



ECONOMY

The Elephant and Castle



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The Elephant and Castle

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Shooting the Elephant

Each year the MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography students at the LCC work on a project documenting the Elephant and Castle. They are responding to an area undergoing the profound changes of regeneration. The course tutors give the students a simple theme, like work or community, and encourage them to find engaging ways of producing documentary photographs. A key concept for this element of the course is taking risks and challenging their practice. The results are naturally unpredictable: some of their best work has emerged from these assignments and occasionally, to be fair, some of their worst. A trilogy of books: Home, Community and now Economy has been edited from their outputs.

Each year a different group of students is sent out into the locality to make fresh work. Inevitably some of their projects overlap: the same subjects are photographed but in different ways. What has emerged is not simple repetition. The differing visual strategies employed to document the same territory has led to a rich layering of imagery. The result is a statement about

the Elephant but also about the processes, potential and partiality of all forms of documentary photography.

The widely held stereotype of the area is encapsulated by Giles Coren's description of the Elephant as a "stabby shite hole of staggering grimness". This negative image has recently produced unexpected dividends: while the few remaining Heygate tenants were being "decanted" from their homes, the estate became a popular film location, a backdrop offering directors an instant dystopia, an atmosphere redolent of decay, dread and urban anxiety. The Brad Pitt zombie movie World War Z was filmed here, complete with exploding cars, Michael Caine's Harry Brown too.

The regeneration plans and timetable have been substantially affected by the credit crunch and recession. However, demolition crews have finally begun to dismantle the Heygate. Inside the estate it often seems surprisingly quiet: the massive slabs of council flats blocking out the sound of traffic. But now, depopulated, the place has an extra stillness. Birdsong cascades down from

the canopies of thirty year old trees, belying the very idea of blight. In amongst the dense greenery, part of the "Walworth Urban Forest", small vegetable plots crowded with broad beans, garlic, fennel and brassicas have appeared, symbolic acts of regeneration and resistance. They echo Gerard Winstanley's community of diggers on St Georges Hill.

This project would not have been possible without the involvement of the local people of the Elephant and Castle who gave access, permission and in many cases substantial assistance to the students. The project, production of this book and the accompanying exhibition was generously supported by Southwark Council, Getty Images, LCC and C3 Imaging. A website www.theelephantvanishes.com will be launched later in 2012.

Patrick Sutherland
Director
The Elephant Vanishes Project
January 2012

Nooks and Crannies

Michal Honkys

While the sky darkens and my camera and I are being soaked in the thundery rain in the middle of the Elephant roundabout, I hear someone call out from the stream of cars: “What the f... is that?” The strange metal box does not accommodate secret nuclear waste, as is rumoured, but is a memorial to the famous locally-born scientist Michael Faraday. It houses the Northern Line Underground Electrical Substation.

I took a long walk. I walked from busy roundabouts, through the surprisingly green concrete jungle, through unexpected open areas, parks and allotments to the local archive and back again. From being an “invisible” visitor I became a part of the place, abandoning a sense of time, piecing together a patchwork of the place. Is any landscape a result of our limited desires and needs in a particular time? Are these needs and desires formulated mostly by the few in power? Do such generated landscapes affect the way we think and live as a society as well as individuals? What would happen to our landscapes and lives if individuals and local communities were given space to have their say and took more control over their space and lives?

On my walks through the nooks and crannies of the Elephant, many people told me they felt alienated and excluded, losing their sense of place or control over where they live. They blame the Council or the Government for not doing enough to help them, for seeing people and the space only in the algorithmic frame of numbers and profits. On the other hand, I met quite a few people reclaiming their neighbourhoods: creating community gardens, restoring local parks or creating new ones on neglected sites, growing food and keeping bees but most importantly sharing their knowledge and experience with others. Even government and local authorities support some of their initiatives and projects.

I found a patch of sweet wild strawberries in the Heygate Estate, picked cherries and tried to identify herbs and plants in the parks. I had delicious fried plantain, an Afro-Caribbean speciality, at East Street and chatted to many friendly local people. The sense of community was apparent. No, do not take me wrong. Elephant is not beautiful, rich or safe. But it can be as beautiful and as safe as people desire. The regeneration is necessary: not only of the landscape, but also of our minds.



“It’s something that everybody can use, regardless of how much you earn, where you live or where you were born,” said councilor Paul Noblet, executive member for regeneration, at the opening of the restored St Mary’s Churchyard Park and playground. There was a church on the site in the time of the Domesday Book. The Parish of St Mary Newington dates back to the 13th century but by 1876, traffic had increased so much that the church was demolished to widen the road. Until the regeneration, costing £1.35 million, the neglected churchyard was strewn with litter and frequently used by drug addicts. Today it is once again a small family-friendly place.



Samuel and Kahn were unaware that their pitch on the Heygate will shortly disappear. The current regeneration is the latest of a series. In the 1880s, numerous blocks of flats, crammed together to increase housing density, replaced pleasant residential neighbourhoods. The better-off moved out, the population became exclusively working-class and children had nowhere to play but the streets. In the 1930's Southwark Council began yet another regeneration to clear these slums. An article in the Times described the proposal in detail: 1400 people would be relocated and new five-storey blocks of council flats housing 1500 people would be build. At the enquiry, local residents suggested unsuccessfully that terraced cottages with private gardens should be built instead.



London honey is regarded as some of the best in the world. The Walworth Garden Farm was founded in 1987 on the site of the former Surrey Zoo. Local residents created the farm on derelict land in this heavily built up inner-city area. It aims to provide education, resources and training in organic horticulture. The farm now provides horticultural therapy for adults with learning difficulties, environmental education for schools, like the School Orchard Project, an employment programme for unemployed Southwark residents, and free courses for local residents.



Elephant and Castle is widely viewed as one of the most uninspiring places in London. But the Salisbury Row Park Development is a typical example of how the power of a dedicated community of local people can make their habitat cleaner, healthier and safer. Lorraine Hilton and her husband actively pressurised the Council to listen to the local residents, and organised community meetings and workdays. The Salisbury Row Park is receiving a massive £1.8 million as a part of the “Street for People” scheme. Amongst many changes, the roads will be narrowed and where there is a tarmac today, trees will be planted, the green spaces linked, the lighting improved and cycling paths built.



“Estates like the Aylesbury and Heygate are where the new generation of drunks, junkies, muggers and wreckers are growing up now”... an article in the Sunday Times a few years ago regurgitated the old stereotypes of the Elephant. Security patrols advised me not to enter the estate after nine in the evening, as gangs plunder the abandoned flats. But this is not a crime scene, it’s a film set on the Heygate, one of many, though the crew refused to tell me what they were filming...



“Look at O – Central. People from the Heygate have moved elsewhere. The Council failed to provide the alternative accommodation they promised. There are new flats over there, but sadly the Heygate residents can just watch it from across the road. They say there are affordable units, but only a handful of people from here could afford it. It’s about £160,000 for a small flat. I can’t buy, I am litigating the Council at the moment and will move away later.” *(A local Heygate resident who asked not to be named)*



“A real sign of the coming regeneration of the Elephant and Castle” and “the next London icon” said Simon Milton, Deputy Mayor of London, watching the topping out of the Strata tower, a new 43 storey residential block, that will “truly put the Elephant on the map of London”. The adjacent Draper Tower, now dwarfed by the Strata, was once the tallest block of flats in London and home to City workers, who enjoyed magnificent views over the Capital. Most of the available apartments in the Strata Tower sold very quickly despite prices up to 2.5 million pounds.

I Shop

Rebecca Harley

These portraits were taken in the Elephant and Castle shopping area in South London in the summer of 2009. I was interested in the diversity of the people who use the shopping centre and the surroundings areas, particularly East Street market and Walworth Road.

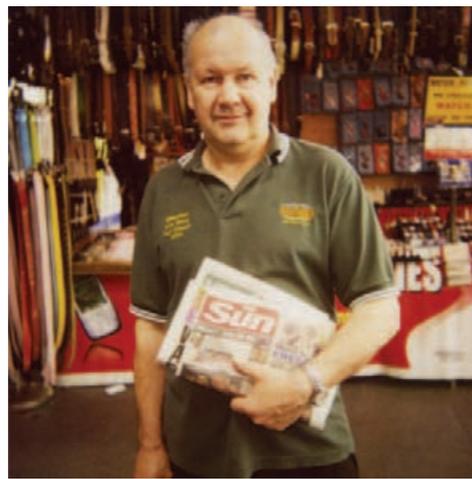
I wanted to explore the link between the products people buy and their personality and identity. Items in a shopping bag can give clues about tastes and spending habits and reveal tantalising information about individual personalities, which I find fascinating.

I asked strangers I met on the street what they had just bought. Through the act of photographing and having conversations with the people I met, I built up a picture of the people who shop in the area and their differing personal stories. I photographed on film, took notes and also took two polaroids

of each encounter, one to be given as a gift and one on which I recorded their names. The following selection is made from these polaroids.



My name is Juliet and this is my mum Nelly. We live in Southwark, but we are originally from Columbia. Today is my day off and I don't get much free time so I'm really loving spending time with my Mum today. We've been shopping for two pineapples and I think they were about two pounds each from Tesco's in the Elephant and Castle. We've been in London for the past 18 years, we go back every two years or so. You don't see these fruits growing here in London, this one is from Panama I think, no Costa Rica. They bring a little taste of home to us.



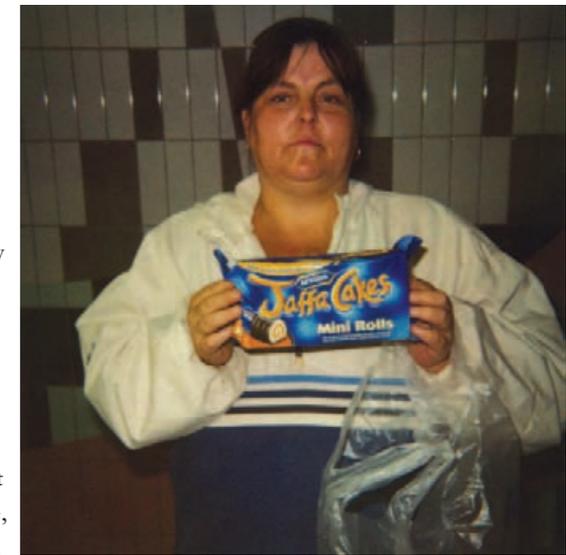
Top Left – I'm Louise and I live in Stockwell. I'm shopping here because it's the only market that's open everyday rather than just on Sundays. It's quite close to home so I come here to get some cheap clothes. I bought a dress and a couple of handbags. The dress was only three quid so it was a bargain. That's another good thing about coming to the Elephant: I only spent £30.00 in total, so not too much.

Bottom Left – My name is Miguel. I live near by and I'm a student. I came out to buy a couple of nice fresh ciders for lunch. It's really random, I like to spend around twenty pounds per week on shopping, but it's always over, you know. Today I spent already eleven pounds because I went to East Street Market.



Top Right – My name is Tony. I live local, about five minutes bus ride from here and it's very convenient for me to shop locally. I've been shopping for everything today, I buy all me toiletries, the groceries, the meat, everything all at once from the stores. It's convenient because we both come together, then when I've finished I go outside and look after the dog and the wife goes in and gets the rest of the shopping.

Bottom Right – My name is Dawn. I live in Forest Hill and I was going through the Elephant and Castle so I thought I'd have a look around. I've only just started shopping and all I've bought are some Jaffa Cakes for the grandkids to eat while we walk around. I do like the market here, there's lots of different things to buy and it's pretty cheap, so that's why I like to come and have a look.





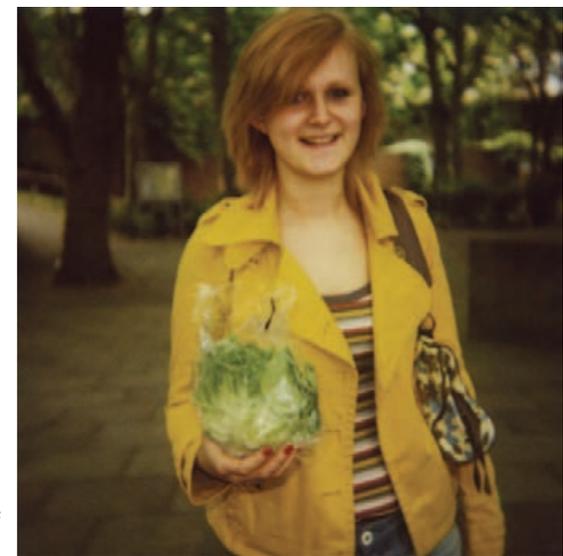
Top Left – I'm Rita and we've been shopping and then to play bingo. We didn't win anything though.

Bottom Left – My name is Pritchard. I came to the shopping centre to buy a pair of shoes. I'm going to wear these shoes when I go shopping.



Top Right – I'm Hilton Herbert. I came from the West Indies in 1955 and settled here. I know they say the country is going downhill but I still think Britain is the best place in the whole world. I've been shopping for sea salt to bathe my skin. It's very good for West Indians, especially to use in the bath.

Bottom Right – I'm Kat and I live right over there in the big blue building. I've bought lunch for my friend who's waiting for me. I've got lettuce, some coleslaw, some tomatoes and some Pro Plus because I'm going out tonight. I spent about four pounds and thirteen pence.





My name is Helen and I live in a residential place and it's where all elderly people live, we have to look after ourselves and do our work and cleaning and that. We've got a lovely garden and when the sun is out it's very nice. I've been shopping to Marks and Spencer and I've got all my groceries. We shop here because it's local and we don't have so far to walk as we are both elderly, my friend Mary here is 93 and I'm 86 so we can't walk all that far as we're getting too old.



My name is Janet. I'm from the Elephant and Castle. I've been shopping for clothes today. I shop here because it's local to me, I've got disability problems so it's quite close for me as I live in the Heygate Estate. When they pull them down I don't know how far I'll have to go for my shopping. I'm going to miss the Elephant and the Heygate when I move because it's where all my children were brought up. I've got 12 grandchildren and even they'll miss visiting here. It's sad because we don't know where we are going to be put. I could be miles from a shop so I'm trying to learn the PC so I can do the shopping online and get it delivered.

Bound Together

Francesco Stelitano

Why, even when we are thousands of miles away from home, do we always look for people who belong to our town, our nation, or our continent? What is this thing that binds us together? In the mid fifties my grandfather migrated from a poor village in the mountains of the “Aspromonte” in the Calabrian region in southern Italy to the north. As with many immigrants, his primary goal was to find a job in a safe and nice place to build a home for his family where he could raise his two sons. The tales he told me about those early years are countless. How he used to meet with his friends from the south every afternoon to find a bit of home in a foreign place, how they always tried to help each other to find work, and always the sense of belonging that bound them together.

Before I left Italy to start my own adventure as an immigrant, I went to his house to say goodbye and he told me that even after more than fifty years of living in the border between Liguria and Tuscany he doesn't feel at home at all, his home was in Calabria where he is born.

I was walking in the Elephant and Castle in south London in a desolated alley when I entered the place presented in this essay. I was drinking a coffee when the woman who runs the little restaurant told me that she too doesn't feel at home here in London where she lives. Her real home is in Colombia where she was born. Only the way they help each other and share this space to set up their own individual shops has allowed them to get work and to maintain their family and beloved. In this big room divided into small compartments that accommodate the various shops I heard again all the stories my grandfather told me.









Open for Business?

Wing Ki Lee

Shopping is at the very heart of the Elephant and Castle. The famous pink shopping centre adjacent to the main roundabout was the first shopping centre to be commissioned in the UK (though not the first to open) Once celebrated as a beacon of modern retailing, the centre now has a downbeat quality that distinguishes it from the identikit malls that have sprouted in every town centre in the UK. Sure it has some chains: a Tesco, Lloyds TSB, Greggs, WH Smiths, Boots and Iceland but there is also a bookstall with no English titles, where you can buy the Harry Potter books but only in Spanish. There's a bingo hall and a bowling alley on the top floor, hairdressers catering for the Afro-Caribbean community, a Polish café and deli, a Columbian restaurant, two pawnbrokers and four money transfer centres that facilitate sending earnings abroad.

Walking through the Elephant I discovered a myriad of retail outlets, eateries and stalls. Dragon Castle, my favourite Chinese restaurant in London sits on the ground floor of a student accommodation complex. The graffiti covered bicycle shop called Recycling lies under the railway arches. Angelus Temple, the Foursquare Gospel Church, is located in a shop on the Heygate Estate. These photographs of the façades of shops in the Elephant epitomise this local, particular and richly multicultural economy. As this area

experiences the inevitable transformation of regeneration, this typology of shops will undoubtedly shift.

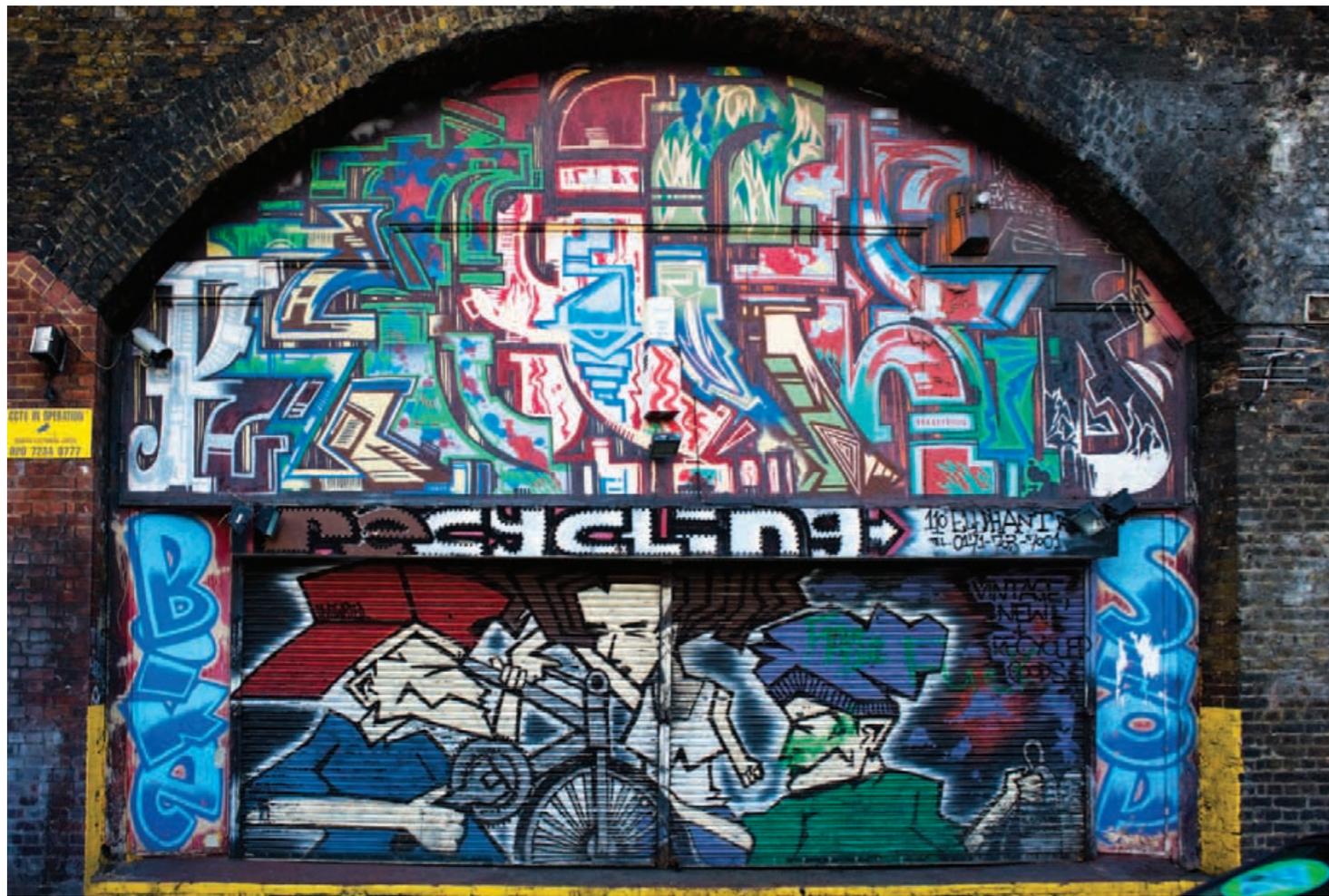
At St Georges Circus, a series of fake façades of shop windows has been pasted over the row of boarded up shops adjoining the old Duke of Clarence pub. These detailed photographic images show expensive designer boutiques and upmarket grocers selling organic foods. They look like an old-fashioned unspoiled high street in a prosperous town, not what we think of the Elephant. There is no sign of Payless in this developer's vision of the future.

This record of shop fronts offers a miniature time capsule, a record of a locality, its high streets and retails outlets at a particular point in time (May 2009). The pattern of the local economy in the Elephant is bound to change. What will the regeneration do to these outlets? How many of these small local businesses will survive or even flourish? But the shopping centre is no longer scheduled with demolition. The latest plans are for a major refurbishment. Perhaps the new centre will still have space for the small market traders who cluster below the roundabout.











Hostel

Steve Mepsted

There are hostels all over London. They typically cater for travellers from Canada, America, Europe, the Middle East and Australia: people working and studying in the UK for short periods of time, adventurers on a budget. However 'The Cricketers', in Elephant and Castle, seems to attract another, more motley bunch. UK residents, older than the average student or traveller, co-exist with the flow of internationals and tend to be billeted in the seven-bed dormitories. Some of these people have stayed for years. For them, the very cheapest accommodation is a priority. The sporadic shift work undertaken by these chefs, postal workers and security guards results in a nightly traffic of weary bodies collapsing into, and heaving out of, creaking metal bunk beds. The Cricketers is a beaten, crooked building nestled between a parking bay and a pizza delivery outlet. There is no receptionist, no student bar, no breakfast, not much sleep and never, ever any privacy.

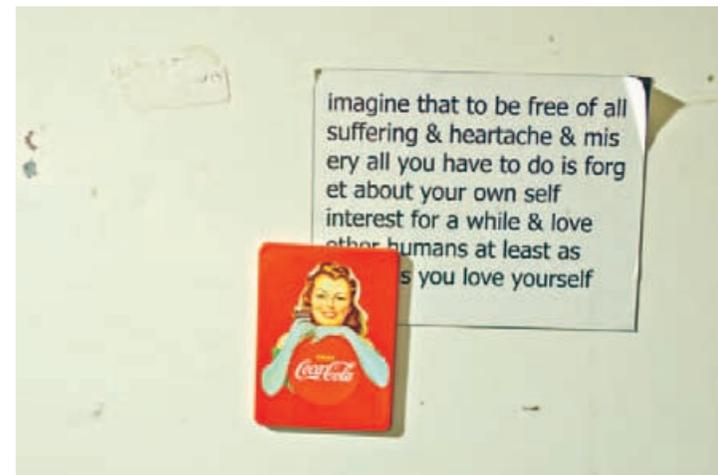
Separation from relationships and estrangement from children, the need to pay divorce maintenance coupled with the severe lack of affordable housing, has led these longer-term residents here. I moved in and became part of the hostel. After living there for a time I pinned up a notice asking if anyone might let me to take

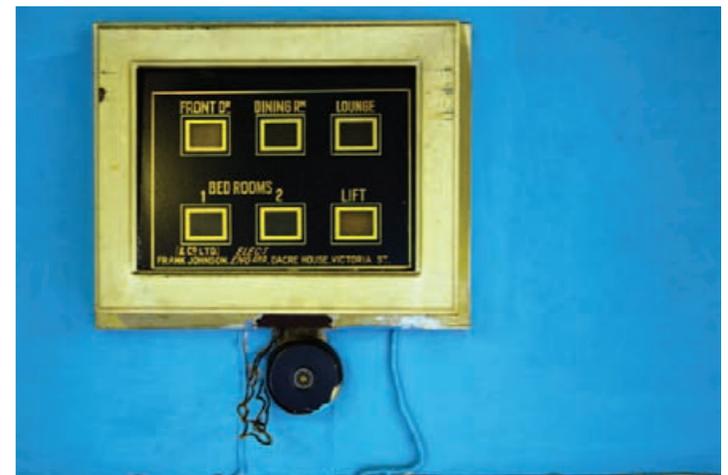
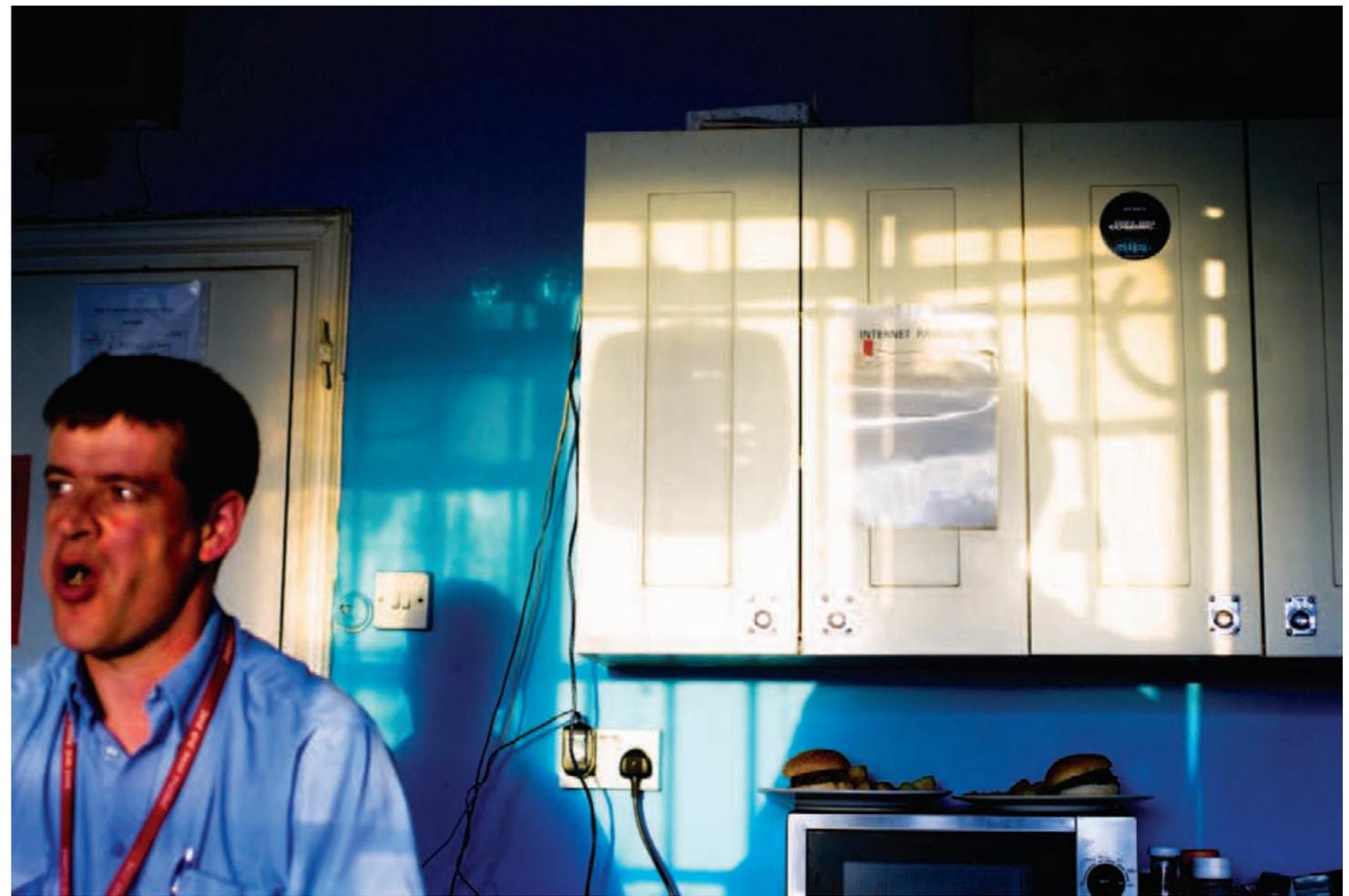
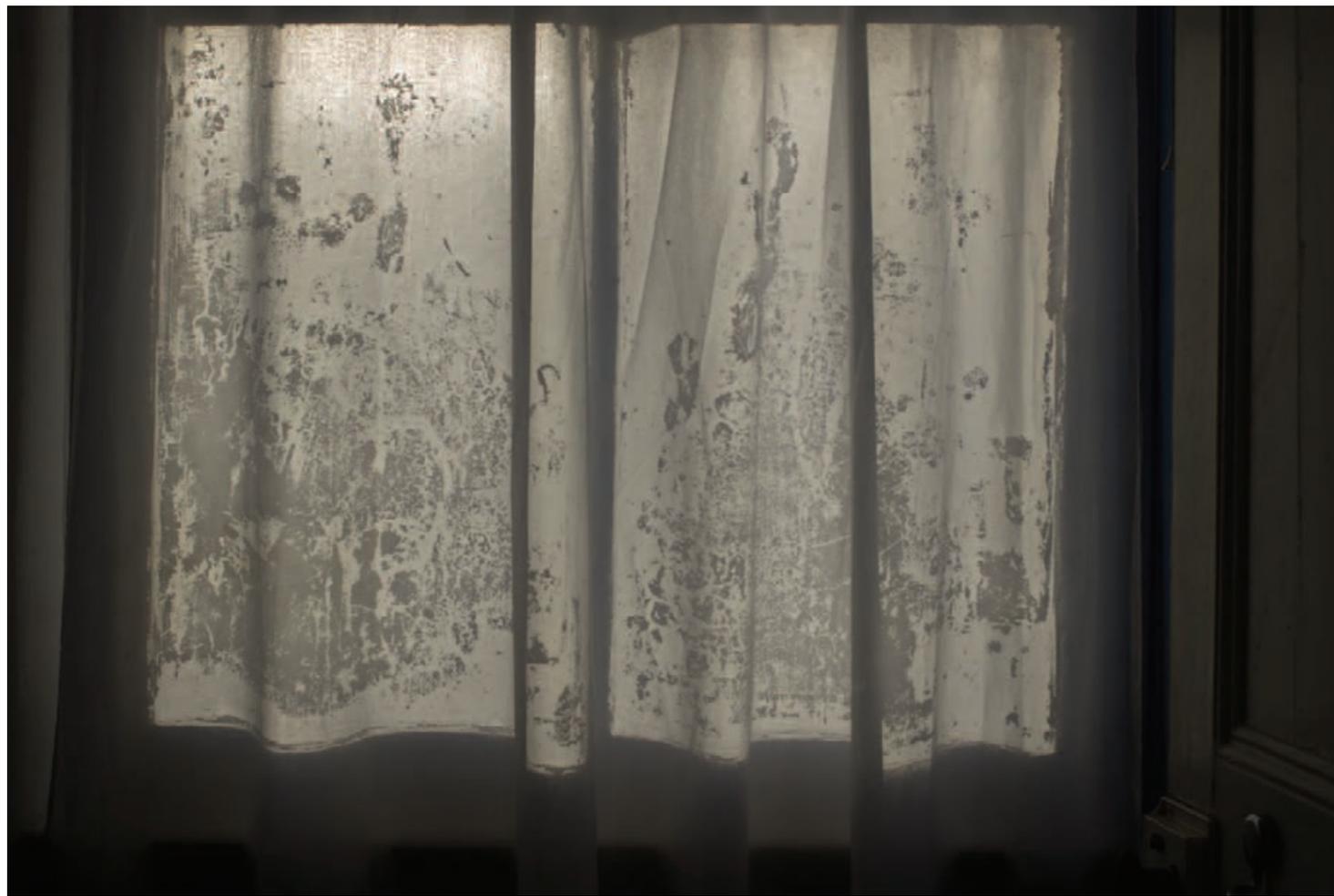
their portrait and interview them about their lives, about how they had come to be in 'The Cricketers' and what their future plans were. Their stories, interesting, sad, hopeful, funny and true, were as fascinatingly varied as the people themselves.

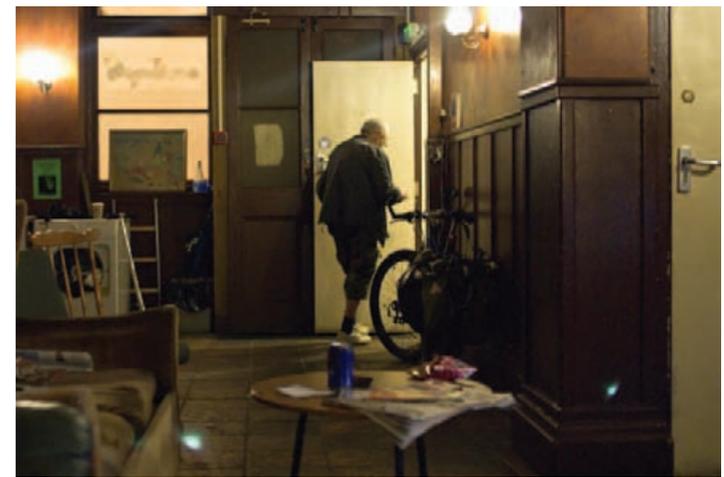
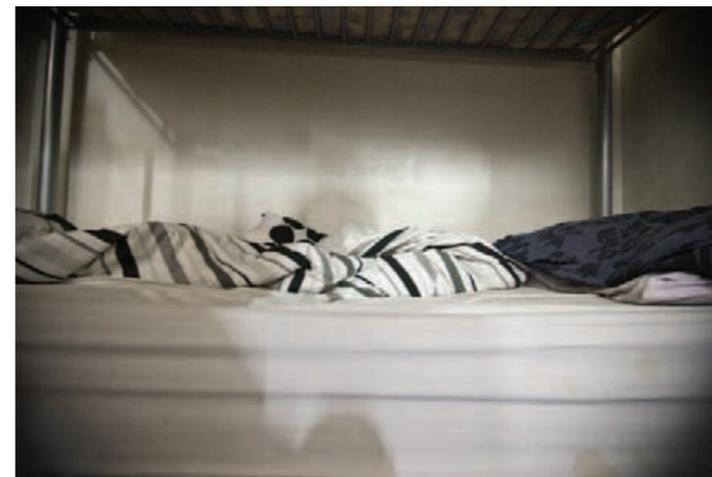
The hostel has three floors, several dormitories (the larger, the cheaper) two bathrooms and three toilets. Life centres on the kitchen, a hub of activity at whatever time of day or night, or in the television lounge downstairs. Evening meals, cooked by one of the resident chefs, are funded by people chipping in to a weekly 'food pot'. After being accepted as 'one of them' I was able to photograph moments of fun, reflection, sadness and community.

A tension was evident between these disparate and mainly transient people. There was the need to co-exist in the knowledge that moving on was a possibility, and the desire to form closer friendships and lasting bonds. Definite hierarchies had formed between the residents in the hostel but there was always the sense that newcomers were welcome. Consistently though, the search for a piece of personal privacy was difficult in such a limited social space.









Morphallaxis

Rhian Clugston

This project documents the small and anonymous acts of repair and regeneration undertaken by the people who live and work in the Elephant. Some of these temporary fixes disappeared after a week, whilst others lasted for months. Some have become so established that their original purpose is unclear. The invisible craftsmen were not restricted solely to repairing broken things. One of the most industrious sites was the short gated passage between Larcom Street and Wansey Street. A new block of flats has been built there as part of the official “regeneration programme” to re-house some of the residents from the nearby Heygate Estate. In order to stop the gates at either end from banging, an elaborate system of dampeners and ties has been created. Each time I visited, someone had added their own individual solution to this problem.

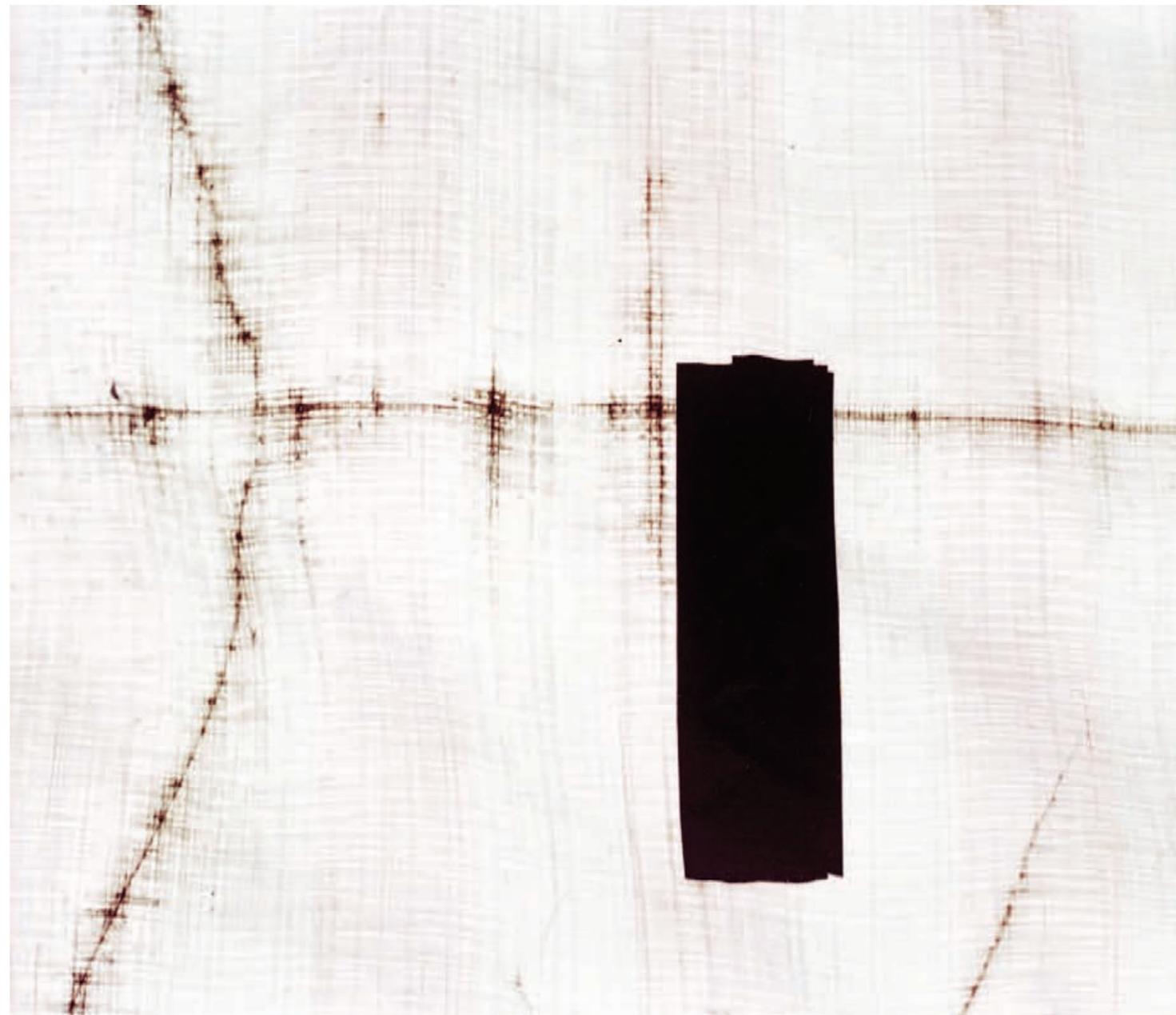
All the things I recorded involve people using materials at hand to get a job done. We are constantly being told as a society that we are wasteful and over reliant on technology. I found it oddly comforting to see that man’s early instinct for utilising and

adapting his environment in the most basic of ways is a skill that hasn’t been lost.

What wasn’t bombed in the second world war, was demolished as part of a 1960’s experiment in urban planning. Communities were broken up and many of the families who had lived in the area for generations moved out to the suburbs. The areas they left were developed into huge social housing blocks, and now history is repeating itself. The residents of the Heygate Estate are being moved to alternative accommodation before the buildings are demolished. There is a concern that this will wipe out any character the area has slowly rebuilt over the last seventy years. But, just as some animals are able to regenerate a destroyed body part by a reorganization of its remaining cells, so I hope that it won’t be too long before the residents of the Elephant & Castle are able to make whatever generic town centre is thrust upon them, their own.









Keeping it Cool

Marta Moreiras

If you have a house, you may have a fridge. The fridge is one of the most common objects in a home. We all need to eat to survive and we all have a fridge at home to keep food fresh.

Even though it is a common object, the fridge is a very intimate part of us. Food is directly related to culture. People tend to believe that we are what we eat. I believe that food reveals a lot of information about us. Food is directly related to economy.

If you let me observe your fridge, I will probably guess a lot of details about your life, your habits, your culture and your economy.

I wanted to do a project to talk about the diversity of the Elephant and Castle through a subject that everybody would understand. Food is universal and is a very visual way to show the multicultural nature of the area. I like to deal directly with people and the project gave me the perfect excuse to enter residents' lives and

homes. I ended up knocking on over four hundred doors. For me, this was an interesting, direct and familiar way to approach people, but I realized how unusual it was to knock on a door in London so I had to develop strategies to gain their confidence so they would let me inside. Over two hundred and fifty houses allowed me in. In the end, dealing with total strangers is just a matter of empathy. If you are able to transmit serenity and honesty, people will open up.

Looking inside people's fridges became quite addictive. The more I knocked, the more I learned. The most exciting part of the project was seeing how people respond to a stranger in their home. That feeling was fantastic!



A British family with one baby living in Oswin Street.



This couple, originally from Italy, live in the New Kent Road.

A family with one son, originally from Guinea, living on the Heygate Estate.



This British woman is living alone in Oswin Street.



A family with two children, originally from Bangladesh, living in New Kent Road.



A mother and son,
originally from Nigeria,
living on the Heygate Estate.

This woman,
originally from Russia,
is living alone in Oswin Street.

O-Central

Freya Najade

Southwark Council decided to regenerate the Elephant and Castle in order to raise its profile and reputation and to make life better for locals and newcomers. According to the Council, local people will benefit from an improved physical environment with tree-lined streets, high quality open spaces and a largely traffic free environment, by 2020. Critics fear an urban gentrification of Elephant and Castle. The most significant change of the regeneration project will be the demolition of the Heygate Estate. At the time I was working on this project, 5400 new residential units in at least seven new big apartment buildings were planned.

One of the apartment buildings already erected is O-Central. It provides 188 residential and 14 commercial units. It is located around the top end of Walworth Road and along the rear of the railway line. The building isn't gated but a concierge monitors the entrance 24 hours a day. Almost all the units in O-Central are rented out or in private ownership.

But who lives there? Over a month period I went to O-Central to find out. Most residents are between 20 and 40 years old. Many dwellers share their flats with room mates, some live with their partner and some alone but no one lives with their family. Almost everybody came to Elephant and Castle because of its geographical location (closeness to the centre of London and to work) and its good transport links. This combined with the desire to move into a new flat for relatively little rent made Elephant and Castle attractive for people. The rented flats are furnished. Dwellers at O-Central generally seem to like the Elephant and Castle and feel that it is much better than its reputation. The majority of residents feel positive about the regeneration. Many occupants intend to stay at least for one more year. Nobody has plans at this point to stay longer than 5 years.



Marcus, 47,
IT Consultant.

I am a passionate cook. This is one of the reasons why I like our flat. It is nice to be in the same room as my partner while preparing the food. I work a lot in France. When I am not here I don't have to worry about my apartment. I just lock it up and there is a concierge at the entrance. I didn't like Elephant and Castle so much at the beginning, but it is now growing on me. I especially like East Street Market and the fact that the population is so diverse.



Marija, 24,
Research Analyst.
Audrius, 25,
Software Developer.

We are kind of nomads. Before we came to London we lived in Lithuania, Germany, Estonia and Cambridge. We were one of the first people moving into this building. Our flat was not even completely finished. We enjoy living in a new flat.



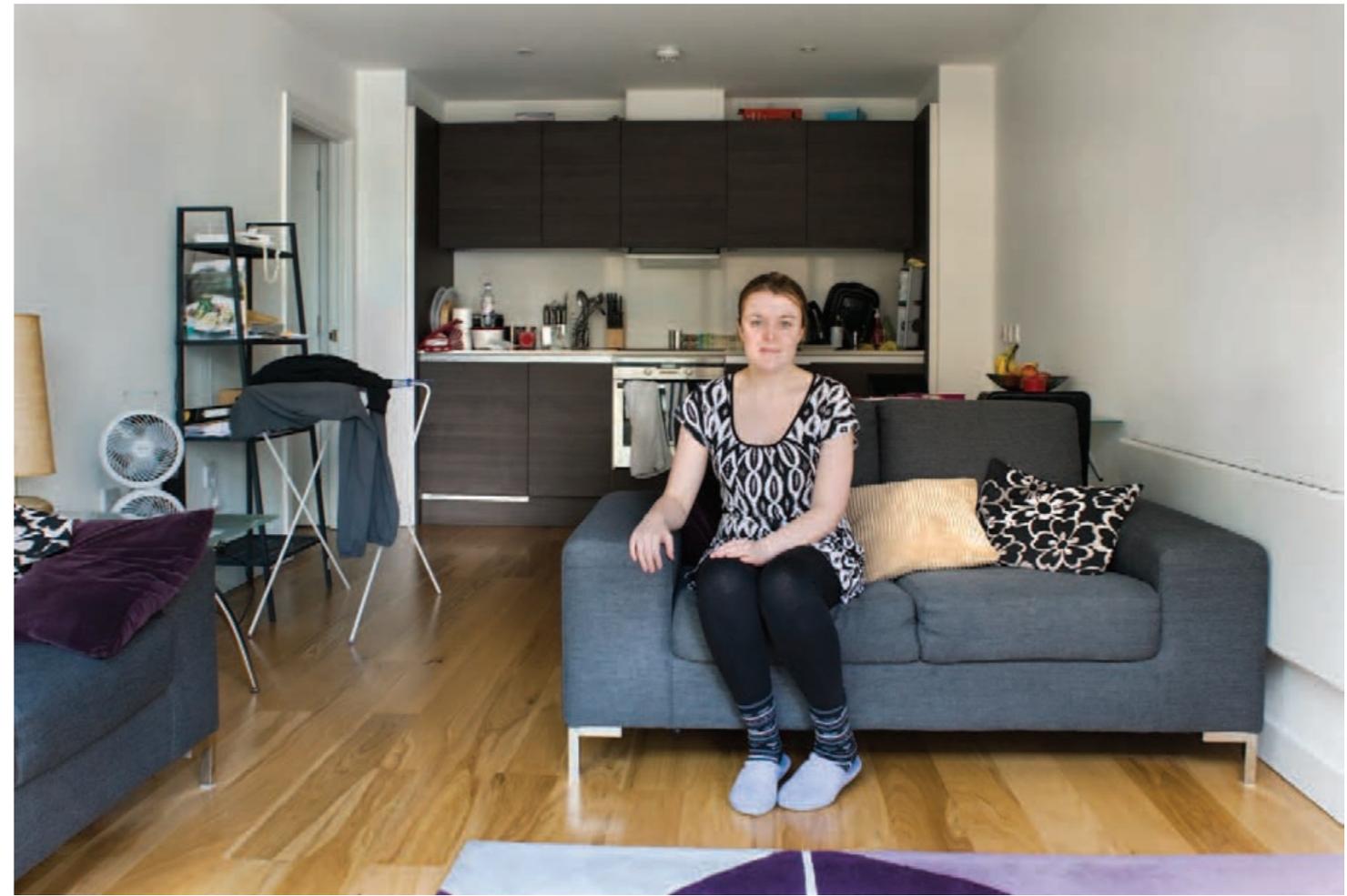
Lucy, 26,
Trainee Teacher.

I'm training to be a teacher. I just got back from school. My pupils were very naughty today. Elephant and Castle is a fun and quirky place. I like that I can visit all my friends so easily from here. But I dislike the rundown shabby council blocks and the violence.



Derek, 47,
Project Manager.
Darren, 32,
Personal Assistant.

We just got back from work. We moved here because most of our friends live south of the river and we also wanted to live in a new flat. But if Elephant and Castle wouldn't get redeveloped we wouldn't have come here. The whole idea was to buy into a place that gets regenerated. We like the diversity of this area a lot but we don't enjoy its dirtiness.



Ferial, 26,
Law Student.

I moved to Elephant and Castle two months ago. I like that it is very multicultural and that it has good facilities such as a gym and nice shops. But I am not planning to stay any longer than two years in this neighbourhood. I think the regeneration is good since the area might be able to change its bad reputation. I am just afraid that the prices will go up and I won't be able to afford it anymore.



Belyndia, 22,
Business Student.

Elephant and Castle is too dirty. It is also a pity that you can't shop for clothes here. But it's great that it is so close to my school.



Max, 33,
Web Designer.

In Elephant and Castle some people are too rough. I lived in Covent Garden before, which I liked much more but there I would never get such a nice flat for the money I pay now.

SiNX, a positive [REDACTED] chain reaction [REDACTED]

Tommaso Protti

I met Shahan, a Bangladeshi-born British citizen, raised in Elephant & Castle, two years ago, on the day after I arrived in London. I was in a bank opening an account and he was my cashier. The next day I was helping him take pictures to cover an Asian Music event. After Shahan introduced me to this world, the Elephant & Castle opened up for me.

From Peckham, Elephant & Castle to Hackney, East London, Asian Grime Music is on the rise. Walworth Road, famously known as “Wooly Road”, has seen a large increase in the number of rappers, MC’s, DJ’s and specialist musicians. This, and the viral craze of online entertainment, has created opportunities for several young local artists to harness their passion and try to realise their dreams.

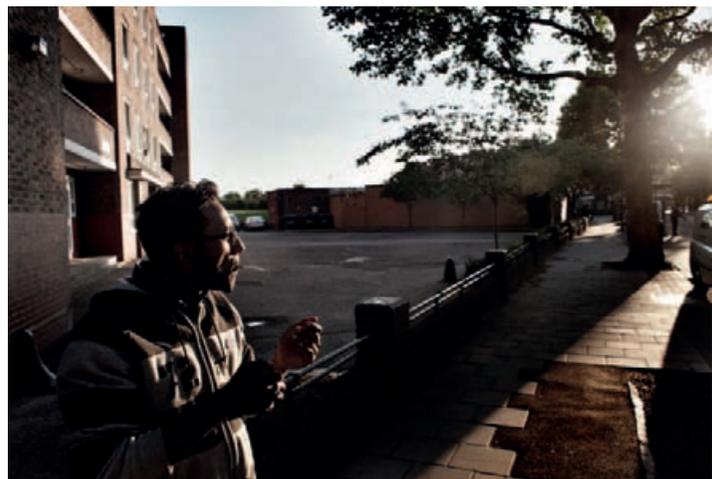
Shahan has launched a company called ‘Synchronised Intelligent Networks’ (SiNX Entertainment), conceived through a desire to help these young performers break into the London Grime music scene. With his media team he attends events, gigs and shows, to record and edit promotional material. This helps to raise awareness

of the artist and connects him with the environment.

Being raised in Elephant & Castle and South London has provided Shahan with the opportunity of creating a network of talented friends: DJ’s, rappers, MC’s, musicians and technicians, who help in SiNX’s promotional activities. “It’s good to help people develop and better themselves; in order to create a positive chain reaction in future generations”, he says. Managing to fit in and keep out of trouble in his local community has helped Shahan build the confidence and self-belief to accomplish anything he sets his mind to.

Now he is working with influential people in the media world, who help him to develop these young artists. With thousands of youths around the UK now connected to the SiNX Network, he hopes to continue promoting the world of Asian Grime Music, and the people who make it.









Landscapes of Regeneration

Marco Pavan

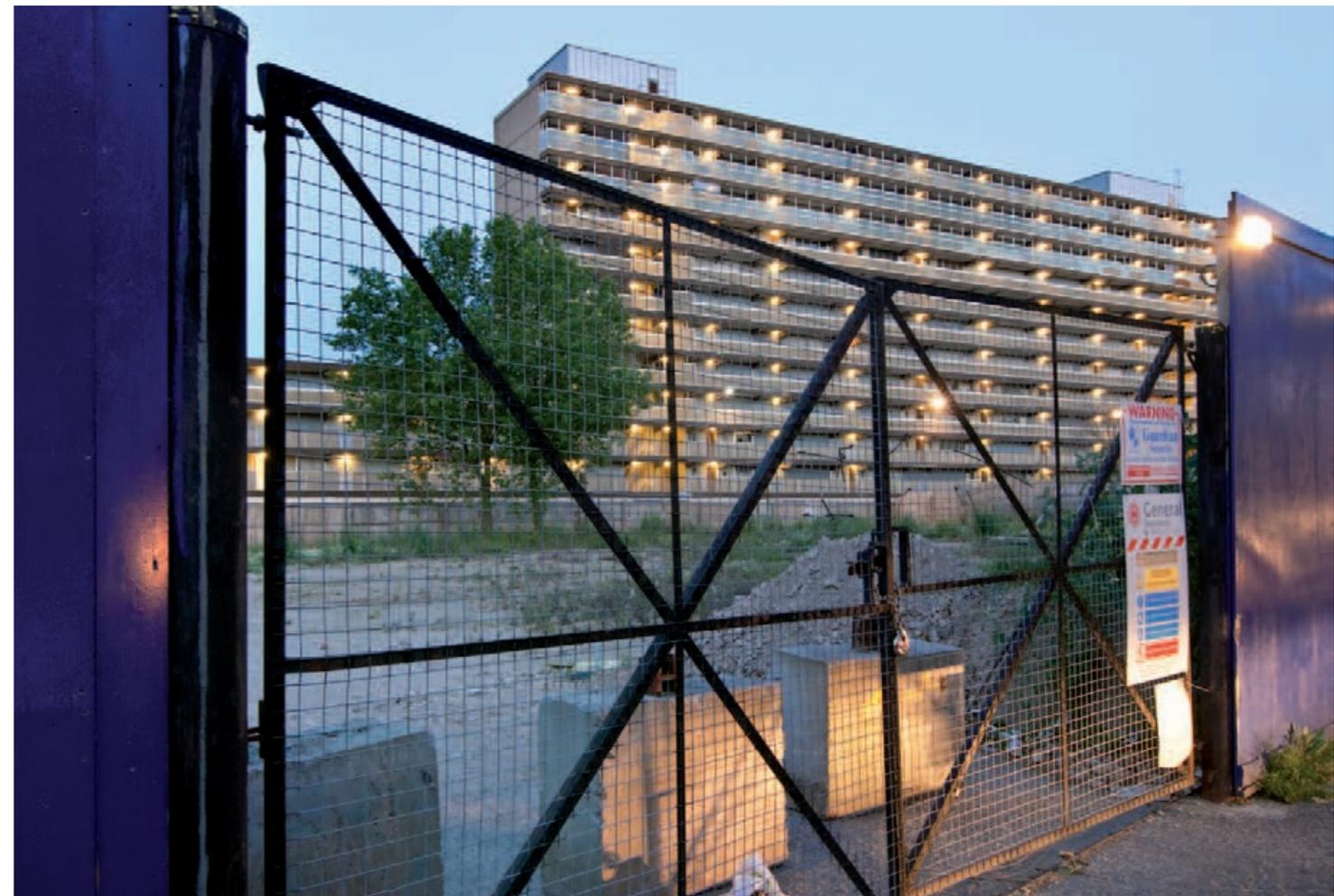
The regeneration process, which will completely transform the Elephant and Castle, dramatically affects the local landscape. The primary focus of this process is the demolition of old buildings and the construction of new, sometimes futuristic, skyscrapers and housing blocks. Some playgrounds, green areas and parking lots will be developed too.

Walking around the neighbourhood, it is possible to see all the stages of this process: empty buildings, sealed and ready to be knocked down; neglected pieces of land waiting for construction teams; new towers being built and a few brand new apartment blocks.

The regeneration is a process of de-constructing and re-constructing this urban landscape. I wanted to photograph this change while it was occurring, taking into account the different stages: completed developments, sites with planning permission granted

and also sites where development was proposed but have since been removed from the original plans. The regeneration is a “fluid” process that changes often as time progresses. Some plans have been scrapped, but in other plots the building process has moved forward so fast that the change in the landscape has felt very sudden.

I chose to photograph these locations at dusk, to reveal their beauty. Many local residents love the place where they live and I wanted to present it as if seen through their eyes. But the colourful and illuminated buildings also remind me of commercial development brochures and material on regeneration websites.



The Heygate Estate, which is due to be demolished by 2012–2013.



The Library street site was occupied by the Borough & Bankside housing office and BOST's Diversity Garden. The development entails an apartment block with thirty four flats and six townhouses. The apartments are arranged around a courtyard and the townhouses overlook a community garden.



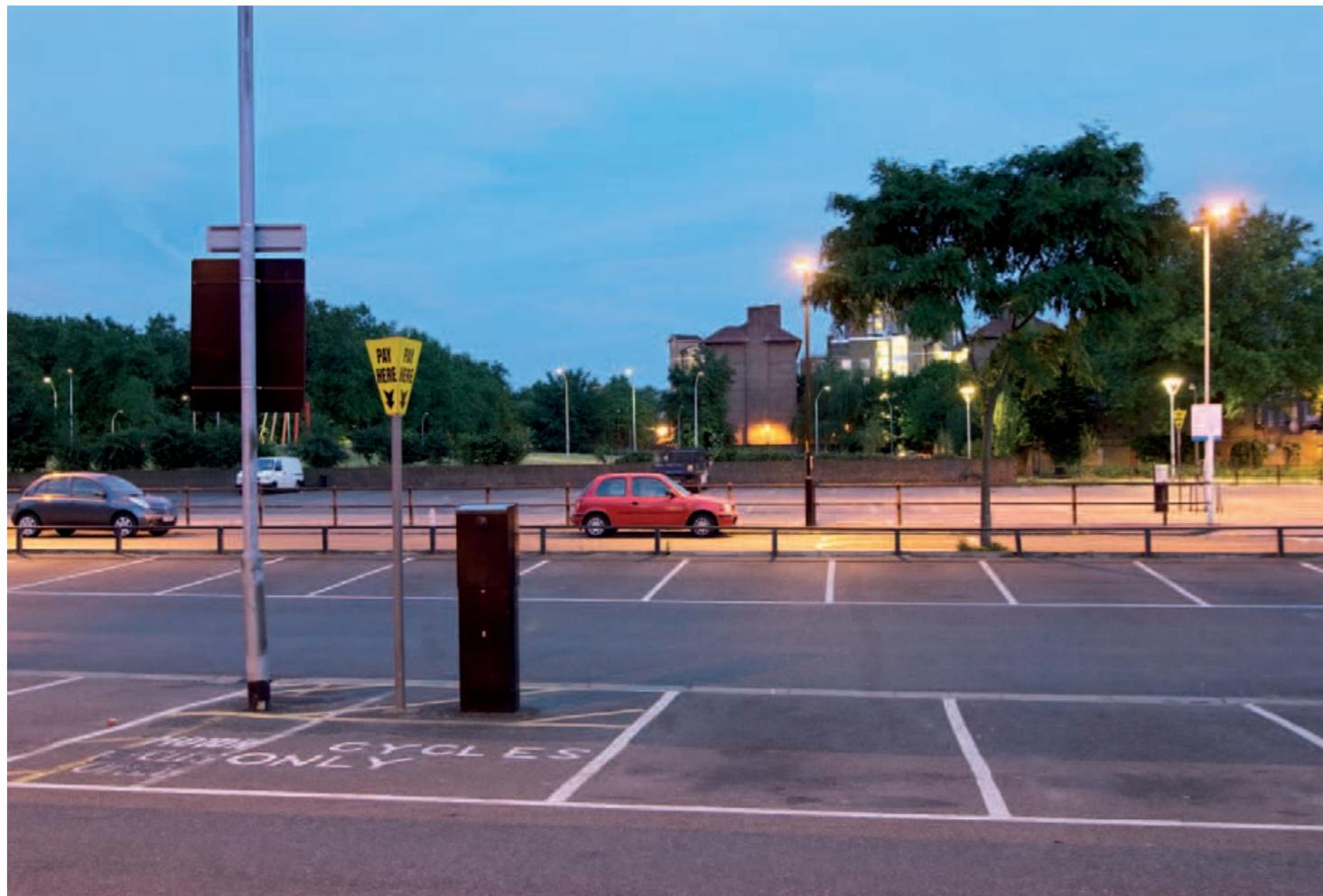
Wansey Street, a housing development, which has delivered sixteen private and fifteen affordable homes.



South Central East in Steedman Street, on the left, is a ten storey building with one hundred and eighteen residential units and seven commercial units, completed in 2006. The Strata Tower on the right, at the top end of Walworth Road, built on the old Castle House site, has forty three storeys, four hundred and eight homes and a pavilion with some space for small businesses at the bottom.



50 New Kent Road, Oakmayne Plaza. A planned two hundred and fifty room student accommodation block with a five-screen cinema, three hundred and twelve private residences, shops and a market square. Preparation works has started. It is due to be completed in 2014.



Stead Street, a proposed development of one hundred and fifty residential units, seventy percent of which would be affordable housing. Still to be submitted for planning.



St. Mary Churchyard, which was redeveloped as part of the Early Moves Programme. Completed in 2008, it is now a park with new playground facilities, seating and planted areas.

Frog Game

Julian Lass

In early summer 2009 I ventured repeatedly around the Elephant & Castle. I had a barely adequate notion of what this part of south London was like or how I would fare with my intention to photograph the area. Crammed into the crowded streets, it strikes me now that I was filled with a sense of dread.

There is a small café under the railway arches. I would often sit outside at the mirrored tables, silent and alone, gazing at the derelict and soon to be demolished Heygate building opposite, its ten storeys in deep shadow, the tiny figures of the few remaining tenants creeping along long terraces.

I would have left empty handed if I had not finally plucked up the courage to ask whether I could photograph in the café. Warily, I approached a group of men playing 'rana', or 'frog', a game of chance and skill that involves throwing heavy coins from a distance into different slots. Landing a coin into the metal frog on top scores top points.

While lingering, chance encounters flicker before my eyes. More than once, someone plainly indicates that they do not want to talk to some chancer-photographer and wards me off with outspread hand.

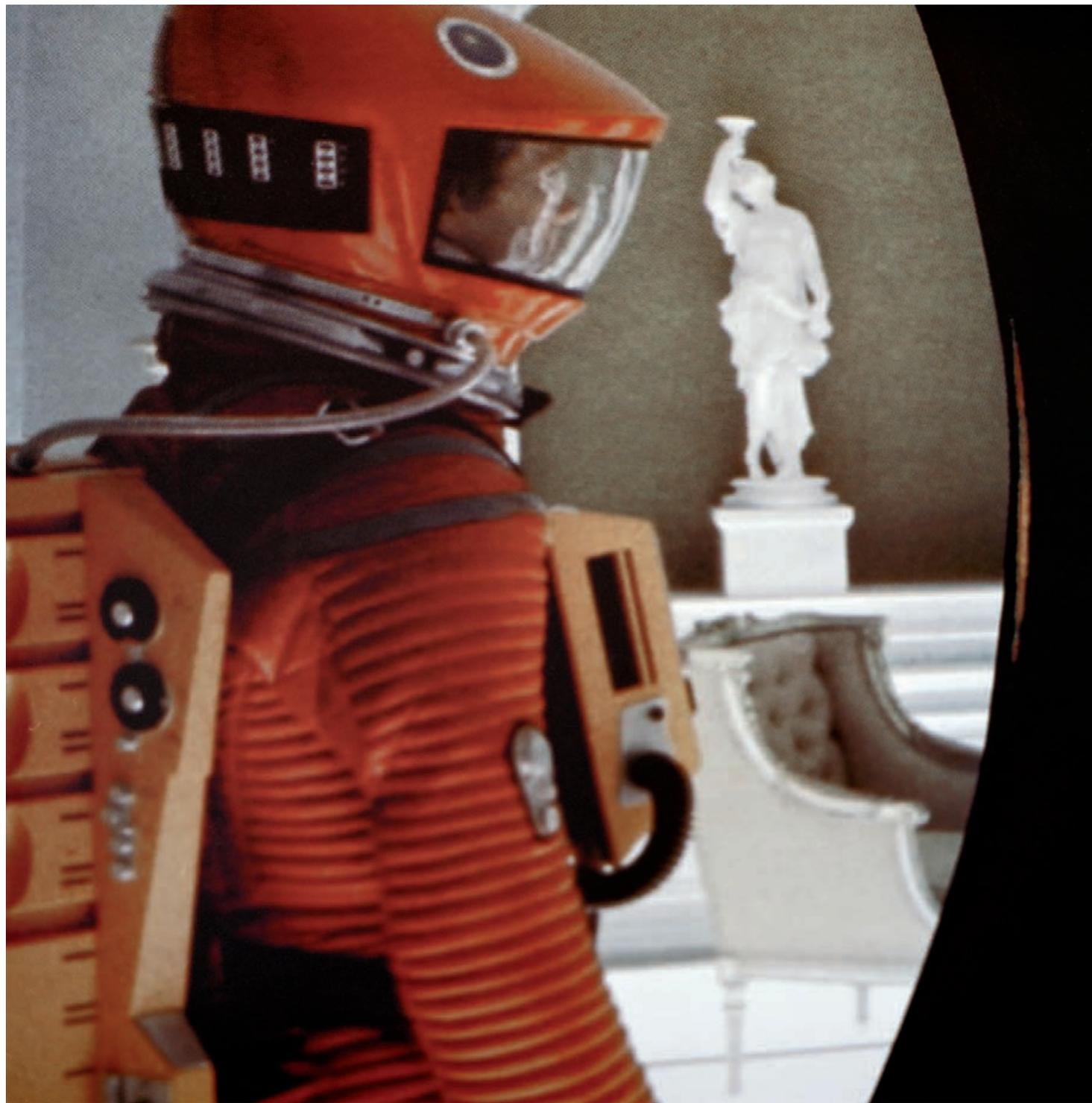
The pictures lie on my desk for some weeks, cut into little squares. Yet, spread out before me these miniature records overwhelm. The more I look at them, the more the task of making sense of them feels insurmountable. Accompanied by this shadow over my feelings, I realise I'm attempting to push the fragments into places they won't easily go and I place them in a drawer to forget about them.

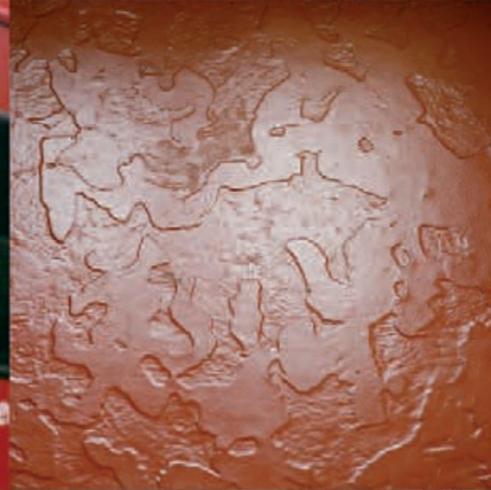
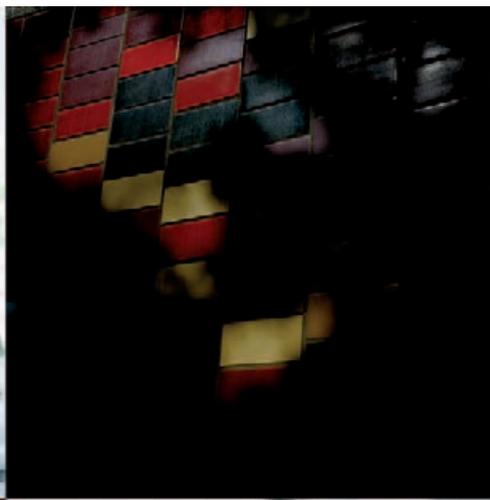
Two years later, they emerge changed entirely. In a fever, I start linking their invisible connections, forging new associations with my memories. I realise now that events become meaningful only after they take place, when their coordinates have already been plotted and the process of turning back to find skeletal beginnings has begun. Only in the careful reconnecting of things can there be an attempt at something over and above the mere recording of facts.

On the streets outside, where everybody is replaceable and superfluous, the photographer carries the city with him inside a small box, knowing that a present without memory means a life without feeling the need to linger, at least for a while.









When I was working

Duncan Nicol Robertson

In Elephant and Castle as elsewhere, people's lives are defined by the work that they do. A new job is a life-changing event – and the end of a working life all the more so.

These portraits are from a project documenting older residents' memories of working and not working: the changes in their workplaces and careers over 30 or 40 years, and the changes that happened in their own lives when they retired.

The participants, who I met at two day centres for older people in Elephant and Castle, told me about their working lives, starting from the first job they held after school, their transition from work to retirement, and what 'working' means to them now.

In many cases, the way these jobs are carried out has changed quite radically. However, the jobs themselves – such as postman, housekeeper, factory worker – are still typical of the

working-class area of Elephant and Castle.

None were particularly well paid, but the people I spoke to gained more than money in the workplace: they found self-respect, a role within society, friendships and mental stimulation.

For the participants, retirement has involved searching for ways to replace these attendant benefits, at the same time as marshalling the limited resources of a meagre pension.



Wyn Robertson,
Housekeeper.

"I worked for the Institute of Directors in Pall Mall. I was in charge of the banqueting hall. I had 48 waiters and waitresses, God knows how many cleaners. I got to meet Maggie Thatcher, if that's such an honour, Prince Phillip, Pam Ayres.

"I met lots of people – but it's awful to be born with a brain and never be able to use it. I wanted to be a nurse but my parents wouldn't let me do the training.

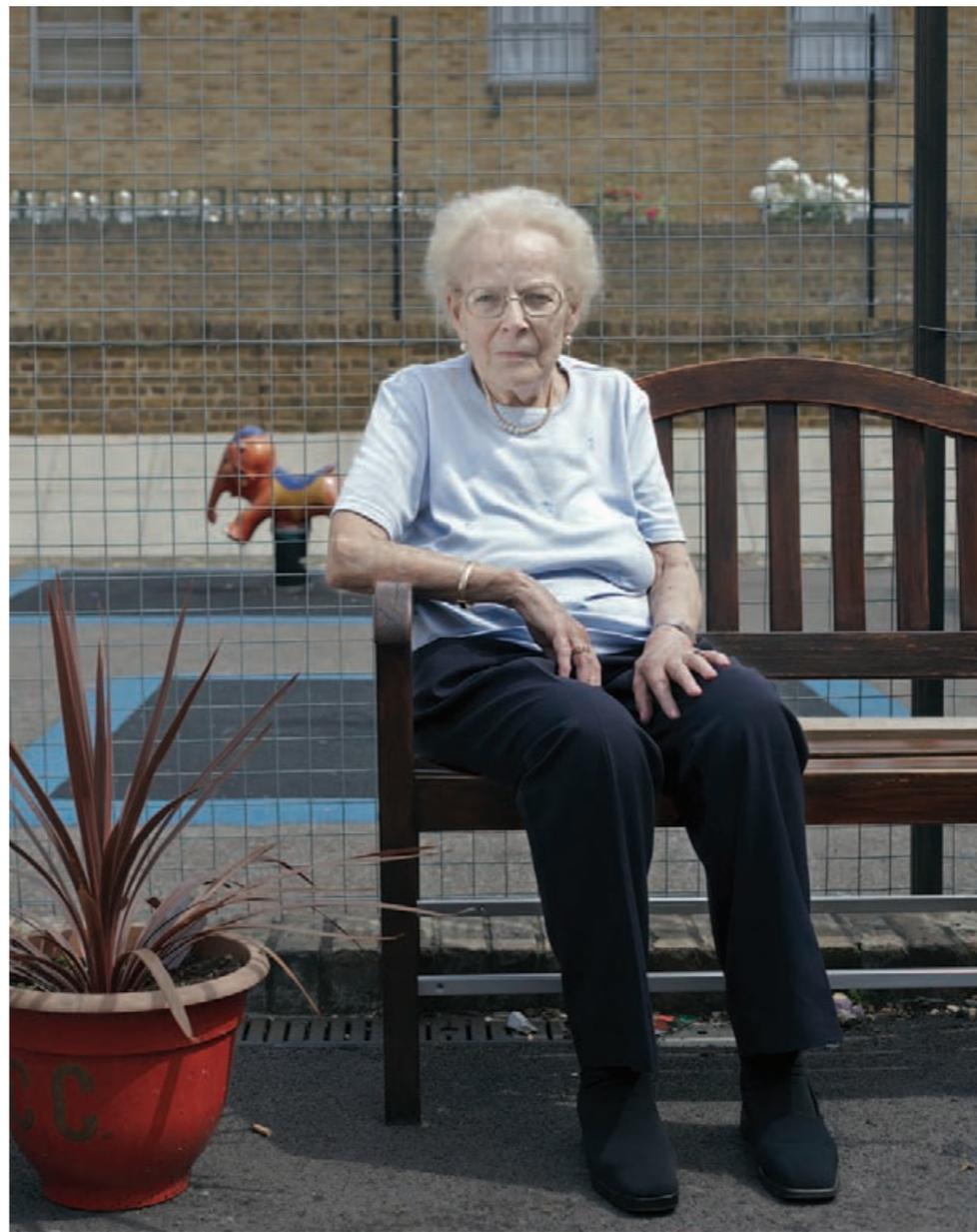
"I use my brain now, funnily enough. My body is worn out – with all the complaints I've got, I need taking to Battersea Dog's Home and being shot. But my brain is far more active now than it has been in years."

Edward Elverton,
Dustman.

“I worked as a dustman for 30 years. When I started, they had a horse and cart and a Jacob – a ladder – on the side. The horses would take you everywhere, they knew where to go.

“You look at all the machines they’ve got now – when we were at it, you had to go under the ground, pull the rubbish over, then put it on your nut. Then you’d get up on the wagon and stamp it down.

“You had all kinds of stuff, you can just imagine. At the Blackfriars Road Salvation Army, the lids would sometimes move from the lice.”



Iris Wheeler,
Dressmaker.

“I was a ladies’ tailoress at John Cavanaugh’s and Hartnell’s. About once a fortnight, we used to have all the well-known ladies come in to look at the dresses. We would get all the chairs ready on each side and then the models would walk up and down, showing off.

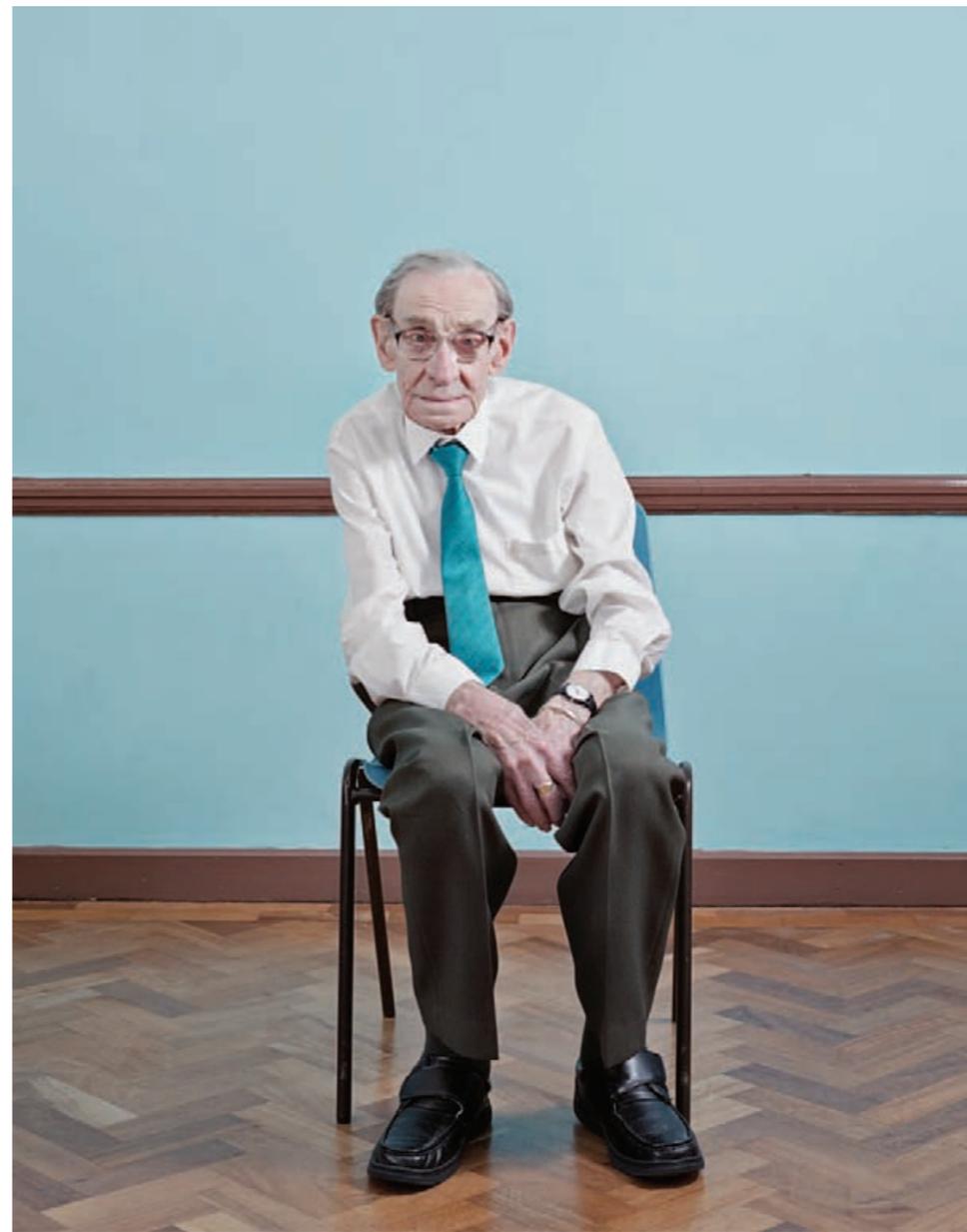
“It took a little time to get used to not working. It did change indoors, and since I’ve had this operation it’s even got worse, because I have to have a carer in to look after me in the morning. I’m not allowed to do any cooking, which annoys me. My husband does it all – and some of it is a load of old tripe!”



Delcene Clarke,
Council Worker.

“We had a laundry where we took the older people’s clothes to wash and press them, bag them up and label them for collection. It wasn’t a very pleasant job but I liked helping people, doing things for the elderly – I got joy from that.

“I stopped working in ‘86 or ‘87 because I suffer from arthritis. You lose most of your friends when you’re not working. The people you live next to go to work and you only see them sometimes. They might knock and say hello, but apart from that, nothing.”



Jim Slaughter,
Factory Worker.

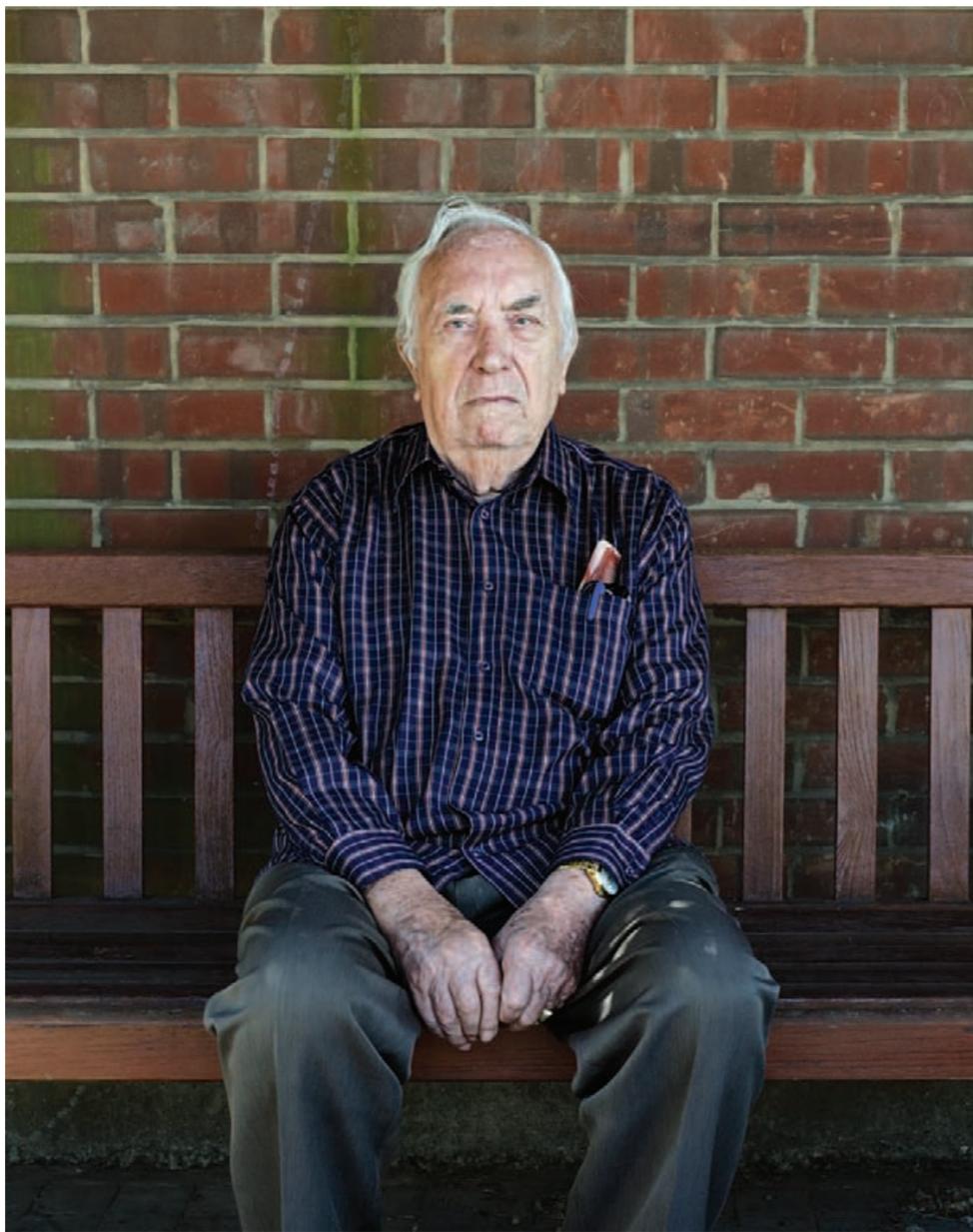
“They wanted to close down the engine plant at Ford in Dagenham, so they were looking for voluntary redundancies. I was 60 then. I admit, we did get a good handshake. But what I didn’t know then was I’d get a very low pension. I should have invested it.”

“My life’s been full of flaming mistakes. I sit down and think what I could have done. I could have stayed in the army, got made up to sergeant. I regret it all, now. Anyway, not much I can do about it – I’m just muddling along.”

Richard Smith,
Postman.

“Being a local boy, I would see the people on my delivery round even after I’d finished work. Sometimes we’d have a social evening together and that was them saying I was all right, I was doing a good job.

“When I finally stopped work altogether and retired properly, it was a bit boring at first. I started coming here because I’d come as far as I could go by myself, being 89 years old – it’s a contest to reach that age. I feel I should try and be there for people that need my advice.”



Iris Boud,
Legal Secretary.

“Once I retired I was able to spend more time with my husband. We were very, very close – we got engaged six days after we met. We moved on to the Aylesbury estate. I had a nervous breakdown there.

“You were shut in, you felt so isolated once you shut your front door. If the window was closed you didn’t hear a sound from outside. You felt as if it was closing in on you.

“If I can knit, crochet, anything, it’s therapeutic. I feel lost without a pair of knitting needles – I feel as if I’m wasting time just sitting there and doing nothing.”

Disequilibrium

Sean Hayes White

To photograph a tree is to not photograph other things.

Entropic scenes wash around Google Images like a rash of fetishised concrete. To transgress this dismal display I was pushed towards the Romantic notion of nature as a bringer of life, as optimism, to eclipse one frame with another.

Beneath the trees of the Heygate sit a number of gardens, recycled subversions of what was once discarded as waste. Vegetables grow in neat rows, tended to on mild weekends. The space has been re-appropriated from a wasteland into a social environment, to a thing of beauty and of safety. The Heygate has a serenity only found in churchyards. Our metropolis is overturned again, this time with the clench of politics making it possible for blossom to grow unabated.

I am in debt to the few remaining residents left within the estate, especially to Adrian for his knowledge and understanding, and for his experience when students come walking in to his home.







Michal Honkys

Michal Honkys is an award winning Czech-born photographer who currently lives and works in London. Michal works on long-term and personal projects on environmental and social documentary themes. His work is critical, suggestive and active, offering a positive inspiration to these caring about our common future. His projects are exhibited and published internationally.

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Rebecca Harley

Rebecca Harley is a photographer and multimedia producer based in Bristol. She studied Fine Art in Context at the University of the West of England, before joining the South West News Service. She has worked on commission for The Times, The Guardian, The Telegraph. Specialising in womens' features, her portraits have been published widely. A project combining images and audio won first prize in the multimedia section of the Press Photographers Year 2010.

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Francesco Stelitano

Francesco Stelitano was born in Sarzana, Italy, in 1982. He studied multimedia arts at Accademia di Belle Arti di Carrara. Since

coming across the works of Robert Frank and Henri Cartier-Bresson, photography has become his main interest. His social landscape projects focus on issues related to economic power. He has exhibited in UK, France, Italy and New York and is part of the LUZ photo agency.

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Wing Ki Lee

Wing Ki LEE was born in Hong Kong in 1981. He studied Art History at the University of Hong Kong and was awarded a British Council Chevening Scholarship to undertake the MA in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at LCC. He now works between Hong Kong and China as a writer, researcher and documentary photographer. He recently received a one-year research grant from the Asia Art Archive to carry out an ethnography of the photographic community in Hong Kong. His photography has been exhibited in the UK, Germany and Latvia.

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Steve Mepsted

Steve Mepsted was born in London. He originally studied Fine Art Painting at Chelsea College of Art before embarking on a career in teaching. He turned to photography when he found

that wider documentary concerns could not be represented within his painting. He was awarded AP Magazines 'Photographer of the Year' in 2008 and is currently working as a freelance documentary and portrait photographer with particular interests in alternative living, community history and social documentary. He is currently working on two major projects: 'Twin Town Tales' and 'The Portobello Album'.

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Rhian Clugston

Rhian Clugston was born in Cardiff. After gaining a BA in Graphic Design and Art and Design History at Camberwell College of Art she became a magazine designer and now has over ten years experience working across a wide variety of titles, from the creatively resourceful NME to major lifestyle magazines like Marie-Claire and The Wallpaper City Guides. She is currently based in London, working on a freelance basis, designing magazines and art directing commissioned projects.

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Marta Moreiras

Marta Moreiras was born in 1981 in Spain, where she studied Media and Philosophy. She is especially interested in using photography to understand social behaviours and their effects. She is based in London and Spain. Since 2004 she has combined her freelance work as a documentary photographer for medical NGOs with projects that explore the world from a personal point of view. Her photography has been exhibited in Spain, the UK and the United States.

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Freya Najade

Freya Najade was born in Germany in 1977. After studying in Bremen and San Francisco she now lives and works in London. Her work has been selected for the AOP Student Awards (2009, 2010), the Foto8 Summer Show (2010), the FotoGrafia Festival Rome (2010) and the IPA Awards (2008, 2009). Publications of her work include the British Journal of Photography, The Times and Testcard.

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Tommaso Protti

Tommaso Protti was born in Mantova, Italy, in 1986. His keen interest in social problems led him to studying Political Science in Rome (Università di RomaTre), and then into photography. He has worked in Italy and

the UK on numerous stories, in France on a project about illegal migrants and in Turkey on a project about water resources. He is currently based in Rome and undertaking a long-term project documenting the situation of the Kurds in south-eastern Anatolia.

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Marco Pavan

Marco Pavan was born in Italy in 1984. After graduating in Communication Studies, he worked as a photojournalist for Italian magazines. Currently based in London, he freelances for editorial clients and NGOs. In 2009 he started working multimedia: his project 'After Jugo' was awarded the first prize at the Digital Heretics award at the International Journalism Festival of Perugia.

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Julian Lass

Julian Lass is a photographer, writer, editor, and lecturer. He received an MA in English Literature with First Class Hons from Edinburgh University. His photography and writing have appeared in many publications including Taschen, Geographical Magazine, Telegraph Magazine, Times Magazine, British Journal of Photography, and Photo District News. He is a lecturer

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Duncan Nicol Robertson

Duncan Nicol Robertson was born in London in 1975. He read English Language and Literature at Oxford University, before working as a publishing officer for various charity and public sector organisations. In 2005, he began working as a freelance photographer with a particular interest in contemporary social issues including housing, education and care. His work has appeared in various publications including The Guardian, The Times, and The Times Educational Supplement.

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Sean Hayes White

Sean Hayes White worked under the umbrella of the Keele Geography School, then stepped towards his study of photographs to ask how history coagulates around particular events. His work combines the still, moving and written. Currently working as a freelance writer, Sean is also art editor and contributor at A History Of Book Burning magazine.

www.unionmanifesto.info
www.ahistorybookburning.com

ECONOMY features the work of students from the MA in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at the London College of Communication (LCC).

This postgraduate programme has been running in various forms for over two decades. An online and part-time version of the course was established in 2007 and teaches students in locations all over the world.

The programme has established a remarkable international reputation and track record of achievement. Students have gone on to win major international awards including World Press Photo Awards (seven times), the Jerwood Photography Prize (five times), the Sunday Times Ian Parry Award (twice), Royal Photographic Society Postgraduate Bursaries (twice), Winston Churchill Scholarships (four times), the Visa D'Or at the Perpignan Festival of Photojournalism (twice), Arts Council Awards (three times), the Eugene Smith Award, the Unicef Photographer of the Year Award, the European Book Publishers Award, the Royal Photographic Society Hood medal, the KLM Paul Huf Award, the Joan Wakelin Bursary, the Olivier Rebbot Award, the Sony Photographer of the Year Award, the F Award, the 3P Award, the Arts Foundation Fellowship and the Inge Morath Award amongst many, many others. Their work is represented by leading agencies including Magnum, VII, Panos and Getty Images. Alumni have been selected for the World Press Masterclass on many occasions, produced over thirty books of documentary photographs, innumerable spreads in major international magazines, made films for UK television and exhibited at venues ranging from the Houston Fotofest in Texas, Tate Britain and the Courtauld Institute in London, Foam Gallery in Amsterdam to the Metropolitan Museum of Photography in Tokyo.

www.lcc.arts.ac.uk



