

Graham Hall Artist Questionnaire

IG: Which artists/photographers do you particularly respect?

Usual suspects at the time, Walker Evans, Henri Cartier Bresson and Robert Frank. I picked up a book early on at Trent by Daniel Meadows - Living Like This - a tour of the UK in a double decker bus taking photographs in 1975 and the stories inspired me to do something similar almost 10 years later.

IG: What or who were your main influences when creating work for Roads to Wigan Pier?

Orwell of course, the traditional coal mine locally and the impact of the miners strike at the time I could not ignore. A mix too of creating single images but wanting narrative flow and to juxtapose images, I have to say I was not content with the mix at the time!

IG: Why did you decide to focus on miners in Nottinghamshire and Wigan for the project?

See above, the text mentioned it and it was big news at the time.

IG: Do you think the work in Roads to Wigan Pier is still relevant today?

I really do, I have not looked back for many years and seeing the images again today really captured what I felt at the time and brought it all back. At their simplest all photographs have some value to someone, these show both an end of an era and the start of new careers for me and my fellow photographers.

IG: How do you think Roads to Wigan Pier shaped your future work?

I have to admit, these were the last real documentary shots I took, I left documentary photography behind and went on to do something much less serious and worked for the BBC as a Television Cameraman. I know they selected me for interview because of the photography background, and I was based at Television Centre for 13 years working on anything from *Top of The Pops* to *Only Fools and Horses* and *East Enders* to name a few. My photography experiences definitely shaped my TV camerawork, believe it or not, I remember framing up on *East Enders* in much the same way!

I then decided to get a proper job and moved into recruiting technical roles at the BBC, including the trainee cameraman scheme I myself had joined on. I stayed in recruitment at the BBC until 2008, recruiting really for all areas before leaving after a total of 23 years!

I then went on to work in very diverse organisations as a recruiter from banking to charity sector, and now work for Virgin Atlantic recruiting Pilots. I still work professionally now and again as a cameraman though, having just been lucky enough to cover the Olympics.

I'm thrilled to be included in the exhibition, and I know my short but fascinating affair with documentary photography directly led me to where I am now. I'm pleased to have developed something of a 'portfolio' career and looking back, the skills I learnt as a photographer, especially composition, helped with the TV camera work.

Documentary photography was perhaps for me a means to an end, I discovered I loved meeting new people, people I would not otherwise have come across. I suppose this has translated to my resourcing roles, the love of meeting new people in different walks of life and finding out about them has continued, all be it in a very different context and without having the bother of a camera!

IG: How has your career altered or developed since Roads to Wigan Pier was exhibited in 1984 and what are you doing now?

Completely different, from TV Cameraman for the following 13 years to now being a recruitment specialist in Aviation!

IG: Some of our visitors will be interested in the technical aspects of your work, what equipment did you use? And did it affect the way that you worked and the project outcome?

Olympus OM1, Olympus lenses 28mm - 135mm small light and uprated XPS

IG: Do you have any recommended reading to further contextualise your work?

Orwell!

John Kemp Artist Questionnaire

IG: Which artists/photographers do you particularly respect?

Don McCullin ("Homecoming" was one of the first photo books I owned, and coincidentally features several images of Bradford and the North); John Blakemore (who taught me correct exposure and printing technique); Anton Corbijn, Cartier-Bresson, Lee Friedlander, Josef Koudelka, John Davies, Joel Meyerowitz, Bruce Gilden, Andy Goldsworthy, David Nash.

IG: What or who were your main influences when creating work for Roads to Wigan Pier?

While a Diploma student in Sussex I was introduced to the work of Lewis Baltz and his fellow topographers; they had a huge influence on the way I viewed the world, and my choice of subject matter. I enjoyed the cool, detached style, and the focus on urban environments. The work of Lee Friedlander opened my eyes to the beauty of juxtaposition and composition in depth. When I received the commission I began reading Orwell's book as background and formulated some ideas about my approach, but my photographs were an instinctive response to the locations I visited.

IG: Why did you decide to focus on environmental poverty in Wigan, Burnley, Rochdale and Bradford for the project?

I grew up around Brighton, so coming to study in Derby was something of a culture shock for me – the Midlands of 1982 seemed a very different world from the South I was familiar with. When I travelled North to the locations of Orwell's book I was further struck by the visual bleakness and physical decay of many parts of the industrial North. The New Topographics movement was concerned with documenting suburban sprawl in the new world, whereas my images largely focused on the decline of the old industrial world.

IG: Do you think the work in Roads to Wigan Pier is still relevant today?

I think that the images capture a particular period and still have relevance today as a snapshot of that particular time and place. Bradford in particular has undergone dramatic improvements in the past 30 years.

IG: How do you think Roads to Wigan Pier shaped your future work?

It affirmed my interest in landscape, particularly of the urban variety. My photographs continue to have a strong sense of composition, and I still enjoy working in monochrome (though now of the digital variety).

IG: How has your career altered or developed since Roads to Wigan Pier was exhibited in 1984 and what are you doing now?

I was an under-graduate photography student in 1984; after graduation in 1985 I did pursue photographic commissions but ultimately found that employment as a photography lecturer was a more secure way of earning a living.

I have maintained my passion for viewing and practising photography, and have tried to communicate that passion to my students over the years.

I now divide my time between lecturing and freelance photography.

IG: Some of our visitors will be interested in the technical aspects of your work, what equipment did you use? And did it affect the way that you worked and the project outcome?

My equipment was very basic: a Canon AE-1 with 50mm and 24mm lenses. Film was mostly Ilford FP4 (HP5 if the weather turned bad). Prints for the exhibition were produced on Agfa Record-Rapid using Dr Beer's variable contrast developer (though I later felt that the images were better suited to a cool tone so reprinted them on Ilford Galerie for my Degree Show).

I was shooting hand-held so was able to travel light and did most of my shooting whilst exploring unfamiliar locations on foot. I think the weather had an influence on the look of my photos as it was predominantly bright and sunny, allowing me to replicate the bleached look of the New Topographics work.

IG: Do you have any recommended reading to further contextualise your work?

See my list at the beginning of this piece!

Tim Smith Artist Questionnaire

IG: Which artists/photographers do you particularly respect?

Magnum remains the world's most famous independent agency and I continue to admire the work of its traditional humanists as well as its newer, more eclectic photographers. I'm also inspired by the work of fellow members of Panos Pictures. This international agency pursues stories beyond the media agenda and engages in all forms of visual communication by producing exhibitions, multimedia and film alongside long-term editorial and publishing projects.

IG: What or who were your main influences when creating work for Roads to Wigan Pier?

I'd just left the Documentary Photography course at Newport College so course leader David Hurn and his staff were my foremost influence. They included Clive Landen, Daniel Meadows, Ron McCormick, Martin Parr, Paul Hill who - importantly - were all practising photographers.

IG: Why did you decide to focus on housing and the traditional industries of Sheffield for the project?

There is a line in *The Road to Wigan Pier* where Orwell states: "The simple solution is flats. If people are to live in large towns at all they must learn to live on top of one another." I chose to challenge this assertion as I knew of Sheffield's radical high-rise estate blocks, known nationally as the "Streets in the Sky". I was persuaded to include additional pictures of Sheffield's steel industry by the then Director of Impressions Frances Middlestorb.

IG: Do you think the work in Roads to Wigan Pier is still relevant today?

Of course it is! In 1984 Margaret Thatcher led a government whose main priority was to dismantle or privatise state-run industries. Currently David Cameron leads a government dismantling or privatising the state itself, fuelling an economy driven by short-term profits for the few at the expense of the welfare of the majority.

IG: How do you think Roads to Wigan Pier shaped your future work?

It taught me to do my research and read around a subject that interested me, and gave me the confidence to go out and talk to people that lived in the worlds I wanted to explore.

IG: How has your career altered or developed since Roads to Wigan Pier was exhibited in 1984 and what are you doing now?

What I'm interested in hasn't changed greatly, but hopefully I've learned how to explore and present it in more imaginative and interesting ways. In 1984 I was newly graduated, naive about how to earn a living, and unsure how to enable my own ideas. In 2012 I'm certainly a lot older and hopefully a little wiser about funding such work, who the audiences are and how to reach them. Although none of this is getting any easier I'm currently doing a wide range of editorial and commercial work and pursuing long-term publishing, exhibition and mixed media projects.

IG: Some of our visitors will be interested in the technical aspects of your work, what equipment did you use? And did it affect the way that you worked and the project outcome?

I used two Canon F1 35mm cameras loaded with black and white film which I developed and printed myself. I've always used 35mm as I like to keep mobile and think on my feet. The commissions were worth £250 with £100 to spend on materials which restricted how we could present the work, but I soon realised that producing the A4 prints seen here didn't do justice to an exhibition.

IG: Do you have any recommended reading to further contextualise your work?

Photography: On Being a Photographer by David Hurn & Bill Jay.

1984: Wigan Pier Revisited by Beatrix Campbell.

2012: Dogma and Disarray – Cameron at Half-Time by Polly Toynbee & David Walker

www.timsmithphotos.com

Artist Questionnaire Huw Davies

IG: Which artists/photographers do you particularly respect?

Vim Wenders, Hollis Frampton, Jean Luc Goddard, Joel Merowitz, William Eggleston, Diane Arbus Nan Golding, David Lynch, Larry Clark and Chris Marker.

IG: What or who were your main influences when creating work for Roads to Wigan Pier?

All of the above + Bill Owen, Robert Frank, Paul Graham, Steven Shore and Brian Griffin.

IG: Why did you decide to focus on industries that had grown up along the Leeds to Liverpool Canal and the surrounding community for the project?

I was interested in the canal as a major industrial artery in the North West and that it represented a journey from the Northern industrial heartlands to Wigan Pier itself. I've always been interested journeys, the process of starting in one direction and seeing what or whom you encounter on the way. It is very much in the spirit of JB Priestley's 'English Journey' (which was an inspiration for Orwell's RTWP), the later work of Robert Frank and the road movies of Wim Wenders. When I took the photographs the impact of 1970/80's post industrialism was in full effect and many of the industries that had developed along the canal were in demise. Manufacturing industry was being replaced by smaller scale operations, the tourist industry and the heritage industry, reflected in the 'Wigan Pier Experience' at Trencherfield Mill, which was in development at the time.

IG: Do you think the work in Roads to Wigan Pier is still relevant today?

Well it is still relevant in that it documents a particular slice of history and it does it in a fairly objective way (as objective as photography ever is). It provides a record of people and places, many have which have continued to change since I took the original photographs. If I was doing the project now I would probably approached it in a different way, maybe less literally - in that many of the themes I looked at have been well explored subsequently by other photographers.

IG: How do you think Roads to Wigan Pier shaped your future work?

Yes it certainly impacted on my future work – Particularly the ‘Transitions’ series that I did in Derby in 1987 (as part of industry year). I am currently revisiting this work and re-photographing the original subjects for Format 2013 as part of the theme ‘Factory’. RTWP also influenced the project ‘Unwatched Operations’ the portraits of Lighthouse Keepers prior to the automation programme which was an Impressions Touring show in 1987 /88.

IG: How has your career altered or developed since Roads to Wigan Pier was exhibited in 1984 and what are you doing now?

I continued working with photography until the mid 1990’s and produced a series of projects over that period which were exhibited or published in some form. During this period I also worked in film, originally documentaries for the BBC and the newly founded Discovery Channel. Some of the films fed out of photographic projects where I did the original research using the still image. From 1995 I concentrated on moving image work. I made a series of short narratives inspired by architectural follies with Nigel Atkinson and also a number of site-specific moving image installations. My interest in this area led to me co-founding the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival in 2004, which I currently co-curate with Melanie Iredale. In parallel I’ve also had an academic career working at several universities in the UK and USA since the late 80’s. I’m currently Dean and Professor of Lens Media in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Technology at the University of Derby, a post I’ve held since 2007.

IG: Some of our visitors will be interested in the technical aspects of your work, what equipment did you use? And did it affect the way that you worked and the project outcome?

It was all shot on a Pentax 6X&7 with a 45mm lens on Ilford FP5 film. Other equipment used was a Metz CT65 Flash Gun, a Bowens 400 flash unit with umbrella and a Manfrotto tripod. Since I was walking large sections of the route I needed to be able to pack it into a rucksack. I shot all of the work over two one-week periods in August 1984. One week travelling from Leeds to Wigan -the other week from Wigan to Leeds. Most of it was done by knocking on factory doors and photographing on the spot –

very little of it was prearranged. It would be difficult to do this now given health and safety regulations.

Artist Questionnaire Russell Boyce

IG: Which artists/photographers do you particularly respect?

A painter that I have always liked is Mark Rothko. Photographers I most admire who are working at the moment are Damir Sagolj, who is based in Bangkok and has worked on stories in North Korea, Myanmar and Japan. Adrees Latif who is presently based in NY and beginning to explore the underbelly of life in the US – he was based in Pakistan. Two new photographers, Navesh Chitrakar who lives and works in Nepal and Danish Siddiqui who lives in Mumbai.

Historically photographers I admire are Chris Killip, Eugene Smith, Henri Cartier Bresson and Don McCullen. My mentor was AP photographer Dave Caulkin.

IG: What or who were your main influences when creating work for Roads to Wigan Pier?

I read a lot of George Orwell and socialist literature – Solzhenitsyn – A day in the life of Ivan Denisovich and Cancer Ward both striking a cord. I was becoming more and more interested in how people look at pictures or read books which can either reinforce preconceived ideas or question them and how the “artist” can influence/manipulate these stances.

IG: Why did you decide to focus on Hull’s fishing dockland and its community for the project?

I was living just off Hessle Road in Hull and was struck how the decline in the fishing industry had impacted the community, not only the people but the way the area looked as row after row of housing was being knocked down. An image that sticks in my mind is a row of housing that had backed onto the back of a larger property that had been knocked down. Just a “dirt” shadow of where the homes had once stood remained, like an echo from the past.

IG: Do you think the work in Roads to Wigan Pier is still relevant today?

I think it’s always relevant to question what is happening to your community

IG: How do you think Roads to Wigan Pier shaped your future work?

The whole of my career what has influenced me the most is how event big and small impact the individual. What is equally important to me is that people should be able to reference information that is true and unbiased. Honest photography is second best only to personal eye witness and understanding this has shaped the chosen direction of my work.

IG: How has your career altered or developed since Roads to Wigan Pier was exhibited in 1984 and what are you doing now?

After leaving Hull in 1984 I tried to earn a living as a documentary photographer, trying to start projects, get grants and interest magazines in my work. The day I took a piece of bread out of my own bin and ate it (I had previously throw away as it was mouldy) was the day I decided things needed to change.

I got a job in a general photographers and worked in the darkroom. I also learned about commercial studio photography, PR photography and started to shoot news stores for national news papers – my diet improved. After 18 months I then got a job with a local news agency (the interviews was conducted in a pub) proving news and sport pictures for national news papers. After 2 years I got a job with Reuters working on their international desk in London. My job was to take in pictures from around the world – I learned about global news photography.

I wanted to work in Africa and covered the humanitarian impact of the war in Sudan, the take over of Addis Ababa by the rebels in Ethiopia, and worked in Rwanda. Deaths of two friends in African conflicts, one very close, made me reconsider my decision to work based out of Africa. Reuters gave me the opportunity to base myself in London and travel on the key global stories, politics, conflict, sport and natural disasters. In 2006 I became chief Photographer Asia, based in Singapore, my cameras were hung up 90% of the time. My primary interest editing pictures, my role became more about news and story management, discovering and growing local talent and ensuring these photographers were able to work with the equipment they need; were kept safe and fully supported while maintaining the high ethical standards that are demanded of Reuters. I over saw stories such as the Japan Tsunami and the nuclear fallout of Fukushima, the Afghanistan conflict, the growing conflict in Pakistan, volcanoes, earthquakes, China, North Korea, India, regional sport and the growing economic story.

Now based back in London since June 2011 my role now is Global Editor, News Projects Pictures, Reuters – quite a mouthful. What this means in a nutshell is that I work with Reuters global network of photographers looking to find ways to illustrate the top news stories, beyond the 24 news cycle, in a way that people will understand the impact the story, why it has happened and potential consequences while at the same time ensuring that beauty of image and integrity are first and foremost.

The news picture industry is going through changes that I believe are equivalent to the industrial revolution. Never before have news pictures become so immediate and accessible through digital technology and social networks. On the surface, the value (both intellectually and financially) of the news picture has been degraded, people expect to see it the instant it happened and for free – an example of this is the killing of Gadaffi, everyone has seen all these pictures and not one of them was taken by a professional photographer, nor was one of them paid for. What I believe the role of the news photographer is now it to ensure that the source of the information is accurate and true and then try to get as close as possible to the story to explain the consequences. With the advent of tablets and hand held devices the appetite for great story telling pictures is insatiable – it will also form the basis for a viable business model for thinking, creative and forward thinking photographers - photographers will get paid 😊.

IG: Some of our visitors will be interested in the technical aspects of your work, what equipment did you use? And did it affect the way that you worked and the project outcome?

I used a Minolta 100b with a 35mm F2.8 lens. Sometimes I used a Nikon F with a 105mm lens (borrowed from college) for tighter frames. My primary role now is an editor but I still carry a Canon 5DmkIII with a 40mm F2.8 lens. When photographing people naturally one has to try to be invisible. I often have a 135 mm f2 in my bag. I also carry a Canon S100 and a flip video camera. I use an I-pad to transmit pictures.

IG: Do you have any recommended reading to further contextualise your work?

Key reads are -

"Unreasonable Behaviour" by Don McCullen

"Pictures on a Page" Harold Evans

"Down and out in Paris and London" George Orwell

"the Cree Journals" surgeon and painter in British 19th century Navy

"Stalingrad" Antony Beevor

"Magnum Stories"

Reuters photographers blog <http://blogs.reuters.com/photographers-blog/>

Lens Blog <http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/>

"Our world Now" - Reuters