

Now Frying Dave E Gillespie



Dave E. Gillespie began creating photographs in 2005, aged 18, when he realised he couldn't draw, paint, sing, or play an instrument. His father gave him an old SLR, and he enrolled on a darkroom night class at Telford Technical College.

Wanting to further develop his creative spirit, he left Telford for Leeds to study biological sciences — the lab proving an inspiration for very little creative output. The student-union darkroom, however, was a place where Dave would disappear for hours. During those barren years of white coats, goggles, Bunsen burners and pipettes, he found solace — and creative nourishment — in the work of Martin Parr, Bruce Gilden, Tony Ray-Jones and Diane Arbus.

Dave has always had a fascination with shops — a legacy of childhood days spent hanging on every word of his grandfather's stories about the family's Ironbridge ironmongers, Beddoes & Son (1882–1983). There were tales of gunpowder and dynamite being hauled up Bridge Bank, Benthall by horse and cart, and of trying — often hopelessly — to keep the taxman from the door after inheriting the business. The main lesson was clear: never take on a family shop, especially when the Telford Development Corporation decides to build a roundabout directly in front of it, killing passing trade and turning loading and unloading into a real bloody mither. Damn that f***ing roundabout.

In 2020, I — sorry, Dave — felt a project with the working title *Nation of Shopkeepers*, documenting the diverse independent shopkeepers of the UK, would be a way of indulging his childhood fascination for shops. However, as with many of his projects it remained an idea — but a really very good, probably award-winningly good, idea.

Later that year, that idea evolved into *Now Frying*: a more focused study of the fish-and-chip shops and Chinese takeaways of England. They were, conveniently, the places open at night when Dave wasn't at work — and among the few high-street shops still illuminated after dark. Over the past five years he has spent countless cold nights waiting for parked cars to move from in front of takeaways so he could get the perfect shot — often only to find weeks later, once the film was developed, that it was under-exposed, out of focus, or generally rather uninspiring.

It was also during these evenings — standing beside a medium-format camera on a tripod, pointed at a takeaway — that Dave discovered this setup apparently communicates to some members of passing society that you must, in fact, be a sexual deviant.

Now Frying gathers a small selection of photographs that show the understated — and often overlooked — beauty of these everyday elements of British life. The signage and interiors are mostly one-off designs, never to be recreated, representing an aesthetic from a bygone era yet still providing families with their faithful Friday-night takeaway. Many of these shops are sadly likely to disappear in the coming years and decades for a variety of reasons: changing tastes, rising costs, or younger generations choosing not to inherit the family business (Gen Z, in particular, seem acutely aware of the risks posed by their local council's latest traffic-management plans).

This exhibition celebrates these spaces — while preserving them, in a small but meaningful way, for the future. To Dave, they are beautiful now, though in decades they may well seem magical.

For enquiries please email pt06dg@googlemail.com



NOW FRYING - East Sussex, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £110



CHAN'S - St Helens, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

61 × 91 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Price: £145



BONNERS MENU - Walthamstow, 2023

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



GAH SHING - East Ham, 2023

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



WELCOME INN MENU - Deptford, 2023

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



FIVE STAR FISH BAR - Collier Row, 2022

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



WALMER FISH & CHIPS - Walmer, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



SALT 'N' VINEGAR - Sea Horse, East Ham, 2020

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



GOLDEN FISH BAR MENU - Wainscott, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



CENTRAL FISH & CHIPS - East Sussex, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

61 × 91 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Price: £145



GOLDEN CITY - Hillsborough, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



HAPPY VALLEY - Stoke Newington, 2023

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

61 × 91 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Price: £145



VINEGAR - East Ham, 2021

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



KIM WAH - Gants Hill, 2022

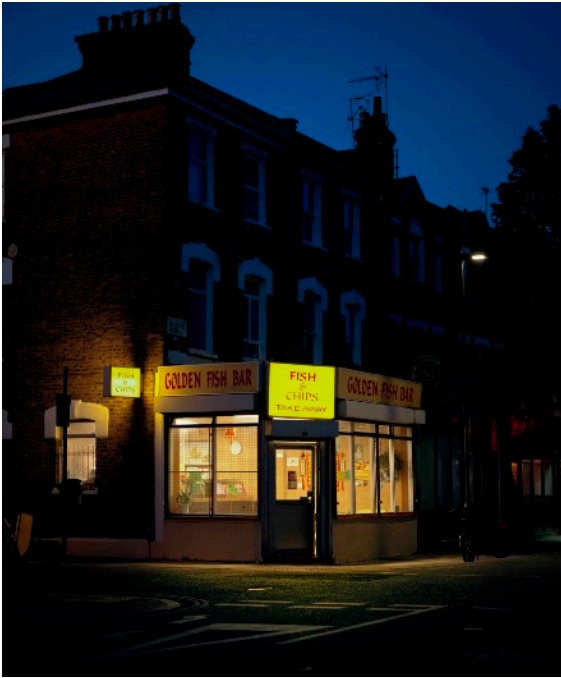
Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



GOLDEN FISH BAR - Highbury, 2023

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



BONNERS - Walthamstow, 2022

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



WELCOME INN FISH BAR - Deptford, 2023

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



CORNER FISH BAR - Peckham, 2020

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



CLARKES - Southend, 2022

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

61 × 91 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Price: £145



THE GOLDEN FISH - Dagenham, 2022

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



PICKLED GHERKINS AND EGGS - Crystal Palace, 2022

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



JADE HOUSE - Manor Park. 2020

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



GEORGE'S FISH BAR - Plaistow, 2021

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



FUNG KITCHEN - Harlow, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

50 × 40 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95



TONY'S FISH & CHIPS - Widnes, 2024

Medium-format colour photograph

C-type archival print

40 × 50 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Price: £95