

Revival, London 1989-1993 - selected photographs from the exhibition at Brent Museum and Archives at The Library at Willesden Green in 2022

- This Learning Resource supports KS1-KS3 topics in these studies:
- Local history (in particular Harlesden and Willesden);
- Art;
- PSHE; and
- Art and Design.
- [Roy Mehta](#) captured photographs in Harlesden and Willesden between 1989-1993 as a way of exploring the diversity and the changing nature of Brent. He has worked as an artist, educator and commercial photographer since the 1980s. His work is specifically concerned with ideas around cultural identity and belonging, reflecting his own background, as his parents originated from India and settled in Wembley in the 1960s.
- The exhibition was called 'Revival' for three reasons: the church references in some of the images; the revival of this particular archive after 30 years; and also a resurgence of interest in representations of minority groups.
[@roymehta](#) (Instagram)



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Introduction to Roy Mehta

- Roy Mehta's father was from Bharuch in India and his mother was from Pune in India.
- Roy was born in Kingsbury in Brent. He used to go shopping with his family in Wembley High Road when he was growing up.
- "The project began in 1989 - I just started walking around the streets with my camera. It was a really different period to be a photographer because people would invite you into their homes." from [2020 Culture Fund interview](#)
- Roy gave a copy to the people he had photographed if they wanted one.
- It was very common for documentary photographers to work in black and white in the late 1980s. Roy used a medium format Single Lens Reflex camera such as a Bronica. He also used a traditional 35mm film camera such as a Olympus OM-1. He used whatever equipment he could borrow at the time as he was just beginning his career. Roy took lots of photos at the time and then selected images from them for this exhibition.
- He is always respectful about how the images are used and is pleased that the photographs are being shared for research and in an educational way.

Cultural Diversity in Brent

- Brent is the second most culturally diverse borough in the UK and the long history of ethnic and cultural diversity is not only one of Brent's greatest strengths and assets, but valued by those who live and work here.
- According to the 2011 census, there are 149 languages spoken in Brent, including Arabic, Gujarati, Portuguese, Somali and Romanian.
- The borough has a large African-Caribbean community; many of the Windrush generation settled in the area, making it not only a thriving community, but a hotbed of creativity. Brent also has the highest proportion of Irish residents in Britain, with 4% of the population.
- In 2019 Brent became the only local authority with 52% born abroad. There are large Asian and Indian, Black African, Black Caribbean, Irish, and Eastern European communities. It also has the largest Brazilian community in the UK; one of the largest Indian communities; a significant African-Caribbean community; and Romanian, Polish and Somali communities.
- Roy Mehta worked particularly with the African-Caribbean and Irish communities for this project.

Question prompts for each photograph:

Describe what you can see in the photograph

What do you think is going on in the photo?

If there are people in the photograph, choose a person in the image, what emotions do you think they were feeling when the photograph was taken?

Why do you think the photographer, Roy Mehta, took this photo?

Then and Now comparisons:

Slide 5: What is important to the person or people who live here? E.g. praying hands ornament, mother and father's day cards, birthday cards made by hand, large birthday card with dog wearing a hat on the table in the foreground. What do you think they are watching on the TV? Compare technology: telephone and TV.

Slide 6: What is important to the person or people who live here? Compare technology: TV; telephone on the wall and telephone on top of the TV.

Slide 7: Compare media: teenagers catching up with news/articles in magazines, contrast with mobile phones nowadays. Where do you think they are travelling from/to?

Slide 8: Fashion: Has fashion changed since this picture was taken? E.g. corduroy trousers. What do you think of the hairstyle the gentleman in the middle of the picture has? Would this hairstyle be fashionable now? Technology: cabled razors rather than one that charges in a base.

Slide 9: St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is in the background. Compare car design shapes. Fashion: shell suit tracksuit - origins in the authentic sports-oriented track suits from 1960s - a reinvention of that look into the streetwear and dancefloor shell suit of the 1980s and 1990s.



©Roy Mehta, *'Living Room, Harlesden'* c.1989
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Living Room, with TV, Harlesden'* c.1989
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Acton Lane, NW London'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Barbershop, Willesden'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Young man, Harlesden'* c.1989
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Wedding, Acton Lane'* c.1989
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Two people at a service in a Pentecostal Church, Willesden'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, 'Young woman
In a church, Harlesden' c.1989
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



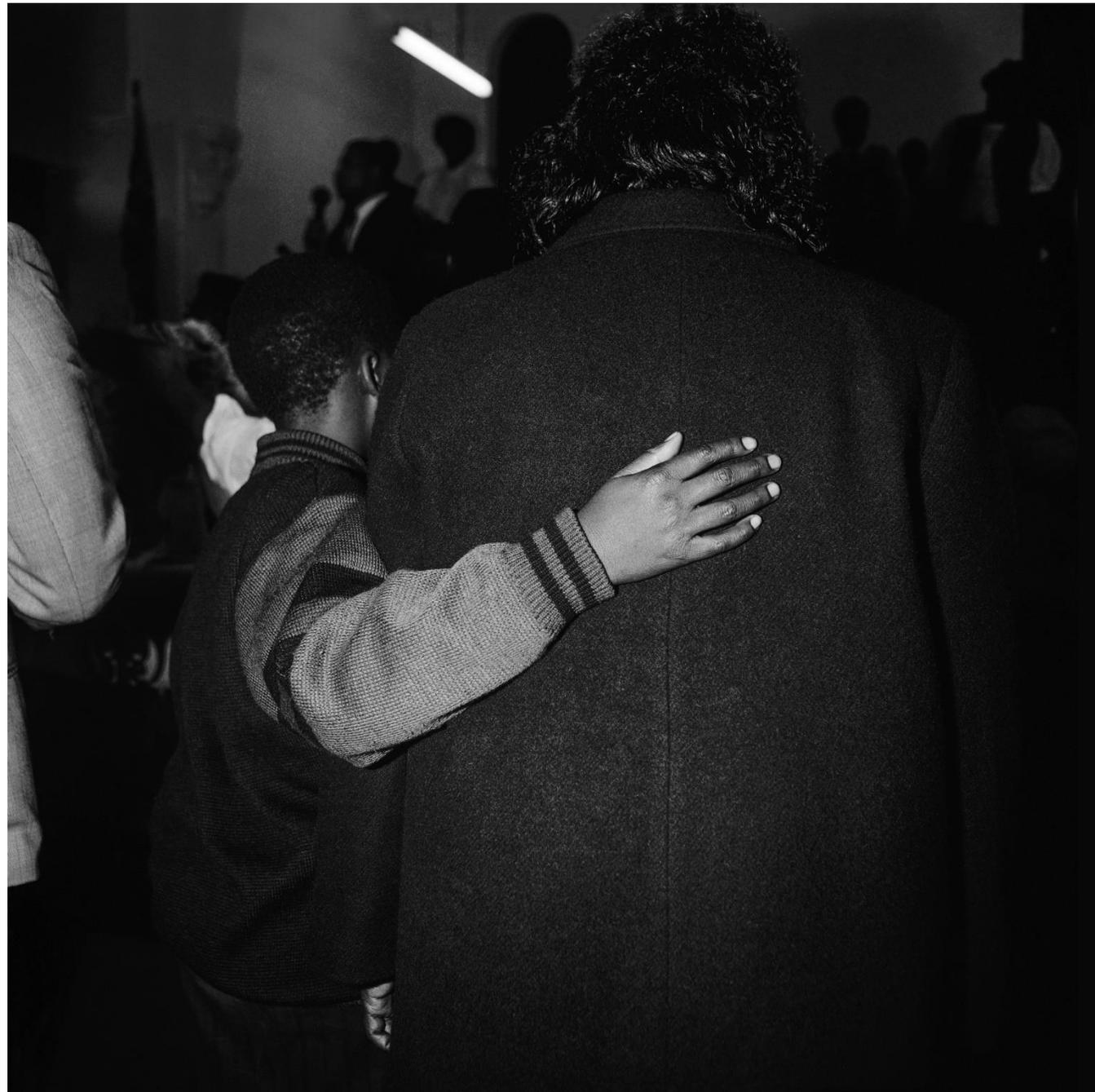
©Roy Mehta, 'Twins,
Robert and Brian,
Harlesden' c.1989
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Church Service, Harlesden'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, 'Two young men, Harlesden' c.1989 from the series 'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Young man's
hand on back, Church Service,
Harlesden'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Funfair, Brent'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Woman and child,
Church Service, Harlesden'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'



©Roy Mehta, *'Family lunch, Harlesden'* c.1990
from the series
'Revival, London 1989-1993'