

Glasgow. Passers-by are presented with the striking image of a woman who conforms to none of the usual stereotypes or clichés of advertising. She is not selling a product but asserting her



individuality and right to inhabit a public space. The lack of text plays on serial advertising techniques frequently used by major companies but in so doing encourages a wider set of responses allowing viewers to

attribute their own meanings to the images. The absence of female stereotyping was equated with maleness in the mind of one respondent who wondered if this was a transvestite, however she also appreciated the positive imaging. Interestingly, there were far fewer men waiting in bus queues to debate with but those questioned found it difficult to relate to these images. It is not easy to assess the impact of this type of intervention but Jan-Erik Lundstrom in writing about marginalisation and photography in the catalogue posits a cultural version of Chaos Theory to inspire the continued efforts of 'media guerillas':

'We fantasize, hope and know that art, photography and cultural practices, may work like acupuncture—that one peripheral intervention will make the larger system change its course, that one tiny disturbance at the edge will summon the centre to redress its ways and make it evolve in another direction.'

The notion of redressing the balance of power also informs Nicola Atkinson-Griffiths' city-wide project *Lost and Found*. Her style combines large-scale sculpture with community interaction and demonstrates a viable approach for those working in a community context. During a two month period she visited homes, schools and work places over a six mile

route between Govan and Springburn collecting teaspoons and buttons. The former were fashioned into a chandelier hanging in the Pearce Institute and the latter filling a tower of 480 glass jars in the North Glasgow College. Both these areas have been abandoned to their post-industrial fate yet they were vibrant communities whose skills and energy helped forge the infrastructure of an empire. Through a painstaking process of collection, structuring and labelling, the artist's intention was to create two site-specific works that would reveal a semblance of the communities' character and to recreate a sense of identity.

The Button Tower shares some of the qualities of its stained glass window backdrop and also echoes the stacking arrangements of tenements and tower blocks. The jars are named and their contents encapsulate the history, memories and diversity of these communities—Margaret Mary Fitzgerald, Arturo Chuez, Mr Crawford, Ross Hassan. Their buttons are leather covered, gilt encrusted, threaded with wool to make a child's toy or inscribed—The Kings Own Scottish Borderers. This assemblage of commonplace objects elicits a profound human response.

In the sombre mahogany panelled gloom of the MacLeod Hall, *The Teaspoon Chandelier* scintillates. Views from living room windows line the walls like icons and recorded sounds from streets and houses create an atmosphere that is far from prosaic. These domestic objects represent the structure of social interaction and evoke the shared experience of individuals and communities. The process of collection was paramount in the creation of these sculptures which have a valid aesthetic in their own right. Discussions with the artist explored notions of community and contributors responded enthusiastically to the eccentricity of the idea.

Lost and Found is the latest in a series of conceptual works by Atkinson-Griffiths that integrate the detritus of human existence into highly structured artifacts. Her structuring does not impose authority on the participants but offers creative possibilities and reveals facets of their lives that are also pertinent social comments. ∞

Jo McNamara

Public and Private
Mansfield Place Church, Edinburgh
June–July 1993
Intimate Lives
City Centre, Edinburgh June–July 1993

Organised as a collaboration between Stills Gallery and the Institut Francais d'Ecosse and curated by Alain Reinaudo, the city wide exhibition *Public and Private—Secrets Must Circulate* suggests to the viewer in its title the multiple possibilities of enigma and transgression. It hints at the revelation of covert knowledge with the pleasure of the expectation of *knowing*. The exhibition was concerned and framed within the philosophical premise that it explored, 'the notions of voyeurism, exhibitionism, family secrets and media fictions and the complex relationships between the public and private nature of the work of art, between the artist's meaning and the viewer's interpretation'. This stated lack of centre, of the fracture between intention and effect, artist and viewer, public and private indicates the tensions between the role of an artist, the function of art and the complex web of social relations which circumscribe the 'reading' of photographic imagery. The latter point is intrinsically related to the nature and form of 'secrets' if we liken it to Foucault's idea of silences or Freud's observation of the unease inherent in culture. In Foucault's use of the term, 'silence itself—the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to say; the discretion that is required between speakers—is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies'. The interesting and paradoxical context to the exhibition is that here the work is positioned as being self-conscious of such silences and visually able to articulate such understandings in the form and content of the image. Is this liberatory or sustaining the illusion of liberation?

Whilst the work on show was situated in various spaces throughout Edinburgh, one venue was outstanding for its symbiotic relationship with the work placed within it. This was Mansfield Place Church, an old,

Anne Elliott. From The Hazel McLaren series

disused Catholic Apostolic Church in East London Street which has its own secrets to circulate. Uncovering the social history of the building simultaneously adds further elements to fragmented Scottish history. The Edinburgh Social Union formed by Patrick Geddes in 1884 counted among its decorators Phoebe Anstruther who in 1893 was commissioned to paint the vast interior of the church. Celtic inspired floor tiling and figurative religious murals fashion a historical and decorative inner space which is both mythic and socio-cultural. This resonates with, illuminates and indeed multiplies the associations and emotions which spiral outwards from the work in this specific and quite special place. This is most evident in work by the artists Helen Chadwick, Patrick Raynaud and Jane Mulfinger.

Helen Chadwick's photo-installation *Eat Meis*, a symbolic altarpiece fashioned from mythological symbols, is a mandorla, a mediaeval christian image of contemplation and reconciliation, a healing unity of opposites. Physically, it is a structure of monumental size which straddles the opposite points of the altar. Upon this expanse of white space protected by clear perspex is a simple arrangement of almond-shaped forms. At the bottom lies a row of three metaphorical eyes with rungs of dried flowers and a space-like blackness forming the pupil and iris. Above this and placed in the centre, like the seventh unseeable chakra, is an almond/vaginal shaped form with an oyster at its centre enveloped by folds of yellow dried flowers. The mandorla is the segment that arises when two circles partly overlap, the fusion of heaven and earth, the ego and shadow. The evolution of Christian thought has sadly led to metaphor interpreted as historical fact and this has silenced the expression of female desire and the degradation of physical and spiritual properties of the female body. All human experience is grounded on the first separation from the female body, that which gives life to all human life and thought. Helen Chadwick has restored this first point of reference in all mythologies to its central significance and reaffirmed the potential of

the photographic image to achieve this visual and spiritual harmony.

If it is the gaze upon the female which is the primary point of departure for Chadwick, it is the gaze upon the nude male body which concerns the work of the artist Patrick Raynaud in his installation *Vanitas*. This comprises a series of large and small steel boxes which are placed throughout the floor space of the church and are left open to reveal their illuminated contents. The viewer looks over and down upon images of naked men with their eyes closed, questionably sleeping or dead, contained and confined, looked at but lacking awareness of this look. Carrying cases or coffins, these containers of male bodies, the physical body as distinct from the spiritual body, weaves ideas which concern the splitting of the body/soul, life/death, divine/human.

Within Hindsight, Within Earshot is the title of Jane Mulfinger's specially commissioned installation. In a small, enclosed, private part of the church, the artist has created a work which meditates upon properties of the senses and their relation to our construction and interpretation of experience. It is as if the artist is playing the role of conductor of an invisible symphony orchestrated by the sense of sight, touch and hearing. Chairs are arranged in a circle upon which are stacks of books written in Braille. A circle of fans surrounds this creating currents of air which are constantly turning the pages of open books. Projected onto the moving pages are images from found photographs; seagulls, clocks, a storm, an aeroplane which suggest the constant movement of space and time, the seamlessness and illusions of cinema. The narrative is never complete and dependent on meanings gained from the total sensory experience. That this is different in individuals depending on which is their primary sense makes clear the particularity of subjectivity in relation to physical reality which is never all-knowing.

Secrets Must Circulate as seen in the Mansfield Church is an intriguing and intelligent exhibition strengthened by its lack of polemic and curiosity with the theoretical possibilities of photography.

It can easily be said that the theoretical contribution to photography made by the late Jo Spence revolutionised thinking on the relation between imagery, the family album, autobiography and the role of photography in depiction of this. Curated by the City Arts Centre, the photographic exhibition *Intimate Lives; Photographers and their Families*, also came under the Fotofeis banner.

After Jo Spence, the ways in which the self is represented in



Maud Sulter: Elsie, Dewar, Madge, Davie
from *Significant Others* 1993

relation to the family is a complex psychological and political task in which idealisation and the bourgeois notion of the family are exposed as phallacies. *Intimate Lives* is as interesting for what is not there as to what is. Of particular note in the show is work by Nan Goldin, Maud Sulter and Julie Millowick.

For Nan Goldin, the family is chronicled not as the stereotyped nuclear unit but as the folk with whom we have affectionate bonds and ties. These are depicted not in idealised form but with emotional directness. Images of a friend crying, sleeping, looking tired and unglamorous, 'real'—the banality and drama which is the nature of 'relationship'.

The family album is the source of imagery for Maud Sulter's installation *Significant Others*. Large black and white images of the artist's family past and present are framed within black borders with a blackboard surface upon which is handwritten text; dates often with a question mark. This work centres on the nature of psychological

past memory, of love and the identities, gendered and racial, of the significant others who nurture this.

In Julie Millowick's *Familiar Stories*, images and handwritten text are a visual, autobiographical diary reflecting on childhood memory, mothering and significant events like a death in the family. They are a narrative on domestic life and relationships told with frankness and a sense of humour. This encircles all her themes which capture the laughter, love and tragedy of family stories. *Intimate Lives* affirms the idea of autobiography as a creative fiction, a fashioning of a story, subjective and with multiple meanings in which the photographer can suggest, not control what is revealed and what remains hidden. ∞

Lorna Waite

Borderlands

Contemporary Photography
from the Baltic States
Cottier Theatre, Glasgow June–July 1993

A former church converted into an arts space, Glasgow's **The Cottier** provides the rather unusual site for *Borderlands*, an exhibition of 17 contemporary photographers from the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. After half a century of Soviet occupation, the Baltic States gained independence in Summer 1991. The present exhibition marks the first substantial review of photography from these lands, a photography which grew out of the amateur photography clubs allowed during Soviet rule.

Much is made of the past in this exhibition of contemporary photography. Entering the former church one encounters a sequence of 6 large-scale photographs by the Estonian artist, **Peter Linnap**, paper prints from old negatives which are simply tacked to the wall. They are images of shootings, prints which show uniformed soldiers aiming guns, military exercises, a posing and playing up to the camera. But what first appear as figures of power, on further consideration leads us to think about disempowerment. The photographs were taken in the Summer of 1955 by Linnap's father-in-law while on national service. Are these, then, Estonians in Russian uniforms?

But what stands as the most haunting and effective re-use of old photographic images is that by the Lithuanian artist, **Vytautas Stanionis**. His father was a passport photographer and Stanionis, in a unique collaboration, makes prints from his father's original negatives. What is extraordinary about the portraits he reprints is both the way in which they were taken and the original context for which they were made. Taken just after the end of World War II, film shortages meant two people had to be pictured at a time,

it would take something away from him. And this is very much the case with the Lithuanians portrayed in Stanionis' work. The taking of their photograph is in effect taking something very important away, their very identity as Lithuanian citizens, since the passports they are paired up to be photographed for class them as Russian subjects.

Peter Tooming makes photographs in the exact sites found in old photographs. In 1987 he tracked down the locations visited by the Estonian postcard photographer Carl Sarap in

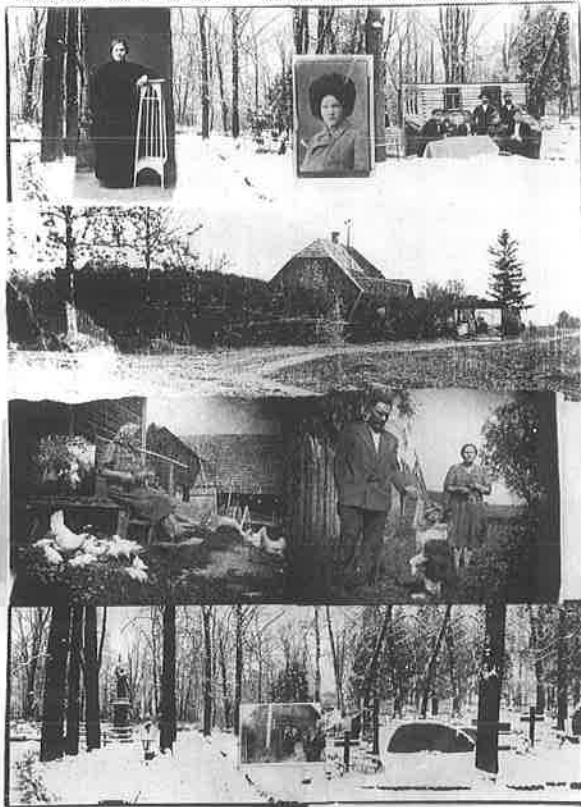


their portraits blown up separately for each passport photograph. Stanionis' appropriation of his father's pictures gives us portraits about appropriation itself. The end of the war marked the beginning of Soviet rule for Lithuanians. The war was thus not really over for those pictured but would continue for another half century. And the portraits attest to this. The subjects refuse a smile, meeting the camera with a considerable degree of trepidation. Brought together before the camera, there remains little relation between them, each is isolated from the other. A sense of subjugation is underlined by the fact that the portraits are hung below our eye level. So the story goes, the great French writer Honore de Balzac was very reluctant to have his photograph taken because he believed

1937. Pairing his photographs with reprints of Sarap's, Tooming's work allows us to compare the changes—not necessarily for the better—that took place over fifty years, a time before and a time during Soviet rule. **Eve Linnap's** work is also concerned with change, edged by numerical columns logging the years, her photographs involve a layering of images gathered from family albums, chronologies of the changing living places and final resting places of Estonian people.

The Latvian photographer **Valts Kleins** presents portraits of homeless adolescents, each bearing a text incised by the sitter telling us of their wants and wishes. **Gvido Kajons** follows a more conventional documentary line with his street photographs of Latvia from the late 1980s. His pictures provide

1896
1900
1905
1910
1915
1925
1930
1935
1940
1945
1950
1955
1960
1965
1970
1975
1976



Organised by
Street Level.
Borderlands included
17 photographers:
Peeter Linnap,
Eve Linnap,
Harald Leppikson,
Juri Lukys,
Remigijus Treigys,
Gintautas Trimakas,
Saulius Paukstis,
Vytautas Stanionis,
Valts Kleins,
Gvido Kajons,
Inta Ruka
& Andrejs Grants.
Borderlands Travels to
Impressions Gallery.
York in January 1994

Eve Linnap
Estonian Home 1993

visually striking records of the ubiquity of Soviet propaganda, of icons of the communist regime amidst daily details—a land invaded with signs.

However, not all the prints on show are so clearly marked by history. The Lithuanian photographer **Alvydas Lukys** makes enigmatic prints about private rituals—an embalmed body, an empty bed, a chair pushed towards a wall to which is pinned a square white cloth. Unlike Treigys', the photography of **Gintaras Zinkevicius** involves comic rather than sinister rituals. He takes the (communist) notion of 'art for the people' to an absurd extreme, presenting photographs of the bizarre sites of his exhibitions—a line of prints in the river, a series of pictures strung upon a line in a field of sheep. Zinkevicius' work, viewed from the perspective of a traditional Western history of art, appears more akin to art of the 1960s than the early 1990s. Indeed, much of the photography on show carries with it more than a degree of familiarity. In the end what the diverse work of *Borderlands* brings out is the power of the more straightforward (and less aesthetic) deployments of photography—Stanionis' restoration of the full image behind Soviet Passport photographs in the mid-1940s and Kajons' street photography in the 1980s. ∞

Mark Durden

Time and Tide

The 2nd Tyne International Triennale,
Newcastle June–Sept 1993

Three years on from its inception, when artists were offered the interiors of newly-built houses on a National Garden Festival site, the Tyne International in '93 centres its activities around Newcastle's Quayside area for a three-month exhibition of contemporary art. *Time & Tide*, curated by Swiss-born Corinne Diserens (latterly of IVAM, Valencia), utilises a number of extraordinary buildings and sites in close proximity to the river, including some previously mined by the likes of Projects UK and Edge 90 for temporary artists projects. The Quayside area has been chosen by Diserens principally for its accessibility and the anticipated hordes of people who would visit the Tall Ships Race (in addition to the presence of a river 'full of the ghosts of workers') The centre-piece for the whole exhibition, a Grade II listed C.W.S. warehouse, of which just three floors are used to accommodate work by some of the fifteen participating artists, mixing videos, and borrowed and commissioned works in a surrogate gallery

One of the highlights of the resulting incoherent exhibition, is undoubtedly Vito Acconci's *Virtual River* in which water is pumped up from the

Tyne to fill a boat-shaped basin dug into a gentrified stretch of Quay. A small rowing boat floats impotently on this newly-manufactured mini-river, producing a quietly ironic and playful piece.

Acconci's work is well-represented, with one floor of the CWS warehouse given over to a mini-retrospective containing performance documentation, models for urban projects and two specially re-created installations from the mid-seventies. These latter pieces translate refreshingly well into the space particularly *VD Lives/TV Must Die* in which the ferrous/concrete columns of the building act as supports for two massive rubber slingshots holding back two bowling balls, restrained by steel cabling in a state of unbearable tension. The balls are aimed directly at suspended T.V. monitors, on one a roving camera scans an orgiastic scene from a pornographic magazine whilst on the other mostly grey screen, images of genitalia suddenly appear and disappear. An incoherent soundtrack of gunshots and speech completes this unsettling and powerful scenario.

The other piece which successfully utilises the warehouse space, taking its historical usage, yet mindful of the etiquette of viewing prevalent in traditional galleries (and warehouses), is the installation by Readymades *Belong to Everyone*. This is the first UK appearance for the agency (founded by Phillippe Thomas in 1987) which offers clients the possibility to buy into project authorship. A simulated office/workshop is enacted, creating a narrative of production and distribution in which photographs of museums are carefully wrapped; cardboard boxes, emblazoned with the agency's trademark signature, are filled with polystyrene chips, and left stacked onto palettes and industrial trolleys awaiting collection in the existing loading bays.

Aside from the obvious art quotations, the piece contains jokey self-references, pointing to the agency's position in the art market—computer bar and pie charts dissects its financial successes and inserted underneath a photograph of art collectors at Venice, a Readymades