



Cardiff

u3a

Welcome to this presentation of
images recently taken
by members of the
Cardiff u3a Photographic groups



First - a thank you

u3a learn, laugh, live

On behalf of the 3 Cardiff u3a photography groups may I thank Mario and the Committee for providing us with the opportunity to showcase our work. Thank you.

Can I just add that images on show today have been taken by people with differing photographic skills and interests, and with cameras of varying age, quality and function. Yet the results are outstanding.

Regardless of your photographic experience, skill set, or the type of camera you prefer to use, I can be sure that with a just a little regular practice, will find photography as rewarding and enjoyable as we do.

We are very fortunate in that the Convenors of Cardiff's 3 photography groups remain true to the values of the u3a - and just to facilitate opportunity and help. Alongside many others convenors they strive to ensure that whatever we do we have fun, don't take ourselves too seriously, and help each other as we go along. In photography's case our motto might just as well be '**snap, smile, share and support.**' That sums us lot up pretty well I think.



Photography - what's on offer

- A Morning Group
- An Afternoon Group
- A Monthly software photography group

Both groups meet on alternate Wednesdays throughout the year)

aimed at introducing members to computer based post processing techniques using Lightroom

Vacancies permitting, members may belong to any, or all, of the above.

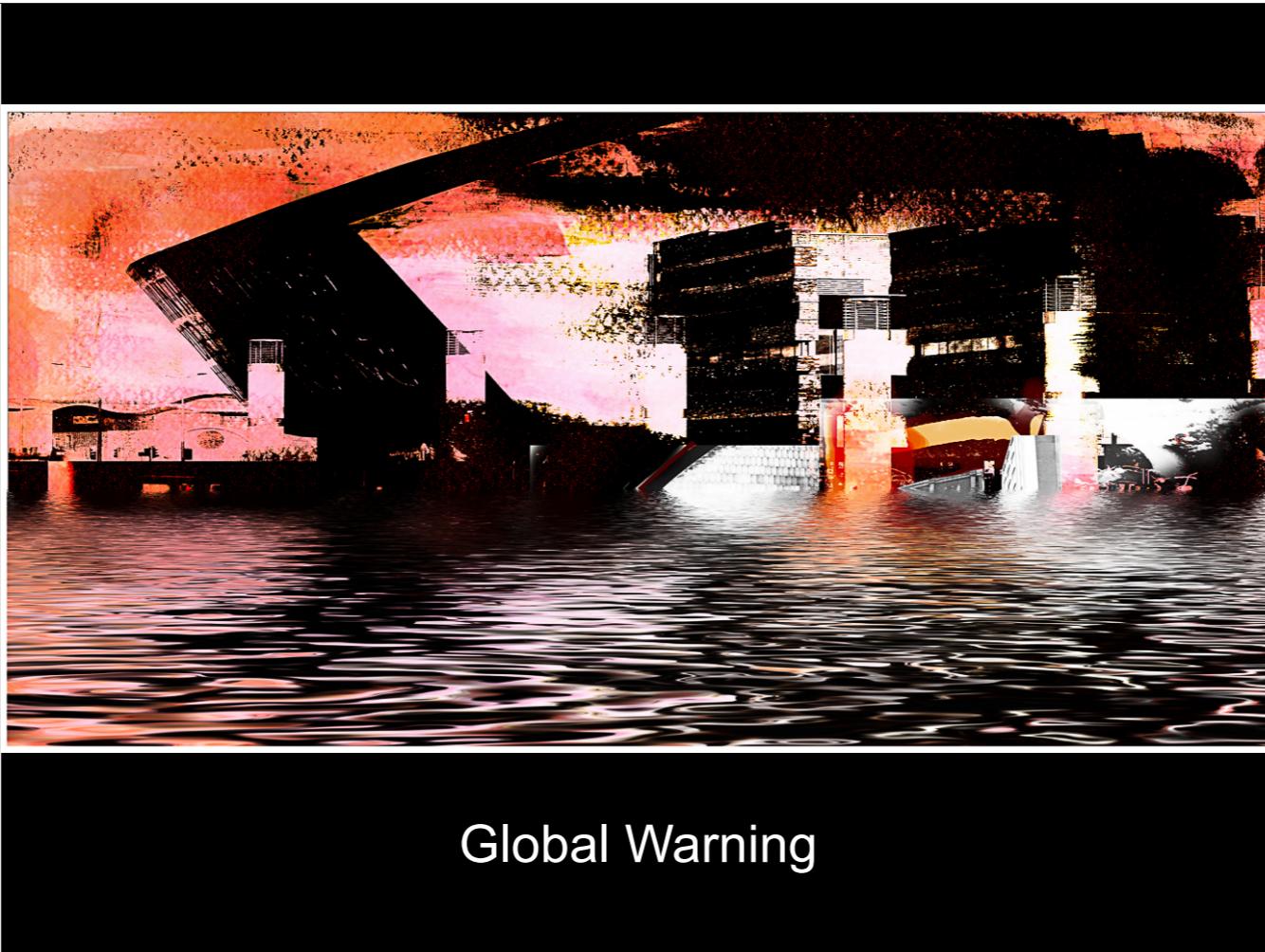
All skill levels and camera types catered for including smart phones, tablets 'point and shoot' DSLRs, Mirrorless etc.

Photoshoots

Workshops

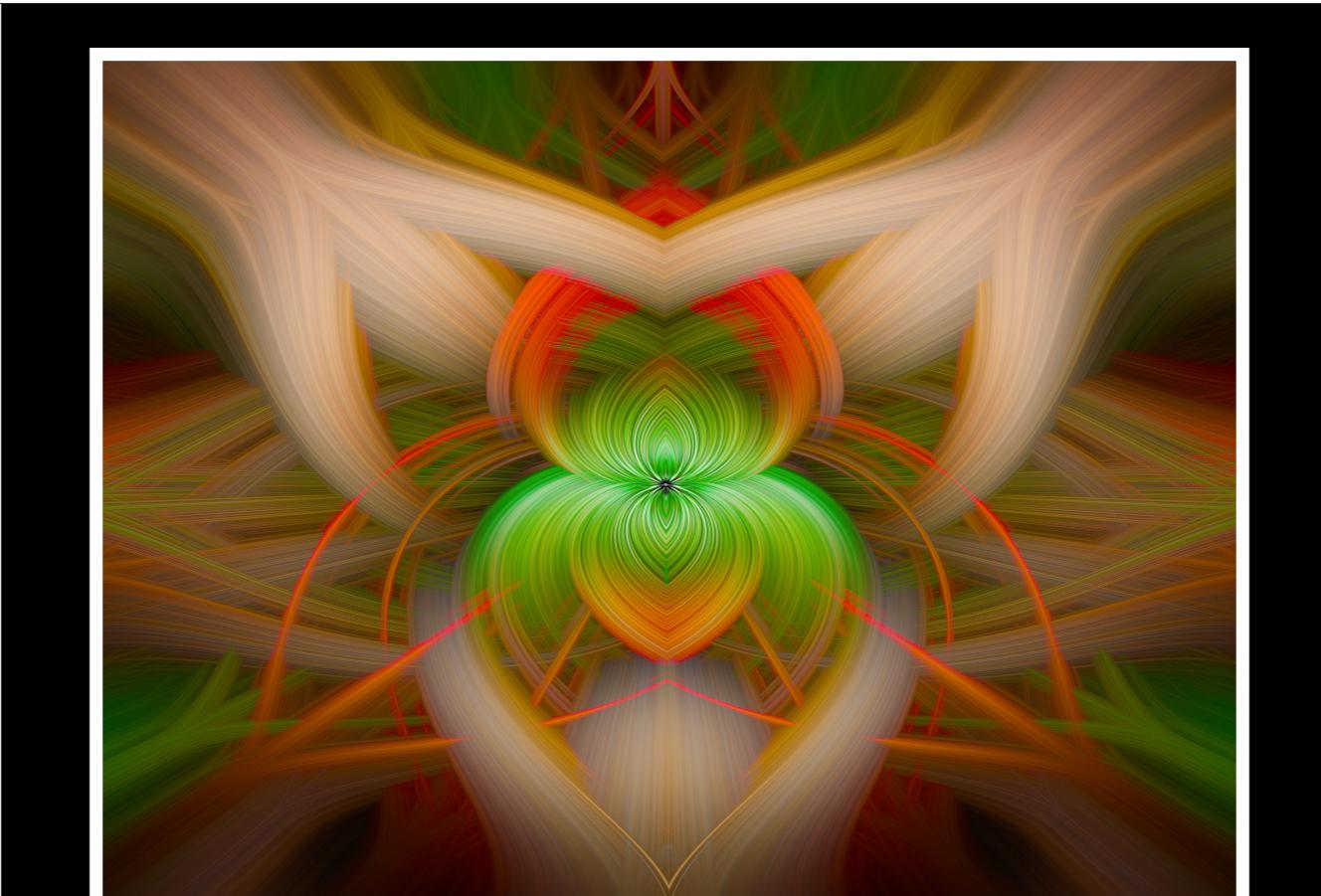
Camera Craft

'Shared Learning'
'Snap, Smile,
Share & Support'



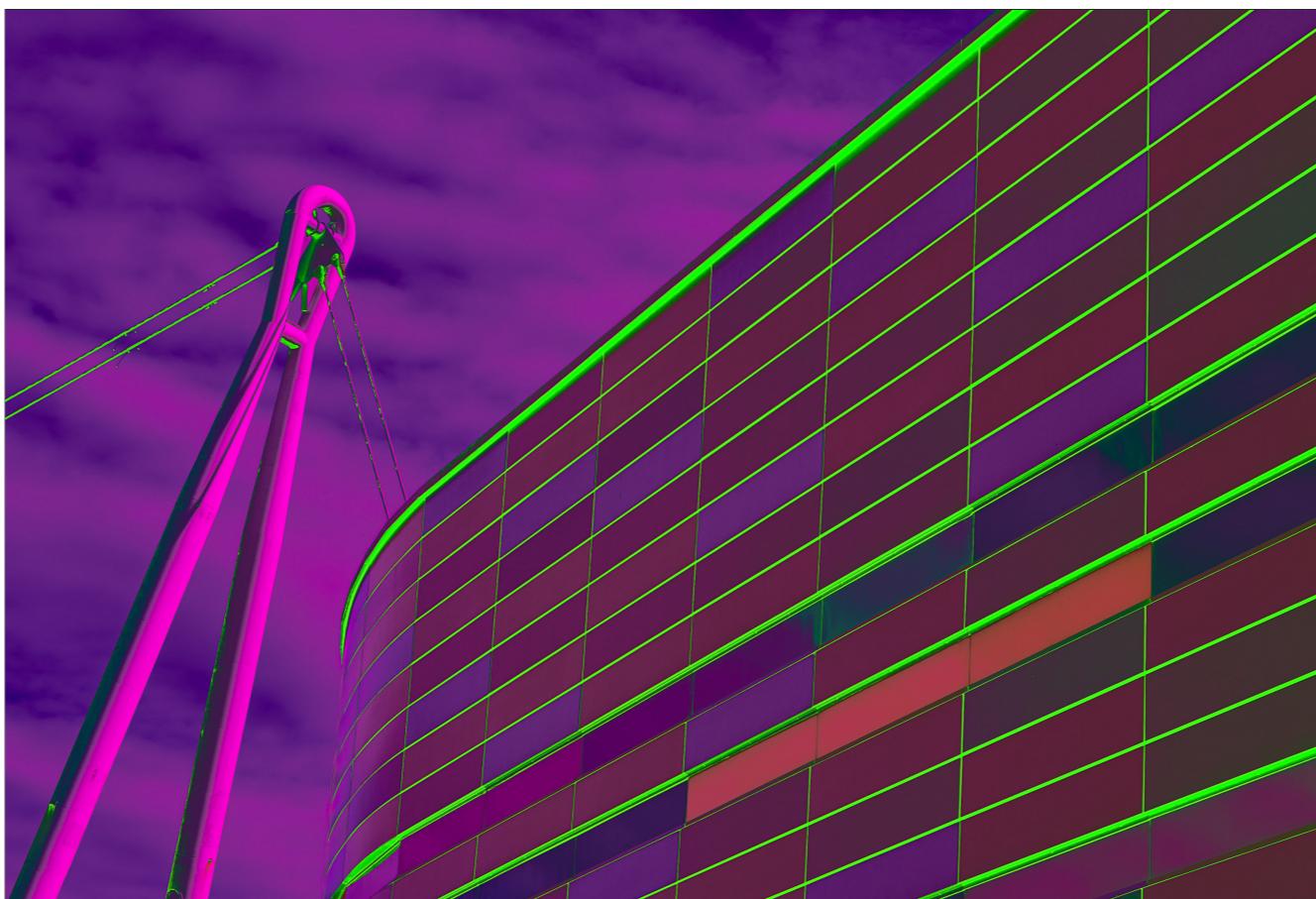
Global Warning

- Peter “Global Warning”
- This is a very thought provoking and entirely re-imagined fictitious image of Cardiff Bay.
- Here the photographer, Peter, is warning us of the threat of global warming with ever increasing temperatures and rising sea levels.
- Look closely, and you will see familiar Cardiff landmarks being swamped by rising water, and familiar buildings scorched by the heat of the sun.
- It is perhaps not so surprising that this photographer is more at home with a paint brush and easel, than with a camera in hand. His clever use of colour, light and darkness, and the way he has created movement in the water creates a very powerful and believable image. No wonder it was the first picture to be sold in the exhibition.
- Images of this type where the shape of different buildings are blended together require a lot of imagination and skill if they are to work.
- What we see here is good use of A.I except there is nothing ***artificial*** about it. **What there is a lot of Artistic Intelligence - proper A.I. - and its there in spades.** Well done Peter.



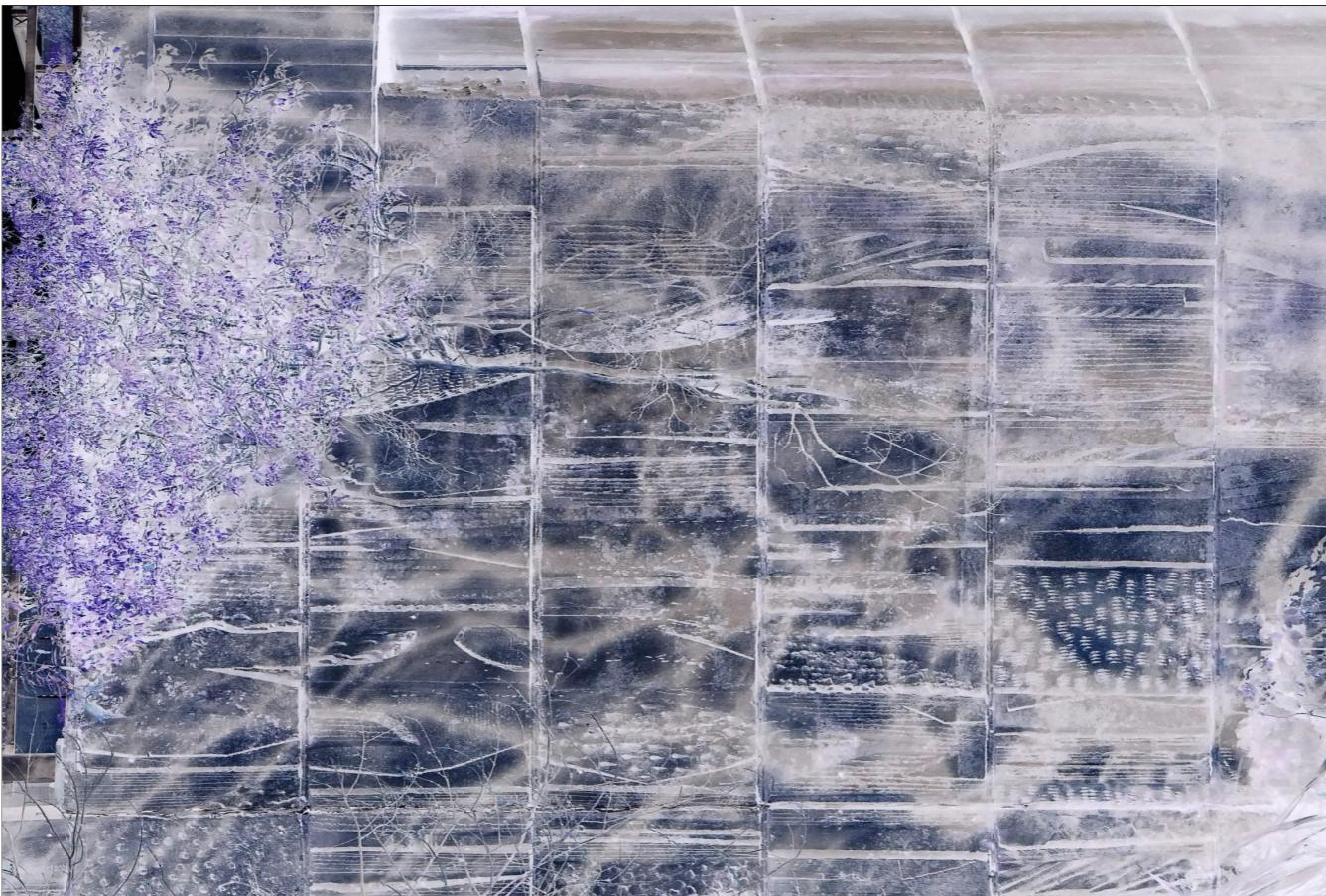
Kaleidoscopic Trefoil

- MARILYN
- Kaleidoscopic photography has become increasingly popular - both in artistic and commercial circles in recent years.
- Basically, it involves using a 'device' - a mirror, a prism or a glass ball - to create symmetrical, repeating patterns of a subject, which are then photographed. The result is that what starts out ordinary shape is then transformed into intricate, symmetrical patterns often bursting with contrasting vibrant colours.
- Here Marilyn has blended 3 elements together to create a trefoil effect but you can use as many elements as you wish although in general an odd number works best.
- It's a happy picture and reminds me of the pleasure and delight of my childhood - once finding a cardboard one in my Christmas stocking which you looked into and rotated. It entertained me for many a long hour. Happy memories.



Newport Cinema Complex and Footbridge

- Albert
- Staying with the theme of creative photography we will now look at another technique in which visual reality is distorted for effect.
- "Here ALBERT uses colour conversion techniques to emphasise the strong architectural lines of a leisure complex in Newport and its relationship with the towering stanchions of a nearby footbridge crossing the River Usk. Colour conversion is not however something new. At its most simple level it used every time we convert a coloured scene to a 'black and white one. Here the colour change is used for artistic reasons but with an emphasis on modernity, permanence and function.
- What I like is that the photographer has taken care to ensure that both structures are set within their own space and have their own identity. This allows the viewer to ponder how they might relate to each other. Are they mutually dependent, or do they exist as 'stand alone' structures? It makes you think doesn't it. I like it.



Jim

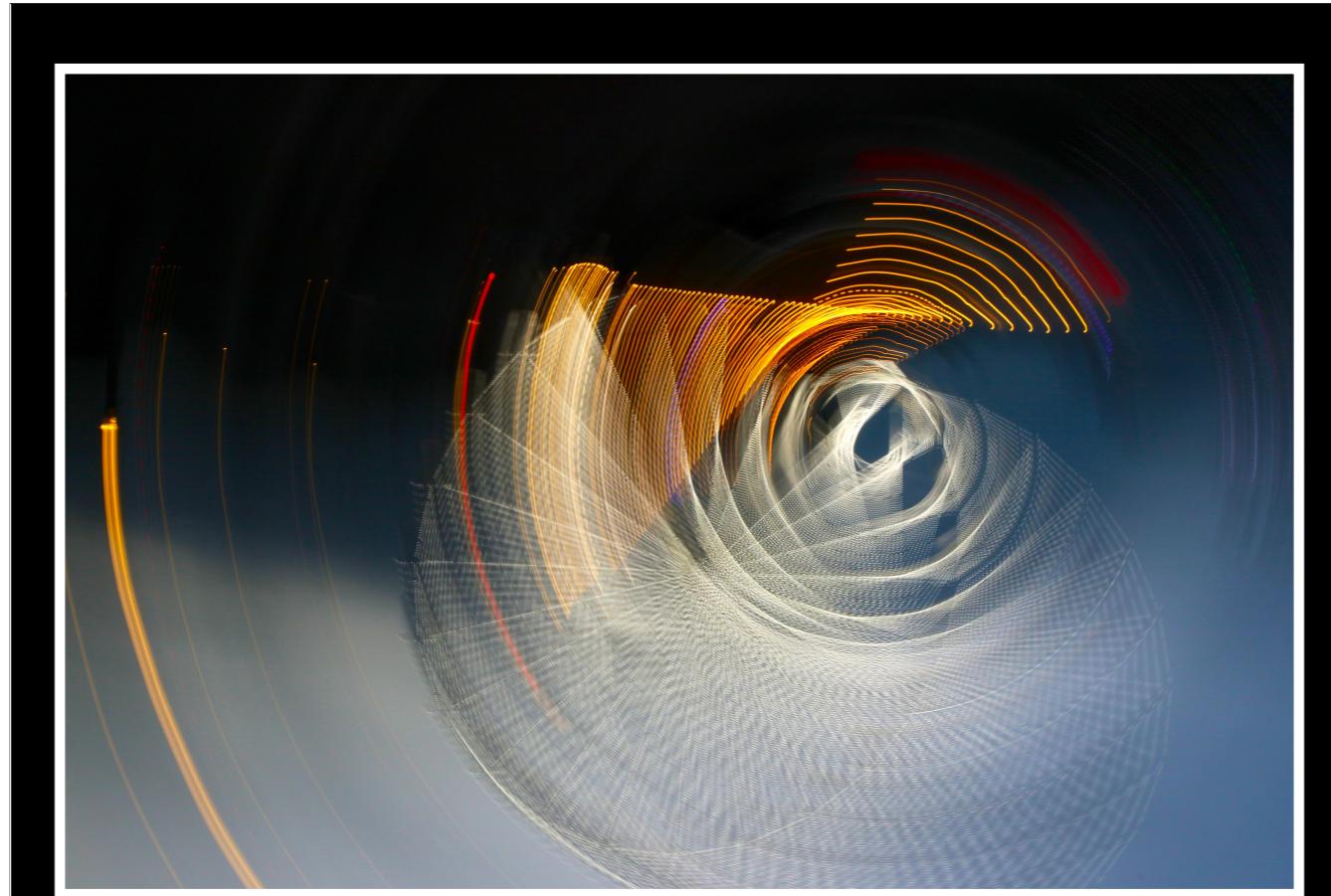
This is another picture characterised where the distorted reality was discovered more by accident than by design. It was also taken on a photoshoot in Newport.

Jim, I am sure, will not mind me saying that it was also taken on a low cost pocket camera. Proof, if you need it, that cheaper cameras do produce excellent photos regardless of whatever type you use.

In photography, it is often said that what matters most compositionally is not necessarily what is in front of it! what is immediately *behind* it - I.e the person taking the image ! Here Jim has cleverly used colour conversion not just to alter colours tones but to create an entirely reimagined image from that seen originally through the lens.

So what have we got here ? It's actually a photo of a plant and judging it accompanying 'shadow' of earlier growth struggling to survive.

The photographer took the image 'as is' and then inverted the colours so that the green in the plant turned blue. This not only changed the colour of the image but distorted the reality by making it more abstract in structure so that it appeared to be **less plant-like** and much more like a **storm cloud emerging during lightning strikes, and in pouring rain**. Its a well taken, engaging image which not only puzzles people but invites them to put their own interpretation on what they now see.



... but what is it?

You'd be forgiven for thinking that our lot are a particularly creative. Whilst some are, most have been encouraged to explore their side during the Covid pandemic when we all searched for something different, safe and not to difficult to photograph.

I'll not say any thing more about this particular except to pose the question 'What Is It?' Well come back to that later.

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PATRIZIA'S IMAGE What is it ?"

The clue perhaps is in the sub-title where it is described as being Abstract - Geometry of Light.

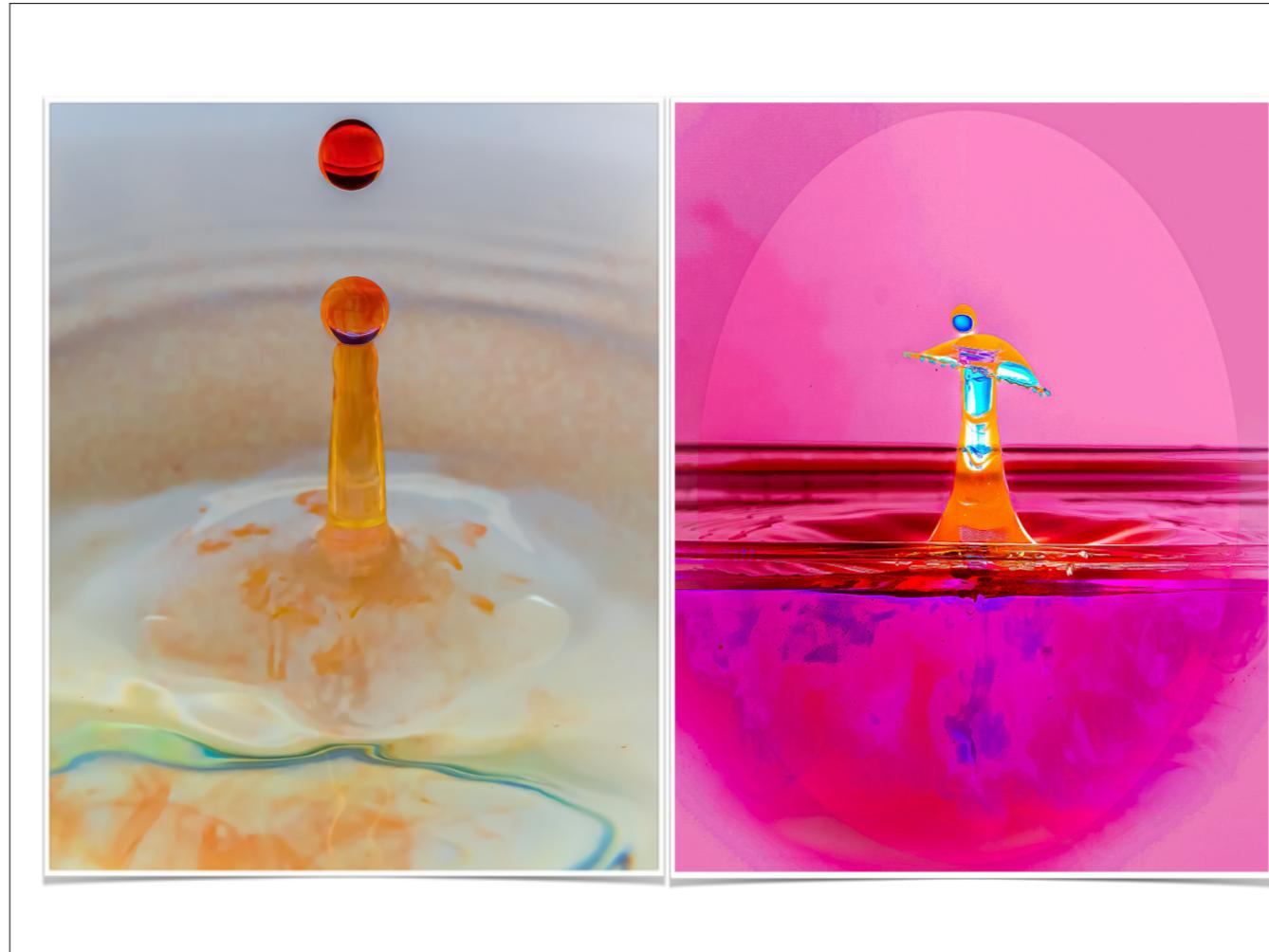
Its actually a picture of the Ferris Wheel taken, I think, at Christmas time, outside the National Museum of Cardiff.

Here the camera was put on a tripod and rotated 180 degrees during which time multiple image were captured using a slow shutter speed.

The technique used here is generally called **voluntary or intentional camera movement** - ICM. Normally in photography you strive keep your camera still but here movement of the camera is intentional.

ICM is a very good way of practicing composition because the results are often random in nature, very forgiving, and can be used to photograph people, flowers, transport, and many other things with good effect.

And there is no need to worry about any blurring. That's the whole point of it. Why no try it. When you're next in the garden or at a park choose some colourful flower compose your picture and as you press the shutter button down give it a purposeful flick of the wrist - upwards, downwards - even sideways - and see what effect it has.



- Personally I am not a creative person but I am grateful that membership of the Cardiff u3a photography group encouraged me to put aside my creative inhibitions, and to experiment a little - and this is the result!
- The next 2 photos **which I am going pass over quite quickly** are images of a water drop falling from a pipette into a shallow bowl of water, and then bouncing back on hitting its surface before colliding with the next drip on its way down.
- As you can see I experimented further by adding coloured backdrops and some contrasting coloured water to the mix, and let gravity take over.
- **In the first image** you can see how the descending water drop created a crater before bouncing up again to hit a blue drop on its way down. The net result gives the appearance of a crowned water drop dancing on there water.
- **The second image is a little different.** It was taken early in the process and clearly shows two individual drops about to collide with each other.
- **The secret of good water drop photography is set up the camera on a tripod to pre focus the camera on where you to expect the drop to fall and continuously take pictures whilst it does so.** Its takes a bit of practice **so be patient**.



Promenade at Barry Island

"Eastern Promenade, Barry Island, 300x400,Landscape,

"This is a well taken and well observed image in which Albert uses perspective and contrast to very good effect. The strong pillars act to frame the sea and the bay beyond, and lead your eye down the promenade until it settles on the distant arcade.

The sky and the incoming tide add much needed movement and life to the image. Good use is also made of the shadows as they breakup what otherwise would be empty space. Definitely one of those images where mono works better than colour.

This picture was also sold at the exhibition. If I remember correctly it was purchased by a man who on seeing it was reminded that many years he ago proposed to his wife at that very spot. The rest as they say is history.



Not Quite Lined Up

Anne

“This image by Anne was constructed as part of a group project when a group tasked to photograph lines at the beach.

Whilst most people perceive lines as being a flat, one dimensional pathways that do not bend, Anne told me that she thinks of lines in more abstract terms so chose sea shells as subject

As this photo shows, lines needn’t be just straight but can also be curved, as shown on the shells, or even circular as seen in the bottle corks, or even irregular as demonstrated by the cobbles. I like that thinking. It reminds of the times my mother would tease me by saying “stop telling me that you are just going around the corner because corners aren’t round they are square.”

The photographer has put this set together because, in her mind lines define shape and give direction.

Compositionally, Anne thinks the image could be stronger. The shells, she says, need a little more space and she is not sure if the cobbles add anything to the picture. Perhaps they would look better moved to the front. What do you think?

Never the less she enjoyed taking this photo not just for aesthetic reason but because it reminded her that whenever you are out to keep her camera close at hand because you never know what visual delights are hiding around the corner!



Raindrops Keep Falling

Yvonne "Raindrops Keep Falling"

"This image by Yvonne is another strong image and a great favourite at the exhibition.

Looking back it reminded her that during recent summers we **have had more than the usual amount of rain** for which we should, perhaps, be thankful.

The raindrops on the leaves of the Acer Palmatum which she keeps in a pot in her garden, appear jewel-like in the sunshine which followed the short downpour. It was a scene which she felt impelled to capture - and I can see why. Definitely one to frame. Its outstanding ."



Seattle Skyline

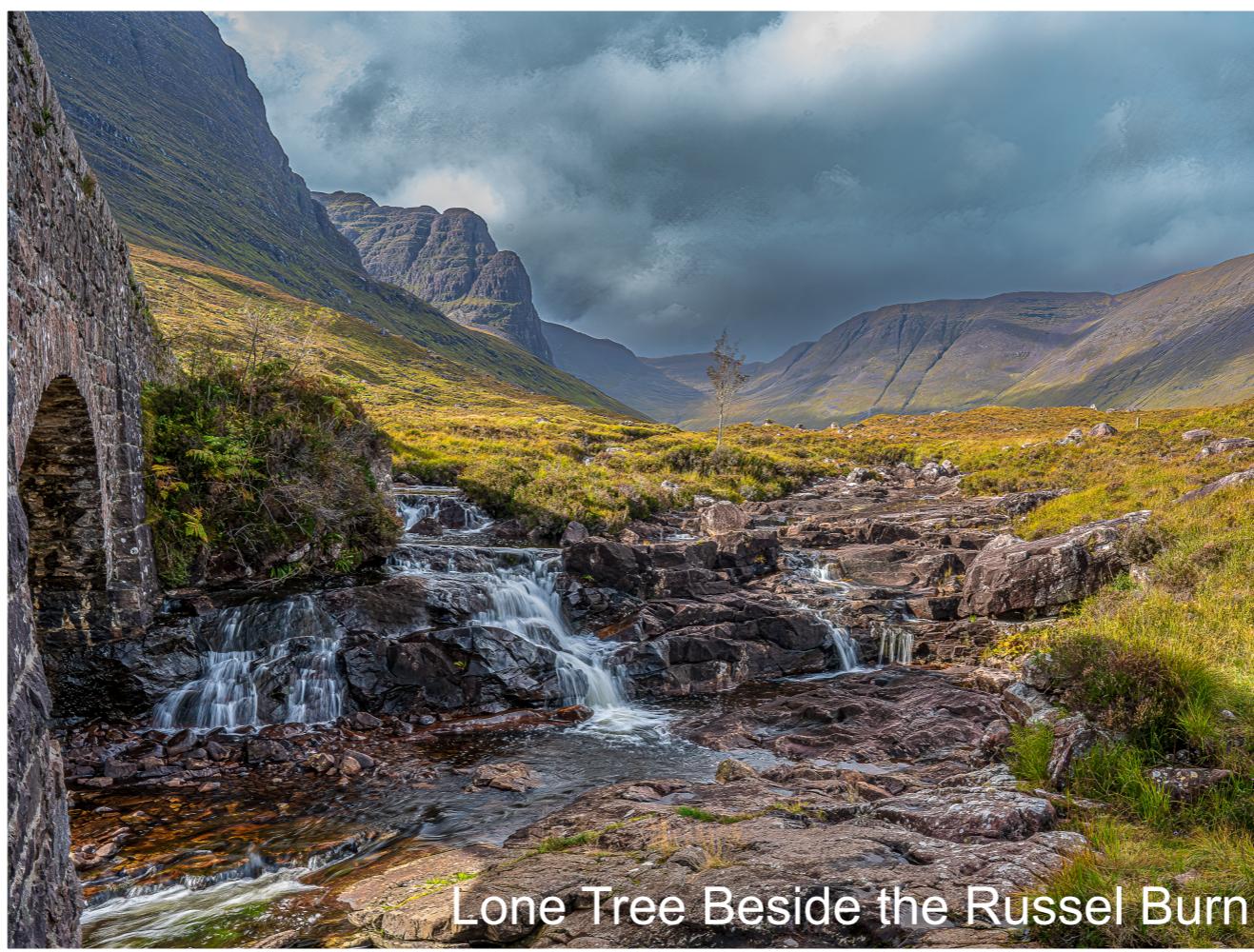
Andrew

This photo was taken by Andrew on the Bremerton to Seattle High Speed Passenger Ferry.

Not an easy task when you are traveling at speed and bobbing up and down. It shows the skyline from Downtown Seattle to the iconic 'Space Needle' which' at over 600 feet' is Seattles tallest structure.

I know Andrew did, briefly, consider placing the 'Space Needle' more towards the centre of the photograph but I'm glad he didn't partly because it needs its own space, and partly because the waterfront is dominated by conflicting and competing geometric shapes and structures. These are almost entirely - square, or rectangular, whereas the 'Space Needle' has a more feminine form, graceful, curvy - am I allowed to say that!

The geometrical skyline and the billowing sky do however give energy to the picture. I'm sure its an image the photographer will not forget for a long time.



Lone Tree Beside the Russel Burn

Scotland “Lone Tree beside the Russel Burn”

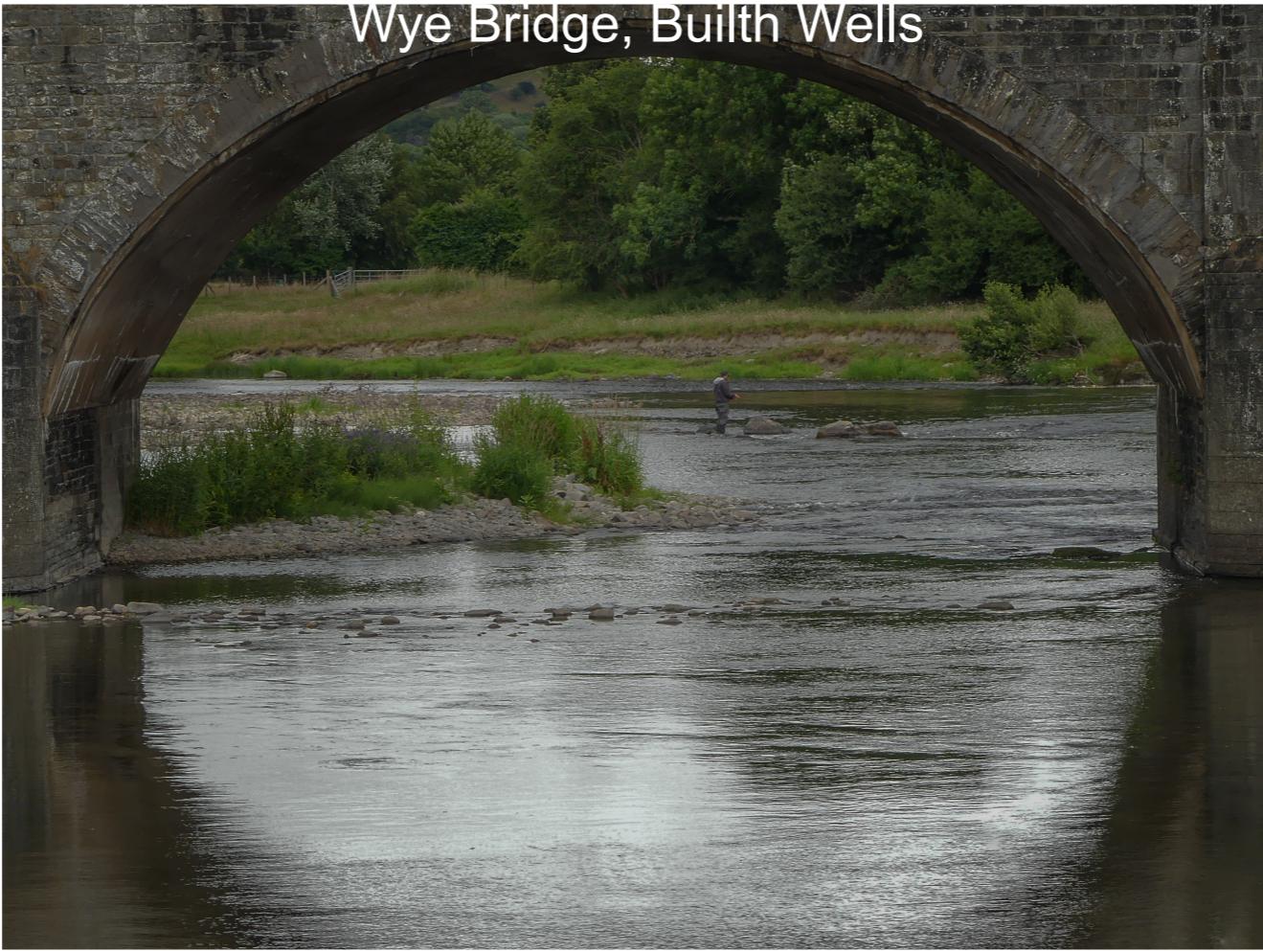
This was also a very popular image in our exhibition. As one of the visitors remarked - it makes you want to go and visit the place. Here you can tell the photographer, David, has patiently waited until the light was at its best for illuminating the lone tree.

How do I know that - It's because it needed that break in the cloud to let the light in. If he had waited much longer it would have closed up and he would have ended up with deep shadows covering the tree itself, the sunlit heathland and the mountain stream.

Some people have suggested that the tree would be more dominant if the photographer had zoomed in on it more. I disagree because it would have the effect of reducing the foreground and limiting the visual impact of the stream.

The **whole point of taking this image as it is**, is that the tree not only gives scale to the image but also exposed its vulnerability. How has it been possible to survive so well in a such a hostile environment? Its a lovely picture.

Wye Bridge, Builth Wells



Pauline“Wye Bridge, Builth Wells”,

This much photographed bridge over the River Wye was built in 1779 - more from wood than stone but now supports the busy A470. Its my kind of image. Very appealing, well seen and thoughtfully composed.

Normally photographers prefer to photograph images of *this* bridge revealing its seven picturesque arches but here Pauline has chosen a more authentic and nostalgic view, re-creating what artists would have been literally *drawn* to long before photography was invented. I like it very much.

I am not quite sure who chose its title - I think it was me! Perhaps something like 'Lone Angler Fishing on the River Wye' would have given added emphasis to what she was wanting to draw attention too. That said, its a well spotted image which, if the angler had not been present, would have significantly diminished its impact. In photography timing matters !



Coombestone Tor

Coombestone Tor (pronounced Cumstone) offers beautiful views overlooking the River Dart

I previously mentioned about the value of looking for 'pictures within a picture'. Here we have a landscape consisting 3 elements each strong enough to be the dominant picture in its own right - a stunning landscape, a striking sky, an immovable stone outcrop - all quite different in character and all worthy of emphasis.

Tempting, as it might have been, the photographer has resisted breaking up the scene by isolating these elements but instead has used them to emphasize the urgency of horse moving through an otherwise static environment. It gives the whole scene purpose and something we can all identify with.

It also reminds us that if you need a photographic device to increase a person's (or animals) sense of movement, or to add some image urgency to the picture take several shots in rapid succession whilst they are moving so you can capture the foot off ground.

The Bird of Paradise Flower



Marilyn Guest,

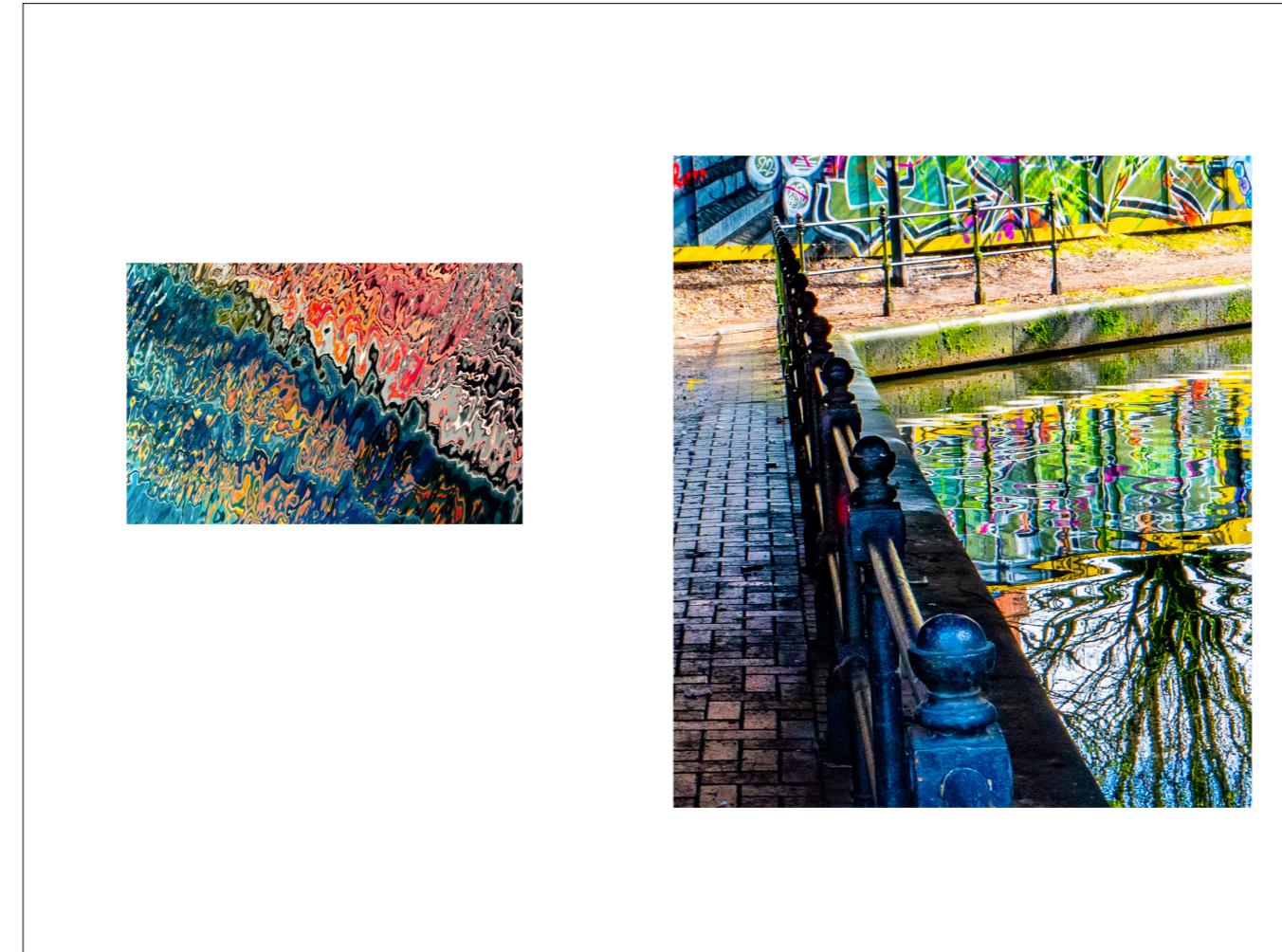
“The Bird of Paradise Flower” (taken on a recent u3a photoshoot - I’ll let you into a secret - South Africa is long way away ! Seriously we do go on some really good photoshoots - which sometimes involve a day or two away.

This picture was actually taken on photo shoot in one the University’s horticulture buildings, It’s stunning!

Her presentation of it against a black back ground is very compelling. I must try it sometime!! Who wouldn’t be proud to have taken this.

The plant is popular for a number of reasons and not just for its beauty. It is a popular house plant in cooler countries because it is relatively long lasting and easy to grow. Its also does not produce air borne pollen and is therefore pollen friendly,

Not surprisingly, it is frequently given to commemorate achievement or as a token of love and friendship, especially, on a ninth wedding anniversary when, not to receive one, is regarded as bad luck.”



These colourful images were taken by Jonathon on a photowalk along the Bute feeder canal which was built in the 1830s to divert water from the River Taff at Blackweir Bridge to feed the newly constructed West Bute Dock.

Now looking dated along much of its length it has been livened up by some striking artwork on hoardings alongside the footpath reflecting on the canal and wet pavements.

This is another good example of how a static image taken of an ever changing reflection not only adds depth to an image but draws attention to colour, shape of an otherwise unseen or unnoticed elements within the image.

Sunset on Las Palmas Beach at Gran Canaria



Sunset on Las Palmas Beach"

Sunsets are always attractive subjects for photographers. This image, whilst displaying a vivid sunset also shows it being enjoyed by several spectators intently watching the continually changing view of the sun as it dips behind the mountains on the other side of the bay.

The sunset however is not what makes this picture, glorious as it is. What makes this picture stand out is the way the photographer has positioned the camera so that the silhouetted shape of the onlookers mirrors the profile of the distant mountains. It is this that holds the image together.

For me, this picture, taken during the 'golden hour', is as much about visual harmony and pictorial balance than admiring the warm glow of the sun - even at this distance.



Ladybird, Ladybird

Anne

Lavender is well known for its calming properties, and is said to bring about good luck, something we all need from time to time, especially so during times of ill health.

This image of a seven spot ladybird on lavender was taken at Cowbridge Physic Garden - a little gem of a garden. Its small and compact, and full of insect loving, medicinal plants and herbs.

They are called Seven Spot because they have three and a half spots on each wing. The top spot consists of two half spots on each side of wing, which, when closed join together to create a whole.

Ladybirds are also associated with various myths and tales such as

- 1 if one lands on you, you should count the number of spots to predict how many years of good luck you'll have.
- 2 the number of spots a lady bird has indicates the number of months until your greatest wish comes true. Some say that the redder the ladybug, the better your luck will be.
- 3 The singing of Ladybird, Ladybird, fly away home....your house is on fire, and your children will burn apparently aid to describe the risk of fire to the ladybird caused by farmers burning stubble in the fields

No wonder ladybirds have gone on to become beloved garden insects. Where people fear spiders, or actively chase away wasps, many love ladybirds. And who can blame them?



That All Folks

We started with a powerful image so lets end with one.

This simple photographic image is however more than just a snapshot in time.

It is what is often referred to as a **record shot** intended to document historical and/or cultural events of interest and importance and usually speaks for it self so I will say no more. Nothing more needs to said really. The message was obviously important to photographer. Its one that visitors to the exhibition might share and not necessarily because they agree with. Its a statement piece really.

Before we move onto part 2 may I pause bythanking

- the convenors of the 3 photography groups for their unstinting encouragement and leadership.
- all those groups members who have been involved in planning meetings,organising photoshoots etc, and for others making it worth with their attendance today
- members for sharing with you, what I think you will agree is some excellent photography, taken in the best traditions of the u3a remembering to 'snap, smile, share and support'

Thank you