

THE EAST END IN COLOUR 1960-1980

DAVID GRANICK



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The photographs of David Granick from the collections
of Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives

edited by
CHRIS DORLEY-BROWN



HOXTON MINI PRESS



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We are an indie publisher making small collectable photobooks out of East London. Our goal is to make books that are both beautiful and accessible. Neither aloof nor plain. We want both collectors and everyday folk to keep them in neat piles on wooden shelves.

We are Ann and Martin and have two dogs, Moose and Bug, both of whom hate art. East London is where we nurture our ideas, walk the dogs and meet people more talented than ourselves. Thank you for supporting us. You can find more of our books at:

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TOWER HAMLETS LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

On his death in 1980, David Granick's slides were deposited at his local public library on Bancroft Road, just a few minutes away from where he lived in Stepney. At that time, the large Victorian building was the central lending library for the borough of Tower Hamlets with just one room for local history. Now, the whole building is dedicated to collecting, capturing and preserving materials and resources illustrating the amazing history of the borough.

Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives exists to document and share the endlessly rich and diverse histories of the world-famous East End of London. We welcome thousands of people from all over the world to browse through our rare collection of books and pamphlets, newspapers and press cuttings, maps, oral histories, film and video, as well as the archives – from local businesses, places of worship and prominent individuals to the records of Tower Hamlets Council and other local authorities which governed the area from 1593 to 1965.

The image collection is particularly special, with over 35,000 illustrations – mostly photographs but some engravings – of East End streets, buildings, people and activities since the 1800s. David Granick's slide collection is one of many gems.

Visit us

We hold many exhibitions and events, always free of charge, highlighting many different aspects of East End history. But even if you can't visit in person, feel free to ask a question, add us on social media or sign up to our newsletter. For further information about David Granick, our upcoming events and opening times, please visit www.ideastore.co.uk/granick.

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Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives
277 Bancroft Road
London E1 4DQ





INTRODUCTION

Chris Dorley-Brown

I have been living and working as a documentary photographer in East London for over 20 years, collaborating with Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives on a number of projects. During one of my visits I became aware of a large collection of slides that had not been digitised, and I asked the archivists if they would let me explore them. They agreed, and so I was able to pursue my ongoing quest for colour pictures of the post-war East End.

The East End after the war was an imagined territory for me. I had glimpsed it in colour only through cinema and TV: in *To Sir, With Love* (1967), there is Juniper Street, the No.15 bus dropping off Sidney Poitier in Poplar, and in the opening sequence of Alfred Hitchcock's *Frenzy* (1972) we see a helicopter flying over Wapping towards the opening bascules of a Tower Bridge still coated in the black soot of war and industrial smog. The Technicolor film rendered the muted browns of abandoned riverside wharves as labyrinths of ancient intrigue, and summer skies were more yellow than blue. I yearned to find an equivalent mood in a collection of still images but never had. So when I came across the slides of David Granick I was beyond excited: he was our man on the ground, he had it covered.

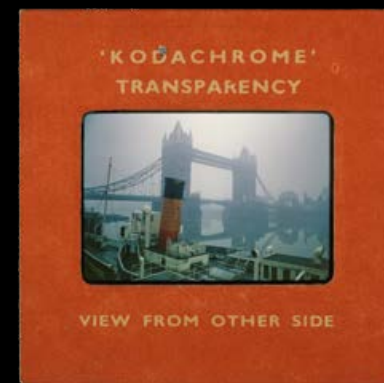
Only fragments remain of the life of David Granick. His bequest to Tower

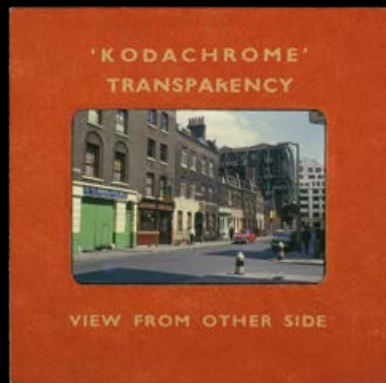
Hamlets Local History Library & Archives of some 2,000 Kodachrome colour slides have lain untouched and unseen to a wider audience for nearly 40 years. Each slide is meticulously dated and includes an exact location, while accompanying sheets from his lecture notes reveal self-deprecating apologies for his lack of professionalism. Genealogical searches for more information on Granick revealed only the bare bones.

Born in 1912, he was the eldest child of Anne Rabinovitch, (a Russian Ashkenazi Jewish surname) and Jonah Granick (probably of Irish origin). David died in 1980, aged 67. A Stepney resident his whole life, he first appears on the electoral register in 1935, in Clark Street, then decades later the Ockbrook flats in Hannibal Road, living with Rose, his younger sister. Also staying there periodically was a younger brother, Hyman, who met a tragic end in 1941 when the US Merchant Navy ship he was serving on was torpedoed by a German U-boat. Their mother Anne outlived them all.

Granick's collection of 35mm transparencies were primarily made for illustrating lectures and talks which he occasionally gave to members of the East London History Society (which still meets every month). These cool, slightly detached and beautifully composed photographs invite us into a world that seems to be decomposing and fading, just like the material on which they are made.

Laden with topographical information and nostalgic warmth, Granick's images can be added to a burgeoning array of photography collections that have become a vital and valuable element in our reassessment of London's recent





history. This renewed fascination with photography's analogue heritage has revealed some significant East End collections - Tex Ajetunmobi and Alan Dein (Stepney), Raju Vaidyanathan (Brick Lane), Steven Berkoff (Whitechapel), to name but a few.

The buildings lining the streets of David Granick's Stepney, Whitechapel, Bow, Poplar, Shadwell, Mile End and Aldgate in the sixties and seventies are coated in peeling lead paints from a colour chart that has long ceased to exist. The war has been over for 30 years but in places the trauma looks recent, infusing the mood of this tired landscape which bore the brunt of Luftwaffe blitzkrieg, with a melancholic determination to remain in the past. Shops, cafés and workshops bear the names of their owners and founders, hundreds of years of tradition still hanging on – just.

Granick keeps people in the background. The older men, still in de-mob pinstripes of ink shades, the younger ones dressed in modish dark suits, usually walking alone, locked in their own thoughts. The women, more sociable, chatting, carrying shopping back home, appear more resilient. Granick's East End is a place in transition: the docks and heavy industries are closing, the Jewish silversmiths and hatters are moving on and up, the Bengali rag trade is yet to establish dominance.

The first signs of a new breed are just detectable. The empty St Katharine Docks has been temporarily leased to a group of young artists, doing it for themselves, escaping the rip-off landlords up West. Huguenot terraces, squatted by

aesthetes and chancers, their ageing Cadillacs parked outside; sons and daughters of laid-off dockworkers, smoking Gitanes beside Mini Coopers, channelling Julie Christie or local boy Terry Stamp, thinking about careers in television or novel writing; errand boys for the Twins, darting between the vegetable barrows meeting deadlines... Only forensic zooming of these fragile shards of celluloid yield these clues, but Granick takes a step back from this to reveal a bigger picture. The psychogeographers, flâneurs and hipsters will have their day soon, but the photographer knows he's getting the last shots of those wharves, steamers and warehouses before they are replaced by imagined hotels and marinas, the proto-blueprint for the new world dominated by leisure, tourism and heritage replicas. These post-dockland utopias are soon to be upgraded into big business steel and glass, craven monuments of late capitalism. The future was in a distant haze, just around the corner.

A note about treatment of the original materials:

Almost all of David Granick's pictures in the archive are shot on Kodachrome 64, a fine grain colour reversal (transparency) film, discontinued by Kodak in 2009. These 60-year-old slides have held their subtle tones perfectly, very little fading or colour shift has occurred, but the standard Kodachrome thin cardboard slide mounts have not fared as well, drying out considerably. Over the years the fibres have migrated onto the film surface and embedded themselves as a rain of spots

and lines. In preparing the scanned files for this publication I have retouched and cloned away these distracting marks.

In an effort to preserve the subtle colour and tonal gradation I have used a high-resolution digital camera instead of a scanner. Conventional scans of Kodachrome can be problematic – modern scanners are set up for negative originals or other more common types of reversal film and detail can be lost. By laying the slides on a lightbox and using a macro lens, I have re-photographed the originals as if they were objects. This has preserved the very subtle difference between dark shadow and solid black and has kept intact the unique tonal subtleties of Kodachrome.

A consistent trait in Granick's compositional style was to hold his camera as untilted as possible, his intention to maintain the verticals as perpendicular within the frame, but on occasion he had to pan the camera up slightly to include the architectural features of the surrounding buildings. This caused the verticals to converge towards the top edge, which annoyed him. If he were working with a more sophisticated plate camera or had access to digital post processing he would, I am certain, have corrected this shift. In an effort to restore this perceived intention and to preserve the resonance and power of these images, I have made minimal but effective corrections to this end. Other than that, these pictures are unmanipulated.

from Bermondsey Wall, 1971





Whitman Road, 1976



Emmett Street, 1969



Redmans Road, 1961



Redmans Road, 1972



Redmans Road, 1971



Redmans Road, 1974



Clinton Road, 1976



Joshua Street, 1974



Maples Place, 1971



Raven Row, 1971



Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1969



Jubilee Street, 1971



Jubilee Street, 1971



Jubilee Street, 1973



Jubilee Street, 1973



Mansell Street, 1971



Hessell Street, 1974



Commercial Road, 1968



Alie Street, 1963



Alie Street, 1971



Alie Street, 1966



West India Docks, 1974



Little Somerset Street, 1974



Wellclose Square, 1969



Wellclose Square, 1969



Leman Street, 1968



Leman Street, 1967



Commercial Road, 1974



Artillery Lane, 1964



Fournier Street, 1968



Black Lion Yard, 1966



Black Lion Yard, 1966



Pool of London, 1963



Sheba Street, 1978



Brushfield Street, 1970



Spitalfields Market, 1973

Tower Bridge, 1971





Old Montague Street, 1966



Cheshire Street, 1969



Brick Lane/Hanbury Street, 1970



Brick Lane/Hanbury Street, 1976



Folgate Street, 1979



Fleur de Lis Street, 1966



Elder Street, 1968



Elder Street, 1965



Commercial Street, 1970



Wilkes Street, 1968



Wilkes Street, 1970



Wilkes Street, 1978



Brady Street Buildings, 1978



Brady Street Buildings, 1979



Cable Street, 1964



Cable Street, 1969



Cable Street, 1969



West India Dock Road, 1966

West India Docks, 1971





Aldgate, 1967



Gardiner's Corner, 1963



Aldgate High Street, 1975



Whitechapel Road, 1975



Whitechapel Road, 1965



Mile End Road, 1974



Whitechapel Road, 1970



Whitechapel Road, 1969



Mile End Road, 1968



Mile End Road, 1975



Mile End Road, 1977



Mile End Road, 1974



Mile End Road, undated



Commercial Road, 1969



Commercial Road, 1969



Three Colt Street, 1969



Three Colt Street, 1975



King John Street, c1960



Davenport Street, 1969



Newell Street, 1964



Newell Street, 1971



Belhaven Street, 1977



Limehouse Cut, 1969



Limehouse Cut, 1969



Old Watney Street, 1975



Tilbury railway arches, Whitechapel, 1975



Tower Bridge Road, 1974

from Bermondsey Wall, 1967





Stifford Estate, Stepney Green, 1961



Devons Road, 1974



Devons Road, undated



Watney Market, 1974



Commercial Road, 1970



Minorities, 1973



Whitechapel Station, 1972



Branch Road, 1971



Canning Town, undated

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Frontispiece: South East from Stifford Estate, 1963

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