

Chris Doyle



SF

248 Utah Street
SF, CA 94103
+ 415 399 1439

NY

313 W 14th Street 2F
New York, NY
By appointment only

WEB

www.cclarkgallery.com

Salford Central Train Station Exhibition Shows Growing Inequality In City

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CHAPEL STREET WEALTH DIVIDE HIGHLIGHTED IN MIND THE GAP PHOTOS

'This is an exhibition by people from Salford who see inequality every day of their lives in their communities...'

At Salford Central Train Station dozens of photos have gone up on the glass windows showing the screaming inequality that is growing around the city. The exhibition by St Philips Camera Club is poignantly called Mind the Gap! and runs until 4th August.

People using Salford Central Train Station may not even know they are in Salford...so Salford has come to them, via a brilliant exhibition showing the growing, screaming inequality brought about by so-called 'regeneration'.

Slapped onto the glass windows are photos taken by over a dozen members of the St Philips Camera Club, based off Chapel Street, that depict the reality of life within a ten or 15 minute walk from their base.

The photos range from images taken around Salford Precinct and the Islington Estate, to the posh shops and cafe bars around King Street and the unaffordable housing in between.

"We noticed there was lot of inequality...and it was kind of depressing when you see it next to such immense wealth, especially the kind of wealth that's concentrated in parts of Manchester and is coming towards St Philips with the development" says Chris Doyle of Chapel Street Community Arts who facilitated the project.

"It was a conversation that was cropping up quite regularly in terms of development; Who it was for? Who benefitted? We wanted to do something that kind of showed that disparity" he adds.

The photos certainly do that. The stark differences are exposed as totally contrasting images are placed next to each other...young professionals quaffing lager on King Street with a Discount Super Store photo; homeless people's tents with luxury cars...inequality protesters with Tory boys...There's also more subtle differences depicted, with the old community and new community worlds apart.

....Also, because of the location and the see-through 'walls', the passersby and viewers of the photos become almost an extension of the exhibition itself...it really is fascinating to watch, as the images throw more than a window on the now Salford.

The poignantly titled Mind the Gap! exhibition has an accompanying newspaper which can be picked up from the Station. Its editorial gives some stats...

Salford house prices rose by 13.1% in 2016, almost double the national average, while average wages rose by only 2.3%...

"We'd been taking photos of new residential buildings around the church at Middlewood Locks and Timekeepers Square where the houses start at around £250,000" states the editorial "... 'They're not very affordable, are they?' says Sue, a local resident 'I understand that they're very attractive for people wanting to be close to Manchester, but I feel for the young people who've grown up around here and have to move away from their families and support networks'..."

As the Mind the Gap! posters state, it's a 'conversation that is becoming increasingly relevant, and a subject that affects us all'...

Do not miss this exhibition – it's more than mere photos...

Mind The Gap! runs until 4th August at Salford Central Train Station.