

Who holds the knowledge anyway?

Sitting in the office, on the first floor of The Photographers' Gallery, I am thinking about the theme of this issue 'wrong' and find myself questioning what it means to be wrong in this context? What does a 'wrong photograph' look like, what constitutes a 'wrong opinion'? And when does a gallery get it wrong?

With a measurable subject this is simpler, in mathematics an answer can be incorrect or correct, taught and measured. But when looking at photography the parameters are different, so what then is our role in 'teaching' or passing on knowledge about the subject?

For myself I have always seen myself as a facilitator, not a teacher. To teach is defined as 'to impart knowledge or instruct someone', but this implies that the teacher is an expert who holds the knowledge and delivers this down to the passive student. In actuality the way I'm interested in working is collaborative, a joint learning, questioning and discovery.



The aim for the way in which I work at the gallery is to support joint learning, to remove the idea of the traditional expert and encourage instead learning from one another in an attempt to level or flip the knowledge hierarchy. We do have curators' talks but given the same weighting and platform are our *Teen Tours*, where teenagers are invited to come and share information they have learned and their perspective on the exhibitions in a tour with gallery audiences.

In our work with teachers, alongside a CPD programme we rely on their advice and guidance through our advisory group, as well inviting practising educators to share their own ways of working with photography. In our workshops with

schools we ask pupils to question the exhibitions and tell us how they interpret the images. I often leave these discussions having learnt as much as I've imparted.



My hope is that by working in this way, individuals, myself included, stop looking to receive knowledge and instead learn to question, challenge and discover knowledge for themselves. But this is just my opinion. Maybe I'm wrong.

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