

Select one of Reas' photographs which you think is critical of consumerism.

What makes you think this photograph is critical? How do you think Reas has achieved this?

Use the prompt questions on the previous page to help.

Explain to your fellow students why you selected this photograph.

Notes

For more information watch the specially made film interviewing Paul Reas, opposite our Welcome Desk, and see the artist folder and selected books on the reading table in the Gallery.

Further reading and research

Family of Man - Edward Steichen, book from the 1955 exhibition

Face of Our Time (Antlitz der Zeit) - August Sander, book from People of the 20th Century

The New Color Photography - Sally Euaclaire

Roads to Wigan Pier - exhibition at Impressions Gallery 2012

The Battle of Orgreave - Jeremy Deller

How We Are: Photographing Britain - exhibition at Tate Britain 2007

Photographers that work on related themes

- Tony Ray Jones
- Polly Braden
- Elaine Constantine
- Paul Graham
- Martin Parr
- Martine Franck
- Anna Fox
- Nick Danziger
- Bill Brandt
- Simon Roberts

Impressions Gallery

Impressions Gallery opened in York in 1972, moving to Bradford in 2007. As one of the first specialist photography galleries in Europe we have gone on to play a vital role in promoting photography and have had a huge impact on the development of photographic culture in Britain and beyond.

Impressions Gallery Centenary Square, Bradford, BD1 1SD

www.impressions-gallery.com Twitter @ImpGalleryPhoto

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Visual Literacy Worksheet

"Day Dreaming About The Good Times?"

Paul Reas



"Day Dreaming About The Good Times?" uses humour to explore themes such as consumerism, class, work and leisure. The exhibition spans Reas' thirty year career from Thatcherite Britain and the miner's strike, through the consumer boom in the mid 1980's, to his influential advertising work and his most recent body of work in Elephant and Castle in South London.

Paul Reas is part of the influential movement, now known as the 'New British Colour Documentarists', that changed people's attitude to colour photography. Reas' states that his photographic practice has been heavily influenced by his social and cultural background.

As a collective body of work "Day Dreaming About The Good Times?" is not a chronological presentation of the photographic career of Paul Reas. Instead, the projects are linked through portrayals of working class, alienation in the work place and examinations of consumerism.

Background

Paul Reas

Paul Reas was born in 1955 in Bradford. He grew up in Bafferton Abor, on the Buttershaw Estate, a large 1950s council estate and worked as a bricklayer in the UK and Germany. Reas discovered his love of photography through visiting Bradford Library's photography collection, in particular he was struck by Edward Steichen's book of the 1955 exhibition *The Family of Man*. Reas would carry his camera to capture the streets around him and was 28 when he enrolled on Newport College documentary photography course.

In 1986 he attended a lecture by Sally Eauclore, an American academic and was inspired to begin working in colour. His photographic move into colour from black and white became integral to the 'New British Colour Documentarists' movement, which includes Martin Parr, Paul Graham and Anna Fox amongst others.

Reas' invitation to work on editorial and advertising work bought a fresh style to British editorial photography, leading to award winning marketing campaigns for clients including Nissan, Volkswagen, Transport for London and others. His documentary style approach was quickly adopted across the advertising industry, changing the face of marketing campaigns.

Paul Reas currently is the course leader of Newport College's documentary photography degree course.

Use the following questions when looking at work in the exhibition:

Choose a photograph:

- What can you see in the photograph?
- What is included in the frame? Is anything in the image obscured? Do you think this is intentional?
- How do you think the use of framing focuses our attention in the photograph? What, in the image, do you think Reas wants us to focus on?
- What angle is Reas shooting the photograph from? Is it below on a level or above the subject? What do you think this implies?
- Do you view the colour photographs and black and white photographs differently? Do you think that it makes a difference to the way you look at the images?
- What do you think Paul Reas saying about the subject matter through his photography? Do you think the subject represented in a sympathetic way? What in the image makes you think this?

Notes:



Working Men 1982

Influenced by August Sander's work from 1930's Germany, these portraits are an early student project, depicting men in their working lives.

"...what really struck me about Sander's pictures... was seeing the portrayal of working people that gave them some kind of grace and dignity..."

What I wanted to do was portray a working class experience to the one I recognised!" - Paul Reas

Choose a photograph from this series. Do you think the photograph is portraying the subject with grace and dignity? What makes you think this?



The Valleys Project 1985

Commissioned by Ffotogallery to document the South Wales Valley, this project focused on new industries replacing the traditional mining communities and the impact it had on the area.

Choose a photograph from this series that you think highlights the changes these new industries were making to the Valleys' area. What in the photograph makes you think this?



I Can Help 1985 -1988

This project shows Reas' move into colour photography. This work looks at the UK's consumer boom of the 1980s; the growth of American style out-of-town malls and new housing estates on the edge of the green belt.

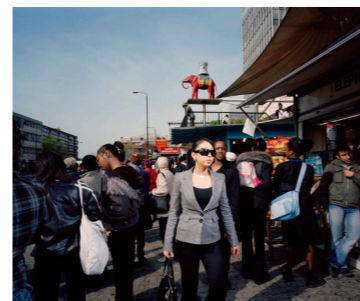
Look carefully at the details in the photographs. What role do you think the signs and posters included in the photographs play in this project?



Flogging a Dead Horse 1989 - 1993

This project grew out of Reas' personal interest documenting previous working industrial sites, such as mines being closed and transformed into museums and theme parks.

The term '*Flogging a Dead Horse*' means a pointless exercise. Why do you think that Reas chose this title for this project?



From A Distance 2012

Commissioned by London College of Communication (LCC) this project highlights the regeneration in the Elephant and Castle area of London. Reas states it was important for him to get back onto the streets and make pictures of what it meant to live in a changing city.

Look at both *I Can Help* and *From a Distance*. Do you think Reas' colour photography mirrors the attitudes and aesthetic of then and now?