UNDER DEVELOPMENT

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CITIES CHANGE?

Two radical photographic archives come together to examine fifty years of housing, redevelopment and urban change across Tyneside and East London.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - A new exhibition opening at Newcastle Contemporary Art on 16 October 2026 brings together more than fifty years of documentary photography from Tyneside and East London. *Under Development: What Happens When Cities Change?* draws on the AmberSide Collection and Four Corners Archive to trace the human consequences of decisions about housing, planning and who gets to shape the places we live.

In 2026, Newcastle and the London borough of Tower Hamlets are home to almost the same number of people: around 330,000 each. They sit within two much wider urban histories, Tyneside in the North East and East London, nearly 300 miles apart but shaped by some strikingly similar forces.

Both grew through river trade and industry. Both became home to generations of people arriving for work and building communities around it. Both saw large areas of working-class housing cleared and rebuilt. Both were hit hard by the loss of industries that had shaped them. And both were later subject to ambitious programmes of regeneration intended to give them a new future.

Within this history, two photographic organisations were taking shape. The Amber Film & Photography Collective moved to Tyneside in 1969 and opened up SIDE, a dedicated space for documentary film and photography on Newcastle's Quayside, in 1977. Four Corners was founded in Bethnal Green in 1975, while the nearby Half Moon Photography Workshop, later called Camerawork, was developing its own radical approach to photography and publishing.

These organisations did not begin as institutions looking back on local history. They were making photographs and films while the cities, industries, and lives around them were changing. They were there as streets disappeared, housing changed, communities settled and organised, and arguments about the future of these places were still being fought.

Today, those issues are far from finished. Britain is again facing an acute housing crisis, and we are once again being asked to imagine how places might be rebuilt, expanded and made better.

Under Development brings the AmberSide Collection and Four Corners Archive together to ask what happens when housing ambitions become real places to live. Through photographs made across more than fifty years, it looks at what changed, what was gained, what was lost, what people fought for, and what happened next.

LOCATION
Newcastle Contemporary Art
High Bridge Works,
31–39 High Bridge, 4th floor,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE1 1EW

DATES
17 October - 29 November, 2026
Thursday - Saturday, 12 - 5pm

FREE ENTRY

PRESS CONTACT
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ARTISTS INCLUDE
Amber Films, Bengali Photo Archive, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Mick Catmull, Steve Conlan, John Davies, Dorman Long Collection, T.J. Ermel, Jimmy Forsyth, Martine Franke, Peter Fryer, Richard Grassick, David Hoffman, Graciela Iturbide, Izabela Jedrzejczyk, Chris Killip, Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen, Lambton Visual Aids, Tom Learmonth, Keith Pattison, Derek Smith, Graham Smith, T. Dan Smith, Paul Trevor.

WITH THANKS TO
Under Development is made possible through support from Community Foundation, Joicey Trust and Arts Council England.

Under Development is also made possible through AmberSide Trust's National Lottery Heritage Fund project *Relocating Amber.* Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. Thanks to National Lottery players, *Relocating Amber* supports collections care, conservation rehousing, archive integration, digital access, education activity, practitioner development and a new programme of exhibitions, screenings and public events across the North East.

Community Foundation

Made possible with Heritage Fund

LOTTERY FUNDED | Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

SIDE AMBERSIDE NEWCASTLE CONTEMPORARY ART four corners

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NOTES TO EDITOR -

About AmberSide Collection (AmberSide Trust)

The AmberSide Trust is a registered charity (No. 1160760) based in the North East of England. It preserves and conserves the AmberSide Collection and supports public access to it through Side's exhibitions, education, community and public programmes.

The Collection grew out of the work of the Amber Film & Photography Collective, founded in 1968, and Side, which opened on Newcastle's Quayside in 1977 as a home for humanist documentary photography and film. Across more than five decades, Amber and Side have produced, commissioned, collected and presented work rooted in long-term relationships with working-class communities in the North East, across Britain and internationally.

The AmberSide Collection comprises more than 20,000 photographs, 100 films and 10,000 slides, spanning historic and contemporary documentary work. It includes major bodies of work by Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen, Tish Murtha, Chris Killip, Graham Smith, John Davies, Ian Macdonald, Mik Critchlow and Alys Tomlinson, alongside photographs by internationally significant figures including Diane Arbus, Weegee, Bill Brandt, Don McCullin, Susan Meiselas, Graciela Iturbide, Robert Doisneau, Abbas, Lewis Hine, August Sander, Walker Evans, Tina Modotti, Berenice Abbott, Shahidul Alam, and Newsha Tavakolian.

In 2011, Amber's films and Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen's photographs were inscribed on the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register as being of "outstanding national value and importance to the United Kingdom". Through The AmberSide Trust, the AmberSide Collection is protected by an asset lock, meaning it will remain intact and accessible in the North East of England.

sidegallery.co.uk
Facebook: @SideGallery / Instagram: @amber_sidegallery / Bluesky: @sidegallery.bsy.social /
X: @SideGallery / LinkedIn: @side-gallery

About Four Corners

We are a creative centre for film and photography, based in east London for 50 years. We draw on our history of radical, socially-engaged approaches, exploring often hidden and marginalised stories through exhibitions, films and community-led programmes. Four Corners Archive comprises the early work of Four Corners and its neighbour the Half Moon Photography Workshop, which is best known for its radical photography magazine *Camerawork*.

fourcornersfilm.co.uk
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LinkedIn: @four-corners-ltd

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About Newcastle Contemporary Art

Newcastle Contemporary Art (NCA) is a vibrant, inclusive gallery located within the High Bridge Works building, a hub for creativity in the heart of Newcastle city centre. NCA champions creative experimentation and critical dialogue, connecting regional practices with national and international conversations. Through an evolving programme of exhibitions, commissions, and events, NCA supports artists, creatives and audiences in exploring new ideas, challenging conventions, and engaging with the social and cultural issues shaping our time.

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About National Lottery Heritage Fund

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That's why as the largest funder for the UK's heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033. Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities.

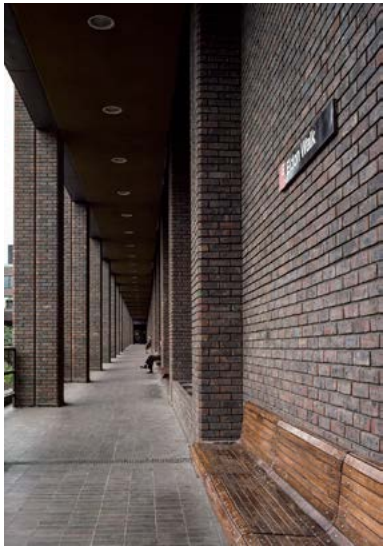
heritagefund.org.uk
Follow @HeritageFundUK on Twitter/X, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLottery #HeritageFund

GENERAL PRESS IMAGES

Exclusive images and interviews with select artists and exhibition curator available on request.



Cale Cross House, Quayside 1978
©Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen
(Courtesy of the AmberSide Trust)



Eldon Square, 1980
©Lambdon Visual Aids
(Courtesy of the AmberSide Trust)



Scotswood Road, 1958
©Jimmy Forsyth
(Courtesy of the AmberSide Trust)



Look Me In the Eye, 1988
©Richard Grassick
(Courtesy of the AmberSide Trust)



Mrs Potter in Mason Street, Byker, 1975
©Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen
(Courtesy of the AmberSide Trust)



Killingworth, Modern Housing, 1980
©Lambdon Visual Aids
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Tselmuun, Byker Revisited, 2004
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(Courtesy of the AmberSide Trust)



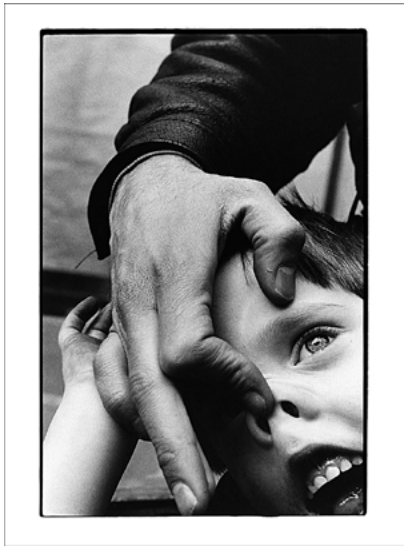
Urban Landscapes, 1979
©Izabela Jedrzejczyk
(Courtesy of the AmberSide Trust)

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In Your Face, 1980
©Paul Trevor
(Courtesy of the Artist & AmberSide Trust)



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