

University for the Creative Arts  
Research Project Portfolios

# Resort 2

By Anna Fox



# Project Details

Name of Researcher:	Professor Anna Fox
Name of Output:	Resort 2
Output Type:	T – Other – multi-component output - comprising photography book and exhibitions
Year and mode of dissemination:	<p>PUBLICATION</p> <p>Anna Fox (2015) <i>Resort 2: Butlin's Bognor Regis</i>. Schilt Publishing. ISBN-10: 9053308407</p> <p>EXHIBITIONS</p> <p><i>Happiness: A Place in the Sun - Encontras da Imagen</i> (photography festival), Braga, Portugal, 20 September - 5 November 2016</p> <p><i>Lishui International Festival of Photography</i>, multiple venues, China, 15 - 19 November 2017</p> <p><i>Another Way of Telling:</i> OCAT Xi'an, Xi'an, China, 10 March - 26 May 2019 Shanghai Center of Photography (SCôP), China, 19 September - 18 November 2018 Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing, 8 December 2018 - 6 January 2019 Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Xiamen, 15 Jan – 2 March 2019</p>
UCARO link:	<a href="https://research.uca.ac.uk/1864/">https://research.uca.ac.uk/1864/</a>
Key Words:	Portrait photography, British photography, British documentary photography, leisure industry, Butlin's Bognor Regis
Funding:	Schilt Publishing Amsterdam - £10,000 Light Work Gallery Hangzhou - £5000 Pallant House Museum and Gallery - £10,000

# Synopsis

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*Resort 2* is a research output by Professor Anna Fox comprising a series of 46 photographs of Butlin's Resort, Bognor Regis. It has been disseminated both as a publication and in exhibitions.

This research shows the first documentary images of the new adult parties which form part of the revised Butlin's programme. The parties have been devised to create an alternative income stream for this iconic holiday resort and mark a major change to its more usual commitment to family holidays for the working-class British public, the latter also documented by Fox in *Resort 1* in 2011. In *Resort 2*, the adult-only parties are documented from start to finish showing the great British fascination with dressing up and display that closely resembles pantomime. The

photographs investigate an aspect of the carnival-like inversions (especially of sex and gender) that are a persistent feature of British leisure.

The research was disseminated first as a book by Schilt, which included a foreword by David Chandler. This was followed by the dissemination of *Resort 2* alongside Fox's other works in a number of international exhibitions, including in Portugal and multiple venues in China.

This portfolio of supporting contextual information includes evidence of the research aims, context and processes which led to new insights. It also includes images from several of the exhibitions in which *Resort 2* was included and a PDF of the book.

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*Red arcade, 2010*



*Bob the Builder audience, 2010*



*Bar, Centre Stage, 2010*

# Research Questions, Aims and Methods

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## Research questions:

What is the significance of the new wave of leisure activity programmed at the resort?

How can the adult weekend parties be photographed in a way that reveals their character and its effects on the traditional Butlin's environment?

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## Research aims:

To investigate the contemporary face of Butlin's in Bognor Regis.

To create the first images of the adult weekend party culture at Butlin's.

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## Research methods:

To make the work Fox gained exclusive access to the Butlin's Bognor Regis, making repeated visits over a period of 2 years. She photographed her subjects using large and medium format cameras and printed using digital techniques. The resulting *Resort 2* photographs are highly colourful and monumental in terms of their scale when exhibited. The subjects may be involved in playful, irreverent and previously-overlooked leisure pursuits, but Fox's approach gives them significance.

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# Context

Leisure has been a significant subject for British documentary photographers from the inception of the medium until now. Seminal photographers such as Tony Ray Jones, Martin Parr and Markéta Luskačová have focussed on the British leisure experience and Butlin's too has been the focus for a number of these photographers. *Resort 2* contributes to this development of British documentary photography and its fascination with leisure time and space.

*Resort 2* builds upon, yet is markedly different from, Fox's previous work *Resort 1*. The first *Resort* was commissioned by Pallant House Gallery and first exhibited there in 2011, after which it was published as a book in 2013 and submitted to REF 2014. *Resort 1* provided the foundation for Fox to explore Butlin's very particular place in the social history of modern Britain. Butlin's was established as a holiday camp in 1932 by Billy Butlin to provide affordable family holidays for the British public. The Butlin's holiday has always been rooted in a sense of community, extending the bonds of family and friendship to embrace shared social activities that are promoted as democratic and accessible to all. While there is much contemporary nostalgia for the Butlin's brand, what you experience at Butlin's today reflects the dynamics and challenges of changing consumer expectations.

Where the first *Resort* instalment focused on Butlin's as a family resort, *Resort 2* tells the previously untold story of the changing face of the holiday experience taking place in the resort in Bognor Regis. In particular, it tells the tale of a new kind of Butlin's experience for adults only that takes place on

one weekend each month. Fox's intention in this project was thus to create a series of colour photographs that reveal a very different side of leisure culture in the UK. She set out to record an increasingly popular (yet rarely seen) side of Butlin's culture, questioning the stereotypical view of the Butlin's experience.

Photographs of these once-a-month events show guests enjoying a fluid carnival-like performance of diverse identities that is both new (for Butlin's) but that is in the tradition of low-culture inversions of sex and gender norms and social rules. It relates to the long history of the seaside as a liminal zone where normal rules no longer apply, or at least can be playfully challenged.

## REFERENCES

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*Installation of Resort 2 in Another Way of Telling exhibition, Three Shadows, Beijing*



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# Research Contribution, Dissemination and Recognition

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## Research contribution and insights:

*Resort 2* reveals the nature of Butlin's as both an iconic British site of traditional leisure, and of new programmed leisure activities that present a contemporary phenomenon. It thus contributes to a history of the representation of Butlin's in documentary photography since the late 1970s and offers a new understanding of the holiday resort as a centre for adult entertainment. It brings new light to an underrepresented cultural phenomenon, treating its subjects as significant and worthy of interest where they have otherwise been dismissed or ignored.

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## Dissemination:

Schilt have published numerous books by high profile international photographers. Schilt publications are distributed by Thames and Hudson. The essay in the book is by David Chandler who is well known for writing on contemporary documentary practices.

The exhibitions were widely publicised and attended. *Another Way of Telling* has been featured by nearly 30 media and publications, including a live broadcast with Pear Video and feature stories in *The Paper*, *ELLE China*, *Art Review Asia* and more. It welcomed nearly 10,000 visitors.

The exhibition at Light Gallery as part of *Lishui International Photography Festival* was reviewed in the *Shanghai Daily*: <https://www.shine.cn/archive/city-specials/hangzhou/Exhibition-capturing-a-bygone-era-of-postcard-Britain/shdaily.shtml>

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# Research Dissemination and Recognition

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## Follow-on-activities:

The exhibition in Lishui International Photography Festival led Fox being invited to speak at the Lishui International Photography seminar (with proceedings published in *Images in Hypermedia*, ISBN: 978 7 5179 0802 9).

Work from *Resort 2* was purchased by Pallant House Museum and Gallery, a boxed set purchased by the Hyman Collection of British Photography 2020, and an edition of 2 album sets purchased by the National Media Museum (collection now moved to the V&A).

Through this work Fox gained the commission for *Loisirs* from Photoaunales.

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## Impact:

This research underpins the Impact Case Study 'Fast Forward: changing attitudes and experiences for women in photography'. The exhibition of the work in China led to the development of a Fast Forward workshop for Shanghai in 2021. Fast Forward's workshops have led to the building of support networks to initiate and sustain relationships between emerging and established women photographers and galleries, industry actors and institutions.

Poster for Another Way of Telling  
exhibition featuring Resort 1 image





*Installation of Resort 2 in Another Way of Telling exhibition*



*Installation of Resort 2 in Another  
Way of Telling exhibition*



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Graphic Design:

Studio Mothership

*COVER IMAGE*  
*Dance studio, 2011*

*BACK COVER IMAGE*  
*Bar, Centre Stage, 2010*

