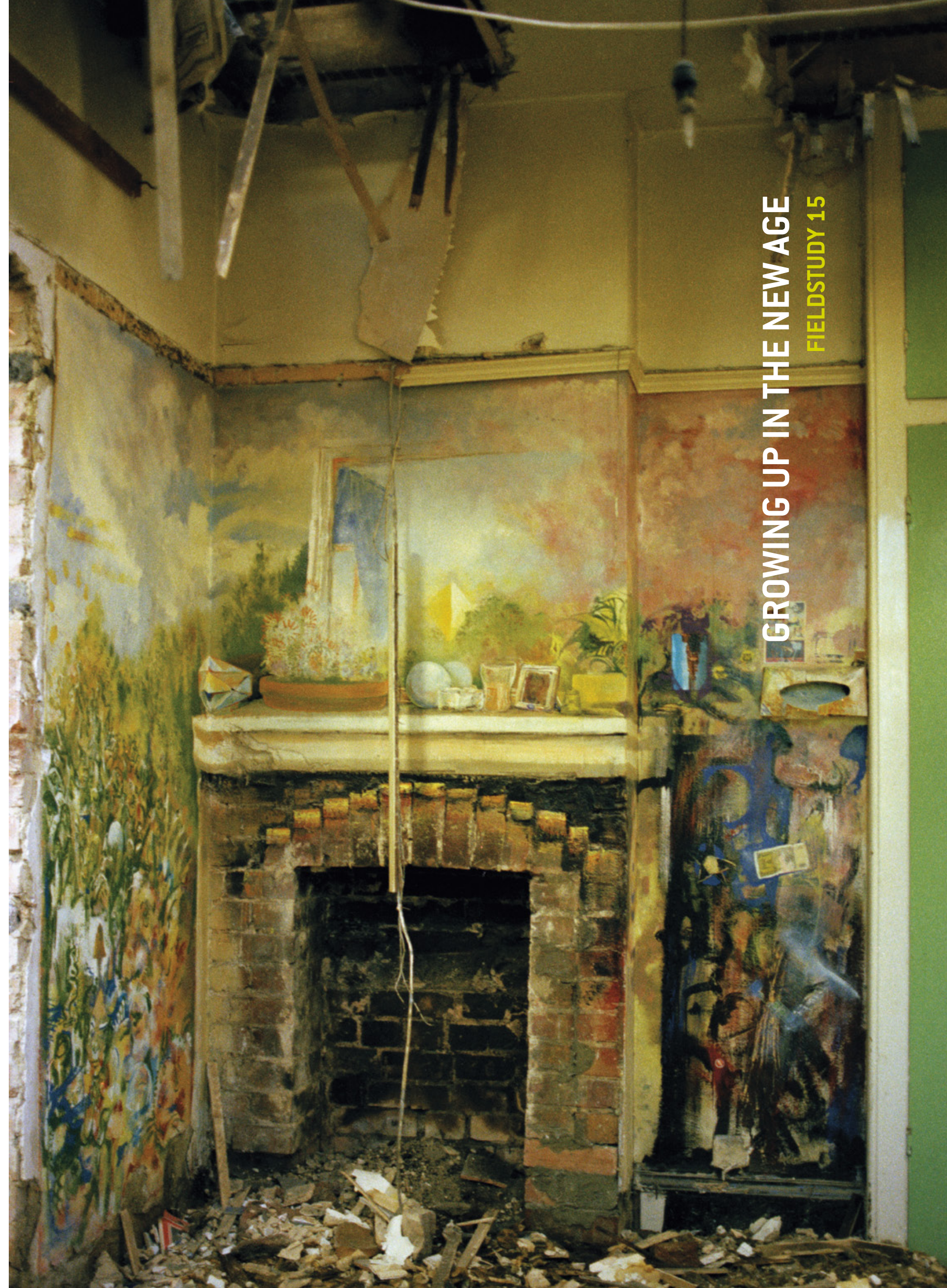




# FIELDSTUDY 15







GROWING UP IN THE NEW AGE  
FIELDSTUDY 15





Marjolaine Ryley [MR]  
and Dave Waking [DW] 2011

P1: Dave Waking, fireplace of semi-demolished squat, Beckenham 1979.  
P2-3: Dave Waking, 77 & 81 Thicket Road, Penge early 1975.  
P4-20: All images without annotation Marjolaine Ryley, from the series  
*Growing Up In The New Age*

- MR] How did you arrive at a point in your life where you began squatting?
- DW] I was studying photography at what was then the London College of Printing, living in a tiny house in Camberwell with four other people, sharing a scullery kitchen and no bathroom.
- MR] What year was this?
- DW] 1974.
- MR] The year I was born.
- DW] Yes that's right. I already knew about 81 Thicket Road because it had the darkroom in the basement. I was told about it by a friend who lived in Beckenham, probably Chrissie Trevena, and she introduced me to Imke Dreyer and Chris Schwartz who were running the darkroom and they invited me to join in as long as I chipped in with heating bills and bought my own chemicals. The heating bills I did fall behind with. That's how it started and that would have been late 73-74 – before I had thought about squatting myself.
- MR] I guess that's where this story begins really. This serendipitous event of you having been working in this darkroom, sharing the costs and photographing and printing your images.
- DW] Well attempting to share the costs.
- MR] Yes it always was! And I was born in the house at 81 Thicket Road. My dad had built a special raised platform for them to live on when they had come back from the communes in the South of France.
- DW] Was that in the kitchen?
- MR] No – he built it over the top of the stairwell and knocked through to an adjacent toilet to make more room, then he built another bed at ground level. That was where my mum had me, had a home birth. And how old would you have been at that time?
- DW] In 1974 I was 25.











MR] You would have been there around that time as a young photographer?

DW Yes a student photographer

MR] When you sent me that photograph of the darkroom in the basement I was astounded because no one had ever told me it existed.

DW] The first time I became aware of squatting I moved into 20 Silverdale, in Sydenham. It was a completely empty house, it had no running water. I moved into an empty house and other people followed me in. I lived in that house for 18 months. During that time I failed my second year photography exams. I had started photographing squatting as a potential college photography project before failing my exams. After I was kicked out of college I was photographing people in the area for pin-money because at that time I was living on £5.90 a week getting unemployment benefit. When I was kicked out of college it was traumatic. The course was mainly fashion and advertising but my bias was for documentary. I hoped it would work out as I hadn't wanted to leave London, but it hadn't.

MR] So to be at LCC (as it's now called) after so many years and meeting with Val Williams with a view to us publishing this.

DW] It's extraordinary.



P6 [from top]:  
81 Thicket Road Kitchen, Xmas Day 1976  
Interior, Keith's room, 81 Thicket Road, December 1976  
Basement darkroom, 81 Thicket Road, December 1976  
P7: Jimmy and stairwell, 79 Thicket Road, December 1976







MR] How many years ago would it be?  
 DW] 36 I think, and Val was on the same floor as the darkrooms – words fail me.  
 MR] It must have been a shock?  
 DW] Yes especially given the state I was in last time I left the building!  
 After Silverdale I lived in a house in Peak Hill Gardens in Sydenham and people were moving out of 81 Thicket Road and I was offered a place there which I jumped at. 81 Thicket Road was a genuine commune. It wasn't drug oriented for a kick off it was alternative therapy and free school oriented. That was the main thing coming out of that house. At one point some of them were heavily into alternative therapies, which included drinking your own urine!  
 MR] Would we have gone by then?  
 DW] Yes you were in Jasmine Grove (another squat) by then  
 MR] We went from Thicket Road to Laurie Park Road to Jasmine Grove  
 DW] Maybe Laurie Park Road then. Do you have any direct memories of 81 Thicket Road?  
 MR] My earliest memories are of some of the communes in the South of France but I do have memories of Laurie Park Road. When I first saw your images of the gardens at Laurie Park Road (and particularly the summer house) it was a bit like your experience of going back to LCC because I had written about that summerhouse but never seen any pictures. I was really speechless because it was like seeing a memory brought to life.  
 So you've recently been in touch again with many of the people in these pictures. How do people look back at that time?  
 DW] Some have fared better than others. For some people, those who came out of it okay and assuming you had something to go on to, it was a magical time. There were some casualties largely through taking the wrong drugs. There are some absent friends.  
 MR] I remember it as being very time-rich, hours and hours of running around with no sense of time or routine at all; but then I was experiencing it as a child.



P10 left: Kev & Anna, Anerley, February 1979,  
 right: Linda, Silverdale, Sudeham, 1976.  
 P11 from top: Katrina's birthday party, 81 Thicket Road, late 1976.  
 [Small child with drinks bottle is Marjolaine Ryley]  
 81 Thicket road, October 1976  
 81 Thicket Road, January, 1977  
 Beckenham, 1979

MR] I think part of my motivation for starting this project is that I'm trying, as an adult, to understand what it was like to be part of that: what were the motivations for squatting and how did that fit into the broader historical context of the times. Yet I can only look at it through my own prism of memory and that's why it's been such a rich experience to see your pictures because my parents didn't take many pictures and so it's a counterpoint to my work. Do you remember it being a positive experience squatting?

DW] It had its marvelous points. It had its scary points.

MR] What were the two extremes would you say?

DW] There were two extremes to give an example. They were in Silverdale. That shot of Steve sitting on the balcony shows Silverdale. It was the hottest summer in living memory [76] and we were making bread on a daily basis. We stuck the bread on the balcony and it rose just like that. We were happily smoking



away and sunbathing without a care in the world. On the other side of it on Whitsun Bank Holiday we were raided by the police and at one point a policeman threatened to punch my head through the kitchen wall.

MR] Did they suspect drugs or was their animosity towards you because you were living in an alternative way?

DW] Both, they were after drugs and they found them [cannabis] and I and three or four others spent the weekend in Catford Police Station.

MR] So do you feel each squat and commune had its own individual identity?

DW] Yes to a large extent. In Silverdale there were two or three people who ran the show but we lived communally and always ate communally and we cooked very good meals indeed. It was a gourmet's paradise that house. It kept going until the end.

MR] So what brought about the end?

DW] Notice to quit by Lewisham Council!

















**Field Study 15** *Growing up in the New Age* is a collaboration between Val Williams at PARC, Marjolaine Ryley [University of Sunderland] and Photographer Dave Walking.

*Growing up in the New Age* began as an artist-initiated research project exploring the alternative world of 'the counterculture', from communes in the south of France, squatting in South London and 'free school' education to the many forays into all things 'New Age' set against the backdrop of social and political happenings of the era. During research for *Growing up in the New Age* Ryley came across the archive of photographer Dave Walking, a rich and diverse survey of life in countercultural South-London. Walking has documented squats where Ryley and her parents lived, the free school, Kirkdale, she attended and he even worked in the basement darkroom in the squat where Ryley was born. *Field Study 15: Growing up in the New Age* brings together the work of photographers Marjolaine Ryley and Dave Walking. A fascinating interface between the lives of both artists emerges. Ryley's work has the feel of an 'Alice in Wonderland' psychedelic dream, looking back at the counterculture through the prism of time, recapturing her childhood memories of places, people and events. Walking lived through these times; his work has the feel of an intimate family album, capturing his life and the lives of his friends at a pivotal moment in history.

An exhibition of Ryley's new work from the project *Growing up in the New Age* will be shown at Street Level Photoworks, Glasgow 21 April – 10 June and at Wolverhampton Art Gallery from 23 June – 8 September 2012. The exhibition will also include a rage of images and materials from the project archive, featuring the work of Dave Walking.

A book, *Growing Up in the New Age*, will be published by Daylight in Spring 2013. For more information see the project website [www.growingupinthenewage.org](http://www.growingupinthenewage.org).

The UAL Photography and the Archive Research Centre was designated by the University of the Arts London in 2003 and is based at the London College of Communication. The Centre commissions new and innovative research into photography and culture and organises seminars, study days, symposia and conferences, both within the UAL and externally. The Centre has a core group of members including Tom Hunter, Alistair 'O' Neill, Patrick Sutherland, Wiebke Leister, Jennifer Pollard, David Moore, Paul Lowe and Sara Davidmann. Centre staff and members supervise a group of PhD students. The Journal of Photography & Culture is co-hosted by the Centre and PARC also leads the online *Directory of Photographic Collections in the UK*.

PARC's interests span the history and culture of photography, with particular emphasis on post-war British photography, the documentation of war and conflict, the photography of fashion and style, the visualization of the counterculture, and photographers as filmmakers.

PARC is currently working in partnership with the University of Sunderland; Street Level Photoworks; Wolverhampton Art Gallery; the Photographers' Gallery; the National Media Museum; Ffotogallery, Wales; Birmingham Library and Archive Services; British Telecom; the Imperial War Museum; the University of Plymouth; the University of the Creative Arts; Berg Publishing and Photoworks. For more information about PARC's work, including forthcoming conferences, seminars, exhibitions, publications and study days visit: [www.photographyresearchcentre.co.uk](http://www.photographyresearchcentre.co.uk). Information about PARC's research can also be found at: [ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk](http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk). and on its Facebook group page.

Director: Professor Val Williams: [v.williams@lcc.arts.ac.uk](mailto:v.williams@lcc.arts.ac.uk)  
Deputy Director: Brigitte Lardinois: [b.lardinois@lcc.arts.ac.uk](mailto:b.lardinois@lcc.arts.ac.uk)  
Centre Administrator: Wendy Short: [w.short@lcc.arts.ac.uk](mailto:w.short@lcc.arts.ac.uk)  
Research Assistant: Bob Pullen: [b.pullen@lcc.arts.ac.uk](mailto:b.pullen@lcc.arts.ac.uk)  
Networking and IT: Belinda May  
Research Seminars: Sam Vale  
PhD Ambassador: Corinne Silva

Photography and the Archive Research Centre  
London College of Communication  
Elephant & Castle  
London SE1 6SB  
t. 00 44 [0]207 514 6625



P14: Residents and visitors, back garden, 64 Lawrie Park Road, Sydenham, 1979.  
P 18: Steve on the balcony, 20 Silverdale, March 1976.  
64 Lawrie Park Road, Sydenham September, 1979.  
P 19: Silverdale, March 1976.  
P 20: Bonfire party, Villa Road, Brixton, 4th November 1979.









