

SIXTEEN

What's it like to be sixteen years old now?

SIXTEEN is a multi-venue exhibition exploring the hopes, fears and dreams of sixteen-year olds across the UK. Photographer Craig Easton conceived this ambitious project following his engagement with sixteen-year olds at the time of the Scottish Referendum. It was the first, and as yet only, time that these young people were given the vote in the UK. Building on the success of that work he invited 16 of the UK's foremost documentary portrait photographers to collaborate with young people across the country to make a visual vox pop on what it means to be sixteen now.

Sixteen is an age of transition, of developmental, and of social change. At this time of increasing national and international anxiety, these young people are shifting from adolescence to become the adults who will live in a politically reshaped country, divorced from the European Union. Working with photography, film, social media, audio recordings and writing, the project brings together the faces and voices of more than a hundred young people from diverse communities across the United Kingdom.

The photographers open up conversations with these young people about their hopes and fears, and who or what sustains them, giving prominence to voices rarely heard. The project explores how social background, personal histories, gender, beliefs, ethnicity, and location all might influence aspiration.

The exhibition in **New Adelphi Exhibition Gallery** focuses on young people from the North of England. Lead photographer Craig Easton, a University of Salford alumnus, has been commissioned to make a new series of portraits; two of his series based in the post-industrial North will enter the University's permanent art collection. Jillian Edelstein worked with a group of sixteen-year olds at a sixth form college in Hull, Christopher Nunn collaborated with two young people in his home town of Bradford, and Simon Roberts' video portrait reveals a young man's aspiration to study in Blackburn.

In the Atrium, Michelle Sank's portraits focus on young people facing economic poverty and physical isolation in Cornwall.

A wider selection of photographs from SIXTEEN can also be found at HOME, Manchester Central Library, 42nd Street's Horsfall Gallery and online at sixteentouring.co.uk

More about the artists:

Craig Easton

Craig's career began at the ground-breaking Independent newspaper in 1990 and he went on to shoot for editorial, publishing and advertising projects worldwide. His work is deeply rooted in the documentary tradition and he is recognised for his ability to combine expansive landscape with intimate portraits. He moved to North West England to concentrate on longer, personal projects. Much of this work focuses on social documentary, identity and a sense of place. He is passionate about giving his subjects 'a voice' and he often works collaboratively, asking them to write their own story, which he presents alongside their portrait. This approach led him to create The Scottish Referendum Project, an award-winning series made at the time of the Scottish referendum, when sixteen-year olds were given suffrage. Building on the success of this he invited a diverse group of leading UK documentary photographers to join him, working across the country to extend this ambitious collaborative project.

Craig's focus for SIXTEEN reflects his long-term interest in two areas: the post-industrial communities of the North of England and the Scottish island communities of the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland.

Jillian Edelstein

After working as a press photographer in Johannesburg, South Africa, Jillian moved to London and established herself as an outstanding and versatile portrait photographer. Between 1996 and 2002 she returned frequently to South Africa to document the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, producing a unique and powerful series of portraits and a seminal book, *Truth and Lies*. Recent major commissions include the National Portrait Gallery *Road to London 2012* and a national campaign for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Jillian mixed her collaborative methodology and the elegance and style of her studio work for SIXTEEN. She set up a studio in the empty classroom of a sixth form college in Hull, inviting students to have their portraits made and to write down their ambitions, fears, hopes and dreams – as well as their favourite songs. 'These songs tell their stories' she said.

Christopher Nunn

Christopher juxtaposes editorial commissions in publications such as FT Weekend, i-D, De Correspondent, The Wall Street Journal, Morgenbladet, Le Monde, The New Yorker, and Weapons of Reason, with long-term personal projects. He travels throughout the UK and Europe and since 2013, he has lived and worked in Ukraine, responding to the people, landscape and daily life in his grandmother's native country. This finely observed work evolved into 'a portrait of small-town and rural Ukraine during rising political tensions...and descent into war.' In 2016 Chris was selected as one of PDN's 30 'New and Emerging Photographers'. In 2017 he was awarded the Bob and Diana Fund grant for *Falling into the Day*, a project documenting his longstanding friend who was living with Alzheimer's.

For SIXTEEN Chris stays in his home-county of West Yorkshire, collaborating with two young men living in Bradford. In the time he spends with these sixteen-year olds, he builds up an extraordinarily intimate and compelling series of moments in their daily lives.

Simon Roberts

Simon is a photographic artist based in Brighton. After winning the Ian Parry Scholarship in 1998 he freelanced for national and international magazines. In 2004 he moved to Russia and spent a year travelling and making work for his first monograph, *Motherland*. He has concentrated on his own practice ever since. Simon creates wide-ranging surveys of our time, which examine contemporary economic, cultural and political landscapes and he is heralded for his expansive tableaux photographs. Alongside his practice he is an active public speaker, holds academic posts and is involved with not for profit organisations.

At a time when half the UK population say they have no religion Simon's series of video portraits *SIXTEEN: A Portrait of Faith* focuses on young people who identify with a religious faith. Each sixteen-year-old poses for the camera for several minutes in a similar fashion to mid-19th century photographic portraits, and offers a short monologue, in which they talk about their faith, their hopes, dreams and fears.

Michelle Sank

Michelle was born in Cape Town, South Africa. She left there in 1978 and has been living in England since 1987. Her images reflect a preoccupation with the human condition and to this end can be viewed as social documentary. Her work encompasses issues around social and cultural diversity.

Gallery: List of works from (from entrance then left to right):

Craig Easton *Maizi*, (Runcorn, Merseyside, England) 2017, digital print
Jillian Edelstein *Sixteen - Hull Series*, digital print 2018
Simon Roberts *Ahmed* (Blackburn) digital video, 2m48s
Christopher Nunn *Carlton and Dominique* (Bradford) 2018 digital print
Craig Easton *Rida* (Brierfield, Lancashire, England) 2018, digital print
Craig Easton *Oliver* (Tyldesley, England) 2018, digital print
Craig Easton *Molly* (Barrow, Cumbria, England) 2018, digital print
Craig Easton *Awais* (Nelson, Lancashire, England) 2018, digital print
Craig Easton *Saul* (Sunderland, England) 2018, digital print

Atrium: List of works from (from left to right):

Michelle Sank:

Cameron (Penzance, Cornwall) August 2018
Lory (Treneere, Cornwall) August 2018
Ayisha (Falmouth, Cornwall) July 2018
Josh (Treneere, Cornwall) August 2018
Ison (Treneere, Cornwall) August 2018
Chloe (Falmouth, Cornwall) October 2018
All digital photographic images on Phototex

Danielle (Treneere, Cornwall) August 2018
Digital photographic image on banner

Thanks goes to our funders and partners:



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