

DECADE



October / November
2019

Celebrating 10 Years
Of
Edinburgh LoFi

Traditional, Alternative and Lomographic
Photography

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Foreword
by
Catherine Marshall

Today, apps like Google Photos and Facebook curate memories for us. We will the cloud to become the reliable narrator in our lives. We are persuaded that technology can help us to gain control. There is an app, for example, which we can use to adjust our heating when we are far from home. We know how many steps we have taken, the distance we have travelled, and where we are at any given time on a map. We are masters (or is it slaves?) of measurement and (self) surveillance.

Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the LoFi photography movement has burgeoned over the last 10 years, and the Edinburgh LoFi group with it. Its members actively seek out unreliable technologies, in the form of second-hand cameras found in flea markets, Lomo cameras, pinhole cameras made from anything from coke cans to discarded municipal bins. Many members even do away with the camera itself, exposing objects directly onto photo paper in cyanotypes and lumens. The LoFi group may be 10 years old, but, in fact, its members draw on photographic techniques which span hundreds of years.

Paradoxically, it is by giving up a certain amount of control, which is a given in modern cameras, that these LoFi enthusiasts gain freedom. These processes open up windows for the imagination, that exist, for example, between the moment of taking a photograph to seeing the image for the first time, maybe weeks later when the film is developed. Failure is not infrequent when experimenting with LoFi technologies, as one member admits, but this makes the creative process and results often more exciting.

Catherine Marshall is a photographer and author. Her book - *Fleetway, a story in twelve photo fails* - is available in the exhibition gallery and was shot on 120 film. Her most recent work, a series of photos and reflective poems is published in *The Evergreen: A New Season in the North* anthology which launches 24/10/2019.

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Little did I know when I walked into the Beyond Words photography bookshop on Coburn Street ten years ago how meeting a bunch of strangers would influence the next decade.

Edinburgh LoFi was set up by Neil McIlwraith, owner, and Beth Sandison his shop manager. They had recently added Lomography cameras to their stock. The cameras and the books about their use were popular, developing a cult following of photographers looking to slow down their practice and get back to making photographs rather than taking them.

The very first group exhibition of pinhole photographs was shown in the shop. I remember the excitement of making my first camera from a coffee can, calculating the pinhole size for the recycled canister and counting down the seconds of exposure (quite some few in Scottish light!). The experience of taking my first paper negative into the darkroom and plunging it into the developer hoping it wouldn't blacken entirely was a magical one. I still have that negative.

Times quickly changed and the physical bookshop became an online bookshop. Where would we meet? Would we still meet at all?

Ten years later many of the original group are still meeting and strangers have become fast friends. Over the years people have come and gone but most people stay in touch so our network reaches up to Aberdeen and Dundee, down to Newcastle and London. Our most far flung member is in New Zealand where we enjoy hearing of her continuing passion for photography - now centred on Astrophotography.

New members bring fresh interests to the group; vintage cameras, rare film stocks, lensless techniques, and alternative processes - not only do we make the cameras, sometimes we make the negatives and paper too!

We meet monthly for discussion of recent work, arrange workshops, exhibitions and photowalks. Each year we celebrate World Pinhole Photography Day (occasionally in the snow, as this is Scotland!). Recently we have added a monthly morning meeting to our roster for those who can not make the evenings.

Throughout the years though, we have always remembered that it is not the equipment, the technique or the process that is important but producing an image with thought and meaning, to connect with the viewer and allow them to see a glimpse of our perspective on the world. Having the groups honest opinions is invaluable.

While my photographic inspiration comes from Saul Leiter, Lee Miller, Garry Fabian Miller and Hiroshi Sugimoto, to me Ferris Bueller sums up perfectly -

*Life moves pretty fast.
If you don't stop and look around once in a while,
you could miss it.*

Thanks to Printspace Dundee for hosting the Exhibition. Full details of meetings and events can be found on our website and we welcome new members.

Here's to the next ten years!

Elaine Robson

Alan Borthwick

Alan Borthwick still regularly works with film cameras from his collection of classic cameras, anything from Rolleiflex to Lomo. He tutors analogue photography at Dundee Contemporary Arts, covering traditional black and white as well as Argyrotypes and Cyanotypes.

His main love however is pinhole photography, shooting on colour negative film then printing in either colour or black and white, depending on subject matter. His current project is garden photography, mainly in Dundee Botanic Gardens.

Exhibiting here is a decade of work, Cornwall in 2009 to Botanic Gardens in 2019.



Sheila Borthwick

Sheila Borthwick, ARPS, has worked with instant film for well over a decade, from original Polaroid SX70, 669 and 10" x8" for emulsion lifts. She then used Impossible (literally) film, Fuji Instax and now the reinvented Polaroid film, not exactly instant but getting there! She had a solo exhibition in Redrooms, Perth Theatre several years ago, and there is a Blurb book with that title available.

For Decade, she is presenting some recent work, on various themes, preferring to do series of images. Equipment used includes Polaroid SX70, Polaroid 680, and Fuji Instax cameras.



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Olive Dean

My work is usually inspired by nature in all its forms, in particular the use of plants for my favourite form of alternative photography , viz. lumenographs.

For these works on exhibition I have selected two lumenographs and a modified cyanotype, the latter employing the "wet on wet " technique with the small addition of household ingredients to add further colour.



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Brittonie Fletcher

Brittonie Fletcher is an artist & educator who's been based in Scotland for nearly a decade and working in alternative and historic process for nearly 2 decades. She drinks too much coffee and alcohol and does not ride her bicycle enough.

"To be thematic 2 presentation pieces made about a decade ago have been chosen.

The stereo-cards were made when steam punk was just coming into fashion so I thought it would be fun to make new tintypes of steampunk-esque places and people in stereo and inlaid into wooden card. It references the era the cards were made. I'll be adding a few new ones to the old shots for fun.

Anthropocene is a daguerreotype I made in Philadelphia in 2009 and it has never been exhibited before. The media reflects the viewer and the surroundings... the image of a skeleton arm on a bag of garbage in a natural surrounding. I feel the need to make small political statements."



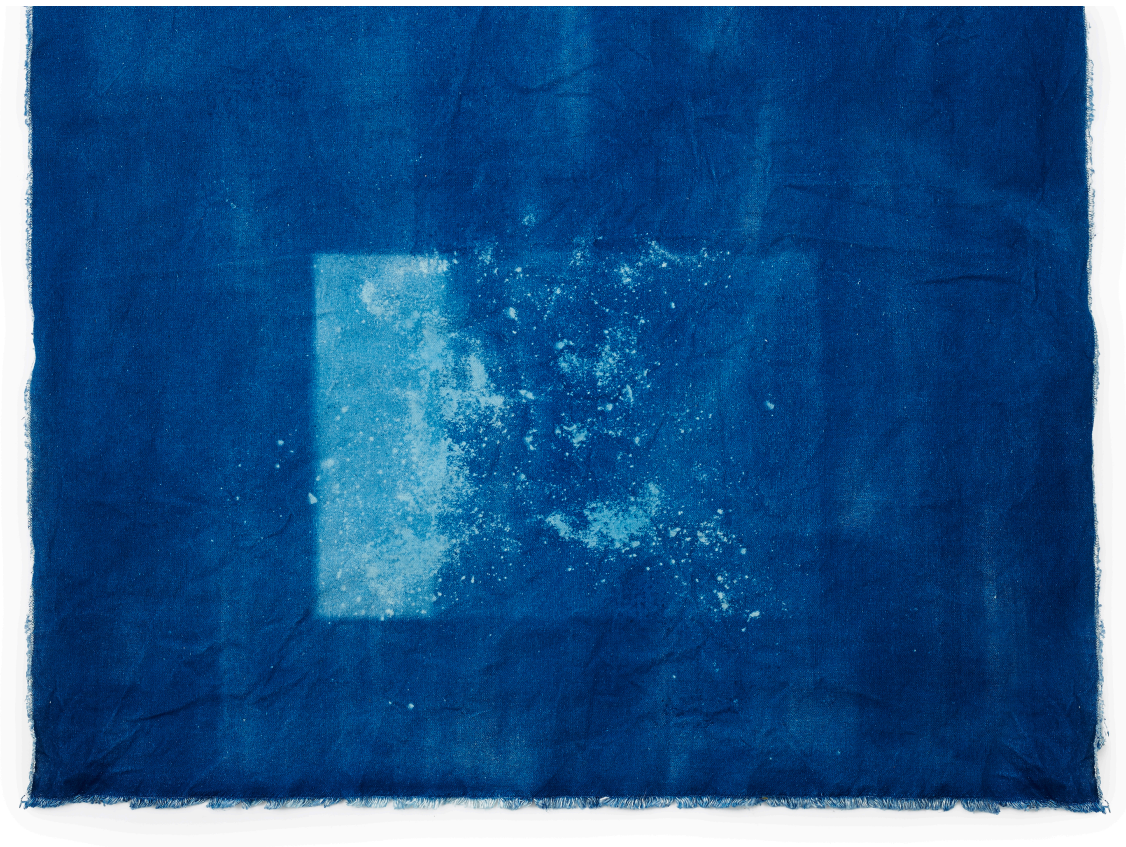
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Helen Jones

Helen Jones is an artist and photographer based in Edinburgh, Scotland. A recent graduate of Glasgow School of Art, Jones's work uses photography and sculpture to explore themes of decay, urgency and memorial.

My project, *Herschel's Garden*, was made as a response to a Victorian walled garden on the outskirts of Edinburgh, owned by Pyrus Botanicals. I took a slow contemplative approach to making the work. Spending time in the garden reflecting on space and season. At this time of year, plants are balanced on the cusp between the decaying, breaking down into the earth, and the dry and desiccated remains full of seeds waiting for the right conditions to burst into life. Out of sight, the earth warms, bulbs and seeds send shoots out and pollinating insects start to emerge. The trees are full of early buds and early blossom. Cyanotypes were first made in the early 1840s, the process itself is slow, taking a long time to complete an exposure in sunlight. The slow process reflects the pace of the growing garden and the necessity of light and water. The large-scale cyanotypes are printed on Calico, a natural fibre. The prints are a combination of photographs and debris taken from the walled garden. The photographs were turned into large scale negatives which were then used to make the cyanotypes.



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Mandy Kerr

Mandy Kerr studied photography at high school and immediately fell in love with the cameras, the film, and the darkroom. Attended Edinburgh college of Art (1993-1997) and did a little more photography there, though my main subject was animation. It was a number of years later before I began experimenting with photography again, initially digital, but before long I got my first 35mm film camera, followed by several others, and some medium and large format cameras too, and I almost exclusively shoot film now and do all my own processing.

These images were all shot using my first medium format camera, a Lomo Lubitel 2, which I bought almost a decade ago now, and still one of my favourite cameras to use, so I thought it was fitting that I entered them as part of the Edinburgh LoFi "Decade" exhibition.



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I have a long standing interest in photography, starting as child with my white plastic camera with a bulb flash. I have been developing my interest in alternative process, starting with cyanotype and expanding from there.

I wanted to demonstrate some of the variety of images that can be made without a camera.



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Opening 2pm October 20th 2019

Printspace Dundee

13 High Street
Newport-on-Tay

Please see website for full scheduled opening hours.



• Image by Ali Miller



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Image by Mandy Kerr

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Elaine Robson

Elaine Robson is based in Edinburgh and has been playing with creating photographic work with plastic cameras since obtaining her first Lomographic Fisheye in 2007. She now experiments with a variety of equipment and chemicals to form images.

For Decade she had looked at how the architecture and landscape has changed since the image was made. Each of the 4 unique handprinted colour darkroom images shows only a memory of the place, which either no longer exists or has had extensive works done. The multiple exposures were made in camera using a simple holga with a plastic lens on Kodak Ektar 120 film.



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Film Swap Elaine Robson and Dan Clipsom

Each year Edinburgh LoFi has a film swap project in which its members give one another a pre exposed film to re-expose creating a double image. As the second person does not know what the first person has seen the results are unpredictable and surprising.

These traditional black and white silver gelatin darkroom prints contrast the architecture of the new town with that of the brutalist period and the engineering of the modern automobile.



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Judith Rowan

Judith Rowan (BA{Hons} Fine Art, Professional Member SSA), has enjoyed experimenting with different types of Lofi photography over the past decade or more, having also exhibited widely.

From original SX70 Polaroids (2006-7), B&W film/darkroom, photo-etchings (Edinburgh Printmakers), pinholes/double exposure using box and Holga camera, panoramic photographs (charity shop camera), and more.



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Donald Tainsh

I made my first pinhole image in 2010. In the years since and much of LoFi's Decade, pinhole has become one of my main creative interests. What I seek from a pinhole camera is a serendipitous softness in which light and time create something otherwise unseen by the naked eye.

I am exhibiting four pinhole works, created with three different self-made pinhole cameras. From the simplicity of a tin can with a hole punched directly into the side, a more complex constant radius panorama pincam created from an old shoebox and a pincam crafted carefully from foam-core and hot glue.

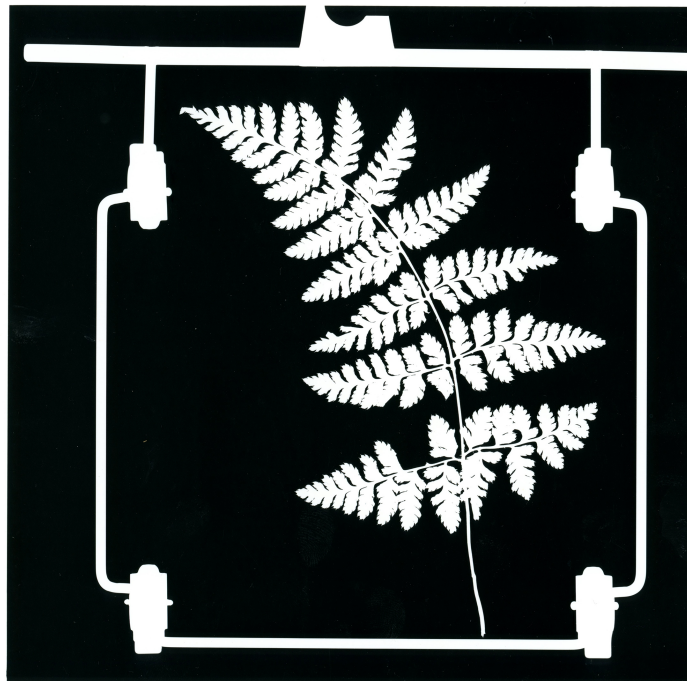
My favourite medium, direct positive paper, creates unique in-camera images and has been used in three of the works presented. The fourth was created from a self-made dry glass plate negative.



Malcolm Thomson

Malcolm Thomson started in Fife in the 1960's as an apprentice photographer, working in the darkroom and on location with a 5" x 4" camera, later a 6cm x 6cm Rolleiflex. He was busy in a commercial darkroom and a move to Dundee saw him working with Viking Studios, a well known local business. Upon retiring, he operated out of a WASPs studio in Dundee, and tutored analogue photography at Dundee Contemporary Arts. Nowadays, he is limited to single use cameras but still has his much used Rolleiflex SL66.

For the Decade Exhibition a series of camera-less shadowgraphs, created in the darkroom with objects placed on sensitised paper, exposed to light then processed have been created.



Edinburgh LoFi

Our next exhibition

April 2020

“Let There Be Light”

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