

IN THE STUDIO

My mother hates having her photograph taken. She screws up her face in disgust at the merest whiff of a camera and when the pictures come back from the developers she wonders why she doesn't look too good.

But the art of giving good photo is not about being good looking - no one looks good permanently - it's about how you react to



The eyes have it

Bridget Hayden visits a York gallery where the mask of humanity puts in a timely appearance

having a camera pointed at you. Everyone's got their way of looking cool. Snarling in defiance, pouting like a porn star, or trying to look amiable are all common ruses.

Some people try to put on their "mirror face" when someone points a camera at them, which is a big mistake. At least when you are being photographed deliberately, you have something to respond to, even if it's just the photographer and the anticipation of other people's judgements.

At a current exhibition at the Impressions Gallery in York, photographer Jed Hoyland gives us 121 portraits, mostly of people on the brink of adulthood, whose stances communicate awkwardness and indecision about what they want to express to the world.

A State of Paradox is being sold as a conceptual exhibition, despite the ultra-conventional style of the portraiture and the relatively ordinary nature of the subjects. Its intention is to remind us of our tenacious desire to read faces mercilessly.

History has told us time and again that the eyes are the windows of the soul. Here you find yourself imagining that you have some sort of angle or insight into Hoyland's subjects. Through their body posture, you can interpret the way in which they want to be understood: "Yeah, I'm a tough nut, me," one lad seems to suggest, "I'm a bit of a Jack-the-

Lad," says another and even, "Don't Come Any Closer or I'll Kill You!"

In a way, they're all wearing masks, but if you look into each pair of eyes deeply enough, you'll find the same base expression of shared humanity.

It's nice to have the opportunity to stare in people's faces without embarrassment. Usually the only people you stare at like this are lovers - passing people on the street doesn't give you nearly enough time.

Most of the subjects are white, clean-cut



student types in their late teens and twenties and some have been digitally manipulated to emphasise the fact that the same person can look completely different from one picture to another.

They have all been taken to the same forest glade to have their upper bodies photographed beneath the trees. Some look more willing than others, but it is up to the viewer to decide what each one is thinking, since most are stand in identical positions, and it is only subtle differences in posture that communicate the varying levels of internal security within each subject.

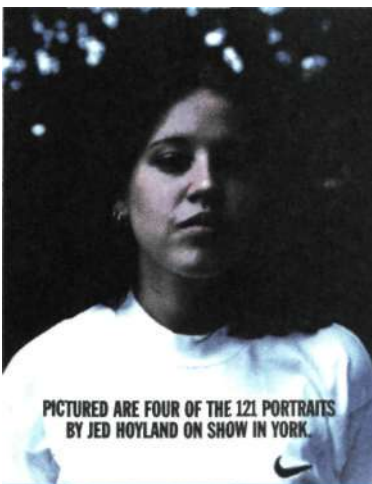
In the end, all we are left with are our own critical facilities in assessing the subtle nuances of other human beings exposed.

Hoyland has been cast in the role of a photographer who is out to question the Darwinian theory that the internal state of a person can be transmitted through the ligaments of their face.

He is described by art historian Richard Pickup as a photographer whose main aim is, "not to make portraits of people but of portraits tendency to fail".

Hoyland is toying with our perceptions and imaginations by giving us very ordinary, conventional photographs to look at. •

The Impressions Gallery, York until July 25.



PICTURED ARE FOUR OF THE 121 PORTRAITS BY JED HOYLAND ON SHOW IN YORK.

Regional round-up

It's Not been Done Before

Throughout his time in Salford and Manchester, LS Lowery was surrounded by heavy industry. This show focuses on how he expressed his ambivalence about it.

Salford Museum and Art Gallery until July 18.

Rover

Examining the lot of man's best friend with photography, sculpture and computer-generated images from Derrick Santini, Elaine Axten and Carole Baker, all artists with a fine pedigree, chum.

Heaton Hall, Heaton Park, Prestwich, Manchester until October 31.

Mythomania

An interconnecting set of portraits and photonovellas investigating the construction of subjective narrative in news footage by the young London-based Brazilian artist Daniel Marques.

Huyton Gallery, Merseyside until August 3.