



Chiara Tocci

20 May - 19 June 2011



The Gallery @ Idea Store Whitechapel is pleased to present an exhibition of photographs by Chiara Tocci.

A recent graduate in documentary photography, Tocci has been exploring the lives and aspirations of different communities. Subjects have ranged from the traces of the former occupants of an abandoned council estate in Cardiff, to the streams of Albanian immigrants seeking a new life in the artist's home town in south Italy.

The exhibition at Idea Store Whitechapel includes *Enlightened*, a series of nine photographs exploring the relationship between photography and Islam.

Islamic strictures regarding depictions of living beings see such images as potential triggers for idolatry, as well as a debased imitation of Allah's creation. Tocci worked with Muslim women to reflect on these issues, exploring their interpretations of how they would like to be represented. The artist negotiated with each of her subjects to create their portraits, lighting only what each of them allowed her to depict. Whilst one woman chose to show her hair and another focused on her personal copy of the Quran, others allowed Tocci to photograph their face without a veil.

The exhibition also includes selected images from *The World in One Room*, a series of portraits of British Muslim cub scouts. The photographs can be seen as asserting the commitments represented by the cub scout oath taken by their subjects: "I promise that I will do my best to do my duties to Allah, the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful, and to the country in which I am now living, to help other people and to keep the cub scout law".

Chiara Tocci lives and works in Cardiff. Recent exhibitions include *Let's Face it 7*, London Photographic Association (2011); *Salon Photo Prize*, Matt Roberts Arts Project Space, London (2011); *Untitled*, TRACE Gallery, Cornwall (2010); *Pingyao International Photography Festival 2010*, China.