Report back: Jesse Alexander presents his work at our June Bristol meeting.

On June 17th, Photography curriculum leader Jesse Alexander led the meeting, held at the St Elizabeth Hall, Bristol. Following on from our May gathering, we used this meeting to develop some discernment.

Discernment was not the only quality demonstrated on Saturday in Bristol. Excellent taste came in the form of two superb cakes, generously baked and brought across by Liz and Sharon! Thank you very much. In our estimation, you have joined the ranks of bakers of the Légion Culinaire!

We had a record number of students, and these same ten students set a record of their own by making Saturday the first day in our albeit very short history that everyone who signed up turned up! May both trends continue.
As scheduled in Part 1, Jesse started the day with a presentation of his work. Not only did the work show the progression of Jesse’s involvement with the material aspects of photography through his own, self-made books but, in showing us his examples, we saw how self-published book-making has evolved since his book début in 2002. Jesse printed his first book for a first year assignment. Jesse also spoke about how different colour printing technologies have affected how photographers print their images.

His books had some great quotes: how, you would ask, could Alan Sekula quotes like “Clearly archives are not neutral” come in to a children’s illustrated book entitled Noah’s Ark? (There’s a hint in the title.)

Part 2 involved a discussion on a David Bate essay on beauty and the sublime in landscape, recommended by Jesse & distributed before the event. The ensuing discussions were fraught at times when we were trying to analyse what composition meant using, as examples, images some of us had brought along. The boxing gloves were in the wings! Great times!

A very brief lunch was followed by Part 3: students sharing their work in progress. We had work from textiles, printmaking, painting and photography. It is to be expected, I suppose, that there was a majority of photographers at a meeting led by the OCA lead in photography, the biggest OCA department. That aside, the photography presented was very varied: from
Allan’s intriguing portraits, to Liz’s images of her exquisitely intricate origami to Amano’s landscapes, to my prison pics, to Claire’s eerie documentary shots of her New Zealand earthquake & tsunami experience. Painting student Krystyna had us in stitches with her pink skeleton installation! When Karen said that the huge amount of work she presented was for one exercise for one of the 5 units in her textiles work, I could feel my knees buckling at the thought of all the time she must have spent painstakingly putting it all together.

Karen’s Dorset buttons.

Karen’s ‘gathered knife pleats’.

Claire talking about her earthquake images.
Sharon closed the presentations and discussions with her textile prints which she had developed since our Plymouth meeting.

We had a terrific time discussing so many ideas from dioramas to ‘what is a concept’, to the role of black, white and red in the work of Barbara Kruger. We all benefitted so much from seeing the work of fellow students and hearing how they got there and discussing possible ways forward. A hugely positive development so soon after the event, was a slideshow which is still a work in progress, compiled by Claire Borlase using her New Zealand earthquake images. I attach a link to it here with Claire’s kind permission:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/oBynmJijNrImCbDg2VmdxZndydUk/view

Now to more news:

I have applied for funding for our last 3 months’ meetings and I am told that the outcome will be announced this Thursday, so I shall let you know then.
Our Autumn exhibition

Funds permitting, we will hold a physical exhibition over the weekend of 25th & 26th November in Wellington.

Please remember that this exhibition is for all students, irrespective of their creative pathway, who have participated in our OCA SW new initiative programme at some stage and who have developed or who are developing a piece of work as a result of their participation. It can be a ‘work in progress’ - perhaps they should all be ‘works in progress’.

It would be great if we could do this collaboratively. To this end, please let me know which of the following aspects of the exhibition you would be interested in doing:

Finding a venue Paddy Howe
Fundraising **vacancies**
Curating Anna Goodchild + ???
Hanging **vacancies**
Publicity Sue Parr + ???
Stewarding at the event: ???

So far, 8 people have indicated that they would like to submit work for the exhibition but we also need volunteers to make this exhibition happen. Please consider volunteering and exhibiting if you have not already done so.
Students from all creative pathways are warmly welcomed.

Venue: We will meet at the following venue:

https://www.hallshire.com/halls/view/3306/st-elizabeths-hall

The address is St Elizabeth's Hall, Hambrook Lane, Bristol, BS16 1RT

There is parking in the road next to the church

The proposed outline of the day’s events are as follows:

9.45: arrive and have coffee/tea & cake (anyone want to make a cake for the day?)

10 - 11: Miriam presents her work

11 - More coffee /tea/ cake?

11.20 - 1: Student led discussion on a topic selected by Miriam

1 - 2 : Lunch: There is a pub quite a way down the road but it would be best to bring your own. Depending on how things are going and how many students there are, we might start the student presentations earlier than the proposed 2pm.

1.30 / 2 - 4: Students present their work / stuckness / proposals to take their work forward. This is a forum to discuss ‘work in progress’. If, on the other hand, you have some award-winning work or work which has done really well, please bring it along & show us.

So far, student participation has been inspiring and we have discussed, encouraged, disagreed and suggested, and everybody has benefitted from the exercise.

Several students have signed up for the session but we could always do with some more.

The cost of hiring the hall is £30 which will be shared amongst all who attend.

There will be a £1 charge for as much tea/coffee as you can drink.
So far, we have 6 students who have signed up for this event so, if you would like to attend, please email me - it would be great to have a few more. In our meetings so far, what has worked best is if students from different learning pathways contribute both in presenting their own work and in discussing that of others. I shall circulate the material suggested by Miriam to attendees on July 1st.

Our August event in Plymouth will include a practical element! Please have a look at Richard’s web sites: http://www.richardsunderlandart.com

We have artist Richard Sunderland from Plymouth who has agreed to lead our August meeting!

he will be leading on Photography and Painting.
News from Karen:

Saturday 24th June - SKETCHBOOK DAY with OCA tutor Polly Harvey in her studio space in Frome, Somerset

We will discuss the importance of sketchbooks; what to include and how to structure your ideas by showing stages of development which flow from page to page. Your sketchbook will become a valuable resource of exciting ideas and techniques you can use towards your assignments, there will be time to experiment with drawing, mixed media and hand printing techniques.

The theme for the day is 'Home' or a theme of your choice, please arrive with some research or initial ideas for development. These should include some black and white, and colour photocopies or print outs of an object or scene to use as a starting point.

In addition bring along some images and information on an artist who relates to your theme and any materials which you might find inspirational - these might include

- Photos, photocopies, prints
- Magazine or newspaper cuttings
- Drawings, sketches, doodles
- Text, poetry, stories, thoughts, letters, extracts, statements, words
- Colour – paint, crayons, pencils
- Fabrics, Threads, Wools
- Papers of all kinds

Time 10.30 - 4.30 (30 mins lunch)
Cost OCASA are funding this event and it is open to all students who use sketchbooks as part of their course. Resources cost of £5 payable on the day.

Funding:
Please remember that the funding we receive from OCASA covers the tutors’ costs only. We must find the costs of the venue and any refreshments.