

https://dspace.org/

Situating the Camera Club of Johannesburg in South African Histories of Photography 1960–1989

Meyersfeld, Michael

2022-05
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/38455

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Situating the Camera Club of Johannesburg in South African Histories of Photography 1960–1989

Michael Meyersfeld
Student number 1571083
Supervisor: Professor Christo Doherty

Abstract

In this research report I present my dissertation together with a self-curated hard-cover book containing one hundred photographs. The two must be viewed as a single entity, with the dissertation providing the supporting evidence for the images selected.

In this part of the research report, I discuss the Camera Club of Johannesburg (CCJ), focusing on the work produced by the black and white print section during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Given the progressive outlook of the leadership of the CCJ, work produced during these three decades was rarely seen at other South African clubs. The general apathy of the South African art world towards photography, combined with a sceptical view of camera club photography, resulted in these works being largely ignored.

At a time when South African photography was mainly predicated on press and documentary photography[1], a relatively small group of dedicated photographers were aspiring to produce art with the camera. A selection of these works is shown in an accompanying hard-cover book containing 100 images curated by the author.

To situate cameras clubs in the history of photography, I discuss three dominant movements: the Pictorialists, the Photo-Secessionists, and Group f/64. These movements emanated from dissenting voices within camera clubs, with Group f/64 being an example of like-minded photographers opposed to any form of manipulated photography.

To highlight the difference between most South African clubs and the CCJ, I discuss the Johannesburg Photographic Society (JPS), the oldest and largest club in Johannesburg, and the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa (CCCSA), formed due to the exclusionary policies

[1] There were isolated instances of photography that did fall outside the ambits of documentary and protest photography, but these were few and far between. Through his nightclub photographs taken in the seedier clubs of Cape Town between 1967 and 1969, Billy Monk reflected a side of life under apartheid not seen elsewhere. Santu Mofokeng's *Chasing Shadows*, which began in the late 1980s, and John Liebenberg's portraits made in a migrant labour compound in Namibia primarily done in 1984, are some further examples. I would venture that while these examples are not "protest" in content, they are far removed from the aim of work done at the CCJ.

of apartheid. Both these clubs remained largely committed to Pictorialism. Both have ceased to exist.

By way of contrast, I discuss three overseas clubs, each of which became highly successful by operating outside the prevailing club system to keep their work contemporary. These are the Photo Club Riga, Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante and the Lexington Camera Club.

I argue that the CCJ operated at a different level from most other clubs in South Africa, that the work produced was progressive, and where the keywords of the founding statement of the CCJ **–** "where originality was not stifled by conventional judging" – were prophetic.

Research Question

Does the work produced by the Camera Club of Johannesburg during the period 1960-1989 warrant inclusion in South African histories of photography?

Key Words

Camera Club of Johannesburg, Pictorialism, amateur photography, camera clubs, South African photography, Johannesburg Photographic Society, Chinese Camera Club of South Africa, progressive, leadership.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree Masters of Art in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.



Michael Meyersfeld

16th May 2022.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Meyersfeld

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H20/03/13**
PROJECT TITLE	Situating the Camera Club of Johannesburg in South African histories of photography, 1960 - 1980
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr M Meyersfeld
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Arts/
DATE CONSIDERED	13 March 2020
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk level: Minimal
EXPIRY DATE	13 April 2023
DATE 14 April 2020	**CHAIRPERSON** J-Knight (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Professor C Doherty

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.**

Signature M Meyersfeld

Date 29 / 5 / 2021

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Dedication.

To Mike Feldman and Lou Yudelman who unstintingly provided me with inspiration through many years of mentorship.

Acknowledgements.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the following people: Mike Feldman, a respected and loved friend over many decades. Dear Stacey Vorster for providing me with a soft landing during my re-introduction to academia; Dr. Lou Yudelman and his son Dale for their constant support and friendship; Dr. Rory Bester for his insightfulness into the world of art, and for providing the inspiration for this paper; I would further like to thank Dr. Johan Myburg, dear friend, for guiding me through the last stages of my dissertation, and Professor Gareth Cornwell for his punctilious editing. I am both indebted and grateful to Professor Christo Doherty who patiently steered me over many hurdles. And lastly, to Saranne, my wife and soulmate to whom I owe everything.

Table of Contents

Abstract: 2

Declaration: 4

Ethics Certificate: 5

Dedication: 6

Acknowledgements: 7

Table of Contents: 8

Introduction: 10

Chapter 1: Situating Camera Clubs within Historical Movements 18
The Pictorialist Movement 18
The Photo Secessionists 21
After the Photo Secessionists 25
Group f/64 28

Chapter 2: Camera Clubs that Broke the Mould of Amateur Photography 31
Club Photo Riga 32
Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante 35
The Lexington Camera Club 37

Chapter 3: Two Prominent Johannesburg Camera Clubs Mired in Pictorialism 42
Johannesburg Photographic Society 42
The Chinese Camera Club of South Africa 49

Chapter 4: Camera Club of Johannesburg 54
The Culture of Creativity 57
Judging 57
New Topography 62
Portraiture 65
International Guest Speakers 70
International Salons 77
Entering the Public Domain 81
The Bensusan Library 83
Group 3 84
Exhibitions 88

Politics and the CCJ 100

Chapter 5: Discussion of Selected Works 102

Chapter 6: Conclusion 111

Epilogue: 114

List of Plates: 115

Bibliography: 117

Introduction

> *Let me here call attention to one of the most universally popular mistakes that have to do with photography – that of classing supposedly excellent work as professional, and using the term amateur to convey the idea of immature productions and to excuse atrociously poor photographs.* – Alfred Stieglitz

This dissertation focuses exclusively on the black and white print section,[2,3] of the Camera Club of Johannesburg (CCJ), of which I was an active member from 1968 until 1986. Thereafter I kept in close contact with several members, in particular Mike Feldman and Dr Lou Yudelman, two of the Club's key figures. As a participant in the history I address, this account is moored in personal experience and reflection. In the dissertation I argue for the significance of the work done by members of the CCJ during the period 1960-1989, work that has remained largely unknown and unseen outside the milieu of camera clubs. The three decades at issue were chosen for the following reasons.

First, and most importantly, this was the period when Mike Feldman was the guiding force of the club. It was also during the exciting development of the club in the 1970s and 1980s that I was an active participant for approximately eighteen years. Lastly, the three decades discussed largely coincide with the apartheid period (1948–1994), when photography was dominated by press and documentary imagery. With the constant portrayal of rapidly escalating unrest, South Africa began to be defined by political photography, including images of the silent vigils of the "Black Sash", protesting students from the University of the Witwatersrand, and many others. Then followed the Sharpeville Massacre in March 1960, the arrest of Nelson Mandela in August 1962, and the arrest of the Rivonia Trialists in July 1963. In the 1970s, the country was ablaze with images of the June 1976 Soweto uprising and the assassination of Steve Biko in September 1977, culminating in the "Struggle" photography of

[2] The CCJ had a colour section that ran as a separate entity from the B&W section. The members had their own elected office-bearers, and their meetings were held independently.

[3] While the book does contain five SX-70 Polaroids by Dale Yudelman, and three by Lou Yudelman, these were isolated instances of colour work, experimental works done for an exhibition.

the 1980s. Referring to this period, I reflect on my life in photography, both in advertising as well as in fine art, and how the stimulus for this was the encouragement received through my membership in the Camera Club of Johannesburg, and particularly from Feldman and Yudelman.

My lifelong journey in photography has been significantly guided by the support and critique received at the CCJ. In this dissertation I am therefore both the researcher and – to some degree – the subject.

The thrust of my argument is embodied in the research question: Does the work done by the Camera Club of Johannesburg during the period 1960-1989 warrant inclusion in South African histories of photography? I will argue that the work done by the CCJ was significantly different from that of other clubs operating in South Africa at that time. This was almost entirely due to the CCJ's progressive outlook and its leadership. I propose that the CCJ fell outside of the negative connotations attached to camera clubs as described by Dona Schwartz (1983) in *Camera Clubs and Fine Art Photography: Distinguishing Between Art and Amateur Activity,* and Michael Griffin (1987) in *Amateur Photography and Pictorial Aesthetics: Influences of Organisation and Industry on Cultural Production.*

In support of my curated selection of CCJ photographs, this dissertation provides an overview of the evolution of camera clubs, both overseas and in South Africa, as well as a more detailed history of the CCJ. The dissertation reciprocally relies on the visual evidence of the volume of images.

The history of camera clubs and associations is nearly as old as the camera itself, "with the mid-to-late-nineteenth century seeing a dramatic increase in practising photographers as a rising leisure class explored options for filling their non-working hours" (Volpe, 2017, para. 3). Many factors and personalities contributed to the growth of the camera club phenomenon, including Alfred Stieglitz, the promoter of modern art, the formation of the Linked Ring and the Photo-Secession, as well as the introduction of the Kodak Camera. "By the 1890s amateur photographers in the USA constituted an enormous mass market, many times larger than the entire professional market" (Griffin 1987, 110). The introduction of the miniature camera further fueled the expansion of camera clubs, with the German-made Leica and Contax 35mm cameras enabling a new wave of amateur expansion. While the majority of

clubs ran on similar structures, there were some that broke the mould. This is crucial to my argument.

An overview of most camera clubs would reveal the following characteristics and structures:

- They are associations of photo-enthusiasts, usually of amateur status, with skills ranging from rank beginner to highly accomplished.
- Meetings are generally held on a regular basis, usually monthly.
- Prints are submitted for judging, the aim being to move to higher levels within the club's hierarchy. The methods of judging and the rating system might differ from club to club, but the aim of advancing within the club's ranks was common to all.
- Invited speakers give occasional talks, these varying from the basic demonstration of a lighting set-up, to photographic suppliers displaying their latest "must have" piece of equipment (Griffin 1987, 288), to visits by highly regarded and accomplished overseas professionals.
- Group outings are common (Schwartz 1983, 54), with dedication and enthusiasm varying significantly from club to club.
- The entering of salons, both local and international, plays an important role in most clubs' activities. This generally happens under the auspices of umbrella organisations with set rules, regulations, and standards. The most important were the Royal Photographic Society (RPS), the Photographic Society of America (PSA), and the Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographie (FIAP). The South African equivalent is the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA), founded in 1954 by Dr Kin Bensusan, which continues to serve as the officially recognised body representing photographers in Southern Africa.
- The highlight of the year's activities is typically an annual trophy night, when members compete vigorously for one or more trophies awarded in different categories.

This was the basic format of most clubs, with the most critical differences between them lying in the qualities of the club's leadership.

But not all clubs operated according to this general formula. The following is a summary of the principal differences that distinguished the CCJ.

- In terms of the judging, the emphasis at the CCJ was on innovative and experimental work, with a distinct antipathy to the repetition of entrenched formulaic imagery.
- Talks were predominantly given by invited speakers whose expertise and standing in the world of international photography were entrenched.
- In the area of salons, it was decided as early as 1975 to remove the CCJ from the mainstream practice of club activities, as envisaged by such bodies as the Photographic Society of Southern Africa, the Photographic Society of America, and to a lesser extent the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain (*Viewfinder*[4] May 1981). The severing of membership with these umbrella organisations was seen as a bold and precarious move, and to the best of my knowledge the CCJ was the only club in South Africa to do so.
- The stringent rules, regulations and anticipated judging criteria of these umbrella organisations abetted and promoted a style of photography that the CCJ leadership felt would inhibit original thought. Group outings were never part of the CCJ's organized agenda.[5] With the spirit of individualism that prevailed at the club, it was thought that such activities would engender a sameness in the images inevitably produced by groups working in tandem. Most importantly, it was the progressiveness of the leadership at the CCJ that kept the club on a path distinctive from mainstream camera clubs.

I would like to raise the subject of the system of judging and grading in camera clubs. As such judging does not exist in the art world, much criticism has been levelled at it. In my experience, progressive camera clubs are places of learning, with the method of grading and judging being a necessary delineation of progress. What I believe to be fundamental is not the judging per se, but rather the aim and quality of it. The CCJ judging was stimulating and progressive. Fresh ways of seeing were valued and encouraged, resulting in many members pursuing their photography with renewed enthusiasm, and with their interest in other art

[4] *Viewfinder* was the monthly journal for the CCJ. It was here that articles, comments, and announcements were usually made. Containing interesting information, the publication was devoid of reproductions of photographic works.
[5] There were occasional visits to Lesotho, but these were not organised by the club and invariably involved the same two or three members.

forms aroused. The assessments were always open-minded, with the paramount aim being the creation of art with the camera.

Writing about a time almost fifty years ago has its challenges. The CCJ, like most clubs in South Africa, was not diligent in keeping records. A modicum of information is to be gleaned from the in-house monthly journal, *Viewfinder*, and although personal recollections have been useful, unfortunately many past members who could have made valuable contributions are either not contactable or have passed on.

In Chapter 2, I situate the CCJ within the main movements in early photography. I discuss the development of certain movements, particularly Pictorialism, the Photo-Secessionists and the California Modernists, and the impact they had on camera clubs. Both Pictorialism and the Photo-Secessionists grew out of dissension within camera clubs, while Group f/64 was made up of like-minded photographers opposed to any form of manipulated photography.

To illustrate the sustained adherence to Pictorialism[6] in South Africa, in Chapter 3 I discuss two South African clubs, the Johannesburg Photographic Society (JPS), the largest and oldest club in Johannesburg, and the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa (CCCSA), the only South African club formed because of apartheid's exclusionary policies. Both these clubs have ceased to exist.

In contrast to this, in Chapter 4 I review the scholarship regarding three overseas clubs – the Photo Club Riga, Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante and the Lexington Camera Club[7] – all of whom in different ways strove to move outside the prevailing club system and produced work resonant with contemporary fine art[8] values. Together with a detailed analysis of the

[6] Here I refer to the persistence of most South African camera clubs in photographing landscapes, portraits and animals, both domestic and wild.

[7] I selected these three clubs for two reasons. My research showed that very few clubs kept archives. This absence applied to most South African clubs, including the CCJ and the JPS, where most available information was limited to awards achieved by members at international salons and club meetings. More importantly, I felt that the leadership qualities of these three clubs provided an interesting parallel with the CCJ.

8 The term "Fine Art" is, and probably always will remain, a loaded one. Here I use the term to delineate the focus and intention of work done by the CCJ in the period under discussion. The term was used to separate itself from other photographic practices. These would include the prevailing practice of Pictorialism evident in many clubs. There was a determination to avoid the traditional landscape, the highly stylised portrait, and the ubiquitous animal. Here

CCJ in Chapter 5, this furnishes an overview of the development of camera clubs, with an emphasis on the difference of the CCJ, as evidenced in the accompanying book of photographs. The photographs were chosen to highlight the contemporary nature of work done at the CCJ, and how this differed from that being done in other South African clubs.

Very little has been written on South African camera clubs. Three articles written by Malcolm Corrigall provide a detailed analysis of the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa, emphasising the singularity of their having been formed because of apartheid segregationist laws. In his book, *Silver Images*,[9] A. D. (Kin) Bensusan (1966) includes a chapter dealing with the historic growth of Pictorial camera clubs in South Africa, giving the founding dates of several clubs, as well as describing his forming of the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA), the umbrella organisation to which most South African clubs still belong. None of these publications go beyond the presentation of historical information, and they offer no analysis of images. My research on the CCJ is largely limited to discussions I had over the years with Mike Feldman, elected vice-chairman of the print section in 1962 and chairman in 1969. He passed away in 2018, aged ninety-three. I have had lengthy interviews with Lou Yudelman[10] (who sadly passed away in Cape Town on 26th January 2022, aged ninety-four), his son Dale Yudelman,[11] and Dennis Arden, an advertising photographer and one of the club's senior members. Feldman's personal archive, containing prints, correspondence, newspaper clippings and assorted ephemera, was kindly loaned to me by his children Martin Feldman, Clare Feldman and Laura Sandelsohn. Back copies of *Viewfinder* were the source of much information, as were various newspaper and magazine articles. In addition, interviews were held with several past members of the JPS as well as the late Anne

---

the term is used as a distinction between straight documentary photography, protest photography, and advertising photography. There was a strong desire to use the camera to achieve works outside the broad categories listed. These works were loosely referred to as Fine Art, with the best works deserving to be recognised as significant pieces of photographic art.

[9] *Silver Images*: *History of Photography in Africa* (1966) chronicles the history of photography in Africa (with special emphasis on Southern Africa). The book records research done over a period of thirty years by one of South Africa's foremost authorities on photography.

[10] Lou Yudelman was a senior member of the club and a committee member. Together with Mike Feldman he was largely responsible for moving the club away from traditional photography.

[11] Dale Yudelman worked for the Star from 1979–1986, thereafter freelancing in London and L.A. for newspapers, magazines and editorials. Currently living and working in Cape Town.

d'Oliveira, who served as President of the PSSA from 2015 to 2017. Lastly, the author relied on his personal collection of photographs and newspaper clippings.

The CCJ was established in 1935, thirty-six years after the founding of the Johannesburg Photographic Society (JPS) in 1899, then the largest camera club in Johannesburg.
The conservatism and strong adherence to Pictorialism at the JPS led to discomfort among some members who wished for a more progressive and modernistic environment.[12] It was this frustration that led to the birth of the CCJ.

Right from its inception, the path of the CCJ was made clear in the aim articulated in its founding statement: "to foster pictorial photography in a club where originality was not stifled by conventional[13] judging" (Vermeulen 1985:15). As is evident from this statement, the founding members of the CCJ wished to pursue a more modern approach to photography and sought to distance themselves from the conventionalism of Pictorialism, which was still very evident in many clubs in the USA, Britain, and South Africa.

I will demonstrate that the key words in the founding statement of the CCJ – "where originality was not stifled by conventional judging" – were prophetic, and how under the leadership of Mike Feldman the club produced work that went beyond traditional camera club practice at that time. It is my contention that the CCJ operated at a different level from most other clubs in South Africa, and that it ran contrary to the generally entrenched belief that camera clubs conducted photography as little more than a hobby subject to the prevailing ethos of their respective club. While Schwartz (1983) and Griffin (1987) cast a negative light on camera clubs, they do, in differing ways, provide an accurate assessment of the broad mass of clubs.

While agreeing with their general view of how camera clubs were run and the type of imagery made by club members, I argue that the CCJ had a different ethos. Here the images produced were far more progressive and experimental than those seen at other clubs in South

[12] Based on conversations with ex members of the JPS, including Jules Cohen, Dan Swart and C.V. Hougaard, one of the founding members of the CCJ and previously an office bearer at the JPS.
[13] Given the existing conservatism of the Johannesburg Photographic Society the term "conventional" would imply the formulaic approach at the JPS, where promotion was anchored in the adherence to given rules and entrenched approaches.

Africa at that time. This I demonstrate in the book of photographs accompanying this dissertation, none of which belong to that "picturesque style of imagery dominated by landscape, nature, portrait, still-life and studio work" (Griffin 1987:196), a style that characterises the photography promoted by most clubs.

My argument for the significance of the CCJ is contrarily based on the ethos of most club photography in South Africa at that time. Geographically distanced from the cultural centres of the world, the CCJ operated within a near vacuum of appreciation for photography outside of documentary photography. This notion brings into question Patricia Hayes's statement in "Power, Secrecy, Proximity: A Short History of Southern African Photography" that "photography now could not have happened without the documentary impetus of the 1980s" (Hayes 2007,159). Here, as the title suggests, Hayes provides a short history of South African photography, placing considerable emphasis on the political and struggle photography of the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Her total exclusion of work done by camera clubs is an unfortunate omission.

From as early as 1977, and up to and including 1986, fifteen members of the CCJ exhibited their work publicly. Club members had exhibitions at the Pentax Gallery, situated in Rosebank, Johannesburg, with a further two exhibiting their work at the Market Photo Gallery (*Viewfinder* 1975-1983). Importantly, these exhibitions endeavoured to show photography as an art form and were not beholden to the genre of documentary in the traditional meaning of the word. Many of the 100 images reproduced in the accompanying hard-cover book were exhibited at these two galleries and were curated as a counterpoint to Hay's assertion, as well as to the somewhat dogmatic opinions of Schwartz and Griffin.

I would hope that in some small way these photographs reflect Alfred Stieglitz's conviction, expressed in the epigraph to this chapter, that some of the best photography is done by amateurs, and that the common assumption that professionalism is the exclusive realm of innovative photography is a "universally popular mistake" in photographic histories.

Chapter 1

Situating Camera Clubs within Historical Movements

To provide an international historical context, I will discuss the role of camera clubs in three dominant photographic movements, the Pictorialist movement, the Photo-Secessionists, and the California photographic Modernists, known as Group f/64.

The Pictorialist Movement

Photography involving the capture of images on light-sensitive media and the chemical processes of fixing such images on paper originated early in the nineteenth century. The British inventor of photography, William Henry Fox Talbot, produced his first "photogenic drawings" in 1834, and in 1841 he patented the first negative-positive photographic process (*Britannica*, "William Henry Fox Talbot", 2022). Virtually from the moment the new medium was established, dissension among painters and photographers arose regarding the relationship between the artistic and scientific aspects of the medium.

Almost from photography's inception, too, camera clubs and societies have played a pivotal role, with The Royal Photographic Society being founded in 1853, a mere fourteen years after the camera was invented. Since these early beginnings, camera clubs have mushroomed in most parts of the world. Despite this, very little has been written on the subject. In his *Amateur Photography and Pictorial Aesthetics: Influences of Organisation and Industry on Cultural Production,* Michael Griffin (1987) makes the following observation: "Amateur photography is unusual in the sense that it is an arena of activity which has largely been ignored despite the great numbers of people involved and the central role of amateur groups in the history of photographic practice" (Griffin 1987, 15).

The basic thrust of the Pictorialist movement was to move away from photography that depicted objective reality to images conveying subjective emotions: "They wished to distance themselves from the mass-produced imagery of the time, largely a result of the arrival of the Kodak camera in 1888, where a plethora of photographs were produced by people who were interested in merely recording their lives, and far removed from the making of fine art" (Kingsley & Reed 2013, 1).

By the 1880s there was a move in Britain to go beyond the creating of visual records of reality, impelled by the desire to put photography on the same footing as painting: "Photographers sought to convey subjective emotions rather than depict objective reality" (Kingsley & Reed 2013, 1). At the start of the 1890s, growing dissension emerged among members unhappy with the conservativeness of the Royal Photographic Society, where new techniques were scorned and there was strong resistance to moving beyond traditional landscapes and portraiture. There was a growing sentiment that photographs could be *created* rather than used merely to record the scenes in front of the camera. At the 1891 exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, Henry Peach Robinson's request for the inclusion of an Impressionist photograph by George Davison was refused, leading to Robinson's defection from the Society. In May 1892 Robinson with several others formed a new club that was open to experimentation and promoting the fine art aspects of photography. This was the birth of the Linked Ring Brotherhood, who proposed that photography was just as much an art as it was a science. These "Pictorialists," as groups such as the Linked Ring became known, modelled their work in the fashion of fine art, "embracing such influences as Impressionism,[14] Symbolism, Art Nouveau and Japonisme" (Kingsley & Reed 2013, 1). This became known as Pictorialism, and it was this movement that re-invented photography, imbuing it "with the desire to create images of beauty and to establish photography as an art form" (Kingsley & Reed 2013, 1). This movement soon flourished, becoming an international aesthetic movement with centres in England, France, and the USA.

Many of the great nineteenth-century painters took photographs themselves. Eugène Delacroix, Gustave Courbet, Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Paul Cézanne, and Paul Gauguin, among others, used photographs as aids to be incorporated later into their paintings (Scharf 1991, 10-12). Interactions between painting and photography became increasingly reciprocal (Harker 1979, 19), with several Pictorial photographers – including Alvin Langdon Coburn, Edward Steichen, Gertrude Käsebier and Oscar Gustave Rejlander – taking up painting in addition to their photography. Early Pictorialism closely imitated paintings both in style and content. "As early as 1853, English painter William Newton proposed that the camera could produce artistic results as long as the image was slightly out of focus" (Doty 1978,11). Numerous dark-room effects were utilised to achieve this. Images were printed in

[14] An Impressionist photograph is one that engages the viewer in the interpretation of the subject and its mood. This is the antitheses of documentary photography that prompts viewers to respond emotionally. Impressionist images are usually in soft-focus.

soft focus, frequently on a textured paper that enhanced the dream-like ethos characteristic of Impressionist and Symbolist aesthetics then dominant in painting. Gum bichromate was a popular process capable of producing painterly images from a photographic negative, with Farmer's Reducer, a bleaching agent used to lighten areas of a print or negative (used especially on clouds) and thereby create a more dynamic visual. Typically, prints were toned in a colour other than black. These ranged from a warm brown (Van Dyke brown) to a deep blue (Cyanotype), with visible brush strokes and other surface manipulations. These manual processes required skill and time and supported the trend toward producing individual works of high value. Pictorialists desired to be seen as elevated, and distinct from the mass production of commercial photographers. They aspired to be recognised as "artists," not camera operators, and aimed to instil artistic subjectivity into the "mechanical" photographic process. In this way, they sought to distinguish their hand-made photographs from commercial photography which, in their view, lacked any beauty or distinction. The common goal of Pictorialist photographers was the creation of beauty rather than a simple record of facts.

Pictorialism should be viewed in the context of the social and cultural attitudes of the time. Before the advent of photography, the recording of a person's likeness was through painted miniature portraits, which meant that photography rendered the roles of many traditional artists obsolete. A general increase in commerce, travel and mail services made the dissemination of magazines, ideas, and photographic prints easier, resulting in Pictorialism's becoming "a more international movement in photography than almost any other photographic genre" (McCarroll 2004, 10). The increasing exchange of ideas, technical information, and prints among camera clubs in England, France, Germany, Austria, Japan, the USA and South Africa served to entrench Pictorialism.

It was the voice of amateur photographers that frequently championed Pictorialism. At the time the word "amateur" did not suggest a novice, but rather "someone who strived for artistic excellence and a freedom from rigid academic influence. An amateur was seen as someone who could break the rules because he or she was not bound by the then rigid rules set forth by long-established photography organisations like the Royal Photographic Society" (Wilson 1994, 4). For the first forty years after the capture and reproduction of images was invented, photography remained the exclusive domain of select, highly-skilled practitioners. Given the knowledge required about optics, light, chemistry, and the very mechanics of the

camera, photography was limited to a relatively small group, mainly scientists, professional photographers, and well-to-do amateurs.

The effect of the introduction of George Eastman's Kodak camera in 1888 was considerable, greatly accelerating the growth of camera clubs and amateur photography. This easy-to-use hand-held box camera began to change the face of photography. "Containing a 100-exposure roll of film using paper negatives, consumers simply sent the entire camera back to the Eastman Kodak Company for developing, printing, and reloading when the film was used up" (*Britannica*, "George Eastman" 2021). One cannot underestimate the global impact brought about by the technical advancement of cameras. These easy-to-use and inexpensive cameras opened up two mass markets: the camera club enthusiasts, and, importantly, the burgeoning sector of family "happy snappers," the first of whom aimed to be creative and the second to record. Beginning with the Kodak camera in 1888, closely followed by the Brownie, the concept of the snapshot was born. Later, with the appearance of the UR-Leica 35mm camera in 1913, a flourishing artistic and journalistic market was transformed. Suddenly everyone could take a photograph.

In a few short years, photography became commonplace, with the resulting deluge of snapshots "creating a world awash with technically good but aesthetically indifferent photographs" (Wilson 1994,1). Serious photographers were dismayed to see their "art" being mass-produced in such an uncontrolled and untalented manner, intensifying the debate around art and photography. This in turn gave rise to camera clubs, where it was thought that a heightened, more sophisticated and artistic photography could be practised, thereby distinguishing photography proper from the products of the commercial photographer and the casual snap-shooter.

It was particularly after World War II, with the proliferation of camera clubs in many parts of the world (many of them members of the Royal Photographic Society, then the oldest and most dominant Society in the world), that their stringent rules created a near-uniform style of photography which was predicated in Pictorialism.

Photo-Secessionists

"The shift in thinking about photography in amateur circles coincided with the appearance of the serious art photographer as a new social figure, a role defined and characterised early in

the twentieth century by the career of Alfred Stieglitz" (Trachtenberg 1980, vii). In 1890, Stieglitz returned to New York after spending several years in London and Berlin. "After abandoning his engineering studies in Berlin, he began to devote himself entirely to the study of photography under the direction of the renowned photo chemist H. W. Vogel" (Trachtenberg 1980, 115). On his return to New York, he immediately immersed himself in the community of amateur photographers, soon becoming an outspoken member of the New York Society of Amateur Photographers. In 1893 Stieglitz became editor of the *American Amateur Photographer*, where he expressed the need for artistic excellence and originality in American photography. Already an elected member of the Linked Ring, he set about merging the Society of Amateur Photographers and the New York Camera Club. In 1896, these two clubs joined to become The Camera Club of New York. Declining the post of President, he felt he would be more influential in charge of the club's magazine. His intention was that this new club should become a dominant source of photography as fine art and set about expanding the existing club newsletter into a full-fledged journal, with himself as editor. In July 1897, the first issue of *Camera Notes* appeared with Stieglitz having complete control over the contents (*Camera Notes*. The Alfred Stieglitz Collection. n.d.). In the ensuing five years of his editorship, it would feature some of the finest photographs of the time, as well as articles from noted art critics. Interestingly, very few of the photographs published came from non-club members, with two notable exceptions being F. Holland Day and Clarence White. For the National Arts Club exhibition in 1902, Stieglitz selected the best of the images that had appeared in the pages of *Camera Notes*. The unifying connection among the chosen photographers was their modern look and antipathy towards the conservative establishment. The name of the National Arts Club exhibition was *The Photo-Secession*. Photo-Secession was the first important group of American photographers that strove to have photography accepted as fine art. These photographers "began sharing their aims, their problems and their methods" (Lowe 1983, 119). "In 1902, after several power struggles, Stieglitz resigned his editorship of *Camera Notes*, going on to found the Photo-Secession and *Camera Work*" (Art Institute Chicago, "The Alfred Stieglitz Collection", Journals, *Camera Notes*, n.d.). Thus began a subtle but decisive move away from early Pictorialism. In 1903 Stieglitz launched *Camera Work*, where he occupied the dual role of publisher and Editor-in-Chief.

Both *Camera Notes* and *Camera Work* became enormously important to a whole generation of practitioners and supporters of the arts. They were a potent force not only in promoting photography as a serious medium but also in defining and encouraging the development of

twentieth-century modernism in all the arts (Lowe 1983, 124). *Camera Notes* was devoted to voicing the ideas, both in images and words, of the Photo-Secessionist movement. *Camera Work* was unique for being the first photographic journal where the focus was visual rather than technical. The illustrations were hand-pulled photogravure printed on high-quality Japanese tissue. This quarterly illustrated periodical was "the mouthpiece of the Photo-Secession" (Margolis 1978, 128), which became "a forum for debate on whether photography could be admissible as art, as well as the theories of modern art in general" (Fulton 1978, 146). Stieglitz's position changed significantly over the years. In his 1902 talk at the National Arts Club, he claimed that "it was justifiable to use any means upon negative or paper to attain the desired end" (Fulton 1978,163), yet seemingly contradicted himself when in the following year he endorsed Gertrude Käsebier's work in *Camera Work*, lauding the fact that this was straight and in no way faked or unretouched photography. Stieglitz began moving away from any form of "impressionism," with photographs like *The Steerage* and *The Pool-Deal* making apparent his beginning to experiment with the inherent qualities of the medium (Fulton 1978). Stieglitz began directing the magazine towards a more modern approach with the August 1912 issue showing the works of Matisse and Picasso, and importantly the unmanipulated and straight approach of the young American photographer Paul Strand. *Camera Work*, which ceased publication in 1917, essentially defined the artistic ambitions of amateur photographers in the first quarter of the twentieth century (Szarkowski 2021).

Throughout his career, Stieglitz regularly revised his work, but even so, his early work has been seen as "sentimental and conventional, with little of it comparing in vitality with the contemporary work of Käsebier, Steichen or White" (Szarkowski 2021). It was perhaps his fascination and involvement with the other arts that spurred his reputation. In 1907 and again in 1909 Stieglitz went to Europe, where through Steichen he was introduced to modern art. Here he met many of the avant-garde painters including Matisse and Cezanne, and visited the home of Gertrude Stein, one of the great collectors of contemporary art. In 1905, together with Steichen, he opened The Little Galleries at 291 Fifth Avenue in New York. Here he showed not only works of European photographers and works of the great American Photo-Secessionists, but also paintings by Henri Matisse, Henri Rousseau, Paul Cezanne and Pablo Picasso. "Modern art led Stieglitz to reject the work of the Photo-Secession and prompted him to meditate critically on photography in general, and how it was different from the other arts" (Greenough & Hamilton 1999, 18). Picasso's Cubism featured in an exhibition at the

291 gallery and made a great impression on Stieglitz. It was Picasso's Cubism, with its geometry of inter-related shapes that gave him a "new vision," as The Met Museum characterises the inspiration for *The Steerage*, 1907, a Stieglitz photograph in the museum's collection (Metropolitan Museum of Art. Alfred Stieglitz, *The Steerage*. n.d.).

On a trip to Europe in 1907, setting off from the first-class deck he came across the huddled masses in the ship's steerage section. In his account of *How The Steerage Happened* written much later, Stieglitz describes how this image encapsulated his career's mission to elevate photography to the status of fine art by engaging the same dialogues around abstraction that preoccupied European avant-garde painters: "A round straw hat, the funnel leading out, the stairway leaning right, the white drawbridge with its railings made of circular chains – white suspenders crossing on the back of a man in the steerage below, round shapes of iron machinery, a mast cutting into the sky, making a triangular shape. I stood spellbound for a while, looking, and looking. Could I photograph what I felt, looking, and looking and still looking? I saw shapes related to each other. I saw a picture of shapes and underlying that the feeling I had about life" (Stieglitz 1942).

In *The Steerage*, Stieglitz embodied a radically new way of thinking about photography.



Alfred Stieglitz, *The Steerage*, 1907.

In 1910, the highly respected Albright Gallery offered Stieglitz its entire space to mount an exhibition on the art of photography as he understood it (Szarkowski 2021). The exhibition contained about 600 photographs, with Stieglitz declaring that full recognition of photography by an important art museum was the realisation of his dream of a quarter-century. The exhibition was a political triumph, but not an artistic one, as it represented only a very limited conception – Stieglitz's own – of photography's creative potential. In fact, the exhibition revealed that, while claiming to be progressive, the Photo-Secessionist ideals had in some ways become both authoritarian and deeply conservative, ignoring work that pursued anything other than an attenuated aestheticism.

Stieglitz appears to have been an irascible, self-opinionated man with a strong controlling streak. He was also a genius with a determination to place photography on the art map. An ardent Pictorialist who moved later in his life to Modernism, he in the end all but gave up photography, becoming more interested in running his gallery situated at 291 Fifth Avenue, New York. Notwithstanding, he remains one of the towering figures in the annals of photography, with a unique understanding of the importance and influence of painting and sculpture.

After the Photo-Secession

As a counter to the excesses of Pictorialist societies across England, Western Europe, and the USA, with their cultivated archaic look employing all manner of means to mirror paintings, the Modernist movement in photography was born. Initially retaining some residues of Pictorialism, photography began to move away from the beaux-arts definition of beauty towards a more Modernist approach (Trachtenberg, 1980).

Simultaneous with this shift in thinking about photography in amateur circles, the serious art photographer emerged as a new social type (Trachtenberg, 1980). The work of the art photographers was not necessarily similar, other than in its eschewal of the Pictorialists' adherence to soft focus and the emulating of a painterly style.

Looking at the photographs of Ansel Adams, we see a complete reversal of traditional Pictorialist landscapes. These images are sharp and crisp with strong defining gradations. Taken with an 8" x 10" view camera, they are in sharp focus from the immediate foreground

through to the distant peaks. Utilising the Zone System[15] developed by Adams, the images contain a voluptuous range of tones, from pure black to a crisp white, with all the intermediate tones in place. The image is pure, straight photography, without any darkroom manipulations. Many of Adams's photographs were contact printed,[16] a process often regarded as the most direct representation of what the photographer saw through the lens.



Ansel Adams. *Moonrise Hernandez, New Mexico*. 1941.

Paul Strand, a celebrated art photographer, could arguably be considered the first truly Modernist photographer. Writing for the International Photography Hall of Fame and Museum's website, Lori Oden (n.d.) remarks that Strand "began to deviate from his contemporaries and attempted to make artistic photography without manipulation of camera or development."

Strand's work was in every sense a departure from Pictorialism. His photography was both sharp and direct, frequently imbued with graphic qualities. Looking at his photograph *Wall*

[15] The Zone System is a photographic technique for determining optical film exposure and development. The Zone scale, from pure white to pure black, is divided into eleven parts, allowing the photographer to pre-determine where the shadows and highlights should fall.
[16] The negative, either 8" x 10" or 4" x 5" was laid directly onto the printing paper usually held down by a piece of clear glass, giving direct contact.

Street (1915), we see a reliance on the sharpness and contrast of shapes created by the stark architecture of the building and the determined, hurried-looking workers. This play on shapes and chiaroscuro is also evident in *White Fence* (1916). The purity and clean lines in both these images reflect Strand's shift from Pictorialism to a more Modernist approach.

Edward Weston, one of the most innovative and influential American photographers, was regarded "as the photographer who developed the quintessential Californian approach to modern photography" (Pitts 1999). His exquisitely detailed photographs were produced from 8" x 10" negatives, and in breaking with Pictorialism introduced into his work subject matter both simple and quotidian. The placing and tight cropping of his nudes and still-lifes, together with his masterly use of light, elevated objects beyond their traditional use, celebrating their uniqueness. His works, whether fruit, vegetable or nude are imbued with a reverence for the individuality of the subject.



Edward Weston, *Cabbage Leaf*, 1931.
Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Gift of Sam Pratt, © 2020 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Photo ©President and Fellows of Harvard College, P2003.250

Photographers began experimenting and looking for new ways in which the camera could be used. Lewis Hine, the American sociologist and photographer, used his photography to highlight the immorality of child labour in the Carolina Piedmont, as well as documenting child labourers in cotton mills, mines and factories, all of which was largely hidden from the

public eye. He understood the power of documentary photography and how it could be employed as a tool for social change and reform.

In contrast to Hine there is Man Ray, a significant contributor to the Dada[17] and Surrealist movements. As a painter and a photographer, he created images both startling and unique for the time. While living in New York he befriended Marcel Duchamp, famous for his use of "ready-mades" in his art. In the early 1920s, he moved to Paris where he became a pioneering photographer and a significant member of the Paris art scene. Here he mixed with such luminaries as Pablo Picasso, Gertrude Stein, Salvador Dali and Peggy Guggenheim. Contrary to the Pictorialists, Man Ray's rubbing shoulders with such prominent names in the art world was inspirational and produced no mimicry.

László Moholy-Nagy, the Hungarian painter and photographer, was highly influential in the development of twentieth-century art and visual culture on both sides of the Atlantic (Borchardt-Hume 2006). A professor in the Bauhaus School,[18] he was highly influenced by Constructivism[19] and relentless in his pioneering pursuit of not only photography, but also drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, and writing. In 1937, he moved to Chicago to become the director of the New Bauhaus.

Ansel Adams, Paul Strand, Edward Weston, Man Ray, and László Moholy-Nagy are just a few names in a growing number of photographers exploiting the range of the camera's inherent qualities, with multi-disciplinary artists beginning to regard the camera as part of their creative toolbox.

Group f/64

I now turn to the last movement to be explored in this chapter, Group f64, formed forty years after the establishment of the Photo-Secessionists. This informal grouping began when Ansel

[17] The Dada movement developed in reaction to World War I. Artists rejected the logic, reason and aestheticism of modern capitalist society, instead expressing nonsense, irrationality and anti-bourgeois protest in their works.

[18] The Bauhaus was founded by the architect Walter Gropius, who believed that students should be trained equally in art as well as technically expert craftsmanship.

[19] A style or movement in which assorted mechanical objects are combined into abstract mobile structural forms. The movement originated in Russia in the 1920s and has influenced many aspects of modern architecture and design.

Adams and six other San Francisco Bay photographers started to share a common photographic style defined by sharply focused and carefully framed images. Group f/64 shared the vision of promoting a new Modernist aesthetic based on precisely exposed images of natural forms and found objects. This new generation of photographers questioned what the medium of photography meant and was eager to promote a new vision. They aimed to define photography as an art form, but to do so through purely photographic means. They eschewed the Pictorialist methods of creating an image in the darkroom and defined pure photography as that which was seen through the camera lens without embellishment. They wished to express through the unique qualities of the camera that which could not be expressed in other ways, with aesthetics being their primary concern (Macfarlane 2016). The resultant emphasis fell upon sharp, detailed, and straight untoned silver-bromide prints, which became the dominant style well into the 1970s (Macfarlane 2016). Manipulation of an image, either in the darkroom or in the actual taking of the photograph, was frowned upon. This movement repudiated the notion of photography's being influenced by paintings, with the result that the camera was used to reflect the medium's own technical visual language. As early as the 1920s, Moholy-Nagy expressed European Modernism's contempt for the aesthetic forms of the past, and its celebration of the machine, endorsing photography's claim to be the most important form of representation (Wells 1996, 20). Pre-visualisation that prioritised the photographer's envisaging of the final print was pivotal to their thinking. In 1933 Adams stated in *Camera Work*:

> My conception of Group f/64 is this: It is an organisation of serious photographers without formal ritual of procedure, incorporation, or any of the restrictions of artistic secret societies, Salons, clubs or cliques …The Group was formed as an expression of our desire to define the trend of photography as we conceive it …Our motive is not to impose a school with rigid limitations, or to present our work with belligerent scorn of other view-points, but to indicate what we consider to be reasonable statements of straight photography. Our individual tendencies are encouraged; the group exhibits suggest distinctive individual viewpoints, technical and emotional, achieved without departure from the simplest aspects of straight photographic procedure" (Heyman 1992, 20-24).

Group f64 was founded primarily in opposition to the Pictorialist photographic style that had dominated much of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, championing their conviction that photographs should "celebrate rather than disguise the medium's unrivalled capacity to present the world" (Hostetler 2004, 1).

As a movement Group f/64 set the stage for photography beyond Pictorialism. While Pictorialism continued and is still in evidence today, particularly in the milieu of camera clubs, photography now is firmly established in many different guises as an important and relevant art form. It is necessary to highlight that the Pictorialist movement produced many important and beautiful works, mostly created for their aesthetic appeal. The espousal of Pictorialism by camera clubs is not in itself the reason that they have been maligned, but rather, as pointed out by Schwartz, it was their penchant to perpetuate the ethos of their club, "conveying a message about group membership by making pictures which show they share a consistent symbolic code" (Schwartz 1983, 139). As will be detailed in Chapter 5, the CCJ ran on completely different lines and individuality was celebrated.

Chapter 2

Camera Clubs that Broke the Mould of Amateur Photography

Since World War II very little has been written about camera clubs. “It is only in the histories of nineteenth-century photography, those written before the Second World War, that one finds any substantial attention given to the activities of photographic societies, amateur clubs, and the relationship between social organisations and photographic developments” (Griffin 1987, 16).

The adoption of 35 mm technology between 1925 and 1930 saw considerable growth in camera clubs. But with the introduction of relatively inexpensive, affordable cameras, camera club photography began to wane, overtaken in the 1960s and 1970s by general popular photography. With colour technology increasingly used, photography entered the commercial world, becoming integral to advertising and the flourishing magazine market. As the general use of photography began to expand rapidly, the crafting of black and white photography began to shrink. “The growth of colour photography saw the concern for tone quality in prints becoming increasingly less prominent in pictorial evaluation after World War II (Griffin 1987, 441). The shift to colour, combined with the popularity of the 35 mm camera, saw amateur photography becoming less craft orientated, with “the honing of fine prints getting replaced by the interest in compact precision mechanical instruments like the Leica” (Griffin 1987, 217).

During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, black and white photography indeed endured, but here I would suggest that for the most part, members of clubs working in black and white fell into two categories – the keen hobbyist who was fascinated with the results produced in his bathroom turned darkroom on the weekends, and the serious amateur who was more concerned with the image produced rather than the process.

In her book *Objects of Denigration and Desire: Taking the Amateur Photographer Seriously*, Annebella Pollen (2020, 1) comments: “For too long, amateur photography has been considered a sub-category of photography, or even as a photographic genre – when not ignored entirely in canonical histories – amateur photography has nonetheless represented, for over a hundred years, the single largest area of photographic practice.” With a specific

focus on the "serious amateur" (Pollen 2020, 23), Pollen argues that amateur photography offers a prime site for establishing the medium's moral values and social expectations. Her highlighting of the "serious amateur" is pivotal to my argument for the CCJ.

I proceed to discuss three clubs that in different ways rebutted the negative image espoused by detractors of camera clubs. Here I rely on the scholarship of Alise Tifentale[20] for information on both the Photo Club Riga as well as Foto-Cine Bandeirante (FCCB). For the Lexington Camera Club, I am informed by Robert May's (1989) article in the *Kentucky Review*. These three maverick clubs had various reasons and methods for avoiding the perceived camera club mould, with the common denominator being that of inspired leadership.

Photo Club Riga

During the 1950s and 1960s, photo clubs in Latvia, then part of the Soviet Union, were important venues for exhibiting photography as an independent art form. "The Photo Club Riga was formed in 1962 by members of the Faculty of Journalism [at the People's University in Riga] and is one of the oldest photo clubs in Latvia" (Tifentale 2011, 24). By the mid-1960s, this club had become a significant player in global photo club culture. Members included professional photographers, photojournalists, artists, and amateurs, all interested in promoting photography. The club's ethos was to create a culture of photography as an art form at a time when the professional and official art world had a jaundiced view of the medium. This contradicts the allegations made in Schwartz's *Camera Clubs and Fine Art Photography: Distinguishing Between Art and Amateur Activity* (1983). She declares that "camera club photographers do not produce innovative pictures," and that "camera club pictures are straightforward and realistic." Photo Club Riga soon became a meeting ground for several important figures whose work shaped the ideas of art photography of that time. Importantly, it was in opposition to stringent Soviet political dictates that members of Photo Club Riga pursued their art photography. These political conditions only eased in the mid-1980s with the beginnings of the policy of *glasnost*.[21] "In the post-war Soviet Union, official art institutions, artists' unions, art academies, and art museums excluded photography from the hierarchy of artistic media. Photography as a medium was even understood as the

[20] I refer to three publications by Alise Tifentale: 2011, 2012 and 2019.
[21] Glasnost meaning "openness" was the Soviet policy introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s, allowing for the open discussion of political and social issues.

antithesis of art, with photography as a profession mainly limited to politicised journalism and its ideological and education functions" (Tifentale 2012, 1).

The ambitions of the members of Photo Club Riga directly contradicted Schwartz's comments, with the work of several members leading the vanguard of Latvian photography that became known the world over. The members of the Riga Club were dedicated and innovative in their pursuit of photographic art, despite the omnipresent threat of interference from Soviet officialdom. As Tifentale sums it up, Photo Club Riga distinguished itself by producing photography contra to the dictates of the Soviet Union: "They chose to immerse themselves in pure art, staying as far as possible from politicised everyday life" (Tifentale 2019, 4).

As with most successful clubs, the motivation to excel was driven by a few people. One of the central figures in the club was Gunārs Binde, with his photographs employing a combination of staging, directing, acting and documentation. His approach to photography is interestingly described in an interview with *Leisma* magazine, where he states: "The art is in creating a photographic visual concept, raising it to the level of a symbol, a problem. The photographic concept rises above documentary truth, becoming a generalisation" (Tifentale 2019, 1). For Binde (n.d.) purely documentary photography was too primitive: "I don't pursue sensationalism, striking events or characters, nature photography, documentarian, or portraiture. I am looking for a resonance between the visible world and my soul. If I perceive such a harmony, I take a picture." Another highly regarded member of Photo Club Riga was the experimental photographer Valters Jānis Ezerins. His pioneering of solarised and abstract imagery was innovative in its time and shows a particular affinity to work being done at the CCJ in roughly the same period. The 1970s saw the rise of a new generation of photographers at the Photo Club Riga, with Wilhelm Mikhailovsky being the most prolific and visible of that generation. He felt that the infusion of young minds and the introduction of new blood help to curtail the production of repetitive work and are therefore essential to the progressive spirit of any club (Tifentale 2019).

The work of Mikhailovsky and other members of the Photo Club Riga was circulated in exhibitions of the world's prominent photo clubs, thus becoming internationally known. "The importance of the works of Latvian photographic art produced within the local photo-club culture of the 1960s and 1970s lies in the conscious examination of photography as an art

medium, and using it for the creation of highly subjective, personal visions that aimed at departing from the mainstream language of the official press photography and photojournalism of the time" (Tifentale 2019, 4).

Soviet politics eschewed celebrating the individual. Official press photography at the time can be seen in the government-sponsored photo chronicle *The Republic in Photographs* (Tifentale 2019, 4). Issues of this publication were prepared centrally by LATINFORM, an information agency functioning under the Telegraphy Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) and the Council of Ministers of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. In keeping with the approach of a totalitarian state, the names of individual photographers did not appear in the chronicle, with all work being attributed to LATINFORM. In general, the photographs epitomised the official visual culture of the Soviet Union, being positive, dynamic and energetic. The priority was to trumpet the might of the Soviet Union, a cause completely out of tune with the artistic convictions of photographers at Photo Club Riga.

Another prominent photographer to emerge from the creative environs of Photo Club Riga was Egons Spuris, an important figure on the photography scene in Latvia in the 1970s and 1980s. He eventually became a teacher, inspiring the next generation of photographers. Tifentale (2019, 1) notes that the Latvian National Museum of Art embraced the world of art photography only recently when it began to acquire photography for its collection. This is probably in line with museums in many countries where, with a few exceptions, the acceptance and introduction of photography have been slow in coming.

South Africa was no different in this respect, with the Iziko South African National Gallery only setting up its photography department in 1965. The lack of earlier inclusion of photography was mainly due to ambivalence around photography's perceived status as art. "Documentary photography," being the dominant genre up to the time of Nelson Mandela's release and beyond, was denied to local audiences (outside of relatively low-key exhibitions at venues such as the Market Photo Gallery) and could only be acquired after the lifting of prohibitions in the 1990s. Donations have played a significant role in augmenting the Iziko collection. In 1981, Paul Alberts made a presentation of 76 photographic prints. In 1986, David Goldblatt donated 182 prints of his work, and in 2003 Struan Robertson donated his entire archive of negatives together with over five hundred of his prints (Iziko Museums of South Africa n.d.). Later acquisitions, including works by Ernest Cole and Alf Kumalo,

continue to situate the collection in the domain of protest photography. The Johannesburg Art Gallery largely mirrors the situation at Iziko.

Rather like the history of Iziko's photographic holdings, the Latvian National Museum of Art's initial photographic collection was donated by the photographer Inta Ruka, and included many prints by Egons Spuris. Significantly, Tifentale (2019, 1) notes that while the Museum boasts a notable collection, it does not include the works most visible in Latvian photography during the Soviet era, especially the 1960s and 1970s. The focus is rather on the names of well-known photographers working mainly in the 1980s and 1990s, after Latvia regained its independence from the Soviet Union. By preferring these works, the Museum reinforces the idea that there is only one type of photography worthy of being given the status of an artwork (Tifentale 2019). This attitude on the part of the Latvian National Museum towards camera club photography is not that dissimilar from that of institutions in South Africa, where works by camera clubs, particularly dating from the 1960s and 1970s, are largely absent from museum collections.

Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB)

Tifentale (2019) regrets the fact that the Latvian National Museum of Art was tardy in including photography in its collections. By way of contrast, she describes the photo-club culture prevalent in Brazil during the 1950s and 1960s. The phenomenon has been dubbed *fotoclubismo* by Brazilian historians of photography, a term derived from the Portuguese *foto clube* (photo club).

Founded in 1939, Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante was a São Paulo-based photo club that played a central role in the Brazilian avant-garde art scene. In the 1950s, during rapid industrialisation in São Paulo, its members arrived at an abstracted Modernist style that became their signature. Much emphasis was placed on experimental work, with Modernist, semi-abstract, and non-representational photography being encouraged. Beatriz Jaguaribe (2021) succinctly sums up the FCCB:

> The construction of a Modernist Photographic gaze in Brazil has largely been attributed to the amateur photo clubs that grew exponentially during the first decades of the twentieth century. Helouise Costa has argued that photographers from the FCCB, such as German Lorca, Thomaz Farkas and Josė Yalenti, among others, in inaugurating the Modernist aesthetic of the photographic image, were responsible for the transformation of Brazilian photography. Despite their different styles, the

> photographers of the FCCB shared an agenda premised on the promotion of photography as an art form and on the value given to experimental techniques.

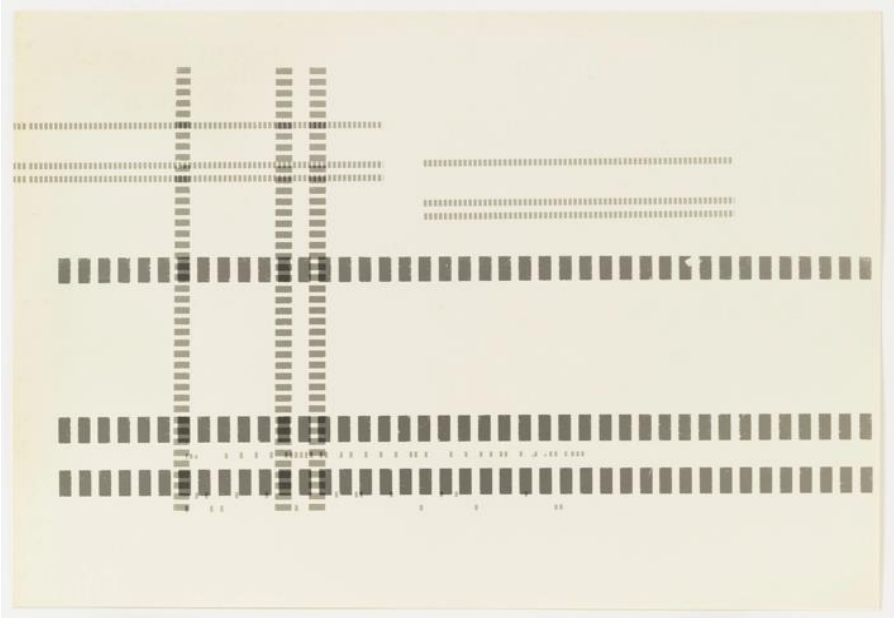
In this respect, FCCB's photography offers another example to contradict Schwartz's view (1983) that camera clubs were absorbed with technical knowledge and not conducive to the development of individual aesthetics. Schwartz's perspective is obliquely endorsed by Michael S. Griffin, who, writing at about the same time, remarks: "On my first visit to a camera club competition I was immediately struck by the consistent and predictable preferences for subject matter" (1987, 46).

One of the major contributing factors to the success of the FCCB was the showing of their work in São Paulo museums – museums that had previously hosted only paintings and sculpture (Tifentale 2015). Many members of the FCCB participated in the Bandeirante Salons held between 1942 and 1960, further contributing to their success. This club organised the Brazilian Photographic Art Exhibition for many years and twice arranged the Brazilian Photography Biennial between clubs. Over the years public interest grew, turning the Salon into a prestigious event where the city's political and cultural elites circulated.

FCCB produced several famous Brazilian photographers. Amongst them were Thomas Farkas, Geraldo de Barros, German Lorca, Eduardo Salvatore, Chico Albuquerque, and Gertrude Altschul. Geraldo de Barros, a Brazilian painter and photographer, was the leader of the Concrete Art movement[22] in Brazil and co-founder of Grupo Ruptura.[23] He was lauded for his experimental abstract photography and Modernism, highly innovative for its time.

[22] The term Concrete Art was introduced by artist Theo van Doesburg in his 1950 *Manifesto of Concrete Art*. Here he stated that there was nothing more concrete or more real than a line, a colour, or a plane (a flat area of colour).

[23] Grupo Ruptura was formed by a group of Brazilian abstract artists in the early 1950s with the aim of breaking with the prevalent naturalist approach to painting in the country. Geraldo de Barros was one of the seven founding members of the group.



Geraldo de Barros, *Fotoforma*, c.1952/53.

Gertrude Altschul, one of the very few woman artists at the FCCB, was in many respects more adventurous than her male peers. She had prints included in the 2017 Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Making Space: Woman Artists and Post-War Abstraction* (Making Space: Women Artists and Post-War Abstraction at MoMA – Art Viewer 2017). During the 1950s and 1960s members of the FCCB were producing photography markedly different from most other clubs in the world. Here a small group of inspired men and women adopted an abstract and modernistic style. The social standing of some of the leading members of this club gave them the opportunity to hold their salons in the prestigious Galeria Prestes Maia, thus exposing their work to the public of São Paulo.

The Lexington Camera Club (LCC)

W. Brooks Hamilton, Arts and Sciences Professor at the University of Kentucky, founded the Lexington Camera Club (LCC) in 1936. In its heyday the LCC was regarded as one of the more experimental groups of photographers outside of art centres such as New York or Chicago. The LCC began with the humble aim of making and exhibiting pictures, and initially there were no professional photographers among the members but rather a potpourri of businessmen, lawyers, doctors and others who wanted to explore photography for personal pleasure. This was not dissimilar to the CCJ, where the initial founding members were all professional men – the key players in the 1950s being a dental surgeon, an optometrist, a chiropodist, and a sprinkling of businessmen.



In 1944, some members of the Lexington Camera Club posed for a group portrait. Front row: Clyde T. Burke, F. Van Deren Coke, James Tinder, William Curry; middle row: Prof. W. Brooks Hamilton, James K. Poole, A. Z. Looney, Dr. Louis H. Mulligan, Dr. Charles N. Kavanaugh, Roland S. Roberts; back row: John Tinder, Duke Young, J. Winston Coleman, Jr., John W. Davis, Sr., Paul Price, John Riley. (Courtesy of Mrs. Roland S. Roberts)

Members of The Lexington Camera Club, 1944

From the start, the Lexington Camera Club "was a unique group of photographers, embracing both organisational and artistic talent" (May 1989, 6). Contrary to most American camera clubs, the LCC did not become a member of the Photographic Society of America (PSA). Under the influence of its founders Dr Louis Mulligan, Prof. Brooks Hamilton and Van Deren Coke, the decision was made to never become a "PSA type" (May 1989, 7). They believed that they benefitted enormously from the resultant uniqueness and independence. The CCJ, though much later, had similar sentiments. In a notice in the May 1981 edition of *Viewfinder*, it was decided that the CCJ should remove itself from mainstream club activities as envisaged by bodies such as the Photographic Society of Southern Africa, the Photographic Society of America, and the Royal Photographic Society:

> Our newer members have not been encouraged to join these societies nor to participate in their salons and other projects. The Camera Club of Johannesburg virtually moved onto its own track in the hope that there would be a development towards the more personal photographic statements, greater individualism, and the nurturing of the latent creative talents of our members. This departure was seen as being justified because it was felt that the work standards were being inhibited by salon requirements. (*Viewfinder* 1981)

What distinguished the LCC members from their counterparts in bigger cities was how they allowed the idiosyncrasies of their environment to inspire their photography.

The first formal public exhibition of the Lexington Camera Club was held in 1940, when apart from works by club members, photographs were entered by individuals throughout the state. According to Brooks Hamilton (May 1989, 9), it was the joining of the club by Ben Hart, a man with considerable photographic experience, that gave it its first boost. Soon after joining, Hart began helping other club members by providing photography classes. He also knew Ansel Adams, then associated with the influential f/64 group, and brought Adams to address the club on more than one occasion. Robert May, author of *The Lexington Camera Club, 1936-1972*, remembers his extreme nervousness at the first showing of his works. "I recall, also, the comments and discussions of Van Deren Coke during print criticism each month. Van's career as a celebrity photographer had begun. His career was to take him to the University of New Mexico, George Eastman House, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art" (May 1989, 11).

The LCC's fortunes rose in 1954 when Ralph Eugene Meatyard joined the club. Meatyard was already an experienced photographer and was later to become internationally known. A short while after Meatyard joined the club, in the summer of 1955, Van Deren Coke began offering a series of photography classes at his home. These were attended by the more serious members of the club. At these meetings, a small number of dedicated enthusiasts met to discuss such subjects as the Zone System (a system of exposure and development put forward by Ansel Adams) and photography as a creative medium (May 1989, 16). Robert May describes how the classes given by Van Deren Coke represented a turning point in the work of club members. "Our photographs became much more individualistic because we had been stimulated into a new way of seeing photographically, and our personal orientation towards photography had been heightened and enriched" (May 1989, 16). This is not dissimilar from what was done at Lou Yudelman's Group 3 at the CCJ. Group 3 was formed as a discussion group for those members who wanted more in-depth deliberation on not only their own works but photography in general. Given prevailing time constraints, this was not always possible at the monthly club meetings.

Meatyard gained enormously from Van Deren Coke's classes and in 1957 stated that his pictures had become an extension of himself (May 1989, 16). In 1959, writing in *Aperture*, Coke spoke with pride about his friendship with Meatyard, lauding him for having reached the position where his talent has become a contribution "to that small body of work which can be termed creative photography" (May 1989, 23). Though he did not gain much

recognition during his lifetime, Meatyard's images, particularly those of masked children, have since established him as a key figure in American photography (Artnet, n.d.).



Ralph Eugene Meatyard, Romance (N.) from Ambrose Bierce #3, 1962.
Credit: © The Estate of Ralph Eugene Meatyard, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

In 1956, the Lexington Camera Club sponsored a seminal exhibition featuring seventeen contemporary photographers. The participants were Ansel Adams, Ruth Bernhard, Reva Brooks, Wynn Bullock, Harry Callahan, Van Deren Coke, Larry Colwell, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, Arnold Newman, Don Ross, Charles Sheeler, Aaron Siskind, Dody Warren, Brett Weston, Edward Weston, Minor White, and Charles Wong. The exhibition was held at the University of Kentucky Art Gallery and was supplemented with 56 photographs by LCC members. It was accompanied by a forty-page brochure containing one reproduction of the work of each of the specially invited photographers. Van Deren Coke, in an interview, voiced the opinion that the "difference between Meatyard's work and that of other photographers with his background is that he joined the Lexington Camera Club" (May 1989, 23). In 1957 Meatyard began giving a series of seminar classes for some of the club members at his home, in which members were encouraged not to look for new things but rather for new ways of seeing. Again, one can discern a strong correlation with what Lou Yudelman was doing in the

CCJ's Group 3. In 1968 the Transylvania Morland Gallery mounted a show of Lexington Camera Club work. The show, initiated by Meatyard, featured prints from photographers at the George Eastman House of Photography at Rochester, Indiana University and the University of New Mexico. In 1970 he organised *Photography 1970*, soliciting work from Robert Heineken at the University of California, Harry Callahan at the Rhode Island School of Design, and Arnold Gassan, the widely recognised authority on the history of the art of photography (May 1989, 26). The Lexington Camera Club, despite being tucked away in the state of Kentucky, had the good fortune of having dynamic leaders such as Van Deren Coke and Eugene Meatyard who staged numerous exhibitions, many of them incorporating the works of major American photographers of the time. This unique combination put the LCC into a league of its own, differentiating it from the average club. Meatyard died in 1972, his legacy insisting that "photography should extend beyond being merely documentary, and that its role should extend to assisting the individual in grasping an overall sense of meaning in life…." (May 1989, 31). May notes that, with Meatyard's, passing the "special presence that held the club together was gone, and the Lexington Camera Club was over within a year" (1989, 31).

These three clubs, in their different ways, followed paths that diverged from prevailing photography. Photo Club Riga pursued art photography in opposition to political dictates; Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante adopted an abstract and modernistic style as early as the 1950s and the Lexington Camera Club followed an independent path by avoiding membership of the Photographic Society of America and accessing some of the great names in American photography. However, common to all was the good fortune of having dynamic and progressive leadership.

Chapter 3

Two Prominent Johannesburg Camera Clubs Mired in Pictorialism

In this chapter I discuss two Johannesburg-based clubs which, while successful in their time, never progressed beyond Pictorialism and eventually dissolved. During the period under discussion, many photo clubs were operating in South Africa. I have elected to write about the Johannesburg Photographic Society (JPS) and the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa (CCCSA) as both, in their ways, stood out from the plethora of South African clubs.

The JPS, founded in 1928, was the oldest club in Johannesburg, still steeped in Pictorialism long after it ceased to be relevant in Europe and the USA. The CCCSA, formed in 1952, was unique, being the only club in South Africa to owe its existence to apartheid's exclusionary policies. These clubs were selected because of their established profile and high level of activity, and must be seen as distinct from the many other clubs that did little more than accommodate the dabbling's of hobbyists.

Johannesburg Photographic Society

"In 1928, the year Johannesburg became a city, an article appeared in *The Star*, suggesting a need for a local photographic society. Written by well-known photographer, J. Beanes, the idea was shortly followed up by a meeting in August 1928 at which the Johannesburg Photographic Society was born" (Bensusan 1966, 88). The inaugural meeting saw the attendance of many prominent pictorial photographers, establishing from the outset the club's deep-rooted enthusiasm for Pictorialism. One cannot underestimate the influence of the pictorialist Bensusan. At that time a prominent name in photography, a senior member of the JPS and founder of the Photographic Society of South Africa, his commitment to Pictorialism could not have been better evidenced than by the personal invitation he received to become a member of the London Salon of Photography. "This singular honour was presented by Mr G.L. Hawkins, one of the foremost members of the London Salon of Photography, at a formal banquet hosted by the Photographic Society of South Africa" (Bensusan 1966, 92).

The word Pictorialism has various meanings and connotations. Here I refer to the work first shown by the five members of the London Photographic Salon in Britain in 1893. The objective was to create beauty via a painterly effect, employing a repertoire of darkroom

manipulations such as textured paper, soft focus, and the toning of prints. The combination of Bensusan's invitation to be a member of the London Salon of Photography coupled with his enthusiasm, his legendary skills in landscape photography, and the significant influence of the JPS, gave this club the momentum to continue long after the movement ceased to be relevant. It was not Pictorialism itself that has been maligned by critics such as Schwartz but rather the perpetuation of a photographic style that imitated painting. From the first exhibition of the London Photographic Salon in 1893, wrote Bensusan, "standards were set for photographic exhibitions the world over, thereby giving to Pictorial photography a place of its own" (Bensusan 1966, 86). Rapidly becoming established in camera clubs, Pictorialism was further entrenched by the wide reach of the like-minded Royal Photographic Society. The resultant static, self-perpetuating situation eventually created the dissatisfaction that led to the formation of the CCJ.

Very little has been written on the JPS. Archives were either non-existent or disappeared in the process of going digital. Such information as I have been able to glean is derived from Bensusan's *Silver Images*, the JPS in-house magazine, *Reflex*, and interviews. The JPS formally disbanded in 2017 when they paid their bank account balance over to the PSSA (Anne d'Oliveira [Regional Director PSSA for Central Gauteng] 2020). According to D'Oliveira, the club gradually morphed into a "mutual admiration society," with few members remaining. It has been difficult to get examples of work done by members of the JPS, with the past members I spoke to having long since destroyed or discarded their works. Given this situation, I had to rely mainly on interviews, which I conducted with Syd Hirshowitz, Max Aaronson, Jules Cohen and Dan Swart. The aim of the interviews was to get personal accounts from past members of the existence and demise of this once strong club. Dr Syd Hirshowitz's Honorary Life Membership (personal communication 2020) enhanced his credibility as a long-standing member. I got the impression that he felt the digital age was responsible for the JPS's demise. He lamented that Adobe Photoshop had replaced the darkroom, observing that people didn't want to come to clubs anymore. He joined the JPS in 1962 and agreed that the club leaned very strongly towards Pictorialism. He felt that the CCJ was an attractive alternative to younger photographers and that shortly after its founding, its membership grew exponentially. My interview with Max Aaronson (personal communication 2020) produced similar results, again confirming that the ethos of the JPS was strongly centred on landscapes and portraiture, with technical aspects of photography dominating. Jules Cohen (personal communication 2020), a much younger interviewee, has a different

view. Joining in 1965 after being introduced by the late Frank Ward, a senior member of the club, he worked his way up the ladder of "rules and compositional standards," passing from beginner to advanced. According to Cohen, these "rules and standards" were firmly situated in the repetition of established mores, most particularly in portraiture, landscape, and wildlife photography. "There was little desire to break new ground and we were largely out of touch with what was happening in the rest of the world." This seems to be supported by the following articles appearing in the JPS monthly journal *Reflex*.

A letter to the editor in the February 1967 edition reads as follows.

> The discussion which ensued disclosed that many members have the impression that our Society is not likely to progress further in the International Salon field, while adherence to traditional methods of expression and treatment are continued… .We were told that successful pictures now-a-days are not made to be lived with, while the new-style work possesses terrific 'impact' but having no lasting effect on the observer. The author having scored his point, its life expectancy is only one or two weeks at the most. – J. B. Kelley

In the March 1969 issue, there was an article on "Basic Principles of Composition" extolling such things as the "rule of thirds." Again, under the heading "Shutter Chatter," a few tips on how to go about taking a portrait were offered in the February 1970 issue. Among other archaic advice is the suggestion that the sitter's lips should be moistened with the tongue to produce a sparkle. Extraordinarily, the author also suggests that a female sitter should hold her breath before the shutter is released as this fills out the chest.

In the May 1970 issue, some suggestions from a lecture by Brian Bates were given. His recommendations include the caveat that the distance between camera and model be no less than six feet, that Vaseline be used on the lower lip for a highlight, etc. In February 1974 a talk given by Roelf Roelofsen on portraiture suggested that to get a model to relax one should give them a drink.

These examples give a clear indication of what was considered important at the JPS, and reading them now helps one to understand Schwartz's disenchanted view of camera clubs. It is this predilection for standardised technical advice, which seemingly ignores personal expression, that validates Schwartz's criticism. "Photographers do not attempt to articulate personal ideas through their use of the medium, rather they convey a message about group membership by making pictures which show they share a consistent symbolic code"

(Schwartz 1983, 139). In discussing the works of the Miniature Camera Club of Philadelphia (MCC), Schwartz (1983, 136) comments on how members spend much of the time analysing the technical aspects of photography: exposure either over or under, colour saturation, composition, strong or weak centre of interest, distracting or busy, flat, or too grey. This could have been written about the JPS.

Discussions with Jules Cohen and Dan Swart, both having relinquished their membership of the JPS to join the CCJ, revealed a perhaps more accurate – if personal – summation of the JPS's methodology. Cohen (personal communication 2020) began his artistic pursuits first by painting and then with a cine camera, where he "discovered a kind of magic in sequential composition juxtaposition which went beyond the subject matter of the separate elements." "It was, in fact, my first realisation of the difference between 'studium' (the subject) and 'punctum' (the subject's emotional or intellectual impact), even though I did not use those terms until much later." While acknowledging the value of the technical aspects of photography inculcated at the JPS, he is quick to mention that he learnt nothing about what was going on photographically in the rest of the world. He continues by narrating how once he became secure in his technical prowess as a photographer, he started to grow uneasy about the way that the JPS concentrated exclusively on such matters. He felt that they didn't know what else to do and were afraid to push the envelope because the members of the JPS "had to get their marks and points and medals and things." So they just kept on repeating the work that was expected. In his view, it was the dual aspects of technical excellence coupled with superb landscape images that became the cornerstone of JPS photography. While still life and portraiture were represented, it was principally landscapes that dominated their repertoire. There was, he said, almost no discussion of the aesthetic value of prints as distinct from the technical and compositional aspects. At the invitation of Lou Yudelman, Cohen joined the CCJ where he found more appealing photographic work that demanded to be viewed more introspectively and in greater depth. "I regarded as excellent any work which broke new ground, explored more avenues of creativity, and generally engaged the emotions. That is still my opinion, and it is on that basis that I can say I found the work of CCJ to be more satisfying, more often. It was at the CCJ that I found a greater breadth of creative vision and a willingness to explore new ideas" (personal communication 2020).

Dan Swart also left to join the CCJ after finding the JPS "not to be very creative" (personal communication 2021). In the manuscript of his unpublished book, "Creative Photography for

Switched-On People" (2005), he bemoans the fact that organised South African amateur photography has become isolated from the mainstream of modern thinking in the visual arts. Outside influences that could have liberated the creative minds of South Africans have not done so to any appreciable extent. A pervasive attitude of parochial isolationism has discouraged these photographers from wanting to expand their horizons.

Citing the connection with British amateurs, and the South African acceptance of the technical and aesthetic standards set by the Royal Photographic Society, Swart notes that repetitive subject matter has been passed down from generation to generation. He believes (Swart 2005, 18) that even connections with the slightly more liberal American and European amateur organisations, PSA and FIAP, have had little influence on South African photographic approaches. He singles out the CCJ for being more open-minded. He concludes with the following observation: "CCJ is closer in its approach to mainstream developments in world photography than most other clubs and should stick to its guns regardless of misplaced criticism" (Swart 2005, 131).

The intention here is not to malign the JPS, but to show how this once powerful and influential club differed substantially from the work done at the CCJ. Almost from the inception of the CCJ the JPS took a disparaging view of it. The following is an extract from Bensusan's (1966, 96) *Silver Images*: "In the fifties the emphasis was on the documentary school and the Chinese group, whilst the sixties brought the contemporary work of K.J. Reinheimer and the unorthodox treatments of M. Feldman, both from Johannesburg." It was this disdain for the Modernist cultural currents sweeping through the Western world that led to the gradual loss of JPS members, mostly to the CCJ.



Michael Meyersfeld, *Dr Kin Bensusan*, 2001.

To further illustrate JPS's preoccupation with the technical aspects of photography, I cite some extracts from issues of their in-house journal *Reflex*:
February 1974: "Brian Jude from Frank and Hirsch will give a lecture and presentation on the Unicolour process."
January 1977: "A presentation of Leitz and Leica products by courtesy of Wild of South Africa (Pty) Ltd."
April 1978: "A presentation by Peterhouse of a new process called Exhibitex, allowing for a photograph to resemble canvas."
August 1981: "A monthly workshop by Minolta to be held at the Landrost Hotel."
September 1983: "A lecture by Ciba-Geigy."
June 1985: "An evening's outing to Ciba-Geigy, where a practical demonstration will be given on Ilford Multigrade."

Interspersed amongst these product guides, somewhat alarmingly, is an indictment by David Goldblatt:
July 1977: "We'll be presenting a follow up to David Goldblatt's thought-provoking talk last month, in which he suggested our photographs were shallow in concept, and often pointless."

Other presentations that highlight the chasm between the JPS and the CCJ include:
December 1967: “A talk on bird photography by R.M. Bloomfield.”
September 1969: “Frank Sanborn will be giving a talk on ‘Cats and Dogs.’”
Talks of this nature were never given at the CCJ.

Much store was set at the JPS by organised group outings, frequently mandated on pre-designated subject matter. This contrasted with the CCJ, where group outings were never organised. The occasional outings that occurred, mainly to Lesotho, comprised no more than three members, all friends, and usually the same people.

I include more extracts from the JPS’s *Reflex*:

December 1969: “We are trying to arrange a visit to the Krugersdorp Game Park and or the Pretoria Zoo.”
May 1974: “Bring your Joubert Park pictures to the meeting.”
October 1974: “Krugersdorp Game Reserve. Rondavels have been booked for a club outing. Workshop, picnic, and other excitements.”

January 1977: “Carlton competition.”
March 1977: “Sunday March 13th: This is an extra. Our last outing proved so successful that we’ve decide to have another one. The idea is that we all turn up at a selected venue, with our cameras and gadget bags, and compete to see who can make the best photograph of that place. The outing chosen this month is the Rand Afrikaans University in Auckland Park, and we’ll be meeting at 8:00 am. Members will compete in teams, with four people to a team.”
March 1982: “On Sunday morning the 7th of Feb. at an unbelievably early hour, the new Ellis Park Stadium was invaded by a motley selection of Print Section fanatics suitably hung about with enough equipment to sink a ship.”



Group Outing. JPS, 1960s

Looking at the subject matter of talks given, together with the emphasis on group outings, one sees a club whose method of operation could not be further removed from that of the CCJ. “Camera outings are a tradition among amateur photograph groups” observes Schwartz (1983, 54), perhaps implying that group outings invite a herd approach and leave little room for individuality.

It becomes evident that the JPS was a club still characterised by a style and methodology that began to wane in the 1920s in Europe, Britain, and the United States. By contrast, it was the phrase in the CCJ’s founding statement, “to form a club where originality was not stifled by conventional judging,” that was pivotal to what the CCJ stood for right from the beginning. While the JPS was mired in the past, the CCJ was led by a group of progressive thinkers.

The Chinese Camera Club of South Africa

The Chinese Camera Club of South Africa (CCCSA), sometimes referred to as the Chinese Camera Club of Johannesburg, was formed in 1952 in Johannesburg and was active throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Following the Population Registration Act of 1950, members of the Chinese community were classified as “Coloured” and were subject to discrimination based on this designation. During the first decade of institutionalised apartheid, a whole raft of legislation curtailed the Chinese community’s access to property ownership, public facilities, education, healthcare, and much else. Within this oppressive

atmosphere the CCCSA, an all-Chinese society, was formed, creating a forum for photographs that expressed the Chinese community's aspirations and cultural heritage. There does not appear to have been any legislation that prohibited Chinese individuals from joining the existing "white" clubs. Still, the prevailing atmosphere of apartheid, where Chinese people were treated as second-class citizens, must undoubtedly have led to feelings of humiliation, embarrassment, and discomfort. The CCJ did for many years have an Indian and a Chinese member. Both Hussein Ibrahim, a medical doctor working at Medunsa, and Henion Hahn were, despite the segregationist laws, very active and popular members of the CCJ. The CCCSA, born out of a sense of exclusion, appears to have operated similarly to many other South African clubs. Their distinguishing factor was their strong Hong Kong connection and the decidedly Chinese aura of their photographs, lending them an apparent exoticism. In his three articles, Professor Malcolm Corrigall (2018a,7) goes into detail about the workings of the CCCJ. He describes how the Club was founded by its first chairman, Jack Ho, whose application to study photography at the Witwatersrand Technical College in Johannesburg had been rejected on the grounds of race. This kind of discrimination conduced to the establishment of a racially exclusively Chinese Camera Club, an institution that could provide a photographic education and at the same time impart a sense of pride to both its members and the Chinese community at large.

It can be assumed that, like most camera clubs, members of the CCCSA photographed a range of subjects. Still, reading Corrigall's articles, there appears to have been a strong emphasis on cityscapes (mainly in and around Johannesburg) and landscapes heavily influenced by traditional Chinese landscape painting.

Corrigall (2018b, 4) states that photographic outings were one of the principal activities of the Chinese Camera Club. Frequently these outings had overlapping functions, combining photography with social gatherings of family and friends. The excursions provided an opportunity for members to leave their restrictive areas and move around in the city where they lived "but was not theirs." Apart from the novelty and pleasure of a day away from their confining areas, members of family and friends frequently accompanied them and were used as models for their photographic shoots. This reminds us of Schwartz's (1983, 54) criticism of outings as a tradition among amateur photography groups, but here the circumstances were atypical. Many of the outings, usually day trips, were within and around Johannesburg and Pretoria. Outings within the city were usually made to well-known locales. Some of the

favourites were Wits University, Zoo Lake, a variety of newly built Modernist buildings, and the Civic Centre, an impressive Modernist structure in its time replete with sculptures and fountains. There seems to have been a shared desire to take imaginative possession of places de facto out of bounds to Chinese people (Corrigall 2015).

"By situating Chinese South Africans within recognisable locales in Johannesburg, the visibility of the Chinese community was heightened and announced them as an intrinsic and permanent part of the city's population" (Corrigall 2018a, 513). This may well be accurate, but the whole process of group outings including family and friends was the antithesis of what happened at the CCJ. These group outings bear a strong resemblance to the planned group outings of the JPS.

Jack Ho, the founder of the CCCSA, studied for some time in Hong Kong, becoming significantly influenced by Chinese painting. Together with the firmly knit fraternity of the CCCSA and their cultural pride, it is not surprising that their work should have had a strong Chinese leaning. The two international salons staged by the CCCSA in 1956 and 1964 were open only to individuals who identified as Chinese. They regularly referred to their work as "Chinese camera art" and "Chinese print," firmly situating the ideas and practices of club members within an international network of "Chinese photographic practice" (Corrigall 2015). The overwhelming influence of traditional Chinese landscape painters identifies this work as unreservedly Pictorial in style. From the images shown in Corrigall's papers, it is patent that copying Chinese paintings was their absolute intention. Completing the similarity still further was their inclusion of calligraphy in the body of a photograph and the "chop," a signature seal stamped with red ink.



Ancient Chinese Landscape Painting.

Calligraphy was used for a variety of reasons. Appropriating an ancient Chinese style, calligraphy was used by club members to inscribe poems on prints, as well as to detail the title of the print and the name of the photographer. Notably, calligraphy was also used as a device to balance the composition (Corrigall 2015). The photograph *Distant Mist* by Tony Yau is a fine example of how the block of black calligraphy accentuated by the red chop so elegantly balances the triangle of trees at the bottom right.



Tony Yau, *Distant Mist*, date unknown.

During its active years, the CCCSA was counted among the more successful South African camera clubs, primarily due to members' success at International Salons. While being influenced by Chinese painting, their approach to landscape photography was greatly motivated by the Pictorial style of photography, still popular in Hong Kong despite having long since waned in the West. In their seeming oriental exoticism, these photographers were

unabashedly copying Chinese paintings. This, together with their tendency towards group shoots, places them in a position not too dissimilar from that of the JPS.

There is no argument that the formation of the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa had much to do with the exclusionary laws of the country. It also allowed members to express themselves photographically. I am, however, not in full agreement with Corrigall when he suggests that the desire to perpetuate a Chinese style of landscape photography that originated outside of South Africa cannot be adequately explained without referring to the local historical situation in South Africa, and that "part of the reason for club members' attachment to China through photography was due to their unwelcome treatment in apartheid South Africa" (Corrigall 2015, 54). While I would agree that the very formation of the club was predicated on the apartheid government's treatment of Chinese people, I do not believe that their appropriation of a Chinese style of landscape photography was simply a function of the political climate. Both the JPS and the CCCSA were clubs where group activities were paramount. Individualism seems to have largely been absent, with both clubs firmly rooted in Pictorialism, one with a Western slant and one with an Eastern slant.

Chapter 4

In the previous chapter, I discussed in some detail how both the CCSA and the JPS largely adhered to the conventions of Pictorialism and bore out many of the criticisms levelled at amateur camera clubs by Schwartz. Both these clubs are now defunct. This chapter describes the different approach adopted at the CCJ and how this distinguished it from most other South African clubs.

Camera Club of Johannesburg

Photography in the past half-century has undergone significant technological advances. Prints, both colour and black-and-white, can be digitally printed in sizes previously unheard of. High-resolution cameras capture information in infinite detail, with computer technology and Adobe Photoshop transforming image-making beyond the imagination of the darkroom era. Social issues such as feminism, race, gender, and many more have migrated from the newspapers to the pristine walls of important galleries. International auction houses conduct photography sales with knowledgeable collectors paying sums in the multiple millions. It wasn't always like this. In the camera clubs of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, photography was steeped in the atmosphere of darkrooms, with developing baths, fixers, drying, glazing, spotting, and mounting. It is about this time that I am writing, when there was little recognition of photography as a form of gallery art.

In most respects, the CCJ appeared in its day-to-day running to be much the same as any other club. Monthly meetings were held at the Johannesburg Library, usually on the last Thursday of every month, where announcements were made and prints were submitted for evaluation. There were the rare group outings to Lesotho, generally comprising the same three or four members and not organised by the club. The annual trophy night was the year's highlight. A visitor from any other club would probably have seen nothing significantly different. Attendance usually ran between twenty and thirty people. The secretary took notes of the evening's awards and announcements were made, while chit-chat permeated the evening.



Main Entrance to the Johannesburg Library, 18-11-2018.



The Indaba Room, where CCJ meetings took place, 18-11-2018.

The CCJ, while being one club, had two divisions, the colour section and the black-and-white print section. They were run as separate entities, each with its own set of office-bearers. My dissertation focuses exclusively on the black-and-white print section. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, I have worked exclusively in black-and-white for many decades, and secondly, all the photographic movements and selected camera clubs discussed in this dissertation were working in black-and-white. Colour photography only became common in the early 1970s with the advent of the C21 negative process. The first major exhibition of colour photography was by William Eggleston, curated by John Szarkowski, Director of MoMA's photography department. It opened at New York's Museum of Modern Art in May 1976 (Museum of Modern Art 1976).

Like most clubs, the CCJ had a dedicated core of members who attended meetings regularly. It adopted a "star system" to grade differing levels of competence. This ranged from one star for beginners to five-star honours. Not all clubs used the star system but common to all was a defined system that positioned members in a hierarchy of competence.

Viewfinder, the CCJ journal, lists the core members as Mike Feldman, Lou Yudelman, Ludi Blum, Wally Rossini, Jooste Kotze, Dirk Vermeulen, Frank and Sonya Sanbourne, Eddie Field, John Rushmere, Danie Coetzer, Dennis Arden and the author. The three most prominent experimental members were Mike Feldman, Lou Yudelman and Wally Rossini. Mike Feldman passed away on 18 August 2018, aged 93, having achieved the status of Honorary Life Member, Honorary President, and Honorary Lifetime President. His boundless energy was abundantly manifest in his solo exhibition *Patterns in Decay* early in 2018. Lou Yudelman, who was living in Cape Town, passed away on 26 January 2022, aged 94, leaving Wally Rossini, who upon retiring to Knysna fifteen years ago sadly destroyed every negative and print of his career.

The success of the CCJ was different from that of the three overseas clubs I discuss in Chapter 2. The Lexington Camera Club had direct contact with such luminaries as Ansel Adams and Brett and Edward Weston, not to mention the guiding leadership of Ralph Eugene Meatyard, a name that became well known in the annals of American photography. Nor did CCJ have the good fortune of the Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB), which appeared to have members with strong connections to the São Paulo Modern Art Museum and the São Paulo City Council.

From a photography point of view, Johannesburg and the rest of South Africa lagged far behind the strides being made in England, the USA and Europe. Photography as an accepted art form was all but non-existent. Our national galleries were apathetic or too conservative to include any meaningful examples of contemporary photography in their collections. Commercial galleries, with a few exceptions, were not much better, resulting in the art-buying public being largely unaware of photography as an art form.

The Culture of Creativity

Several criteria set the CCJ apart from other South African clubs, all emanating from the progressive actions of its strong leadership and resorting under the rubric of creativity. These are explored below.

Judging

Much of the club's success can be attributed to the monthly judging. On arrival members placed their submissions for judging on the designated "star" table. Mounted photographs were pinned to a display board for all to see, beginning with the lowest grade. Notably, the judges, carefully chosen for each section, were obliged to discuss and give reasons for their decisions. This process was neither arbitrarily dispensed with nor rushed, with a senior member always at hand to intervene should the process veer off track. The importance of this cannot be overstated, with these evenings providing a wonderful opportunity to learn, particularly as the prevailing ethos of the club encouraged a modernistic approach and experimentation.

Very early on in my membership of the CCJ – I seem to recall I was a two-star worker – I was keen to put up for evaluation an image that I was very excited about. I had been photographing around the Sea Point Pavilion Swimming Pool in Cape Town when my attention was drawn to a detail of the pool, which in retrospect could be viewed as an abstraction of an urban landscape. I was aware that this image was very different from anything I had ever seen or previously done, but I nervously went ahead and submitted it at the next meeting. When the judges got to my print, a hiatus translated into "and what do we do with this?"

Mike Feldman got to his feet, encouraged new ways of seeing, and to my delight commended my print. This was a classic example of what the club did. You were not awarded for reproducing work that had previously been seen. I would argue that this open and encouraging approach to experimentation and original Modernist interpretations was an important difference between the CCJ and the JPS.



Michael Meyersfeld, *Retreat*, 1976.

Feldman was by no means an internationally known photographer; nor, for that matter, was any other member of the club. He was, however, well known at most international salons and was a recognised force in the local photographic milieu. Right up to his death, Feldman constantly sought new ways of expression through the camera, and harboured an ardent antipathy towards the conservatism that prevailed in South African clubs.

Telescoping back into history can make everything appear so orderly and neatly packaged. I do not doubt that among the three photographic movements and the three overseas camera clubs that I discuss, untidy instances of disagreement and uncertainty must have occurred. Differences must have flared, and failures recognised, none of which come to be written up in the history books.

Alfred Stieglitz, one of the great names in the twentieth century, constantly grappled to understand what photography meant and to establish the camera's place in the art world. Beginning as a dedicated Pictorialist, he became known as the father of photographic Modernism in America after producing his legendary photograph *The Steerage*, and ended his career with a series of abstract images of clouds known as the *Equivalents*, which were intended to free the subject matter from literal interpretation. The unrelenting progression that defined Stieglitz's career highlights the constant seeking for a "new" camera language amongst committed photographers. This continuous seeking was particularly prevalent at the CCJ. Looking at Mike Feldman's landscape photography, one sees a change in style, moving from early Pictorialism right up to Modernism in the early 1980s. The following four photographs by Feldman are a sampling of that change.

Harvest End represents many aspects of typical Pictorialism of the early 1900s. The strong cloud formation probably enhanced in the darkroom, the use of textured paper, and the composition itself defining this image as pre-Modernist.



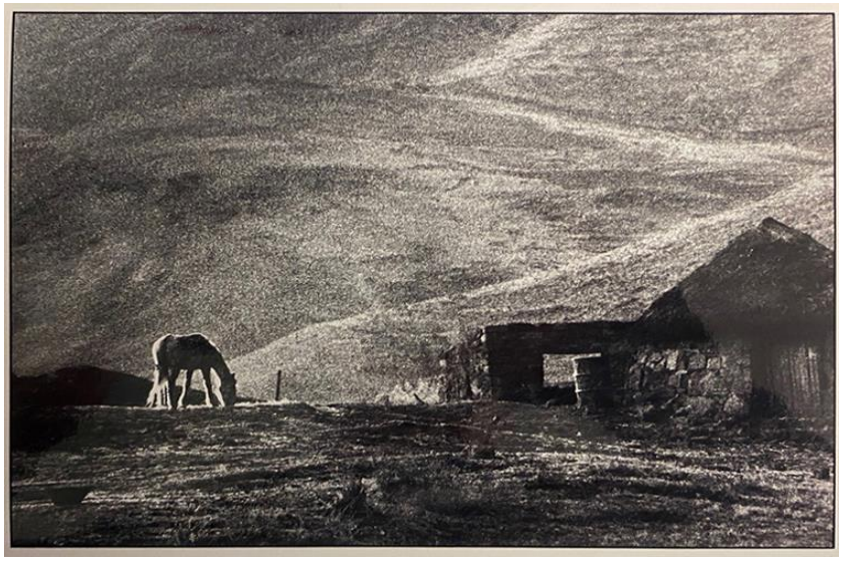
Mike Feldman, *Harvest End*, 1958 (Lesotho).

All photographs credited to Mike Feldman are copyright "The Estate of Mike Feldman 2018". Reproduction in any medium and by any means is strictly prohibited.

Sextet, done four years later, illustrates the continuing use of textured paper, but there is a significant divergence in style. Placing the clump of five trees on the left of the frame with the single tree to the right creates a perfect and deliberate pointer to the distant homestead. This isolated dwelling in an oasis of trees is situated in a burnt and barren landscape. There is a distinct underlying narrative of the remoteness of farms in South Africa, strongly indicated by the dwarfed, white-walled home. *Sextet* is formative and artistically modern, with the strong shapes of the foreground trees telescoping one's vision to the isolated homestead in the distance.



Mike Feldman, *Sextet,* 1962.



Mike Feldman, *Eventide*, 1976

Just more than a decade later, in *Eventide* an otherwise typical Lesotho landscape, has been treated by Feldman very differently from either *Harvest End* or *Sextet*. Harsh grain has replaced a smooth tonal range. The contrast is greater, with the content almost taking second place to the design elements. There is nothing lyrical about the strong S-curve. Towards the bottom left of the photograph, the light-rimmed horse joins the sharp zigzag up the mountain, seemingly bisecting the image in two. The horse's position on the white path perfectly balances the thatched dwelling squatting towards the bottom right. Where the tonal range of

Sextet is smooth, *Eventide* is aggressively punchy in its graininess. Both these scenes have been seen many times in different variations, but the graphic qualities in *Eventide* darken the otherwise pastoral scene with something bordering on the ominous.

Twenty years after *Harvest End*, the image below illustrates Feldman's new treatment of a Lesotho landscape. *Lesotho* is substantially different from his earlier works.



Mike Feldman, *Lesotho*, 1979

Comparing *Lesotho* to *African Kraal* (below) one is struck by the quantum leap in style between these two images of similar subject matter. Both photographs reflect a bucolic rural scene replete with the ubiquitous thatch huts, sheep, mountains, and the figure of a lone person. But the unique treatment in *Lesotho* places it within a markedly Modernist and progressive category.



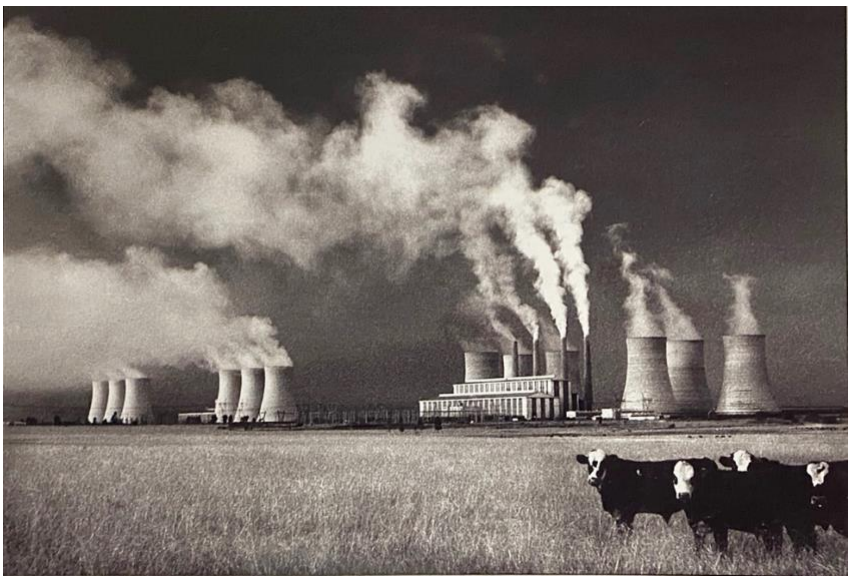
Mike Feldman, *African Kraal*, 1964

When viewing a photograph such as Mike Feldman's *Lesotho*, it is essential to be cognisant that it was produced in-camera and not through darkroom manipulation. This work preceded the creation of Adobe Photoshop by more than a decade. The result of a photograph had to be pre-envisaged. Care was taken to get the required crop in the taking of the image, and the inclusion of the rebate (the black border around the photograph), as seen in *Lesotho*, indicates that this was not cropped in the printing. Feldman, an optician by profession, cut his filter to produce this unique interpretation of common subject matter, startling in the context of South Africa photography in 1979. It was images like these that spurred members to move into uncharted waters. They both encouraged and galvanised. They were discussed, entered into salons and exhibitions, sold, or more likely given to friends and family who in turn displayed them. Thus began a slow seepage out into the non-camera club world. At the CCJ, particularly from the early 1970s, there was a determined and sustained effort to use the camera in ways not previously seen in South Africa. Not everything was good, but the ethos to move away from repeating previous styles was a key concern.

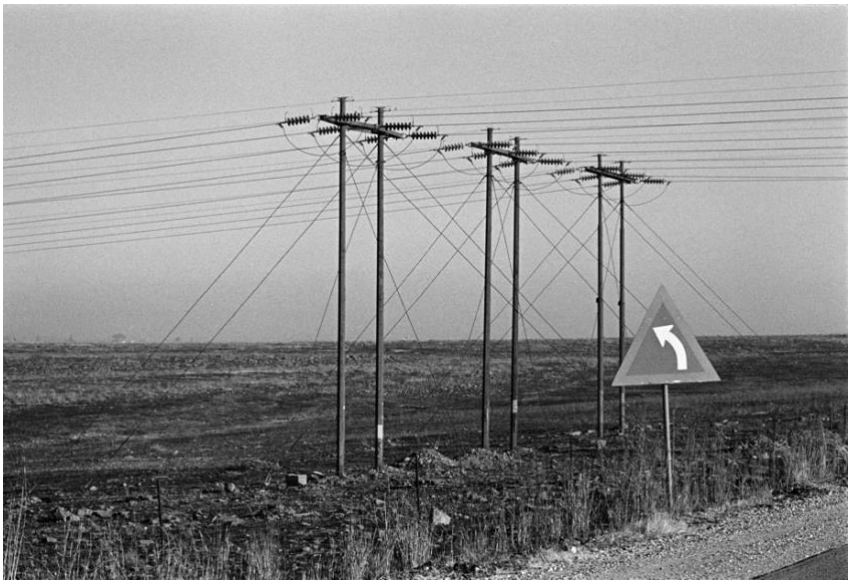
New Topography

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, landscape photography at CCJ changed direction. This was in direct opposition to the traditional landscapes still being produced at many clubs. Landscape photographs began to incorporate non-rural objects, in line with the nascent New Topographic Movement that began in America in the early 1970s. Including such names as Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz and Stephen Shore, this group was inspired by man-altered landscapes, selecting subject matter that was often considered mundane. Parking lots,

suburban housing developments, and warehouses were all depicted in stark austerity. I believe that neither Feldman nor other club members, including the author, were familiar with the phrase "New Topographics." Still, as shown below, these were the beginnings of urban photography at the CCJ, occurring at the same time it did in the USA.



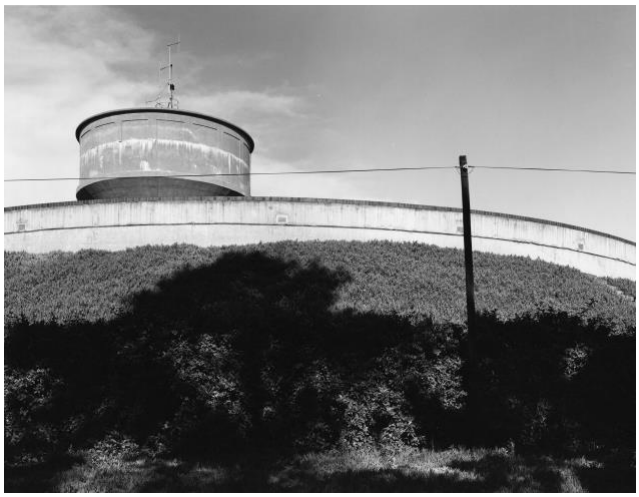
Mike Feldman, *Majestic Pollution*, early 1980s



Michael Meyersfeld, Pylons & Arrow, 1977



Michael Meyersfeld, *M2 East Highway*, 1982



Michael Meyersfeld, *Hyde Park Reservoir*, 1982

The above two images were part of a 1982 exhibition held at the Market Theatre Gallery. They reflect the growing confrontation between nature and man's needs.

M2 East Highway considers the overpowering concrete structure barely allowing room for a wisp of cloud and a man-sculpted shrub. In *Hyde Park Reservoir* the plant growth on the embankment is challenged by a creeping shadow of darkness, suggesting the elimination of nature and the dominance of man-made structures.

The following is a short article that appeared in the June 1982 *Viewfinder* describing the reaction of club members to these images by Meyersfeld:

> The members of Group 3 found themselves to a certain extent at odds with the photographer in terms of their interpretation of the exhibit, and it appears that Michael
> Meyersfeld has moved his photography into a world very far apart from that in which members of the club exist. He has certainly displayed in no uncertain terms the courage of his convictions and his individual attitude towards what could be described as 'Urban Pictorials'. Many of us[24] have been predisposed to dismiss this type of
> work out of hand, but for this writer, there is a definite and dynamic development in the work of Michael Meyersfeld. His attitudes are clear, and his ability undoubted.

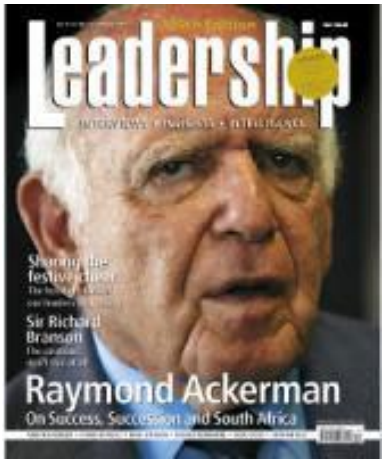
[24] This presumably refers to members of Group 3 who attended the exhibition.

Does Feldman's *Majestic Pollution* have merit beyond the aesthetic? The white plumes of smoke starkly contrasting with the near-black sky seem to herald an ominous sense of approaching gloom. The bewildered looks of the beautifully positioned four heads of cattle in the bottom right-hand corner appear to plead for help. This is surely far removed from the traditional photography that Donna Beth Schwartz claims is perpetuated by the camera club ethos. Similarly, *Pylons & Arrows*, subverting the expected landscape photograph, provides many narratives. It is noteworthy that almost at the same time (1975) that the groundbreaking exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* was showing at the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House, New York, works showing man-altered landscapes were being produced by members of the CCJ. Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Stephen Shore, and others embarked on a previously unseen approach to landscape photography, where aspects of beauty and emotion were stripped away and the stark realities of urban scenery were revealed with pronounced detachment. Their photographs showed the everyday sights of suburbia with little or no attempt to glamourise them. In his publication *Beauty in Photography*, Robert Adams (1981, 24) remarks: "Beauty seemed to be an obsolete word, appropriate to urns and the dead inside them; what had the term to do with the realities of this century?" A photographer, he states, "can describe a better world only by better seeing the world as it is in front of him, and that for a picture to be beautiful, it must in some significant respect be unlike what has preceded it" (1981, 26, 27).

The CCJ was already taking tentative steps in this direction, producing works consonant with the aesthetic of the New Topographics movement. There is no evidence that any other South African camera club was doing such work at the time.

Portraiture

Like landscape photography, portraiture at the CCJ was constantly being nudged towards a new form of expression. Traditional portraiture produced by the well-known commercial portrait photographer Jane Plotz, and the portraits taken by David Goldblatt for *Leadership*, the South African magazine (acknowledging that these were for editorial purposes), were eschewed at the CCJ and seen as purely marketable or commercial work. While these portraits were of the highest technical quality, well-lit and composed, they were generally "safe," with little artistic interpretation.



David Goldblatt, Raymond Ackerman



David Goldblatt, Professor Mahlo Mokgalong

One needs to be cognisant that portraits created for a specific advert or magazine cover, as shown above, frequently have specific shooting conditions. In the case of *Leadership*, there were likely requirements for the masthead and text at the base to fall on dark areas to allow for immediate readability and recognition. Similarly, while meticulous both in lighting and technical know-how, Jane Plotz's portraits remained fundamentally commercial, with the primary requirement being to create as flattering an image as possible.



Jane Plotz, *Betty Meyersfeld*, c. 1940



Jane Plotz, *Untitled*, c.1950

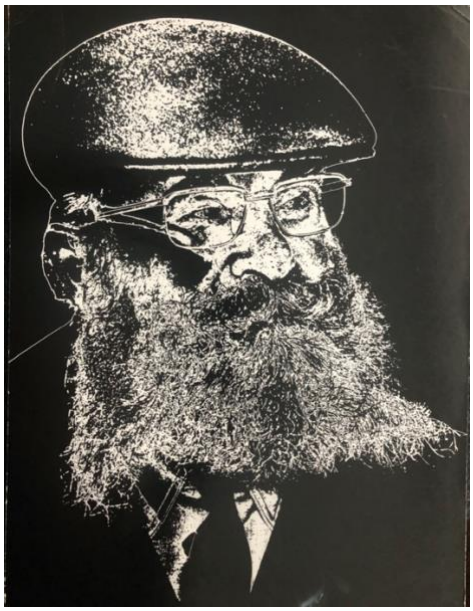
Portraiture has always been a favourite subject at camera clubs, and as demonstrated by Brian Bates (1970), they were usually formulated and prosaic. The CCJ eschewed this approach and determinedly directed members to a more contemporary and modern style.

In the May 1970 issue of *Reflex*, the JPS's monthly journal, Bates offers "some suggestions":

> The distance between photographer and subject should not be more than six feet.
> The shoulders must not be "square on". Try 45 degrees for slenderising.
> Fill the viewfinder and compose in it.
> Use Vaseline on the lower lip for a highlight.
> The nose must not cut the cheek-line.

By contrast, the CCJ moved away from such formulaic approaches and strove to pursue a more modern path.

The CCJ followed three distinct approaches. The first is derivatives, as shown in the following two examples. Mike Feldman's *J Brown Esq*. is a solarised image, and Wally Rossini's *Looking* is a combination print utilising high contrast and posterisation. The techniques adopted in these images are not new, but at the time they caused a stir in photographic circles in Johannesburg. It is not the processes that I am lauding, but rather their innovative use in portraiture.

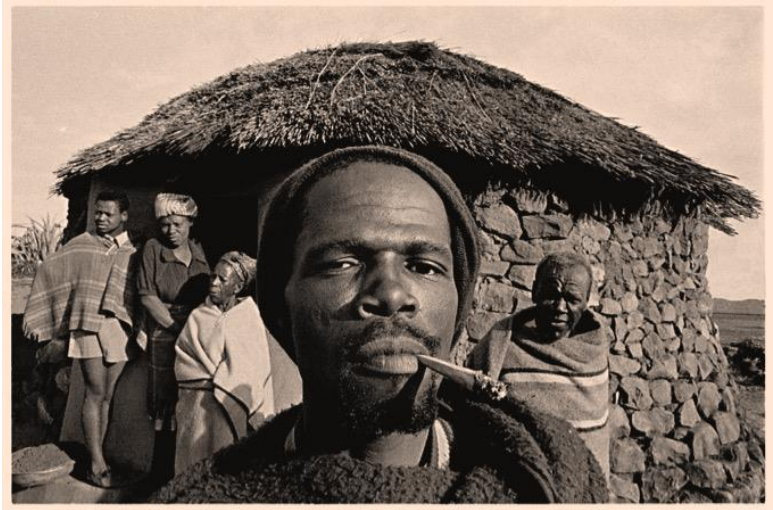


Mike Feldman, *J Brown Esq.*,1971



Wally Rossini, *Looking*, 1975

The second approach was that of portraiture taken outdoors into natural surroundings, usually incorporating peripheral information about the subject. The following example taken by Lou Yudelman in Lesotho prominently features a man, presumably the head of the family. This portrait situates the subject in his environment, expanding the meaning of the photograph and enlarging the viewer's understanding of its subject.



Lou Yudelman, *Lesotho Family*, c.1975.

Yudelman uses layered positioning, with the head of the family in the foreground, the remaining family members traditionally some paces behind, with the backdrop being their stone and thatch dwelling. Together with the soft natural side-lighting, greatly enhanced by the appropriate use of a wide-angle lens, this portrait creates a sense of immediacy. A further example of situational portraiture is *The Twelve Apostles*, below.



Michael Meyersfeld, *The Twelve Apostles*, 1977

The third style was to give portraiture a more modern look. This was influenced by discussions at Group 3 and an array of books on contemporary photography that became available through Russell Friedman Books and the Bensusan Library.

The works by Man Ray, Bill Brandt, and David Bailey, among others, triggered the desire to produce work that was more poetic, intense, and powerful.



Bill Brandt, *Untitled*, c.1950s



Bill Brandt, *Untitled*, c.1950s

Both of Brandt's photographs reproduced here utilise graphic and unusual viewpoints, with wide-angle lenses used to heighten the effect and drama of the portraits. Strikingly unusual for club portraiture, the models in both of Brandt's photographs are not looking into the camera and seem absorbed in their own world.

Woman with Scarf is a further example of how the CCJ moved away from conventional portraiture. This image comprises only three tones, the black of the hair and background, the pale face, and the darker grey of the scarf, thereby giving it a very graphic feel. Also, the subject is neither aware of nor interested in the viewer.



Michael Meyersfeld, *Woman with Scarf*, 1974

International Guest Speakers

Inviting overseas guest speakers to conduct lectures and workshops was an ongoing occurrence, providing an important window onto photographic methods and styles in other parts of the world. These talks were open to the black-and-white print and colour sections. Amongst others, there were visits from Freeman Patterson, George Pollock, Hank Shull, Raimo Gareis, Willy Hengel, Paul Yarrows, and Jerry Uelsmann. "There was a short visit from Margaret Bourke-White when she came to South Africa to photograph the filming of *Zulu*," remarks Phillip Feitelberg (2022, personal communication), a senior member of the colour section of the CCJ.

Hank Shul, a doyen of the Cibachrome world and developer of soft focus and diffusion lenses, was one of the visiting speakers. While being colour-orientated and falling outside the direct interests of the black-and-white print section, a lot could be learned from speakers like him about new ways of seeing and different approaches. Raimo Gareis, famous for his shots of hippies in Central Park, New York, and the technical director of Agfa-Gevaert in Leverkusen, Germany, was another noteworthy speaker. Regardless of their content, one left these talks with a refreshed sense of enthusiasm.

Freeman Patterson, the Canadian nature photographer and writer, was a frequent visitor who lectured and conducted workshops. I never attended his talks, as his subject matter fell outside my sphere of interest. He was, however, regarded as a vibrant, informative, and stimulating speaker. He began teaching photography and visual design in the early 1960s, primarily to small groups. His knowledge and presentation skills soon attracted notice, and in 1973 the demand for his instructional skills enabled him to establish a workshop programme at his home situated on four acres at the tip of Shampers Bluff, New Brunswick, Canada. Patterson made several visits to South Africa between 1967 and 1983. "Regarded as one of Canada's pre-eminent photographers, he is known worldwide for his excellence in photography, writing and teaching, and has written several outstanding books" (McCristall 2013, para.10). Patterson emphasised the importance of visual design and the principles of composition, recommending doing as much as possible in-camera when taking a photograph. Patterson and Colla Swart co-founded the Namaqualand Photographic Workshops in 1984 and undertook visits to the desert village of Kamieskroon once or twice every year to teach three to four week-long workshops. I never attended his lectures and cannot provide any

direct link to work done by the club, other than that of Ed Field, a club member who went to Canada to attend a course with Patterson. His photograph *Crayfish Buoys* was taken at Grand Manama, an island off the Canadian coast. This saturated colour photograph has strength, not only in its composition but also in its almost monochromatic appearance. The buoys – centrally situated, red-hued and nearly starfish in shape – exhibit strong graphic qualities, the design element almost stronger than the content of the photograph.

There is no doubt that in the world of nature photography, Patterson was highly rated and he probably had a great influence on the colour section of the CCJ. Subject matter in the black-and-white print section infrequently showed scenes of a pastoral nature, possibly as this type of photography does not always translate well in monochrome. For these reasons, I feel it important to establish that it is not particularly Patterson's classes nor Ed Field's *Crayfish Buoys* that are being highlighted. Rather, they serve as further examples of the CCJ's ethos of endeavouring to expand horizons and offer exposure to the work of important photographers, irrespective of their style.



Ed Field, *Crayfish Buoys*, 1981

Today, such images may appear bland and purely decorative, but they were all produced pre-postmodernism, which emerged in the late 1980s. Art photography in South Africa was until the late 1980s firmly situated in aesthetics, with attention to processes of signification as yet largely undeveloped. The theoretical elaborations of semiotics and psychoanalysis, which now frequently figure in debates about meaning in photography, were only rarely found. At

that time, and not only in clubs, photography could be encapsulated by the following quotations from Marcel Proust and Pablo Picasso.

> *A work of art that contains theories is like an object on which the price tag has been left.* – Marcel Proust

Proust, it seems, was thinking of those who feel that some explanation is required to understand or appreciate an art piece. The implication is that the art piece itself should be sufficient.

> *I hate that aesthetic game of the eye and the mind, played by those connoisseurs, these mandarins who "appreciate" beauty. What is beauty, anyway? There's no such thing. I never "appreciate", any more than I like, I love, or I hate.* – Pablo Picasso

In the early 1980s, questions began to be raised about the nature of a photograph. A discourse developed that suggested that photography was not only about vision but also the social context of the photograph. Thus in 1986, in Nan Goldin's most notable work, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, an exploration of LGBT bodies was presented to the American public, frequently in raw and graphic detail (Goldin, N. 2005). In *Touching Photographs*, Olin (20122) documents the shift in emphasis from the photograph's physical presence to the medium's social dimension and its role in establishing individual interaction, communal interrelation, as well as emotional identification or empowerment.

In *Feeling Photography*, edited by Elspeth H. Brown and Thy Phu (2014), the implications for photography of a wide range of subjects are discussed, including "critical race theory, queer studies, post-colonial theory, and the feminist engagement with the relationship between representation and intimacy."

Another important speaker at the CCJ was Norman Seeff, the highly successful ex-South African living in Los Angeles who was invited to address the club in October 1985. Seeff, a photographer and filmmaker, made a name for himself both in shooting images for record covers and pioneering the making of videos of famous rock groups. His work focused on exploring human creativity and the inner dynamics of the creative process. I was unsuccessful in gaining an interview with Seeff. Still, his presence in South Africa at the invitation of the CCJ was undoubtedly a further manifestation of the club's progressiveness and desire to keep abreast of world trends.

The most significant visit was by Jerry Uelsmann, the American photographer and early exponent of photomontage. The February 1982 edition of *Viewfinder* describes this visit as "the big event of 1982":

> Arrangements have been finalised to run a two-day weekend photographic workshop at Wits University on 24th and 25th April 1982. The workshop will be conducted by two of the world's best-known photographers and teachers… PROFESSOR JERRY N. UELSMANN and HENRY A. SHULL. The former specialises in black & white while the latter is one of America's best-known colour slide and print workers.

Uelsmann was renowned for his darkroom wizardry and surrealist narratives incorporating multiple negatives, using up to a dozen enlargers to produce his final image. Several members of the CCJ, particularly Lou Yudelman, were actively pursuing this type of work at much the same time. Uelsmann was, in many respects, the most important American exponent of surrealist photography. During the mid-twentieth century, when photography was still being defined, Uelsmann flouted the boundaries dictated by the Photo Secessionists and other realists. He wished to share with the viewer images from his imagination. Using only analogue tools, his work is all the more remarkable for having been done before Adobe Photoshop's invention. His first solo show was at MoMA in New York in 1967 (Maher & Berman 2007), and he has works in the collections of the Arts Institute of Chicago, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In 1965, Jerry Uelsmann argued that by using "post-visualisation," photographers could re-visualise their images via darkroom manipulation. Some of his works have been termed neo-Pictorialist, with others describing his more unusual images as post-Pictorialism ("Pictorialism: Concepts and Styles" n.d.). I would suggest that Uelsmann's photography, though anchored in darkroom manipulations, is essentially contemporary. His images are far from painterly, with his subject matter offering fresh interpretations of multiple printing. The two images below reflect Uelsmann's mastery of surrealism with the camera, as well as his immaculate craftsmanship. Despite the obvious improbability that the content of these images is 'real,' they have a convincing quality not often seen in similar images achieved through Photoshop.



Jerry Uelsmann, *Untitled*, c.1970s
Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College, Chicago



Jerry Uelsmann, *Untitled*, c.1970s
Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College, Chicago

Successfully printing multiple negatives requires both technical skill and the ability to previsualise. Uelsmann's process would typically begin with sorting through numerous proof sheets: "folding and overlapping various contact sheets he explores visual possibilities" (Uelsmann, J. 1967). Then, to test the feasibility of his idea, he would place a sheet of non-photographic paper on his easel and separately project each of the desired negatives onto the sheet displaying his rough sketch. Each required negative was placed in a separate enlarger. Moving the easel from one enlarger to the other, he then sized each negative (by moving the head of the enlarger up or down) until the desired effect was established. Only then did the process of actual printing begin.

The following three images by Lou Yudelman provide further evidence of the progressiveness of the CCJ and its strong desire to be in the vanguard of world photography. It is of interest that in 1960 Uelsmann was invited by Van Deren Coke to teach at the University of Florida. This is the same Van Deren Coke who was one of the founders of the Lexington Camera Club, discussed above. It also evidences how the meeting and cross-pollination of prominent American photographers began to seep into other clubs and other art genres.

> We have recently been exposed to a few unexpected joys in our photographic lives – firstly, the visit of that incomparable photographic artist and humourist, Jerry Uelsman, and then a very enlightening lecture by PROFESSOR VAN DEREN COKE, curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco. (*Viewfinder*, October 1982)

Yudelman readily admits to having been greatly influenced by Uelsmann's surrealist works, the images reproduced below having been produced by him in about 1975, at almost the identical time to those of Uelsmann's. This influence came from books and not from Uelsmann's visit to Johannesburg, still a decade away. Even after Uelsmann visited South Africa in 1982, not many members were doing the kind of work he produced. I asked Yudelman how many separate negatives were involved in each of the three shots, to which he laughingly answered, "I'm not sure if I even remember the shots". *Parachute Man* seems to combine four or five separate images. The story has been beautifully and dramatically created, with all the perspectives being accurately rendered. This is a formidable challenge.

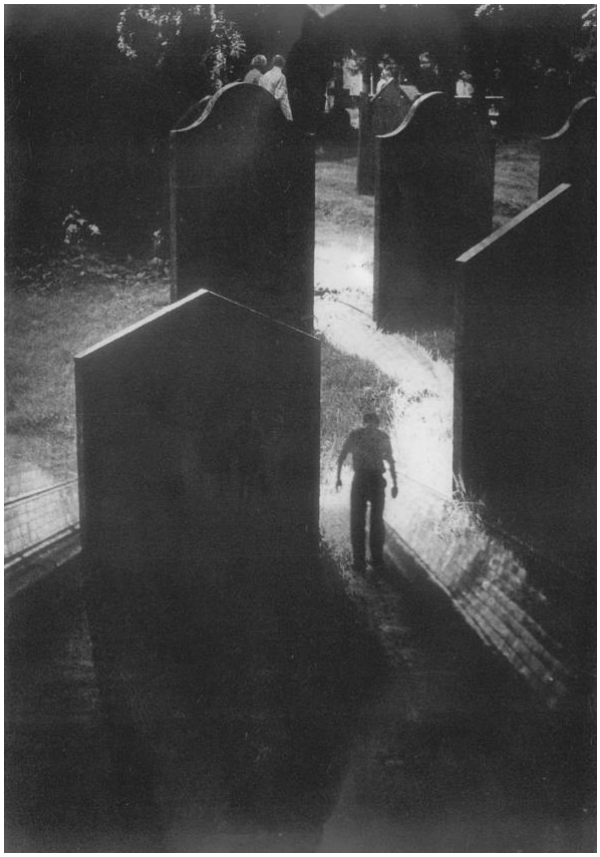


Lou Yudelman, *Parachute Man*, c. 1975.



Lou Yudelman, *Shades of Ophelia* c.1975.

Shades of Ophelia presents a beautifully graded surreal image of a girl floating among reeds in a stretch of still water. This ethereal image is open to a host of interpretations. Similarly, in *Lonesome Road* the narrative is open to various understandings. What these three images have in common is their story-telling appeal. These works were at the time as unique to South Africa as they were in America, positioning the CCJ in a realm very different from that of other South African clubs. Yudelman's *Lonesome Road* is a further example of how one can utilise the camera and multiple printing to create fictional narratives, far removed from the expected and familiar. The multiple printing of Yudelman's three images is very different from Feldman's *Growing City* or Rossini's *Looking.* Feldman's and Rossini's images are flat, without any perspective. The second negative in these two prints is high contrast lith negative where perspective is absent. By contrast, Yudelman's photographs are combinations of images containing their full perspective and a full range of tones, thereby making the combination printing far more challenging.



Lou Yudelman, *Lonesome Road,* Keswick Lake District UK c.1975

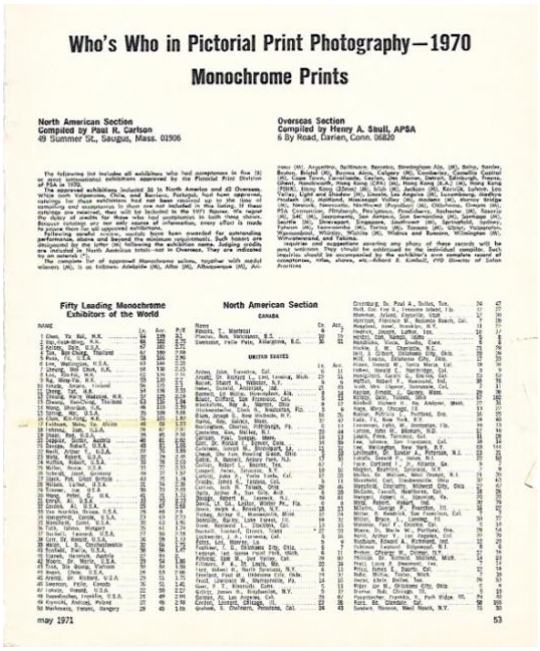
International Salons

International salons are an important feature of most camera clubs. They would normally take place under the auspices of umbrella societies with strict rules governing aspects of entry. These might specify the maximum and minimum size of print that could be entered. There were rules about how a photograph should be mounted and strict adherence to placement in the different categories of exhibition. The three main international societies are the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) founded in 1853; the Photographic Society of America (PSA) founded in 1934, and the Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographie (FIAP) founded in 1946, an international organisation of national associations of photography to which more than 85 national associations belong (Wanderscheid n.d.). The South African equivalent is the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA), founded in 1954, the officially recognised body representing photographers in Southern Africa.

Before the mid-1970s the CCJ was reasonably active in the entering of salons, especially American and Asian salons where the work submitted was generally less conservative than in

the British ones. There certainly were gains to be made by entering salons. One of the advantages of entering a national or international salon was the opportunity it afforded to step outside of the relative comfort of one's club and expose one's work to an unfamiliar audience. Entrants received brochures from salons, thus giving an up-to-date window of global club work. In the 1970s only a few sources for photographic books existed in Johannesburg. Apart from the Bensusan Museum, still somewhat conservative in its selection, there was the Russell Friedman Books and Magazine Centre situated in Hillbrow.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a meteoric rise in the CCJ's involvement in salons, with Mike Feldman placed seventeenth in the 1970 "Who's Who in Pictorial Print Photography".



Who's Who in Pictorial Print Photography—1970

Monochrome Prints

North American Section
Compiled by Paul H. Carlson
69 Summer St., Saugus, Mass. 01906

Overseas Section
Compiled by Henry A. Staull, APSA
6 Sly Road, Darien, Conn. 06820

Fifty Leading Monochrome Exhibitors of the World

North American Section

CANADA

UNITED STATES

may 1971 53

This entry in the January 1969 edition of *Viewfinder* expresses the euphoric mood engendered by participation in these salons:

> It is no idle boast that our Club is amongst the world's greatest. A couple of years ago, there wasn't an international salon which did not feature work from the Hong Kong Photographic Society. Today our club is sharing these honours. No doubt this is our greatest year. Flushed with these successes, we could very easily concentrate our Club's attention onto winning more and more overseas club competitions, and gaining more and more salon acceptances.

Among the awards garnered by the club was the very prestigious honour presented to Mike Feldman for the inclusion of one his prints in the permanent collection of the PSA.


Photographic Society of America

This Certificate is Awarded to

MIKE FELDMAN

for print selected for inclusion in the Permanent Print Collection

FOUR PRINTS

President

Chairman Permanent Collections Committee

February 27, 1986

Date

The CCJ was involved in hosting salons as well as entering them, starting as early as 1948, a short thirteen years after its inception.

> I wonder how many of the present active members remember the first salon given by the Camera Club. It was the forerunner of our Salon today and was the 1st WITWATERSRAND NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SALON and was opened on the 22nd of November 1948 in the Public Library with 154 accepted prints on the walls.
>
> In 1952 a step further was taken, and the Camera Club presented its 1st Salon which was of International Standard. In 1958 another milestone in the history of our salon was passed when we included a colour transparency section which has grown from strength to strength. (*Viewfinder*, March 1962)

> 10th. Sept. 1962. Official opening of the Witwatersrand International salon of Photography in room 77 of the Public Library. (*Viewfinder*, September 1962)

Though the situation later changed, the entering and hosting of salons represented an important growth period for club members. Given the geographical isolation of South African clubs from the metropolitan centres, the success achieved brought much confidence. As successful as the CCJ was in international salons, it must be stressed that this was the outcome of, rather than the reason for, the club's distinction. By nature, salons are highly competitive, setting the goal of getting an acceptance and beyond that, silver or gold. The result was that prints for submission began to be chosen, not on their merits so much as their likelihood of fitting into the culture of a particular salon. As prints were awarded, there was the temptation to print multiple copies of the same image to be entered in as many salons as possible. Numerous prints of a successful image were like pellets shot around the world. This

was competition time, almost solely concerned with the garnering of awards. By the 1960s it was beginning to be felt that many salons, due to the rigid rules of photographic societies, had become too formulaic and were not advancing with the times. There was an awareness at the CCJ that their innate progressive ethos was getting side-tracked and replaced by the temptation of accumulating salon points.

Not all clubs are the same. Looking at the status of camera clubs generally, one cannot help noticing the discrepancies between American camera clubs and their South African counterparts.

> As early as 1914 the first Pittsburgh Salon of National Photography took place in the galleries of the Carnegie Institute's Museum of Art. The salon gained enormous prestige from this venue which often hung the photographs in the same galleries where its nationally renowned annual survey of paintings and sculpture was installed, and four years later the Camera Pictorialists of Los Angeles organized its first annual salon, which was hung at the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art. (Peterson 1997, 134).

This highlights the prestige accorded to some American salons, far removed from the Johannesburg salons that were generally held either in the Selborne Hall[25] or a room in the Johannesburg Library.

Salons began to lose their sparkle. The rules and regulations of photographic societies were becoming more prescriptive, resulting in a growing sameness of images entered. By the mid-1970s, this began to be voiced at the CCJ. It was also felt that the rigid methodology and ethos of salons were becoming too restrictive. It was to the credit of the CCJ leadership that they recognised the pitfalls of salons. This was bold and visionary, particularly as most South African clubs' activities at the time were predicated on salon showings. The following excerpt from *Viewfinder*, May 1981, characterises their thinking.

> Since about 1975 the club has more or less removed itself from the mainstream of club activities, as envisaged by such bodies as the Photographic Society of Southern Africa, the Photographic Society of America, and to a lesser extent the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain. Newer members have not been encouraged to join these societies nor to participate in their salons and other projects. The Camera Club of Johannesburg virtually moved onto its own track in the hope that there would be a development towards the more personal photographic statements, greater individualism, and the nurturing of the latent creative talents of our members. This departure was seen as being justified because it was felt that the standards of work were being inhibited by salon requirements.

[25] Situated in the old Johannesburg City Hall.

While I am not aware of any other South African clubs following this lead, there were clubs overseas that adopted a similar stance. The highly successful Lexington Camera Club elected, as early as the 1950s, not to become a member of the PSA so as not to compromise their integrity and independence. Like the CCJ, although twenty-five years earlier, the leadership was particularly conscious of not wanting to influence the latent talents of young members, which was thought to be an inevitable consequence of joining photographic societies.

Entering the Public Domain

The viewing of camera club work was, for the most part, restricted to club meetings and salons, very rarely entering the public domain. Only after the opening of the Market Photo Gallery in 1976 and the Pentax Gallery in 1977 did amateur photography begin to be seen by the public in a gallery atmosphere. The exhibitions, many by members of the CCJ, brought amateur photography to the attention of the Johannesburg public, an audience removed from the world of camera clubs and salons. In the main they were art lovers, who likely frequented a range of galleries and museums. This was how the CCJ went public, beginning to attract an art-loving community to photography as an art form distinct from the ubiquitous genre of photojournalism. Outside of these galleries, an active and growing informal milieu existed where such works could be seen. To a small degree, highly awarded salon images did appear on the walls of major photo stores and were published in photo magazines. Still, here again, the viewership was largely restricted to camera buffs.



Article in *Creative Photography*, June 1982

Advertising agencies, highly active and creative in the 1970s and 1980s, attracted many gifted photographers. The more successful photographers regularly produced self-promoting

posters, usually displaying their virtuosity as art photographers as opposed to advertising photographers. These lavish and costly posters trumpeting art photography were frequently hung in the offices of art buyers and creative directors.



There is no overt link between photography in advertising and the CCJ other than that the club provided a venue for the meeting of photographers, some of whom were in advertising, and allowed ideas to percolate among them. Meeting with other photographers at advertising agencies was frequent, resulting in lengthy debates about the merits or demerits of someone's image. Then there were the Saturday morning gatherings, particularly at the photographic supplier Recordia, in downtown Johannesburg, where groups comprising club members, amateurs, and professionals would gather to animatedly dissect one work or another.

At the two main photo labs in Johannesburg, Beith and City Lab, there was a constant flow of photographers discussing their work, particularly their non-advertising work. Finally, there were the advertising agencies that had "pop-up" shows of their favourite photographers' work over the years. These were occasions to show off one's personal work – usually displayed in a foyer – where a whole variety of people got to see art photography, often for the first time. Leading agencies were constantly looking for that little something extra, often evidenced in one's personal work. This resulted in frequent portfolio showings, which were ongoing as both new and old art directors wanted to keep abreast of the photographers' capabilities and new works. The showings frequently included a large percentage of one's

personal work. Willy Sonnenberg, chairman of Sonnenberg Murphy Leo Burnett, highly valued creative photography. “In my opinion a really good photographer would be someone who adds value to the communication and doesn’t allow technique to supersede. And that’s where good photographers excelled – they understood what the ad was about, and their work added huge value” (Sonnenberg, personal communication 2021).

Graham Warsop, chairman of the highly creative Jupiter Drawing Room, put huge store by creativity, seeing an important difference between photographers who were in it simply for the money, and those who regarded what they are doing as a “calling,” always seeking to push the boundaries to create something inspiring. “In a perfect world, I would like to suggest that advertising photography is an art-form in itself” (Warsop, personal communication 2021).

That three members of the CCJ were advertising photographers resulted in a filtering through of work happening outside the world of amateur club photography. The ongoing exposure to fine-art works at photo labs, the stimulating discussions at photographic suppliers, and the pop-up exhibitions at advertising agencies all contributed to an ever-growing appreciation of fine-art photography. Photographers began looking for new ways of expression and experimentation became de rigueur, resulting in an innovative phase for advertising and fine-art photography, whose activities frequently coincided. A shift in the perception and appreciation of photography was under way, with a growing demand for work with a more distinctive and fresh vision.

The Bensusan Library

Started by Dr Kin Bensusan in 1968, this was the first photographic library in Johannesburg and it remains the only one. It began with Bensusan’s large personal collection, which, together with an impressive assortment of vintage cameras and enlargers, formed the library’s nucleus. New additions were regularly publicised in the CCJ’s monthly newsletter *Viewfinder*, which encouraged members to familiarise themselves with the work of important overseas photographers. A thorough perusal of the JPS in-house journal *Reflex* surprisingly makes no mention of the Bensusan Library. Once again, this highlights the difference between the CCJ and the JPS, the former keeping abreast of photography developments in the

rest of the world, the latter still largely mired in the past. Referred to by club members, the books in the Bensusan Library frequently provided a source of information and a basis for discussion, particularly at Group 3 meetings. The following are some typical examples to be found in *Viewfinder*.

April 1980
Group 3: Discussion Group
…At the next meeting to be held on Wednesday, the 21st of May, Frank Rome will be presenting the works of a well-known photographer, Annie Leibowitz.

July 1987
Group 3 meeting
David and Mark Gordon did an interesting presentation on the work of ROBERT DOISNEAU.

The July 1981 issue of *Viewfinder* explicitly extols the Bensusan Library as an important source for the development and success of members of the CCJ.

> At a recent meeting of Group 3, some interesting and contrary opinions were expressed about a matter which I have always regarded as being extremely important in relation to one's development as a photographer. I refer to the matter of reading books, journals and magazines about photography and photographers. Publications and books are a means of extending one's reading beyond the often constrained and restricted scope of one's own abilities.

Group 3

Group 3, the little-known splinter group of the CCJ, quietly became an assembling point for a small group of active art photographers. Similarly to the invited speakers, the Bensusan Library and International Salons, Group 3 was an important element in the progress made by the CCJ. The name "Group 3" was adopted because the grouping was effectively the third body within the CCJ, the other two being the black-and-white print section and the colour section. Formed by Lou Yudelman in 1979, the group was not a breakaway from the CCJ but rather an adjunct to it. Its purpose was to provide a forum for discussion, primarily of important overseas photographers, and conduct a critical analysis of members' work. An article in *Viewfinder*, June 1979, reads as follows: "Group 3 seems to be acquiring an identity of its own. It seems to be filling the gap in both the Print and Colour Sections by giving active members an opportunity of discussing the meaning of their pictures as well as the meaning of contemporary photography." Discussions were animated and informative, with meetings covering a range of works, from that of Annie Leibowitz, best known for her

celebrity portraits, to Avedon's sophisticated fashion and advertising photographs. The importance of Bruce Davidson, Diane Arbus and William Eggleston was hotly debated, as was the work of our fellow countryman, David Goldblatt. Dedicated to pursuing contemporary art photography, Group 3 was pivotal in encouraging public exhibitions.

During the three decades ending in 1989 very little photography was seen in either commercial galleries or museums, except those depicting historical moments. Because of censorship, even "struggle photography" was rarely seen in South Africa, with only non-violent images making their way onto the pages of the daily papers. Few commercial galleries exhibited photography, with a public still wary of entering these uncertain waters.

As Johannesburg gallerist Linda Goodman (personal communication, 2020), has remarked: "I tried selling photography to the Pretoria Art Museum circa 1970s. The then director Albert Werth refused photography as he did not believe it constituted legitimate art."

Given the stature in the art world of both Goodman and Werth, this is an indictment of how far behind South African art institutions were in accepting photography. The Museum of Modern Art in New York began collecting modern photography in 1930 and established its photography department in 1940. Under the heading "Photography and New Media," Iziko (n.d.) states: "By comparison, the Iziko South African National Gallery set up their photography department in 1965 with the presentation by the Cape Tercentenary Foundation of a portfolio of 135 prints by Albert Newall." At that time, barely a handful of photography exhibitions had been mounted. The author had a joint exhibition with the sculptor Aileen Lipkin at the Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, in 1978, with the first photographic exhibition shown at this gallery being that of John Brett-Cohen circa 1977 (Goodman, personal communication 2020). Karl de Hahn had several exhibitions at 101 Gallery in downtown Johannesburg in the mid-1960s (De Haan 2013). Neville Dubow and Bob Cnoops held occasional shows. I'm sure there were others, but records are hard to find. A smattering of fine-art photo books by South African photographers – Sam Haskins, David Goldblatt, Rodney Barnett – was available on bookstore shelves but they remained few and far between. Haskins, born in Johannesburg in 1926, was best known for his books *Five Girls* (1962), *Cowboy Kate* (1964) and *Haskins Posters* (1973). In 1968 he moved to London, where he became involved with advertising photography. His innovative and compelling portrayal of

Cowboy Kate and the models featured in his other publications brought him international fame.

> Photographers like Sam Haskins do more than report facts. Haskins is a storyteller, even a poet. When he records *Sunday*, he records how it feels, not what it looks like. So, turn the pages and read his pictures. Or just look at the pictures and tell your own stories. They move like movies and talk like words. *Cowboy Kate* is something new in photography: with great technical virtuosity, extreme selectivity, a poet's insight, and an artist's eye, Sam Haskins has produced a photographic fable or allegory."
>
> (The Guardian)

> *Cowboy Kate and Other Stories* went on to win the prestigious Prix Nadar in France, becoming one of the best-selling books of all time and garnering Haskins, who died at age 83, an influential following. (O'Toole 2010)

Haskins's work was followed and admired by many amateur photographers, and while it is impossible to quantify the effect he had on amateur and club photography, the influence of his work was extensive.



Sam Haskins, *Kate, Gunbelt, Seated.* 1964

© All Rights. The Sam Haskins Estate. 2021



Sam Haskins, *Cowboy Kate Front Cover*, 1964

© All Rights. The Sam Haskins Estate. 2021



Sam Haskins, *African Image Front Cover*, 1967

© All Rights. The Sam Haskins Estate. 2021

Rodney Barnett, born in 1943 and probably one of South Africa's most underexposed photographers, was finally recognised for his publication *A Life's Work 1943-2000*. A dedicated photographer, he interacted with and photographed various communities, cultures, and people. In 2009, after his untimely death in 2000, a retrospective was held at the Michaelis Gallery. Initiated by The Centre for Curating the Archive, the exhibition was opened by Mannie Manim.

Professor Neville Dubow, a director of the Michaelis School of Fine Art (1971-1988) and a founding director of the Irma Stern Museum, was another highly respected writer, lecturer, artist, and photographer. As the 1992 Standard Bank Guest Artist, he presented the exhibition *Sequences, Series, Sites 1978-1992*, which comprised more than one hundred works. *The Thinking Eye*: *Photographs by Neville Dubow*, is inspired by an essay – "Constructs: Reflections on a Thinking Eye" – that he wrote for David Goldblatt's book *The Structure of Things Then* (1988).



Neville Dubow, *Landscape Intervention*, New York, 1975.
Collection, UCT Libraries, Special Collections.

Dubow was more interested in "making" than "taking" photographs, as Karin Skawran suggested. Her view is that "his interest lay primarily in the conceptual possibilities of the medium – particularly in the field of sequential imagery" (Martin & Weinberg 2015). No doubt there were other publications, but except for Sam Haskins, photographic books were seen only by a relatively small select group of interested parties and rarely entered the mainstream of South African art.

Exhibitions

Two photographic galleries opened in Johannesburg in the mid-1970s. The first to open in 1976 was The Market Photo Gallery. Housed on the first floor of the Market Theatre, based in the downtown suburb of Newtown, it attracted a theatre-going crowd, largely non-racial

and opposed to government policies. The second was the Pentax Gallery, an exciting venture launched in 1977 and situated in the northern suburb of Rosebank. Although it was run by Pentax SA, there are no surviving records for the gallery. In conversation, Jolene Castelyn, Marketing Manager of Ricoh, the current agents for Pentax, confirmed that the distributorship had passed through four companies since the Pentax SA Gallery opened and that any archive material that may have existed had vanished over the years (Castelyn, personal communication 2022).

As distinct from the Market Art Gallery, the Market Photo Gallery was overseen by a committee headed for some years by David Goldblatt and managed by Carol Hacker. Both galleries operated in defiance of apartheid segregationist laws, showing to multiracial audiences. In discussion with Ricky Burnett, co-founder of the Newtown Galleries, I asked what he thought the principal difference was between the two galleries (apart from the one being purely photographic). I ventured that Goldblatt was mainly focused on social documentation, to which Burnett agreed but softened it slightly with his remarks. He felt that the Market Gallery was focused on the work of artists as "interpreters," and the Market Photo Gallery on the work of "observers" (Burnett, personal communication 2021). This distinction was not entirely accurate, with many photographic exhibitions taking place at the Market Gallery – Rodney Barnett in 1976, Peter Magubane in 1977, David Goldblatt in 1977, the advertising photographer Iain Campbell in 1980, Hennion Han in 1981 and the author in 1982. These galleries provided a most welcome opportunity for both amateur and professional photographers to show their work to a wider public.

While international and local salons certainly provided opportunities for work to be seen outside the confines of one's club, the viewers comprised mainly camera enthusiasts. Thus the opening to the art-loving public of the three Johannesburg-based venues heralded a new era for fine-art photography. Over an eight-year period, there are records of 15 members of the CCJ having exhibited at the Pentax Gallery and a further two at the Market Photo Gallery (*Viewfinder*, 1975-1983). Many ex-club members were also exhibitors at the Pentax, but regrettably, no records of these exhibitions survive, other than notices in *Viewfinder*.

The Pentax Gallery saw large attendances at opening nights; prints were beginning to be sold and a distinct following for fine-art photography was emerging. The exhibitions attracted the

attention of the press and thus helped to create for fine-art photography an ever-widening circle of awareness. The following write-ups reflect some of the prevailing views on photography between 1963 and 1982.

The Star, Saturday, June 15th, 1963

Top Honour with Cheap Camera

With the aid of a cheap camera bought eight years ago, a Johannesburg optician has just received one of the highest distinctions open to any photographer in the world – Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society.

The Star, Thursday April 6th, 1961

The club award for the best collection of pictures in the "Amateur Photographer" overseas competition has been won for the first time by camera Pictorialists[26] of Johannesburg. A silver plaque was awarded to Mr. M Feldman, FRPS of Johannesburg.

Artlook 95, June July 1975
Reviews: Exhibition of Photography: Nedbank Gallery: Killarney.



Wally Rossini, *Looking*, c.1970s

The large crowd at the opening of the exhibition by Michael Meyersfeld, John Rushmere and Wally Rossini testified to the interest shown in this group show. In fact

[26] I wonder whether the reporter from *The Star* fully appreciated his use of the nomenclature "Pictorialists." Either way, the work referred to was not in any way painterly, with both subject matter and execution being contemporary.

the crowd was so huge that it was very difficult to view the pictures in anything like the proper perspective and a second visit was a necessity. Altogether an exciting exhibit, a pioneering effort, and a demonstration of courage. These three could very well start a meaningful cult for one or more shows of photographers who have faith in their own creative abilities.

Rand Daily Mail, June 4, 1975

Knowing when to 'press the trigger' by HE Winder

Photography by John Rushmere, Wally Rossini, and Michael Meyersfeld – Nedbank Gallery Killarney. Because photography is primarily a mechanical process[27] and therefore lacks something of the soul of the individual and even his inward intellect, it can hardly compete with Fine Art.

Articles on this exhibition appeared in several leading papers: *Die Beeld*, 4 Junie, 1975; *Sunday Express*, June 1, 1975; *Rand Daily Mail*, June 2, 1975; *The Star*, June 6, 1975. In *The Star*, Thursday, May 29, 1975, Albert Werth, Director of the Pretoria Art Museum, writes:

Wally Rossini has the honour of having one of his photographs hanging in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. John Rushmere recently held a one-man show in Linz, Austria. Michael Meyersfeld last year was the third South African photographer ever to have four pictures accepted at the London Salon.

Rand Daily Mail, January 27th, 1977

'We're Still Living in the Dark Ages'

What kind of status does photography have?

Vita Palestrant looks at photography in South Africa today.

The question whether photography is an art is still being hotly debated in South African Universities, museums and art galleries – and this over 150 years after the birth of photography. The Americans, Europeans and British, having resolved the debate 50 years ago, are forging ahead, cultivating new talent and stimulating interest. Museums and galleries are exhibiting and collecting works for their permanent collections – like the New York Museum of Modern Art.
The best thing that has happened this year has been the opening of the Pentax Gallery in Rosebank, Johannesburg.

[27] The comments by Mr. Winder highlight once again how far behind South Africa was from an understanding and appreciation of this art form already being well received in the capitals of Europe, England, and America.

The Star, Wednesday June 22nd, 1977.



Mike Feldman, *The Washing Line*, undated

Early morning in the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho… this moody shot, titled *The Washing Line* is part of an exhibition by Johannesburg photographer Mr. Mike Feldman (FRPS, EPSSA) currently Showing at the Pentax Gallery in Johannesburg. The bulk of the exhibition is a striking photo-essay on Lesotho.

Die Beeld, 23rd August 1977
Pentax Gallery
The Usual becomes Unusual by Johan Brewer

For a medium that is apparently connected to visible reality, photography is, strangely enough, often at its most convincing and effective when it is the least realistic. One would experience this at the exhibition by the Johannesburg photographer, Michael Meyersfeld, at the Pentax Art Gallery in Rosebank. (Translated by Johan Myburg)



Michael Meyersfeld, *Rolling Roofs*, 1976.

Articles on this exhibition appeared in *The Citizen*, Thursday August 18th, 1976, and *The Star*, Saturday September 10th, 1977.

Aileen Lipkin and the author had a joint exhibition at the Goodman Gallery in 1978. There were two write-ups, one by John Dewar of *The Star*, Wednesday November 22nd, 1978, and an article by H. E. Winder in the *Rand Daily Mail*, Monday 20th November, 1978. The following piece responds to an exhibition by Mike Feldman in 1979.

The Star, November 5th, 1979
Exhibition: Diffusions – Mike Feldman (Pentax Gallery) by
Garalt MacLiam

> The exciting thing about his latest exhibition is the new technique he has developed. It is almost as if an Impressionist, or sometimes abstract painting has been made of a subject and then reproduced through the eye of Feldman's camera… this exhibition is fascinating and well worth the visit. The exhibition was opened by the prominent Johannesburg artist Cecil Skotnes.

In 1980 the author had a show at the Pentax Gallery, opened by Linda Goodman.

The Star, April 17th, 1980

Some of his pictures are provocative. Some are fanciful, subtle, abstract. Some have a metaphysical feel. All have a distinct intrinsic quality. You can live with them.

– Olga Horowitz

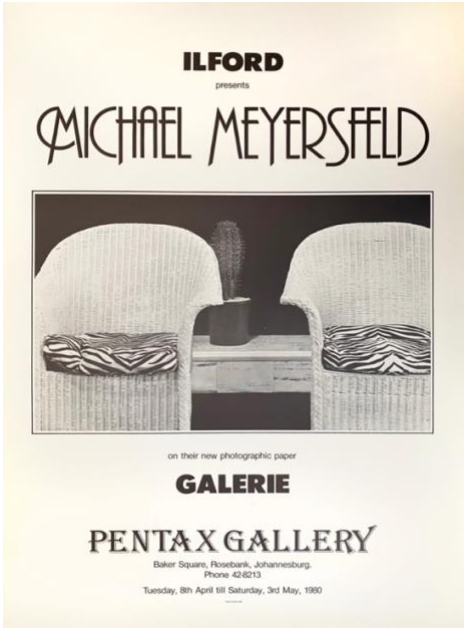
Rosebank Killarney Gazette, April 16th, 1980

The current photographic exhibition at the Pentax Gallery, Baker Square, Rosebank, should be of interest to all who appreciate the finer qualities of good monochrome photography.

The Star, April 10th, 1980

A philosopher at the viewfinder by Garalt MacLiam.

Many of his pictures seem to carry a metaphorical tag, as if to say: "This could be a possible answer – at least for me."



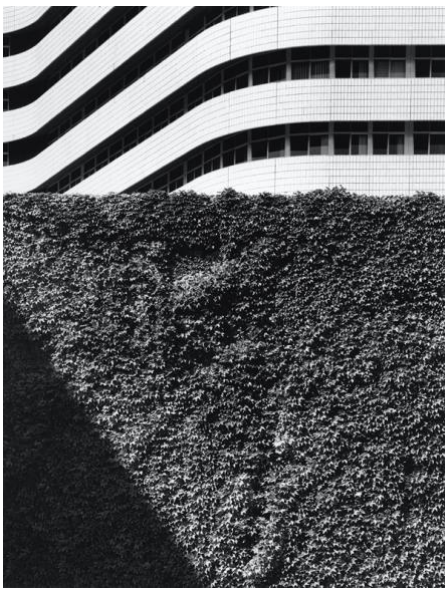
Rand Daily Mail, April 16th, 1980

Michael Meyersfeld's exhibition heralds the launch of "Galerie", a new photographic printing paper soon to be introduced in S.A. by Ilford. Meyersfeld has put together a compelling collection of black and white photographs which makes a trip to the Pentax Gallery very worthwhile. – William H. Snyder

Two reviews were published of the exhibition *Photographs* by Michael Meyersfeld at the Market Photo Gallery in 1982.

The Star, May 4th, 1982

> …I find the cityscapes passionless and lifeless. They remain objects. Interesting though the conjunction of foliage and concrete may be, it is no more than that.
> – John van Zyl



Michael Meyersfeld, *Unisa*, 1982



Michael Meyersfeld, *Water Tower in Forest*, 1982.

Rand Daily Mail, Tuesday, May 11th, 1982

> He presents us with a selection of photographs depicting snatches of his environment with the selectivity that characterises his unique sense of vision. – Pierre Oosthuysen

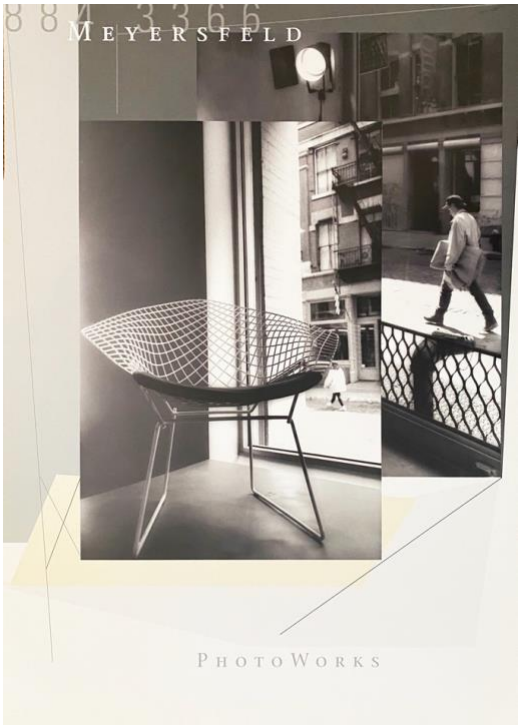
There were no doubt many more articles about and reviews of CCJ members' exhibitions, the above being a sampling of what I could find. It was most gratifying to get a fair amount of coverage through press reviews, but in retrospect I feel the reviewers could have been more engaging and critical of the works themselves. There were a few encouraging write-ups: *Artlook 95*, July 1975, Vita Palestrant, *Rand Daily Mail*, January 27th, 1977, and Johan Brewer, *Die Beeld*, August 23rd 1977. Nonetheless, there seemed to be a pervading nervousness, possibly due to either a lack of knowledge or sufficient conviction to dig deeper into the photographs on display. Just getting their toes wet probably mirrored the general apathy of photography.

Such shows, both at the Pentax and the Market Photo Galleries, marked the beginning of sustained photographic display in Johannesburg. Forthcoming exhibitions were announced by both galleries, resulting in ever-increasing attendances, frequently accompanied by articles and reviews in the press. Non-documentary photography had for the first time permanent homes in Johannesburg, with the CCJ being a major contributor. The public was at that time gaining an awareness of photography that was neither political nor "protest" in its content.

Saturday mornings frequently saw the Pentax Gallery turn into a meeting place abuzz with discussion and opinion. New relationships were formed with previously unknown photographers. With Wally Rossini, Dennis Arden, and the author all being advertising photographers, art directors, copywriters and designers were attracted to the gallery, resulting in many advertising photographers getting involved with fine-art projects that fell outside of their professional work. South African advertising photography in the 1970s and 1980s, frequently referred to as the industry's golden years, was heavily augmented by highly trained award-winning English and European creative directors. They, in turn, brought with them fresh ideas, some of which found their way into the work of fine-art photographers. The momentum at the time was such that for advertising photographers to pursue their personal work seemed the natural thing to do. What is more, to demonstrate their artistic capabilities, their promotional posters often featured non-advertising work.



Harry de Zitter, Promotional Poster



Michael Meyersfeld, *Walking – Sitting N.Y.* Promotional Poster, c.1979

The line between advertising and fine-art photography began to blur, with a common aesthetic frequently prevailing. An example of this was an informal discussion in 1984 between Iain Campbell, a leading Johannesburg-based advertising and fine-art photographer, and David Goldblatt, the distinguished political photographer noted for his unique rendering of apartheid South Africa. Here you had the meeting of two prominent photographers pursuing different agendas. I was not at this talk, but the fact that both felt an interest in having a public discussion showed an opening of minds and a willingness to engage among artists in disparate genres of photography. Lines of communication began to open, with different disciplines learning from each other. I wonder whether Goldblatt imagined in 1984 that in a matter of three decades he would be exhibiting digital prints, in colour and of monumental size, a quantum shift for a dedicated black-and-white photographer. Was he perhaps influenced by the advertising industry's use of colour and large-scale posters and billboards?



Iain Campbell & David Goldblatt in discussion, 1984.

In the early 1980s, a growing interest in what other photographers were doing began to develop, sometimes with an understanding and recognition that work in one genre was not too far removed from that in another. Photography other than advertising, photojournalism and fashion was being seen and discussed in the main photo labs. Beith, the Johannesburg-based repro house, was frequently the venue where fine art, advertising, and other photographers would quibble over the merits of an "art" piece.

As mentioned above, prominent advertising photographers began using their fine art photographs on self-promotional posters. These were widely distributed and, in many cases, became sought-after collectables. Moreover, "[s]uccessful commercial shots often stood on their own as creative images which appealed to sophisticated viewers" (Peterson 1997, 70).

The mid-1990s saw the results of these earlier collaborations: increasingly, advertising agencies began producing campaigns that went beyond direct product showing to more subtle and sophisticated forms of communication. Conversely, and at much the same time, we begin to see art photographers turn their lenses to subjects that are, to all appearances, advertising shots.

The two images below are examples of this shift. Sonnenberg Murphy Leo Burnett's campaign for Mercedes Benz does not show the traditionally expected shot of a vehicle. In its place is a humorous visual more in line with an art piece than traditional advertising. Even in 1994, this represented a brave move for both client and agency. By contrast, Gursky, a fine-art photographer whose works are only to be seen in galleries, produced *Prada 1,* easily seen as an ad for Prada Stores. While there is an understanding that this photograph is a commentary on capitalism and consumerism, it is clearly anchored in an advertising idiom.



Campaign for Mercedes Benz, Sonnenberg Murphy Leo Burnett, *Bat Out of Hell*, 1994



Andreas Gursky, *Prada 1*, 1996.

Copyright: Andreas Gursky / VG Bild-Kunst, Courtesy: Sprüth Magers

Politics and the CCJ

Looking back from the vantage point of more than half a century, an eyebrow might be raised at the near dearth of imagery at the CCJ reflecting the politics of the time. Apart from paid professional photojournalists, very few photographers were involved in social commentary. David Goldblatt was an exception; as he succinctly put it, "I can never deny my complicity in the South African scene during apartheid – just to draw breath you became complicit," adding "so unless you were prepared to go to prison and possibly even die, you became complicit" (Dodd 2019, 55).

There are some who argue that artists have a responsibility to reflect the injustices of the society in which they live. The subjective factors that were key to the work produced at the CCJ need to be understood in relation to the circumstances in which the work was produced. The absence of "struggle" photography at the CCJ could not be assumed to reflect the political views of its members, just as it would not be correct to assume that all struggle photographers were necessarily deeply involved with the cause. The work at the CCJ had an independent existence, with its own intrinsic values, that did not respond directly to unfolding politics, preferring to see art as more than a space for political expression.

Feldman never discussed his political views at the club, rarely talking about how, in the early 1940s, together with Joe Slovo and Ruth First he founded the Young Communist League, which was banned in 1950. Also, not widely known was how deeply troubled he was by the politically motivated demolition of the suburbs of Pageview and Vrededorp. During the 1970s he worked on an extensive record of this cruel destruction. Presented at the Fietas Museum on 24th September 2016, his exhibition *The Forgotten Land Grabs* was opened by retired Constitutional Court Judge Johann Kriegler. What is perhaps more relevant was the pervading art scene at that time. When it came to the arts – painting, sculpture, and lithography – the works shown in galleries were almost entirely devoid of political content. Works by Robert Hodgins, Vladimir Tretchikoff, Edoardo Villa, Walter Battiss, Alexis Preller, Irma Stern, Cecil Skotnes, and many more were largely situated in "pure" aesthetics. While Linda Goodman, founder of the Goodman Gallery, was determined to make her space a non-discriminatory one, showing and mentoring many young black artists, the works exhibited were not overtly political. Bill Ainslie, a prominent artist in the 1970s, dedicated his life's work to teaching art to underprivileged black children in South Africa and

developing their talent. His aspirations for the country were wholeheartedly behind the African National Congress, yet "his aims were always human, and not political. His work was always with people rather than politics; he cut straight through all that" (Caro 1990, 6).

In the sphere of South African photography during the three decades under discussion, there were delineated lines of photography – commercial, advertising, and portrait photography – with a handful of art photographers mainly concentrating on the production of photo books. For the rest, there were camera clubs, those whose work was politically motivated, including Goldblatt and one or two others, and then the group dubbed "struggle photographers." With very few exceptions, the latter were paid professional photojournalists who took instruction from the editors of the various newspapers and magazines for whom they worked. Theirs was a paid job. The main thrust of social commentary in South African art only really began in the late 1980s and early 1990s. William Kentridge began his *Soho Eckstein* chronicles between 1980 and 1996. Jane Alexander's *Butcher Boys* was created in 1985/1986, with Paul Stopforth's painting of Biko, *Elegy*, completed in 1980. Photography at the CCJ was, like most other art forms at the time, predicated on aesthetics, and was by no means necessarily a reflection of political apathy.

Chapter 5
Discussion of Selected Works

The images in the Photo-Book have been selected and curated both in support of my dissertation and to provide an accurate visual overview of work done by members of the CCJ during the three decades under discussion. All have their place in supporting the progressive nature of the CCJ and differing from the images produced by most other clubs in South Africa. The photographs are not presented in chronological order. The author's works are not grouped, and styles differ from page to page. Here the sequencing was based purely on my aesthetic preference, with the overall aim of reflecting the diversity of work done at the CCJ.

The word "progressive" was used in the club to describe work that at the time seemed to be new and different from that produced by other clubs. Progressive work was seen to be that which was adventurous, and which pushed against conventional thinking.

I have selected sixteen images for discussion. These, as well as those presented in the book, have been chosen for the specific contribution that they made. The sixteen should not necessarily be regarded as the best, but they do support the argument of the dissertation by evidencing the club's achievements and the main aesthetic directions that informed them. In the following pages I therefore present a diversity of styles that emerged for different reasons over a period of at least two and a half decades. There were of course many others, some perhaps more nuanced, that formed an integral part of the journey of the CCJ, and examples of these are included in the book. Notably, there was no coherent archive of the club's work, which means that there is an element of contingency attaching to the range of images that I was able to source for inclusion in this historical record.



Lou Yudelman. *Eve*. 1960s

Page 108



Lou Yudelman. *The Secret*. 1960s

Page 102

Taken over half a century ago, the two portraits by Lou Yudelman, *Eve* and *The Secret*, remain compelling. Portraiture then, particularly at club level, was very formulaic, with little attempt to go beyond capturing a good "likeness." Interpretive portraiture was rarely seen.

Portraiture was usually conducted formally, with predictable pose and lighting. The mandatory main light source, the fill light, the key light, the hair or rim light, and a whole manner of givens, resulting in production-line sameness. Spontaneity and a fresh approach were rare, even among professional portrait photographers.

I am sure that a print from an unworked negative of *The Secret* would have been charming and cute, but I doubt it would have had that extra dimension that we see in the high contrast version. Here all the mid-tones have been removed, leaving a stark two-tone image: a solid black and a slightly greyed-out white. Several things happen here. First, we see an emphasized silhouette of the two boys. The negative spaces between them combined with an information-free background have accentuated the rolls in the clothing and given prominence to their body language. Coupled with the emphasis on the boys' eyes and hands, this portrait beautifully captures a timeless moment.

Eve, I feel, is a more complex and successfully experimental photograph. Here a technique using high-contrast and large grain has been used. Despite the heavy black area down the left of *Eve's* face, it is the small catch-light in her right eye that we are drawn to. The extremely tight crop with the resulting negative space at the bottom right has further added to the creation of an unusually compelling portrait. Yudelman has infused his personal feelings and thoughts into both these works, thereby creating two very successful interpretive portraits.



Mike Feldman. *Growing City*. 1968

Page 10



Mike Feldman. *At Work.* 1970

Page 8



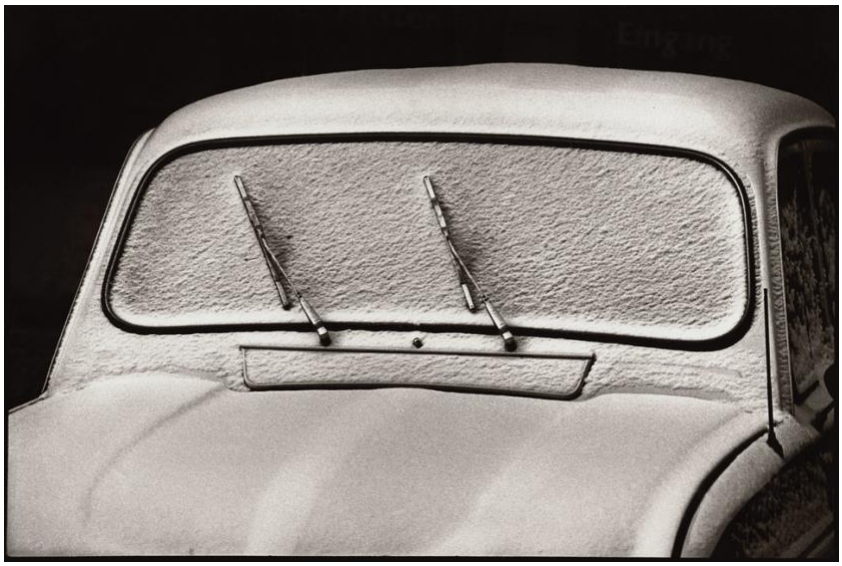
Mike Feldman. *The Hoist.* 1974

Page 50

None of the three images above is intended to be viewed as straight unaltered photography. Rather, they are to be read as metaphors for growth, construction, and industry. All three narratives are created by combining multiple negatives in the printing process, with pre-visualisation being integral to their composition. The photographs exploit perspective and scale to achieve a synergy between the abstract and the concrete. In *Growing City* and *At Work* Feldman has used a combination of a normal negative, under printing the background to achieve a ghostly effect, together with a high contrast lith negative to create the silhouetted strip of workers and crane in the foreground. *The Hoist* utilised two negatives, one for the gantry crane and one for the small figure of the man, with both reproduced on lith[28] film to achieve the high contrast image. It seems that the figure of the man holding the chains has been reduced in scale to achieve a heightened drama. The purpose of creating a photograph using multiple negatives is essentially to create a fantasy narrative. Many levels of skill are required. Apart from a high level of darkroom expertise, there is the challenge of locating the

[28] Lith film is an extreme form of line film, which produces very high-contrast images. From an original black-and-white negative, you produce a lith positive. If you contact the lith positive onto another sheet of lith film, you will produce a lith negative, which in turn will produce a positive print.

different scenes one wishes to combine. Of particular interest in Feldman's photographs is their almost graphic flatness, devoid of the expected perspective. The individual images are familiar, but are reproduced in combination in a graphic, almost surrealistic manner.

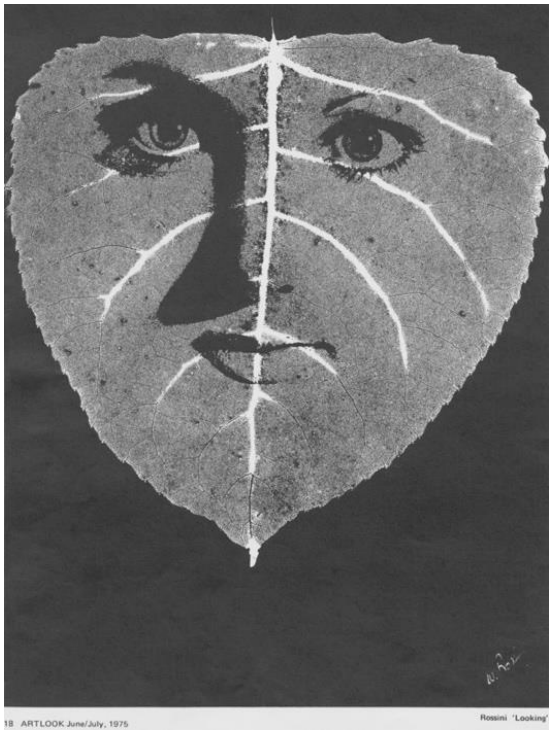


Lou Yudelman, *Beetle*, 1970s

Page 13

Yudelman's *Beetle* is not a particularly headline-grabbing image or one with a deep underlying meaning. Yet *Beetle* is an intriguing photograph. There is no sense of location, scale, or perception of being real. The very perfection of the blanket of snow, coupled with an inky black background, produces an aura of surrealism. Is this part of a stage set, is it a model in a toy shop's window, or is this an intricate studio shot brought to life by the wizardries of stylists and model builders?

What is so special for me in this photograph is that it makes one smile and perhaps that sums up the CCJ. Members worked hard; criticisms could sometimes feel harsh, but permeating all of this was a sense of enjoyment, a sense of fun, and the dictate to observe afresh. The photographs in the book all suggest individual viewpoints devoid of any club ethos, each achieved with different technical and emotional values, but all of them progressive and modern for their time.



Wally Rossini, *Looking*, 1975. Page 9

Multiple or composite printing is certainly not new, but Rossini's *Looking* does have a quality not often seen. His combination of a high contrast negative (the face) and posterisation[29] (the leaf) has produced a compelling impressionistic portrait, with the solid black background and the whited-out veins of the heart-shaped leaf providing an unusual base for the peering eyes. Highly acclaimed and widely exhibited, *Looking* was included in a show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (*Viewfinder* May 1975).

[29] Posterisation entails the conversion of a continuous gradation of tone to several areas of fewer tones, with abrupt changes from one tone to another.



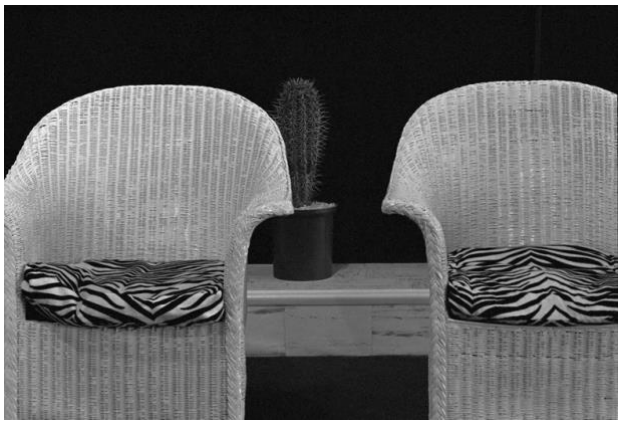
Michael Meyersfeld, *Rosebank Meters*, 1977. Page 15



Michael Meyersfeld, *Detail, Sea Point Pool*, 1979. Page 29

Straight, abstract photography, shot "as seen" and unmanipulated was largely liminal and barely understood, even in the late 1970s. When these two images were put up for judging, they were met with a combination of puzzlement and embarrassed sniggers. Mike Feldman intervened, stressing once again the importance of expanding one's repertoire of observing. Whether deemed good or otherwise, this type of work was certainly not common fare in most South African camera clubs. Both *Detail, Sea Point Pool* and *Rosebank Meters* feature sights that are seen daily but rarely acknowledged. Graphic in their simplicity, they evidence the way the CCJ's work constantly challenged the viewer to look at the world in a new way.

The following three images are shown as an example of photographs shown as a series.



Michael Meyersfeld. *Two Straw Chairs & Cactus*. 1979. Page 30



Michael Meyersfeld. *Two Pool Chairs*. 1978. Page 43



Michael Meyersfeld. *Two Trees, Ireland*. 1979. Page 31

The grouping of thematic images[30] was one of many unremarked developments at the CCJ. "Here the importance of the singular image is diminished. Instead, the primary focus of the inquiry is the series" (Wallis 2015). Such groupings are commonplace today, but at the time, they were nuanced and perhaps often not seen for what they were. In some ways what characterises photographic art as it emerges in the 1980s in the USA and Britain is a concern, not with individual images, but with photo sequences. Outstanding examples of this are the works by Duane Michaels, Ed Ruscha's *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations*, and Sophie Calle.

At the CCJ, changes occurred over time, becoming progressions. Frequently new ideas, such as groupings, happened more by chance than design. The encouragement given at the CCJ to see afresh subliminally produced many forms of experiment that in 1970s South Africa

[30] Images in series are not new, with works by Bernd and Hilla Becher, August Sander and Karl Bossveldt being some of the early examples. The highly respected Walther Collection is almost entirely made up of images shown as series (The Order of Things – The Walther Collection).

seemed original. The grouping of the above three photographs, taken over two years, provides an additional narrative not evident when the images are seen singly. The 1970s and 1980s were exciting times at the club, when photography was very fluid.



Dan Swart. From left to right. *Floating Stones, Bones, Sticks and Stones*. Late 1980s
Pages 18, 42, and 94

The three images taken by Dan Swart in the late 1980s are situated somewhere between surrealism and constructed scenes and are certainly not traditional camera club fare. “Since the latter part of the 1960s, photography in terms of pictorial strategy changed fundamentally. Contemporary photography began to take an opposite view to the requirement for ‘straight’ photography where any alteration to the exposed negative, finished print, or subject matter was anathema” (Köhler 1995, inside front cover). Constructed photographs refer to work specifically arranged and made to the taste and liking of the photographer. Here the role of the photographer went from taking a photograph to the making of one. “Scenes are deliberately staged for the camera, with the intention of creating a fictional photographic reality” (Köhler 1995, 7). Constructed or arranged photography is not new, with an early example being Oscar Rejlander’s composite *The Two Ways of Life* from 1857. “The Surrealist movement, the Constructivist and early advertising photography can all be regarded as precursors of the contemporary art of staged photography” (Köhler 1995, 8).

Staged surrealistic or constructed work has largely been the province of a few artists and certainly was not typical of camera club work. Constructed photography, whether Phillipe Halsman’s 1948 composite image of a suspended Salvador Dali with three cats tossed through the air seemingly on a wave of water, or Man Ray’s *Untitled* Rayograph, 1922, or Sandy Skoklund’s *Radioactive Cats* and *Revenge of the Goldfish*, all go beyond straight photography, involving either model-making or complex darkroom printing of multiple

images. As with Swart's works, they all need pre-visualisation, occasionally requiring some rudimentary sketches. Converting an idea into its three-dimensional form ready to be photographed requires patience and trial and error, involving many a slip between the initial inspiration and the final product. Swart's three images, even outside the ambit of camera clubs, would require a rich and fertile imagination coupled with the skills to physically construct the set before producing the final image consisting, in this case, of constructed, unretouched photographs.



Dale Yudelman. *Wedding.* 1980s. Pages 6-7

In *Wedding*, we see one of camera clubs' hallowed golden rules deliberately and successfully broken. By cutting off the heads of the groomsmen, an otherwise typical wedding photograph has been made new. The anonymity of the bow ties, white carnation buttonholes and white gloves provides a perfect foil, drawing one's attention to the young boy on the extreme left who would otherwise have probably not been noticed. This was a fresh way of seeing that subverted traditional camera club dictates.

I do not claim that any of the images shown or discussed is unique. They were all produced at different times of the club's existence, by different photographers and with different equipment, but what they have in common is their shift away from photography done by any other photographic body in South Africa during those three decades. It is this distinction, however small, that I wish to highlight.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In the Introduction to this dissertation, I note how little has been written about camera clubs in South Africa. Apart from three articles by Malcolm Corrigall on the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa, and Bensusan's historical overview, there has been no discussion of the actual type of work done. In view of the sheer numbers of camera clubs and amateur photographers in the latter half of the twentieth century, this is a situation of some concern.

In *Amateur Photography and Pictorial Aesthetics: Influences of Organization and Industry on Cultural Production,* Michael Griffin alludes to what he regards as a general anomaly, observing: "Given the impact of amateur practice on technical developments, on popular notions of picture-making, and the institutionalisation of aesthetic forms, amateur photography has failed to receive adequate attention" (1987, 15). Perhaps the answer lies in the two phrases, "technical developments" and "the institutionalisation of aesthetic forms." Clubs have been castigated for their narrow interest in the technical developments of cameras, lenses, etc., and their tendency to form a club ethos that results in the stereotyped perpetuation of photographic content and style. As Schwartz (1983, 152) so succinctly states, "camera club members invest very little thought and emotion into their photographs." Griffin (1987) remarks on how, "before the Second World War much attention was given to the activities of photographic societies and amateur clubs, particularly noting early activity in the United States and the influence of the amateur societies on standards and practice …. Since then, little has been written on the contribution of serious amateur photography" (Griffin 1987, 17-18). It is this lacuna that I have sought to address here, albeit by focusing on a single, determinedly atypical camera club. I have contextualised the study by showing how camera clubs were integral to photography's development, focusing on the three major photographic movements of Pictorialism, the Photo-Secession, and Group f/64. I look at two other South African clubs, the Johannesburg Photographic Society and the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa, both of whom propagated a club ethos mired in the repetition of landscape and portrait photography. Even though many camera clubs both here and abroad did not generally advance beyond imagery that was "sugary, clichéd, pictorial romanticism, nostalgic, cute and familiar" (Schwartz 1983, 110), this does not apply to all clubs. To demonstrate this, I discuss the work and ethos of three overseas clubs that successfully avoided falling into this category: Photo Club Riga, Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante and the

Lexington Camera Club. Like the CCJ, these clubs were graced by leadership that steered them into an independent and progressive arena.

Here I would like to interpolate an objection to a widely-held attitude that criticises and demeans camera clubs for their methodology. It is correct to say that most clubs have a rating system that involves photographs being judged by their peers. We know that this is not the way artists work. But why should it be seen as a negative? For many, the camera club is a school. All artists should continue to learn and advance, and all art gets judged in one way or another. It is not the system of grading and judging that should be judged, but rather the quality of the benefits that it confers.

In the chapter on the CCJ, I go into some detail on how the club operated. Aspects of the difference between the CCJ and most other clubs are discussed in depth. But my argument is essentially a visual one and cannot rest upon a written statement alone. That is why the images in the Photo Book are crucial to my thesis.

In looking at these images – both the selected images discussed above and the one hundred photographs in the accompanying hard-cover book – one needs to appreciate that all were produced in a pre-digital world. Producing a "good" print could require many hours of printing and re-printing. The process of analogue darkroom manipulations was underpinned by craft and labour. Unlike a Photoshopped digital image, where the process of production is potentially unending, a bad print couldn't be rectified – one had to start over. I mention this because many of the photographs shown required finely honed skills and a heightened ability to pre-visualise. Today, complex combinations of images can easily and readily be produced using Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Lightroom; the very name Lightroom implying a "new, improved darkroom."

Technical achievement aside, the essence of my case for the CCJ lies in the progressive and diverse work done by members. It was different from most other clubs, and a direct result of the leadership's enthusiasm, energy, and progressiveness. Images simply showing an aesthetically pleasing arrangement of forms were not deemed successful. The CCJ during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was an exciting place to be. Images were, for the most part, new or fresh. The prevailing requirement was to exploit the camera's intrinsically creative qualities, eschewing the documentation of banal or familiar ideas.

During the three decades under review, photography in South Africa, coinciding with the era of apartheid in South Africa, has been generally seen as dominated by "struggle" or protest photography. This photography was important, valid, and frequently brave, but remained in essence photojournalism. It is interesting to review the standoff between David Goldblatt and Peter McKenzie at the Culture and Resistance Conference held in Botswana in 1982. McKenzie, reading a position paper drafted by the Afrapix Group, "made a case, very rigorously, for photographers becoming cultural workers of the struggle." Goldblatt strongly disagreed with this, stating, "I thought that photographers were reporters, and a reporter's job is to report" (Hayes 2017, quoted in Enwezor & Bester 2013, 342). Either way, it would seem that the political circumstances sought to reduce photography to a social instrument.

At that time the CCJ represented a small group of photographers who were endeavouring to use the camera for purposes other than documentation. Contra to the documenting by members of Afrapix or the ongoing repetition of homogeneous images by many clubs, the CCJ was actively pursuing what was deemed photographic artwork. With galleries, museums and collectors for the most part shunning photography, the CCJ, however inchoately, struck out in the direction of another genre rarely seen at that time in South Africa.

It is for this that I argue the CCJ should be recognised.

Epilogue

On the eve of getting my dissertation printed and submitted, I received a mail from Professor Christo Doherty directing me to a webinar of a discussion and report-back by members of the South African delegation to the Venice 2022 Biennale.

Hosted by Professor Doherty, this included the curator Amé Bell and the three participating artists, Phumulani Ntuli, Roger Ballen and Lebohang Kganye.

I was struck by a particularly interesting comment by Lebohang Kganye. Discussing the dominant role of photography in South Africa, she iterated how it was used as a political tool to display the violence of apartheid. She tempered this by adding that there always existed photographers who had poetic ways of using photography.
She added further, "still photography need not be static, it can also be used in fantastical and imaginative ways."

In all my research, this is the first instance where an important personage has verbalised the existence in South Africa of photography that possibly transcended documentary and struggle photography.

It is the perfect epilogue.

Future Research

As already mentioned, this dissertation was burdened with limitations. There is very little doubt that had this subject been tackled one or two decades earlier, it might have been richer in content, and better informed. It is with this in mind that I implore other researches to urgently start collating the rich seams in current South African photography. Important photographic works from many African countries have become sought after by both international as well as South African collectors. While a small but growing number of South African photographers have reached fame, both here and abroad, existing literature on these photographic artists is largely predicated in gallery brochures, press announcements, and a sprinkling of monographs. Perhaps most importantly a growing number of young black South

African photographers are producing work that needs attention. There are rich pickings out there that need to be seen, studied and written about.

List of Plates

1. Stieglitz, Alfred. *The Steerage*. Page 15
2. Adams, Ansel. *Moonrise Hernandez, New Mexico*. 1941. 18
3. Weston, Edward. *Cabbage Leaf.* 1931. 19
4. Giraldo de Barros. *Fotoforma*, c. 12952/53. 29
5. Members of the Lexington Camera Club, 1944. 30
6. Meatyard, Ralph, Eugene. *Romance (N). from Ambrose #3*, 1962. 32
7. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Dr. Kin Bensusan.* 2001. 40
8. J.P.S. Group Outing. 1960s 42
9. Ancient Chinese Landscape Painting. 45
10. Yau, Tony. *Distant Mist*. Date Unknown. 46
11. Main Entrance to the Johannesburg Library. 48
12. The Indaba Room, where CCJ meetings took place. 48
13. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Retreat.* 1976. 51
14. Feldman, Mike. Harvest End (Lesotho), 1958. 52
15. Feldman, Mike. *Sextet.* 1962. 53
16. Feldman, Mike. *Eventide.* 1976. 53
17. Feldman, Mike. *Lesotho*. 1979. 54
18. Feldman, Mike. *African Kraal.* 1964. 55
19. Feldman, Mike. *Majestic Pollution*. Early 1980s. 56
20. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Pylons and Arrow*. 1977. 57
21. Meyersfeld, Michael. *M2 East Highway.* 1982. 57
22. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Hyde Park Reservoir*. 1982. 57
23. Goldblatt, David. *Raymond Ackerman,* Leadership. 59
24. Goldblatt, David. Pro*fessor Mahlo Mokgalong*, Leadership. 59
25. Plotz, Jane. *Betty Meyersfeld.* c.1940. 60
26. Plotz, Jane. *Untitled.* c. 1950. 60
27. Feldman, Mike. *J Brown Esq.* 1971. 61
28. Rossini, Wally. *Looking.* 1975. 61
29. Yudelman, Lou. *Lesotho Family.* c 1975. 62
30. Meyersfeld, Michael. *The Twelve Apostles.* 1977. 62
31. Brandt, Bill. *Untitled.* c. 1950s. 63
32. Brandt, Bill. *Untitled.* c.1950s. 63
33. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Woman with Scarf.* 1974. 64
34. Field, Ed. *Crayfish Buoys*. 1981. 66
35. Uelsmann, Jerry. *Untitled.* c.1970s. 68
36. Uelsmann, Jerry. *Untitled.* c.1970s. 69
37. Yudelman, Lou. *Parachute Man*. c.1975. 71
38. Yudelman, Lou. *Shades of Ophelia*. c.1975. 71
39. Yudelman, Lou. *Lonesome Road*. c.1975. 72
40. Haskins, Sam. *Kate, Gunbelt, Seated.* 1964. 82
41. Haskins, Sam. *Cowboy Kate Front Cover*. 1964. 82
42. Haskins, Sam. *African Image Front Cover.* 1967. 83
43. Dubow, Neville. *Landscape Intervention, New York.* 1975. 84
44. Feldman, Mike. *The Washing Line*. Undated. 88
45. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Rolling Roofs.* 1976. 89
46. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Unisa.* 1982. 91

47. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Water Tower in Forest.* 1982. 91
48. De Zitter, Harry. *Promotional Poster,* Untitled. Undated. 92
49. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Walking, Sitting, N.Y.* Promotional Poster c. 1979. 93
50. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Bat out of Hell.* 1994. Mercedes Campaign. 95
51. Gursky, Andreas. *Prada.* 1996. 95
52. Yudelman, Dale. *Wedding.* 1980s. 98
53. Swart, Dan. *Floating Stones.* 1980s. 99
54. Swart, Dan. *Bones.* 1980s. 99
55. Swart, Dan *Sticks and Stones.* 1980s. 99
56. Feldman, Mike. *Growing City*. 1968. 100
57. Feldman, *At Work.* 1970. 100
58. Feldman, Mike. *The Hoist.* 1974. 100
59. Yudelman, Lou. *Eve*. 1960s. 101
60. Yudelman, Lou. *The Secret.* 1960s. 101
61. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Two Straw Chairs and Cactus*. 1979. 104
62. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Two Pool Chairs.* 1978. 104
63. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Two Trees Ireland.* 1979. 104
64. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Rosebank Meters.* 1977. 105
65. Meyersfeld, Michael. *Detail, Sea Point Pool.* 1979. 105
66. Yudelman, Lou. *Beetle.* 1970s. 106

Bibliography

Aaronson, M. 2020. Personal correspondence. 30 July.

Adams, R. 1981. *Beauty in Photography: Essays in Defence of Traditional Values*. New York: Aperture.

Art Institute Chicago. n.d. "The Alfred Stieglitz Collection, Journals, Camera Notes." https://archive.artic.edu/stieglitz/camera-notes/. Accessed 6 February 2021.

Artnet. n.d. "Ralph Eugene Meatyard." http://www.artnet.com/artists/ralph-eugene-meatyard/. Accessed 5 May 2021.

Barnett, R. 2009. *A Life's Work 1943-2000*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town. Libraries.

Bates, B. 1970. "Some suggestions." *Reflex Magazine*. May.

Bensusan, A. D. 1966. *Silver Images*. Cape Town: Howard Timmins.

Binde, G. n.d. "Gunars Binde." http://www.gunarsbinde.com/biography. Accessed 2 September 2021.

Borchardt-Hume, A. 2006. *Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World*. Boston: Yale University Press.

Britannica, Encyclopaedia. n.d. "George Eastman." https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Eastman. Accessed 5 October 2021.

Britannica, Encyclopaedia. n.d. "William Henry Fox Talbot." https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Henry-Fox-Talbot. Accessed 20 November 2020.

Brown, E. H., and T. Phu. 2014. *Feeling Photography*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Burnett, R. 2021. Personal communication 10 August 2021.

Camera Notes. The Alfred Stieglitz Collection. n.d. *Camera Notes* 1, 1 (July 1897). https://archive.artic.edu/stieglitz/camera-notes/. Accessed 20 November 2020.

Caro, A. 1990. *Last Paintings by Bill Ainslie 1934–1989*. Oxford: Wolfson College.

Castelyn, J. 2022. Personal communication. 11 March.

Cohen, J. 2020. Personal correspondence. 8 December.

Corrigall, M. 2015. "Invisible Communities and Their Visible Cameras: The Landscape Photography of the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa." https://www.researchgate.net › publication › 282471347. Accessed 20 February 2021.

Corrigall, M. 2018a. “Reframing Johannesburg’s Urban Politics through the Lens of the Chinese Camera Club of South Africa.” https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2018.1503036. Accessed 20 February 2021.

Corrigall, M. 2018b. “A Spirit of Cosmopolitanism Happily Prevailing in Art: The Chinese Camera Club of South Africa and Transnational Networks of Photography.” https://doi.org/10.1080/00043389.2017.1372071. Accessed 20 February 2021.

De Haan, K. 2013. “Karl de Haan, 1929-2002, Photography, Graphics.” https://www.art-archives-southafrica.ch/deHAAN.htm. Accessed 21 February 2021.

Dodd, A. 2019. *David Goldblatt: The Last Interview*. Göttingen: Steidl.

D’Oliveira, A. 2020. Personal communication. 1 November.

Doty, R. 1978. *Photo-Secession: Stieglitz and the Fine Art Movement in Photography*. New York: Dover Publications.

Enwezor, O., and R. Bester. 2013. *Rise and Fall of Apartheid. Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life*. Munich: Del Monica Books, Prestel.

Feitelberg, P. 2022. Personal communication. 25 January.

Goldin, Nan. 2005. *Fantastic Tales*. University Park, Penn. : Palmer Museum of Art in association with The Pennsylvania State University Press, c2005. ISBN 9780911209631.

Goodman, L. 2020. Personal communication. 15 March.

Goodman, L. 2021. personal communication. 15 May.

Greenough, S., and J. Hamilton. 1999. *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings*. Washington: National Gallery of Art, Callaway Editions.

Griffin, M. S. 1987. Amateur Photography and Pictorial Aesthetics: Influences of Organization and Industry on Cultural Production. https://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations/AAI8804932/. Accessed 15 March 2021.

Harker, M. 1979. *The Linked Ring: The Secession Movement in Photography in Britain, 1892–1910*. London: Heinemann.

Hayes, P. 2007. “Power, Secrecy, Proximity: A Short History of South African Photography.” *Kronos*, no. 33, November: 139-162. Cape Town: University of the Western Cape.

Hayes, P. 2017. “Photographic Publics and Photographic Desires in 1980s South Africa.” *Photographies* 10, no. 3: 303-327. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17540763.2017. Accessed July 2021.

Heyman, T.T. 1992. *Seeing Straight: The f.64 Revolution in Photography*. Oakland Museum. pp. 20–24, back cover.

Hirshowitz, S. 2020. Personal correspondence. 31 July.

Hostetler, L. 2004. "Group f64." The Metropolitan Museum of Art. https://www.metmuseum.org › toah › f64 › hd_f64. Accessed 6 March 2021.

Iziko Museums of South Africa. n.d. "Photography and new media." https://www.iziko.org.za/collections/photography-and-new-media. Accessed 20 February 2021.

Jaguaribe, B. 2021. "The Modernist Gaze and the City: Notes on Photography and Urban Repertoires in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s and 50s." https://post.moma.org/the-modernist-gaze-and-the-city-notes-on-photography-and-urban-repertoires-in-sao-paulo-and-rio-de-janeiro-in-the-1940s-and-50s/?_ga=2.247628743.1569986411.1646031842-30687315.1646031842. Accessed 28 February 2021.

Kingsley, H., and D. Reed. 2013. "Pictorialism [Pictorial Photography]." https://www.coursehero.com/file/62430642/Pictorialism-Grove-Art-Onlinepdf/. Accessed 20 March 2021.

Köhler, M. 1995. *Constructed Realities*. Zurich: Edition Semmle.

Lowe, S. D. 1983. *Stieglitz: The Founding Father of Modern Photography*. London: Quartet Books.

Macfarlane, E. 2016. "Group f.64, Rocks, and the Limits of the Political Photograph." https://www.academia.edu/30203649/Group_f_64_Rocks_and_the_Limits_of_the_Political_Photograph?email_work_card=title. Accessed 20 March 2020.

Maher, C., and L. Berman. 2007. "Master Photographer Interview: Jerry Uelsmann." Shutterbug. https://www.shutterbug.com/content/master-interview-jerry-uelsmann. Accessed 27 March 2021.

Making Space: Woman Artists and Post-War Abstraction MoMA. 2017 https://artviewer.org/making-space-women-artists-and-postwar-abstraction-at-moma/. Accessed 15 February 2021.

Martin, M., and P. Weinberg. 2015. *"The Thinking Eye: Photographs by Neville Dubow*." UCT Libraries Digital Collections. https://digitalcollections.lib.uct.ac.za/article/thinking-eye-photographs-neville-dubow. Accessed 10 March 2021.

Margolis, M. F., ed. 2019. *Camera Work: The Complete Image Collection.* By Alfred Stieglitz. Mineola, NY: Dover.

May, R. C. 1989. “The Lexington Camera Club, 1936-1972.” *The Kentucky Review* 9, no. 2: 3-47. https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1117&context=kentucky-review. Accessed 10 February 2021.

McCarroll, S. 2004. *California Dreamin’ Camera Clubs and the Pictorial Photography Tradition*. Exhibition and Catalogue by Stacey McCarroll. Boston University Art Gallery January 30, 2004 – March 28, 2004. Boston: University of Washington Press.

McCristall, M. 2013. “Inspired by Freeman Patterson.” *Everything Neat*, posted on 29/01/2013.https://everythingneat.wordpress.com/2013/01/29/inspired-by-freeman-patterson/. Accessed 20 November 2020.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. n.d. “Alfred Stieglitz, The Steerage, 1907.” https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/267836. Accessed 21 July 2020.

Museum of Modern Art. 1976. “Colour Photographs by William Eggleston.” Press release. https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_326994.pdf. Accessed 19 May 2021.

Oden, L. n.d. “Paul Strand 1890-1976.” The International Photography Hall of Fame and Museum. https://iphf.org/inductees/paul-strand/. Accessed 15 August 2021.

Olin, M. 2012. *Touching Photographs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. https://journals.openedition.org/transatlantica/6694. Accessed 18 October 2020.

O’Toole, S. 2010. “Wild and Whimsical.” *Sunday Times* 24 January.

Peterson, C. 1997. *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910-1955*. New York: Norton.

“Pictorialism: Concepts and Styles.” n.d. *TheArtStory*. https://www.theartstory.org/movement/pictorialism/history-and-concepts. Accessed 18 February 2020.

Pitts, T. 1999. *Edward Weston 1886–1958*. Köln: Taschen.

Pollen, A. 2020. *Objects of Denigration and Desire: Taking the Amateur Photographer Seriously*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Scharf, A. 1991. *Art and Photography*. New York: Penguin.

Schwartz, D. B. 1983. *Camera Clubs and Fine Art Photography: Distinguishing Between Art and Amateur Activity*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pennsylvania. University Microfilms International.

Sonnenberg, W. 2021. Personal communication, 22 February 2021.

Stieglitz, A. 1942. “How ‘The Steerage’ Happened.” *Twice a Year*, 8-9: 175-178.

Swart, D. 2021. Personal correspondence. 20 February.

Swart, D. 2005. “Creative Photography for Switched on People.” Unpublished manuscript.

Szarkowski, J. 2021. “Alfred Stieglitz.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1 Jan. 2021. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alfred-Stieglitz. Accessed 5 March 2021.

Tifentale, A. 2011. *The Photograph as Art in Latvia, 1960-1969*. Riga: Neputns.

Tifentale, A. 2012. “Unconventional Art: The Emergence of New Photographic Art in the Post-Stalin Soviet Union.” Paper presented at the SECAC (South Eastern College Art) annual conference, Collisions: Where Past Meets Presen., Meredith College, Durham, NC, October 17–20. http://www.alisetifentale.net/article-archive/2016/11/5/unconventional-art. Accessed 27 April 2021.

Tifentale, A. 2015. *The Artist and Propagandist: Steichen’s Role at Two Decisive Moments in the History of American Photography*. Riga: Latvian National Museum of Art.

Tifentale, A. 2019. “Following the Invisible Hand. The Role of Photo Clubs, Magazines, Exhibitions, and Curators in Latvian Photography, 1960-2000.” Ansone, E., ed. *Ten Episodes in Art of the Second Half of the 20th Century in Latvia*. Riga: Latvian National Museum of Art. http://www.alisetifentale.net/article-archive/2019/2/7/following-the-invisible-hand. Accessed 25 April 2021.

Trachtenberg, A. 1980. *Classic Essays on Photography*. New Haven, CT: Leete’s Island Books.

Uelsmann, J. 1967. "Post-Visualization" (PDF). *Florida Quarterly* – via Contemporary Photography, 1967.

Vermeulen, D. 1985. *Viewfinder*. 50th Anniversary Edition.

Volpe, L. 2017. “The Rise, Fall, and Re-Emergence of the Photo Club.” https://www.donttakepictures.com/dtp-blog/2017/1/18/the-rise-fall-and-reemergence-of-the-photo-club. Accessed 23 November 2020.

Wallis, B., ed. 2015. *The Walther Collection. The Order of Things*. Göttingen: Steidl.

Wanderscheid, E. n.d. “History.” *The International Federation of Photographic Art*. https://www.fiap.net/en/history. Accessed 20 March 2021.

Warsop, G. 2021. Personal communication 214 February 2021.

Wells, L. 1996. *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.

Wilson, M., and D. Reed. 1998. *Pictorialism in California: Photographs 1900–1940*. Malibu, CA: Getty Museum.