



“Broadstairs Dickens Festival, Isle of Thanet, 19 June 2008”

GALLERY

Photograph by

SIMON ROBERTS

For the past 15 years, photographer Simon Roberts’s work has explored Britain’s complicated, sometimes paradoxical relationship with itself. His rich tableaux, often shot on large format from the roof of his motorhome, follow in the tradition of documentary photographers who’ve cast a quizzical eye over evolving British identity. Post-imperial reality, the complications

of immigration, Brexit divisions, the possibilities of UK devolution – all are themes that Roberts explores with wit and complexity in his latest exhibition, *How did we get here? / Where do we go now?*

Here, we see people in the sea at the Dickens Festival at Broadstairs in Kent, apparently the Victorian author’s favourite seaside resort. “Often in my photographs I’m thinking about

the landscape as a theatre set,” Roberts tells me. Within that set, people enact various ideas linked to identity and notions of history and culture. “There is always a cast of characters in my photographs who seem to portray a sense of a performative Britishness,” he says.

Roberts’s images, which include video and installation, will be on show in Chester at a former H&M clothes store in the Grosvenor

Shopping Centre. It seems fitting that an exhibition examining notions of Britishness should be held on the “British high street”, yet another hotly debated symbol of the state of the nation. **FT**

.....
 Words by Josh Lustig. “How did we get here? / Where do we go now?” is on until June 30 at Chester Visual Arts, Grosvenor Shopping Centre, Chester. chestervisualarts.org.uk