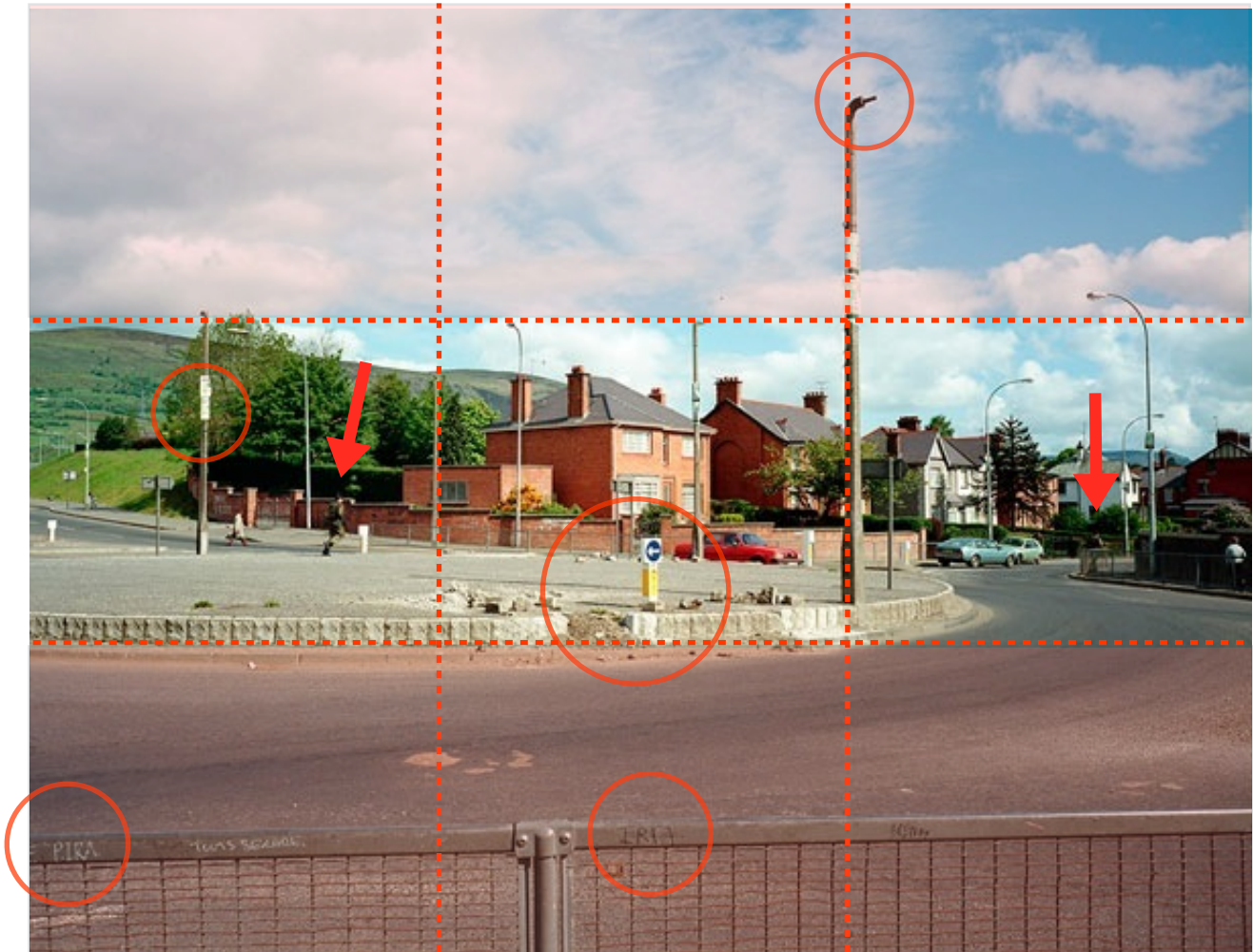


UNDERSTANDING PHOTOGRAPHS: Example #5



Paul Graham, from *Troubled Land*, 1984-86

VISUAL

A **suburban landscape**. View from the pavement of a road and traffic island. Appears to conform to **landscape tradition** although seemingly insignificant subject. Edge of town - green landscape in **background**. **Bright, clear daylight** and **bold colours**. Very **few shadows**. **Composition** organised with **Rule of Thirds** - clear sense of space (Foreground, middle ground and background). **Details** slowly emerge to undermine the ordinariness of the scene - graffiti on barrier in foreground, two soldiers running, the damaged island, missing lights and posters high up on the lampposts etc. - and to illustrate the everyday violence suffered by the local population. Most of the information is contained in the **central horizontal third**.

CONTEXTUAL

Graham one of pioneers of **UK colour photography** in the 1980s. Inspired by American colour photographers - William Eggleston and Stephen Shore. Photographs the "world out there" - **unstaged, documentary, street tradition** with a twist. **Political** edge to work - unemployment, Northern Ireland etc. Has photographed across Europe and the USA. On 'The Troubles' series, Graham has commented: "It's a combination of landscape and conflict photography, using small seductive landscapes to reveal the details."

TECHNICAL

Medium format camera - larger negative. Often used for landscape photography where **detail** and **texture** are important considerations. Image appears to have been taken quickly without a tripod. **Available light** and **small aperture** - everything in focus.

CONCEPTUAL

- Mixing genres - landscape, documentary, street, reportage
- Noticing details that reveal a wider (hidden) truth or significance
- Importance of editing carefully - graffiti on railing not seen by Graham until image was printed
- Images that force the viewer to work hard, to decode, to see the details