

GEOORGE

SHAW

PART ONE

ABOUT THE ARTIST

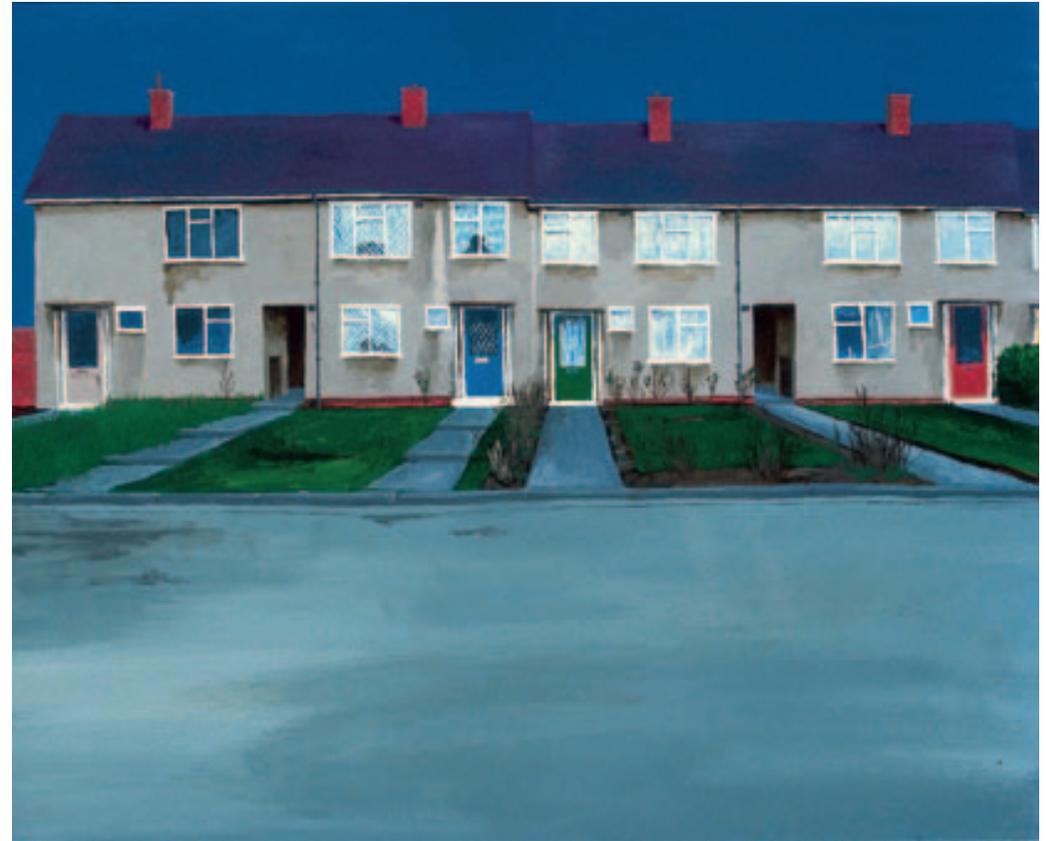
George Shaw was born in Coventry, England, in 1966. He studied Fine Art at Sheffield Polytechnic from 1986 to 1989, and graduated from the MA Painting course at the Royal College of Art, London, in 1998. He lives and works in Ilfracombe, Devon.



ABOUT THE WORK

George Shaw makes paintings of the Tile Hill housing estate in Coventry, where he lived with his family from the age of two. After leaving home to go to university, he made a visit to his parents' house and started to photograph the place where he had grown up. He used the photographs to start a series of paintings which he has continued to this day. Having originally planned to make fourteen paintings, Shaw has gone on to produce more than one hundred and fifty.

Shaw's paintings depict scenes and subjects which are commonly found on suburban housing estates in England such as houses, gardens, pubs, schools, playing fields, patches of woodland, paths, social clubs, libraries, and details such as puddles, litter and graffiti. The paintings focus on everyday, familiar things which might often be considered uninteresting or insignificant. All of the sites in the paintings exist within half a mile of the house in which Shaw grew up.



ABOUT THE WORK

The Sly and Unseen Day is an exhibition of George Shaw's work at BALTIC, made up of 40 paintings produced between 1996 and the present day. The titles which Shaw gives his paintings often suggest that the place depicted has a particular significance for the artist, perhaps associated with a memory from his past. The end of August, for example, might refer to his memories of the school holidays. Shaw creates groups of paintings which he calls 'song cycles', in which he paints the same scene in different versions, showing how it has changed over a period of time. The *Ash Wednesday* series depicts scenes from the housing estate at half hour intervals on the same day. Shaw uses Humbrol paints; a range of enamel paints normally used by amateur modelmakers or hobbyists and not generally associated with fine art. This gives his paintings an unusual and distinctive quality with their unrealistic colours and reflective surfaces.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Choose a painting in the exhibition and look carefully at it. Now read the title of the painting. Does the title affect your understanding or change how you feel about the painting?

- What feelings or emotions do you think are suggested by George Shaw's paintings? How do you think the artist feels about the place where he grew up?

George Shaw has said that he takes roughly 100 to 150 photographs on each walk he makes around the Tile Hill estate, and he now has over 10,000 photographs in total.

- How do you think the artist decides which photographs to use as inspiration for his paintings?



IN MY OPINION

There are no people in Shaw's paintings and he leaves out all details such as cars or signs. Why do you think he does this? Do you think it would make a difference if the paintings did include people and signage?

- Think about the journey you make between the place where you live and your school.
- Can you describe the buildings, structures, spaces and scenes which you pass?
- How much do you think you notice the landscape or environment around you?
- Do you walk to school or travel to school in a car or on a bus? How do you think this affects your experience?



HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER

Have a go at making a series of images which show the same subject in different ways.

- Choose a subject, e.g. an outdoor location, a building, a tree, a shop, a sign, a garden, a person's head.
- Make a photograph or drawing of your chosen subject.
- Now photograph or draw the subject again in different circumstances e.g. in different weather, at a different time of day or in different light.
- Make a series of at least three images.



HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER

When talking about working with hundreds of photographs before starting to make a painting, Shaw has said, 'When you get all the pictures and lay them all out on the table, you sometimes see a theme or something there that you weren't aware of, like a path.'

- Try using photography to carry out research for an artwork you are going to make.
- Choose a subject (something you can photograph).
- Spend time using your camera to photograph anything that interests you about your subject, or catches your eye. At this stage, try not to focus on one idea. Try to record the subject in as many different ways as you can.
- Now print out a wide selection of photographs and lay them out on a table, or put them on an empty wall. This allows you to see all the images at the same time.
- Try arranging the photos in different ways and grouping similar images together. Try to make visual or thematic connections between different images.
- Select an image or group of images to use as the starting point to make a drawing, painting or sculpture.

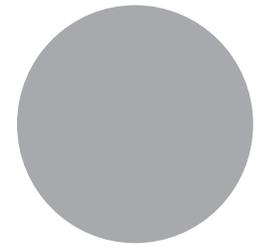


FURTHER RESEARCH

Carel Weight
David Hopher
David Rayson
Elizabeth Magill
Kitchen sink art
Michael Raedecker
Peter Doig

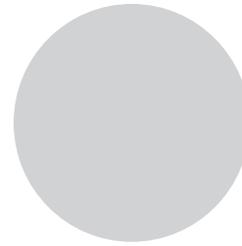
LITERACY KEY WORDS

reflective



building

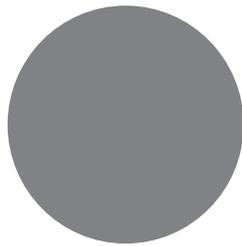
landscape



scene

suburban

depict



familiar

melancholy

nostalgia

space

unrealistic

environment

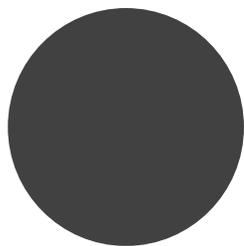
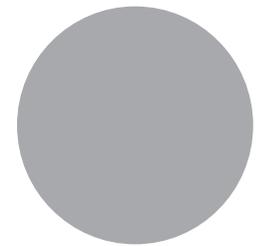
estate

insignificant

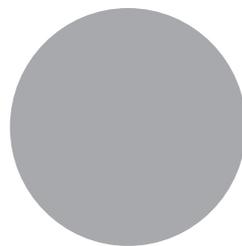
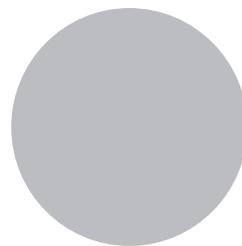
memory

painting

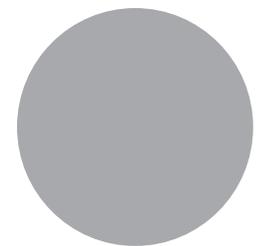
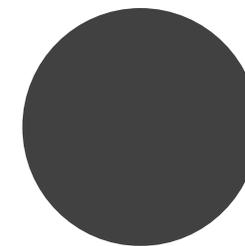
subject



everyday



photograph



PART TWO

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Contemporary art is incredibly diverse and wide ranging and can be used to support teaching and learning as part of an entire learning experience. It can be used to generate creative thinking in all subject areas and to support learning across curricular dimensions, as well as contribute to personal development and personalised learning.

CROSS CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

- Art and Design
- English
- Geography

USEFUL LINKS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BALTIC

www.balticmill.com

Quay

www.balticmill.com/quay

BALTIC Multimedia Database

<http://archive.balticmill.com>

'In my opinion' toolkit to help pupils approach artwork, formulate questions and contribute opinions

www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php

Blank presentation template: pupils can use this to present their own research and ideas

www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php

BALTIC Secondary Resources Bank: pupils can use this to search for and download images and other information

www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php

IMAGE CREDITS

Slide 3

George Shaw portrait photographed
by Dan Wootton

Slide 4

George Shaw
No. 57, 1996
Humbrol enamel on board
43 x 53 cm
© the Artist. Courtesy Wilkinson Gallery, London.

Slide 5

George Shaw
Ash Wednesday: 8.30am, 2004-5
Humbrol enamel on board
91 x 121 cm
© the Artist. Courtesy Wilkinson Gallery, London.

Slide 6

George Shaw
Scenes from The Passion: The Way Home, 1999
Humbrol enamel on board
75 x 100 cm
© the Artist. Courtesy Wilkinson Gallery, London.

Slide 7

George Shaw
The Assumption, 2010
Humbrol enamel on board
56 x 74.5 x 5 cm
© the Artist. Courtesy Wilkinson Gallery, London.

Slide 8

George Shaw
Scenes from The Passion: The Cop Shop, 1999-
2000 Humbrol enamel on board
43 x 53 cm
© the Artist. Courtesy Wilkinson Gallery, London.

Slide 9

George Shaw
Poets Day, 2005/06
Humbrol enamel on board
92 x 121 cm
© the Artist. Courtesy Wilkinson Gallery, London.