

The Photographers' Gallery

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Opening times:
Monday to Saturday: 11am – 6pm
Sunday: 12 – 6pm
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1 David Goldblatt, *The commando of National Party stalwarts which escorted prime minister and party leader Hendrik Verwoed and his wife, Betsie, to the party's 50th anniversary celebrations at de Wildt, Transvaal. October 1964*

Citigroup Photography Prize 2004 29 January – 28 March 2004

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Introduction to Exhibition Notes:

The Photographers' Gallery Exhibition Notes are produced for teachers and group leaders on exhibitions taking place during the school year. These notes are available to download as a PDF document at the start of each exhibition from the Gallery's website www.photonet.org.uk - under 'Group Visits' in the 'Information' section. They are also available in printed form, along with copies of the Gallery magazine GREAT, from the main reception at 5 Great Newport Street. A brief history of The Photographers' Gallery as well as more information about other aspects of the Gallery's facilities and programme is shown on the website under 'General' in the 'Information' section.

Notes on each exhibition during 2003/4 are produced by freelance writer Jo Hall, with support from practising teachers and gallery staff. The Photographers' Gallery welcomes suggestions and feedback on the Exhibition Notes from teachers and group leaders. Please use the Evaluation Form on page 16.

A large print version of these notes is available from the reception of 5 Great Newport Street or by telephoning 020 7831 1772.

Planning your Visit:

The Photographers' Gallery has two sites at 5 and 8 Great Newport Street. Entrance to The Photographers' Gallery is free of charge. All donations are gratefully received.

London Underground: Leicester Square
Overground Rail: Charing Cross Station
Parking: NCP, 6-8 Upper St Martin's Lane, WC2
tel: 020 7836 7451
Coaches: The Photographers' Gallery regrets that there is no parking for coaches in the immediate area. There is a coach drop-off point behind the National Gallery on Orange Street, SW1.



Groups larger than 10 people are requested to telephone ahead to book their visit. Below are some suggestions for planning your visit so that everyone can benefit from what the Gallery has to offer.

- Book your visit at least one week in advance or two weeks in advance if you are planning to visit towards the end of the exhibition dates. Have some alternative dates planned.
- Visit early during the exhibition's dates. Popular exhibitions tend to get busier the longer they are on show.
- When arriving at the Gallery, please report to the reception desk staff at 5 Great Newport Street.
- Visit earlier in the day and avoid 5 Great Newport Street between 12.30 and 2.00pm, when the café space might be busy at lunch hour. Please note that there is no space for groups to eat packed lunches in the galleries or café.
- Primary and secondary teachers should check when booking if they have any concerns about sensitive content within the Gallery's exhibitions.
- Visit each Gallery site in groups no larger than 15 students. A full class of pupils should be split into two groups and alternate their visits between sites. Each school group should be accompanied by one or more adults at all times.
- Please note that the Gallery will occasionally be closed for installing between exhibitions. Always check your visit corresponds to exhibition opening times and dates.
- Please ensure you fill in a Group Visits form from reception if you wish to be included on the Gallery Education database.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Photography: a brief summary

In the mid-nineteenth century, the painter Paul Delaroche famously declared 'From this day, painting is dead'. This quote provides some idea of the significance of photography when Frenchman Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre first announced its discovery in 1839. For centuries basic photographic techniques, in the form of the *camera obscura*, had been used by architects, artists and scientists to explore perspective and the accuracy of drawing and painting. But photography as we know it today has come a long way from its origins as an aid to other disciplines in the arts and sciences.

The medium developed quickly from the first fragile daguerreotypes to the photographic negative and print process, initially developed in 1840 by the English scientist and artist William Henry Fox Talbot. From the mid-nineteenth century, the Western World experienced a period of enormous industrial and technological change and, within 50 years, access to photography increased dramatically. This was mainly due to massive public use of George Eastman's handheld, portable Kodak 'Brownie' camera. Colonial expansion, the creation of modern America, world wars and political revolutions, as well as artistic movements, are just some of the events that the camera was able to disseminate throughout the world as never before.

Photography has been both witness to and collaborator in the social, economic and technological developments of its time. The writer and philosopher Hubert Damisch pointed out that history itself has become increasingly influenced by photography (1). Politicians and public figures have always recognised the power of the photograph, just as photojournalists and activists have used it to challenge official history and give an alternative view.

In 1936 Walter Benjamin famously described photography as 'the work of art in the age of mechanical production' (2). The popularization of photographic reproduction hugely increased the dissemination of visual information. In newspapers, books, postcards, advertising and magazines, it provided the possibility of structuring, cataloguing and understanding the world. In addition to its crucial determining role in the public domain, photography also developed an important position in the personal and domestic world. Through family albums, studio portraiture and holiday snaps photography has been assimilated into everyday experience in a way that makes it almost inconceivable to imagine life without it.

The photographic image is always subject to a continuous state of transformation and metamorphosis. The sheer variety of processes - from the heliotype, calotype, albumen print, silver print, photogenic drawing to

polaroid and digital processes - demonstrate the medium's changing character. These permutations remind us of the inherent complexity and shifting nature of what constitutes a photograph. In addition, the size and scale of an image, and the context within which it is experienced, will change its perceived value as well as its function. A double-page spread in a magazine or a framed studio portrait on the mantelpiece at home has a very different status and meaning to the same photograph if it is signed, framed and mounted on an art gallery wall (3).

Until the 1970s, 'serious' photography was synonymous with black & white prints while colour belonged to the arena of the amateur. More recently, artist/photographers such as Andreas Gursky and Thomas Demand have used highly sophisticated colour photographs, often on a very large scale, for museum exhibitions. The snapshot aesthetic of the amateur has become equally prevalent in contemporary galleries through the work of artists such as Richard Billingham, or 'real' amateurs such as Gary Lee Boas (4). Artists have also incorporated photography into their practice to critique everything from political ideologies, as in the photomontages of Hannah Höch to questioning the very value of representation itself, as seen in the work of Barbara Kruger and Victor Burgin. Others, such as Jeff Wall or Cindy Sherman, use photography to create narratives that blur the boundaries between documentary and fiction.

Our experiences of the world at large are predominantly mediated through photography, as well as television, film and video. International events are accessible from the privacy of our own homes. They are held at a safe distance although our access to them is immediate. Conversely, private life has increasingly pervaded the public domain as intimate and everyday experience has become a rich source of inspiration for artists and photographers. Amateur and anonymous imagery is disseminated through new avenues such as the internet and mobile telephones. Although it is tempting to think that everything in the world has now been represented, photographed or filmed, it is always important to consider what has been left out of the picture frame. The power of photography still resides in its ability to challenge assumptions as well as to inform us about the world. It raises important questions about who we are and who we wish to be.

Footnotes

1. The writer and philosopher Hubert Damisch points out that history has been influenced – with increasing speed – by photography, which ‘wishes to be present in history, and in official history just as much as in the most secret history, in collective history as much as that of the individual’. In ‘A partir de la photographie’ in the preface to R. Krauss ‘Le Photographique: pour une théorie des écarts’ (Paris, Marcola, 1990).
2. Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt (Introduction) ‘Illuminations’ (Pimlico, 1999).
3. The works of Seydou Keita (Mali, 1923-2001) and Harry Jacobs (UK, b.1918) are good examples of studio portraitists whose work has been transferred into art galleries in recent years.
4. Gary Lee Boas’ exhibition *Starstruck* was at The Photographers’ Gallery 11 April – 26 May 2001. The exhibition featured Boas’ own snapshot photographs taken of celebrities between 1966 – 1980.

Suggested Reading List

— Suitable for A-level and above

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| <p>Roland Barthes <i>Camera Lucida</i> (Vintage Classics, 1993); <i>Image-Music-Text</i> (Fontana Press, 1987); and <i>Mythologies</i> (Vintage, 1993);
 John Berger <i>Ways of Seeing</i> (Penguin Books, 1990);
 John Berger and Jean Mohr <i>Another Way of Telling</i> (Harmondsworth, 1992);
 Richard Bolton (ed) <i>The Contest of Meaning</i> (MIT Press, 1992);
 Victor Burgin (ed) <i>Thinking Photography</i> (Palgrave Macmillan, 1982);
 Graham Clarke <i>The Photograph</i> (Oxford University Press, 1997);</p> | <p>Michel Frizot (ed) <i>A New History of Photography</i> (Könemann, 1998);
 David Green (ed) <i>Where is the Photograph?</i> (Photoforum/Photoworks, 2003);
 Susan Sontag <i>On Photography</i> (Penguin, 1979);
 Alan Trachtenberg <i>Classic Essays on Photography</i> (New Haven, 1986);
 John Tagg <i>The Burden of Representation</i> (Palgrave Macmillan, 1988);
 Liz Wells (ed) <i>The Photography Reader</i> (Routledge, 2003).</p> |
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Introduction

The *Citigroup Photography Prize*, founded in 1996 by Citibank in association with The Photographers' Gallery, is one of the most prestigious international photography awards. An exhibition of the finalists' work is held each year at the Gallery. Artists and photographers are nominated for their contribution to photography over the past year. The prize seeks to acknowledge some of today's leading photographers and to explore photography's role in contemporary society.

A jury of three experts arrive at a shortlist of four artists from nominations made by photography professionals and the general public. Artists and photographers are nominated for an exhibition held in Britain, or a book published, in the past year. A 'winner' will be announced on 4 March 2004 and will receive a prize award of £20,000.

The selection of **Robert Adams** (USA, b. 1937), **Peter Fraser** (UK, b. 1953), **David Goldblatt** (South Africa, b. 1930) and **Joel Sternfeld** (USA, b. 1944) as finalists in this year's *Citigroup Photography Prize* brings together four photographers who have had a significant influence on contemporary artistic and photographic practice. Paul Wombell, Director of The Photographers' Gallery, comments that these artists are 'in many respects photographers' photographers who have not yet received the public recognition that their influence or work warrants.'

Robert Adams

‘...what we purchased, what we paid, and what we could not buy. [The photographs] document a separation from ourselves, and in turn from the natural world that we professed to love.’

Robert Adams, in *What We Bought: The New World*

Robert Adams has been nominated for his work shown in the *Cruel and Tender* exhibition held at Tate Modern in 2003, which featured a selection of images from his extremely influential series *What We Bought: The New World* (Scenes from the Denver Metropolitan Area), 1970–1974. Photographs from this series are shown in 5 and 8 Great Newport Street.

Adams returned to Colorado in the mid-1960s, revisiting the countryside where he spent much of his youth. Changes to the unspoilt landscape, which embodied the American idea of the West with its vast open spaces, are documented in these photographs. Adams highlights the consequences of unregulated development and the effects of mass consumerism. His photographs show scenes of cheaply-constructed, affordable housing and trailer parks, neon logos and billboard advertisements, supermarkets and drug stores. Adams’ concerns about these developments are highly relevant to our society today, some 30 years after the work was first made.

Discussion points

How does Adams compose his photographs in a way that highlights the discrepancy between nature and urban sprawl?

How does Adams seem to incorporate elements such as light, heat and cold into his black and white photographs?



1 Robert Adams, *Denver, Colorado*, 1973



2 Robert Adams, *Untitled*, 1973



3 Robert Adams, *Untitled*, 1977

Peter Fraser

‘I’m trying to understand what the world around me is made of through the act of photographing it.’

Peter Fraser



1 Peter Fraser, *Untitled*, 2002-2003

Peter Fraser has been nominated for a new body of work that was first shown at the *Brighton Photo Biennial 2003*. Photographs from this series are shown in 5 and 8 Great Newport Street.

Over the last 20 years, Peter Fraser has established himself as one of Britain’s most influential photographers, introducing to the UK a preoccupation with the everyday that a number of American colour photographers were exploring during the 1970s. Fraser has created an extraordinary body of work where the most ordinary things – an abandoned carton, a paper aeroplane, a sheet of corrugated plastic – are transformed from objects into subjects, depicting some of the details and leftovers of human existence.



2 Peter Fraser, *Untitled*, 2002-2003

The photographs by Peter Fraser in the *Citigroup Photography Prize* concentrate on the material and sculptural properties of seemingly unimportant, unnoticed objects. These objects, caught spontaneously by the artist, record the mass of things that we use, and discard, in everyday life.

Discussion points

What can taking photographs of abandoned, overlooked and unnoticed objects tell us about human impact on the environment?



3 Peter Fraser, *Untitled*, 2002-2003

Is the use of colour essential in Peter Fraser’s work or could he achieve the same effect in black and white?

David Goldblatt

‘My photography became a political enquiry, an interest in real things. My concern was not to make ‘interesting photographs’ but to probe the immediate world I lived in.’

David Goldblatt

David Goldblatt has been nominated for his exhibition *Fifty One Years*, shown at Modern Art, Oxford in 2003. Goldblatt’s work holds a unique position within documentary photography. Since 1961 his work has been illuminating the society in which he lives. He does not take pictures of events as a photojournalist might, but instead concentrates on sites and activities from everyday life.

The Citigroup Photography Prize 2004 includes work from three of Goldblatt’s series, along with some new large-format, colour photographs that study the relationships between the people of South Africa and their landscape. *Particulars* focusses on close-ups of the human body. *The Transported of Kwandebele* shows workers who are forced commute up to eight hours each day to earn their living. *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then* is a study of buildings that reveals how the immense discrepancies in South African society are registered in its architecture.

Discussion points

How does the content of David Goldblatt’s photographs, which intentionally lacks sensation, convey the problems inherent in the political (and psychological) structure of South African society and culture?

How do David Goldblatt’s photographs highlight the importance of control of the land, both historically and today, in South Africa?



1. David Goldblatt, *Foundations: Johannesburg from the south-west* 12 July 2003



2 David Goldblatt, *Workers, who commute up to 8 hours per day between their homes in KwaNdebele, the apartheid Bantustan, and their work in Pretoria, seen here on the bus going home. Some on this bus will not reach home before 10pm. Most will rise between 2 and 2.30am the next day in order to catch the bus to work. February 1984.*



3 David Goldblatt, *The commando of National Party stalwarts which escorted prime minister and part leader Hendrik Verwoed and his wife, Betsie, to the party's 50th anniversary celebrations at de Wildt, Transvaal. October 1964*

Joel Sternfeld

'[His work is] curious and complicated ... often involving at a second glance, incidents that are bizarre and unusual.'

Brian Wallis on Joel Sternfeld, *Citigroup Photography Prize 2004* catalogue

Joel Sternfeld was nominated for his solo exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery in 2003. Photographs from *Walking the High Line* are shown in 5 Great Newport Street. The High Line is a disused stretch of raised New York Central Railroad track running through the western edge of Manhattan. The railway has somehow escaped demolition in the 20 years since it was last used, but there has been much debate on how to use the land. A group of local residents, including Joel Sternfeld, has successfully campaigned for this incongruous and unexpected piece of wilderness to be turned into an urban park.

A selection of photographs from *American Prospects*, a series taken by Joel Sternfeld as he travelled around America in a camper van, trying to gauge the national mood, are on show in 8 Great Newport Street. He investigated the blurred boundaries between city and wilderness. His photographs show a culture that is inextricably linked to the land, but which is simultaneously idyllic and on the verge of ecological disaster. The impact of *American Prospects* continues to be felt in contemporary artistic, filmmaking and photographic practice.

Discussion points

Walking the High Line – How do these photographs make us think of the history of a city – and its future?

American Prospects – Would you agree that Joel Sternfeld's photographs illustrate the saying 'art should supply what life does not'?



1 Joel Sternfeld, *A Spring Evening, the Hudson, May 2001*, from *Walking The High Line*



2 Joel Sternfeld, *After A Flash Flood, Rancho Mirage, California, July 1979*, from *American Prospects*



3 Joel Sternfeld, *McLean, Virginia, December 1978* from *American Prospects*

For General discussion

How does a series of photographs that are individually unexceptional convey information about a society or culture differently compared with a single, spectacular image?

How does black & white and colour photography differ in the messages it can convey? Are both media still acceptable for artists to use?

Further Reading, the *Citigroup Photography Prize 2004* — Suitable for A-level and above

Citigroup Photography Prize 2004 catalogue (The Photographers' Gallery, 2004)
Robert Adams ***Why People Photograph*** (Aperture, 1996)
Robert Adams ***Beauty in Photography*** (Aperture, 1989)
Robert Adams ***The New West*** (Walther Konig, 2000)
Robert Adams ***What we Bought: The New World Scenes From The Denver Metropolitan Area 1970-1974*** (Stiftung Niedersachsen 1995)
Joel Sternfeld ***Walking The High Line*** (Steidl Verlag, 2002)
Joel Sternfeld ***American Prospects*** (Steidl Verlag, 2004)
Joel Sternfeld ***On This Site: Landscape in Memoriam*** (Chronicle Books, 1996)
Joel Sternfeld ***Stranger Passing*** (Bulfinch Press, 2001)

Peter Fraser ***Two Blue Buckets*** (Cornerhouse Publications, 1988)
David Goldblatt: Fifty-One Years (Actar, 2002)
David Goldblatt ***Particulars*** (1975)
David Goldblatt ***In Boksberg*** (Gallery Press, Cape Town, 1982)
James Lingwood ***Epic and the Everyday*** (Art Books International, 1995)
Strangers: The First ICP Photography Triennale of Photography (ICP, 2003)
Documenta XI catalogue (2002)
Jack Kerouac ***On the Road*** (Penguin Classics, 2003)
Susan Stewart ***On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*** (Duke University Press, 1993)

Curriculum Links:

The photographs shown in the *Citigroup Photography Prize 2004* can be linked to several areas of the curriculum for both Key Stages 2 and 3. The worksheets on Page 14 & 15 can be copied double-sided for use in the gallery.

Key Stage 2 QCA Schemes of work

Art and Design, Unit 5A, *Objects and Meanings* – Peter Fraser
Art and Design, Unit 6C, *A Sense of Place* – Robert Adams, Joel Sternfeld
Citizenship, Unit 5, *Living in a Diverse World* – David Goldblatt

Key Stage 3 QCA Schemes of work

Art and Design, Unit 7C, *Recreating the Landscape* – Robert Adams, Joel Sternfeld
Art and Design, Unit 8A, *Objects and Viewpoints* – Peter Fraser
Art and Design, unit 9A, *Life Events* – all artists
Citizenship, Unit 21, *People and the Environment* – Adams, Goldblatt, Sternfeld
Geography, Unit 12, *Images of a Country* – Adams, Goldblatt, Sternfeld
Geography, Unit 16, *What is Development?* – Adams, Goldblatt, Sternfeld

Practical Projects to continue in the classroom:

Material properties

Find unusual objects/locations, concentrating on their material properties and colour contrasts.

- Use a viewfinder (an A4 piece of card with a small square cut in the centre through which to frame and view subjects) to frame a series of objects and make an observational drawing
- Write a story, or draw a set of story boards, explaining how one of the objects in your photograph or drawing (or one of Peter Fraser's photographs) came to be where it is

What shapes the landscape?

- Find a local site that contrasts urban landscape with nature's reclamation of the space (possibly derelict) and take photographs showing how the two exist side by side. Who has been responsible for shaping this landscape? How might it evolve in the future?
- Make a 2-D or 3-D response to the site

Practical Projects to continue in the classroom cont:

Black and white vs. colour photography

- Pick a black and white photograph that has been taken since the popular use of colour photography in the late 1960s and consider why the artist chose to use black and white rather than colour

Making a series

- Take a series of photographs of your local area that aim to present how you feel about the area as a whole (rather than trying to capture everything in one picture)
- Take a series of close-up photographs which begin to make a statement about something

Landscape and memory

- Return to a location where something good happened to you. Photograph or draw it. Think about how the landscape has changed, or how you have changed. Write about these changes.

Other photography exhibitions showing in public galleries in London:

Gerhard Richter: Atlas, Whitechapel Gallery, 6 Dec 2003 – 14 Mar 2004

www.whitechapel.org

The Schweppes Photographic Portrait Prize 2003, National Portrait Gallery, 5 November 2003 – 15 February 2004 www.npg.org.uk

Bill Brandt – A Centenary Retrospective, Victoria and Albert Museum, 24 March – 25 July 2004, www.vam.ac.uk

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2003, The Natural History Museum, 18 Oct 2003 – 18 April 2004, www.nhm.ac.uk

There is work by each artist in both 5 and 8 Great Newport Street.

Robert Adams

Robert Adams took these photographs after revisiting the West of America (the old Wild West) after a gap of 30 years. When you think of the 'Wild West', what sort of landscape do you picture? Where did you get your ideas about the Wild West from – films, TV, books, songs?

Robert Adams was shocked at the changes that had taken place since he first visited the area. What do you think had happened during that time? How might that make Robert Adams feel?

Peter Fraser

Why might artists choose to take photographs of everyday, unnoticed objects like those shown in Peter Fraser's work? How does Peter Fraser encourage us to look at these ordinary objects differently?

Do you think Peter Fraser's photographs are artificially staged, like a still life painting, or taken as he finds them. Why?

There is work by each artist in both 5 and 8 Great Newport Street.

David Goldblatt

David Goldblatt has been taking photographs of people and places in South Africa for 50 years. Describe three different groups of people (think about their lifestyles and standards of living) shown in his photographs.

Choose two of David Goldblatt's photographs and explain why together they suggest that South African society is unequal.

Joel Sternfeld

Find the photographs in 5 Great Newport Street showing the High Line, a disused railway track running through the centre of New York City. If you were a city planner, what would you suggest this space be used for and why?

The photographs by Joel Sternfeld in 8 Great Newport Street are part of a series taken over eight years as he travelled round America in a camper van. Write a short, newspaper report on the story behind one of these photographs.

The Photographers' Gallery Exhibition Notes are produced with the advice and feedback of teachers and group leaders. If you have read through or used the notes to accompany a visit or to aid in classroom work, we'd like to hear from you. This is your opportunity to inform the content and format of Exhibition Notes.

Have you had an opportunity to make use of this set of Exhibition Notes, either on a visit to The Photographers' Gallery or within classroom work?	Yes	No	
How did you find the section 'Planning Your Visit'?	Useful	Not Useful	
How did you find the section 'Photography: A Brief Summary'?	Useful	Not Useful	
How did you find the section 'Background Notes, Discussion Points and Further Reading'?	Useful	Not Useful	
How did you find the section 'Curriculum Links'?	Useful	Not Useful	
How did you/your group find the section 'Practical Projects for the Classroom'?	Useful	Not Useful	
How did you/your group find the 'Worksheet'?	Useful	Not Useful	
Please comment on how accessible you found the Exhibition Notes for yourself.	Very Accessible	Somewhat Accessible	Quite Challenging
Please comment on how accessible your class or group found the discussion points and worksheets.	Very Accessible	Somewhat Accessible	Quite Challenging
Please comment on the design and format of the Exhibition Notes.	Well-designed	Needs Work	Not Useful

Thank you. Please feel free to write to us with any specific or general comments or suggestions about any aspect of this set of Exhibition Notes or about your group's response to the exhibition.

Name:

Position (if applicable):

Organisation/Contact Details:

If you are a practising teacher in the U.K. and would like to be involved more directly in the production of Exhibition Notes, please let us know. Telephone Genevieve Kantoch, Information Officer, on 0207 831 1772 or email info@photonet.org.uk