

John 'Hoppy' Hopkins
Taking Liberties

Curriculum subjects:

Art and Design
Higher Photography
English
Modern Studies

Curriculum for Excellence:

Expressive Arts - Art and Design
Social Studies - People, past events and societies
Sciences - materials

'Taking Liberties' was a *retrospective* of the photographic work of John 'Hoppy' Hopkins from the period 1960 to 1966. The work captures the ethos and style of the emerging *counter-culture*, which was expressed through music, *popular protest* and art.

Included are iconic images of musicians including The Beatles and The Rolling Stones on their first wave of stardom. A unique series of images capture historic meetings with civil rights leaders Dr Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, whilst another set show CND marches and anti-racist demonstrations.

'Hoppy' (born 1937) is a British photographer, video-maker and political activist, who was a highly influential figure in the UK underground movement in London. In 1965 he helped set up the 'London Free School' in Notting Hill. This in turn led to the establishment of the annual Notting Hill Carnival. He also helped set up the legendary UFO Night Club with Joe Boyd, with Pink Floyd as the resident band.

Now in his 70's, there have only been 3 major surveys of his photographic work – in 2000 at the Photographers' Gallery, London, in June 2009 at Idea Generation, also in London, and in late 2009 at Street Level Photoworks in Glasgow.

A Biographical Note by Hoppy

Taken from the book 'From The Hip' by John 'Hoppy' Hopkins

My first camera was given to me on graduation day '58 at Cambridge University by my Godfather. I'd never taken a photo till then. For the next 2 years I learned how to see, and how to do the basics of 'wet' photography. On the strength of a handful of pix in the Guardian, I arrived in London at Xmas 1960 to take up a job as a commercial photographer's assistant. He encouraged me to bring in my own work and after a year or so I was making out as a freelance in *Fleet Street*.

I found myself in a rich cultural environment - jazz, poetry, literature, arts, political protest, free love, experimentation - and followed my instincts when it came to earning a living with a camera. This meant working on both sides of the boundary between straight and alternative lifestyles. Snapping the prime minister at lunchtime, mixing it in Notting Hill at night.

I began to feel frustrated working for the press barons, where I could not choose the agenda and was basically a small cog in the capitalist machine. Alternative options beckoned and, with a lot of help from my friends, I began promoting all sorts of events and schemes - some worked out, others crashed. Either way it meant taking less pix. By the dawn of '67 I'd put down the cameras altogether, only taking them up again in '69, but with a difference: this time it was video. That however is another story, yet to be told.

Asleep for 30-odd years then rediscovered by accident, certain of the images from the brief 6-year period have become iconic (recognised). Many more have not been seen before and are therefore perhaps more free from the historical accumulation of meaning than the iconics - at least for a little while. Then, word falling / image falling / lost in a dusty street half-covered in sand / the skein unravels / dust to dust.

Meanwhile, in the Riviera sunset of the old order, the world has gone digital, old technologies have become art, and the global image bank is available to all humankind to remix, creating undreamt-of delights. Artists of the world arise, you have nothing to lose but your *intellectual property*. Go for it!!

Hoppy

Glossary taken from Cambridge dictionary

Retrospective, a show of the work an artist has done in their life so far.

Counter-culture, a way of life and a set of ideas that are completely different from those accepted by most of society, or the group of people who live this way

Popular protest, an occasion when people show that they disagree with something by walking somewhere, often shouting, chanting and carrying signs.

Fleet Street, was the home of the British Press including printing companies, newspapers and journals until the 1980's.

Intellectual property, (IP) is a term referring to distinct creations for which property rights are recognised and protected by corresponding fields of law. Under intellectual property law, owners are granted exclusive rights to a variety of assets, such as musical, literary, and artistic works; discoveries and inventions; and words, phrases, symbols, and designs.