Work
Photographs by Ian Beesley
Poems by Ian McMillan

Gallery 2 Salts Mill Saltaire
September 2018 to August 2019

Supported by
UCLAN the university of Central Lancashire
Gallery Oldham
Arts Council England
IAN BEESLEY: WORK

This exhibition presents work from the last 4 decades by Ian Beesley, one of Europe’s finest social documentary photographers. Large-scale prints include images taken at Salts Mill in the 80s as it slowly shut down, and some from 2017 when Beesley returned to see the building thriving once more. Elsewhere, an extraordinary Wall of Workers shows portraits of men and women employed in trades which no longer exist. The final part of the gallery houses The Big Big Camera – a century-old industrial relic revived by Beesley - and the work he has created with it. Throughout the show are poems written by Ian McMillan, Beesley’s friend and frequent collaborator.

Open Mon – Fri 10-5:30; Sat & Sun 10-6pm.
Ian Beesley, celebrated documentary photographer and Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, is Bradford born and bred. In 1985/86 he photographed Salts Mill as it slowly shut down. In 2017 he returned to explore how the mill had changed with technology firms occupying the space where cloth was once woven. These images of now and then, seen in this first space, reflect on change, humanity, hard work & pride. ‘The Bobbin Doffer’ is exhibited alongside a poem written by Beesley’s friend and frequent collaborator Ian McMillan.

The second part of the gallery shows Beesley’s work on capturing vanishing trades. The wall sculpture is a collaboration with the designer Craig Oldham.

The third part of the gallery contains ‘The Big Big Camera’ – an enormous industrial relic revived by Beesley.

Thanks to:
- National Coal Mining Museum for England
- Gallery Oldham
- University of Central Lancashire
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43 Images
6 pairs of 6 Horizontals
Gap between suggest 6 cms 1/2"
Frames
External Size: 21" x 17"
54 cms x 43 cms

1 Row of 7 Verticals

348 cms /approx 137" /11\(\frac{1}{2}\) ft

354 cms /139" /11\(\frac{1}{2}\) ft
Sculpture

Option 4
Landscape
approx 1500 × 1334mm

Letters will be made as stencils like Grafters Exhibition and will be cut out from the metal
44 portraits of workers to stand for 44 years as a pher by @IanBeesleyphoto in a show coming very soon @SaltsMill. I’ve had a Beesley on my wall for something near thirty years, and .. I’m not bored of it yet. Terrific pher. Go see.
BOBBIN DOFFER CARRYING HISTORY

Look at this man, how he carries the bobbins
So carefully, each hand just so. Here, and here.
He’s carrying the jokes and he’s carrying the stories
The Bobbin Doffers told each other in the brief rests
They took, when the sun from the windows lit the wool in the air.

Look at this man, how he carries the bobbins
In a kind of practised geometry of balancing.
He’s carrying the structure of a lost language,
A lost way of thinking, a set of skills and solutions
That hung in the air for a while like wool in light,
Then faded.

Look at this man, how he carries the bobbins
Like he’s carrying history.
And he can’t see where he’s going, can’t see which way
History’s heading. But we can see him.

Ian McMillan
WE’RE ALL IN THE SHADOW OF THE BUS STOP

The slubbers stood here,
And the stampers.
Now the programmers stand,
And the packers.
The dyers stood here
And the combers.
Now the carers stand,
And the chuggers.
All in the shadow of the bus stop
All waiting for the bus to come
All in the office or the workshop
To the beat of the working drum
All waiting for the bus to come
All waiting for the bus to come

Ian McMillan 2018
This Hunter Paton camera was originally used by a company manufacturing wallpaper at Rome Mill, Springhead, Oldham. Gallery Oldham gave it a home when the wrecking ball beckoned. Ian Beesley saw the camera in their stores and became determined to repurpose this century-old industrial relic.

After a year of cleaning and repairs, the challenge was using a camera that was designed for huge negatives 34 inches square. Beesley’s solution was to create a grid which could take smaller negatives, resulting in images made up of 20 separate prints. These are some of the photographs Beesley has taken with a camera that was never intended to be moved from the factory for which it was made, but which is now well acquainted with travelling the highways and byways in a Ford Transit van.

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THE BIG CAMERA
Salts Mill @SaltsMill · Sep 19
And today we welcomed the big big camera - 3 meters x 2 metres long, and a hundred years old!
The brilliant documentary photographer Ian Beesley set the camera up outside to take a picture of the mill. The results should be on the walls in about a week!
#Photography #Photographer
Photographer @IanBeesleyphoto photographs @SaltsMill with the Huge Hunter Penrose camera see @yorkshirepost @LeedsNews photography
Lots of fab pictures in @Bradford_TandA of @IanBeesleyPhoto putting the big big camera together – it’s quite a task...

This antique camera is twice as big as a fridge
AN INDUSTRIAL age relic came to the district yesterday morning to give the public a snapshot of the history of photography.

thetelegraphandargus.co.uk
Timelapse of a 100-year-old camera being assembled by @IanBeesleyphoto to take a photo of Bradford’s @SaltsMill See the full report by me and @dannelson_cam on @BBCLookNorth 🌟
44 portraits of workers to stand for 44 years as a pher by @IanBeesleyphoto in a show coming very soon @SaltsMill.
I’ve had a Beesley on my wall for something near thirty years, and .. I’m not bored of it yet. Terrific pher. Go see.
Our Big Big Camera is being installed at @SaltsMill today as part of a new @IanBeesleyphoto exhibition. Well worth a visit!
Rolling! Ian brings giant camera to historic site

It’s almost twice as big as a fridge, takes 20 minutes to assemble and originally held a two-foot-square negative – so it’s no wonder this century-old camera was the focus of attention when it arrived in Saltaire yesterday.

Photographer and artist Ian Beesley has restored the ‘Big Big Camera’ over two years and now travels across the North of England with it in his van – and a hydraulic platform to get it off. He stopped in Saltaire for a shot of Salts Mill.

FULL STORY - CENTRE
Ian sees the bigger picture as he brings giant historic camera to the district

Photographer brought camera back to life in two-year restoration

By Bradley Deas 01274 70516
brad.deas@hayle.co.uk

AN INDUSTRIAL age relic came to the district yesterday morning to give the public a snapshot of the history of photography.

"The Big Big Camera" is a century old and was brought to Salts Mill to snap an old school photo of one of the most famous parts of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The large multi-material structure gets its name from the fact it measures three metres long and two metres wide, which is nearly as big as the average fridge.

Ian Beesley, award-winning and internationally acclaimed artist and photographer, who has had work shown in the National Media Museum before, is the person who brought the artefact back to life over a two-year period.

He now travels across the North of England with the camera in his trusty Ford Transit, complete with its own hydraulic platform to get it in and out.

Yesterday's stop was Saltaire for a shot of the village's famous mill.

Setup of the camera is a far cry from the ease of being able to take a selfie on a phone, or even the professional-style photos some smartphones can now aspire to.

This piece of history physically needs to be assembled and takes a massive 20 minutes to do, so in modern day terminology that means in thousands of selfies' time.

Large pieces of polished wood, big bellows and machined metal all have to be brought together to create the final product.

Once in position, Mr Beesley has a simple chance to get the shot—unless he wants to disassemble the camera again, get to a place of complete darkness, change the multiple negatives and start over, something which would take a click of a button on a smartphone or a modern day camera.

The photographer has to use a special device to measure the light. Such meticulous and intricate preparation is reminiscent of Mr Beesley's effort in restoring the huge Hunter Penrose camera.

It was originally used by a company manufacturing wallpaper at Rome Mill, Oldham and was given a home at Gallery Oldham when the wrecking ball beckoned.

Mr Beesley took it as his personal mission to bring a piece of history back to life when he saw the camera sitting in the gallery store.

After 12 long months of cleaning and repairing the camera, the most difficult part was yet to come.

The device was designed to take huge negatives, 34 inches square, but Mr Beesley connected a plan.

His solution was to create a grid which could take smaller negatives, resulting in images made up of 20 separate prints which could then be brought together as one.

This unique method was on show at Salts Mill, with Mr Beesley seen piecing together the components of the camera puzzle, filling it with film, before getting under the device's cover to take a photo.

The result of the shoot at Salts Mill, plus other recent work, is set to be shown in an upcoming exhibition, which is opening on September 24.