Resistance: How Protest Shaped Britain and Photography Shaped Protest

In February 2025, Turner Contemporary will open the groundbreaking exhibition *Resistance*, a powerful exploration of a century of protest in the UK and the role of photography in shaping and documenting social change. Conceived by Turner Prize-winning artist and filmmaker Steve McQueen and curated alongside Clarrie Wallis, the exhibition reveals how acts of resistance have defined Britain's history—and how images have immortalized those moments.

6. Brian, Paul and Denice Gregory watching Channel Four News. Cuba Street. Easington Colliery. County Durham. November 1984. (Full caption in image credit sheet) © Keith Pattison

A major highlight is the documentation of the Black People's Day of Action in 1981, a landmark protest in response to the New Cross Fire. Photographs of the march convey both the grief and the determination of Britain's Black communities. Similarly, Paul Trevor's work with the Bengali community in East London exemplifies community photography as a form of activism, using the camera as a tool to amplify marginalized voices.

The exhibition also features photography from protests against environmental degradation and nuclear weapons, including images from Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp and the 1996 anti-bypass protests in Devon. These snapshots serve as a reminder of how collective action has shaped policy and public consciousness.

On route from London, this family were taking part in the first protest march to Aldermaston. Many children were among the thousands who set out from Trafalgar Square.

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