

Anna Fox

Cockroach Diary & other stories



An Impressions Gallery
Touring Exhibition

Curated by Anne McNeill

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Cockroach Diary & other stories

This exhibition brings together works spanning more than twenty-five years and is the first retrospective exhibition by Anna Fox, one of the most significant photographers to emerge from the new wave of British colour documentary of the 1980s.

Anna Fox's photographs document the everyday. She is fascinated by the rituals that take place both in the home and in the villages of middle England. Her photographs are often autobiographical, giving us a glimpse into her world, as well as telling stories about life behind the scenes in the rural South.

List of works

The Village (1991 - 1993)

10 x Framed Photographs 54cm x 49cm incorporating:

1 x 8ft cubed Box Room (2 x 9ft x 7ft Slide projections / projectors + soundtrack)

Country Girls (1991 - 1996)

4 x Photographs mounted on aluminium 102cm x 142cm

Pictures of Linda (1983 - 2008)

4 x Framed Photographs 100cm x 100cm

3 x Framed Photographs 76cm x 76cm

2 x Framed Photographs 49cm x 49cm

3 x Framed Photographs 64cm x 54cm

1 x Framed Photograph 77cm x 52cm

1 x Framed Photograph 49cm x 72cm (Portrait)

1x Video Monitor

Back to the Village (1999 - 2008)

3 x Framed Photographs 100cm x 100cm

26 x Framed Photographs 49cm x 49cm

Notes from Home (2000 - 2003)

Gifts from the cats – 1 x 60 page Book (page size 15cm x 17.5cm)

Pete's food and flowers – 1 x 58 page Book (page size 15cm x 17.5cm)

Making cakes – 1 x 52 page Book (page size 15cm x 17.5cm)

Super snacks – 1 x 28 page Book (page size 15cm x 17.5cm)

Father Christmas – 1 x 22 page Book (page size 15cm x 17.5cm)

4 x Presentation Shelves w500cm x d18cm x h7cm

My Mother's Cupboards and My Father's Words (1999)

15 x Framed Photographs 31.5cm x 23cm

Cockroach Diary (1996 - 1999)

13 x Framed Photographs 63cm x 53cm

2 x Presentation Shelves w200cm x d15cm (Diary)

41 Hewitt Road (1996 - 1999)

8 x Presentation Tables w102cm x d63cm x h77cm (Book Layout)

Equipment

2 x 9ft x 7ft slide projectors will be provided. Venue to provide monitor, DVD player and a pair of speakers. Venues will need to provide their own technician. Technical advice supplied.

Interpretation

Included with the exhibition is:

Text for venues own information sheet

Specially produced film in DVD format with an interview with Anna Fox directed by the curator (13 mins)

Artist information folder

Selection of books for visitors to read

Education pack and gallery trail

Text for introduction panel and captions will be provided, venues to produce own vinyl lettering.

Hire Fee, transport and insurance

£2500+vat, for an eight week exhibition, which includes a fee to the artist

Venues will be responsible for two way transport within mainland UK and for insurance in transit and in situ.

Space required

Approximately 50 - 70 linear metres

Publication

Full colour 288pp publication ***Anna Fox: Photographs 1983-2007*** by Val Williams, published by Photoworks, in association with Impressions Gallery RRP £24.99



Untitled from *The Village* 1991-1993
© Anna Fox

The Village (1993), made in collaboration with curator Val Williams, is a body of work looking at domestic life in a rural West Sussex village. The specially made room has been re-created as an installation for the first time in fifteen years, using obsolete projection equipment and the original slides. On the outside of the darkened box are a series of black and white photographs. These depict gardens, photographed secretly through hedges and fences, as if they are settings for the next village drama. Inside the projection box, larger than life size colour projections display such events as family weddings, fêtes and women's domestic lives. A surround soundtrack whispers secrets revealed in interviews with women from the village. As Fox explains "*I wanted to spend time investigating the realities (which I felt were hidden) lying behind the façade of the typical English picture postcard village*"



Untitled from Country Girls, 1999
© Anna Fox and Alison Goldfrapp

Country Girls (1996-2001) is collaboration between Anna Fox and singer/songwriter Alison Goldfrapp. It explores the lives of women growing up in rural southern England and the story of Sweet Fanny Adams, which fascinated them both as young girls. The photographs, often disturbingly violent, act as metaphors for the feeling of suffocation they both felt as young women growing up in the countryside in the 1970's. Fox says " *We went out into the landscape, often at night or early morning, and made photographs that summed up our memories.*"



Untitled from *Pictures of Linda*, 2005
© Anna Fox

Pictures of Linda (1983-2008) is the result of an ongoing documentation of musician Linda Lunas and show their relationship through a set of playful performance based portraits. Fox first photographed Linda at a party, and inspired by the punk movement, in which Linda and her band Fashionable Living Death were involved, went on to continue photographing Linda's ever changing costumes and hairstyles. As their friendship grew, Linda became more obsessed with documenting herself dressed in different ways, and recording all theses changes she made to herself. In 2007 Fox created the film ***Pictures of Linda Lunus*** where Linda speaks, touchingly, about her life, her experiences and her response to being photographed for such a long period of time.



Hampshire Village Pram Race 2004
© Anna Fox

Back to the Village (1999-2008) is an ongoing photographic project observing the uniquely English rituals that take place in the picturesque villages of Hampshire. On her return to Selborne (after moving out of London in 1999) Fox became more aware of how significant the various events that take place in the countryside can be. Citing the 19th Century photographer Sir Benjamin Stone as an influence, Fox has created a collection of photographs documenting the customs - such as nativity plays, Halloween festivities and Guy Fawkes night - that take place in local villages.



41 Hewitt Road © Anna Fox

41 Hewitt Road (1996–1999), designed as a series of book dummy pages by Dean Pavitt at Loup Design, is a series of colour photographs accompanied by a set of emails describing 41 Hewitt Road (This is the London home which Fox shared with family and friends, and is also the setting for *Cockroach Diary*). The photographs appear as if made by an archaeologist discovering a site of interest, recently deserted, but the emails tell a different story. As Fox says *"The house was a chaotic place to live, so photographing the rooms enabled me to distance myself from the place"*



Pete's Food & Flowers © Anna Fox

Notes From Home (2000 -2003) is a set of intimate works produced in a series of artists' books, designed and made by Riikka Kassinen. The work started when Anna Fox found herself immersed back into village life after leaving London in 1999. Once again she turned the camera on herself and her immediate family and started to closely document the domestic activities that were happening in her new home. Each series of photographs form short stories about very simple activities - such as baking cakes and biscuits.

Making Cakes is collaboration between Anna and her son Louis and shows a variety of decorative themed cakes. **The Rise and Fall of Father Christmas** records the life size model of Father Christmas her son Felix made for the village art competition. **Pete's Food & Flowers** documents the strange and extraordinary range of meals made by Pete, who lodged in the house, and records the wild flowers he picked every day. **Supersnacks** are a series of self-portraits. **Gifts from the Cats** shows a record of all the dead animals the cats brought into the house as presents.



My Mothers Cupboards and My Fathers Words © Anna Fox

My Mothers Cupboards and My Fathers

Words (1999), designed originally as a miniature book using images and texts, tells an unusual story about family relationships. While her father was ill for many years Anna kept a notebook recording his outbursts that were mainly directed at the female members of his family. His quotes paired with a series of claustrophobic images of her mothers' neatly kept cupboards reveal a couple struggling to keep an even keel in the wake of a rapidly debilitating disease.



Cockroach Diary © Anna Fox

The darkly humorous ***Cockroach Diary*** (1996-1999) documents an infestation of cockroaches at Fox's North London (41 Hewitt Rd) home where she lived with her children, partner and a number of lodgers. First published in 1999 by Shoreditch Biennale, it tells a tale of how an invasion of cockroaches affected the people who lived there. The work combines a series of colour photographs with a handwritten diary that she kept until the cockroaches eventually left.

Installation Images



Anna Fox

Anna Fox first gained attention for *Work Stations: Office Life in London* (1988), a study of office culture in Thatcher's Britain, originally commissioned by Camerawork and The Museum of London. She is best known for *Zwarte Piet* (1993-8), a series of twenty portraits taken over a five-year period that explore Dutch 'black-face' folk traditions associated with Christmas. Other projects have included *The Village* (1992), a multi-media collaboration with the writer Val Williams, examining the experiences of rural women, and *Friendly Fire*, which records the leisure activity of paint-balling in the manner of war reportage. More recent publications include *Cockroach Diary* and *My Mother's Cupboards and My Father's Words* (2000), which deal with autobiographical narratives and were designed as miniature, limited edition books. She is Head of the BA in Photography at the University College of the Creative Arts, Farnham. Fox's work is represented in a number of major collections.

Impressions Gallery

Established in 1972 in York, Impressions was one of the first specialist photography galleries in Europe. Now based in our new purpose built space in Bradford, we are widely considered a leading international exhibition space for photography. We support and promote innovative and creative work that extends the boundaries of current photographic practice.

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