**BERWICK CAMERA CLUB**

**24th January 2023**

Geoffrey Bradford

**LANDSCAPE:**

**1. SUMMER SUNRISE SPITTAL.** The silhouetted trees and chimney stack work well in this piece as they accentuate that feeling of early morning. Proportions are also very well balanced within the picture plane, allowing the beautifully patterned sky to play a dominate roll. The two gulls successfully punctuate the composition.

**2. STUDY IN GREEN.** The balance of the composition is successful - the lawned area pulls the viewers gaze towards the very richly textured area of trees and shrubs, and on to the softness of the sky. I particularly like the placement of the shrub at bottom left and the foliage that breaks in from the right as they add depth to the composition. More could be done to pull out the tonal qualities of the piece.

**3. FANCY A SWIM.** The tufts of straw-coloured grasses perfectly complement the sweeping rocks and pools of water on the foreshore. Compositionally it works well, even though the horizon is dropping to the right. Something that could easily be resolved. The bright sunny colours are joyful and pull the whole scene together. Though, I would have liked to have seen at least one area in focus.

**4. CLOSE TO THE WATER.** The chosen depth of field in this piece successfully draws our attention to the main subject, and its extended reflection in the gently broken surface of the water. The architecture and colours shout Nordic, they really do know how to build sympathetically within the landscape to maintain a perfect harmony with nature. The out of focus cliff face provides a good backdrop and adds a further sense of perspective and depth.

**5. LONELY BOLLARD.** In many respects this is a minimalist work, and I am drawn to it because of that. However, minimalism has the tendency to highlight minor areas of discord. We have verticals and diagonals holding the composition together, and what ought to be a horizontal throwing a spanner in the works. Other than that, I enjoyed looking at this and exploring the relationships between the various shapes and forms.

**6. A GREY DAY IN CROMER.** This is an intelligently well composed piece of work. All the elements have been placed perfectly within the picture plane, and successfully exploit the chosen format. I have visited this pier and liked the mix of curving stonework, domes, and how they are complemented by the more geometric forms of the iron work and kiosks. The monochrome treatment perfectly exploits those qualities; it has allowed the manufactured forms to sit comfortably within the natural world. **SECOND.**

**7. VISITORS.** All works very well, using the orthostat to the right and the one to the left anchors the composition, and directs our gaze to the people on the hilltop. Wonderfully observed variety of forms, textures, patterns, and tones come together to make a well-considered piece of work.

**8. HIGHLAND TEXTURES.** A generic though very successfully composed photograph. What I particularly like is the funnelling of the sky down and through the landscape in such a way that the forms of the mountains and shape of the shoreline, together with the reflective water are all allowed to play an equal and successful part in the work.

**9. THROUGH THE SQUARE WINDOW.** The layering and looking through add thoughtfulness to this piece; we often spend time avoiding those things that interfere with our view - people getting in the way or waiting for a car to pass. Making use of such things can open up creative possibilities, and this is a case in point. The ‘valley’ made by using the condensation on the window has made an ordinary ‘view’ much more interesting and encourages the viewer to look a little more closely.

**10. SUMMERTIME IS OVER.** Strong composition that uses the low position of the sun to exploit the shadows in the foreground, and that cast by the kiosk. It is another intelligent piece of work. Although the colours are bright there is a softness about them that comes with the quality of coastal light, especially in Norfolk. The clouds above the theatre at top left increase the sense of scale, depth and perspective and work to balance the darker shadows in the footmarks at bottom right.

**11. AUTUMN STREAM.** Most of this piece comes together very well - it is full of well observed detail, together with rich colour, texture, and pattern. The chosen format successfully exploits the movement of the water through the composition. The wide range of dark and light areas will always present challenges, and the tolerances can be quite difficult to balance. In places the light areas of the water are in fact unprinted paper. It is a minor technical issue that could be resolved by simply adjusting the output value in levels from 255 to around 245.

**12. SPITTAL BEACH.**  An interpretation of the landscape that demands attention. Basically, the picture plane is a collection of familiar natural elements that coalesce to make a rather abstract and perfectly composed photograph. Slabs of pastel colours, soft delicate textures, patterns, and the play of light, together with an intelligent choice of the matt print surface combine to make an extremely imaginative and resolved piece of work. **FIRST.**

**13. WINTER DOGWOOD.** The strength of this piece is the dominant yellow and orange complemented by the blue of the sky. The dogwoods at the bottom add a sense of scale and accentuate the perspective. Their position becomes a frame and pulls the viewer across the scrub, towards the bright row of dogwood at the centre, and then onto the treeline and hills beyond. It is a joyful and thoughtful piece of work.

**14. SERENITY ON THE TEST.** All the picture elements are perfectly placed within the chosen format. The lighter breaks in the water beyond the swans create an important visual link in the composition as they lead the viewer to the opening in the far bank. The small area of reflected sky anchors the image and punctuates the verticality of the distant trees. **THIRD.**

**15. GUIDING LIGHT.**  A dramatic image, full of rich detail. The foaming tideline as it swirls and breaks around the shallow rocks adds to its graphic qualities. This is then countered by the overall softness, though, in a rather threatening sky. The standing branch completes the composition by drawing all of these elements together. An imaginative piece of work.

**16. BOUNCING LIGHT.** The complementary colours of lilac and yellow make this photograph. The composition is perfect and full of imagination. Running diagonally from bottom left we have a series of rippled sand forms that direct us towards the figures walking seaward, and a dog, which seems a little unsure. Printed on matt paper, the colours stay true regardless of how it is viewed, I am surprised that this sort of surface is not used more often.

**ILLUSTRATIVE.**

**17. INTO THE SUNLIGHT.**  The figures are positioned perfectly within the composition as they emerge from the darkness into the light. The brightness and upward thrust of the handrails accentuates their movement and offers some relief from the overpowering blackness of the shadows. Quite a difficult situation to work with, the sunlight needed to be a little more convincing to properly pull it off.

**18. SLEEPING BEAUTY.** And she is of course. The figure itself has been perfectly rendered, but much of the strength of this piece has been diminished by the dominance of the bench back and the way it slopes across the composition. Both of these things could be easily and legitimately remedied in photoshop. (Illustration, should not be confused with photojournalism, the first is creative and the second is informative/factual.)

**19. THE NEW YEAR DIP.** Obviously, a group of brave souls venturing into The North Sea. It is a very graphic piece, and the treatment suits the strong and contrasting light. The wet sand has helped to animate their movement across the composition by breaking up their reflections which extend to the bottom of the frame. Complementary flesh colours work perfectly against the Prussian blue of the sea. **THIRD**

**20. FEEDING TIME TOUR OF BRITAIN.** By cropping the front rider’s head, the composition has been made much stronger by increasing the overall depth of the image. That may have been by luck of course but make the most of it. Wonderfully rich colours full of detail where it matters, combined with softer out of focus areas that provide the context. **SECOND**

**21. SEASONAL PLANNING.**  Daffodils, tulips, and apple blossom set the context. A well composed photograph that makes use of the props and paraphernalia of gardening and their role in the social history of allotments and growing your own. Raised beds with plastic hoops and lengths of fleece, together with the garden bench (for contemplating success and failure), add to the story. It is Social History really.

**22.** **SQUINTING AT THE PERSPECTIVE.** Wonderful to see a photograph so perfectly composed, and one that also provides the opportunity for the viewer to identify the location. Excellent use has been made of the light to capture all the relevant information and detail. The bright yellow top works well against the surrounding blues in the landscape and paintwork on the rear of the board. Also, good to see a smaller print. **FIRST**

**NATURE.**

**23. BOWED AND BROKEN.** Intelligent use of the format as it allows us to concentrate our full attention on the subject without the distraction of too much background. The lighting has modelled the forms and the detail perfectly. The broken piece is an important part of the grouping as it moves the work beyond simply showing perfect specimens, but also exemplifies their fragility. **SECOND**

**24. ENCRUSTED.** The focus is quite soft which makes the study abstract in nature. It is more about texture, pattern, shape, and softness of colour. The shadow that creeps in from the right accentuates the three-dimensional qualities of the leaf and ice. The cluster of crystals to the right is, perhaps, the most important element in the completion of the composition.

**25. FAB AT 70.** Strong composition that makes appropriate use of the square format. Employing a diagonal to position the rose, exploits the unfurling forms of the petals more effectively by pulling the gaze from bottom right to top left. A little more sharpness around the centre would have improved the print without detracting from the velvet softness of the rose.

**26. TAILS.** The composition works well, as does the three distinct tonal areas. The sky is a little bright, but that could easily be resolved. The diagonal movement in the composition is imaginative and does catch and hold the viewers’ attention. However, the focus is very soft and that diminishes the fine textural qualities of the ‘Tails.’

**27. LEMMY.** A quite wonderful piece of work, the tight square cropping is inspired as it demands that the viewer pays full attention to what is going on. The soft warm colours extend from the subject and fill the frame to make a complete statement. Most of the image is out of focus except around the area of mouth and chin and in this particular shot is how it should be. **FIRST**

**28. FRINGE BENEFITS …OR NOT.** Another beautifully observed and composed piece of work. The choice of paper complements the well observed textures and surfaces of subject. The small scale of the print proves that bigger is not necessarily better. The greens of the background and the oranges are in perfect harmony. **THIRD.**

**29. PEEPING INTO THE GLOOM.** Another small piece, which I suppose could be in keeping with the subject. The forms and sticky shiny surfaces glisten in the gloom and are compelling to look at. Some parts of the background are a little distracting, but in many ways, they do provide a genuine context, and that seems to be perfectly legitimate within the category of ‘Nature.’

**PORTRAITURE.**

**30. BILLY WITH HIS MORNING BREW.** Nicely composed study that also provides the context of the piece. The natural light has provided some nice modelling, especially around the facial features. There is an alertness in the model, and his engagement with the photographer is refreshing as it moves away from the archetypal studio shot. **FIRST.**

**31. THE GENTLEMAN BIKER FROM DURHAM.**  Wonderfully sunny days often present problems for portrait photography, but in this case, and because of the very packed composition it works quite well. The Helmet and the brightly painted surroundings add enough distracting element to make for a good piece of work. **SECOND.**

**32. TWO ON A ROCK.**  It looks like a casual family shot, and as such it becomes a memory of the day that will be treasured. The lighting is difficult and given the position of the horizon and the cast shadow to the left it was taken rather hurriedly. However, there are things here that could be worked with. **THIRD.**

**GENERAL.**

**33. DECAY.** In both senses really. The organic and the inorganic combine beautifully to illustrate the story. Both display their underlying structure and have become locked together in the composition. The arch to the right provides an indication of the context, which is possibly ecclesiastical, and in that scenario, there is a surreal element to the piece. I can now only view the verticals and horizontals as crosses. It is one of those occasional pieces of work that encourage interpretation.

**34. PROPAGATION.** A rather beautiful and imaginative work based around the form and colour of an Allium. The possibilities for graphic, textile and surface design are endless when working this way. When Charles Voysey and William Morris were designing wallpaper and textile designs such methods were not imagined. Each piece of the deign would have been drawn and coloured by hand. It would be interesting to see an example of this as a multiple print.

**35. CHECK MATES.** Reminiscent of a basic design exercise from the 1960’s when artist played around with the idea of projecting geometric grids over organic forms. The characters in the composition occupy a space that has become a stage set, and have unknowingly become the performers, in a piece of street art. This is a found piece, seen by someone with the ability to take advantage of a visual opportunity to record it. I would like to think it would build into a series of further works. **FIRST.**

**36. AN ABSENCE OF PENGUINS.** Awell observed and beautifully composed photograph of Berthold Lubetkin’s penguin pool (1934). Without the penguins its scale and purpose are difficult to comprehend, and it has become even more sculptural and abstract. The complementary colours of the orange pathway, the blue water, and the shadows are in perfect harmony with the form of the structure; the reflected branches add a figurative element that anchors the composition securely within the frame. **SECOND.**

**37. BERWICK MARKET BY NIGHT.** Beautiful lighting and shadow formations make this piece. There is enough light to model the forms and textures of the stonework, cast delicate shadows across the tarmac and to carry the viewer back into and through the composition.

**38. STUDY IN STONE.** A patchwork of various qualities and colours of stone punctuated by windows, niches, and capping. The warmer oranges in the stonework, especially around the central window help to lift the image from the overall gloom. Surfaces that are largely flat do work much better when the light is more directional. It would be good to see this particular wall photographed under different lighting conditions. A good example to look at would be the series of paintings made by Claude Monet of the façade of Rouen Cathedral.

**39. LEAF FILTER.** Dividing the composition up into different areas animates the surface, and presents us with a variety of related patterns, shapes, and textures, whilst exploiting the qualities of complementary colour to complete the statement.

**40. THE ONLY SOLE ON THE BEACH.** Good to come across such finds and to record them, they open up opportunities to read around the subject, and to develop ideas for photographic projects. What is the story behind the shoe, how did it get there……. Things get lost, discarded, and washed up. The composition is probably as found and the framing the choice of the photographer. The sand, pebbles, and shadows all add to the context and as an idea it works well. Little of the image is in focus and I am not sure how that happens when the subject is static.

**41. SPRING POSY.** An imaginative, delicate, and understated piece of work. The colour relationships are beautifully rendered and the placement and overlapping forms within the picture plan are well balanced. The hard cut off edges of the stems could have been softened a little more. **THIRD.**

**42. LONG EARED BONGO.** A well composed study with lots of detail. The area around the face is sharp enough to show the softness and delicacy of the feathers, and the things that provide the context have been allowed to fall out of fucus and become less dominant.

**43. BALMORAL CASTLE.** A conventional architectural photograph. The main area of attention seems to be centred around the turret and the tower with the weather vane as that is the only part of the image that is in focus. Good colour, tone, and detail.

**44. SEA MARIGOLD.** I really like the composition in this piece of work. The shadows and lighting extend the mirrored construction in such a way that it occupies a space that is more than itself, and that is clever. It is a minimal piece, and as in all such work it needs to be perfect if it is to succeed. None of the image is in focus.

**CREATIVE.**

**45. BUILDING AND BREAKING.** A beautifully balanced piece of work, composed of a number of simple elements that harmoniously coalesce on the picture plane. The blue green palette, together with the horizontal interwoven forms make a complete statement. The only criticism is that of the falling horizon on the right-hand side is a distraction.

**46. LOST HORIZONS.** The diagonal division in the composition is always going to add interest in such an abstract piece of work as it suggests movement. Soft tones flecked with textures and the suggested transparency/veiling offers a chance of breaking through the surface to something beyond. It is a very painterly piece, and if we remember that whilst photographs are taken, and paintings are made this work perfectly fits the ‘creative’ category.

**47. THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS.** Wonderfully printed image that recalls the modernist work of Paul Strand (1890 -1976) American, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy 1895-1946, professor of painting and photography at the Bauhaus, Hungarian. Their work was analogue of course. The very obvious spiral forms become almost invisible as they move across the picture plan to coalesce at the bottom right-hand corner of the composition. **THIRD.**

**48. TRELLIS.** A combination of organic and made forms merge quite naturally to produce an abstract, but reassuringly comfortable composition. The delicate and sinuous branches complement the geometry of the rusted iron framework that recedes into the shadows. It is an idea that works very well and one that could easily develop into an extended project.

**49. COLDINGHAM BEACH HUTS.** I understand the idea but am not sure that it works that well. I imagine that one of the artistic filters in Photoshop, or other software, has been used to overlay a straightforward photograph to generate an alternative image. One of the principals of creativity in the visual arts is that the individual can be seen to be breaking new ground. It may be worth investigating alternative ways of working with different parts of this image.

**50. HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN.** Reminiscent of the work of Chuck Close, American photorealist painter. 1940-2021.He also worked with photography and did a self-portrait using 9 Polaroid’s. This is an interesting piece because of the varying scales and their juxtaposition within the composition. Being a black and white image removes the ambiguity of colour and moves it towards the idea of the identikit. The negative spaces are refreshingly innovative.

**51. A WALK IN THE WOODS.** Good composition: it all builds from the thinner tree that runs from top to bottom; its outstretched branches tie everything together and form an entrance to the rest of the image. The overall softness and desaturated colour are held together by the matrix of trunks that recede towards the soft green area at centre. Complementary colours, though soft, still play an important part in accentuating the sense of depth.

**52. SACRIFICE.**  There is something quite human about sea washed pebbles, that grinding down and polishing, models their form and heightens their individuality. We pick them up and add them to the growing collection on window sills and shelfs. We choose some and reject others; it’s a basic creative activity. This arrangement goes one stage further and transforms them from individual pieces into an art work and then provides the viewer with a narrative. The composition works very well, as does the raking light that highlights the two figures to the left.

**53. PAWS FOR THOUGHT.**  The process used by this photographer has flattened the surface and presented the viewer with a piece of work that relies on the characters to build the composition. The soft colour palette is reminiscent of early medieval fresco painting, where depth is implied by placement of the picture elements, rather than the change of scale brought about by the conventions of European perspective developed during the Renaissance. I think this is a good idea that is worth pursuing.

**54. BURNING THE MAGIC GARDEN.** Firstly, let me say this is a beautifully presented piece of work. The play on complementary colours is quite innovative as its effect runs contrary to what we would expect. In this piece the upper green area that drapes across and around the composition advances, and the red framed section recedes. This has been further achieved by the bright yellow points of colour and their placement. **SECOND.**

**55. BLOCKED LIGHT.** This a work that you need to pick up and handle as well as look at. The surface itself is almost translucent, it could be tracing paper. This ‘CREATIVE’ category should encourage experimentation with both, process as well as image, and this work does just that. The blocking of the light reveals the hidden qualities of shapes and forms that can sometimes be lost if treated more conventionally. **FIRST.**

**56. SEE NO EVIL.** In many ways it would fit the genre of graphic design and those transfer processes that we remember from the 60’s and 70’s. What goes around, comes around. I like it very much as a way of working and something it would be good to see more of. The composition is well considered as is the sympathetic way in which it has been handled.

**57. ALWAYS THE PHOTOGRAPHER.** A photograph of a photograph. Like the way that we can now legitimately appropriate photography to explore creativity and alternative ways of making. For me, all the value of this work is in the hanging piece, and I would like to see it differently proportioned in relationship

to the overall composition. This may have been intentional of course.