

Jeremy Deller*So Many Ways to Hurt You**(The Life and Times of Adrian Street)*

Adrian Street is a wrestler I first became aware of through a photograph showing him with his father in 1973, which seemed to me possibly the most important photograph taken post-war. It encapsulates the whole history of Britain in that period – of our uneasy transition from being a centre of heavy industry to a producer of entertainment and services. It's a rather bizarre and disturbing photograph, taken when Adrian went back to Wales, to the mine that he had worked in as a young man, to meet his father. Adrian's still very much alive and still wrestling in Florida, where he has settled. He's an incredible person, who has tremendous willpower and a great sense of his own worth. His story has an epic quality to it, he has basically reinvented himself for the late twentieth century.

Jeremy Deller

The black and white picture above of Adrian Street and his father was taken in 1973, at the pithead of Bryn Mawr Colliery, his father's coal mine where he had also worked as a young man. Adrian's first professional wrestling match was on 8 August 1957 and he went on to a hugely successful career as a wrestler in the America in the 1970s and 1980s. After his final match in 2010, he estimated he had wrestled between 12,000 and 15,000 times. Now 77, he has retired and moved back to Wales.

So Many Ways to Hurt You (The Life and Times of Adrian Street) by Jeremy Deller was commissioned by Grizedale Arts for the Sao Paulo Bienal 2010. It was included in Jeremy Deller's touring institutional exhibitions 'Joy in People' and 'All That is Solid Melts Into Air'. It is on view at Barbican Centre, London for the group exhibition 'Masculinities: Liberation through Photography' as of July 13th.

Jeremy Deller (b. 1966 in London; lives and works in London) studied Art History at the Courtauld Institute and at Sussex University. Deller won the Turner Prize in 2004 for his work 'Memory Bucket' and represented Britain in the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. He has been producing projects over the past two decades which have influenced the conventional map of contemporary art. He began making artworks in the early 1990s, often showing them outside conventional galleries.

Deller has exhibited extensively worldwide with selected solo exhibitions including: 'Wir haben die Schnauze voll', Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2020); 'Everybody in the Place, An Incomplete History of Britain 1984-1992', The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2019); Skulptur Projekte Münster (2017); 'The Infinitely Variable Ideal of the Popular', CA2M, Madrid (2015), touring to MUAC, Mexico City, Fundación Proa, Buenos Aires and Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao (2016); 'English Magic', British Pavilion, 55th Venice Biennale, Venice (2013), touring to William Morris Gallery, London, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol and Turner Contemporary, Margate (2014-2015); 'Joy in People', Hayward Gallery, London (2012), touring to the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania and the Contemporary Art Museum St Louis; 'It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq', New Museum, New York (2009), touring to Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; 'Procession', Cornerhouse, Manchester (2009); Kunstverein, Munich (2005); 'Folk Archive' with Alan Kane Palais de Tokyo, Paris and Barbican Art Gallery, London (2004); 'After the Goldrush', Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2002); and 'Unconvention', Centre for Visual Arts, Cardiff (1999).

Deller has curated numerous projects, recent exhibitions include: 'Iggy Pop Life Class', Brooklyn Museum (2016); 'Love is Enough: William Morris and Andy Warhol', Modern Art Oxford (2014); and 'All That is Solid Melts Into Air', Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester (2014), touring to Nottingham Castle, Nottingham, Mead Gallery, University of Warwick and Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle.