

# The Language of Photography



**‘Every image embodies a way of seeing. Even a photograph. For photographs are not, as is often assumed, a mechanical record. Every time we look at a photograph, we are aware, however slightly, of the photographer selecting that sight from an infinity of other possible sights.**

**The photographer’s way of seeing is reflected in his choice of subject.’**

**John Berger**

What impact does photography- which literally means writing with light- have on our ways of seeing, experiencing, and making sense of experience?

How do we use photographs?

What can photographs reveal that would otherwise be imperceptible?

# The Democratic Camera

‘Photography is a deceptively simple medium. Pressing the shutter is so easy, yet the moment that is recorded is very likely to reveal a quantity of information that would take hundreds of words to accurately describe.

At the same time there will almost certainly be a mountain of information that the image does not reveal. Photographs may clarify things but they can also be ambiguous, mysterious, or downright confusing. An ordinary everyday moment can be (unintentionally) transformed into something that seems magical- the reverse can also happen. A photo is very complex.’

Julian Germain



Eggleston's pictures preclude a quick and unambiguous interpretation owing to their strange or unfamiliar perspective, the detail chosen, the control of colour: each picture evokes, opens up, different associations for every observer.'



Classroom Portraits  
Julian Germain



Llythyren Yr wythnos

Beth yw'r amser?

Penblwyddi



'A photograph gives you everything all at once, but takes time to unravel. It contains more than what's there in the sheen of the paper, in the chemicals and grain of the printed surface.'

Adrian Searle



# Photographs

- To print?
- To view on screen?

# A photograph says as much about the photographer as the subject



Martin Parr



Sirkka -Liisa Kontinen

Two studies of Mothers and Daughters



‘It is the life of people that shines through Sirkka’s work. Everyone is an individual, no-one is generalised, even the least auspicious subjects have tangible dignity.’

Lee Hall



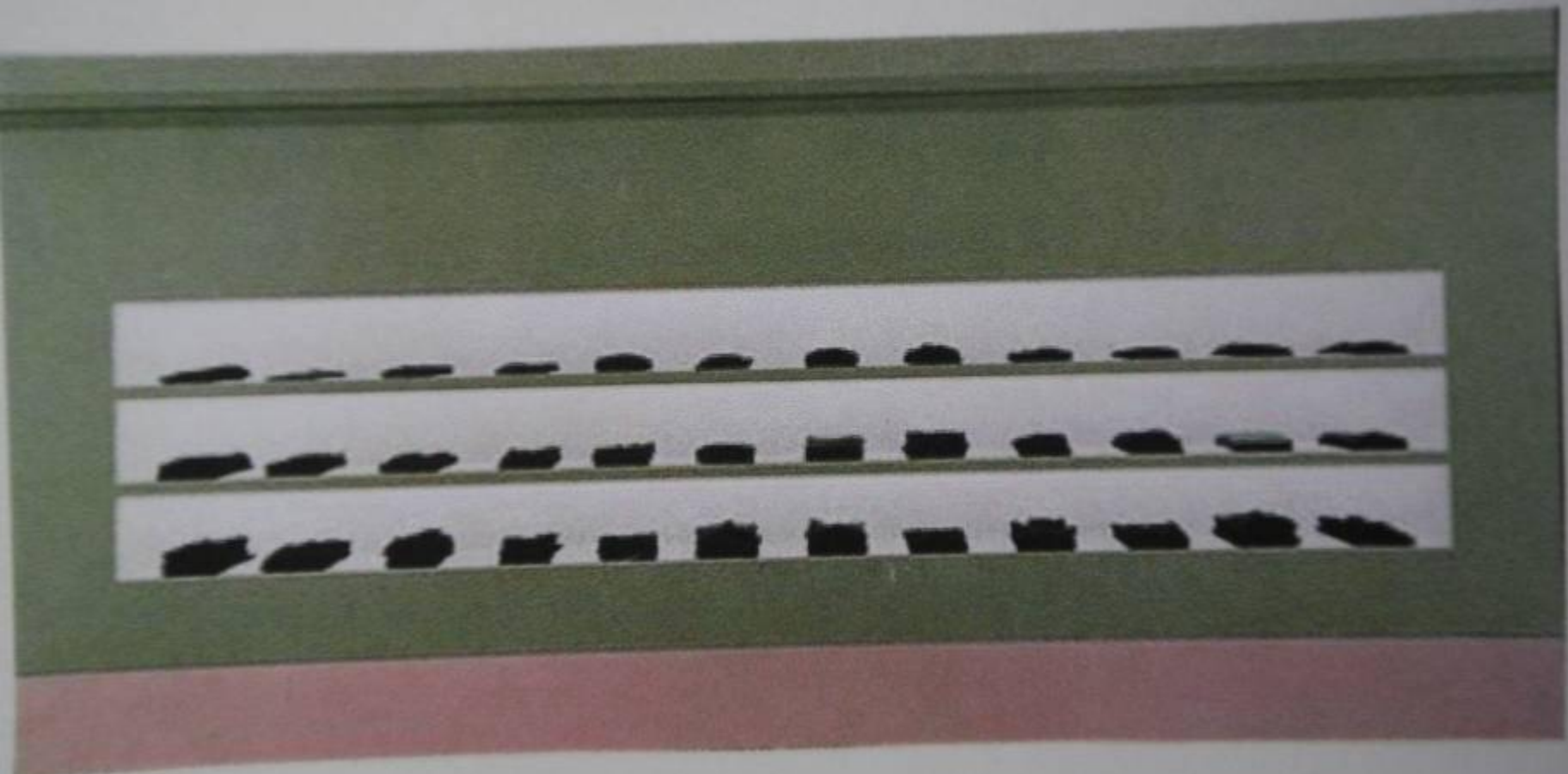




Gursky is a contemporary photographer working in the documentary tradition. His work crosses genres-encompassing both social documentary and urban/rural landscape. His subject matter is the contemporary capitalist environment.









99c



‘Photography is no more than a system of visual editing’



‘My preference for clear structures is the result of my desire- perhaps illusory- to keep track of things and maintain my grip on the world.’

Andreas Gursky

# Children as photographers

*“Photography, stripped down to its essentials, is actually a simple and generous medium. The act of pressing the shutter is so easy, yet the fleeting moment that is recorded on film may provide endless fascination and be a beautiful, complex and emotive social document. The idea therefore, was to equip favela children with cheap ‘point and shoot’ cameras with flash and colour film, and to encourage them to use photography to express their feelings and explore the relationship between football and their community.” Julian Germain, Patricia Azevedo, Murilo Godoy, from the introduction of ‘No Mundo Maravilhoso do Futebol’, Basalt publishers, 1998.*

*“In the beginning there was nothing, not a stone or a tree. Dinosaurs were everywhere. There was only one little house, far in the distance; Eve and Adam’s. They made a bomb and destroyed all the dinosaurs. Then Adam and Eve made us and sent us to live here in Cascalho. Then came chickens, dogs, birds, horses, cats, pigs, rabbits, goats, rats, cockroaches and many more people...”*  
*From, ‘The History of Cascalho’, a collective text by the children of Cascalho, ‘No Mundo Maravilhoso do Futebol’, Basalt publishers, 1998.*



‘Children often use cameras in a very exciting way- unrestricted by conventional notions of what makes a good picture they are so direct, curious and unpretentious that I often find myself liking their pictures more than my own.’

Julian Germain











Pictures in the 'snapshot style' ..... have an apparent disorder and imperfection, which is exactly their appeal and style. The picture isn't straight. It isn't done well. It isn't composed. It isn't thought out. And out of this imbalance, and out of this not knowing, and out of this real innocence towards the medium comes an enormous vitality and expression of life.'





# City Sense



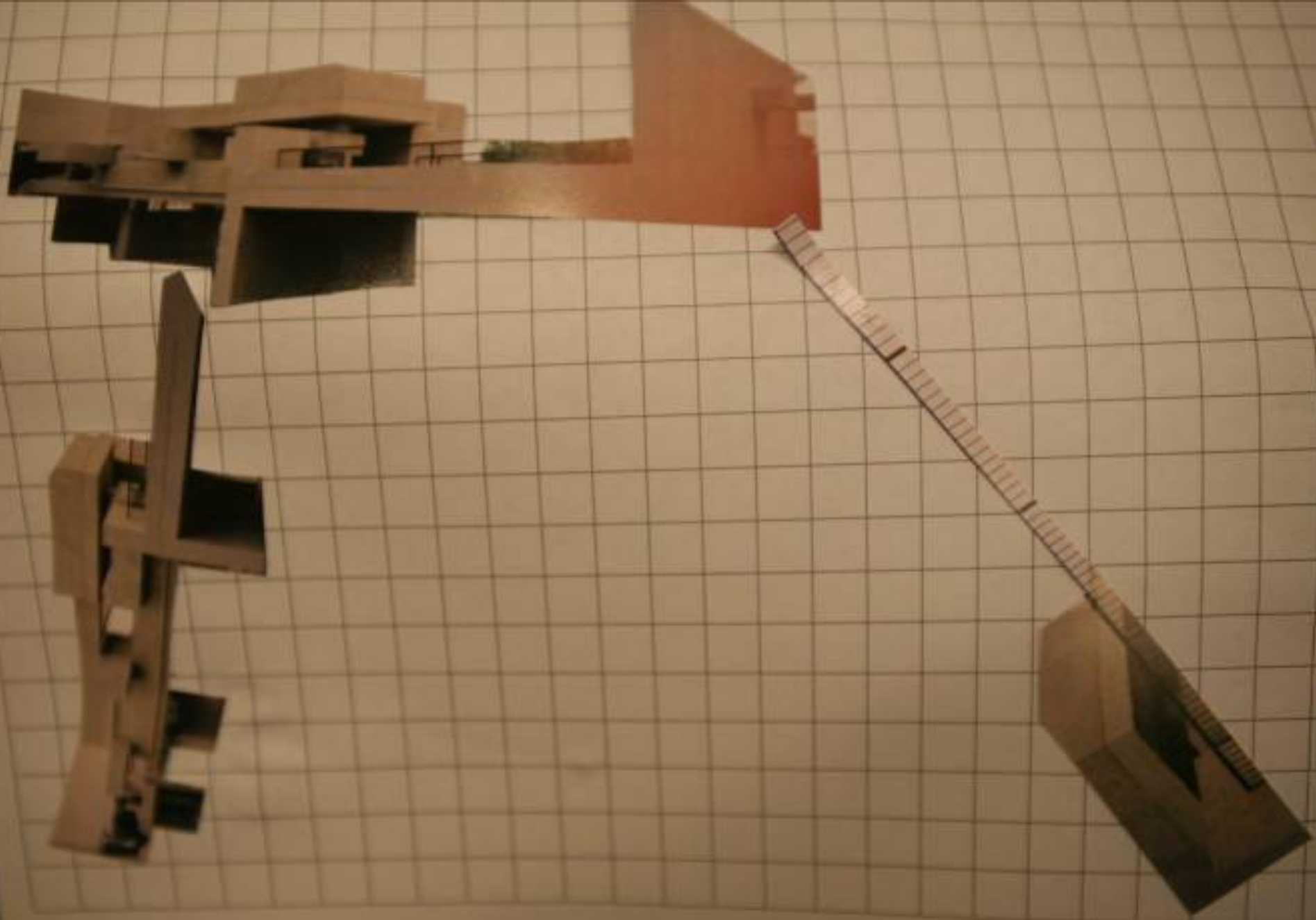














'The camera makes real what one is experiencing...a way of certifying experience....converting experience into an image'

Susan Sontag



'Photography helps people to see'  
Berenice Abbott



‘Philosophers have questioned whether we can distinguish between the world as experienced directly, and the world as represented to us.’      Geoff Dyer ‘ The Ongoing Moment’



# Getting started

**What do we need to know?**

**Understanding the camera**

**Automatic or manual**

**Systems**

**Resources**

**Framing and composition**

# The camera as a creative tool



# Princess in the golden bed





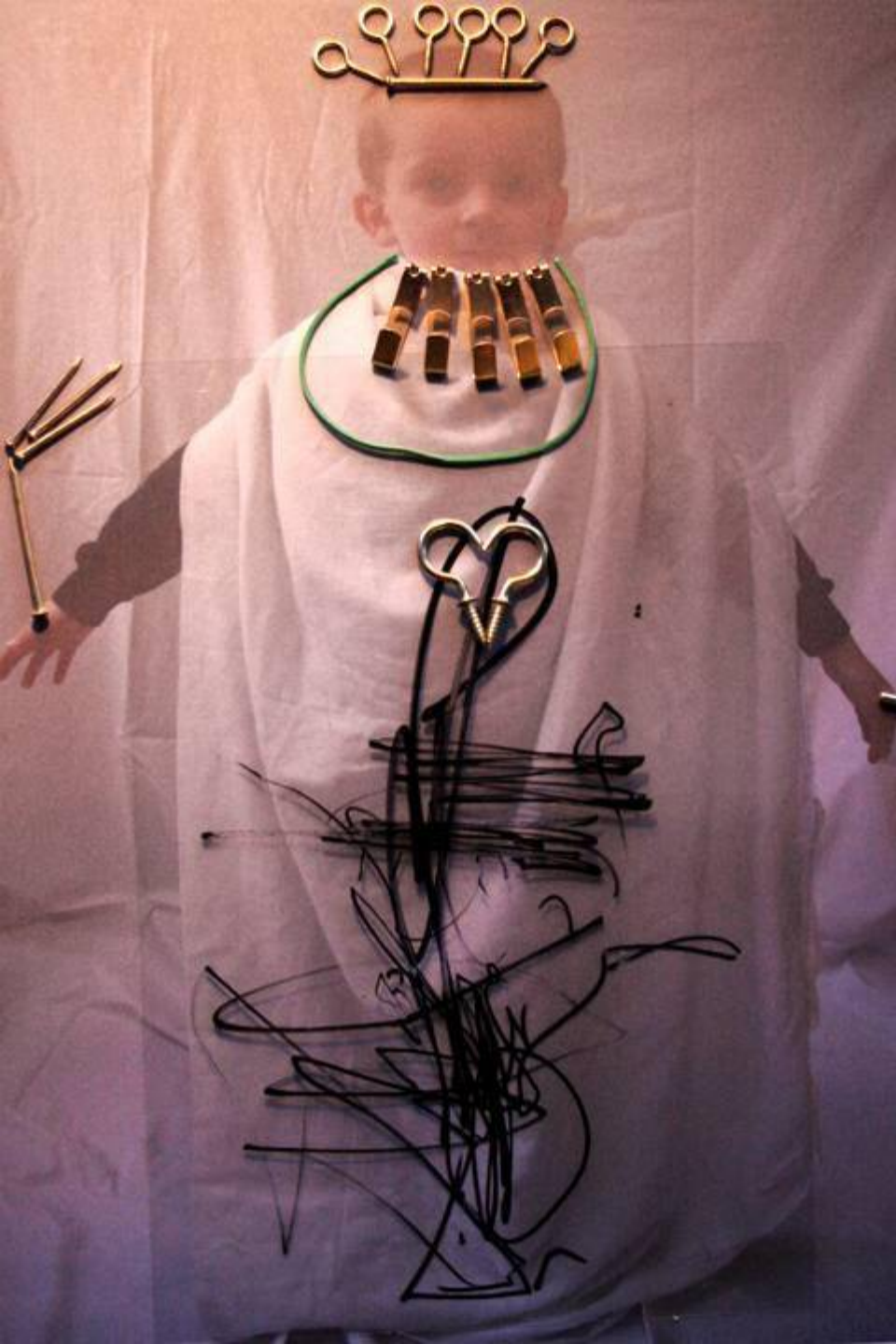
Princess Mara



Princess Megan



Princess puppets







# Being inspired by other photographers



Hackney Flowers

by Stephen Gill



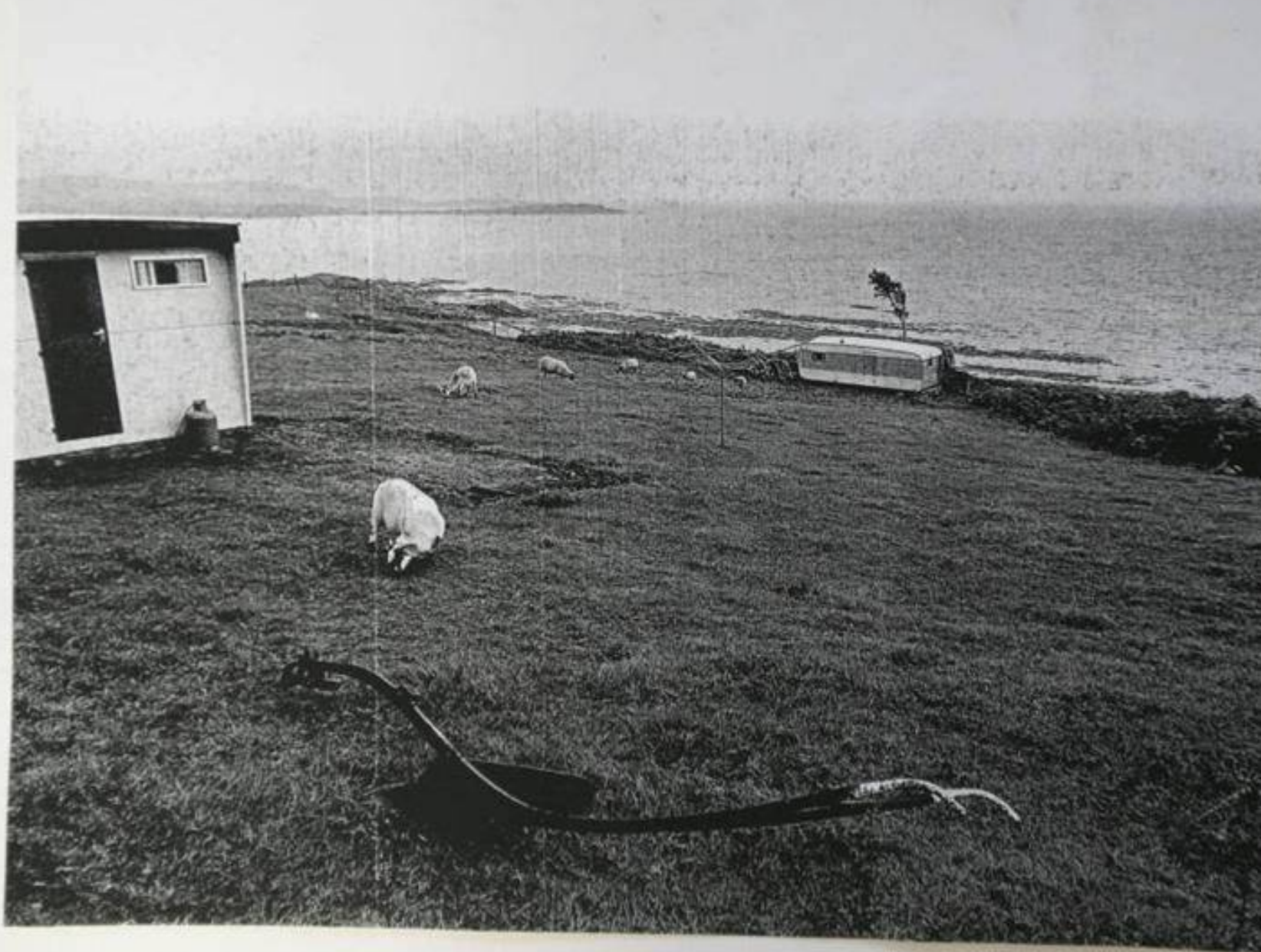


Neeta Madahar 'Sustenance'

# The elements within a photograph an exercise



Private









# **Giving documentation back to the children**

How many of the specimens were used

# Bird Stories

55



HOBB

1/11

1/11

the (1/11) by 1/11

# **Becoming interested in birds.....**

**During spring term , the children have become interested in birds.**

**Their play area is full of mature trees, with nest boxes, and looking for nesting birds becomes a fascination.**

**The adults support this by offering the children the tools they need to investigate. They have binoculars, a bird hide, opportunities to watch and listen for birds.**

**And they make time to talk about birds.**

**The children already know a lot, and have their own theories and ideas about birds.**

Jodie 'I know all about parrots. I seen them on tv, they're really colourful. I know about all the birds.'

Charlotte has seen birds in her garden.

'We called them Colin and Justin. They had a baby. We named the little one Peewee. Magpies- they eat the other birds.'

Caitlin 'I seen a big bird, it was white.'

Tegan 'I seen a squashed bird. It was dead on the side of the road.'

Paige 'Birds fly high in the sky.'

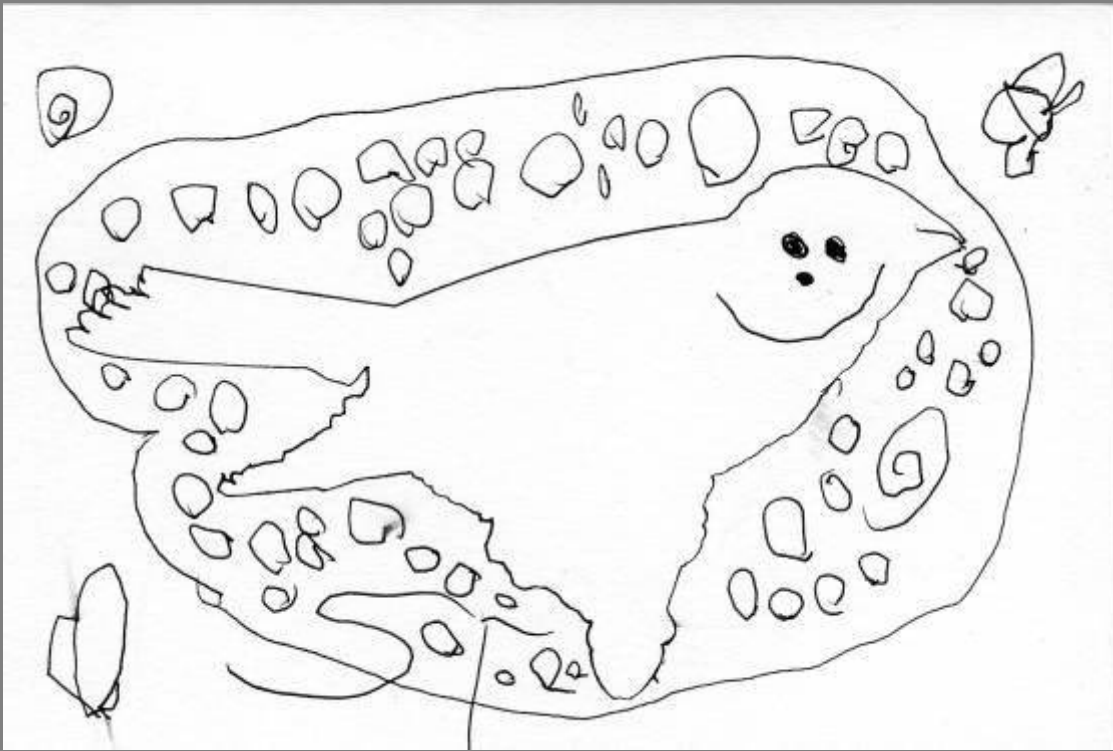
Zara 'Not high, not in space.'

# Casey



‘She’s called Ellie. It lives in a nest with grandma. It flies to space and everything. I doin the nest. My bird eats loads of chicken.’





Zara 'It's a girl bird, she's happy, her nest is nice. She flies in the sky, but not in space. She's in a nest and she's got baby chicks. And a butterfly.'

Holly







‘That bird is trying to get that worm, it’s a teeny, teeny worm. It’s sad, it wants to get the big worm. It’s greedy’



Kasey 'My bird is called Muriel. He's a boy. He's got a tv. His house next to my house. He's got a chicken yogurt for dinner today. He got wings.'



Kate 'I'm doing lots of birds  
outside. They're flying to  
London to get some  
sweeties.'



## A blackbird by Paige

'She's a girl, she lives in a bird house with a lamp, a chair, a telly and a flower for Mother's day. One more thing, a feather for her blanket.'

Bringing the birds to life.....

After discussing and drawing birds, clay is introduced to a group of interested children.

Could we make our birds?

Do we need anything else?

‘Feathers!’. The children take collecting bags outside, and hunt for feathers and other things to make their birds real.



## The finds.....

Jodie 'A parrot feather. The parrot flew by, it picked up a fork, the feather went plop, and it fell off!'

Paige 'A stone, that's for his bed. He could stand on this (leaf) for his food. That's his lamp, and that pebble's his tv. The leaf is his chimney.'

Casey 'If someone comes to his door, they've got to wiggle the doorbell.'

Paige 'This daisy is for it's Mam for Mother's day.'





Jodie 'I made eggs and worms  
and a nest.'







‘It’s whistle, it’s singing!’

Paige 'My bird got two wings.'





Paige 'It's a baby bird. I doin worms and eggs.'



# If you could be a bird....

The children are asked:

If you could become a bird, what kind of bird would you be?

Casey S 'A bluebird.'

Kate 'A pink bird, with pink beads and feathers.'

Tristan 'A blue bird.'

Zara 'A parrot, with green, blue and yellow feathers.'







# Charlotte

‘I’m making Zara into a butterfly.’





Kate

'I fly to London!'



I'm making a bird house, that is the floor. It's a bird tent this, it's just a little room. They're camping. They're just on a trip, and the birds go inside





Zara's idea grows as she explores the materials.

She chooses not to become a bird after all.

'I'm Queen Chloe.'

This idea takes hold.

Holly Q *[scribbles]*

Holly

'My is a alien  
Queen, she  
comes from  
space'



22

Holly Q

W M

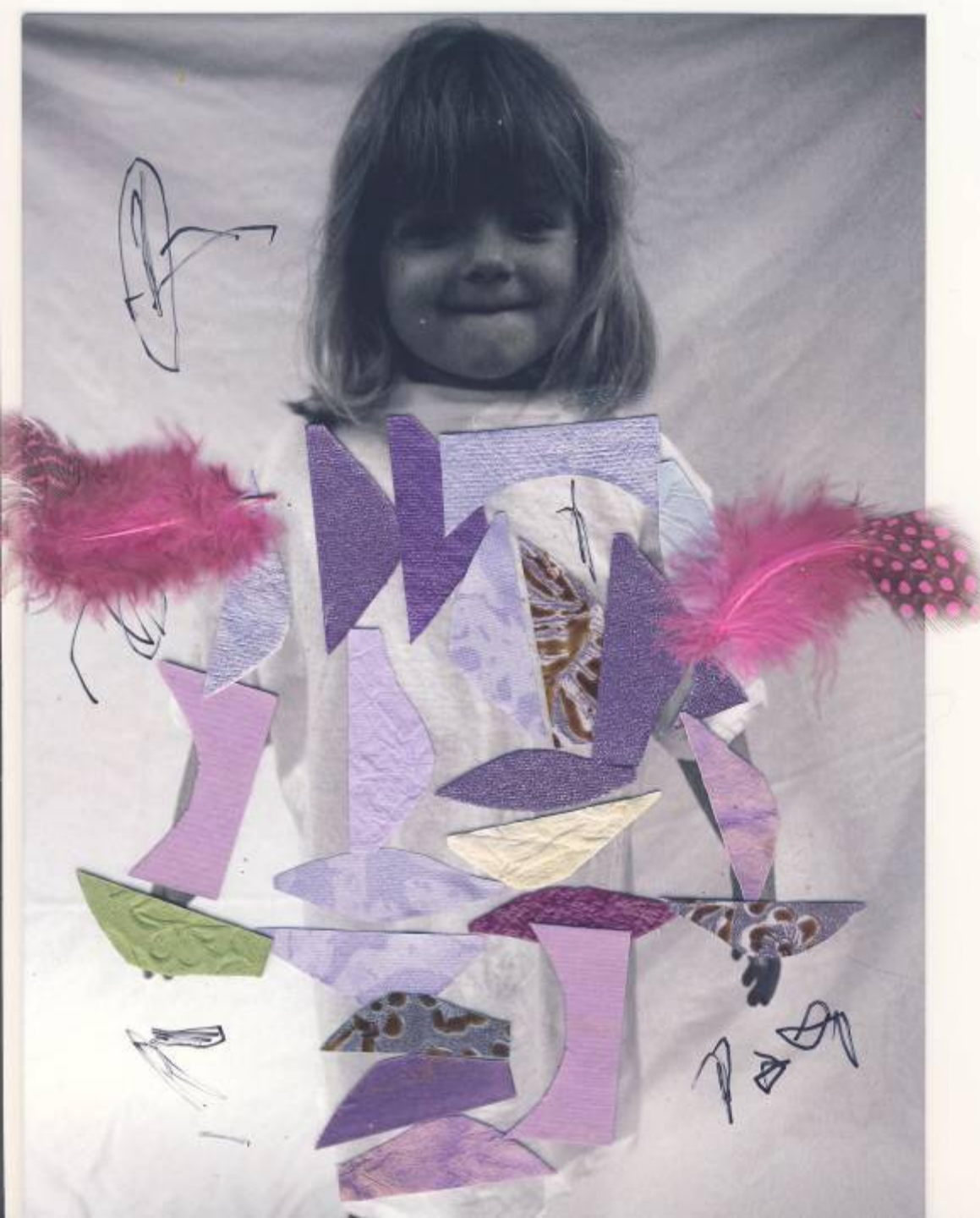
*[scribbles]*

*[scribbles]*



Layla





Paige



Paige





T



Tristan

I'm a  
blue  
bird.'

Jodie

‘She’s just a baby  
bird, a princess  
bird. She’s got a  
bird crown.’





Jodie  
carefully  
draws bird  
feet and  
tiny claws.

‘I want to  
draw  
something  
when you  
flap.’

She flaps  
her arms  
and thinks  
how to do  
this.

‘Little  
circles.’



I'm a blue bird and I fly in the ocean. I see crocodiles.'

Jodie 'I've got a nice secret. My garden is going to turn into a jungle, with lots of flowers.. With tigers too. I'm doing a noisy jungle game.'

Where do Jodie's ideas come from?

'My head is stuffed full of everything. All the ideas are in my brain cos I roll about and get grass in my head and get a magic head.'