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creative camera

Polish Photomontage
Jaromir Funke Paul Outerbridge



photograph by Jaromir Funke, 1932

Galerie Schürmarm & Kicken

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The Churchill Outrage

With the death of the widow of Sir Winston Churchill it has been revealed that she ordered her servants to destroy the highly-controversial portrait of him painted by the famous artist, Graham Sutherland. It had been common knowledge that both she and Sir Winston disliked the picture intensely but this was the first time its fate was known. Graham Sutherland's comments on this do not really show him to be moved with great indignation but it is important that someone should protest at what is, in fact, an outrage. Some years ago, when doing a survey of the use of cameras in various museums I was amused to discover that even some of our most respected institutions had learned the hard way that when you purchase a painting you do not purchase the copyright or any right to reproduce it. This fact of life is much better known among photographers and the purchasers of photographs but it should be remembered basically that at all times the purpose of copyright was to protect the original author, the photographer or the artist. It is only through commercial exigency that it has been expanded so as to include agents, employers etc.

Copyright law is now nearly universal but in France there is what is called *droit d'auteur*, the author's or artist's rights. I do not know the details of the French law but regrettably it seems to be assumed by all English lawyers that no such rights exist in England. I am surprised because I would have thought that even within Common Law the artist has some basic rights. Certain of these are protected by copyright. For example if you were to sell a painting or photograph and later to discover it being used as an advertisement perhaps in a distasteful way, an action for breach of copyright could be sought and indeed punitive damages might be imposed because of the offensive nature of this breach. The point about punitive damages is of vital importance because although the advertisement is an infringement of the artist's rights the legal action for that does not actually recognise these rights but is undertaken because of the breach of copyright law. But if punitive or exemplary damages are acknowledged to exist, as indeed they are, then this is the acknowledgment in law of something beyond copyright and indeed that this breach of copyright is also a breach of the author's rights. This reason alone I feel should encourage the various organisations whose purpose is to protect the rights of photographers, and I am thinking of the N.U.J., I.I.P. and the R.P.S. as among the principals, to strengthen their demand for greater recognition of a right which is even now, albeit hazily, recognised.

In the case of a painting, artists' rights can be fairly understood; however offensive Lady Churchill found the painting she should not have ordered its destruction. In the same way it is generally accepted as outrageous if the owner of a painting chops a foot or so off it to fit into the nice gold frame that he has or alters it to be the right shape for his living room. The legal profession does not support me in my view that if you so alter a painting so as to diminish it in the eyes of its author this is damaging to his reputation and therefore constitutes defamation and that an action for defamation would exist. To alter an artist's work is, at least in my view, as much a libel of him as to misrepresent his artistic output in words. Again this is a matter which should be pressed by the official bodies and although it would not protect the destruction of a painting it would at least prevent its alteration. The same would apply to what has not been unheard of in the past and that is the alteration of the painting by an unauthorised hand.

In the case of the photograph the protection that the official bodies should be looking for is not the destruction of the print but the destruction of a negative, fortunately it is established law that the negative remains the artist's, even if the copyright passes to other hands. Today the retouching of photographs other than by the artist or with his consent is comparatively rare but the unauthorised butchery of photographs not only in the general press but even in the photographic press is a very frequent source of complaint by photographers. Indeed, when we state that it is the policy of 'Creative Camera' never to trim a picture and have even corrected our printer for the loss of one-tenth of an inch we need hardly add that we would uphold this right very strongly. We even endeavour to do what is far more difficult in practical terms and that is to try and maintain the correct size of the photograph relative to the format. In other words if the photographer always makes small prints we try and print them relatively small and vice versa for large pictures although this is obviously less easy in practical terms. The same applies to tonal range but here the limitations are more the technical ones of the printing process but I think we have said enough to show that 'Creative Camera' has, amongst its principles, the rights of the artist.

A single asterisk (*) in the index or near a photograph indicates that the negative was made by the named photographer, but the print was not made under his direct control. A double asterisk (**) indicates that a duplicate negative and a print made from this have been used. Their presence or absence should not be taken as any guarantee of authenticity.

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Tenth Anniversary Issue

creative camera

19 Doughty Street, London, WC1N 2PT

February 1978

Number 164

Editor and Publisher **Colin Osman**
Co-Editor **Peter Turner**
Advertising & Production **Rick Osman**
Book Department **Terry Rossiter**
Subscriptions **Howard Lamer**
Circulation **Dave Osman**

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Messer (see page 71). Dates are of the
issue in which they appeared.]

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OUR FIRST DECADE PLUS

This issue contains a complete index of all photographers since issue no. 1 of 'Camera Owner' in June 1964. None of the persons now concerned with the magazine were then with it. It was published by Davpet Ltd. and the Editor was Alec Fry, one of the Guildford alumni joined in issue no. 8 by Jurgen Schadeberg, first as picture editor then (issue 10) as editor. Jurgen is now at the Central School of Arts & Crafts, London, teaching photography and is remembered for his exhibition 'The Quality of Life'.

In issue no. 18 of December 1965 Bill Jay became Editor and was the driving force, aided and abetted by the advice of David Hurn and Tony Ray-Jones in particular. His enthusiasm was boundless even to the extent of working in Fleet Street for money while editing 'C.C.' for a mere pittance, it was finance that led to the break in December 1969 with 'Creative Camera' still believing that salvation lay in holding on to a popular price, then about a quarter of Bill's short-lived 'Album'. After this Colin Osman became Editor as well as publisher, joined by Peter Turner, first as Assistant Editor and then as co-Editor. The ownership of the company had passed from Davpet Ltd. to Coo Press Ltd. much earlier than that May, 1966 for the munificent sum of £1 and then, as now, Colin Osman was the controlling shareholder and the source of finance in those difficult days.

It was soon realised that the title 'Camera Owner' was not really suitable to describe the type of photographer the magazine was aimed at and so as an interim move in October 1967 the name was changed to 'Creative Camera Owner' and from February 1968 the change was complete to 'Creative Camera'. It is therefore ten years that we have been stuck with this rather meaningless name. Probably the only reason it has not changed is that we cannot think of a better one. We did think about 'Creative Photography' but that was the name of a short-lived glamour magazine on the American West Coast and actually by now we are beginning to get a little attached to our own name for we seem to have created a meaning, or at least an identity, for it.

This issue is, therefore, our 10th anniversary issue and we are indulging in some backward glances which we think may be of interest. It is also the time by coincidence when the long-delayed index of photographers actually got completed.

We are not even sure if it is healthy for us to look back on the pictures that have been published. The reason for our hesitancy is perfectly simple, 'Creative Camera' is a magazine concerned with the here and now; today's photographers, photographers of the past who have become important today, photographers of the future who will become important in some future today. We are not interested in history for the sake of history or conversely of progress for the sake of change. When dealing with historic photographers we try to put the here and now into practice by using newly-discovered work or a new contemporary appreciation of their work rather than by re-hashing last century's opinions. Experimental work appears not to be trendy but to test the frontiers of photography. Even the reprints in 'News and Views' are included because of their relevance to the here and now. For this reason we were more than glad to invite Bill Messer, an American with a considerable knowledge of British photography, to undertake the almost impossible task of illustrating the last ten years.

What about the next ten years? Who knows? The magazine and Year Book are now on sound financial footings, our mail order bookselling subsidiary continues to attract customers, perhaps we shall do two Year Books every year, perhaps we shall go into book publishing, perhaps we will start producing facsimile portfolios. The future is still wide open.

Our apologies for the late appearance of recent issues. As ever, this is the result of production problems, but every effort is being made to bring the magazine back to schedule. Thank you for your patience.

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Six Australian Photographers
Robert Besanko Marion Hardman
Steven Lowjewski Max Pam
Geoff Parr Ingeborg Tyssen



photograph by Geoff Parr

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NOTICE OF DECISION TO THE PROTEST

Date: Dec. 10, 1977
Notice No. 10

To:
Jintaro Takano, President, Orion Service & Trading Co., Inc.

From:
Sohei Miyashita, Director of the Tokyo Customs.

You are hereby notified under the provisions of Item 5, Article 21 of the Customs Tariff Law.

1. Date of the file of the protest: Sept. 21 and Oct. 20, 1977

2. Point of the protest:

The protestant does not accept the notices dated Sept. 12 and Oct. 21, 1977, given by the Director of the Tokyo Customs and the Director of the Haneda Branch Custom, indicating that the four copies of the photobook entitled 'Creative Camera International Year Book' imported by the protestant are immoral materials under the provisions of the Item 1-3, Article 21 of the Customs Tariff Law.

3. Decision:

Notice No. 80 dated Sept. 12, 1977, and Notice No. 30-1042 dated Oct. 21, 1977, are withdrawn.

4. Reason of the withdrawal:

The subject photobook contains photographs in which pubic hairs of women are exposed. However, the subject photobook is edited under a serious intention and is recognised to be a valuable informative publication of photography. Furthermore, the protestant proposed to present the declaration that he would limit its distribution and would not distribute nor show the book to other people than those concerned in photography. In consideration to the above, the aforementioned decision has been made and notified.

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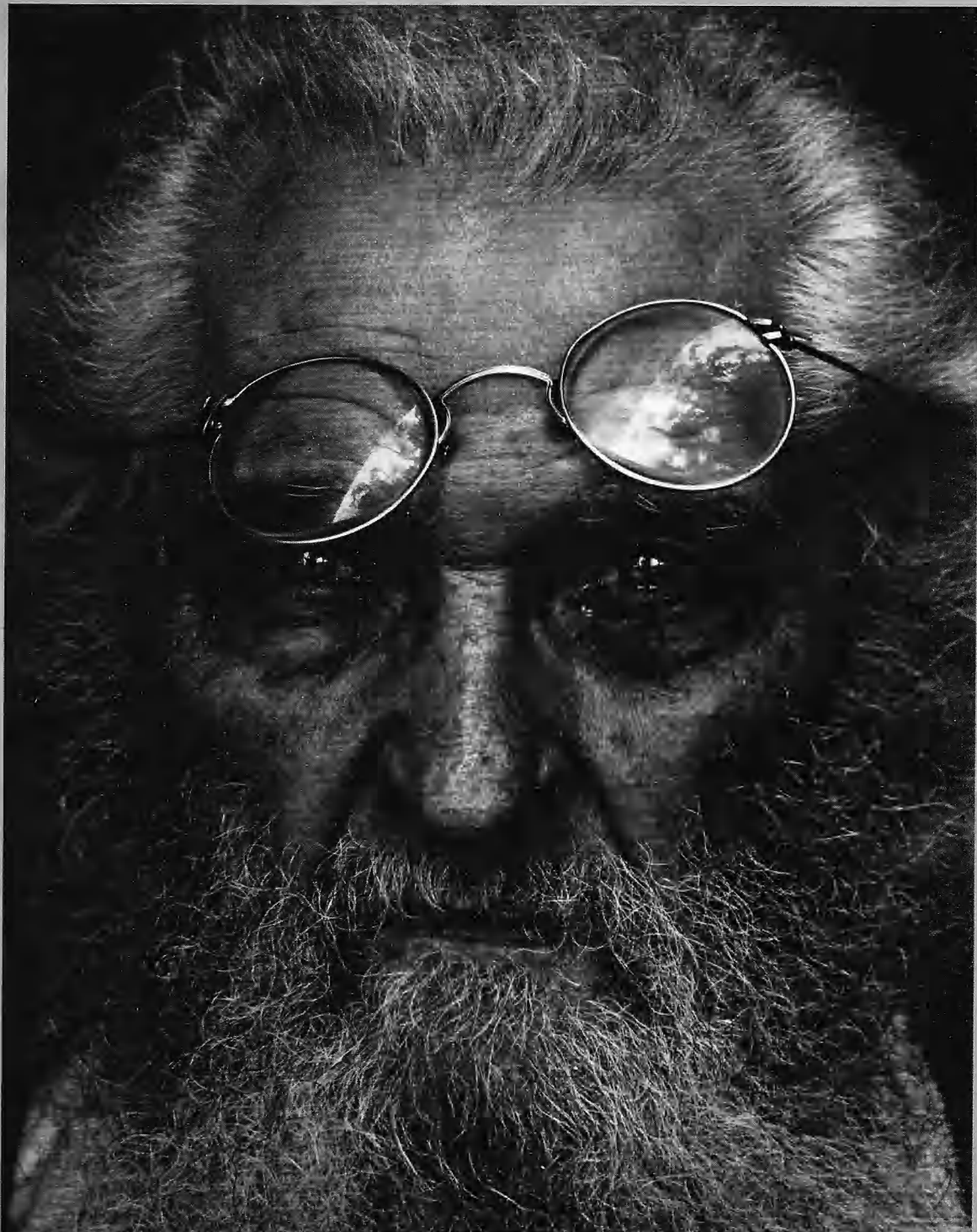
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Roger Minick Lynne Cohen John Smart



photograph by Roger Minick

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OPINION

This space is normally given over to hopefully pertinent thoughts on some area of photographic concern. For many reasons, not least our embarrassment, we try to keep our mumbblings on the state of 'Creative Camera' to a minimum. But for this issue I intend to break with tradition as it is the last one which I shall co-edit and my thoughts, not unnaturally, are centred on what the magazine is and what we have achieved in the period since November 1969 when I joined. These thoughts are provoked by my departure and by a letter from a ten-year regular reader from Canberra, Australia, who has announced a subscription cancellation on the grounds of 'increasing senselessness', 'pretentiousness' and 'banal content'. I would like to quote the whole of his letter, but he requests not unless it is printed in full, and we simply do not have the space.

The years that have elapsed since I first came to 'C.C.' have seen tremendous changes in the photographic climate in Britain. In November 1969 this magazine was a lone voice pleading for the recognition of photography as a contributing force to our culture. It was quickly joined by 'Album,' and the 'Do Not Bend' Gallery both of which failed to sustain their contributions, I suspect as the result of apathy on the part of the community they hoped to serve and enlarge. But help was at hand—The Photographers' Gallery emerged, funded by an abundance of energy from Sue Davies and some financial assistance from the Arts Council. Then came the Half Moon Gallery, then Impressions, then The Photographic Gallery at the University of Southampton. And more and more concern for the medium both privately and publicly. I do not intend to write a short history of photographic growth here, just to make the point that growth has taken place and to suggest that in some small way 'Creative Camera' has helped it. Which is why I was saddened by this reader's letter, for he has not grown with us and the concept of growth is what 'Creative Camera' is all about.

Rightly or wrongly, I look upon the (photographic) world as an arena where battles have to be fought—the first fight is for personal understanding and the last for public recognition and if this medium is to continue towards a full maturity it must not lie back and become complacent. I must understand more and at the same time find more and more ways of presenting what I understand. I have to do this because I am an enquiring human being, conscious that to advance civilisation we must advance culture—the quality of life will not improve simply by improving housing conditions. And it is inevitable that a magazine like 'Creative Camera' with few constraints on its content will reflect some of my enquiry for its very existence has contributed to my curiosity. While I not only accept but enjoy the fact that it has a life quite separate from me, or Colin Osman, or both of us together, it is important to its continued integrity that it moves with us.

Which brings me back to the letter. I have made the points above in a personal manner because the issues he so disliked were largely my responsibility. He mentions two issues in particular—September and October 1977. The first dealt with Walker Evans and the second with William DeLappa's 'Portraits of Violet and Al'. The publication of both of them, and many others besides is simply explained by the desire to encourage growth, increase understanding by questioning the basis of photography. Walker Evans—patron saint of straight documentary *truthfulness*. William DeLappa—investigator of the possibilities in photographic *fiction*. But why bother with all those essays which brought the accusation of 'pretentiousness'? Why not 'let the pictures speak for themselves'? Because it is no longer enough just to allow the pictures to be seen. 'Creative Camera' has grown, times have changed. The photo magazines that publicly mocked us now fall over themselves to publish portfolios by the 'underground cult' figures we gave space to in 1969. So we must move too, create a new context, find the next arena, push the barriers further forward.

When William Messer wrote his afterword to our tenth anniversary issue he made a plea for the continuing 'unreasonableness' of 'Creative Camera'. He was right. I hope that it will remain a thorn in the side of those who demand premature celebration and desire a constant reinforcement of the known. I hope that it will continue to question both photographic history and current photographic taste. But most of all, I hope it will grow.

Peter Turner

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Jill Freedman

Claudia Andujar Susan Friedman



photograph by Susan Friedman

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THE NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES

It may come as a surprise to our readers to know that editors are only human, and that they are even prepared on rare occasions to admit to human frailty. Most editors are concerned with the possibility that their supply of copy or photographs may all of a sudden dry up. For that reason we always like to have enough photographs on hand to be sure that we don't run out of material. We have described the system by which we work before but it will not hurt to do so again.

Every morning in the mail we receive one or two portfolios of prints. They are opened and checked to see whether they have been damaged and if return postage (preferably as International Reply Coupons) is included. The return postage unhappily is an important part because the cost of returning unsolicited portfolios would run into thousands of pounds per year if we did not insist on this. The portfolio is then put by for a viewing session which is held at least once a week. Some pictures are automatically rejected. Usually they are the ones from people who have obviously never looked at the magazine and have no idea of its editorial policy. Also rejected are photographers whose work has appeared recently in the magazine or Year Book because however good their new work is, it is someone else's turn.

The portfolios are then put by for at least another week when they are looked at again and on the second viewing some decisions are made, usually they are on pictures which we feel we are unlikely ever to need for publication. Sometimes the photographer has promise, rather than present merit, and he will be encouraged to go on working to represent a portfolio in a year or so when, hopefully, it will be better. Others are put by for yet a third viewing and after this we will write to a selected photographer saying that we hope to be able to print his pictures and asking for biographical information. The photographs thus retained are put on our racks and entered in an index.

We do not actually write to the photographers promising to use their pictures. We never, repeat never, do this because we know of the uncertainties and the difficulties. We do put it to them fairly that we hope to use them but even so we have been misunderstood and only this month a photographer came back after seven days because he thought we had sent the pictures to the printers following our promise to use them: none of which was accurate.

We also have many visitors to the office, some of them under the impression that we are just sitting here waiting to look at their portfolios and the others more reasonably phoning beforehand and making an appointment. Because we enjoy talking to photographers the appointments are made for the late afternoon so that in the morning we can get on with more routine work but obviously the system is flexible. Where it is not flexible is where a photographer calls without an appointment and when we are just very busy. Again we look at the portfolios and talk to the photographer about his pictures and from these some are retained for a further viewing or for possible use.

Undoubtedly there are people who believe that there exist such things as good photographs and bad photographs. Unfortunately they don't include us. Quite often, on those blessed occasions, we receive a set of pictures so outstanding that we know instinctively we are going to use them. They are the good ones and they are very, very rare. Sometimes we receive pictures with so little merit that they can be called bad, at least in respect of this magazine but the great majority fall somewhere in the middle. If one was to treat them like schoolboy essays their marking would be 80 per cent. If it was 81 per cent they would be accepted, if it was 79 per cent they would be returned, for rejected is too strong a word. Whether we rate a portfolio 81 per cent or 79 per cent can depend on so many factors and it is for this reason that we like repeated viewing so that we are more sure of our judgements. Of course if one could mark portfolios like schoolboy essays how easy it would be, but this is a cerebral 81 per cent with no basis in mathematics. When an issue is being prepared then the index is used to jog our visual memories of the material that is in the racks. It is then that other factors can influence our choice. If we have recently done an issue on Polish photomontage we are unlikely to use Polish photomontage again in the next few issues and indeed we are unlikely to use German or Russian photomontage unless there are special reasons. The end result of this is that many worthy portfolios do not get used.

As now must be known to our readers Peter Turner, who was responsible for maintaining this mechanism has now relinquished this and, although still working part-time in an editorial capacity, has been replaced by Judy Goldhill and one of her first tasks will be to go through the print rack and between us we will send back a lot of material which we have previously kept but which now we feel has little likelihood of being used. It will be a sad day for us, perhaps sadder for the photographer, but we feel that this is the only fair way of doing it and it will give not only Judy but ourselves the opportunity to look again at some material that might have been overlooked.

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creative camera

YOUNG EAST GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHERS



photograph by Ute Mahler

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Young East Germans

From time to time we have done special issues relating to certain groups of photographers. Quite often the intention is not to make a personal or corporate statement but just to present something for the examination of our readers. We did explain all this when in international Women's Year we did a women's portfolio. Since then we have done other special issues (including some featuring women's photography) without being necessarily declared as such. This present issue shows the work of Young East German photographers and arose out of an exhibition being prepared by us for the Camden Arts Centre. It was a very modest exhibition intended to do no more than say this is some of the things that they are doing in the German Democratic Republic. It does not try to make any sort of political point. It is not intended to be overt propaganda, it really does no more than what it intends and that is to show what is going on.

It is an official exhibition in so far as it has been organised by the Cultural Section of the G.D.R. Embassy and through the Central Commission of Photography in East Berlin. But what they did was provide a number of portfolios for examination and then Colin Osman selected from these and made recommendations. There are plenty of other ways in which the exhibition could have been produced but none which would so readily have gained a reasonable cross section.

Perhaps a word of explanation about the title of Young East Germans should be made. Originally it was intended to make the age limit 25 or 30 years which, while this might seem old to someone of 18, is a practical lower limit for serious workers putting together a portfolio. Of course there are a number of photographers in all countries who know the direction they intend to go at 18 but only rarely have they achieved it by the time they are 25.

When looking at the portfolios it became quite clear that it would be to the advantage of the exhibition if the age limit was raised even further and so this was done since the important criterion for selecting young photographers was to ensure that the photographs were the work of those brought up and educated in a Communist state and this would apply to those born even as early 1945. It leads to a curious and flexible definition of youth which we would willingly have abandoned if we could have thought of an alternative title.

We should also explain that this issue of the magazine is not a catalogue of the exhibition. This was considered at one time but it was so obviously going to be impracticable that we decided simply to select portfolios from the exhibition and present them in our usual way and to give it a more rounded appearance by using small pictures from the other contributors. Since the original selection of the exhibition was by one joint-editor, Colin Osman, the selection of the portfolios was by the other editor, Peter Turner.

Reading this editorial it would seem amazing that an exhibition could ever result; the answer is just to look at the pictures.

Special thanks for assistance in producing the exhibition and this issue go to Dr. Gerhard Mertink of the Praesidium of the Kulturbund, Herr Rainer Knapp, secretary of the Zentral Kommission Fotografie, Herr Alfred Neumann, editor of 'Fotografie', Leipzig and Herr W. Kloetzer of the G.D.R. Embassy, London.

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HARALD LECHENPERG
PETER HARRAP



photograph by Peter Harrap

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Partly introduction, partly tribute

Normally this section of the magazine is used to express intelligent thoughts on the future of photography, etc. etc. This time it is being used to comment on a coincidence. The two photographers in this issue have in common a working association with Simon Guttman although separated by 40 years in the dates of their pictures and even more in their ages.

Simon Guttman must be one of the most influential persons in the development of modern photojournalism, although his limited financial success would hardly encourage anyone to believe this. In 1928 he and Alfred Marx took over Dephot with shortly afterwards Felix Man and Umbo (Otto Umbuhr) as the photographers. Umbo, happily still alive in Hanover took portraits and in his unambitious way contributed to the organisation. Felix Man now a sprightly 85, was far better organised and in that period contributed 40 stories in two years to the 'Berlin Weekly' and 108 stories in six years to the 'Munich Illustrated' as well as many other picture stories to other magazines, all of the early work placed by Dephot. For the sheer amount of work that was produced he outstripped his contemporaries such as Kurt Hutton (then still Hubschmann), Tim Gidal and his brother George (until his early death in 1930).

Simon Guttman was the organiser. He never photographed but he made sure things happened. He always regarded Dephot as a co-operative but others who came within his influence are in no doubt at all that it was his guidance, indeed strong guidance, that made them better photojournalists. Harald Lechenperg, when I met him in Munich in the spring of 1977 in his affectionate remembrances of him, made it clear that his work has been strengthened and improved through the guidance of Simon Guttman, often received in distant Asia via letters from Berlin.

Not all of that band of photographers in Berlin of that period who received his advice accepted it and probably some individuals felt they did not need it but for Harald Lechenperg at least it was the beginning of a long working association which was to change his viewpoint on photography. Harald Lechenperg stayed in his native Austria although travelling frequently until in 1936, he was invited to become the editor of the 'Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung' and of the later, wartime, international fortnightly version 'Signal'. Simon Guttman after various wartime adventures in France and Spain, arrived in London in 1942 and after working for nearly a year on a Foreign Office French language magazine 'Cadran' then restarted a picture agency named 'Report' which is still running in Oxford Street.

A number of young photographers like Patrick Eager and Chris Davies passed through his hands in the steps of Romano Cagnoni. One of these was Peter Harrap and in a recent interview he too paid generous tribute to the guidance he had been given by this selfsame Simon Guttman who, even though in his eighties, has the keenness of mind and the appreciation of values which many younger men lack. Peter Harrap, of course, did not always agree with Simon and Simon possibly would not regard this later work shown here as among his best but the point is made simply to illustrate the importance he has exercised over these years.

'Report' is not as Simon will explain really a picture agency but a co-operative and an important distinction recognised by those who worked there. Simon said on one occasion that he regarded it almost as a continuation of Dephot. This co-operative intention has another curious sideline because another young photographer working in Berlin for Simon was a fellow Hungarian of his who later became famous as Robert Capa. Later still became of equal importance as the founder of the photographers' co-operative 'Magnum' which, while by no means identical in aims and achievements must owe at least something to its predecessor.

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creative camera

Ferenc Berco
Cristobel Hara
Hansgert Lambers



photograph by Cristobel Hara

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Help yourself

There is an old song that begins 'The World Owes Me A Living' and if my memory is correct it was sung by a Walt Disney character. Perhaps this is appropriate because we do not live in the world of the manipulated puppets like Pinocchio but in a very real and sometimes only too harsh world. It seems to be the disease of English photographers not to realise that the world does not owe them a living and that if they want things to happen they've got to get up and make it happen.

There are two things which bring this to mind. One is a recent trip to Berlin. There are four or five galleries in Berlin at the present time. We have met a number of the people who run them, in particular of course Alex Nagel and Regina Linderlauf who run the Nagel Gallery. They get up at six o'clock in the morning, start work at seven o'clock with a company that supplies graphic artists' equipment so that they can finish at four. They then open their gallery at five, close it at eight and then the rest of the day is their own.

Two other galleries are only open in the evenings because the owners of them are working during the day. This is not said in any sense of criticism to English galleries but it does draw attention to the fact that without Government money most of them would not continue and that, although the pioneers who founded the galleries in this country did so at great personal sacrifice and with enormous amounts of hard work, the second generation of galleries that are coming along now look increasingly to public funds. Needless to say, as a magazine that values its independence the necessity of State money is viewed with alarm.

Even more alarming is the state of mind which looks forever to State support. Turning from galleries to photographers there is this widespread belief that in America creative photography even if it doesn't lead to riches can lead to self-sufficiency. This is absolute rubbish. Wynn Bullock earned his bread by photographing soldiers on their way to Vietnam, Edward Weston relied upon the commercial jobs he had to undertake. Ansel Adams produces murals for giant corporation buildings. Another photographer has an optician's business supplying spectacles, countless photographers become teachers. The list is endless but it means basically that even in the 'promised land' of America the number of photographers who can earn their money by creative photography is negligible even if the handful who succeed do include some well-known names.

Why we write is that it seems to be the custom for young photographers to look for an Arts Council grant or a Guggenheim or a Kodak or any one of the many foundations which provide money and who think that they would have these if it was not for the insensitivity of the committees who award these. The fact that this leads to frustration because there is just not enough money to go round is beside the point. What is to the point is that it seems to us to lead to a very unhealthy attitude which demands State or quasi-State support of the arts. There are times when the State perhaps must step in and provide finance but it seems to us that these should be kept to the absolute minimum and that most important of all total dependence on the State can be nothing but dangerous. The State is not the all-benevolent father that provides all. This is, after all, the first step towards true Fascism; the State can help but it is the people who must help most of all and this means simply finding a way to continue with creative photography and earning a living elsewhere. Some may choose to do this by being commercial photographers, others may do this, as in this issue, by working for IBM or the Post Office in non-photographic fields. There may be strain, there may be tension but at least it makes photography honest.

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wilhelm schürmann
manel esclusa
.photodiscovery



photograph by Wilhelm Schürmann

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Weston at Oxford

A magazine like 'Creative Camera' lives by good intentions. Sometimes, fortunately, they are enough, other times not. In spite of our good intentions we had never actually got to the Museum of Modern Art at Oxford in spite of the excellent shows they have put on. That was until a recent weekend when we were triggered by some foreign visitors actually to get there. It was a delightful experience because the gallery has a very fine ambience and there was not only the show of Edward Weston pictures but an exceptionally fine collection of French paintings from the Museum of Modern Art in Paris. The concurrence of painting and photography exhibitions has everything to recommend it because among the more depressing features of editing a photographic magazine and thereby talking to a great many photographers is the comparative lack of knowledge about other visual arts. On visits to amateur camera clubs this depression can verge upon panic about the future of photography with the realisation that of a local club for every 100 who has visited their local camera equipment shop about one has been to the adjacent art gallery.

For these reasons it is encouraging that Oxford shows not only photography but painting. It is a little unfortunate that the photography should be relegated to the basement where Saturday shoppers and their kids enjoy a rest as well as intellectual stimulation. One does not want the peace of the tomb in which to study photographs of Weston but one doesn't really want to push chairs out of the way to get round the room.

The Weston exhibition raises another question because the prints were made by his son, Cole, and are at least 90 per cent familiar images. Would it not have been possible to get Cole to print his personal selection of 40 lesser-known images? The constant appearance of well-known pictures, while it can consolidate a reputation, does not enlarge it, and can only lead to artistic ossification, as each exciting image solidifies into an icon. The metaphors may be mixed but hopefully the meaning is clear.

The paintings brought many of the art critics to Oxford and not many commented on the photographs downstairs. One who did was Caroline Tisdall of 'The Guardian' who compared a big nude by Suzanne Valadon with some of the nudes by male painters, particularly a large Rouault that illustrates her article. I hope I don't paraphrase unfairly when she describes Valadon as sensually cool and Rouault 'as heir to the savage and biting caricaturing eye of Daumier'. To those who are familiar with these painters this will not be an unfair comparison although I would have wished her to compare Valadon with her male counterpart, Marcel Gromaire, but that's another story.

So far her article has been an excellent exercise, stimulating and informative and constructive but then in her final paragraph she says 'Interesting too, to compare the painter's approach to the nude with the classic photographs by the American Edward Weston included in the show of his prints downstairs. For Weston the naked body was not a sensual object. His camera caught it as an almost abstract arrangement of light and shade, curve and mass quite beyond lust.'

There in the exhibition is a photograph of the famous pepper not to mention the shell which we have always been taught to believe was sensuality itself, and now here is a respected critic saying that Weston's nudes are not sensual. I think most would agree that if we can separate our knowledge of the people concerned from the pictures, we too, would agree that they were without lust, at least in any conventional sense.

But surely that is not to say that the pictures are not of a sensual object, sensual after all means pertaining to the senses and the Mexican nudes are certainly sensual in a tactile sense. As well as this tactile sense feel to the pictures there is also surely an appeal, not just to the visual sense, but to visual sensuality. In some of the later Weston photographs his sense of line and form becomes greater and the sense of intimacy, or perhaps proximity, becomes less, but in these Mexican pictures there is this sensuality of immediacy and proximity. I am (perhaps) reading too much into the use of the word sensuality.

One of the reasons why we so rarely write articles like this in 'Creative Camera' is because they have no ending, one thought leads to another, one opinion to a modification of that opinion and so on *ad infinitum*. Perhaps the value of the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford is that it is in a position to stimulate, unlike so many segregated photographic galleries and for this, even if it wasn't for the quality of its exhibitions in general, one can be especially glad that it is among the ever-growing number of places where photography is shown regularly. All we need is more.

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creative camera

Sean Kernan
Kenneth Shorr
Dennis Carlyle Darling
Marcia Resnick



photograph by Sean Kernan

creative camera

19 Doughty Street, London, WC1N 2PT

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Editor & Publisher **Colin Osman**
Assistant Editor **Judy Goldhill**
Book Department **Terry Rossiter**
Advertising **Rick Osman**
Subscriptions & Circulation **Howard Lerner**

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When prints are refused

A letter from a reader in Rochester, New York adds a further chapter to our saga about the submission of portfolios. We have said over and over again that the prints must be marked prominently 'Press Photographs Of No Commercial Value' and that 99 per cent of the time they come through without any difficulty. We have fought and won a battle with Her Majesty's Customs & Excise Department who used to insist that press prints could only be 10in x 8in.

But if the box also mentions that they are exhibition gallery prints with an insurance value of thousands of dollars or pounds then Her Majesty's Department suspects, not unreasonably, that these can hardly be of 'No Commercial Value'. Please do not insure prints for more than a nominal £1 if necessary or better still don't send us gallery prints because, as potential contributors ought to know, we take no responsibility for anything at any time under any circumstances, at least in the legal sense.

There has only been one set of prints that has gone astray but there could be a second, and unsolicited exhibition prints can be a nightmare. We really do try very hard to look after the pictures and we do treat every print as valuable but please don't mark a value on the package.

What happens if there is a disagreement between us and Her Majesty's Department is that they ring us up and say that a parcel has arrived addressed to us from Rochester, Rotterdam or wherever. It has been valued at so many hundred pounds and that Excise Duty and Value Added Tax amounts to so much. The amounts asked for have been sometimes as little as £10 and sometimes higher than £200 and until we pay the money we don't know the name of the sender.

The thought of paying £200 for unsolicited pictures which we would not be able to use is not one to make us happy and so the rule is that inevitably these pictures are refused and returned to the sender, if we do know who sent them then we would notify the photographer the reason they have been refused but usually this information is not given to us.

Having amplified this point for the umpteenth time can we also emphasise the point about sending return postage and packing with unsolicited pictures. The G.P.O. of Great Britain has just announced that it made £1 m profit each and every day of last year. One of the ways of doing this, we believe, was by making charges for sending parcels much higher than the rest of the world. If you can find out what the correct return postage is then please do send it. While we don't want it exact to the penny we just do not have the funds to subsidise this sort of operation.

While on the department of repetition let us remind everybody that every picture sent to us should have on its back: the name, address and phone number of the photographer; the title of the picture if it has one or a reference number and the date when it was made. It helps make sure there can be no errors and it is a wise precaution in any case.

Recently, there were many complaints about delays in returning portfolios and in receiving copies of the magazine from U.S.A. Although everybody knew there had been an unexpectedly long dock strike in New York and everybody knew that our copies and prints were sent surface mail a remarkably high number didn't put two and two together and realise that the surface mail would have been held up by the dock strike!

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Philippe Blache Paul Caponigro Use Bing Gunnar Pick



photograph by Paul Caponigro

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Go Home Bible Mike

Every morning I pass this somewhat strange inscription written on the wall not far from Highgate Hill, and every morning the same thought comes to me of who 'Bible Mike' is and why someone should think it necessary to tell him to go home in letters two feet high. Such messages go beyond mere graffiti, indeed one may still read the rather sad messages which told us that George Davis was innocent and even that Sergeant -----framed him. Such wall messages can indeed be an area of communication not otherwise open. Not far from 'Bible Mike' is a far more thought-provoking one which says in a very fair hand 'The Urge to Destroy is a Creative Urge'. The saying has all the great arresting power of any paradox and deserves our attention at least as much as that of 'Bible Mike' because it lies at the heart of so much contemporary thinking.

In the critical world it represents the difference between destructive and constructive criticism. Many times we have heard the plea for constructive criticism and yet we get remarkably little of it. In conversation there is regrettably even less, the put-down is only too common, reason is only too rare. The trouble is that with photography reason has little enough part to play even in the first place. On the surface, photography is a scientific practice which produces if not facsimile images simulacra. In practice whether these can be regarded as beautiful or even effective depends very much on more personal qualifications. One man's meat is indeed another man's poison and the only photographers who seem only completely safe from such form of criticism are those who are virtually iconographers or those whose reputations are so entrenched and so secure that literally no one dare criticise them. This in itself is as damaging as over-criticism because unless we accept the fact that every photographer can take some bad images and equally, every photographer may allow to be printed, some bad images we are ignoring one of the pure realities of photography.

The trouble with constructive criticism is that it needs guidelines, it needs some unassailable standard by which photographs may be assessed. We do not have and indeed we shall never have that but that should not prevent us from making the effort. Constructive criticism is as I see it to look at photographs, to try and decide what the photographer was trying to do, to assess the value of his intentions and then to try and assess how nearly he has succeeded. It seems simple enough when written like that but there is all too little of it done.

I suspect that the purpose of writing the statement 'The Urge to Destroy is a Creative Urge' is political rather than artistic. It is a summary, perhaps even a quotation from an anarchist. It could indeed be a quotation from the Bader-Meinhof gang or some of the other terrorist groups. In political terms this philosophy has never yet proved successful and there is no indication even now that it will be, but it does apply to the institutions of photographic politics: because we do not agree with the photography committee of the Arts Council that is no reason to destroy it, because we criticise the Royal Photographic Society that is no reason to abolish it. It is a fascist solution but we still like to think that there are still some considerable amounts of democracy working in this country and even that the Democratic system has some merit. It is not, certainly in this case, creative to destroy, it is creative to amend even if it means going through the tedious democratic processes of committee work etc.

Come Back Bible Mike—All is Forgiven.

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Louis Lanzano Charles Traub Masaki Oishi August Strindberg



Louis Lanzano

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December 1978

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Looking ahead

This is as good a time as any to start looking ahead. We don't much like what we see, for with printing costs galloping ahead and paper costs rising we shall be faced from January with yet another price increase. It is not a happy thought as none of the price increases over the last few years has really benefited us but only helped us to recover the extra costs.

The same thing is true of the Year Book and added to that is the fact that the sheet-fed gravure process has at long last died. It was the finest of all processes and our printers did a grand job in getting the splendid quality that we were looking for but, alas, technical difficulties mean it cannot be continued.

Even worse is the problem of getting a replacement. For the Year Book it is not too difficult because there are a number of printers capable of doing good quality duotone books but magazines are a different matter and our breath is duly bated for the next few months. We would ask our readers' indulgence over this period. Believe us we are doing the best we can.

The one bright spot is the book department which continues to expand as ever more people seem to have ever more money for what was once a trickle of books but is now rapidly becoming a torrent. In the course of the next year we expect to expand this side even more and indeed are making changes within our premises with this in mind.

Also on the brighter side we have plans which may or may not come to fruition to enlarge and expand the magazine in 1980. Before then we hope to have done a readership survey so that we can find out what it is our readers really want because really we know remarkably little about those who read these words.

Every issue of the Year Book (sorry, Collection) contains some quotations from reviews. We are as proud as any ageing actor of these press clippings but often they only mislead us because one would think that with reviews like these there would be a mammoth increase in sales every year and this just doesn't happen. We want to hear from the people who read the magazine once and never want to read it again, or those who do not renew their subscriptions because it is only if we speak to dissatisfied customers that we will know how to make improvements.

We never expect to compete with the popular amateur magazines, they are doing a different job to us and sometimes doing it remarkably well but we are genuinely puzzled by the fact that we do not seem to be sharing in what appears to be a boom in photography. We co-operate with many other magazines whose interests are somewhat similar to ours and certainly these proliferate although we fear not many will be successful. Galleries increase, more books are published, attendances grow and we are not naive enough to think that we do not share this world, and yet, and yet... tell us, dear readers.

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