

SIDE

AMBERSIDE

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30th July, 2025

SIDE PROJECTS: WEEKEND PLANS

A Bank Holiday Celebration of Documentary and Dialogue at Side Gallery & Cinema

Friday 22nd - Monday 25th August, 2025 | 12-6pm daily | Free Entry
Side Gallery & Cinema, 5-9 Side, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1JE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - THIS AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY, a Newcastle based arts organisation will present a four-day programme of exhibitions, workshops, talks and community conversations. 'Side Projects: Weekend Plans' will set a path for the future of socially engaged documentary practice and its exhibition.

Side is the only arts organisation in the United Kingdom that has, for nearly fifty years, devoted itself to documentary film and photography centred on working-class life, from the North East to the rest of the world. *Weekend Plans* is a unique opportunity for audiences to see how that mission is evolving and to take part in the medium's next chapter.

Visitors will engage with historic and contemporary work, join live conversations, and help create resources that will guide emerging storytellers in ethical and community focused narratives. Highlights from the gallery's unparalleled collection, The AmberSide Collection, will be displayed with new international voices, demonstrating how images can drive reflection, debate and social change.

Ellen Stone, Creative Director, Side said: "It has never been more important to showcase, share, and discuss documentary film and photography. As the creative landscape shifts and we're asked to question the reality of the images we see every day, we need to focus and celebrate the personal and community narratives that only documentary photography can tell. *Weekend Plans* is about proving our dedication to the medium and highlighting its key value to our region and the UK's cultural scene."

Despite being closed to the public, Side has been supporting the development of documentary through the MySide platform, where there will be a selection of work that has been submitted along the theme 'Documenting the Self and Places That Made Us'. This weekend is a rare opportunity for audiences to step inside the historic Side gallery.

Laura Laffler, Managing Director, The AmberSide Trust added: "Side has been a vital institution for the North East since 1977. In 2023, we lost our National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from Arts Council England and were forced to close our doors. Over the last year, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we have worked hard to lay the foundations for a more sustainable future. We're excited to look to what's next, and to continue to be able to highlight and showcase important humanist documentary work about and from our region."

Weekend Plans also offers emerging and established documentary practitioners to have their portfolio reviewed by Creative Director, Ellen Stone. There will also be a live forum with Photo Connect looking at the Future of Documentary and an Open Q&A with Side staff.

Running across the Bank Holiday weekend (Friday 22nd - Monday 25th August, 2025) at Side Gallery & Cinema, 5-9 Side, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1JE and will be open 12-6pm daily. Visiting Information; admission to all exhibitions and events is free. Some programming requires advance booking. For full schedule and booking links visit: sidegallery.co.uk

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE -

Our Side: A Documentary Toolkit - An exhibition and workshop that brings together some of the most iconic images from the AmberSide Collection. These photographs, drawn from decades of documentary work, explore everyday life from the North of England and around the UK. Visitors are invited to respond directly to the images, reflecting on how photography can help us understand place, memory and social change. The result will become a printed toolkit to empower the next generation of documentary storytellers.

22nd - 25th August, 12-6pm Daily

MySide: Group Exhibition - A bold exhibition showcasing new photography submitted to Side's open platform, MySide. In response to the themes *Documenting the Self* and *Places That Made Us*, contributors from around the world present powerful personal stories shaped by landscape, history and identity. The work connects local experience with global voices.

22nd - 25th August, 12-6pm Daily

Portfolio Reviews - Fifteen-minute one-to-one sessions with Side's Creative Director, offering direct feedback on photography portfolios and documentary projects. A chance for emerging and established practitioners to receive tailored guidance grounded in Side's curatorial approach.

22nd August, 12-4pm, Advanced booking required

Future of Photography Forum - A live forum presented with Photo Connect, exploring the future of documentary photography. Through discussion and debate, this event considers who documentary is for, how it is changing, and what is needed in our region for photographers, curators and audiences alike.

22nd August, 5-6pm, Advanced booking required

Personal Histories: Memories of the Quayside - A drop-in personal memory session collecting stories about Newcastle's Quayside. Visitors are invited to share memories, about life and work along the river Tyne, which will help deepen public understanding of the Quayside and support Side's future exhibitions, educational work, and publications.

24th August, 12-3pm, Drop-in sessions (no booking required)

What's Next: Open Q&A with Side - A live session with Side's leadership team, outlining the organisation's current priorities and long-term vision. This is an opportunity to hear how Side is planning for the future and what comes next for the gallery, The AmberSide Collection, and Side's wider mission.

25th August, 4-5pm, Advanced booking required

50X50: Limited Edition Fundraising Print Sale - A special fundraising sale exclusively at Side Gallery this August Bank Holiday. Photographers from across the UK and beyond have each contributed a single image, printed in an edition of 50 and sold at £50 each. Contributors include local photographers, members of the Amber Collective and internationally recognised names. All proceeds support Side's exhibitions, archive care and continued public access to photography.

22nd - 25th August, 12-6pm Daily, Online sales open 25th August: shop.amber-online.com

NOTE TO EDITOR -

ABOUT SIDE - Founded in 1977 by the Amber Collective, Side is an independent arts organisation dedicated to documentary film and photography. The UNESCO registered AmberSide Collection contains more than 20,000 photographs and 100 films that record working-class life in Britain and beyond. Side is part of the AmberSide Trust (registered charity number: 1160760) together they engage community, provide education projects, create public access opportunities for its archive and support practitioners who keep documentary practice embedded in the communities they serves: sidegallery.co.uk

Side, through the project [Transforming Amber: Building a Resilient Future](#), is currently supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Donations to support the AmberSide Trust can be made at: justgiving.com/charity/ambersidetrust

Instagram: @amber_sidegallery **Facebook:** SideGallery **X:** @sidegallery **BlueSky:** @sidegallery.bsky.social

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PRESS IMAGES (OURSIDE) -



Writing in the Sand: Whitley Bay, 1989 © Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen



Mrs. Little's Home Communion, 2007-2009 © Liz Hingley



Surviving on Darlington's Shop Floors: Morrisons of North Road, 1980/81 ©Richard Grassick

PRESS IMAGES (MYSIDE) -



Gatha Maga Chare, 2024 ©Amit Machamasi



Family Archive, 2024 ©Sergey Novikov



After Everyone, 2025 ©Aga Łuczakowska

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES AND EXCLUSIVE PRESS IMAGERY AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PRESS IMAGES (50X50) -



Mamutone, Mamoiada from the series 'Gli Isolani (The Islanders)', 2021 ©Alys Tomlinson



Heal, 2018 ©Sadie Catt



The Wait is Over, 2025 © Maria Maza



Mannequin Fashion, 1989 ©Rankin

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WITH THANKS TO -



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**ARTS COUNCIL
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Newcastle
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