

Life&Arts

FTWeekend



SNAPSHOT

'Prizefighter' (1948) by Stanley Kubrick

Before *A Clockwork Orange*, 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, or even his directorial debut *Day of the Fight*, Stanley Kubrick trained his eye as a photographer. Aged 17, the would-be filmmaker's first published image — showing a solemn news vendor surrounded by headlines announcing the death of President Franklin D Roosevelt — appeared in the US magazine *Look*. Kubrick would later become a staff photographer for the publication, producing a body of work in which

postwar New York came to life through intimate portraits and animated street scenes. Whether dog walkers, showgirls or household names (pictured here is boxer Walter Cartier, star of *Day of the Fight*), the subjects radiate an unmistakable intensity of character and purpose. **Chris Allnutt**

"Through a Different Lens: Stanley Kubrick Photographs" is showing at the Musée des beaux-arts le Locle, Switzerland, to January 31

The fading interest in Everyman

Janan Ganesh
Citizen of nowhere



In Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, the director-actor confronts a pizzeria colleague about his fluent racism. How can he hate black people, he wants to know, when his favourite athlete is Magic Johnson, his favourite actor Eddie Murphy, his favourite rock star Prince. Only the last of these names provokes a correction. "Bruucece!" insists his friend, perking up from the languor of low-paid work. "The Boss."

It is hard to know if Bruce Springsteen or the white working class comes off worse. Either way, the scene did a lot to entwine the two in the public mind, almost as much as his own hymns to textile mills and jobless veterans did. It was always an awkward fit: he was a liberal in Reaganite times, his E Street Band was multi-ethnic. But then no one else in the stadium-filling league of musicians sang about Nebraska and people with "debts no honest man could pay". And no longer does he. His beguiling new album, *Letter to You*, is a turn inward. Put it down to late-life wistfulness, but there are few attempts to reach out and take Everyman's pulse.

It is not only in Springsteen's work that the heartland has retreated of late. After the electoral shock of 2016, my profession took a near-anthropological interest in the white working class, sending our best to trouble them in their far-off states. What flowed back was a stream of essayistic reportage and television vox pops. If it was a tad romantic (every interviewee a saint, every bar thronged with stoic yeomen)

then at least it was meant well. These were the years in which JD Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* became a coastal hit. Davos Man gave way to Diner Guy as the presiding sage of the times. In the ultimate narcissism of small differences, members of the politico-media cocoon would shame each other for being that bit more removed from "real people". (In Britain, it did not matter if you actually grew up with some.) Well, the folks in Peoria are safe from the Dictaphones now. The camera trucks are long gone. Urban coffee tables have their ring marks covered by books about another sort of "white

The elite's olive branch to the deplorables has not been withdrawn, but it has withered through neglect

fragility": not the opioid plague so much as unconscious racism. The elite's olive branch to the deplorables has not been withdrawn, as such, but it has withered through neglect. It took less than four years to lapse into our prior indifference. There was a lot wrong with the brief but intense fascination with the US interior. It came close to suggesting that only rightwingers count as pukka Americans (more than four in 10 Ohioans voted for Hillary Clinton). It also implied that decaying towns are revivable, if elites just cared enough. Still, credulous attention to these

places was better than none at all. No country can allow the mutual incomprehension of metropole and hinterland to grow as it did pre-2016. And few nations are as structurally prone to it as the US. What distinguishes its deindustrialised poor from those of Europe is geographic isolation. With 68m people in a Wyoming-sized country, no one in the UK is quite as cut off from a metropolis (or rather, no urbanite is as cut off from the heartland) as millions of Americans are. Demographic sparseness does not guarantee the US a more seething interior, but it does require its elites to work harder to understand or even encounter it. They made a formidable effort, for a while.

Looking back, the oddity of Springsteen is that he thrived just as the people who constituted his subject matter turned away from all he believed. When he started, the white working class was still central to the New Deal coalition. As he bestrode the 1980s, they careered right. Reagan was not alone in misinterpreting *Born in the USA*, which still has the bitterest triplet in rock ("I had a brother at Khe Sanh/ Fighting off the Viet Cong/ They're still there, he's all gone"). The desolation of *Nebraska* was another stand against the zeitgeist. Then, in his late phase, he saw them succumb to a man he calls a "criminal clown". It must sting. You could forgive him for losing the will to tell their story. But then he has earned the right in a way some of us have not.

janan.ganesh@ft.com

2020 – year of the ghoul

Jo Ellison
Trending



The pumpkin patch is closed, the ghosts have been sent home. The annual sugar orgy will have to wait another year. Halloween is cancelled. Or else boringly curtailed. Owing to the year of unprecedented bullshit, kids across the world have been advised to put their tricks and treats away. Even wickedness has been put on curfew as All Hallows high jinks are delayed. In a pitifully sad sort of *Little Women*-ish attempt to make the best of things, sugar-deprived children have been encouraged to find other fun instead. "Why don't you head out to look at the decorations in your area with a list of spooky things to spot," is one of the more tragic suggestions, put forward by the community constables of Humber-side in the north-east of England. Another of their recommendations involves staging a spooky scavenger hunt in the home. "Don't attempt a party," they offer brightly. "Watch a scary film."

It's a not dissimilar story in the US, where more than 148m adult Americans are planning to participate in Halloween-related activities: 53 per cent, according to a survey conducted by the National Retail Federation, are decorating their houses, while 18 per cent will be dressing up their pets. Halloween refuseniks will no doubt delight in the suppression of a festival they have long considered to be an evil US import, but I will bow to no one in my love of all things Samhain. So pagan, so dark, so full of wickedness and mischief. Plus, you get to see lots of

desperately sentimental when I see small figures dressed in bedsheets. And although it's a celebration of the macabre, Halloween finds me far more lachrymose and nostalgic than any Santy ever did. Besides, at this juncture, as our daylight hours are being savaged and the long dark nights are drawing in, I could use some pagan cleansing: the traditional rituals of a festival to mark the start of winter darkness might shake the general mood. Watching our leadership flail about in hopeless incompetence persuades me that I might indeed be better off if I threw in my lot with the piskies and other spirits of the netherworld. Samhain was traditionally a time to clear the air with our dead forebears so that we might survive the dark months that lay

Along with pandemic, fires and hurricanes, we've also endured the orange jack-o'-lantern in the White House

ahead. Jumping around a bonfire chanting incantations sounds only slightly less coherent as a strategy than the current Tory plans. And 2020 has offered us such a glorious cavalcade of characters to play with — it's just been one long year of ghouls: Dominic Cummings, Ghislaine Maxwell, a series of displaced and feuding royals. Were I going trick-or-treating, I would be torn between dressing up as Kimberly Guilfoyle, the

things I've ever seen; the new Netflix adaptation of *Rebecca*, which is just hauntingly bad; or Amy Coney Barrett, Mother Supreme in a pearl necklace, with her brood of seven children in tow. In a spookily prescient piece of theatre, this week we watched her being sworn in to the Supreme Court in a strange moonlit ceremony on the White House lawn. A somewhat Samhainian piece of showboating, it sure chilled me to the bone. And then there is our most unambiguous nemesis of 2020 — the Covid-19 virus. But when I suggest to my teenage daughter that she might want to dress up like the spiky red serial killer, she looks at me aghast. Apparently, this would be deeply inappropriate. Which coming from a person who thinks that wearing a leotard and some bunny ears makes for an acceptable Hallow's rig-out, is pretty chastening to hear. I remember being in New York for Halloween in the early to mid-2000s, when it was pretty common to see trick-or-treaters dressed up as the Sars virus. But that was then, a time when parties were still permitted and pandemics happened somewhere else. Perhaps this year has simply been too horror-filled already. Along with pandemic, forest fires and hurricanes, we've also endured the glowing orange jack-o'-lantern in the White House, and we're sick of being scared. Halloween is much sweeter and more amusing when the world feels safe. Right now, all you need to do to scare your pants off is switch on the nightly news.

children — and dogs — dressed up as psychopaths and zombies, a sight that never fails to move me. I become

Trump campaign fundraiser whose performance at this year's Republican convention was one of the scariest

jo.ellison@ft.com; [@jellison](https://twitter.com/jellison)
Read more of Jo's columns at ft.com/jo-ellison

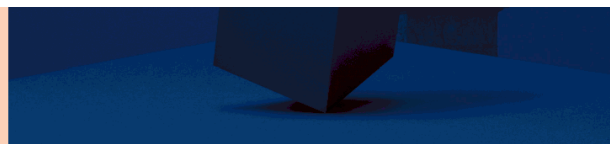
FT Globetrotter — plans may be on hold, but planning shouldn't be



FT Globetrotter offers insider guides to some of the world's greatest cities, celebrating the joys of urban life with expert advice on eating and drinking, exercise, culture, and much, much more. Whether you're rediscovering your own city in the new normal or simply

dreaming about somewhere else, we're here to help you make the most of it — now and later. Meet us in London, Paris, Rome, Frankfurt, New York, Hong Kong and Tokyo — and now also in San Francisco. Visit ft.com/globetrotter

Chess solution 2391 1... Bxb3! wins. If (a) 2 axb3 a2+! 3 Kxa2 Ra6+ 4 Kb1 Ra1 mate.
(b) 2 cxb3 Rct+! 3 Nxt1 Qa1+! 4 Kxa1 Rxc1 mate.



CHAUMET
PARIS