

**PRESS RELEASE****Paul Graham. Photographs 1981–2006**

24/1 – 5/4/2009

Museum Folkwang, Kahrstrasse 16, 45128 Essen

**Press Conference:** Friday, 23 January, 2009, 11 a.m.**Opening:** Friday, 23 January, 2009, 7 p.m.

**The Museum Folkwang is presenting the first retrospective in Germany of the British photographer Paul Graham (b. 1956) with 11 major work complexes produced since 1981. With about 145 images, the exhibition shows a representative selection of his work. Graham's work belongs to the tradition of social documentary photography, which was founded by Bill Brandt in England after the second world war and continued by photographers such as Chris Killip and John David. In dealing with it and with American photography from the 60s and 70s, Graham developed an innovative artistic work whose view is directed uncompromisingly at social reality.**

**The exhibition is a continuation of the cooperation between the Museum Folkwang and RWE AG in the area of contemporary art.**

Paul Graham lives in New York. His latest series, *American Night* and *A Shimmer of Possibilities*, were made in the USA. His exploration of the American black and white photographic work of Gary Winogrand, Lee Friedlander and Diane Arbus, who define their work as individual statements on social developments, but also the color photographs of Stephen Shore and William Eggleston whose interest is directed at everyday situations and objects, marked Grahams, pictorial language. At a time when art photography is increasingly staged, manipulated or produced in a studio, or when the world is kept at a distance with a cool conceptualized manner, Grahams work distinguishes itself with its constant observation and questioning on the realities of life.

Graham's first publication, *A1 – The Great North Road* appeared in 1981 and was a documentation made along the English north-south highway. Already here, Graham draws on the traditional genres of photographic practice and reassembles them anew. In the series *Troubled Land* from 1987, which deals with the situation in Northern Ireland, he combines landscape photography and war photography. The year before, the color reportage *Beyond Caring* appeared, a stock-taking of English unemployment offices and their desolate sadness. In the series *American Night* (1998–2002) or in *End of an Age* (1996–1998) he shifts the frontiers of what is commonly accepted as image or portrait.

The evolution of his photographic work is closely tied with the question of presentation, which he developed for individual projects from large format tableau to small format sequences.

Paul Graham has taken up the strong tradition of British social documentary photography in his work in order to enrich it in a variety of ways and to develop it further. His work provides critical input into photographic discourse and calls into question documentary photography with their "statements". The printed image and the book are thus given special import. While his early projects were presented in the classic series of tableau format with unchanging size, Graham has developed for his more recent work a very individual book form with which their various formats, materials and sequences distinguish his special methodology.

**Presseabteilung**

The book accompanying the exhibition includes three essays by David Chandler, Michael Almeyda and Russel Ferguson as well as an illustrated biography (384 pages, of which 250 in color – price 48 Euro).

Public tours: Current dates in the Internet  
Events: Current dates in the Internet

Downloadable press materials at: <http://www.museum-folkwang.de/de/meta/presse.html>

### **General Visitor Information**

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Opening Hours: Tue-Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Tickets: 5.00/3.50 Euro

**The 2009 program of the Museum Folkwang ends with this exhibition on 5 April. In January 2010, when Essen and the Ruhr Area is the Cultural Capital of Europe, the new building by David Chipperfield Architects, financed by the Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung, will be inaugurated.**

**Presseabteilung**

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