artists. In essence, his photographs are concerned with the experience of life in a globalised world. Through a combination of enormous scale; the most precise pin-sharp detail; and bold use of colour,

He systematically represents the individual's place within our complex, fast-paced consumer society. As *Flash Art* (2007) noted, Gursky scours global locations for scenes that explore 'thematic dichotomies of macro and micro; individual and mass; photographic documentation and abstract formalism.'

Gursky has photographed quintessentially modern scenes - shops, stock markets, apartment buildings, leisure centres, and tourist sites - showing the world as high-tech, fast-paced, expensive, commercialised and overpopulated. Far more than a depressing spectacle of consumerism and globalisation, the sheer beauty and scale of Gursky's photographs is highly seductive. Ultimately his extraordinary images are a visceral experience that makes us profoundly consider our own place within this world.

The exhibition *Andreas Gursky* is organised by Haus der Kunst, Munich. The artist is represented by Monika Sprüth Philomene Magers / Cologne Munich London and Matthew Marks / New York.

Andreas GURSKY

German 1955–

Pyongyang I 2007

C-Print

307.0 x 215.5 x 6.2 cm

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The artist is represented by Monika Sprüth / Philomene Magers Berlin, London and Matthew

Marks / New York.

