HOME

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University of the Arts
London

Professorial Platform
2014

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Home has meaning in both a geographical and ontological sense as the centre of the world. The Romanian philosopher and historian Mircea Elidea (1907–86) describes it as the place where a vertical line crosses with a horizontal one. The vertical line is a path between the sky and the underworld. The horizontal line represents all the possible journeys across the world to other places. Therefore, at home, one is closest to the gods in the sky and to the dead of the underworld, potentially giving access to both. At the same time, one is at the starting point and, hopefully, the returning point of all earthly journeys.

This notion of the centrality of one's home within the universe and how it affects one's sense of being resonates with me. I have explored the home through my art practice and this book maps out my journey, using photography and film and the way these interweave with popular culture, politics and art history. I have explored this theme through my experiences of making my home in Hackney, East London during the past twenty-five years. My work portrays and documents the home and in doing so many of my images capture people, lifestyles and environments that are being destroyed both physically and culturally. I have set out not simply to record the people and places, but also to present them in a way that challenges stereotypes and prompts viewers to re-evaluate how they perceive other cultures and social groups.

My visual sense of the home began as a young boy growing up in rural Dorset with a feeling of isolation yet communal camaraderie in a small village setting. For me home entailed not simply the house I inhabited but the wider environs of the village and its people. This resonates with the meaning of *home* as a village in Old English (*ham*), Old Saxon (*hem*) and Greek (*komi*). My visual identity was first reflected through the words and drawings of René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, who described the ancient Gauls in their independent village surrounded by the Imperial might of the Roman Empire. The characters of Asterix and Obelix had an eccentricity, uniqueness and fighting spirit that captured my imagination and inspired me to look at my small community as something worth recording, immortalising and even glorifying. However, at the height of England's great tribal identity manifestations of the 1970s, when I and my friends joined the battalions of punks, goths, skinheads, bikers, teds and mods, I was too caught up in the moment to capture our lives. Later, I wished I had been able to photograph the stories of the vibrant youth culture that had flourished in my own time and place.

René Goscinny & Albert Uderzo
Frontispiece detail from *The Adventures Of Asterix*
1961–

Janette Beckman
Punks, World's End
London, 1978

Bob Mazzer
Tattoos, Hairstyles, & Leathers at Manor House Tube
London, 1970s

Terry Spencer
Piccadilly Circus, London
1969

As my life changed, I found myself living in Hackney, but my cultural baggage and village mentality endured and I was drawn to and lived in a small community again. Now, instead of fields and hedge-rows marking the boundaries and divisions between locations and areas, these borders took on man-made forms in the shape of roads, pubs, parks and council estates. In this jumble of architectural styles, people and cultures I used my camera to connect with and make sense of my urban village and turn it into a place I could call home.

My early explorations of my home and neighbourhood through photography are represented in black and white images. These forays

Paul Strand
The Lusetti Family, Luzzara, Italy
1953

Don McCullin
Whitechapel, London
1970s

Colin O'Brien
Brick Lane, London
1990s

into East London life in the early 1990s capture the poverty, bleakness and stark reality of social deprivation. Following in the footsteps of my artistic influences at the time — classic documentary photographers such as Paul Strand who depicted small communities like Irish labourers and Italian peasants — I set out to document the harsh realities of my local environs. The images I created, *Brick Lane* (1990–91),

Tom Hunter
From the series *Brick Lane*
1990–91

show Brick Lane Market, the place where the people of the East End gathered on a Sunday morning to promenade, peruse, buy and sell the commodities that furnished their lives. I became interwoven into this fabric by setting up a bric-a-brac stall and selling my wares to make ends meet. The culture of this market is illustrated through its goods and the backdrop of derelict buildings, industrial storage spaces and vacant lots. The bleakness is amplified through the rendering of the black and white tonal range, a far cry from the colourful picture postcard images of the same era, depicting shopping on the King's Road, Oxford Street and at Harrods.

The way that my local surroundings were stereotyped in visual depictions of London inspired me to further my understanding of representation through the use of photography. It was at this time that I became a student at the London College of Printing, embarking on a three year Bachelor of Arts degree course. The use of images as political propaganda and social commentary was an important part of my studies. I soon realised that my neighbourhood, my home and my community tended to be represented through stark black and white photojournalistic images. Quite often these were supported by pieces of derogatory text. This inspired me to re-evaluate my early representations of my home and neighbourhood so as not to blindly contribute to this stock of images.

At this time in the early 1990s there were over 100,000 empty properties in London alone, with a near equivalent number of people without homes. This was very apparent to me, living in Hackney where whole streets, estates and neighbourhoods had been abandoned by tenants, the council, property owners and developers alike. This became the backdrop to my own photographic practice but, rather than regurgitate and proliferate the abundance of sombre monochrome images of my neighbourhood, I set out to create a vision of my home as a warm and vibrant place to live. At the time I lived in a squatted community of around 100 people in two streets that backed on to each other. The community was a creative, supportive and nurturing environment, where people from a wide range of backgrounds had come together to reclaim abandoned houses and gardens and to share an alternative way of living.

My local newspaper, the *Hackney Gazette*, at the time described my neighbourhood as 'a crime-ridden derelict ghetto, a cancer — a blot on the landscape. Why would people want to live there anyway?' This piece of tabloid text was a wake-up call to the way I wanted to represent my community and the life around me, in direct opposition to the media stereotype. My resulting degree show work *The Ghetto* (1994), which is on permanent display at the Museum of London, is a 3D model of the two squatted streets where we lived. Each house has a colour photographic veneer and inside the windows and doors are placed 5×4 colour transparencies, which are lit from within. This gives the model an inner light and a filmic quality. The model is raised on a podium and, owing to its 17-foot length, the viewer has to walk down the street and physically engage with the model to view the images.

£6m SHOT IN THE ARM FOR 'GHETTO'

Joint development will create jobs – but not everyone is happy

by NIGEL SMITH

A HACKNEY company is to make a £5 million investment in one of the borough's most notoriously run-down areas.

Two distributors the Don Group, based in Cazenal Road, South Hackney, plan a food retail distribution and manufacturing park on the Hackney Industrial Improvement Area in a joint development with the council, who are believed to be investing £1 million.

Hackney Gazette
1993

For me photography, with its inherent relationship to the real world, became a vital way not only of creating a picture of home but also of documenting buildings, people and transitory lifestyles. These fleeting moments in the history of a rapidly expanding and mutating city were rendered not by the 35mm black and white images of my early photographic practice, but by the architectural large format monorail camera. This collected and rendered all the tiny details of the intimate living spaces with their rich colours, faded wallpapers and

DIY furnishings. These depictions of our homes gave my community and myself a sense of our own identity that was being kept for posterity, while at the same time the physical structures were disappearing, being pulled down and redeveloped on a continual basis.

Tom Hunter in front of *The Ghetto*
1994

It wasn't long after *The Ghetto* series that my home came under threat and Hackney council attempted to evict myself and my community from the streets we inhabited. It was at this time that my relationship with the home was at its most fragile. In traditional, tribal societies the home was at the heart of the world and vital to making sense of it. Without a home one was not only shelterless, but also lost in nonbeing, in unreality. Without a home everything was fragmented and in chaos. Facing imminent eviction, I too felt this and questioned the notion of a home being a place of peace and security or even, as the saying goes, 'An Englishman's home is his castle'. The castles that I and my fellow squatters occupied were all built on sand and in many cases faced complete demolition.

The threat of eviction became the driving force not only to document my home, but also to use my images in a campaign to

Detail from *The Ghetto*
1994

From the series *The Ghetto*
1994

save our houses and community. My inspiration for this came from paintings from the Dutch Golden Age when art became a radical new way to depict society. Reviewing the 5×4 transparencies of my *Ghetto* series I was struck by the uniformity of the architectural spaces in the dilapidated Victorian terraces and the cool Northern European light which illuminated my sitters. These bore strong relationships to Johannes Vermeer's 17th century paintings of his community in Delft, Holland. His quiet contemplations on everyday life set the scene for the Dutch Republic, which at the time was forging a new identity for its people while fighting a war of independence from the Spanish Imperial crown. Vermeer's work reflected the new Protestant country's rejection of the catholic religious iconography that still dominated the work of Spanish and Italian artists. It captured the spirit of the time and gave an importance and credibility to a new society. For me, Vermeer's new merchant classes, maids, servants and musicians are elevated to the status of the Kings, Queens, Generals and Popes of the Imperial courts of the old European guard. By borrowing from Vermeer's compositions, gestures and titles I set out to render my home in a way that would not only document the harsh realities of eviction but also depict the themes as universal and the sitters as worthy subjects to be dignified and immortalised.

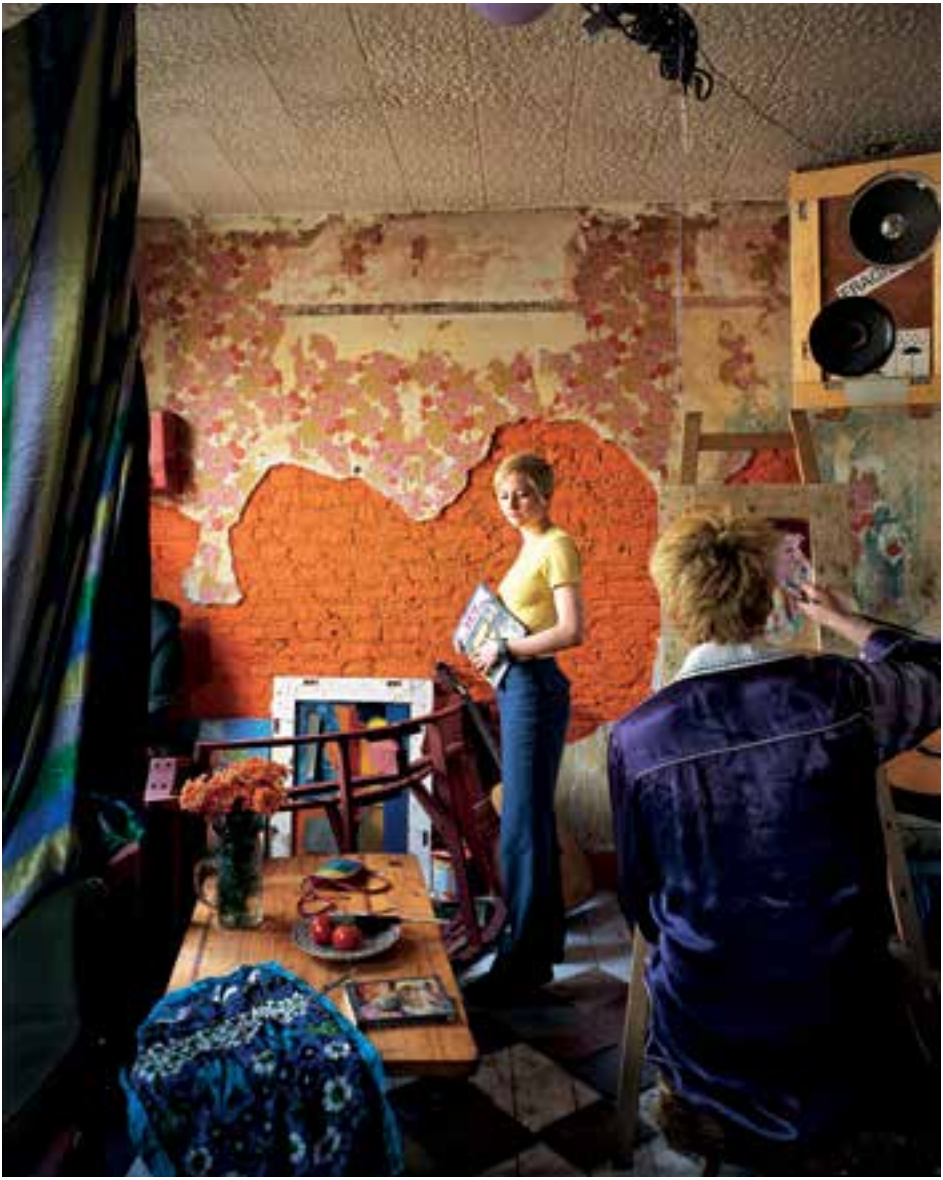
In my series *Persons Unknown* (1997), which refers to the title of the eviction notice that was given to the squatters in my community, I focused on particular paintings by Vermeer. In my work *Woman Reading a Possession Order* (1997) I mirrored elements of Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter by an Open Window* (c.1657) by placing my neighbour and friend beside a similar window in her own squatted home. I replaced the mysterious letter with her eviction notice and exchanged the symbolic bowl of fruit for her baby daughter. These two elements in combination create the tension and drama involved in squatting with a young family, while at the same time giving the sitter a sense of dignity and beauty in this moment of upheaval and change. The notion of home is amplified further when the child is brought into the frame. Even the hardest of social commentators will flinch at the sight of a mother and child being cast onto the street.

Johannes Vermeer
Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window
c.1657

Each photograph in the *Persons Unknown* series portrays the occupants in their homes, depicting aspects of their everyday lives that in some way resonate with Vermeer's classical paintings. These narratives are further illustrated in the titles of the works, such as *The Art of Painting* (c.1666), which is given a modern translation to *The Art of Squatting* (1997). Likewise *Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid* (1670) is updated to *Girl Writing an Affidavit* (1997). These titles not only refer back to Vermeer's originals but also highlight the contemporary plight of a community in flux, threatened with eviction and homelessness. The titles also help rupture a romantic and sentimental notion of home, which could at first capture the viewer's attention through the use of seductive colours, babies and people. The series gained widespread attention in exhibitions, magazines and newspapers and led to our community being able to open a dialogue with Hackney Council. From this heightened profile and collective negotiations we managed to save the houses, form a housing co-operative and stabilise the community.

While my community and I were in the process of securing our homes I focused on another marginalised group with a different notion of home. At this time many of my friends lived in converted vehicles, travelling throughout the UK and gathering together at free

Woman Reading a Possession Order
1997



The Art of Squatting
1997

Johannes Vermeer
The Art Of Painting
c.1666

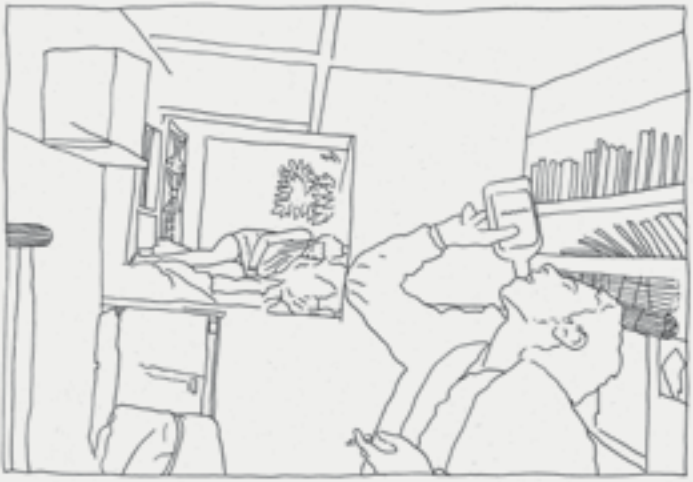
festivals. By recycling work vehicles into mobile homes they created a viable alternative to conventional ways of living in a similar way that squatting did. This cultural phenomenon came to heightened media attention in the early 1990s and in 1994 the Conservative government of the time introduced The Criminal and Public Order Act as a reaction to the Castlemorton free festival. This law became the tool that the state used to curb and restrict the movement and assembly of people. The tabloid media had a significant role in the introduction of this law and in the perception of how not just travellers but also squatters, road

Police powerless as
20,000 attend rave

Western Daily Press
1992

protestors and ravers were portrayed as anti-social and a negative influence on society. Viewing stereotyped images in the press I again felt compelled to show the human face of my traveller friends.

In 1995 I bought myself a double decker bus and spent time on the road in Europe with a wave of travellers fleeing the repercussions of the Criminal Justice Bill. The images of my *Travellers* (1996–98) series deal very much with our notions of home. But in these cases the spaces were not dictated by the architects, stonemasons and plasterers of house builders, but by the steel, glass and plastics of the vehicle production lines. These intimate portraits show whole worlds distilled into small physical locations. Unlike a house, where possessions are situated and functions are carried out in different rooms and areas, the traveller homes consist of one condensed physical space. Like my *Persons Unknown* series, these portraits were taken with a large-format camera and capture the quiet, intimate moments of people in their homes. These are the opposite of the fly-on-the-wall, sensationalised images that frequented press representations of this lifestyle. Although no direct references were taken from historical paintings, the sense of dignity, calmness and humanity that Vermeer gave his subjects is imbued into my photographs. These images went on to be widely reproduced in national magazines and journals, where they presented an alternative representation of this lifestyle.



Donovan Wylie
From the series *Losing Ground*
Brighton, 1996

Traveller No.II
1996

From the series *Holly Street*
1997

The home had now become a central theme in my work. On my return from Europe to my home in Hackney I set out to explore my wider community, questioning what constitutes my home? For many people in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s, the notion of home was facing a huge shift. Under the Conservative government of the time, the country was continuing its transition from the tenanted majority of households towards a nation of mortgage indebted individuals. This shift in the socio-economic personal finances of a nation was also mirrored in our cultural understanding of social housing. In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, 'homes were built for heroes' in a welfare state designed to give decent housing for all. But from the 1970s this notion changed and social housing became seen as substandard — even as the personification of evil in the guise of the inner-city tower block. These factory-built homes, where people had made their lives over years of struggle, were now being abandoned by central government in terms of funding, and, in many cases, blown up by local authorities drained of the resources to maintain them. This came to a head in the mid 1990s when Tony Blair's New Labour government decided to revamp the Holly Street estate in Hackney as a flagship urban regeneration project. Some of my friends lived in the Holly Street tower blocks and again the need to document, illustrate and to elevate these people and their homes before they were lost became the driving force behind my *Holly Street* (1997–98) project.

While working with the residents of the estate the role of the court painter from a bygone age became the core of my practice. As with my squatter and traveller images, I used the large-format architectural camera to render all the documentary details while capturing the beauty and colour of these homes. I worked collaboratively with the residents, showing them 5×4 Polaroids of themselves before making any final images. This enabled people to present their chosen image of themselves to a wider audience in a similar way that the Kings and Queens presented themselves to their subjects. The images of single elderly residents, young families and couples again describe a sense of home with dignity and pride, against a backdrop of degradation and displacement. The *Holly Street* series gave an insight into people's lives, experiences and conditions at the time.

In contrast to this, my subsequent series *Holly Street Voids* (1997–98) is of the same estate when the residents had been relocated and the spaces vacated. The eerie images become requiems to lives lost, with their epitaphs written through the textures of the patterned wallpapers that hang starkly in desolate voids. These stage sets with their backdrops are all that remain of the optimism and promises of lives to be fulfilled. Three of the four tower blocks on the Holly Street estate were blown up in 2001. My images are reproduced in the book *Factory Built Homes* (1998), alongside archival images of Holly Street. They were also enlarged floor to ceiling size and wallpapered over three flats on the 19th floor of one of the tower blocks. These portrayals of everyday lives became a focus of celebration and remembrance, when the residents were reunited for the private view and took a final look at their once cherished homes, before the block was blown up.

The theme of social housing is even more relevant today than it was in the 1990s. Currently in London social housing is under huge pressure, with thousands of low-income individuals and families unable to secure decent, affordable homes. At the same time property prices soar through a huge influx of investors turning homes into property portfolios. In my recent project *A Palace for Us* (2010) I highlight the history of social housing through the personal histories of the elderly residents of the Woodberry Down estate as it underwent huge redevelopment. This estate embodied the post second world war ideal of decent housing for all, that was born out of the destruction of much of London's housing stock during the Blitz. To the people moving there these homes were 'palaces', compared to the slums of the East End. Before these palaces were pulled down amidst plumes of dust, I gathered an archive of images, stories, sentiments and feelings from some of the life long residents that made a testament to lost homes and lives.

I used these materials to create a celebratory film that re-enacts key moments from the lives of the residents. The residents were involved in this project at every stage and are the narrators and in some cases the actors in the film. This project evolved from a three-year residency working alongside Age Concern Hackney and the Woodberry Down Elders group. The estate is currently being

From the series *Holly Street Voids*
1997

Jim Campbell in his flat on the Woodberry Down Estate
2010

Woodberry Girl
Woodberry Down Estate
1981
Tom Hunter archive

Erica's Mum
Woodberry Down Estate
1970s
Tom Hunter archive

expanded, reconfigured and rebranded as Woodberry Park. While the original residents have been rehoused, much of the new development provides an exclusive mixture of apartments and penthouses. My film was shown at the Serpentine Gallery and local cinemas and was critically acclaimed.

'This is a magical film. It weaves the memories of people who grew up in east London and have lived on the estate since it opened into a silvery thread of meaning illuminated by dramatisations of their experiences filmed in the aged, but dignified, Woodberry Down buildings and public spaces.' — Jonathan Jones, *The Guardian*

It has been important for me, while describing my home and the homes of others, to incorporate other physical structures that map out my neighbourhood. Looking at the different communities around me has led me to think about the social, spiritual and public spaces that define and reflect these different cultural groups. East London has always been home to many immigrants from the French Protestant Huguenots of the 17th century and the Russian Jews of the 19th century to the Afro-Caribbean and Bangladeshis of the 20th century and the more recent arrivals of Vietnamese and Turkish peoples. Each wave of immigrants brings with it their cultures, religions and shared experiences and these are often embodied in their community spaces, giving a thread of connection to the countries and homes that they have left behind. Whether it is a community centre, place of worship or marketplace, such as Ridley Road, these places all create a sense of belonging and identity, which is central to the notion of home.

Over the last number of years I have set out to define this landscape through these locations in my *Prayer Places* (2006–11), *Public Spaces, Public Stages* (2008–11) and *Ridley Road Market* (2010) projects, using a large-format pinhole camera. This camera, which has no lens, no shutter and no lighting, felt like the perfect way to interact with these unfamiliar and sensitive spaces, capturing them silently and unobtrusively and giving a respect and calmness. The images, which render the interiors into dreamlike theatre sets, are the products of long exposures that blur colours and edges and leave the human form undetectable. These sets give the viewer the space and backdrop onto which they can project their own narratives and imagined lives, rather than viewing a portrayed subject. I have photographed assembly halls, local theatres, cinemas, mosques, synagogues, churches, temples, markets and shops, which all map out both my and my wider community's psycho-geographical notion of the home.

It is not simply the physical structures we inhabit that shape our notions of home but also the wider geographical setting. The landscape that makes up the place I know as home is an important aspect of how I depict the life around me. At the eastern edge of Hackney lies the marshy landscape of Hackney Wick. Crisscrossed with waterways, it became ideal for industrial development in the 19th century. Print-

Suleymaniye Mosque, Kingsland Road
2006

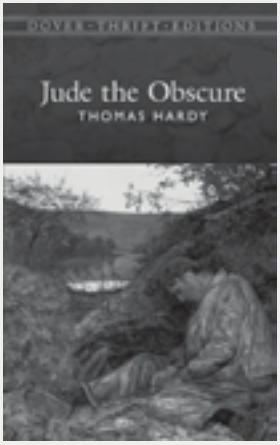
The Way Home
2000

ing and chemical companies reliant upon a good water supply moved into the area. However, during the 1970s, when much of Britain went into industrial decline, many of the warehouses and factories were abandoned and became derelict, leaving parts of this marshy Venice of the East to be reclaimed by nature. It was here that I reconnected with my rural childhood and created my *Life and Death in Hackney* (1999–2001) series.

Even in the urban, industrial, pre-Olympic landscape of Hackney Wick and the Lea Valley it is the shrubs, bushes and greenery, vestiges of a rural idyll, that make a significant visual impact. The images I created for this series reference another generation of artists, in this case the Pre-Raphaelites, and how they made social commentary while exploring the notions of beauty, narrative and nature. In my case, the nature that I described brought the landscape of Hackney Wick back to life through buddleia, brambles, nettles and wild grasses. Tableaux, which are traditionally used in classical painting to record historical events, became the method I used to create a picture of the area, its people, their stories and notions of home. By setting up tableaux and arranging my subjects to re-enact the events that constituted their lives, these lives transcended the ordinary and disposable to become universal and immortal. In *The Way Home* (2000) a girl reenacts her accidental plunge into the River Lea following a rave party in a derelict warehouse. This moment in time takes on an otherworldliness, echoing John Everett Millais's *Ophelia* (1851–2) and the

John Everett Millais
Ophelia
1851–2

narrative of Shakespeare's tragedy. While all the images from *Life and Death in Hackney* can be seen as documenting a landscape that has been lost to the devouring appetite of the 2012 Olympic games, the life stories they depict have been immortalised and will endure.



Cover of Thomas Hardy's 'Jude the Obscure' published by Dover Thrift Editions utilising a reproduction of Henry Wallis *The Stonebreaker*, 1857

In the same way that I have made Hackney my home and the centre of my universe through my art, Thomas Hardy immortalised Wessex, making it the centre of his literary universe. He grew up in a Dorset village close to where I grew up and interwove the real life stories from his local paper, the *Dorchester Evening Chronicle*, into his novels. His eloquent descriptions of ordinary people's lives, dramatising tragic everyday realities, had a huge impact on how I viewed the human condition and inspired me to look at the headlines in my local paper, the *Hackney Gazette*. The stories and people in this became disposable as they were reported one week and then disregarded the next. I collected the articles that could be categorised into negative aspects of the human condition: lust, rage, poverty, hate, violence, revenge, rape and murder — the staple material of the tabloid press. I re-imagined the headlines and their narratives to create tableaux that referenced art historical paintings from the National Gallery, London and created my *Living in Hell and Other Stories* (2003–04) series. This went on to be the only solo photography show to ever be exhibited at the National Gallery.

The After Party
2000

Living in Hell
2004


Living in hell
Pamela, 71, says infested flat should be condemned

Hackney Gazette
2003

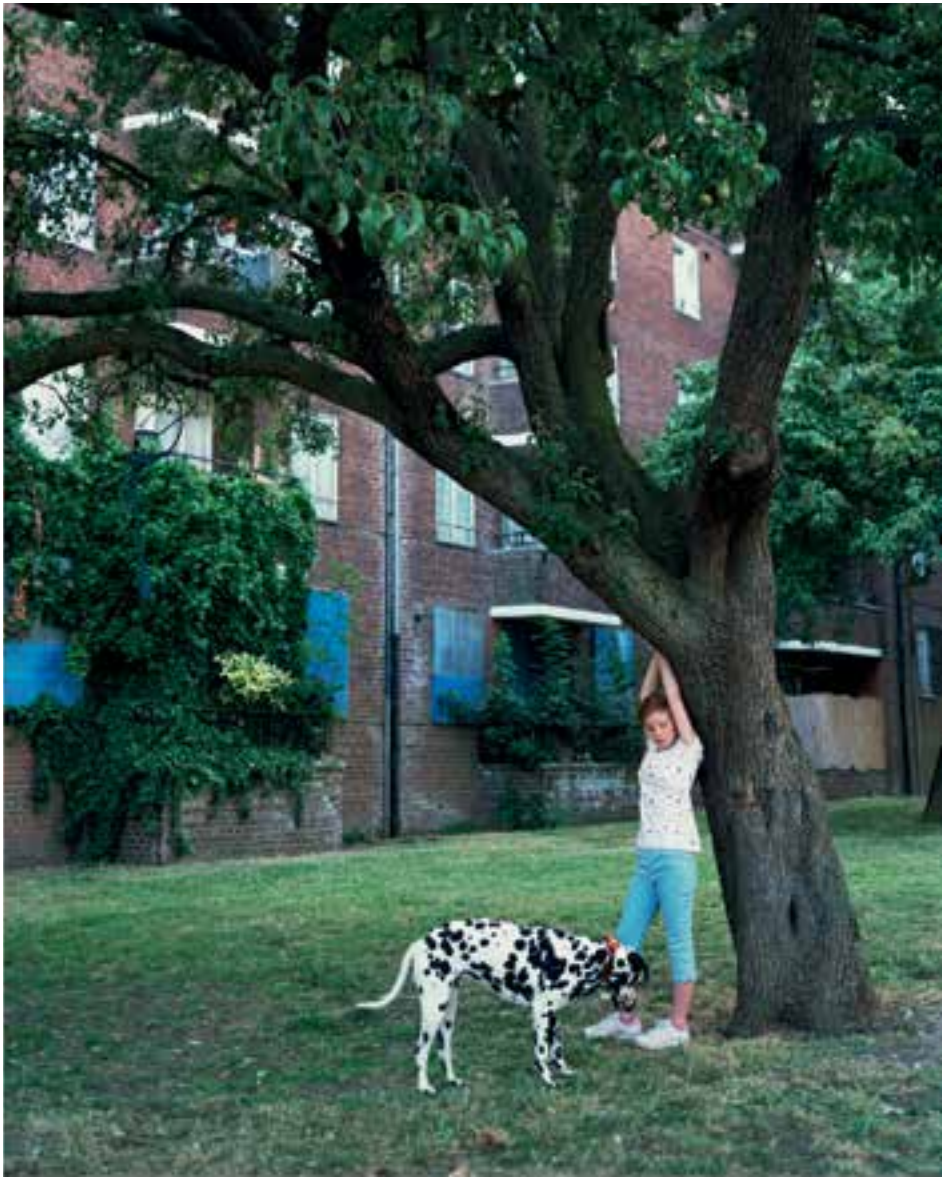
In *Living in Hell* (2004), from this series, I took the story of an old lady, sofa-bound in her own cockroach infested home, abandoned by the state and her own family. Her tragic story was re-imagined using the painting of the Le Nain Brothers' *Four Figures at a Table* (c.1643). Their work shows the poverty of a family living in 17th century rural France; the painting is devoid of material objects, but the family still has a sense of dignity and camaraderie through their companionship. This is all lost in my reimagining of an old woman's home, which is situated in one of the richest cities in the world but whose resident has been left to rot. This is further

Le Nain Brothers
Four Figures at a Table
c.1643

emphasised by the use of a thousand cockroaches that pattern the wallpaper. In this case the physical structure of the home is no longer Elidea's centre of the universe, equidistant between Heaven and Hell, but feels far closer to the underworld. My image shows a different side of home, which is the experience of many, where poverty and neglect has made the space a cause for despair and suffering, rather than celebration and security.

Tableaux have become a significant feature of the way I render my home. My concerns in these reconstructions are the political, economic and cultural forces that inform and shape our surroundings. In *Unheralded Stories* (2008–10) the subject of home is again manifested through art history and the real lives that make up the landscape of my neighbourhood. Many of the people and their homes are in a moment of flux, seeing their culture and landscape disappearing before their eyes. In *Woodberry Down* (2010) a young girl is portrayed under a pear tree with her Dalmatian dog, posed as if from Lucas Cranach's *Cupid complaining to Venus* (c.1525). In this case the backdrop is not the biblical prelapsarian Eden but a half abandoned council estate, where flats are steeled up to keep squatters out in preparation for demolition. The girl stands at a crossroads in her own life, while also personifying the impact on society of the way we

Lucas Cranach the Elder
Cupid complaining to Venus
c.1525



Woodberry Down
2010

Death of Coltelli
2009

develop London and the effects of this on those that inhabit it. Where will her generation live in the future? Will they be able to live in inner London or will it become like Paris, where the workers of the city have to commute from suburban ghettos?

Eugène Delacroix
Death of Sardanapalus
1827

In *Death of Coltelli* (2009) art history is again referenced in the form of Eugène Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827). In this classical painting Delacroix overlooks French society in favour of exploring exotic notions of the Orient. The painting describes a romanticised and Westernised version of the home of the last King of Assyria on his deathbed, watching his harem and entourage being slain before his own death. This exoticism represents the antithesis of what I do in my own art practice, in my case I am trying to document, reimagine and immortalise ordinary moments and places of my home, while Delacroix's paintings abandon his everyday environment.
In my tableau the setting is the home of a recently deceased Italian Catholic grandmother. The girl in my image mirrors the posture of the semi-naked female figure spread at the Sultan's feet in Delacroix's painting. But, unlike the painting, my female figure is the only one to inhabit this shrine to Italian matriarchal Catholic culture. In taking this pose, my subject becomes like Mary at the feet of a crucified Christ. This scene of an immigrant dying above her café takes on universal themes and references played out by the grieving granddaughter. In this case the home is more than a home, it is a shrine

to lives and cultures lost, the bed is no longer a place of comfort and peace but echoes the eternal struggle from life to death.

This image represents many of my concerns around the notion of home — its physical and geographical space in time, its connection to its inhabitants, narratives and lifestyles and its relation to history, culture and the politics of having one's own space in which to live and die. For me, my home is not just the modern, domesticated space, perpetuated by contemporary culture, but more reflects our earlier notions of the home as village, with its sense of community. Through my work I have set out to capture both the uniqueness and universality of the home, echoing Mircea's idea of the home being at the centre of the universe and that without a home one is in chaos and living in a kind of unreality. Using photography I have revealed the complex tapestry of my neighbourhood and its many homes, which form the central points in people's lives. My images frame and freeze these moments on life's journeys and give the home another dimension, as a shrine that connects the everyday to the eternal, immortalising and commemorating these homes and the people that live in them, before they are lost and written out of history.

Tom Hunter is an award-winning and internationally acclaimed artist. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Tom has earned several awards during his career, including an Honorary Doctorate of the Arts from the University of East London in 2011 for his work documenting the lives of the people of East London and Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society in 2010.

He graduated from the London College of Printing in 1994 with his work 'The Ghetto', which is now on permanent display at the Museum of London. He studied for his MA at the Royal College of Art, where, in 1996, he was awarded the Photography Prize by Fuji Film for his series 'Travellers'. In 1998 'Woman Reading a Possession Order' from his series 'Persons Unknown', won the John Kobal Photographic Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery.

In 2006 he became the only artist to have a solo photography show at the National Gallery for his series 'Living in Hell and Other Stories', which talked about Hackney and its relationship to its local paper. His works are in many collections around the world including: MOMA, New York; National Gallery, London; The V&A, London; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Smithsonian, Washington and the Los Angles County Museum of Art.

Robert Elms has been known as 'the voice of London' for 20 years because of his award winning daily radio show on BBC London. He studied Modern History & Political Thought at LSE. In his early twenties he became an editor of the The Face magazine, and made regular contributions to Elle, US Vogue and Arena.

His broadcasts include 'Loose Ends', the satirical radio show on Radio 4; 'Travelog' for Channel 4, writing & presenting portraits of places such as Miami, Cuba, Bhutan and Colombia, and a special on Ethiopia in 1997 which won him the television travel writer of the year; Radio 5's 'Euromix', a show on European youth culture and music which won a Gold Sony award for best specialist music show; a five part BBC TV series on Spain; and a three part Channel 4 series on bullfighting. He has written three novels; 'In Search Of The Crack'; 'Spain — A Portrait After The General', nominated travel book of the year in 1992; and 'The Way We Wore', a best selling memoir on the history of youth culture fashion and his many sartorial triumphs and disasters.

He has been a football columnist for the Times on Saturday and continues to write music, travel and lifestyle pieces for many magazines, especially British GQ where he has been an editor since its inception. He has recently had his first major movie script commissioned by the BBC.

University of the Arts London is a vibrant world centre for innovation in arts, design, fashion, communication and performing arts. The university is a unique creative community that draws together six distinctive and distinguished Colleges: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion, and Wimbledon College of Art.

Proudly associated with some of the most original thinkers and practitioners in the arts, the University continues to innovate, challenge convention and nurture exceptional talents. One of our goals is to sustain and develop a world-class research culture that supports and informs the university's profile. As a leader in the arts & design sector, we aim to clearly articulate the practice-based nature of much of our research, and in doing so to demonstrate the importance of the creative arts to scholarly research.

The Professorial Platforms series is an opportunity for University colleagues and associates, as well as invited members of the public to learn more about the research undertaken in the University. The Platforms enable Professors to highlight their field of interest and the University, in turn, to recognise and commemorate their successes to date.

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