

No. 217 January 1983
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creative camera



A VOLATILE LANDSCAPE

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19 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2PT.

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David Mellor, Val Williams.
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No. 217 JANUARY 1983

News and Views

786

The Arts Council

788

Sir Roy Shaw, Secretary-General of The Arts Council, is interviewed by Murray Martin, as the Arts Council is once more about to set up a photography committee.

Finlay's Little Sparta by Stephen Bann

with photographs by John Stathatos

790

Ian Hamilton Finlay's garden in Scotland is described by Stephen Bann as 'a dense network of allusions, which symbolically convokes the philosophers and artists of the Western tradition'. The photographs by John Stathatos reflect the wit in Finlay's landscape, an arena of neoclassical rearmament'.

Ritual by Roger Polley and John Woodman

798

A series of multiple images produced in the tide on the beach at Lyme Regis in 1981. The work will be exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society in Bath from March 26 until April 25 this year. All the originals are on a large scale in colour. 1: Spell, 36" x 31". 2: Dance, 36" x 33".

3: Set, 73" x 49". 4: Bubbles/Fade, 36" 36"/33" x 31". 5: Riddle, 38" x 35".

Robert Adams—Beauty in Photography by Ian Walker

804

The innovative landscape work of Robert Adams was widely seen in the exhibition of New Topographies. Ian Walker reviews his recent book of essays, Beauty in Photography, which is subtitled, Essays in Defence of Traditional Values.

Pradip Malde

806

Pradip Malde lives in the Orkneys. His work was shown last year at the B2 Gallery and is included in the forthcoming exhibition of Contemporary Scottish Photography in Glasgow. His work on a remote beach in the Orkneys challenges a notion that landscape is inert.

Books Received

812

Gallery Guide

814

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No. 218 FEBRUARY 1983

News and Views 822

Floods of Light by Ian Jeffrey 827

A major exhibition of Flash Photography at The Photographers' Gallery together with an important catalogue are reviewed.

Almost Without Flash 832

Pioneer photo-journalist Kurt Hutton describes how in the 1950's he adapted his available light techniques to use small flash units to illuminate but not dominate his pictures.

Flash Suit, Flash Myth 834

Weegee's widow, Wilma Wilcox describes the man behind the myth in an exclusive interview by Murray Martin of the Side Gallery.

Bruce Rae, Zoo 842

Bruce Rae, who is well known for his portrait work, has been photographing, often using flash, through the bars of London Zoo.

Space Light 848

Paul Walton's recent book on holography is reviewed by Andrew Clarke, who questions if holography should be embraced as a photographic discipline.

Books Received 850

Front Cover by Seiji Kurata from Floods of Light.

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THE GOTHIC MEATYARD

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News and Views 858

Barthes—The Real Thing by Susan Butler 862

Following Victor Burgin's feature on Barthes in the November issue of Creative Camera, and the publication last month of Jonathan Culler's new book on Barthes, Susan Butler emphasises an uncharacteristic lyricism in Camera Lucida. She refers to his discussion of 'the real thing' present in every photograph, and finally asks 'who owns photography?'

Against Camera Lucida by Steve Baker 864

In contrast Steve Baker not only attacks Barthes' book because it is a shift from the writers' semiological standpoint, but because having abandoned terrorism and system in favour of subjectivity and expression, he has systemised the subjective. He claims the book is 'the most unpromising area of study imaginable for any useful and responsible theory of photography'.

Ralph Eugene Meatyard by Martin Harrison 866

From March 15 until April 15, The Olympus Centre is exhibiting the first show of Meatyard's work in this country. Martin Harrison, the Gallery Director, refers to Meatyard's Romantic nature and his emphasis on the intervention of the imagination. He also indicates the significance of Meatyard's correlation between Sound and Vision, which should draw this neglected figure from the periphery of photography.

The Side Gallery, Newcastle 874

Murray Martin is interviewed by Rob Powell on the background and commitment to this vital gallery, the activities of which have made the North East a bastion of British photography as well as the source of the most intelligent international documentary work.

Chris Killip: Askam and Skinningrove
Reviewed by Rob Powell 876

Thirty six photographs from Killip's latest exhibition at the Side are reproduced with Rob Powell's review. Killip's project in two depressed northern villages are documents which were exhibited with texts by Graeme Rigby.

Closely Observed Photographs
by Mark Haworth-Booth 883

Mark Haworth-Booth, who this month opens the new photography galleries at the V & A with a Personal Choice exhibition drawn from the collection, here writes about the relationship between Killip's picture of the Jarrow Youth and the Czech photographer Marketa Luskacova's picture of the sleeping figure on an illegal pilgrimage, which is included in the V & A Show.

Books Received 886

Cover photograph by Ralph Eugene Meatyard.

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V & A

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No. 220 APRIL 1983

News and Views 894

Mother St Croix—Nun of New Orleans 898

Mother St Croix arrived in New Orleans in 1873 from France in order to join the Ursuline community, probably bringing her camera with her. Most of her photographs date from between 1888 and 1912 and reveal a fascination with architecture and arrangements or grouping of her subjects. An exhibition of her work and a catalogue were produced last year by Tina Freeman, Curator of Photography at the New Orleans Museum of Art.

V & A — From Henry Cole to the Eighties 902

Mark Haworth-Booth, Assistant Keeper of Photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in an extensive interview by Mark Holborn, describes the importance of the Photography Gallery which opened last month in the new Henry Cole Wing. He outlines the background to his two opening shows and reveals a structure and direction which will serve the future of photography in this country.

Tina Freeman — New Orleans Interior 908

Tina Freeman focusses on the arrangements and order found in the white interiors of the old Arlington Hotel in New Orleans.

Hatfield and the North — Paul Graham's A1 by Tim Malyon 912

Paul Graham's colour work on the A1, shown last month at The Photographers' Gallery, is reviewed as a nostalgic route as well as a document.

Rolling Stock — Danny Lyon's New World by Susan Hill 914

Danny Lyon's recent book reinforces a myth from pilgrim family to road movie. Unlike his illustrious predecessor, Robert Frank, in Lyon's book "the only flag is the pirates' skull and crossbones blazing from black leather".

Carol Wallitt — Heavyweights 918

The interior of the old YMCA on 23rd Street, NYC, has been an extensive document and exhibition by Carol Wallitt. The peeling weightroom is poised between muscle and metal. Her show "My Y" is at the National Theatre from June 27 until July 30.

Books Received 922

Front Cover, Robert Frank, Andrea, Pablo, Mary, Wellfleet, 1962, from Personal Choice at the V & A.

Back Cover,

Robert Frank "Art object"

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ESTATE OF THE NATION

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News and Views

930

This month we have a report on two landscape shows at the fphotogallery in Cardiff, which included work by Ron McCormick, an article on Photography and Education by John Taylor following a recent conference at Aston University, Birmingham and an extended report by Katherine DiGiulio on Glasgow's festival "Scottish Contributions to Photography". We also include some of Glyn Satterly's pictures which were exhibited at the University of Strathclyde at the time.

John R J Taylor

936

In the spring of 1982, while still at the Royal College of Art, John Taylor photographed a small stretch of the Thames Estuary near Tilbury, having become attracted to the Docklands from his earlier work in Edinburgh. He was trying to discard manipulation of the subject matter at the expense of the subject itself.

Lee Friedlander—Factory Valleys by Mark Holborn 940

Lee Friedlander's recent work in the northern industrial belt of the United States shifts from the desolate landscape of Akron to a series of remarkable portraits. The industrial heartland is rusting. The vacancy of these pictures is now particularly relevant to our native predicament.

Ron McCormick—The Wasteland.

944

In an interview by Rod Jones, Ron McCormick describes his recent work as a response to the radical transformation of urban landscape, euphemistically described as 'the period of post-war reconstruction and development'.

The V & A — Processes and Galleries by Valerie Lloyd 950

Following the opening of the V & A photography galleries, Valerie Lloyd compares the new facilities with those of the Art Institute of Chicago, where new galleries were opened last year. She reviews one of the opening exhibitions, "A Guide to Early Photographic Processes", and examines the V & A's ambitious publication to coincide with the show.

John Goto—Shotover

954

John Goto's work in Shotover Woodlands near Oxford is part of an extended series of prints which vary in size between twenty and sixty inches square. The work was done in 1982 as a result of a bursary from Southern Arts. In April John Goto was exhibiting at PPS Galerie FC Gundlach in Hamburg, and he has a show touring Czechoslovakia until Christmas.

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958

Front Cover by Ron McCormick



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No. 222 JUNE 1983

News and Views

966

We include reports on the Artists International Show at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, Garry Miller in Lincoln, Alistair Crawford in Cardiff, the Photography Open Forum in Birmingham and we have the first publication of pictures from Brian Griffin's nuclear nocturnal London, which are soon to be seen at The Photographers' Gallery.

Northern Ireland—Gilles Peress

972

In an interview by Murray Martin, Gilles Peress explains his attitude and relationship to Northern Ireland where he has worked over many years. As* well as the continual violence, Peress emphasises the skills for physical and emotional survival despite sectarian struggle.

Extracts from Ireland—Nan Richardson

976

Nan Richardson was with Gilles Peress in Ireland and the extracts are from a body of writing that accompanied Peress' pictures in exhibition and will form the text of a future book project.

Beirut—Chris Steele-Perkins

Frontline Story reviewed by Peter Truell

980

Earlier this year Caroline Tisdall and Selim Nassib, a Lebanese reporter for the French newspaper Liberation, produced Beirut — Frontline Story (Pluto Press) in the wake of the massacre at the Sabra-Chatila camp. Chris Steele-Perkins' photographs originally appeared in that publication and here accompany a review by Middle Eastern expert Peter Truell.

My Back Pages

Tim Page's Nam by William Wise

988

The recent publication of Tim Page's book on Vietnam has received considerable attention in this country. William Wise examines the phenomenon of Page and the packaging of Vietnam, the pivot of an era, or "what we had instead of happy childhood" as Michael Herr described the war.

The Photographer as Hero by Tom Picton

992

The publication of The Master of The Photographic Essay — W Eugene Smith, allowed us to see the full sequences of many of Gene Smith's magazine stories. Tom Picton draws our attention to the structure of this brilliant photojournalist and reminds us that "Perhaps his greatest masterpiece is not any one of his photographs, but his overall career".

Books Received

994

Front Cover, Chris Steele-Perkins, shattered memorial photograph of Palestinian youth from Cemetery of the Martyrs, West Beirut.

Back Cover, Brian Griffin, London 1983.

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Photography and The Election

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NOS 223 and 224 JULY/AUGUST 1983

News and Views	1004
The Cultural Left Front in Germany, USA and Britain by Colin Osman	1008
The Photo League by Anne Tucker	1012
Walter Rosenblum interviewed by Colin Osman	1019
Walter Rosenblum	1022
Times Square—1940 by Lou Stoumen	1026
Biographical Notes	1027
Eliot Elisofon	1028
Sid Grossman	1034
Sol Libsohn	1042
Aaron Siskind	1048
Red Masquerade by Angela Calomiris	1054
Photography and The Election by David J Kingsley	1056
Books Received	1060

This double issue, as the previous double issues, gives us an opportunity over the summer months to concentrate on one particular topic. It looks in some depth at one theme and at another related theme and like previous double issues extends and perhaps rewrites a little of the history of photography. More importantly, it tries to indicate what can be learned from this portion of history and what is relevant today.

It is quite extraordinary that there has not yet been a proper history of the Photo League of New York. It is mentioned in all the histories of photography, it appears repeatedly in American publications, there has even been a section of a Time/Life book that discusses some of the participants. There has even been a reprint of their duplicated newsletters, but no major survey has yet been made. The articles in this issue do not pretend to be a major survey but are certainly a major presentation not only of some of the most important photographers but of some of the most important issues.

The major survey is yet to come and will be written by Anne Tucker, the Curator of Photography at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts who has been studying the subject for years and is undoubtedly the authority on its history. Her book on the Photo League is in preparation after many delays. It will be several months before it is in print but undoubtedly will be a major publishing event. Anne Tucker has generously shared her knowledge with us; her essay in this issue is based on the introduction of her book and she has obtained for us most of the photographs and our gratitude to her is immense. We have, however, for European readers, added to it information from our own sources.

It gives some idea of how long the project has been going on that some of the interviews are more than five years old. Naturally our treatment of the Photo League's place in a world context and the events leading up to its final demise are specifically ours. The story could not be told without the emphasis we have placed on the beginnings and the end. One of the joys of such a project is discovering not just new names but putting photographs to the names and discovering all over again just how good the Photo League photographers were. We hope to share that experience.

The British General Election is not long over. The public, thankfully, no longer have to put up with a battering of interviews with politicians whose constant presence on the television screen made politics inescapable. Perhaps one now yearns for the day sixty years ago when the BBC was founded and all political programmes prior to the election were banned! It is extremely relevant to be guided by one of the world's foremost advertising and public relations consultants through the world of politics and photographs in which he has played a leading part. We owe a vote of thanks to the Prime Minister for having arranged the election to coincide with this article.

The relevance of the General Election to the Photo League section of the magazine may not be obvious, but in advertising agency parlance they can be viewed as above-the-line and below-the-line marketing. The Photo League was trying to present a view of society and to show the areas of concern. Its direction was clear even if it was not the policy of any one political party. The very clear marketing approach to politics in the UK now shows how modern visual techniques are being used to direct the electorate to a specific voting decision.—C.O.

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B O D Y W O R K

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No. 225 SEPTEMBER 1983

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News and Views 1070

Ego Geometrica Sum: The Labours—
Helen Chadwick and Mark Pilkington 1074

I: The Incubator — Birth, II: The Font — 3 months, III: The Pram — 10 months, IV: The Boat — 2 years, V: The Wigwam — 5 years, VI: The Bed — 6½ years, VII: The Piano — 9 years, VIII: The Horse — 11 years, IX: High School — 15 years, X: The Statue — 30 years.

David Buckland 1076

These pictures are from a series of forty-five images, made as platinum prints over five years. They were first shown, in part, at the Moira Kelly Gallery in 1981 and are currently showing at the Marlborough and Sam Hardison Galleries in New York. They are all narrative images derived from histories and stories. The first was inspired by a 17th century painting from Jaipur and the final quartet is based on the Adam and Eve myth. Buckland's work with the nude reflects his intimacy with dance.

Hiro Sato 1080

Hiro Sato acknowledges the significance of the nudes of Eikoh Hosoe from the sixties. This first publication outside Japan reveals an attempt to stretch Hosoe's convention using himself as the model.

Jan Saudek — An Interview by Liba Taylor 1084

The publication of two new books by Saudek in the West disguises the fact that Saudek remains in relative isolation in Prague. The range of his work, with its frequent erotic overtones, is both tragic and humorous, and challenges the formal conventions of the nude.

Revising Femininity? — Susan Butler 1088

Robert Mapplethorpe's work with Lisa Lyon, body builder extraordinary, was loaded with style and ambiguity, as well as aggressive assertion but Susan Butler points out that "Women need options, not imperatives; enabling models, not ideals that cripple the psyche by their creation of a sense of inadequacy".

Ava Vargas 1094

Vargas comes from Mexico and is currently working in London. His document on the Tarahumara Indians was exhibited at the Museum of Mankind in 1982. The veiled woman is part of a long and intensely personal series which has not previously been shown or published. The heavy shadow of his prints reveals the sensuality of his Mexican sensibility.

Books Received 1098

Front Cover by David Buckland

Back Cover, Life Sentence/A Death Insight, a mixed-media installation consisting of a large lightbox covered with a collage of colour transparencies and X-ray plates, by Roberta M Graham.

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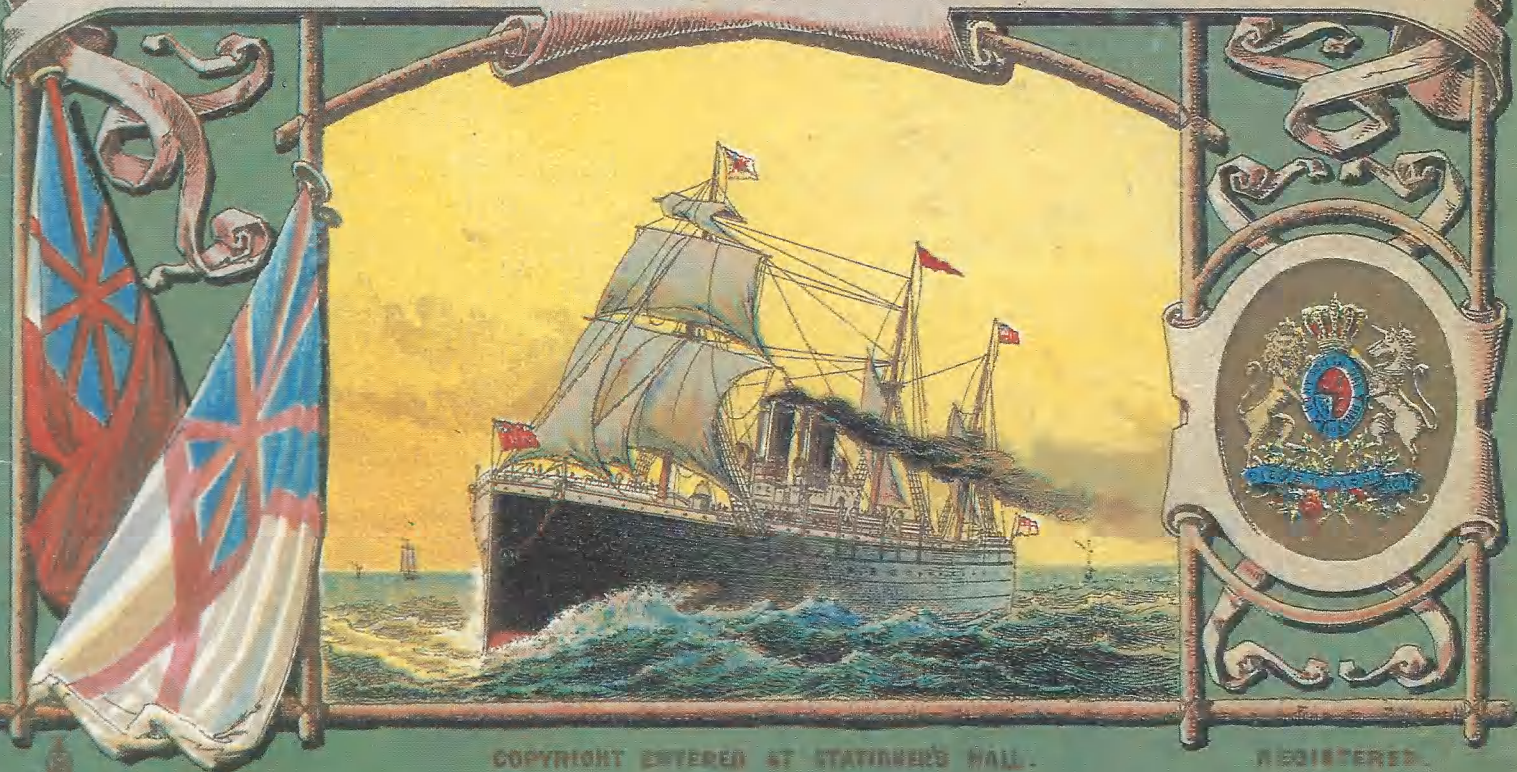
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THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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ALBUM



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No. 226 OCTOBER 1983

News and Views

1106

We include work by Richard Ravensdale, whose show 'In the Buddhist Himalayas' is at the Museum of Mankind this month. Ravensdale has followed many of the Himalayan routes of Samuel Bourne, who is at the centre of this issue. Also included are details on Edward Chambré Hardman's The Birth of The Ark Royal and Bruce Rae's work on Shipbuilding.

Gentlemen — Karen Knorr

1110

Two stereotypical equivalents of the colonial administrator are reproduced from Karen Knorr's 'Gentlemen' series which was included in the Pontonville Gallery's show 'New Beginnings' and 'Beyond the Purloined Image' at the Riverside.

Proper Names — Olivier Richon

1112

The pair of images reproduced from this series were originally in colour and included in 'Beyond the Purloined Image', the catalogue of which described the series as "making use of the film technique of front projection. Europeans — colonial administrators, travellers — are posed in front and next to images of paradise, lost civilisations, antiquity. Each photograph has a title and subtitle formally displayed like in 19th century illustrated books on Egypt and the Holy Land. Among the subtitles are proper names, used as emblems of encyclopaedic knowledge: Science, Politics, Technique, Literature. According to etymology Orient and Origin are equivalent. They share the same etymon. The etymon — the Proper meaning, the origin of Names — is oriri: to rise; Orient and Origin are then just a point on the Western horizon, where the sun rises, East of the dividing line. It is a technicolor sunrise, a post-card, a card which comes after; the origin is then posterior and not anterior to its representation. Thus it is the representation of origins, of the Orient, which constructs the memory of it; representation never gives access to a primary vision but to a constant secondary revision."

Why Postcards Matter to Photography by Ian Walker

1114

Using examples that are picturesque, grotesque and funny Ian Walker asks "Is it the photographer or the medium that is making this photograph what it is?" The whole range of 'Postcard Views', an exhibition organised for Chapter in Cardiff, will be at the Watershed, Bristol next month.

Black and White Postcards by Colin Osman

1120

Racist imagery which Colin Osman describes as so extreme in its surrealism that it loses its racialism, appeared on post cards prior to World War I. Colin has dug into the Osman archives for such gems as The Bombay Scorchers.

Samuel Bourne — The Himalayan Images 1863-69 by Arthur Oilman

Richard Ravensdale, a contemporary Himalayan photographer, who has researched the work of Bourne for this issue, provides this preface to Oilman's article: At the heart of Samuel Bourne's career lies a series of travels in the Western Himalaya's during the 1860's. His three main expeditions took him first in 1863 from Simla to Chini, near the Tibet border, to the Wanga Vally and Taree Pass, 15,284 ft. where he photographed at the highest altitude to that date. The second, much longer journey, was to Kashmir in 1864 and the third, and most ambitious to the remote Spiti region and to the source of the Ganges on the Gangotri glacier, in 1866. As he crossed the Manirung Pass, 18,600 ft out of Spiti he succeeded in making three negative plates which have remained the highest ever exposures for the "wet plate" processes used in early photography.

Writing in 1980 in "Samuel Bourne — Photographic views in India" an exhibition catalogue, P D Walker of Sheffield City Polytechnic speculates, "What special affection did Samuel Bourne have for India? Or what specific attraction did it hold out for him? Many of his literary and artistic contemporaries were preoccupied with a search for the Holy Grail; was his search for the picturesque in the mountains that gave birth to the sacred Ganges, a quest for Nirvana? Certainly there is a tranquil and sublime emptiness within his photographs of the terrain and towns of Northern India, that seems to reflect a remarkable stillness of soul". Or again is his work to be regarded only as "the eloquent composure of a modest gentility seeking highly selective souvenirs for the drawing-room albums of resident and retired colonial administrators"? Bourne is an enigma; in his Himalayan dispatches he writes "Supreme delight arises, where a grand scene opens to the eye and arrests every faculty of the soul, when we feel rather than survey it".

Samuel Bourne's English Photographs by Anne Turner

1130

Anne Turner provides a background to Bourne's early life and his work in Nottingham.

Photography's Golden Age by Valerie Lloyd

1132

Calotypomania is a current phenomenon. Valerie Lloyd looks at the recent scholarship and exhibitions of calotypes. She identifies the qualities of the matt print, the primitive and the picturesque which contribute to this aesthetic.

Books Received

1134

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REQUIEM FOR BYKER — THE WAKE OF KATIE TYRRELL —
PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen — John Minihan — Marketá Luskacova



Street Flowers by Olivia Parker

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No. 227 NOVEMBER 1983

News and Views 1142

Markéta Luskacová 1148

Markéta is recognised for her work in Slovakia, which was first published in this magazine and next month will be exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In the mid-seventies she went with her old friend Josef Koudelka up the Holy Mountain Croagh Patrick in Co. Mayo and recorded the pilgrimage.

Byker — Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen 1154

The industrial suburb of Byker outside Newcastle was Sirkka's home for eleven years from 1970. Sirkka's document on Byker records the vitality and faces of a community. She also pointedly records the demolition and destruction of the community. In addition to the publication of the Byker book by Jonathan Cape in September, the work has been exhibited at the Royal Festival Hall and will soon be at the Side Gallery, Newcastle.

Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen interviewed by
Murray Martin 1160

In an interview with Murray Martin of the Side Gallery and Amber Films, Sirkka talks about the role of the photographer within the community, the effectiveness of a document like Byker, and the relationship between photography and film in the light of the recent showing of her documentary film on Byker on Channel 4.

The Wake of Katie Tyrrell—John Minihan 1164

Minihan grew up in the Kildare town of Athy, about forty miles south of Dublin. For more than twenty years he has photographed the townspeople and a street in Athy will soon be named after him. The wake of Katie Tyrrell in 1977 was recorded by Minihan as the last of the great household wakes. An individual death also marked the passing of an era in the history of a community.

Books Received 1170

NEXT MONTH

CZECHOSLOVAKS

This month we look at the work of Markéta Luskacová and in the issue of September we looked at the nudes of Jan Saudek. These two have international reputations but Czechoslovakia has always had a vigorous photographic life and next month we look at less well known, mostly younger photographers. How does the political climate affect the vision of young Czechs today?

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Front Cover: Street Flowers 1981 by Olivia Parker from Under The Looking Glass, New York Graphic Society, 1983. Distributed in the UK by Hutchinson; in USA Little Brown & Co. (See review on page 1171).

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Portrait of Jan Saudek.

**CONTEMPORARY
CZECHOSLOVAK PHOTOGRAPHY**

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Contents

News and Views 1178
including Hockney at the Hayward
and Goto at Oxford.

Czechoslovakia Today 1182
by Daniela Mrazkova.
Photographs by Milon Novotný,
Karel Cudlin, Tren Stehl,
Miroslav Pokorný, Pavel
Vavrousek, Lukas Kliment,
Jaroslav Kusera, Karel Kuklik,
Zdenko Fyfar, Pavel Banka,
Jaroslav Benes.

Contributors' Biographies 1192

Pavel Stecha 1186

Jaroslav Bařta 1188

Ivo Gil 1190

Ján Reco 1192

Dagmar Hochova 1194

Viktor Kolar 1196

Jaromír Cejka 1198

Jozef Sedlák 1199

Form and Reality 1200
Jan Svoboda by John Goto and
Craigie Horsfield

Books Received 1204

The World of Jan Saudek 1206
Reviewed

Why Czechoslovakia?

Looking back through the pages of Creative Camera it would seem extraordinary that a country like Czechoslovakia has received so much attention, far more, for example, than Poland or Yugoslavia, countries that after all join her on either side and which have an active photographic community. The other Communist states have been even less well represented if we exclude East Germany, which is in a different category because it is part of an artificially divided state.

There are several reasons why Czechoslovakia is worthy of special attention. Some of these are set out in the article by Daniela Mrazkova, a prominent photo-historian, a television media worker and for some years editor of the then prestigious Czech quarterly, 'Fotografie'. Her points about the cultural crossroads of Central Europe are well made and in many respects the crossroads have become even more important in recent years as Czechoslovakia tried to become the frontier post in the cultural Iron Curtain. This is not to suggest that there is support for an anti-Communist culture in Czechoslovakia, or that there is widespread artistic dissent but officially and within the system photography has been allowed and even encouraged to deal with the realities of life in Czechoslovakia today. It is perhaps this which makes Czechoslovakia unique among the Communist countries.

There are other reasons which are reflected in the enormous wealth of internationally recognised talent in the history of Czechoslovak photography, Sudek, Drtikol, Funke are names which no history of photography can ignore and the stimulus of these great historic figures on these later generations has been enormous. They have also had the benefit of some of the finest national photo-historians. Daniela Mrazkova herself, Zdenek Kirschner, Petr Tausk and of course the incomparable and unforgotten first of them, Anna Farova. Although their primary function is as historians their dedicated work with young photographers laid the foundations for many who were to follow.

Front Cover: Portrait of Jan Saudek, Prague, February 1983 by Colin Osman. A review of the new book on Saudek appears on p.1206. A selection of his photographs and an interview appeared in our September issue.

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NEXT MONTH

AND THE NORTH

Is the photography of the North of England different from the South? Is there something special in the feel of the landscape that shows itself in the style of photography? The series of exhibitions at Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal will be examined in detail to see if they provide an answer.

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