

2016 My London Calendar captions

Cover image: CA2015-102.JPG (Cutty Sark Photobomb, Greenwich by ROL)

This Dalmatian, Mr Pongs, is a friend of Ray of Light (ROL) and is pictured in front of the historic Cutty Sark in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. 'He likes to go around London checking out all the touristic places,' says ROL, who has had a photo in every My London calendar since the project began in 2013. The Cutty Sark's name comes from a Robert Burns poem Tam O'Shanter. The ship was built in 1869 and was one of the fastest clipper sailing ships to be built at the time.

Formerly a chef, ROL has been sleeping rough for several years, mostly sofa surfing. He is an active volunteer with many charities, including Café Art, and several of his paintings are featured in cafes around London.

January image: CA2015-065.JPG (Tyre Break, Hackney, by Desmond Henry)

Desmond Henry took this image of a woman taking a coffee break in front of a mural by Brazilian street artists Cranio, Bailon and Sliks, near the Pritchard's Road Day Centre, Hackney. 'I was very lucky, it was as if God sent her.'

Desmond was born in Northamptonshire and grew up in the West Indies. He says: 'Sometimes people at the centre are thrown out of their housing if they can't look after it and they put them in a hostel. They get a place later.' He says he has seen the number of people sleeping rough rise in recent years.

He has been going to the Centre for more than 20 years now. 'They tell you about what is going on in the world. We have meetings, we have outings. Because we are mentally unwell and need support to develop our skills and build our confidence, that's why we are there.' Desmond likes to play music as a DJ: 'R&B up to the 60s.'

February image: CA2015-013.JPG (Bags for Life, Strand, by David Tovey)

David Tovey met Tony sitting at the back of St Mary le Strand, near the Royal Courts of Justice. 'It was the first photo I took. He was sitting there in complete contrast to the building across the road.' He says he ended up talking to him for a while as he read the morning paper. Tony told him that after becoming homeless, listening to music was the only thing he missed.

David, who did a foundation art course at London Metropolitan University in 2013, had two photos in last year's calendar, including the cover shot. 'I've gained a lot from this project. A year ago I almost didn't make the camera handout: this year I gave a presentation to the people picking up cameras!'

After six years in the army David opened his own restaurant in London. But in 2011, following health issues he lost his business and became homeless. He is now housed and is a practising artist. He volunteers with Clothing the Homeless and Café Art.

March image: CA2015-021-2.JPG (Light at the End, Stratford, by Ellen Rostant)

Ellen Rostant took this shot in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. 'It's like you are in a tunnel when you are homeless: it's a journey and there's always going to be light at the end of the tunnel. [Like this photo], there is some dark and light patches in between on the journey.'

Aged sixteen, she lives with her parents and seven siblings in temporary housing where they have been for three years. Her father Andre sells the Big Issue in Soho and her mother works at a supermarket.

Ellen recently finished Eastleigh Community School in Stratford and is now going to Leyton Sixth Form College doing geography, 3-D graphic design and photography. 'Hopefully I am able to go into something like landscape photography or maybe portraits or art stuff. I don't have a camera, I use my phone.'

April image: CA2015-002.JPG (London Calling, Lincoln's Inn, by XO)

‘As I was looking through the camera lens, wondering which angle to take the photo from, this guy walked past with his umbrella (it was raining lightly) & I seized the opportunity to snap it, says XO who photographed these listed telephone boxes near Lincoln’s Inn.

‘I Googled the location & discovered they're Grade II listed & that the shorter ones are unique to London, which I thought was cool and also in keeping with the My London theme. Although very rarely used these days, I love the fact they're still around. They're synonymous with our capital & this city wouldn't be the same without them, so I'm happy they're protected.’

XO goes to the Crisis Skylight building in Whitechapel. ‘I've had a passion for and interest in photography since my teens, but consider myself a novice and would like to go on a course to learn the ropes’ [149]

May image: CA2015-042.JPG (Past and Future, City of London by Ioanna Zagkana)

'I liked the sky, it was amazing that day,' says Ioanna Zagkana about her photo of 30 St Mary Axe, known as The Gherkin, and St Andrew Undershaft. She feels they represent the future and the past of London. The Gherkin was built in 2003, and its elderly neighbour survived not only the Blitz but the Great Fire of London, being built in 1532.

Coming from Greece, Ioanna has been living in London for almost five years. She was a dancer until an accident ended her career. She then worked as a self-employed therapist until ongoing health problems meant that she could not continue. When she ran out of money she lived in a squat in Whitechapel before someone told her about Crisis.

She goes to many art groups, including Crisis Skylight and Women at the Well. She is currently staying with a friend. She believes that not enough people live in the present: 'We are not grounded' and it is her goal to be so.

June image: CA2015-010-4.JPG (Colour Festival, Olympic Park, by Goska Calik)

Goska Calik took this shot during the Greenwich and Docklands International Festival in early July. The Colour of Time was a Holi-inspired event by Artonik and East London Dance who invited the public to participate by throwing coloured powder.

‘I started taking photos when I was five years old. The first photography I did was with my father. It was with a Zorky 12, a Russian camera. He taught me about light and the zoom and everything. I loved it. So then I bought my first camera and I started to take photos. It was Beirette, a German camera.’ Arriving in London four years ago, Goska found herself homeless when she lost her job due to illness. After sofa-surfing for several months she was finally directed to Crisis where she was helped to find a place to live.

Goska is now studying counselling and working part time as a support worker with people with mental health problems. She goes to Cardboard Citizens, a homelessness support organisation where she participated in photography and a dance workshop.

July image: CA2015-055.JPG (Tower Bridge Picnic, Southwark, by Ceci)

‘It was a really hot day. It was the first day I collected the camera so I just walked around until I stopped somewhere near the Tower Bridge and saw people on the grass. It looked so relaxing so I just captured the moment’, says Ceci, adding that London can be bustling but it can also be relaxing.

Originally from Hong Kong, Ceci found herself alone at a railway station all night one December when she met a homeless guy who suggested she join him at Crisis for Christmas.

Diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder while staying at a night shelter, she uses the Crisis art groups to help her get away from the chaos in her large Bethnal Green squat which she finds ‘chaotic,’ with ‘people yelling, shouting, verbal violence and physical violence. Ceci says that art also helps her find her ‘inner connection’ and gives her strength to fight self-destructive behaviour. Ceci has studied media and culture, photography and artistic design in the past and is currently creating a blog about random act of kindness.

August image: CA2015-079.JPG (Royal Geese Sunset, Kensington Gardens, by Maciek Walorski)

Maciek Walorski took this photo in Kensington Gardens, saying the geese were not afraid because they were probably expecting food: 'But not this time!'

Maciek, who comes from Poland, has lived in London for twelve years. He became homeless about a year ago and is currently sleeping rough. He was working as a night auditor for a Soho private members' club while studying art and design and computer animation at London Metropolitan University during the day. 'You know working in the night brings with it some sort of danger because it's not really good for your health. After seven years working night shift I was very depressed,' adding that he resigned because of addictions and money problems.

The Connection at St Martin in the Fields has helped him with a place to live and St Mungo's Broadway has given him a work placement. He is a member of Arts Fitzrovia, a Monday evening arts group: 'I would like to do art from now on as I always wanted.'

September image: CA2015-021-3.JPG (Left Boot, East London, by Ellen Rostant)

Ellen Rostant saw the boot on the road and I thought it would make a nice picture because, 'How can someone loose a boot? Somebody's out there and they've got one boot left.'

Ellen's father sells the Big Issue in Soho. Her family has been in temporary housing for nearly three years now. 'It's quite a small house for our family and the uncertainty is hard for my siblings as we are all in school, and relocating would mean we would have to start again. Before that we were living in Maida Vale and we were renting there.'

Ellen, who is 16 years old, finished Eastleigh Community School in Stratford in 2015 and is now going to Sixth Form College.

October image: CA2015-037.JPG (West End Bird, Westminster, by Zin Vaiteikuna)

Zin Vaiteikuna decided to take this shot at the bird's eye height while exploring streets near Mayfair where he worked on a project with the Kids Company. Called the Book of Life, it covered the struggles in his life, including a troubled childhood and addictions. 'The challenge I had to overcome was to discover a direction in my life that would keep me happy and fulfill me as a human being. And so far I discovered that it is creativity.'

Originally from Lithuania, he lives in a Camden Town squat. 'We are like a family. We get along very well together.' He says that at least one person has to stay in the squat, which used to be an office, at all times: 'That's the unwritten rule of squatting.' He says that because it's non-residential they are legally allowed to stay, but they can be evicted at any time without notice.

In the future he wants to keep creative no matter how hard the conditions get to keep happy and fulfilled.

November image: CA2015-040.JPG (The Artist, Whitechapel, by Michael Crosswaite)

Michael Crosswaite was on his way to return the camera when he took this shot of Aaron Little in the art room of Providence Row, Whitechapel. 'I didn't over-think the photo and perhaps that's why it worked. The painting is so good it makes the picture.'

Aaron explains that he found an ornate oval frame which he decided to create the Caravaggio inspired David and Goliath painting for. 'I found that doing art has been so beneficial to me for my well being and in all sorts of ways. The greatest discovery I've found is I realise that I've got a talent for it and I wasn't aware of that,' he says.

Michael lives near Broadway Market, Hackney. He was sleeping rough for several years before getting into a hostel and then a flat. He goes to Providence Row and Crisis and has paintings in Café Art's Art in Cafés programme. [150]

December image: CA2015-010-2.jpg (Shadow of Self, Hyde Park, by Goska Calik)

Goska Calik took this photo at the base of the Isis statue in Hyde Park which represents the Egyptian goddess of motherhood. She feels that her shadow symbolises her homelessness, adding that for some people she became almost invisible, like a shadow of her former self. 'I lost the ability to convince people and lost control over my life. Being homeless is a result of that state of mind.'

Arriving in London four years ago she became homeless when she lost her job due to illness. After sofa-surfing for several months she was finally directed to Crisis where she was helped to find a place to live.

Goska was taught photography by her father in Poland. She goes to Cardboard Citizens, a homelessness support organisation where she participates in photography as well as dance, forum theatre and creative writing. She is also studying counselling and works part time as a support worker with people with mental health problems.

Inside front cover of calendar:

WELCOME TO CAFÉ ART

Café Art connects people affected by **homelessness** with the wider community through art. We frame artwork of people attending art groups run by homeless sector organisations. We find independent cafés to hang and sell the artwork in, with **100 percent** of any sales going to the artists.

This calendar, supported by The Royal Photographic Society, showcases the talent and creativity of participants in the 2015 Café Art photography contest held in early July.

'Café Art has brought photography and the homeless together in a ground-breaking initiative that is bringing real benefit to those participating. The calendar itself brings direct support but, equally important, is the raising of self-esteem and confidence for those taking part. It is a small project but it is making a big difference.' Dr Michael Pritchard, Director-General, The Royal Photographic Society

All the profits from the sale of this calendar go towards the calendar vendors, the photographers featured in the calendar, the purchase of art materials for the art groups participating in the Café Art programme, the purchase of art materials and photography materials for participants as well as the calendar production costs.

To find out more about Café Art visit www.cafeart.org.uk Facebook: [cafeartforhomelessartists](https://www.facebook.com/cafeartforhomelessartists) Twitter: [@cafeartuk](https://twitter.com/cafeartuk)

Back cover of calendar:

[CAFÉ ART logo with 'MY LONDON 2016 CALENDAR']

If you would like to find out more about homelessness and how you can help please visit Homeless Link homeless.org.uk or one of the many charities and organisations listed on their website or listed below.

Images in this calendar came out of a photography contest for people affected by homelessness, supported by The Royal Photographic Society (The RPS), held 1 – 4 July, 2015. One hundred single-use cameras were distributed at St Paul’s Cathedral, with photography training given by The RPS volunteers. Participants were given three days, with the theme My London.

This calendar is sold in arts markets by homeless and low-income people and volunteers to raise money to buy art materials for participants and art groups supporting photographers involved in the project between October and December. To see a full exhibition of photographs please go to www.cafeart.org.uk. Thank you for your support.

Six judges chose twenty images for this calendar and the accompanying exhibition in Spitalfields Art Market. The thirteen calendar photographs were chosen after a public vote in Spitalfields E1 Market in August. The judges were: Chris Cheesman, Amateur Photographer magazine; David Holmes, photographer who has experienced homelessness; David Honey, FujiFilm; Martin Reed, Homeless Link; Emma Mapp, London Photo Festival and Toby Monk, Christie’s.

[There is also a list of the art groups that participate in the contest and these are also the groups we have raised more than £10,000 for in art materials for in previous calendars]

Thank you to the photographers and artists who are connected to this project through art groups run by the following organisations:

240 Project
240project.org.uk

ARTfitzrovia
artfitzrovia.org

C4WS Homeless Project
c4wshomelessproject.org

Crisis
crisis.org.uk

Holy Cross Centre Trust
hcct.org.uk

Margins

Pritchard's Road Day Centre
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Providence Row
providencerow.org.uk

One Support
onehousinggroup/one-support

SANktUS
sanktus.org

SHP
shp.org.uk

St Mungo's Broadway
mungosbroadway.org

The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields
connection-at-smartins.org.uk

Thames Reach
thamesreach.org.uk

OTHER PHOTO CAPTIONS Rough interviews

CA2015-004.jpg Sleeping Rough, West End by Amadeus Xavier Quadeer

CA2015-010-1.jpg Parked Bike, Hyde Park by Goska Calik

CA2015-010-3.jpg Picnic, Hyde Park by Goska Calik

CA2015-017.jpg Ducks, Hyde Park, by Stephen James

CA2015-019.jpg Picnic in the Park, South East London by James Robson

CA2015-021-1.jpg Faceless child, East London by Ellen Rostant (16)
This is a shot of Ellen Rostant's younger sister. She described how being homeless meant people "were ignored, or were not looked at by other people, so in this photo the girl doesn't have a face."
Ellen has two other photos in the top 20 (both in the calendar)

CA2015-054.jpg Yellow and Red by Frances Whitehouse

“This is a local cleaner that I know from my area and I was in a shop looking at all these toys. This is basically dustpans and plastics. As I was in there I saw him looking in the window he recognised me and I just took a snap because I thought the colours really complimented each other.”