



text + work

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**The Art & Craft of Photography**

**16 March – 8 April 2004**

**The Art & Craft of Photography:**

An Exhibition of work by Arts Institute at Bournemouth Alumni, which looks at Critical Photography within Professional Practice

***Curated by Jim Campbell & Geoff Drury***

**16 March – 8 April 2004**

George Brooks

Leslie Churchill

Jeff Cottenden

Jack Daniels

Yannia Drakoulidis

Enver Hirsch

Ted Humble-Smith

Nick Knight

Carl Lyttle

Nadege Meriau

Adrian Myers

Niall O'Leary

Steve Orino

Spiros Politis

James Ross

Garry Simpson

Oli Tennent

Wolfgang Tillmans

Sarah Turton

Rainer Usselman

Michael Wildsmith

Ben Wright

Graham Young

## The Art and Craft of Photography: Critical photography within professional practice

The photographic tradition of the Arts Institute at Bournemouth is in keeping with the notion that conceptually driven photographers benefit from an education that allows them access to the world of creative commercial photography's well as fine art discourse through an industry mature, critically and visually informed photographic training.

This exhibition addresses a perennial criticism of arts education – that it fails to provide the kind of training necessary to equip graduates with a sound professional grounding in practice, and that their critical outlook or intellectual experiment has no place in a commercial world.

In fact, the more liaison that takes place between industry and education, the clearer the picture becomes the fresh ideas generated by student photographers help to keep the industry vital and creatively focused. There are of course difficulties in making the transition from education to industry, but this is true of any fiercely competitive field.

It is refreshing to know that although the industry has suffered a financial downturn in recent years, many commentators are optimistic about the future fortunes of professional photographers based on an editorial return

to quality image making. In this sense both the critical focus, or the new ideas that are crucial to gaining success in such a market, and the technique necessary to communicate these ideas constitute the finished product exemplified here by photographers who have built on their experience at the Institute to become successful exponents, in various genres, of the art and craft of photography.

**Jim Campbell**

## **The Art and Craft of Photography: Critical photography within professional practice**

This exhibition addresses a perennial criticism of arts education – that it fails to provide the kind of training necessary to equip graduates with a sound professional grounding in practice, and that their critical outlook or intellectual experiment has no place in a commercial world. In fact, the more liaison that takes place between industry and education, the clearer the picture becomes that the kind of fresh ideas generated by student photographers keep the industry vital and creatively focussed. There are of course difficulties in making the transition from Institute to industry, but this is true of any fiercely competitive field. It is refreshing to know that although the industry has suffered a financial downturn in recent years, many are optimistic about the future fortunes of professional photographers based on an editorial return to quality image making.

Jenny Ricketts, Picture editor of the Observer Magazine and staunch supporter of quality photography, recently suggested that she is still looking for a combination of originality, style and technique from new photographers to support an editorial commitment to challenging and original images. In this sense both the critical focus, or the new ideas that are crucial to gaining success in such a market and the technique necessary to communicate these

ideas constitute the finished product exemplified here by photographers who have built on their experience at the Institute to become successful exponents, in various genres, of the art and craft of photography.

Concept or conceptualism, in keeping with the direction that contemporary art has taken over the last seventy years or so, is near the top of a hierarchy of concerns for the photographic artist, whilst for the commercial photographer the accepted wisdom, as dictated by market forces, suggests that it is the delivery of a controlled commercial message to a market that dominates proceedings. In the first instance it is the production of the image that takes precedent, in the latter, its consumption – ‘master and servant’. This dichotomy has the unfortunate effect of denying the former any popular appeal or the latter any critical worth.

But for those engaged both in the business of making photographs for a living or in specialist photographic education, this somewhat dated divide undermines a respect for the craft of the medium when put to sophisticated ends. It is not a question of content over form or vice versa but a potential marriage of the two in commercial as well as fine art contexts. By re-contextualising the works you see here from page or screen to the gallery wall, we are seeking to re-focus the viewer’s gaze on the critical aspects of commercial practice, to claim a stake in theoretical debates for artists whose work is often critically as well as commercially driven.

Even if photographers seek to pursue a wider public appeal than that available to the fine artist, the reality is often a division of private and

commercial work due to the kind of restrictions imposed on the latter. And yet there are contexts in which a creative photographer's efforts are able to gain such an appeal. What you see here is a tribute to pictorial ideas that have met with success in other wider contexts as a celebration and reminder of their creative potency.

It is certainly true that context - gallery wall, magazine spread, etc. - has a dominant bearing on the meaning of photographs. In terms of this exhibition such a consideration may be interpreted in a number of ways. On the one hand we might say that the intention of the maker is less pertinent, and that photographs made for commercial purposes, if then exhibited in a gallery, can generate just as much critical debate as those intended for such a context. On the other we could say that this is the kind of re-appropriation or interpretation that makes a nonsense of the relationship between creative art and audience by finding meaning never intended. The point that we wish to make in this exhibition is not so much a reappraisal of work but that work undertaken through commercial commissions or with the idea of selling to a market, often has a sophistication worthy of both critical and aesthetic consideration.

Scott King, former Creative Director at *iD* and *SleazeNation*, recently re-stated his belief that it is ideas and the ability to present a fresh point of view, rather than conform to professional standards, that will win commissions for young photographers. According to King, good photographers always want to make pictures that challenge the viewer to think, whether they are dealing with a gallery wall or a magazine spread. Further to this, these

images make the point that photographic technique grounded in a lively critical environment adds to the dialogue between author and viewer, in that it enables the artist to be in control of the way in which they want to articulate their ideas. Whilst it is not essential to be a master craftsman in terms of generating thought provoking imagery, it is in the command of the camera that the photographer can achieve the consistent visual signature which marks the successful professional. In spite of the contrived evidence of tabloid television shows, it is impossible to fake this command in the eyes of those that are thoroughly invested into photography.

Photography has been at the very heart of contemporary art for many years now. It is a flexible medium that allows the artist to produce a detailed and immediate notation of critical and aesthetic ideas that may be reproduced and circulated quickly and easily. Most importantly it boasts a viewing public who are themselves practitioners, in one form or another, of photography. The empathy generated by this element of participation can work in the photographer's favour, not through spectacle or superior equipment, but through the ability of the professional artists to master the medium in order to communicate a specific visual voice to the image consumer. At the 2003 Association of Photography in Higher Education conference here at the Arts Institute, Steve Mayes made several pragmatic points about contemporary consumption of photography in order to recognise a position in which not only fine art practice but commercial practice becomes worthy of serious debate. His contentious springboard for this discussion was that over the last ten years people outside the industry have come to understand photography

better than many so called critical experts, since they have learned to read contemporary imagery in a very sophisticated manner.

For example, next to nothing in advertising photography is literal and the conceptual coding of imagery which has been led by advertising has rubbed off on other genres to such an extent that *Time* and *Newsweek*, for example, have not published a literal 'event' photograph for ten years. This widespread phenomenon affects the consumers as well as the producers of imagery and allows them to make informed decisions about many forms of photographic address including fashion, reportage, editorial work and portraiture. Most published photography is 'about' something rather than 'of' something and such coded narrative works on the premise that there is an audience that can make a connection between the meaning being offered by the magazine/newspaper etc. and their own knowledge of culture. In this sense the critics that dismiss commercial photography as eye-candy are turning their backs on an audience that is not only visually informed but has an appetite for ever more complex interactive relationships with photographic imagery. Indeed, the humorous or satirical references which are often extremely sophisticated and are common to commercial practice often seem out-of-bounds in earnest fine art discourse.

The empowerment of the consumer, which postmodern writers have been debating for twenty years, always comes at a price, the greedy exploitation of media in the name of profit. Since the engine of public visual education is commerce, the profit motive is apt to dominate and therefore stifle the vital market it has created, which of course accounts in part for the recession

currently being felt by the industry. There is no doubt that the easy distribution and production of imagery, particularly by low budget digital means, has exacerbated this position and put pressure on the industry to shift in order to avoid being dictated to, dumbed-down and ultimately destroyed.

The problem, as described by Mayes, is that in the battle to control meaning, commercial imagery is purged of complexity and simply promotes the 'big idea' or 'one hit' message. More importantly he is concerned that a new generation of consumers will be making decisions based on a 'thumbnail aesthetic' of poor quality, low resolution, tiny images, originally intended for easy access on internet sites, that somehow find their way on to the pages of widely distributed magazines. Indeed, this is a major concern for more than the photographers themselves and ought to be realised by anyone with an investiture into the future of quality photography.

Mark George, speaking at a recent student workshop at the Arts Institute, shared Mayes' concern to keep the industry vital, suggesting that as well as the attributes that distinguished a great photographer in previous generations, the contemporary practitioner must have an understanding of the business in order to guarantee the exposure and credibility they deserve. As an agent George obviously wishes to promote a buoyant industry and therefore wants to see newly trained photographers hit the ground running, ready to meet the challenges of the industry while their outlook and input is fresh and challenging. The photographic tradition of the Arts Institute at Bournemouth is in keeping with the notion that conceptually

driven photographers benefit from an education that allows them access to the world of creative commercial photography as well as fine art discourse through an industry mature, critically and visually informed photographic training.

The Institute has been committed to high quality photography for more than forty years. During this time it has secured an international reputation for an innovative and creative approach to the subject, currently boasts two Degree courses, as well as excellent further education provision in National Diploma and one uniquely linked to professional standards and consequent progression of graduates to creative industries. Foundation Diploma courses. The reputation of the Institute as one of the leading providers of photographic education in the UK is built on a culture of ideas and the means to articulate complex visual discourse to alternative ends. This exhibition represents a small proportion of the success achieved by Bournemouth alumni who have excelled as internationally renowned fine artists, leading fashion photographers, outstanding advertising and editorial image makers. It is a showcase of individual visual signatures that indicates both the potential of concept driven photography in a commercial arena and the value of a committed institution to provide the stage on which to build a career in professional photography.

**Jim Campbell**  
**Critical Theory Lecturer**  
**School of Media**  
**The Arts Institute at Bournemouth**

**Conference: Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May**

## **Commercial Photography: a new critical dialogue**

### **Synopsis**

This one day conference offers the opportunity for industry professionals, academics and students to consider the critical complexity of commercial photography. Contributors will include professional photographers, editors, agencies, curators, writers and educators. The impetus for debate is grounded in the integration of critical theory and professional practice and seeks to address the critical potential of commercial imagery.



## George Brooks

To keep artistic control over my work, I keep my folio personal and do not let it become client driven. Anyone looking at my book will hopefully see the personality of George Brooks the photographer in his professional and private modes. Some of my best work comes from being asked to shoot in very different directions, often quite experimental. Another thing I do is play. This photograph came about whilst feeling inspired on a trip to New York. I should have been resting for a night shoot but my head was buzzing with ideas. Two and a half years later the project is still ongoing. The struggle and conflict these pictures have caused me has been inspirational and has made my other work stronger and much more satisfying.

## Lesley Churchill

### *Cover Image*

Narrative is important in both my personal and commercial work; however I approach each in a different way. As an editorial photographer I am often required to tell a story with a single image. I feel privileged to be allowed to step into someone's life, if only for a short while. Time is a constraint, and by virtue of the fact that my presence already causes the situation to be contrived, I choose not to interfere with the scene. Instead I engage with the subject, watching for natural gestures.

By contrast, I approach my personal work differently. My pictures are based on real people's stories or are sketches of everyday life. Scenes are often

staged using elements that are already there. These are images of reality with a twist. It is my intention to leave the viewer wondering what is outside the frame, to make them look twice. In both my commercial and personal practice it is important to me to leave a personal trace.

### **Jack Daniels**

My creative slant on animal portraiture arose almost by accident. In my final year of study at Bournemouth I realised that in order to be commercially viable, I would need to achieve technically consistent results using flash and daylight on the lower latitude medium of slow colour slide film. Having a child-like passion for animals I embarked on a series of farm yard portraits. Their non verbal, patient attitude to the green photographer struggling with a Metz flash and a Hasselblad, whilst trying to take meter readings of the fluctuating ambient light resulted in some early happy accidents featuring extreme contrasts between flash and daylight creating powerful and slightly surreal images. As the accidents became decisive control, my practice reached consistency and I realised a new style of animal portraiture with a personal visual signature. As with any new style it took a while to find space within the commercial arena; however in a market where many companies were trying to promote a surface image of 'green' consciousness the style soon found a niche.

## **Yannis Drakoulidis**

An image is by nature suggestive because although it is a finished piece, it is always produced with the intention to refer to something. Narrative therefore is not only located in the image but in the viewer's interpretation. By producing images that negate specific categorization, I try to create an environment of possibility that the viewer is invited to explore and simultaneously project his/her own thoughts and experiences. I believe that by working this way, images encourage imagination and become more flexible to operate in different contexts. A previous exhibition of this work resulted in a commission by Penguin books.

## **Enver Hirsch**

The picture was taken during a reportage shoot on a small atoll in the Pacific. The Island is part of the USA and has been used for nuclear testing, disposal of Agent Orange and the storage of nerve gas. Since its location is completely isolated, the US Government decided to build their first incinerator for the disposal of chemical weapons there. The person shown is a contract worker hitting balls on a small 9-hole golf course. The "blemished" paradise was one of the themes that I was interested in at college and I have been able to transfer that ethos to a certain extent in my editorial work. Bournemouth helped to outline which path to take as a professional photographer. Without this freedom to explore my ideas, technique might have won the battle over content.

## Ted Humble-Smith

(<http://www.hmmm-uk.com/>)

Edited Interview with Craig Howe - Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004

How did you make the transition from college to industry?

I assisted for about two and a half years before leaving to work with Humberto Martinas da Silveira, a Brazilian photographer based in Beirut and working in Iran, Sudan etc. He photographed middle-eastern architecture sites.

After returning to the UK I began working with Andy Earl, a chaotic and rather disorganised experience, before freelancing on my own terms. My first job was with Maclaren and from this I was able to build up a client base which includes Allied Domecq, BMW, Budget car rental, Chrysler, Classic FM, Foster Grant, Inmarsat, Littlewoods, Mercedes, Microsoft, Muse cosmetics, Ocean Spray, Oracle, Psion, Sony, Tefal, The British Army, The Chair Company and West Maclaren.

After three years operating through word of mouth I am now represented by The White Agency ([www.thewhiteagency.co.uk](http://www.thewhiteagency.co.uk)).

Creative compromises to satisfy commercial demand?

Generally, I am fortunate in having a lot of control. Mainly clients will like an image and say "we want it shot like that". Advertising jobs are normally more restrictive.

How much has your outlook/work changed since leaving college?

I was inspired by Tony Wrobiec, a fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and a former arts teacher at Purbeck. He encouraged me at every turn. Now I always work with assistants. I do not feel that my outlook has changed. I now know how to use the tools better. I am able to capture images as I visualise them. I feel like I have achieved my aspirations.

What projects have given you the most creative scope?

Probably my work with The Army has allowed me the most freedom. They liked my style and allowed me complete control. There was very little direction, other than to correct basic errors (i.e. that uniform would not carry that gun). The client was a little inexperienced and so I had to educate them, explaining everything and why things have to be done in a certain way. In this case, image was very important. I had to show up with polished shoes, freshly shaven to make the client comfortable.

What advice would you give to graduating photographers?

I would advise them to think about where they want to take their work. If you want to assist, you have to know Photoshop. You need to recognise that you know little. Understand that it is not going to be easy. There are

now more students and less work.

The other area to think about is business. Get an accountant. Find someone to help with business skills. It is almost like wearing five caps – today I am a photographer, tomorrow I will be the accountant, the day after is retouch, then marketing and PR. Pay attention to money. Keep overheads as low as possible. It is simply a case of survival of the fittest, not necessarily the best photographers.

Tell me about the image you are submitting for the exhibition?

This was shot for F1 Racing. I get on well with the Art Director there. She could not really visualise the idea but she went for it. I had built up trust with the client and she knew that I wouldn't sell her a dummy. The image was very difficult to achieve. I was laid on 2.5cm bullet-proof Perspex. Dressed in black to cut down on reflections, I was suspended above the ground. There was a soft frost above the car and a black pit below. It was not a cheap image. Budget is nearly always an issue in deciding what is possible and achievable. Can you do it for half that? Sometimes, you just carry on regardless because you love the image. The client was very happy with the end result. It is currently included in an exhibition touring Italy.

## Nick Knight

The Way that I work is by following my desires. If I want to find out about something, my way to do it is to photograph it. My excitement comes from problem-solving, knowing I've got an audience and the competition factor... Part of the appeal of working in a commercial region (is) because you've got a very large audience, frighteningly so. One of the things that photography allows you to do is to try to understand how other people work. If you take somebody who is profoundly different from yourself, and you don't have any fear of understanding their world, you'll want to understand how they see things. It's part of the quest, to understand your own condition through working with people who are fundamentally different.

From *Imperfect Beauty: The Making of Contemporary Fashion Photographs* by Charlotte Cotton.

## Carl 'Corey' Lyttle

*Dogs:*

The two pictures chosen are part of an ongoing project I have embarked upon with dogs. I use a little compact Leica, and it is reasonably unobtrusive. I have intentionally never looked through the camera when taking these pictures; I find that by keeping the camera low close to the ground it not only intrigues the animals and increases their curiosity, it has the result of seeing the dogs as if they are being viewed by another dog / animal. The other wonderful thing about shooting like this is that you have

no idea what the image, or framing will be like until the film is viewed.

*Chrysler:*

These two images were shot in New York, and are part of a campaign for Chrysler. The brief was to capture the tranquillity of the car caught amongst the hubbub of a busy cityscape. I had a large production crew, 70 at one stage, 20 extras, rain rigs, police, traffic, catering, stylists, and so on, it was in effect a commercial production for a stills print campaign. The big production allows the scene to be full of energy. It was an ambitious idea that succeeded in capturing the brief and more.

## Adrian Myers

(<http://www.adrianmyers.com/>)

Interview - Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004

How did you make the transition from college to industry?

When I left Bournemouth, I headed straight to London to try and get corporate and magazine work. Then a former peer from Bournemouth explained that they were moving on from assisting Andy Earl and, working on a freelance basis, I assisted Andy for the next three years. This work involved travel around the world photographing bands and music events. It was interesting to learn about all the other elements that go into the shoot, like production, casting, set design etc. I also began to get a feel for photographic hierarchies and how to deal with people.

After this I took a year out to drive from Alaska to Mexico shooting 150 rolls of film en route. I had contacted a number of picture agencies prior to the trip and managed to get The Telegraph colour library to agree to hold some of this mainly landscape work (subsequently acquired by Getty). I had always been conscious of the need to earn money from my images.

On my return from the year out, I did some freelance assisting and started to pick up work from GQ Active. Although not really anything I had

worked on previously, I started to get still life work from this magazine. However, they then asked me to try shooting a sports fashion item. I was sent to Morocco to shoot a golf story and this was well received. I got on well with the art director too and this was the break that I had been waiting for. I haven't looked back since. My clients include George (Asda), GQ, Invesco, L'Oreal, Maclaren, Mens Fitness, Nintendo, Oxbow, Philips (lighting), Racing Line, Reebok and Royal Mail. I have been represented by CottonMuttonBones [www.cottonmuttonbones.co.uk](http://www.cottonmuttonbones.co.uk) for about a year.

Do you have to make creative compromises to satisfy commercial demand – do you resent this?

I do not resent compromise. In editorial shoots, I retain more control than in say fashion or advertising work. For fashion imagery, the photographer does have the final control but it is typically a joint effort with an art director. I have most control when shooting for stock or for magazines.

How much has your outlook/work changed since leaving college?

I do not think that my outlook has changed much at all. I am a realist. College provides a great opportunity to experiment in a sheltered environment. When I studied at Bournemouth, it was considered the best college to have on your CV. My work has changed a lot. At college we had the freedom to write our own briefs on the basis of what we wished to achieve. It was all about self-motivation and still is.

What advice would you give to graduating photographers?

Most important is to work as an assistant. It is the best way to learn the industry. You find out whom to contact. You have to knock on doors. Be realistic, but resilient too. A huge proportion of the industry is going digital. Whilst students have a good knowledge of traditional processes, skills in Photoshop are as important nowadays. I would not take on an assistant who could not operate Photoshop confidently. I would also recommend that graduating photographers join the AOP. This has excellent networking opportunities and is a great way to get assisting work.

Tell me about the image you are submitting for the exhibition?

I have selected an image I took of David Coulthard. I had been asked to shoot a cover and feature for Maclaren. I arrived at about 7am and had to wait four hours before I could shoot. The light was wrong and I was not happy with what I had so I waited. Towards the end of the day, the light looked better. I asked David for 30 seconds whilst his helicopter was waiting. I showed him the Polaroid and he agreed to give me 2 minutes, I shot two rolls of film and then he was off. Maclaren and David loved the shot. This was the first time that an image had been included in their magazine that did not clearly show all of the sponsors' names on the car, normally a prerequisite.

## Niall O'Leary

The picture is taken from a project entitled "Catch me I'm falling". The original series of 27 photographs are in no way manipulated. They were taken over a period of four years within the specific boundaries of "London Borough of Richmond upon Thames".

At first glance my pictures have a peaceful picture postcard tranquil quality. I've chosen to work and convey my ideas in a familiar accessible documentary style. The location is a beautiful, safe, white middle class suburb of London far from any political trouble or turmoil. It is an area that both attracts and repels me in equal measures, yet it is not my intention to present a conventional documentary.

Scratch under the surface and you'll find my pictures emanate from a darker more surreal vision. Old men play in the park with boats, warm inviting Christmas nativity scenes are displayed in funeral parlours and a painted property developer's hoarding resembles post modern pearly gates.

In my photographs, with the exception of the nomadic tourists, nobody is here to stay. The people are fragile ephemeral creatures passing through their daily routines and rituals like ghosts. I view this world as an outsider on the inside. My intention was to explore several broad themes such as time, death, identity and dislocation, to make a critique of contemporary middle-class English life, its values and aspirations, at the cusp of the Millennium.

Naill is the Art Director of Millennium Images, an established photographic library which specialises in the type of images that more conventional photographic libraries do not hold. It has a large range of contacts that may be of benefit to both the established and the less experienced photographer. There is no charge to enter your images into the library. Images are held for a minimum of three years under a standard contract based upon BAPLA (Association of Picture Libraries) recommendations. Millennium are interested in a very wide range of work from art based photography to documentary images, from the conventional to graphic, abstract, constructed, manipulated or digital. [www.milim.com](http://www.milim.com)

### **Steve Orino**

This series was commissioned by Liverpool Football Club to replace the Anfield matchday programme with a new glossy A4 in-depth magazine, and lasted for the 2000/1 & 2001/2 seasons. It had come about from a style I had developed for FourFourTwo magazine's 'The Boy's a bit special' over the previous three seasons. The Art Director had wanted to spice up the feature from the usual telephoto action pictures and gave me a free hand. I had wanted to recreate the cartoon style of 'The Roy of the Rovers' I had read as a kid and convey what it would be like to be right next to these players when they shot, tackled or turned on the flare. When it was picked up by Liverpool magazine, I was allowed to expand the ideas using the full Liverpool squad for the cover and features. The limits were the Title header crop and other cover copy, pre-training time slots and temperamental international first team players who general

didn't like being directed if they did bother to turn up for the shot. Finally the manager, Gerard Houllier, called a halt to this unique title during the summer break, considering it a distraction and risky addition to his players' season. Not before it had set new standards for editorial coverage of football by winning Best Consumer magazine.

### **Spiros Politis**

It is naïve to think that every advertising concept can be translated into a good photograph. The pressures on the creatives to achieve the client's objective put restrictions on what can be done and how exciting or "loud" the photo should be. However, when it all really works it is possible to translate an ad into something with real photographic quality. It is often said that this relies on the photographer but to achieve a good result the work environment needs to be stimulating and challenging. The whole team needs to have the right frame of mind right from the beginning. Ideas and results don't exist in a vacuum; they are consequences of a flow of ideas and collaboration.

I've selected this photograph, which was art directed by Matt Lee at Bank Hoggins O'Shea for Ladbrokes' on-line poker rooms to represent how commerce and art can work together, not least because the experience of doing the job was so good from start to finish. The team was enthusiastic and inquisitive and the client was willing to trust. The merit of the photo is entirely up to each viewer, but it has a sense of place, atmosphere and narrative which are satisfying to create out of a piece of 5"x4" gelatin.

## **James Ross**

Danny and Justin are two amateur bodybuilders in Walthamstow, East London. The picture was taken in the changing rooms at Danny's gym after training on a Saturday afternoon. I set up the light and camera and waited for them to finish throwing weights around. Five minutes and two rolls of film later I packed the equipment away and we all left for a drink.

I have no idea how to get a good portrait but I hope I know one when I see it. Sometimes two hours setting up is a help and sometimes it's a hindrance. It is the same with choice of locations, cameras, lenses, film types, enthusiastic or down right miserable subjects - too much choice and my brain overheats. There doesn't seem to be an ideal route to making it work, which would seem to me to be half the fun. Make the right choice and hey presto. I was given a piece of advice by a picture editor while on the way to a job when I was starting out - 'keep it simple stupid!'

## **Garry Simpson**

My work is predominantly location based for advertising agencies both in Europe and the US. This shot was a Christmas piece for Nike through Wieden & Kennedy, London. The brief was to shoot a basketball hoop with Christmas lights and a Nike backboard in an urban environment. It was shot in London after two days of location finding and is a piece of commissioned work that reflects my personal style.

Advertising is a challenging area for a photographer to work in, with increased emphasis from clients placed on market research, focus groups etc, art directors, copywriters and photographers are often asked to create print campaigns within tight client briefs influenced by their marketing strategy. To the credit of all the creatives involved in print advertising, great work is still produced on a regular basis. It does however put pressure on photographers not only to fulfil a brief, but to also stamp the work with his or her style, the style that originally attracted the creative department.

My approach to gaining commissions in this field has always been to allow my personal work to remain the focus of what I do. It's a highly competitive market place and style is the only tool a photographer has to stand out. My time at Bournemouth allowed me to build the foundations of that style which has developed into a viable commercial product.

### **Wolfgang Tillmans**

'The unprivileged view' may be applied to all my works. In photography I like to assume exactly the unprivileged position, the position that everybody can take, that chooses to sit at an airplane window or chooses to climb a tower. That perspective, on various levels, allows me to work at the same time in a figurative and an abstract manner, analyzing what one could call 'the surface of the total fabric' and getting forms and shapes from which to derive pictures...The way every little thing gets to look the way it looks is a mirror of some intention, and that's maybe my interest in general in aesthetics, that every aesthetic decision is there for a reason.

*From What They Are: A Conversation with Wolfgang Tillmans by Nathan Kernan.*

## **Sarah Turton**

It's almost 15 years since I left Bournemouth for London. In that time I have established myself as a freelance photographer working for magazines, newspapers and advertising agencies.

I am still passionate about photography as a medium despite the many vagaries of working within the industry. One of my biggest achievements is to produce a photograph for a commission that both myself and the commissioning picture editor agree is really strong, but also answers the brief and fits into the ethos and style of the magazine. To have produced a photograph for a commission that stands up alone never ceases to please. To answer someone else's brief, to interpret someone else's story or feature and to make it yours is a challenge and sometimes doesn't work, but to have this aim is part of what keeps me going in the commercial environment.

I believe there is no such thing as the perfect job and photography is no exception, but personally it comes pretty close. Even after a decade and a half I can say that I still love what I do.

## **Oli Tennent**

These two photographs are part of a series I shot as a personal project last year that were taken up by a manufacturer who is an existing client. They ran it in brochures, and as an advertising campaign. Since I've been shooting for this client for 18 years, it was good to see that they had the imagination

to run with something that was so different to their normal output. Which just goes to show it's good to give clients a nudge every now and then.

### **Rainer Usselmann**

For more than 17 years, I have been working as an educator, practitioner and writer, with an interest in digital image making. I am interested in Niklas Luhmann's system theory as a viable framework for the production of works of art. Can complexity of form arise from basic differentiation at the structural level of systems? This project is studio-based as well as theoretical. My work has been exhibited and published in Europe and America.

### **Michael Wildsmith**

I have always taken what are essentially snapshots and from the very beginning I set out to work this way commercially. You get work like the pictures you show, which for me began with photographs taken on day trips, holidays and weekends away, and then you are asked to give the same feeling of reality to a client's often strict and exact brief. But how to do it on command? To me it has become about giving yourself over to this relaxed state of mind and working commercially with a framework of an idea, giving space to allow things to happen and then once again becoming the observer. This photograph I feel was probably the start of fully realising and acknowledging this way of working. It was taken 5 years ago.

## Ben Wright

I work mainly as a portrait photographer in editorial and advertising contexts. I left Bournemouth in the summer of 1989 and started shooting for a Sunday magazine a month later. I never fancied the assisting route but was naive and persistent enough to get work straight away. A steep learning curve then ensued. I have always loved portraiture and I think I am probably a frustrated painter at heart; however, I found light and chemicals to be my strongest medium. I believe the portrait is a much underestimated art in photography, particularly in light of the contemporary obsession with celebrity. A portrait can be dismissed so easily as yet another representation of fame, the emperor's new clothes, a genre without depth. I am always entranced by the capture of something so much more than an instant. The opportunity to observe that person in more intimate detail, to reveal as much of oneself, as is revealed of the sitter, in your capture of them.

'Patrick' was shot at the end of a commission. I wanted to take something more personal than was required by the brief. This is one of my favourite shots in my book; I believe it shows his private face not usually seen in his acting career. 'Girl, Tunisia' was shot while working for a travel company in an undeveloped part of Tunisia. She was amongst a group of children to whom I gave Polaroids of themselves, they had never seen an image of themselves before. She still knew how to pose, proud of her bag and her nappy pin brooch

## Graham Young

This picture is part of a series of black & white landscape photographs numbering about 50 in total featuring European cars in their countries of origin. I first traveled to France in 1989 to shoot an old Citroen DS21 in the Cevennes region. This first series was shot on 35mm infra-red film, which is rather grainy, and, depending on which filter was used, the infra-red effect of dark skies, pale foliage, etc is quite dramatic.

The following year, I took an old VW beetle to what was then East Germany, to Dresden and East Berlin. All the pictures in this series were shot in urban landscapes, using many of the bombed-out wrecks of buildings as backgrounds and juxtapositional foils to the shape of the car. This time, I used the Konica 120 infra-red film (120 format) using a Fuji GSW690 camera which is a very simple piece of kit and a joy to use.

My next excursion in this series was to northern Sweden with a Saab 96. I had a lot of difficulty finding the right car as I wanted a silver vehicle to compliment and enhance the spectral effect of the film. I found out that Saab did not make this car in this colour except for a short production run in 1976 to commemorate the company's silver anniversary and I eventually located one of these models. I had a very enjoyable 2 weeks driving right up into the Arctic Circle where I encountered frozen lakes and dramatic snow landscapes. It was so quiet that I would often set up a shot on a road and not see another vehicle for hours.

One of the wonderful aspects in this region is the constantly changing weather conditions which really lends itself to this type of work. I chose this picture because of the emotions it conjures up to me of this region; calm, peaceful yet with the ever threatening sky. I love the organic shape of the car and the way it sits in the landscape, reflects the light and becomes part of the scene in a way that most "advertising" car shots fail to do.



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