

Hi, I'm Grace. I am an intern at Photography Course London.

I have been given the challenge to explore the streets of London and visit the many photography exhibitions, events and such like that i squeeze into the amount of time i have here.

For my first blog post i decided to explore some of East London's photography exhibitions in the hope of finding something new and exciting....

I prepared myself for my tour of East London's galleries, armed with a notebook, several badly hand drawn maps (by myself) and the name of four galleries on my 'hit list'.

First up was the [Whitechapel](#) Gallery, in particular the Thomas Struth exhibition. After catching the tube to Aldgate East, and exiting via the correct stairway (I'm quite skilled at going in the wrong direction out of tube stations), I turned my head slightly to the left to get my bearings, and there it was right next to me. Perfect! Or so I thought.

Unfortunately I'm not great with timings, so I arrived a little earlier than I'd expected, around 10.30am, and the gallery doesn't actually open it's doors until 11am. So after a small wonder around the surrounding area, and an overly priced caffeine breakfast, I made my way back to the gallery.

The first thing you are faced with when entering the exhibition, is a life sized photograph depicting visitors of the Pantheon, Rome. It's an incredibly striking image. The subjects within the photograph mostly have their heads turned upwards, away from the camera, which in turn makes you feel as though you should be mirroring this act. They are in fact looking at a piece of artwork in front of them, but which is not captured in the photograph itself. This photograph sets off the exhibition beautifully, exciting your imagination and opening your mind to the possibilities the rest of the exhibition has in store.

There are a wide variety of photographs, from life size images of tourists surrounded by art, intimate family portraits, urban street views, chaotic jungle scenes and detailed scientific machinery. They all have very different locations, colour scales, focal points and reasoning behind them, and not all of them excited me, but you could loose yourself in every image. The fascination lies in the details.

My favourite part of the exhibition was finding a photograph that I knew very well, 'Eleonor and Giles Robertson' 1987, which is part of the intimate family portraits series.

I studied this image during my time at university, and it was a big part of my research, influencing the work I produced, so I was quite excited to see it 'in the flesh'. I love it when I get to see the original photographs I have poured over in library books, right there in front of me. I think that's what I enjoy the most about galleries and museums.

After my successful trip around the Whitechapel, I was quite eager to see what else, my chosen galleries had in store, so off I went to [Magnum](#). Unfortunately, when I arrived it was obvious that this wasn't a gallery you could just walk into off the street. But bravely, I rang the buzzer and asked if they had an exhibition on. Sadly, it had just finished and I was informed that the next one wasn't going to be until late September. Not such a good start for gallery no.2, but the girl I spoke to was very friendly and came to the door to talk to me rather than over the intercom, which was a nice touch. Even though I had missed the exhibition, I'll definitely be going back, even if it is just to find out what's behind Magnums closed doors.

[Host](#) was gallery no.3, but again I was stopped in my tracks. After finally finding the building, (it's not the most obvious sign), I was once again faced with a large wooden door and a buzzer. This girl wasn't as accommodating as the previous one, and I was told that the galley would be closed until November for refurbishment. So that put an end to that.

Finally, the last gallery on my list was the [Hotshoe](#) gallery. Fingers crossed I rang the buzzer.

Success! I was buzzed into a small building and instantly surrounded by photographs. This is what I had been hoping for.

The gallery itself is quite a small space with an office at the far end and a few enclosed spaces where they were showing some video art. The exhibition consisted of nine different artists each showing their interpretation of the theme 'Ways of seeing'. After quickly scanning the room I realised that there was nothing to tell you about the individual pieces apart from the notes by the entrance. This annoyed me slightly. I would rather have preferred for there to be a short description, even just a single line about the work, next to each artist. I don't always believe this is necessary, but I couldn't understand what most of the images were supposed to be about. Perhaps it was just me and other people would find it clear, but I was quite put off by this lack of information. It wasn't until I had left the gallery that I spent time reading the A4 page I picked up on my way out, that I actually understood what it was I had been looking at. I guess you could say it was my own fault for not reading the notes while I was there, but I didn't want to stand around reading what looked to me like a small essay, when I could have been looking at something visually interesting.

Don't however let my annoyance at the lack of information, or should I say alternative way of presenting this work, put you off from visiting. The ideas behind the images are really quite interesting, and I would like to go back for a second look, now I can grasp the concept with more understanding. Perhaps I'll combine it with my next venture.

My wish list of galleries and exhibitions I want to see is growing by the day, and I'm intending to visit them in the coming weeks, in between moving house and job hunting that is, but I'll keep you all update with my adventures and random thoughts. It's good to jot them down and get them out of my head every now and then!

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