



01 Paul Trevor - Sunday afternoon, Mozart Street, Granby, Liverpool, 1975

SURVIVAL PROGRAMMES IN BRITAIN'S INNER CITIES

Exit Photography Group

Nicholas Battye
Chris Steele-Perkins
Paul Trevor

SIDE
TOURING

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02 Paul Trevor - Unemployed family, Haigh Heights, Everton, Liverpool, 1975

SURVIVAL PROGRAMMES

Between 1974 and 1979, three photographers [Nicholas Batty, Chris Steele-Perkins and Paul Trevor] set out to document life in Britain's inner cities at a time of profound economic and social transformation. Working in London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow and Belfast, they created *Survival Programmes*, a deeply immersive visual and narrative study capturing the lives of communities in transition.

Through striking black and white photographs, the exhibition presents an unfiltered record of working-class lives, exploring themes of housing, employment, family, protest and resilience. The exhibition provides a nuanced portrait of urban Britain at a pivotal moment, where industrial decline, racial tensions and government policy intersected to reshape cities and the communities within them.

What makes *Survival Programmes* distinct is its dual structure. The images stand alone as powerful documents, but they are also accompanied by first-hand accounts, transcribed from interviews with those living through these conditions. The result is a project that resists singular narratives, instead offering a complex and deeply human perspective on poverty, identity and survival.

The remarkable ambition and vision of *Survival Programmes* continues to challenge contemporary policy on social exclusion, social values and social justice. Widely acclaimed when it first appeared, the work has since acquired cult status.



03 Nicholas Battye - Single-parent family, Bordsley Green, Birmingham, 1975



04 Nicholas Battye - Bedtime, single-parent family, Bordsley Green, Birmingham, 1975

“What emerges from the superb photographs.... is the indomitable spirit and human warmth of these people. This is a moving document of the struggle for dignity against grinding poverty and exploitation in a largely indifferent society.”

Tessa Blackstone, London Review of Books, December 1982

“Survival Programmes so clearly transcends the diluted statements usually produced when art photographers decide to manifest a social conscience in public.... The images, grim as they are, lack any trace of pity. The emphasis is on visual information, on suggesting possibilities for action, on reinforcing the voices of the people who speak for themselves.... Survival Programmes is dialectical in its method and respectful of complexity. It deserves to be taken seriously as a model for documentary projects.”

CL, Afterimage (USA) 1983

“Survival Programmes is a savage, shocking, brilliant exhibition dealing with the plight of Britain’s inner-city poor and deprived.... (It) makes for outstanding social history, as well as powerful documentary photography: relevant, incisive, careful to understate rather than go for the sensational.”

Irene McManus, The Guardian, May 1984

WHY NOW?

Originally published in the early 1980s, *Survival Programmes* has only grown in significance. Today, its themes (housing crises, economic instability, protest and community resilience) are as relevant as ever. In an era where documentary photography is often framed through contemporary lenses, this exhibition offers an essential opportunity to revisit a landmark body of work that continues to shape discussions about representation and photographic practice.

For photography institutions, the project is a vital case study in long-form documentary work. It stands as an example of how photography operates beyond simple documentation, engaging deeply with subjects over time. Battye, Steele-Perkins and Trevor approached their work with a rare commitment to observation and collaboration, making *Survival Programmes* a compelling study in photographic ethics and social engagement.



05 Nicholas Battye - Single-Parent family, Brixton, London, 1977



06 Paul Trevor - Sports class, Everton, Liverpool, 1975

CURATORIAL DIRECTION

Housing and urban space including abandoned estates, clearance areas, shifting cityscapes and homes in transition.

Labour and working life including Factory floors, small businesses, industrial decline and emerging forms of employment.

Community and resilience including Children at play, local initiatives and cultural traditions that persist in uncertain times.

Protest and resistance including Pickets, demonstrations and moments of civil unrest captured with a careful and steady lens.

Works can be displayed chronologically, by theme, or structured alongside the text layout of *Survival Programmes*, Open University Press, 1982.

INSTITUTIONAL RELEVANCE

For Photography and Art Institutions *Survival Programmes* showcase one of Britain's most important documentary photography projects through original prints.

For Social History and Cultural Spaces this show is a unique opportunity to display an unfiltered look at inner city life in the 1970s with direct connections to contemporary issues.

For Academic and Public Engagement these works are a visual and verbal archive that fuels discussions on poverty, social justice and policy-making with direct parallels to contemporary economic and class struggles within Britain's inner cities.



07 Paul Trevor - Choosing sides for football, Everton, Liverpool, 1975

EXHIBITION CONTENT

Space Required

Approximately 50 - 70 linear metres. However the content of the exhibition can be curated down to accommodate smaller spaces We can help advise on adapting the show to best suit your space.

Artworks

99 framed original silver gelatin photographs window mounted presented in stained wooden frames.

The exhibition prints were made by Sid Kaplan, the New York printer responsible for the Weegee prints in the AmberSide Collection

Frames are 53 x 43cm, transported in five crates.

Price

On request dependent on location and size of venue.

INTERPRETATION & ENGAGEMENT

Contextual Texts

The images of *Survival Programmes* were produced alongside oral history recordings and the interview of members of the public. These texts are available for reproduction as facsimile copies from the *Survival Programmes* publication and original touring documents from the original exhibition in 1982.

Educational and Public Engagement

Side can offer artist talks, curatorial responses, panel discussions and screenings of socially engaged film works from the period to complement the exhibition.



08 Paul Trevor - Stolen Car, Everton, Liverpool, 1975

WHAT EXHIBITION HIRE COVERS

Loan of exhibition including all artworks and display content for up to 12 weeks at your venue, plus additional time for installation and take-down.

Suggested hang created to the size and scope of your venue.

Exhibition Interpretation to use and reproduce, including wall panels, information sheets, written guides to work.

Media Pack with agreed digital images and press release for your press campaign.

Support from our curator and exhibitions team, with advice on curatorial and technical matters.

WHAT YOUR VENUE WILL NEED TO COVER

Two-way Transport of the exhibition to and from Side and insurance in transit and in situ.

Exhibition Installation

Travel and Accommodation for a member of the Side team to attend installation if appropriate.

Fabrication of any interpretation materials such as wall vinyl and info sheets.

Exhibition Launch Event (if applicable) and costs for artist attendance from within the UK.

Fees and Costs for Your Education/Learning Programme to cover any activities involving the curator and/or artists (if applicable).

Venue Press & Marketing



09 Paul Trevor - Kids' den in garage, Mozart Street, Granby, Liverpool, 1975



10 Nicholas Battye - Education Unit, Melting Pot Foundation, Brixton, London, 1977

EXIT PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The Exit Photography Group was a documentary photography collective formed in the 1970s by Nicholas Battye, Chris Steele-Perkins, and Paul Trevor. Active between 1974 and 1979, the group undertook an extensive photographic study of social and economic conditions in Britain's inner cities.

Their work is a significant example of the development of documentary photography culture in Great Britain during the seventies. The group formed in 1973 and developed a collaborative work method, sharing tasks equally in gathering, processing, editing, and shaping their material.

The Exit Photography Group was part of a wider movement that helped shape a politically engaged documentary photography culture in Britain during the 1970s. This period saw the establishment of new platforms for photography, from the founding of The Photographer's Gallery in 1971 to the Half Moon Gallery and the influential magazine *Camerawork*, as well as the opening of Side Gallery, in 1977.

With public funding from the Arts Council Photography Subcommittee from 1972, this era saw the institutionalisation and democratisation of photography, providing new opportunities for socially engaged projects. Within this context, *Survival Programmes* stands as one of the most significant documentary works of its time.

Example images from the exhibition follow. For full available image list and details please email: side.gallery@gamber-online.com.



13 Chris Steele-Perkins - Gypsy family, Middlesbrough, 1975



14 Paul Trevor - Kids' den in garage, Mozart Street, Granby, Liverpool, 1975

SURVIVAL PROGRAMMES

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21 Paul Trevor - Clearance area, Toxteth, Liverpool, 1975



22 Paul Trevor - Clearance area, Aldgate, London, 1974

SURVIVAL PROGRAMMES

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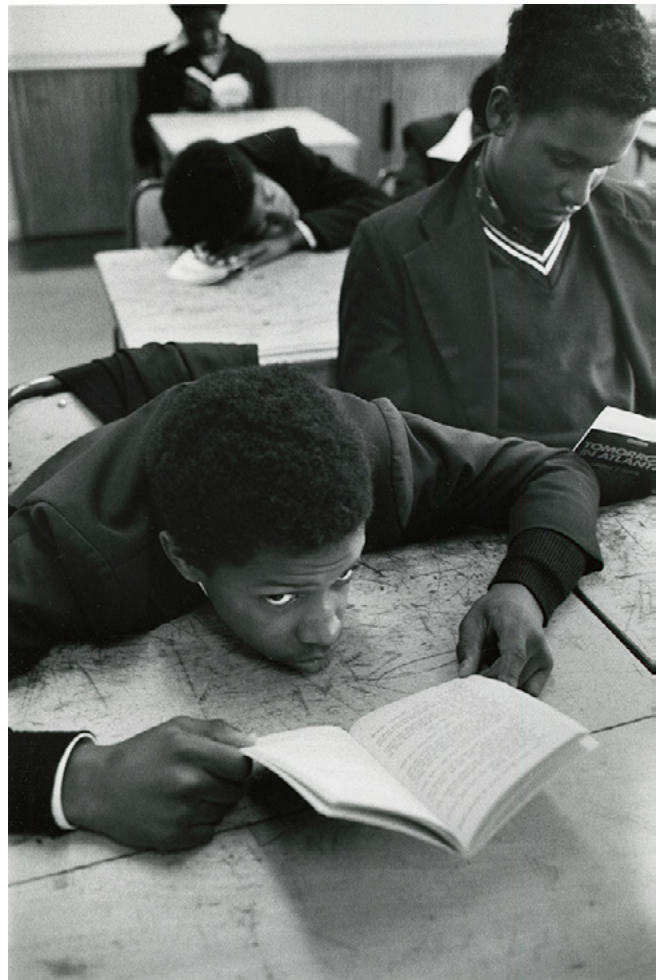
23 Chris Steele-Perkins - Industrial area, Middlesbrough, 1975



24 Paul Trevor - Council flats, Sheffield, 1977

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41 Nicholas Battye - Remedial Class, comprehensive school, Homerton, London, 1977



42 Nicholas Battye - Welfare and advice centre, Dalston, London, 1977

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43 Nicholas Battye - Parked car, Holloway, London, 1977



44 Chris Steele-Perkins - The Queens, South Bank, Teeside, 1975

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53 Chris Steele-Perkins - Lunch, Maryhill, Glasgow, 1975



54 Nicholas Batty - Christmas Eve, Bordesley Green, Birmingham, 1974

SURVIVAL PROGRAMMES

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ABOUT SIDE

Side is a cultural hub dedicated to documentary photography and film, using visual storytelling to document and preserve working-class life in the North East of England and beyond. Through its exhibitions, film screenings, and extensive archive, Side provides a space where photography serves as a tool for understanding and social change.

Located on Newcastle's historic Quayside, Side is home to the internationally renowned Side Gallery, Side Cinema, and the Amber Collective's UNESCO-registered archive. While deeply connected to the North East, Side has a global perspective, sharing stories that resonate across cultures and borders.

Founded in 1977, Side quickly gained recognition for its commitment to socially engaged photography and it has played a key role in shaping the field. Over the years, Side has fostered leading photographic talent, including Chris Killip and Tish Murtha, and in 1978, hosted Henri Cartier-Bresson's 70th birthday retrospective, further cementing its international reputation.

Side is committed to supporting artists who challenge and document the realities of working-class life. Through exhibitions such as *Survival Programmes* by the Exit Photography Group, which exposed and explored urban poverty in 1970s Britain, and the UK's first touring exhibition of Weegee's renowned street photography, Side has championed work that sparks empathy, debate, and reflection.

As part of its wider mission, Side takes its work beyond the gallery walls through national and international touring exhibitions, ensuring that documentary photography reaches diverse audiences.

Side also provides practical support to institutions looking to showcase socially engaged photography. With expertise in curation, exhibition touring, and film programming, Side offers a range of resources that make it easier for museums, galleries, and festivals to share important photographic work.



Side is supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Community Foundation Newcastle City Council, National Archives and Pilgrim Trust - Archives Revealed, and Arts Council England, ensuring that the voices and experiences of working-class communities, both in the UK and internationally, remain visible and valued.

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99 Paul Trevor- Television programme, 1978

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