

For immediate release

No Such Thing as Society Photography in Britain 1967–1987, From the British Council and Arts Council Collection

Toured by Hayward Touring

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

15 March – 27 April 2008

British society, from the late 1960s until the late 1980s, was in a state of unrest and transition, witnessing the effects of de-industrialisation and the rise of Thatcherism, the miners' strikes and conflict in Northern Ireland as well as radical shifts in the structure of society itself. *No Such Thing as Society* serves as a witness to these times, bringing together 150 photographs by 33 documentary photographers among them **Keith Arnatt, Victor Burgin, Peter Fraser, Paul Graham, Brian Griffin, Chris Killip, Martin Parr, Tony Ray-Jones, Chris Steele-Perkins, Graham Smith and Homer Sykes**. The exhibition opens at Aberystwyth on 15 March 2008 before embarking on a national and international tour.



Daniel Meadows Portsmouth: John Payne, aged 12, with two friends and his pigeon, Chequer, 26 April 1974 (1974), Arts Council Collection. © Daniel Meadows 1974

The exhibition takes its name from the famous Margaret Thatcher statement: "...society? There is no such thing. There are individual men and women and there are families." It starts at the end of the 1960s, a time when Pop Art had cemented photography's place in contemporary culture. At this moment the Arts Council of Great Britain began to commission and collect documentary photography, capturing the changing times. The British Council continued this trend in the early 80s, collecting new colour photography of the decade's unique social scene. *No Such Thing as Society* is the first collaboration between the British Council and Arts Council Collections.

The show is divided chronologically into six themes which reflect contrasting aspects of society at the time. *A Social Carnival* (1967-75) shows the British at play from all points of the class spectrum, in sea-front beauty contests, Maypole dances, and at the races at Ascot. *Portrait and Place* (1973-77) is a record of differences in society in 1970s, from industrial workers to representatives of youth culture. *Ethnicity, Community and Street* (1972-80) explores the nation's sense of place and belonging during this period, documenting race tensions through National Front racist graffiti and in contrast, an image of a proud Asian matriarch at her home in Birmingham.

The changing face of British society is captured in *Picturing the Civic Crisis* (1976-81) from houses bedecked with Union Jacks at the Queen's Silver Jubilee to women campaigning against domestic abuse. *Wastelands* (1976-82) is a stark look at industrial change, where

once thriving communities were left to decay. Finally *Society in Colour* (1984-87) is a simultaneously bleak and joyous view of life in Thatcherite Britain, from the seaside sunbathers scrabbling for their hot dogs to the drab colour and cold expanses of a DHSS waiting room.

Curated by David Alan Mellor, Professor of Art History at the University of Sussex, *No Such Thing as Society* outlines a history of the development of photography in Britain during this era for the first time.

Exhibition artists: **Keith Arnatt, John Benton-Harris, Ian Berry, Derek Boshier, Victor Burgin, Vanley Burke, David Butterworth, Ian Dobbie, Tarik Chawdry, David Chadwick, John Davies, Peter Fraser, Paul Graham, Brian Griffin, Alexis Hunter, Philip Jones-Griffiths, Chris Killip, Bob Long, Markéta Luskačová, Peter Marlow, Ron McCormick, Daniel Meadows, Peter Mitchell, Tish Murtha, Martin Parr, Gilles Peress, Tony Ray-Jones, Jergen Schadeberg, Graham Smith, Chris Steele-Perkins, Paul Trevor, Homer Sykes and Christine Voge.**

Note to Editors:

- No Such Thing as Society is a joint collaboration between the British Council and Arts Council Collection and is toured by Hayward Touring
- The Arts Council Collection is the largest national loan collection of modern and contemporary British art. With over 7,500 works it can be seen in public exhibitions and displays across the UK and abroad. For further information please visit www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk
- For more than 60 years the British Council has been collecting works of art, craft and design to promote abroad the achievements of our artists, craft practitioners and designers. The collection, started in the late 1930s, with a modest group of works on paper has now grown to a collection of more than 8000 works covering all media and all aspects of British art and design of the 20th and 21st centuries.
- For over 35 years, The Hayward has played a key role in creating imaginative, high profile exhibitions in London and within the UK through Hayward Touring. The touring programme and the Arts Council Collection are managed by The Hayward on behalf of Arts Council England, and add to the Hayward's distinctive national remit.
- The Hayward is a constituent part of the Southbank Centre which manages the Royal Festival Hall, The Hayward, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, as well as the Saison Poetry Library, the Arts Council Collection and Hayward Touring Exhibitions on behalf of Arts Council England. It attracts more than 3 million visits annually. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following a major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities.

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Admission: free

Touring information to date:

10 May – 13 July

14 November – 4 January 2009

CARLISLE, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery

Warsaw (Poland), Centre for Contemporary Art

For further press information or images, please contact Gillian Fox in the Hayward Gallery press office on 020 7921 0631 or email gillian.fox@southbankcentre.co.uk