

Tristan and Isolde on White Abbey Road

Robert Galeta

The opera poster was on a bus-stand a few yards from a Bentley sportster parked on the pavement in front of what were council houses, and down the hill from Atlas St. Only the latter, given my bus is usually by now full of a dozen nationalities, is perhaps partly capable of making sense of our surroundings. On the other hand, Atlas St. was so named in another time with a different mix of assumptions.

Like comparable places swept by modernity, Bradford was and is a city of the new. Evaluating the social and economic reasoning for various urban layers is a vital responsibility for the process of rational and imaginative aims; what worked in this built and natural environment for living and what didn't. Understanding via seeing is an important part of this, not least because it is in principle available to all of us. Unfortunately only in principle, because the modern technologies of official seeing- photography and film- have also too often been used to falsify and portray untruths.

The late french film critic Serge Daney used a simple but telling phrase to describe the challenge of putting truer images before us, in this case by Fellini:

'Without him we might definitively forget what it looks like, Rome and its traffic jams...a hotel stuck up anywhere...'*

So what it looks like isn't simple; it is refracted through the expectations of certain genres, formal motives, particular agendas. It's with all this in mind that the Bradford Grid is a valuable project; an ensemble considered attempt to see what Bradford now looks like, historical, personal, communal.

*Devant la recrudescence des vols de sacs a main, cinema, television, information Lyon
1991 p.78