

# THE STANLEY & AUDREY BURTON GALLERY

## Information for Teachers and Group Leaders

### The Object of Photography

7 April – 19 June 2009

This exhibition includes the work of four artists based in Yorkshire: Ignaz Cassar, Hondartza Fraga, Joe Mawson and Andrew Warstat. Their work explores the medium of photography itself. The artists respond to and critique photography in a variety of media, using traditional and digital photographic formats, drawing, installation and animation. Playful and subtle treatments of the photographic process show that there is more to the medium than meets the eye.

This exhibition seeks to draw the Gallery's audience into discussion and debate about the nature of photography and its role in our media-saturated society.

### About the Artists

Sheffield-based Spanish artist **Hondartza Fraga** has exhibited internationally, in Portugal, Spain and throughout the UK. With several prizes for her artwork from the Spanish government, Fraga's work was recently showcased with other Sheffield artists at the Venice Biennale and Documenta art fairs.

Hondartza Fraga's website: <http://www.hondartzafraga.com/>

Leeds-based **Joe Mawson** has also received several prizes for his compelling digital photography, which he has exhibited around Yorkshire and recently in Italy. Recipient of several artist residencies in Yorkshire, Mawson also founded the artist collective gallery 'theartmarket' in central Leeds, where he curates shows of other local artists' work.

Joe Mawson's website: <http://www.joemawson.co.uk/>

**Ignaz Cassar** and **Andrew Warstat** are co-editors of the cultural studies journal, *Parallax*, published through the University of Leeds. Italian-born Cassar's background in architecture and photography has led him to exhibit his own artworks and curate exhibitions in Germany, Austria and around the UK. Warstat, based in Hebden Bridge, has a series of UK exhibitions to his name, including one in Norwich, where his work was selected by famed yba artist-curator Gavin Turk. A prolific writer and cultural critic, with several books and reviews in *The Guardian* and *Art Monthly* to his name, Warstat has also conducted a distinguished career as a fine art lecturer in several institutions.

Ignaz Cassar's website: <http://www.cassar.com/>

Andrew Warstat's website:

[http://www.andrewwarstat.co.uk/andrewwarstat/Andrew\\_Warstat.html](http://www.andrewwarstat.co.uk/andrewwarstat/Andrew_Warstat.html)

## Activity Information

See related Activity Sheet with links to National Curriculum

*Heck no. 5*, by Joe Mawson, 2008  
digital Lambda print on dibond

Leeds artist Joe Mawson's digital print *Heck no. 5* explores how our society feels the need to find meaning in disasters through the images they see in the media.

Mawson recreated the scene from the Selby Rail Crash using toy models. The models were then photographed and digitally manipulated. The highly saturated colour of the photograph and the deliberately crude models make clear that the scene is fabricated by the artist. In this way, he reminds his viewers that the real disaster is forever outside the photograph, which only creates the *illusion* of objects and space.

Investigators scrambled to explain the senseless and unfortunate series of events that led to the disaster, which was accompanied by a media frenzy following the story. By re-constructing and re-imagining past events, Mawson makes *more unreal* the events depicted in the media. In this way, he prompts his audience to be aware of their own responses to what is now a constant barrage of disaster imagery in the mass media.

### The Selby Rail Crash

On 28 February 2001, near Great Heck, Yorkshire, a Land Rover towing a trailer swerved off the M62 motorway and ran down an embankment onto a railway track. The Land Rover was struck by a GNER express train. The train was then hit by an oncoming freight train. The crash killed ten people including both drivers of the GNER train and the freight train and more than eighty people were injured. The driver of the Land Rover survived the disaster; he was later held accountable for the collision, and convicted of 10 counts of causing death by dangerous driving.

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