

A portrait of Nigel Tooby

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NOW in his mid-50s and carving out a career in professional photography, Contemporary Group member Nigel Tooby almost went the pro route over three decades ago.

He was offered a job on the traditional route for a young photographer back in the late '70s, to make the tea for a studio that specialised in shooting album covers for international rock stars like Phil Collins and Pink Floyd, among others. But parental advice sent young Nigel back to complete his physics degree, initiating a career which ultimately swallowed up the next 30 years of his life.

He came out of those 30 years still with the desire to be a professional photographer, a bit of capital and a distain for the corporate world in how it can swallow up a person's life and character.

He decided he would initiate his new professional photographer's life by working through the RPS's distinctions route: 'L' was gained with images from his stock library, 'A' was a series of contemporary images documenting the ups and downs of his own family life - a project he still continues today - and 'F' was gained with a book called "Of Our Times: The Price of Money".

His photobook was effectively photographic satire. It smashed through the veneer of corporate business and exposed the dangling noose used



Hands up: Nigel's Facebook picture

by the corporate hangman to entice its followers. Of Nigel's personal work, 100% is what he would hope would be seen as contemporary. He started the RPS's North East Contemporary Group to meet up with other like-minded photographers. Nigel takes inspiration from searching the

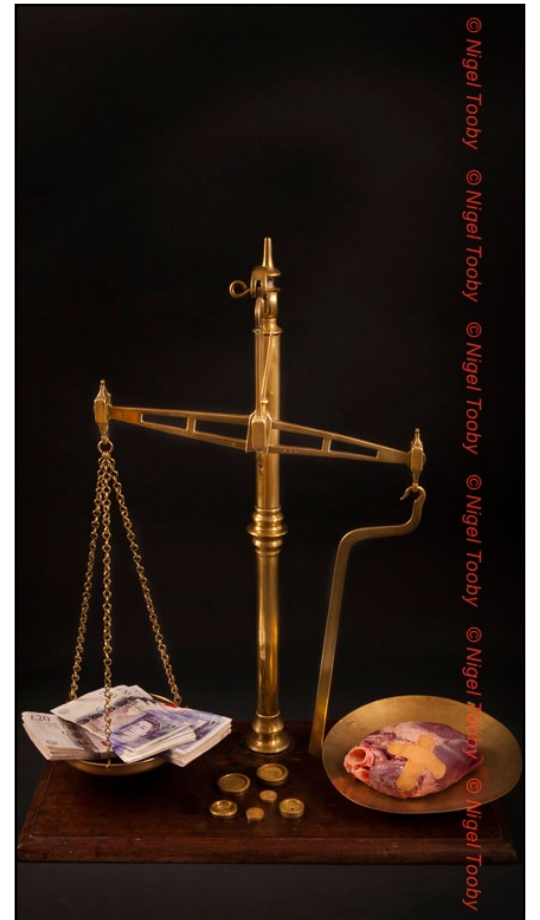
nation's newspapers and pulling out current news articles. With those and sometimes with song lyrics and books he has read, he will plan and shoot images that expose his view on those topics. The North East Group is currently working on a book to celebrate the NHS's 65th Birthday. One of Nigel's images was of a set of scales, with a heart on one side bearing a 'quick fix repair' of a sticking plaster and then a large wedge of money on the other side. The wedge of 'available' money does not balance with the much needed proper operation. I showed the image to a Head Cancer Surgeon who had brought his



What a babe: from a commercial brochure



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The NHS Balancing act: need v. cost



Family life under scrutiny: a project called Mifamilia

13-year old-daughters into my own studio for a shoot and he sighed. The image hit home with him as telling the nation's health story perfectly. You can see the planning Nigel puts into his professional corporate work but he tones down the contemporary approach as people do not always want hard hitting images. He steers away from social photography, not wanting to photograph brides for example. Whether personal or professional, his images have impact,

whether they are pigs on a farm or the inside of a rock venue. Nigel is currently working on a project for Simon On The Streets, a Leeds-based charity which supports homeless people. It is hoped it will lead to a calendar and a solo exhibition in 2015. The Ropewalk Gallery near Hull is also planning a solo exhibition, this time based on his RPS fellowship book. The exhibition, expected to be held in early 2015, will carry a health warning.



Colourful: rock concert



Mifamilia: Father and son's shoes



Get the party started: commercial brochure work



Simon in The Streets Project: a potential view a person living on the streets might endure