

Portrait Photography

LensCulture's essential guide to making and sharing remarkable photographic portraits

What is it about portrait photography that makes it so special for both photographers and our audience?

Why do some portraits make themselves a permanent home in our visual memory? And what makes the difference between a decent ordinary portrait and an extraordinary one?

In this guide, we attempt to find some answers! Through conversations, advice and tips from some of the best portrait photographers today and other experts around the world, our aim is to unravel some of the mystery around portraiture.



© Harris Mizrahi

Within these pages, we've curated fantastic interviews, stunning photo essays and lists of helpful resources to arm you with information and inspiration. Our hope is that this guide will help expand and challenge your own portrait-making, now and in the future.

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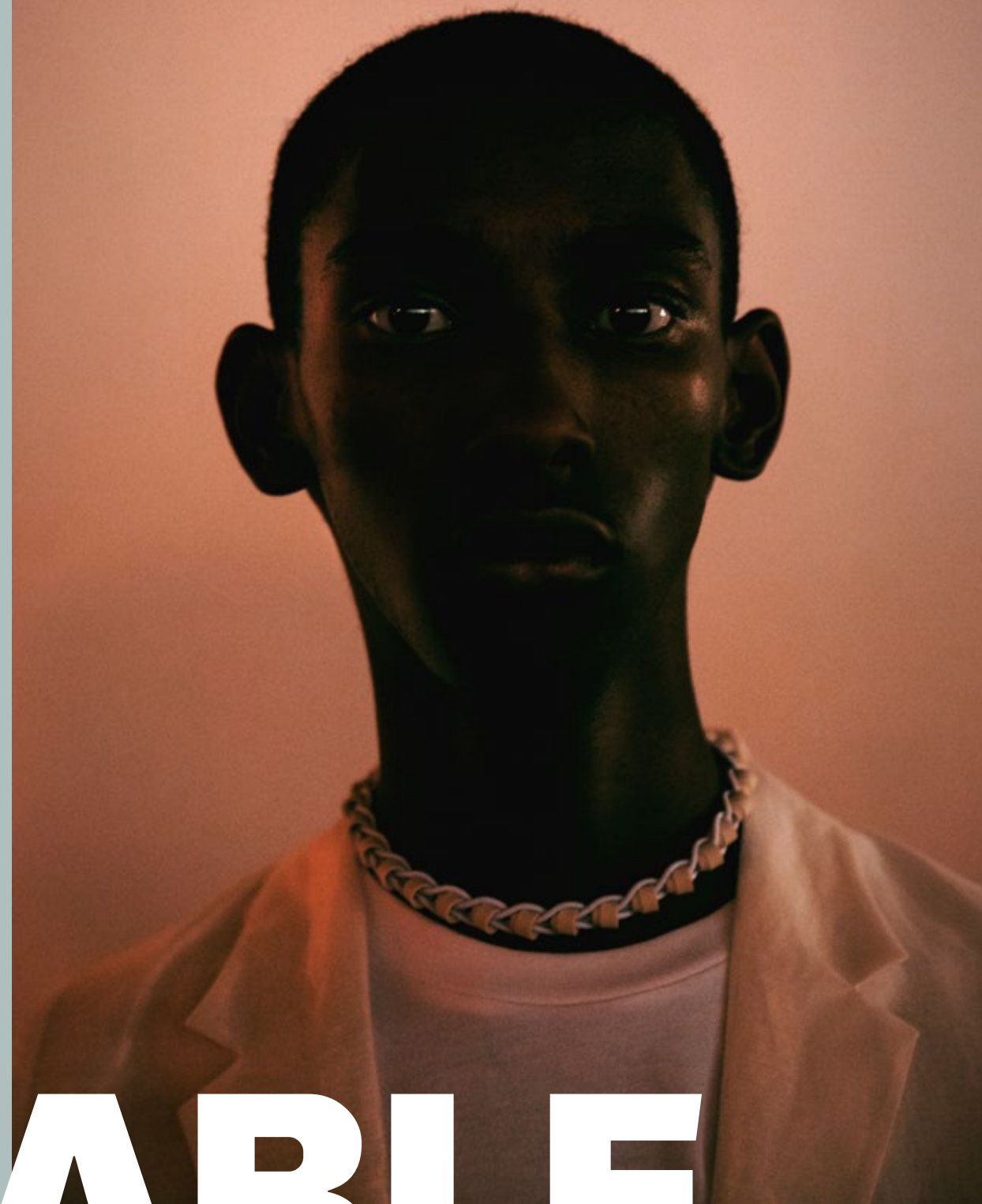
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**“A portrait! What
could be more simple
and more complex,
more obvious and
more profound?”**

— CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, 1859

01. MAKE REMARKABLE PORTRAITS



Go on, get out there and make remarkable portraits.

If you've downloaded this guide, you know that creating portraits isn't as simple as it sounds. Portraiture is a tricky beast. When we're starting out, knowing and understanding the traditional rules of portraiture - soft directional light, an engaging expression and posture - can help us immensely. But it doesn't always result in an image that moves our audience. Breaking the rules and experimenting can do the same, or not!

Conscious or unintended, or just plain lucky, sometimes we manage to imbue that indescribable element into our process and it results in a remarkable image. With time, practice and reflection, the frequency of remarkable work only increases. Some photographers succeed with such consistency that we can only assume they've worked out a few things about portrait-making worth sharing - so we asked them!

In this chapter, read interviews with recognized portrait photographers to discover their tried and tested personal approach to creating compelling portraits. Dive in and take some tips for yourself, there are plenty to find.

THE SECRET SAUCE:

What makes a good portrait?

“I think a good portrait empowers the subject, and is ultimately a collaboration between the subject and the photographer. Trying to impose too much on the subject often creates a forced-looking image that the viewer can’t relate to. Making a connection and allowing the subject to present themselves to the camera is often all you need for a good portrait.”

JENNIFER MURRAY
Executive Director, Filter Photo
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2019 Juror

“I think a good portrait says a lot more about the photographer than about the person portrayed. The subject or person you choose to photograph, the place where you position someone, the moment you capture, the selection, the editing, the use of light—all of these elements are the choices of the photographer. I think we are all (unconsciously) searching for recognition, for something we know, something about ourselves. I think that is having your ‘own style’ within the medium; the reflection of the photographer can be seen in the work.”

ROBIN DE PUY
Photographer
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2018 Winner

THE SECRET SAUCE:

What makes a good portrait?

“Just as the definition for photography is in transition today, the idea of what makes a good portrait is changing. There is no set rule to define portraiture anymore. It does not matter if the work is analog or digital, handmade or computer-generated. What is important is originality, mastery of one’s medium and being able to connect the viewer with the subject.”

DEBORAH KLOCHKO
Executive Director and Chief Curator, Museum of Photographic Arts
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2019 Juror

“I look for authenticity, engagement, a tender and compassionate point of view, and sensuality. I think it’s about a sense of presence, where you feel like the subject is not only looking at the photographer, but looking at you. It’s about some sort of deep looking—a presence rather than self-consciousness. Sometimes it’s about quality of light, or mood. If a portrait has a narrative, I’m usually drawn to it. I don’t necessarily mind if something is staged, but when things start to feel too artificial, I think it’s a crutch.”

RICHARD RENALDI
Portrait Photographer
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2019 Juror

There's No Magic Formula



**INTERVIEW WITH PORTRAIT
PHOTOGRAPHER, RICHARD RENALDI**

In this interview, Richard Renaldi speaks about discovering large format photography, what inspires his numerous portrait series, and why portraiture remains such a pervasive force in our photographic world.

Questions by Cat Lachowskyj
Answers by Richard Renaldi

Cover image on the left: Portland, ME, 2018. From the series *Hotel Room Portraits* © Richard Renaldi
Cover image on the right: Jared and Seth; New York, NY, 2013. From the series *Touching Strangers* © Richard Renaldi

C- I want to speak a bit about how you started working with portrait photography. I think there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding the genre—people write it off as an easier method to tackle. Because portraiture is so historical and all around us, dabbling in and focusing on that genre actually takes a lot of guts. What first drew you to portraiture?

R- It's interesting you say that, because I hear it a lot. And, as you said, it is quite the contrary. When I teach photography, people have a lot of anxiety about photographing strangers and approaching portraiture. I think portraiture is a lot more complicated than we give it credit for—especially street portraiture. I've always been attracted to the genre because I like people—I like to look at them, observe them—and the camera is an extension of the eye that legitimizes that stare.

I worked as a photo researcher at Magnum in the 90s, so I saw a lot of photos in a reportage style, and I think that inherently gave me the desire to slow things down and engage with my subjects. When I started using an 8x10 view camera, that really allowed me to reinvent my process and start from scratch. I could really dig into what it meant to make a portrait of a stranger on the street.

C- Why is the relationship between photographer and subject in portrait photography so important? How do you personally approach that dynamic?

R- It depends on what I'm looking for in each project. When I was casting for *Touching Strangers*, I was thinking about cataloguing different types of Americans. But when I was shooting *Manhattan Sunday*, I was thinking about approaching people who were putting on that drag of glamor, so to speak. They were presenting this sort of ideal self to the world for night life, so I was looking for people who were self-possessed.



Aaron and Ava; Cincinnati, OH, 2014. From the series *Touching Strangers* © Richard Renaldi

C- How did the idea for *Touching Strangers* come about? Was it an experiment you were thinking about for some time?

R- Definitely. I wanted to engage with ideas about groups on the street, and touch on that unseen adhesive tissue linking us all together. I wanted to physically merge people into one frame. When I was thinking about how to do it, I was shooting people on communal benches at Greyhound bus stations for the project *See America by Bus*. I started encountering that same scenario, where I wanted to photograph two or more people—strangers—in the same frame. The extra challenge of coordinating this interaction really appealed to me.

C- You mentioned discovering a view camera, and how that changed the way you approached the medium. How so?

R- I love working with a view camera because it slows things down. It's cumbersome, and becomes a conversation piece in and of itself. People are a little mystified by it, and their curiosity in it becomes an icebreaker. It's a formal portrait experience, but the whole process of it is a little more casual. People can just relax because of the time involved, and they have some time to shake out their giggles and be more present.

C- As a teacher of photography, are there certain things you find yourself telling people over and over again when it comes to approaching the medium? What's a lesson you find yourself returning to with each student?

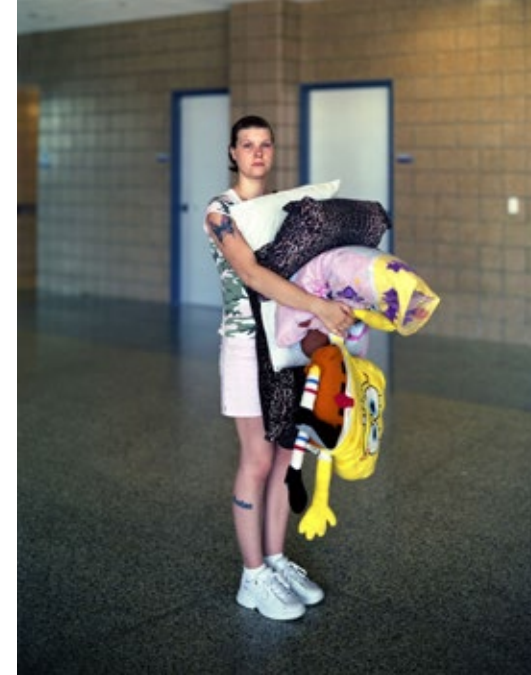
R- A lot of people think that there's some sort of magic formula, but no such formula exists. People just want you to tell them what to do, but you've got to go out there and do it yourself. The only way you're going to get comfortable is if you do it on your own. People want to know how to approach strangers. They want to know what to say, how to do it, and what you need to do to make them relax. For a lot of young photographers, it's really anxiety-inducing to approach somebody. Try not to be thwarted by that experience. It only gets easier with practice, and thinking about what you can do to relax yourself first. That's a big one.



Left: 08:23. From the series *Manhattan Sunday* © Richard Renaldi
Right: 06:41. From the series *Manhattan Sunday* © Richard Renaldi

C- You've got a substantial Instagram following, which allows you to share your dynamic work with a wide audience. How do you see Instagram playing a role in the career of photographers today. Is it necessary?

R- I'd like us all to move away from it, to be honest. I don't think it's necessary. Social media is a double-edged sword. I've definitely gained things from it, but screen time is changing us, and its effects are profound. I don't even think we're fully aware of what's going on. I have a growing concern about it. I think it's changed the industry and made photography too accessible, so that it's harder to make a career out of it. But I also think it's made great photography that much more obvious. It's brought more people into the medium, so that's amazing. But based on what we've learned in the last couple of years, especially regarding the nefarious uses of the Facebook corporation, I think there are legitimate concerns. Instagram fame, as they say, is not terribly deep.



Left: Dawn, Grand Rapids, MI, 2006. From the series *See America by Bus* © Richard Renaldi.
Right: Kerry and Jason, Evansville, IN, 2007. From the series *See America by Bus* © Richard Renaldi

C- And what do you want people to take away from your work, no matter what platform they encounter it on, whether Instagram or an exhibition, or in one of your books?

R- I want to leave that up to the audience. I just hope I somehow move them to feel something. Art is very interpretive, and it should remain that way. Of course if you create something with a certain intent, and people come away with something completely different, you might have to rethink what you're doing. But *Touching Strangers* was so broadly interpreted, and people projected their own ideas onto the pictures—their ideals and fantasies about what was happening in that work. I'm not overly conceptual. I like to work on themes and projects where I think there are stories I'm telling and feelings I'm exploring, and I like to leave those interpretations more open.

- C- I think it's also important to ask why you think portraiture continues to be such a pervasive genre in photography. It's been there since the very beginning—it's one of the first things we did with the medium, and it's probably one of the last things we will do with it.
- R- Exactly. It's because of humanity and our interest in ourselves—our interest in the human figure. We're interested in what we do, where we are, how we feel, how we dress. We're interested in the surface of ourselves, and we're also interested in the interior life of ourselves. There's interest in human psychology. All of these things are within the human shell, and our shell is very dominant when we're alive, sitting in front of a camera.



Ekeabon and Andrew; Venice, CA, 2013. From the series *Touching Strangers* © Richard Renaldi

—Excerpt from interview with Cat Lachowskyj



Nakisha. Image by © Tamara Dean - from the Taylor Wessing Photographic Prize 2016.
Tamara Dean is represented by Martin Browne Contemporary

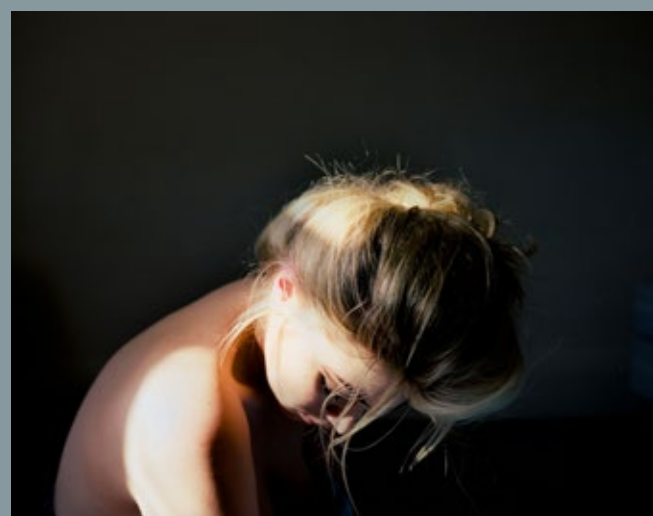
“There is something undeniably magnetic about photo portraiture that defies easy explanation. I often wonder whose identity is revealed to me in a portrait that speaks to me. Is it really the sitter, or is it something internal to me, that maps onto my memory in a powerful way? Maybe a fragment—a mere moment in time— is, after all, the best way to find connection with another person.”

PHILLIP PRODGER
Head of Photographs, National Portrait Gallery



TODD HIDO'S ADVICE FOR
PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHERS

Charge The Air



Renowned American photographer Todd Hido has made a career out of creating imagery that sticks with you. In this generous interview, he offers valuable insights for photographers wishing to make compelling portraits.

Questions by Jim Casper
Answers by Todd Hido



- J- In your opinion, what are some of the qualities that make some photographic portraits stand out and apart from ordinary photos of people? Can you offer some examples of great photo portraits that hold power for you?
- T- Richard Avedon's portrait of Marilyn Monroe. For me, it's the epitome of an unguarded portrait. It was apparently taken at a moment when she didn't realize she was supposed to be "on," and it shows what I gather is the exact opposite of what it was she was trying to portray, most likely your typical flirty persona. But what it actually shows is a person who seems to be lost within herself and looking very much inward.

Now, of course nobody knows what Marilyn was feeling at that moment, and we all know that photography is the best truth-teller and the best liar all at the same time. And things magically appear different when they're photographed, as Mr. Gary Winogrand used to say. So that leaves us with what I believe is the most important part of photography: that we, the viewers, fill the photograph with meaning and bring our own issues and concerns with us.

Cover Image top: From "Intimate Distance: Twenty-Five Years of Photographs, A Chronological Album" © Todd Hido
Cover image right: Selections from a Survey: Khrystyna's World, 2015. Courtesy of Alex Daniëls Reflex Amsterdam and Todd Hido © Todd Hido. Cover bottom image: Selections from a Survey: Khrystyna's World, 2015. Courtesy of Alex Daniëls Reflex Amsterdam and Todd Hido © Todd Hido. Image this page: © Todd Hido.

J- **As a teacher, what advice do you give your students when it comes to preparing for, and making, successful portraits?**

T- To be kind is most important. After that, be prepared with a plan for how you're going to make the picture. An example in my case would be, every time I photograph somebody, I always scout out the spot I'm going to photograph them in and try to anticipate what the light is going to be like and modify it if needed.

Sometimes there is value in communicating well with the person you are working with. I have also found, however, that not giving specific direction yields something that seems to be very believable and less scripted, which ultimately makes for a better photograph. I always avoid things that couldn't have possibly happened, because I want a sense of reality to permeate my work, whether I have completely constructed the image or not.



© Todd Hido



© Todd Hido

T- One other thing that is very important is what the person will wear in the photograph. Wardrobe is obviously a very important component in photographs. You could go with whatever it is they're wearing if you're bound to reality, but if you're not, it's very good to have the person bring several different things to wear, because having the right clothing makes a tremendous difference. I usually opt for dark solids because it highlights their face in the resulting portrait.

J- **When you are working with models for your own photography work, do you consider those images to be portraits, or self-portraits, or some other kind of art altogether?**

T- I would consider the work I do with models to be a partial hybrid between who they actually are and what persona myself and the subject jointly decide we want to create. Very often, the kind of work I do lends itself the opportunity to explore memories of people we used to know or projections of people we might want to be.

- J- Much of your artwork seems infused with psychological power and mysterious implications. The exterior of a home at night could in some ways be considered to be a portrait of those people who inhabit it. Can you talk about how a photographer can infuse his or her images with emotions and a heightened sense of being in a charged moment?
- T- That is a complicated question to answer because for every person it would be different. As an artist, I have always felt that my task is not to create meaning, but to charge the air so that meaning can occur. In all my pictures of people or places, I see something of myself. It is no mystery that we can only effectively photograph what we are truly interested in or—maybe more importantly—what we are grappling with, often unconsciously. Otherwise, the photographs are merely about an idea or concept, and that stuff eventually falls flat for me. There must be something more—some emotional hook for it to really work.

—Excerpt from a conversation with LensCulture’s editor-in-chief, Jim Casper

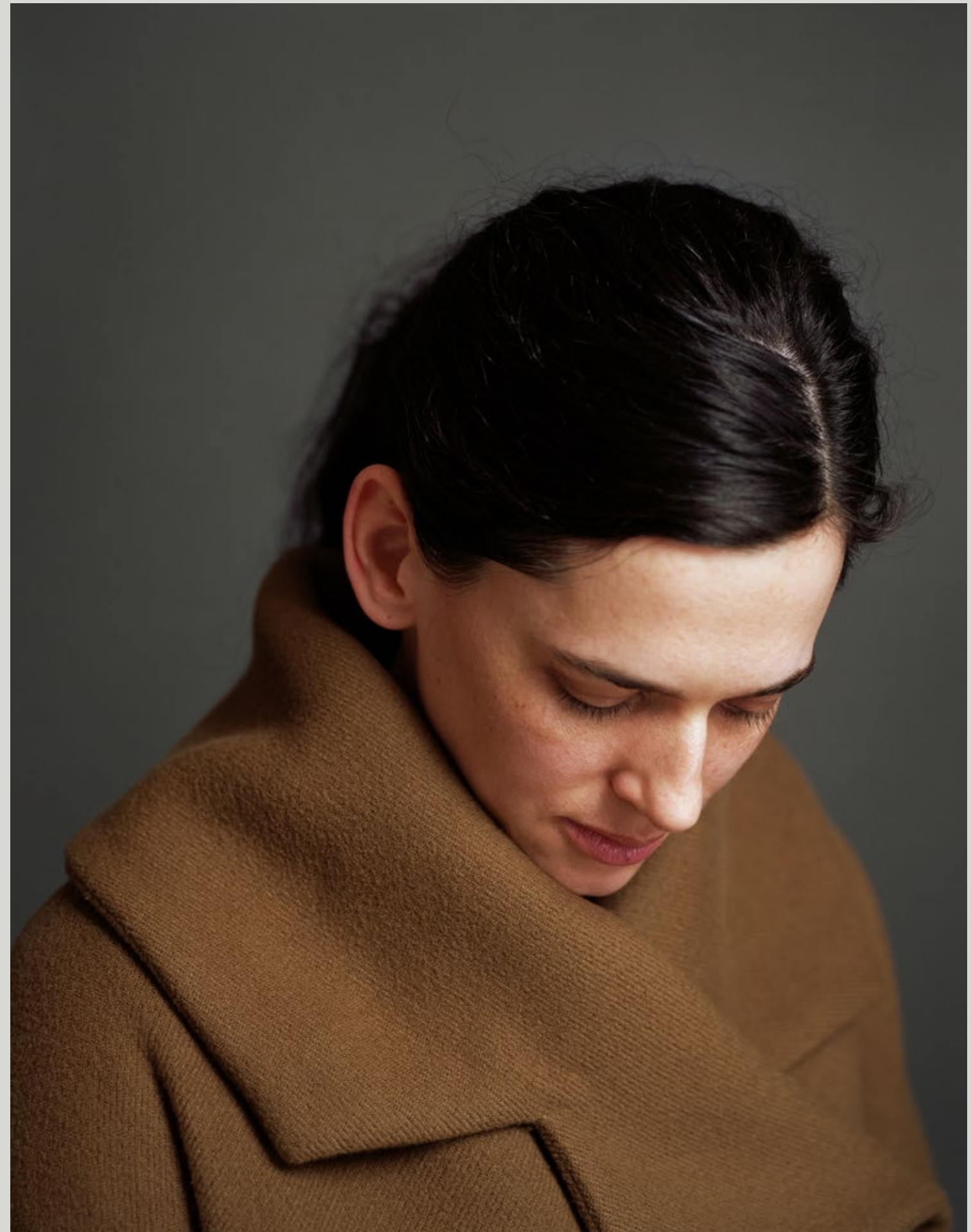


Selections from a Survey: Khrystyna’s World, 2015. Courtesy of Alex Daniëls Reflex Amsterdam and Todd Hido © Todd Hido

“I like people of flesh and blood. And I look for the moment that it appears that someone is present with their appearance and absent in their mind. It fits my personality that I like people as they are: without a fuss and with all their struggles. I think that a good portrait has the personality of the maker in it.”

Koos Breukel
Portrait Photographer

Taryn Simon, Amsterdam 2008 © Koos Breukel



INTERVIEW WITH MAXINE HELFMAN



Creative instinct, discomfort, and discovery



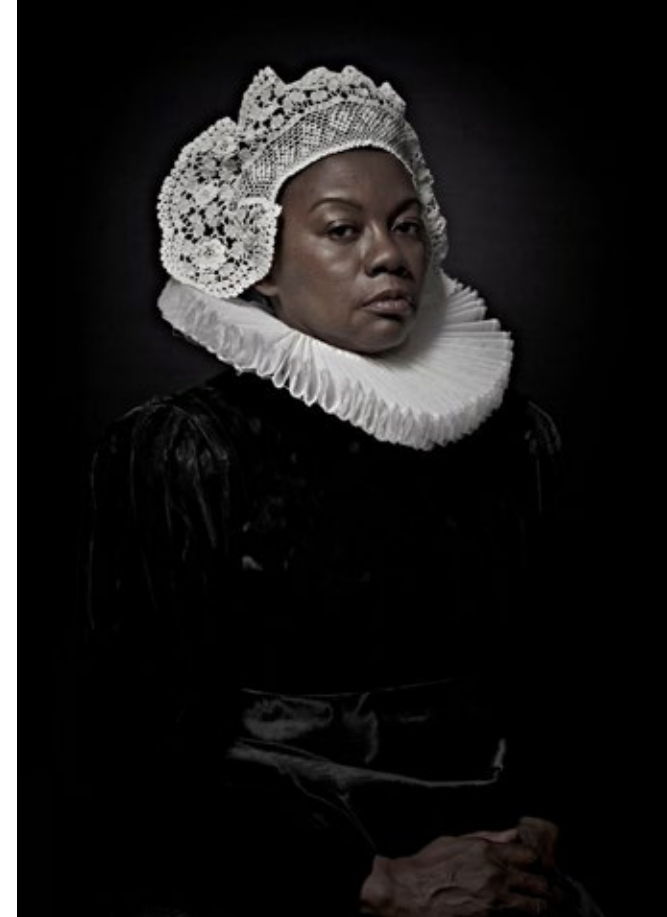
Maxine Helfman has various series of compelling portrait work, all of which are inspired by Flemish paintings. What at first appear to be simple images become layers of complexity, rooted in empathy and vulnerability.

Questions by Collier Brown
Answers by Maxine Helfman

- C- Before we get into the images, maybe you could tell us a little about yourself—where you grew up and what got you into photography.
- M- I grew up in the 60s in Miami. My parents divorced when I was 7. Divorce at that time was not civil or well-accepted in society, so I was a bit of an outcast. I pretty much drifted with no direction until I discovered my creativity in my mid-thirties. Through a job, I talked my way into store display, then into styling props and sets for photo shoots. I eventually taught myself to shoot, which led to commercial still life. I branched out into fashion and portraiture. In 2012, I decided to begin making personal work.

C- Your photographs suggest isolation on a larger scale too. Racial diversity and adversity, especially, feature powerfully in your work. How did that come to be a focal point for you?

M- I grew up during the civil rights movement. My mother embraced those of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. I have a deep respect for the courage it took them to fight for their rights. When I look at images from that time, I am still deeply disturbed by the brutality with which peaceful, hard-working people were treated. Sadly, we are watching history repeat itself. Through my work, I connect current events with the past to create conversation. Art allows us to have that voice.



HISTORICAL CORRECTION © Maxine Helfman

C- You've said you get inspiration from paintings. Are there particular painters you return to?

M- Certain painters inspire me: Michaël Borremans, Radu Belcin, Lucian Freud, and Egon Schiele to name a few. I'm attracted to the awkwardness they depict. I like the challenge of transcending traditional photography to achieve some of the more unnatural qualities, in terms of gesture and expression, that painters have the freedom to explore.



UNTITLED © Maxine Helfman

C- That really speaks to the atmosphere you create in your work.

M- That is what I am attracted to. I like things that feel uncomfortable, the moments and feelings that we all try to avoid looking at: vulnerability, loneliness, fear, melancholy. That's where I find beauty, and I don't want to disguise it by making the image feel comfortable. I also prefer images to be timeless, without distinct locations or props. I think it keeps the story uncluttered.

C- It sounds like you trust your intuition a great deal when it comes to making photographs. Any final thoughts on that balance between instinct and technique?

M- I discovered my talent late and have a deep sense of gratitude to have found this passion. When you absorb yourself deeply in something, it becomes your way of life; it becomes essential. Being self-taught, mine is a process of instinct rather than intellect. I totally let go. I don't try to control the outcome. It is truly about the discovery.

–Excerpt from an interview with Collier Brown.



© Paul D'Amato

“Portraiture is difficult. Interacting closely with someone, especially if that person is someone you don’t know, can be a nerve-wracking and confrontational experience, on both sides of the lens. As the photographer, you have to be a quick reader of people, and be able to pick up on small details that individuate the subject: the way they gesticulate, and so on. It’s all about chemistry, whether it be good or bad. Interesting things can come out of both kinds.”

SIOBHAN BOHNACKER
Senior Photo Editor, The New Yorker

02. SHARE REMARKABLE PORTRAITS



Sometimes it's tempting to keep our best portrait work close to our chest, waiting for the right time to share, or the right moment to come.

In this chapter, we encourage you to share your work with the world, with your peers and mentors, and with your online community. Why? Because sharing is the best way to build relationships within the photography community. Sharing allows you to access different perspectives, which can both give you new ideas or cement your own. Sharing can open doors for growth and for exposure. And sharing can result in a boost in confidence or an injection of motivation to keep going, keep creating, and keep learning.

When looking at the volume of images shared today, it can be overwhelming to try and work out where your own work fits. Our aim with this chapter is to highlight ways in which you can navigate sharing your portraits in a manner that works for you.

Submit your work

JANUARY

World Press Photo Awards
- Portrait Category

Photographer of the Year (POY)
- Portrait Category

Sony World Photography Awards
- Professional Portrait Category

Portrait of Humanity

FEBRUARY

LensCulture Portrait Awards

Head On Photo Awards
- Portrait Category

MARCH

iPhone Photography Awards
- Portrait Category

APRIL

Kuala Lumpur International
Portraiture PhotoAwards

MAY

Martin Kantor Portrait Prize

* Must be of a prominent Australian

Portrait of Britain

* Subject must live in England, Scotland,
Wales or Northern Ireland

JUNE

Taylor Wessing Photographic
Portrait Prize

OCTOBER

Travel Photographer of the Year
Awards - Faces, People and
Cultures category

THE SECRET SAUCE:

What makes a strong submission?

“Be thoughtful in your editing process. It is better to have less work that is carefully selected and works together, than a variety of different projects. I am looking forward to viewing works that challenge our ideas around portraiture.”

DEBORAH KLOCHKO

Executive Director and Chief Curator, Museum of Photographic Arts
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2019 Juror

“When you are presenting your work, you have to be your own toughest editor. Don’t add more just to show that you have done more. A good sequence is like music—one photo should take you to the next and the next. Sometimes these links are chromatic, sometimes geometric. But don’t be overly rational about it. Fundamentally, it should be a sensation and a feeling that guides you.”

ALESIA GLAVIANO

Senior Photo Editor, Vogue Italia
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2016 Juror

THE SECRET SAUCE:

What makes a strong submission?

“Put your best pictures up front—don’t try to tell a nuanced narrative or sequence here. It’s more about making a good first impression with killer photographs.”

DENISE WOLFE
Senior Editor, Aperture

“Start with a very strong photo—one that grabs the viewer’s attention and forces him or her to stop and study the image, to read the caption, to want to see and learn more. You need to hook the viewer right away!”

JIM CASPER
Editor-in-Chief, LensCulture
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2019 Juror

THE SECRET SAUCE:

What makes a strong submission?

“Be clear and direct with how you describe the work to the jurors. There are different contexts where you can be more playful with language and style of writing, but from my point of view, an online submission is perhaps the context where clarity of communication in terms of intent and concept are most useful.”

KAREN MCQUAID

Curator, The Photographer's Gallery
LensCulture Portrait Awards 2019 Juror

“The number of photographers out there is equal to the number of valid approaches to portraiture, so, you should submit something that represents your point of view, your aesthetic. Let life happen in front of you, follow what's there, and the work will come.”

ELINOR CARUCCI

Photographer

**THOUGHTS FROM KAREN MCQUAID,
CURATOR AT THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY**

**Show your
work in
progress**



Karen McQuaid, a long-time curator at London's leading public institution dedicated to photography, offers insight about portraiture at The Photographers' Gallery, and advice for photographers looking to share their work.

Questions by Coralie Kraft
Answers by Karen McQuaid

- C- What is the history of portraiture like at The Photographers' Gallery?
- K- Interestingly, as the gallery approaches its fiftieth birthday, we are re-engaging with our own exhibition history in a variety of ways. We've shown some artists and photographers over the years whose work has had a huge impact on the thinking about portraiture in wider culture and art, such as Andy Warhol in 1971; Rineke Dijkstra in 1997; Sally Mann in 2010 and Zanele Muholi in 2015, to name a few. All of these artists have very different relationships to portraiture, the act of photography and their wider practice.

C- How does TPG approach the genre of portraiture, and what do they look for from portrait photographers?

K- One of the most ambitious public art projects we've ever undertaken was a portrait commission called *The World In London*. In 2012, The Photographers' Gallery commissioned 204 photographers, both established and emerging, to take portraits of 204 individual Londoners who were born in countries competing in the Olympics. It was a celebration of London's cultural diversity, and indeed of portraiture itself. The range of photographic approaches was really satisfying.

In terms of an approach to portraiture specifically, we are led by the individual projects and the artists we work with. I'd say in terms of installation and format, we also look for new and interesting ways that people are making and showing portraits. Vivienne Sassen's *Anelemma* (2014) installation had two large rolling projection scrolls full of her figurative fashion images, mixing light, reflection and sound.

K- Eva and Franco Mattes, who have work in our current *All I know Is What's on The Internet* exhibition, stretch the edges of what constitutes a portrait at all. They are exhibiting stock avatars in place of individuals to protect their anonymity.

C- How does your audiences respond to portraiture? Is it more captivating than other work?

K- I can't really get behind the idea that one sub-category of art or photography is more 'captivating' than the other. Of course there is something in the fact that figurative or facial representation, in any visual art form, provides an easy way to draw people in. But that in itself is not enough. The content and the context must also challenge and fit. Cuny Janssen comes to mind—we showed her portraits of children and young people from conflict regions back in 2005. Her work always combines portraits with environmental or landscape shots from the same regions.

K- Portraiture is completely central to what she does, but there is extra strength when she intermixes it with other genres. Bettina Von Zwehl showed *Alina* in 2004—portraits taken of young women all listening to a composition by Avro Part. The sitters, mostly music students, were left in the darkened soundproof room with the piece of music, and the artist captured the image via flash without warning. The resulting portraits were very much about the idea of absorption and captivation, and the audiences really added to that charged exchange in the exhibition space.

C- **As a curator at The Photographers' Gallery, you have a unique perspective on competitions. Is there anything you wish you could communicate to the photographers about how to create a compelling submission?**

K- It is very different to encounter work through a submission site than through the intimate space of a photobook, a gallery or a bespoke digital presentation. You don't need to be overly descriptive; just be sure that judges who want to know more about the project and your intention for the work can get that information via your text.

C- **In your opinion, what steps have the most impact on a photographer's career? Should all photographers aim to sign to a gallery or publish a photobook? Are competitions and portfolio reviews critical for exposure?**

K- Sadly, there is no one answer to any question that starts with "Should all photographers...?" Getting your work seen is crucial, that's a given. However, sometimes I feel a real imbalance between a photographer's focus on promotion and circulation and their focus on the work itself. The strongest impact on your career that you can make is concentrating on making the best work/project/book or exhibition you can. That has to come before everything else. I urge photographers to be choosy about which prizes and portfolio reviews they enter—don't feel pressure to overspend and attend them all.

K- You should budget annually for these sorts of opportunities, much as you would for a studio or equipment—it is an investment in your work. Select one or two key awards or reviews, and don't do more than you can afford. As a reviewer I try to ensure that the competitions or reviews that I take part in are good value for photographers. I also say that the younger festivals are often the ones where the contact time between photographers and reviewers is more relaxed and generous.

C- You've been a frequent portfolio reviewer around the world. What are a few pieces of advice you find yourself offering most frequently to aspiring or emerging photographers who are looking to break through in their careers?

I would say be open to sharing work in progress in a portfolio review session. It is often much more beneficial than sharing work that you feel is already very finished. If you have made every decision about the work, reviews can be a bit of a wasted opportunity.



Installation view. The Photographers' Gallery, Lorenzo Vitturi: *Dalston Anatomy*, 2014 © Kate Elliott



Installation view. The Photographers' Gallery, Rosangela Renno: Rio-Montevideo, 2015 © Kate Elliott

K- I would urge photographers to consider reviews as a stage for presenting work before publishing and exhibiting—not everything has to be tied up. That way you can actually consider feedback and have some space in the project to respond.

Also, be sure to think about a few key questions that you want answered about the project before you head into any review session—perhaps in relation to sequencing, format, production, accompanying text, etc. It's good to have a few concrete questions ready and waiting in case the conversation doesn't flow naturally.

Furthermore, when you are at these meetings, it is so important that you spend as much time sharing work and ideas with other photographers as well as with the "experts." Keep an open mind. Really valuable collaborations and connections can come from all directions at these events—not just from across the review table.

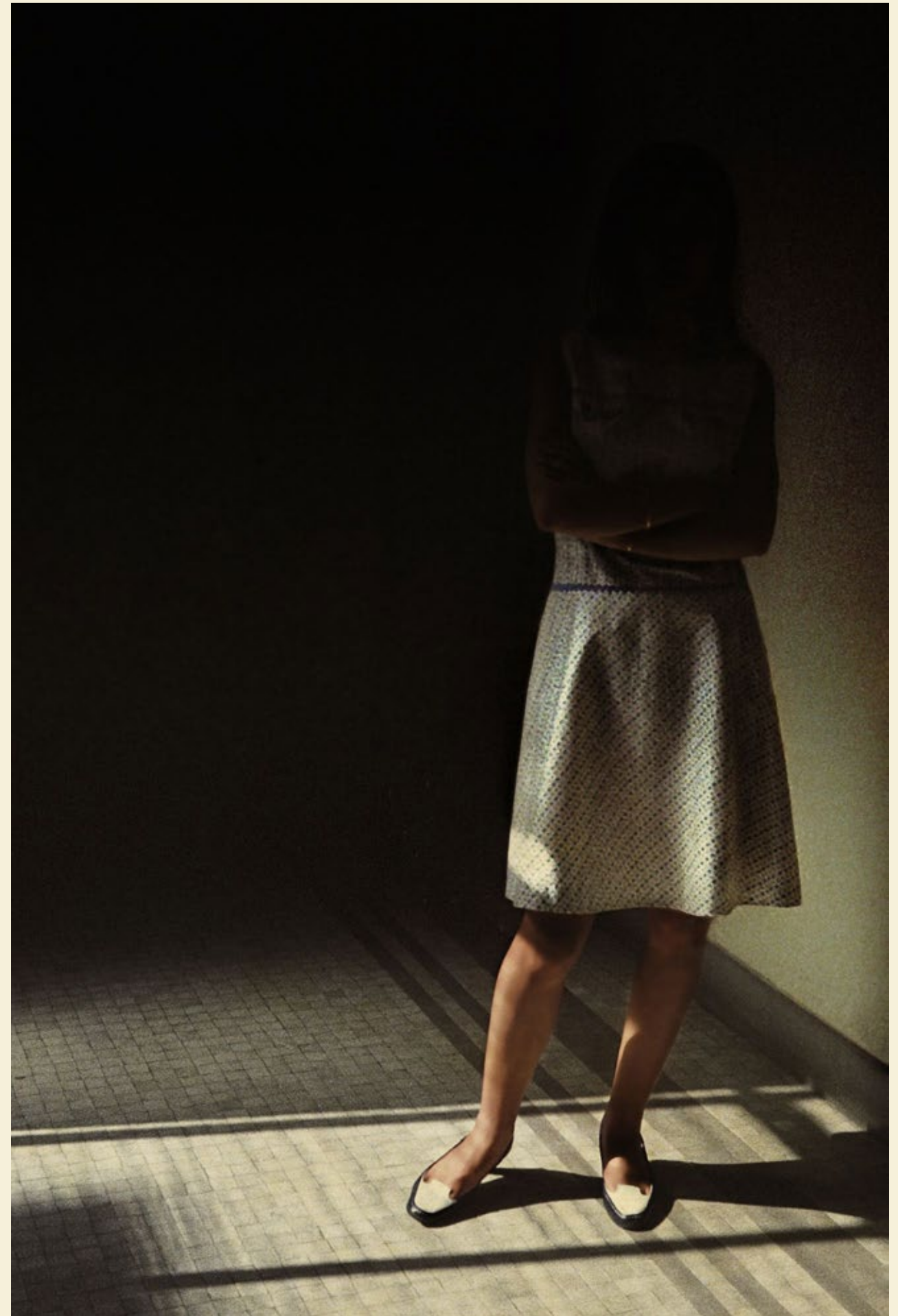
—Excerpt of an interview by Coralie Kraft

“Winning this prize and being selected by Phillip Prodger, Head of Photographs at the National Portrait Gallery, not only made us happy and gave us international recognition, but it also encouraged us to continue innovating, thinking and doing, going beyond established models and boundaries.”

ALBARRÁN CABRERA

LensCulture Portrait Awards 2017 - Juror's Pick

© Albarrán Cabrera



INTERVIEW WITH PHOTOGRAPHER
SARAH BAHBAH



How do I remove all the love
I ever gave you?

Photography as an expression of indulgence

Merging cinematic portraits with achingly-honest subtitle text, Sarah Bahbah's photography explores emotive narratives of love, sex, and relationships from a woman's perspective. In this interview, she reveals the inspiration behind her instantly recognizable images, and how sharing them online has contributed to her career.

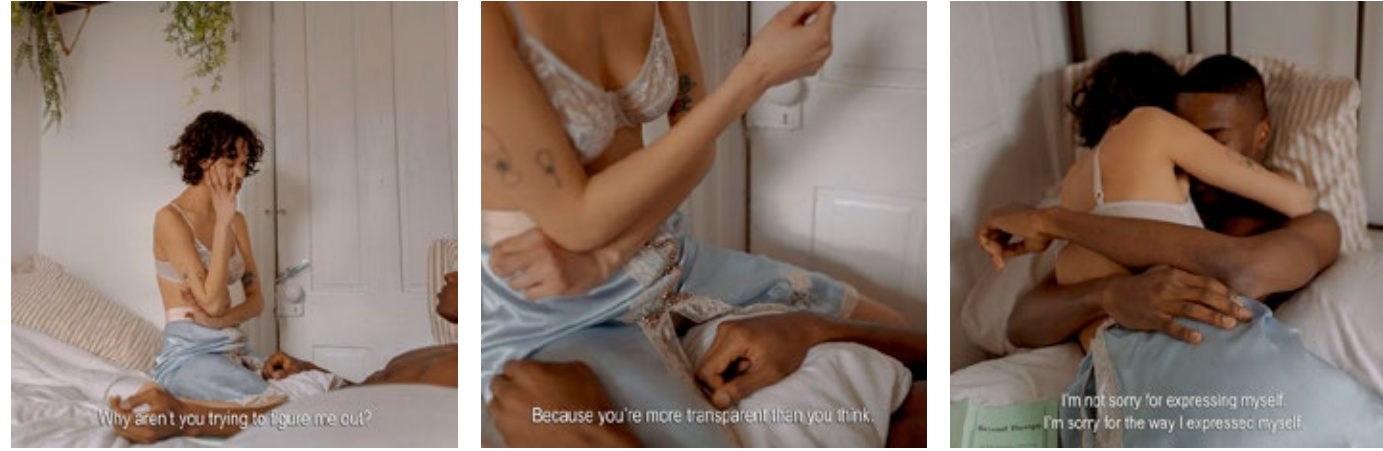
Questions by Alana Holmberg

Answers by Sarah Bahbah

- A_ The themes in your work are simultaneously complex and familiar. What inspires these topics?
- S_ The themes I work with are inspired from a real place, and learned on the back of living. I have learned to completely immerse myself in whatever situation I am experiencing, be it good or bad. I take on the experience of great highs knowing very well that with them come deep lows. I can't romanticize logic, and subjectivity helps me create.

It sounds tragic and romantic, but I feel more inspired when I am wholeheartedly experiencing everything this world has to offer. I delve heart-first into these offerings from the universe, because it is a part of my process towards liberation. As a form of control, the patriarchy has conditioned women to find shame in their indulgences. I express my indulgences through my work as a way of reclaiming my female identity. This is what stimulates my conceptualization.

Cover image © Sarah Bahbah from her series *Love You Me Neither*



© Sarah Bahbah from her series *I could not protect her*

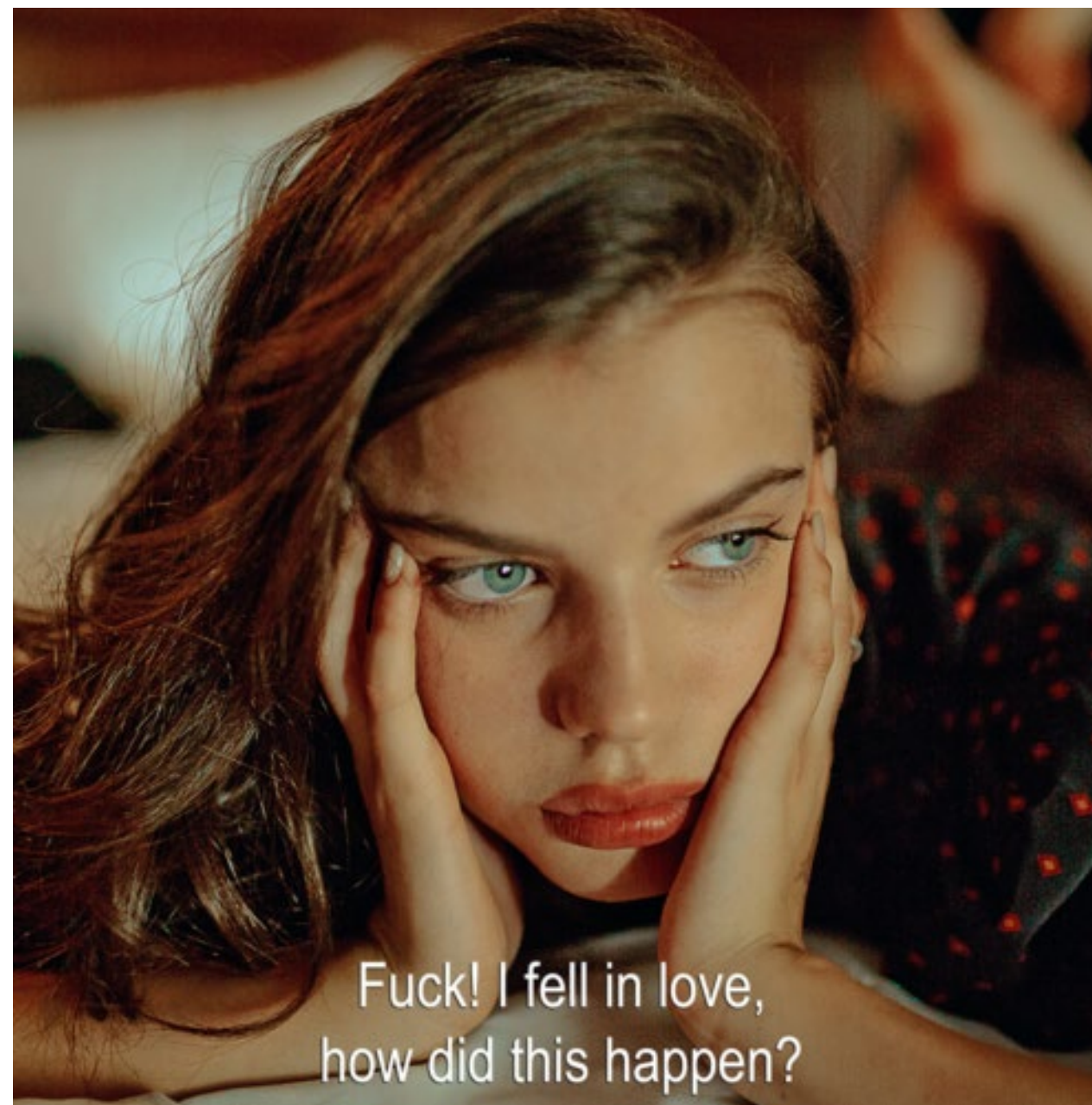
A_ **Why do you think your work has resonated so well with your audience, particularly on Instagram?**

S_ I think my art resonates because I produce work that is accessible and extremely relatable. My work is based on engaging honestly with the self, emotions and relationships, and a lot of people find my expression of these themes comforting and empowering. In some way, Instagram is like a shared visual diary or dream board, so aspirational ways of being can be posted as encouragement.

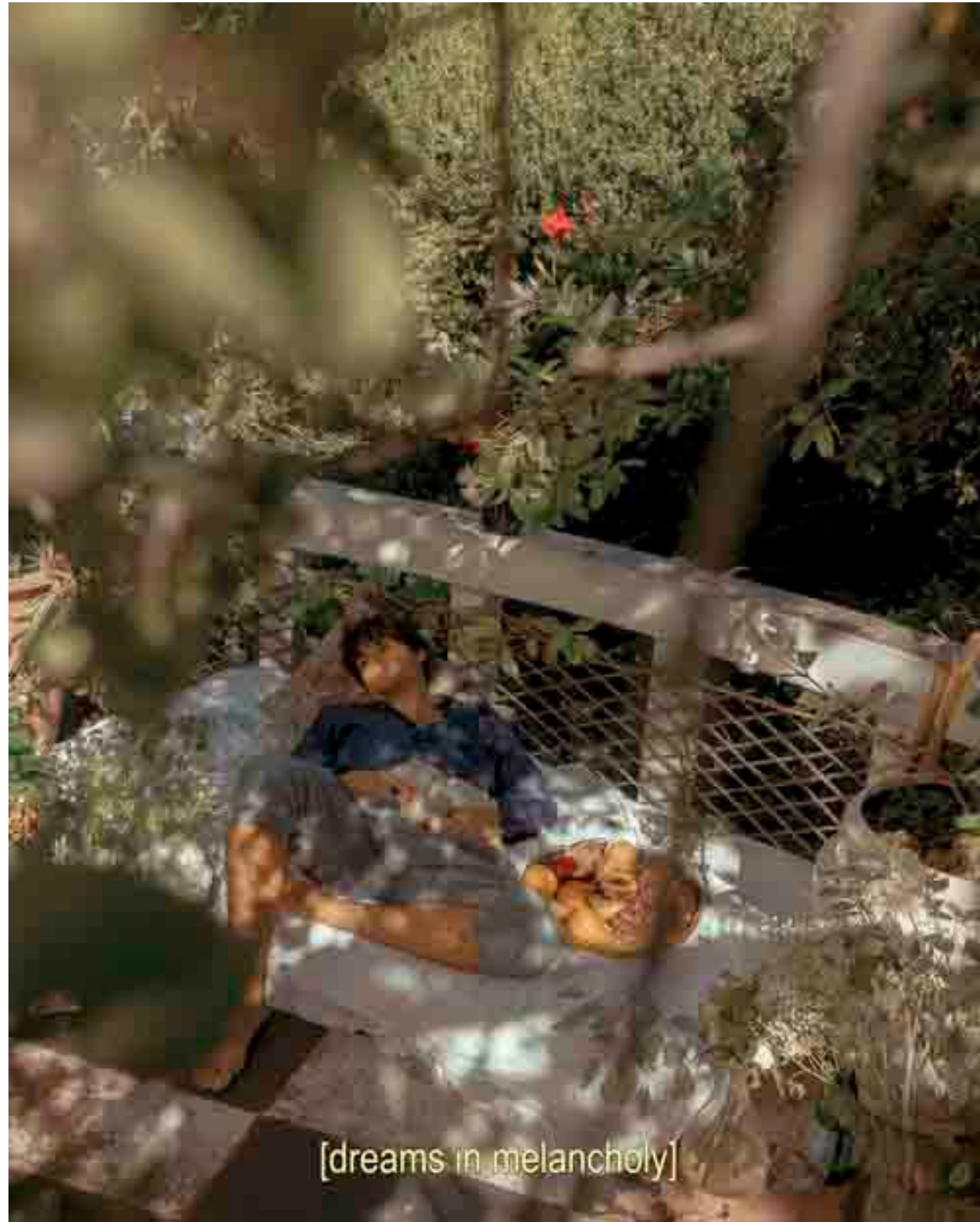
A_ I feel your aesthetic is like a photographic version of a graphic novel, or a series of film stills. Sometimes the expressions and close-ups remind me of Roy Lichtenstein illustrations. How did you arrive at combining text and images in this way?

S_ My style of photography has definitely been inspired by cinema. I am really drawn to foreign films because of the way I experience my interaction with them. While the beauty of foreign films are kept at bay because of cultural incompetence, the translated subtitles are an active attempt at understanding them. In my tumblr days, I was always captivated with screenshots and snippets of foreign films, and I found myself interpreting the subtitled images with my own narrations. That's when the idea occurred to me - how unique it would be to create a story that appears as film, but was in fact, a series of cinematic photographic stills. Paring subtitles with still images has been a powerful to personalize my work while still keeping the themes approachable and interactive.

- A- **What role does your Instagram account have in your career? Can you describe how your efforts or experiences on that platform translate into your client work and your artistic practice, or vice versa?**
- S- Instagram is what helped launch my career as a recognized artist. My first series *Sex and Takeout* received so much love on Instagram, and since then my audience and attention have kept growing. For this reason, I am still really active on Instagram, and I do frame my work to fit into the Instagram format, but I do this so I can stay connected and personable with my audience. The platform itself does not inform my practice or art.



© Sarah Bahbah from her series *I Love You Me Neither*



A_ Instagram provides an unmediated connection between the photographer and their audience. How have you found the experience of having such a large community that is invested in your work, right there on your phone? Has anything surprised you? Are there parts of that accessibility that you find challenging?*

S_ My relationship with Instagram is double-edged. On one side, I feel truly blessed to have an international community of people invested in my work and supportive of me. It has been a really incredible process to open up like this, and to be received so well. But on the other side, I am quite a guarded and introverted person. I am someone who regenerates by taking time out for themselves and turning inwards. What has been really challenging for me is being constantly present and "live." I am still learning to find the balance between these two seemingly contradictory worlds.

–Excerpt of an interview with Alana Holmberg



© Donato Dicamillo

Feedback & reviews

THE KEY TO GROWTH, CONNECTIONS
AND FINDING YOUR VOICE



© Mirjana Vrbaski

Hearing or reading another person's perspective on your work can be one of the best ways to further your photography, refine your approach, have your work seen, and connect with others in the industry.

Portfolio Reviews

Many photography-related events and festivals offer 20-minute portfolio review sessions for photographers to show their work to influential experts in the industry and gain valuable feedback. This is an excellent way to make in-person connections with people who can help you in your career.

Tip: Over prepare. Research the reviewers and determine which are the best fits for your work. Know a few questions you want to ask each reviewer. Present your portfolio professionally, in a manner that is easy to carry, open and show without hassle.

LensCulture Professional Reviews

Did you know that by entering a series of five or more single images in any of our awards, you can get a free written review of your submitted work? This is a unique opportunity for you to receive critical and constructive feedback on your photography from top photo editors, curators, publishers, gallerists, educators, critics, consultants, and other industry professionals.

"I definitely needed a review like this. It's exactly what I was looking for: a real critical, clever, and incredibly accurate review. You've enlightened me about my weak points, but instead of feeling hurt, it gave me the will and the acknowledgment to work on them and improve." Giulia Parisi

Connect with Your Community

Reach out to other photographers and arrange a time to specifically look at each other's work in person or online. Many other photographers are going through similar challenges to you. Sharing feedback and experiences with others can help you (and them!) move past creative blocks.

Tip: Not all feedback is helpful. Reach out to people you respect and trust to provide honest and constructive criticism. Be willing to show work in progress.

Professional Development Workshops

Keep an eye out for interesting workshops taking place near you. Some of the world's best photographers offer tailored week-long or weekend education experiences for small groups that include reviews of participant work.

Tip: Do your research. not all photographers make good teachers. Check reviews and talk with others who have participated before.

Mentoring

Many of the world's leading photographers mentor other photographers, whether that be through a formal, paid arrangement or a free exchange of feedback and ideas. Don't be afraid to email and ask.

Tip: Respect others' time. Be clear about what you are asking. Would you like a one-off review of your work, or an ongoing relationship? Online or in person? What are your goals for the mentorship?



© Polly Braden

“Since the LensCulture Portrait Awards, one of the photographs from my book ‘Great Interactions: Life with Learning Disabilities and Autism’, published by Dewi Lewis, won silver at the Royal Photographic Society.

After the LensCulture competition, the Guardian weekend magazine ran an 11-page spread on the work, and also included two dedicated photo galleries for the series. Additionally, David Company and I published a book called ‘Adventures in the Lea Valley’; that series was also published by the Guardian. I am now working with the arts organization MultiStory on a book and exhibition called ‘Fit to Plead’. It’s about people with learning disabilities and autism, specifically their journeys through the criminal justice system.”

POLLY BRADEN

LensCulture Portrait Awards 2016 - Jurors’ Pick



Get out of your head

INTERVIEW WITH NADAV KANDER

Nadav Kander shoots covers of some of the world's most important individuals. Though his style seems so clear and well-defined today, this apparent certainty only came with time, a journey he shares in this excerpt of an interview with LensCulture.

Cover image: Yibin I (Bathers, Sichuan Province. From the series "Yangtze, The Long River" © Nadav Kander. Courtesy Flowers Gallery.

Nadav Kander never received a university degree and attended no formal, aesthetic schooling. Rather, his autonomous pedagogy occurred at the beloved (and now long-gone) Zwemmer's, a bookshop on Charing Cross Road in London. Spending any spare money he had, he gradually built a library of inspiration that he continues to reference today.

"All the work I've ever seen that has sunk deep into me sits on my shoulders like a rolodex. I see something through my camera, or think about something, or start to print, and these images pop into my head: Edward Weston. Francis Bacon. Joel Sternfeld. Diane Arbus. Cindy Sherman. Hiroshi Sugimoto. Jeff Wall. Thomas Demand. John Deakin. Jan Saudek. Bill Brandt. Bill Henson.

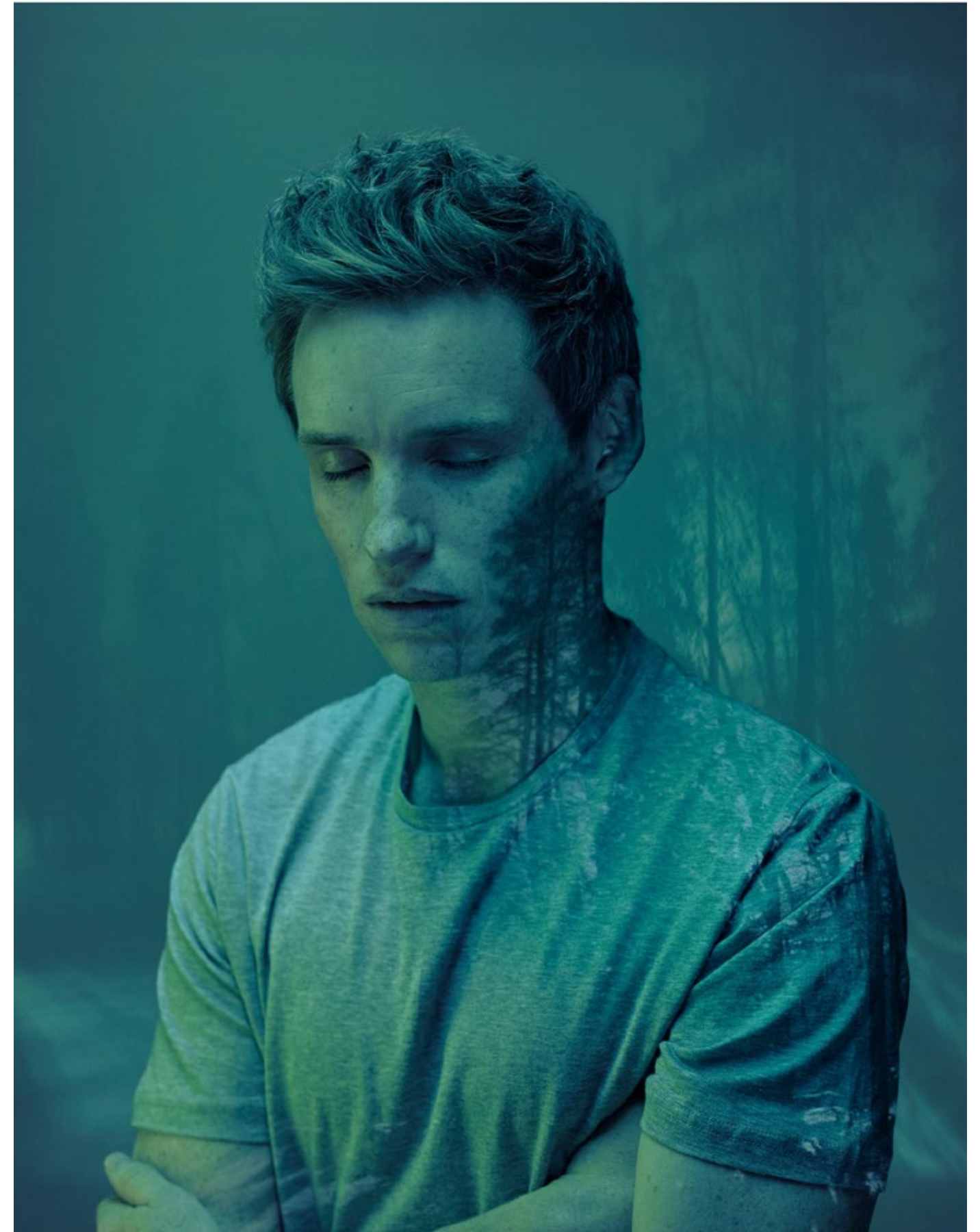
When this happens, I have to reckon with these figures and contend with their work. Do I move towards or away from a particular image, a certain influence?"

Kander recognizes that outside forces must be dealt with thoughtfully. Negotiating with truly dominant figures is one thing, but Kander suggests there is a more pernicious and increasingly unavoidable problem: the influence we feel from the images that are surrounding us every day, the constant visual bombardment we are receiving on a minute-to-minute basis.

“People don’t look deeply enough anymore because there’s too much to look at. Everyone is flipping, flipping, flipping. I don’t think we can absorb work of this level at such fantastic speeds.

“I don’t feel good when I see a whole bunch of work. I feel like I’m swimming in a dirty ocean. I need to be more mindful of what I’m doing and what is authentic to me. I do what I can to slow down. I carefully choose which galleries to visit. I remind myself that I don’t have to see everything. I try to stay true to myself.”

This adherence to mindfulness, and consideration in terms of how to spend one’s time, extends beyond what images Kander looks at. It also applies to the pace at which he makes his work.



Eddie Redmayne (Forest), 2016 © Nadav Kander. Courtesy Flowers Gallery.



Audrey with toes and wrist bent, 2011. From the series "Bodies. 6 Women, 1 Man" © Nadav Kander. Courtesy Flowers Gallery.

"When I give myself time, I create the space to ask myself questions: am I being too clever? Am I being too influenced by those around me—from market forces to gallery trends to the artists I've mentioned? I'm very conscious if something is taking me away. When I get taken away, something is lost. It's as if I don't like myself, as if I don't feel good about myself because I've allowed myself to be weakened by external forces. It means I haven't found that charge in the work."

To combat this compromised feeling that Kander describes, he arrives at his studio at 4 am each morning. There, he feels he can do all the things that keep him centered.

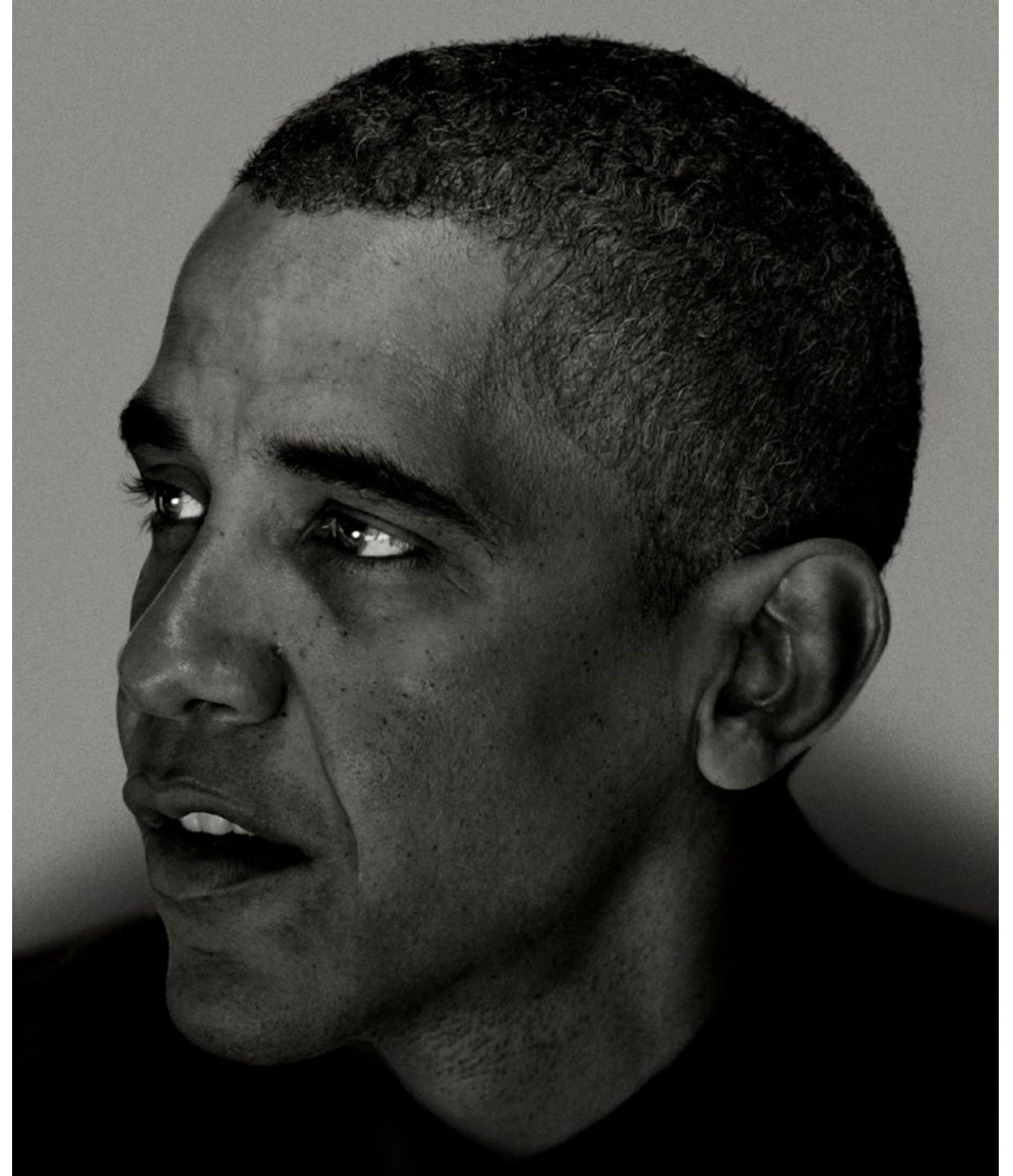
"I look at the work, I edit it, I think. These are the times that I can really center myself and be quiet. If I have three solid hours to focus, that's usually enough to get back on track."

With this image in mind, it's hard to imagine another, significant part of his life coexisting: at the eye of a hurricane known as a magazine photo shoot. Surprisingly, though, Kander considers these two environments not in tension or conflict, but in harmony.

"Making my own work, when it is really my own, is such an insular and lonely time. In contrast, I love working with people, collaborating with assistants, engaging with my subject, working under pressure. The two balance beautifully.

"I believe there's no difference in the end result. In every case, I'm looking for my viewer to be really excited by the image I have made. For the person and the picture to meet... We have wide tastes in what we look at—so why should we limit ourselves in the work we make?"

To maintain the energy for one's personal journey towards authentic self-expression, Kander's drive is one of the key ingredients. In fact, he doubts that people get discovered. Rather, those who fight to have their work seen are the ones that succeed.



Barack Obama I, 2009 © Nadav Kander. Courtesy Flowers Gallery.



Changxing Island III, Shanghai. From the series "Yangtze, The Long River" © Nadav Kander. Courtesy Flowers Gallery.

"Today, it's really hard to be seen among the unbelievable amount of popular imagery that is being shown these days. There are so many more opportunities than there once were, but it's never been harder to be seen with coherence and impact."

When Kander was starting out, the challenges were different. If photographers succeeded in being shown, it wasn't with the speed that images are being seen today, as a magazine spread or being profiled in a newspaper was a much slower vehicle than appearing on someone's phone.

"That's why I always tell young artists: print out your work. Don't just look on a screen all the time. Make your images tactile, move them around. Your work will become much more human as a result."

—Excerpt from a feature by Alexander Strecker

“I think above all, a photographer interested in a career in portraiture should be doing as much personal work as possible to fully develop their visual language. Feedback and exposure are also important, but having a clear photographic voice and an understanding of why you are shooting and what draws you to your subjects is even more essential.”

JENNIFER PASTORE
Director of Photography, Wall Street Journal





© Owen Harvey



© Claudio Rasano

03. INSPIRATION

Many photography projects grow from a spark of an initial idea, ignited from a personal experience, conversations in the zeitgeist, the work of another artist, or something else from the myriad of human experiences we encounter every day.

When you're stuck for an idea, or unsure how to visually approach a new idea, it can be helpful to dive into the work of others for inspiration.

In this chapter we've built a list of thought-provoking and varied resources to stir the portrait photographer within. Pour over stunning features on prize-winning projects from previous Portrait Awards, then make your way through our curated list of notable and interesting books, films and projects related to portraiture.



Project Spotlight

Randy

ROBIN DE PUY



One night in 2015, as she rode her motorcycle through the expansive Nevada landscape, Dutch photographer Robin de Puy stopped outside a casino in the small town of Ely. That evening she met Randy, a teenage boy who would become the subject and inspiration behind a powerful, long-term portrait series.

Cover Image: Randy #5524 © Robin de Puy.
Left: Randy #017101 © Robin de Puy. Top: Randy #017005 © Robin de Puy.



Left: Randy #017429 © Robin de Puy. Middle: Randy #029454 © Robin de Puy.
Image on the right: Randy #027826 © Robin de Puy.

Over the course of their friendship (three years and counting), de Puy created a raw, revealing portrait of American adolescence. The setting is sparse and unremarkable: an arid landscape punctuated by spindly towers, or a car's shiny, plasticky interior. Randy and his brothers cavort through this terrain, their wiry bodies and sharp, angular limbs stretching across the frame of de Puy's photographs. Randy himself is magnetic. The veracity (and intensity) of his emotions translate seamlessly from reality to image; rarely are we, as viewers, presented with a subject who is so vulnerable and unreserved.

—Coralie Kraft



“In the end I wanted to make this homage to Randy. All these pictures. All these films. I just want people to be overwhelmed by him, and hopefully fall in love a little bit. Actually, at this very moment, people are writing me letters or poetry or songs, only for Randy. And that’s pretty cool.”

- ROBIN DE PUY

Image left: Randy #1231 © Robin de Puy.
Top: Randy #8230 © Robin de Puy.
Bottom: Randy #028564 © Robin de Puy.



A person wearing a white headscarf with a black grid pattern is looking out from behind dark blue, vertically pleated curtains. The lighting is dramatic, with the person's face partially visible in profile against the dark background.

Project Spotlight

The Bombs They Carried

ADAM FERGUSON



Taken in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in Nigeria, these portraits feature young women who were forced to carry suicide bombs by Boko Haram, a militant Islamist group based in Nigeria. Captured by the militants at an early age (sometimes as young as 13), these girls were made to transport explosives in the hopes that they would carry out suicide bombing missions in busy urban areas. And yet, they survived.

Cover Image: Balaraba, age 20, stands for a portrait in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria on Sept. 22, 2017 © Adam Ferguson. Image left: Falmata, age 15, stands for a portrait in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria on Sept. 22, 2017 © Adam Ferguson. Top: Maimuma, age 14, stands for a portrait in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria on Aug. 29, 2017 © Adam Ferguson



Aisha, age 14, stands for a portrait in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria on Sept. 21, 2017 © Adam Ferguson

The New York Times commissioned Adam Ferguson to take portraits of these young women for an article about the horrific practice. To protect the identities of these young women, Ferguson obscured their faces in his photographs—some of them conceal their faces with thin fingers and others hide their eyes in the deep shadows surrounding their bodies. As single images, they are affecting. As a series, they cut to your core.

Ferguson's story was awarded first prize in People, Stories at the World Press Photo Awards, and an image from this series was nominated for the World Press Photo of the Year.

“I try to come up with an idea that acknowledges the subjects’ journey as something that intersects with the arc of history. I’m looking for an image that shows a facet of the sitter that can act as either a symbol or metaphor for this intersection. I always have an idea, a starting point, then the intuitive and unexpected unfolds.”

ADAM FERGUSON



Image left: Maimuna, age 16, stands for a portrait in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria on Sept. 21, 2017 © Adam Ferguson.

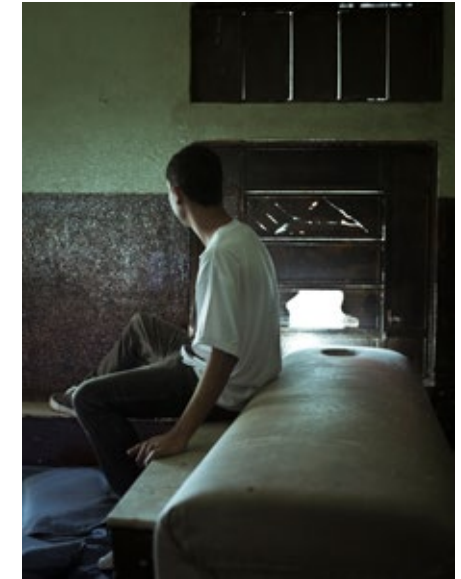
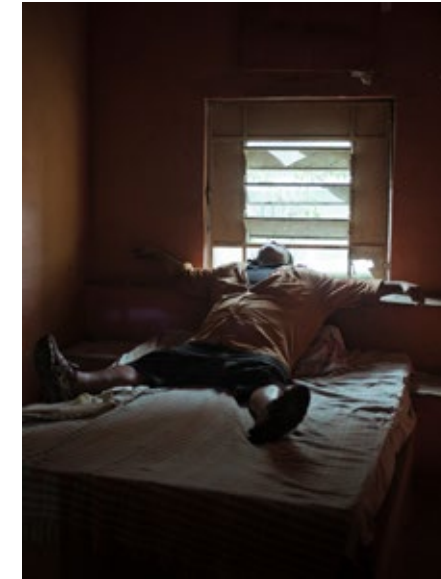
Right: Maryam, age 16, stands for a portrait in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria on Sept. 20, 2017 © Adam Ferguson.

A man is lying on his back on a patterned rug in a room with reddish-brown walls. He is wearing a white polo shirt with red and grey stripes and khaki shorts. He is looking up towards the ceiling. In the background, there is a window with horizontal blinds. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from the window.

Project Spotlight

Gentlemen's Club

CRISTINA DE MIDDEL



Traditional photographic and media coverage of prostitution has focused on only one half of the business. If aliens came to earth and tried to understand what prostitution is about, they would believe it is a business based on naked women staying in dirty rooms. With *Gentlemen's Club* I tried to give visibility to the other 50 percent.

Cover Image: Newton, 43 years © Cristina de Middel. Image left: Silvio, 28 years. © Cristina de Middel.

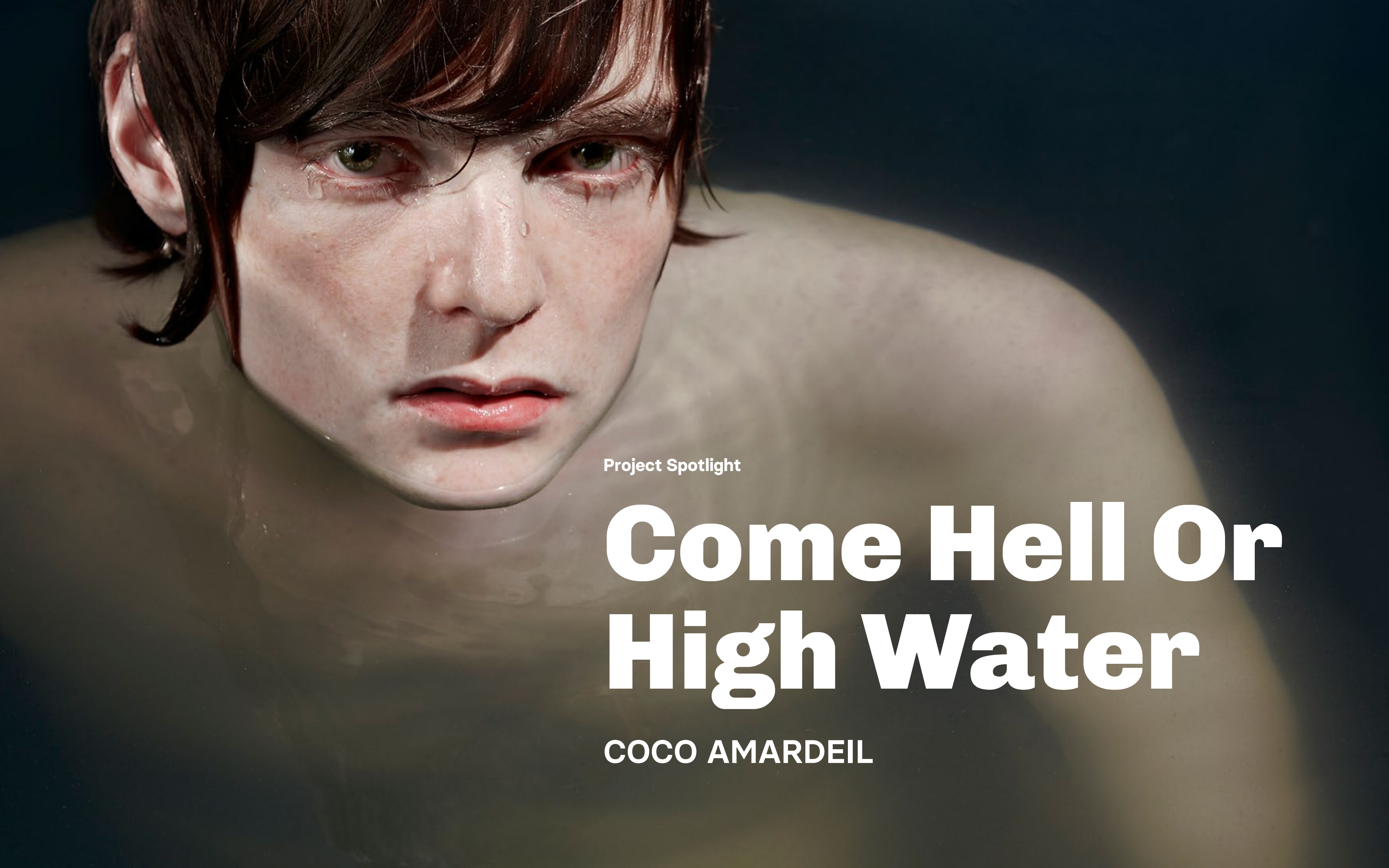
Top left: Luis prefers not to say how old he is © Cristina de Middel. Top Right: Marcus, 22 years old. © Cristina de Middel.



In June 2015, I put an advert in a newspaper in Rio de Janeiro asking for prostitutes' clients to pose for me in exchange for money. My intention was first to see who these people were, and to also invert the roles of the business, as the clients would be selling part of themselves. The response was massive. This is a selection of the men who accepted the deal.



Image left: Charles © Cristina de Middel. Image top: Maginô, 46 © Cristina de Middel.
Image right: Luis prefers not to say how old he is © Cristina de Middel.



Project Spotlight

Come Hell Or High Water

COCO AMARDEIL



The youth of today live in a time where uncertainty about the future—fuelled by a distrust of politics, institutions and the media—has reached epic proportions.

The mass of contradictions created by past generations has left them with a lot of grey areas. As a result, they are overcome with apprehension and anxiety about their place in a confused and changing world—a world without any reliable points of reference and a thousand different forms of violence.

Cover Image: Antoine © Coco Amardeil. Image left: Ana © Coco Amardeil. Image top: Theo © Coco Amardeil

It is this moment in life, a time of soul-searching and self-discovery, that I wanted to capture through this series of portraits. This generation—the generation that will make up the world of tomorrow without having much of an idea of where they are going or what they want—is just trying to keep their heads above the sea of stimuli that surrounds them.



Image top: Aske © Coco Amardeil.
Image bottom: Camilla © Coco Amardeil.

Book recommendations

AUGUST SANDER: PERSECUTED/ PERSECUTORS, PEOPLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY (2018)

Featuring images, contact prints, letters and more, this new book shows specific chapters of *People of the 20th Century*, August Sander's life work that paints a photographic portrait of German society under the Weimar Republic.

DEANA LAWSON: APERTURE MONOGRAPH (2018)

Embracing the black body as the central feature in her work, portrait photographer Deana Lawson upholds domestic scenarios as magical environments, emboldening her subjects to be comfortable in their own skin as they pose in front of her camera.

DIANE ARBUS: AN APERTURE MONOGRAPH (2012)

Universally acknowledged as a photobook classic, "Diane Arbus: An Aperture Monograph" is a timeless masterpiece with editions in five languages, and remains the foundation of her international reputation.

FAZAL SHEIKH, LADLI (2007)

An award-winning book published by Steidl focusing on the situation of young women living in India.

MARY ELLEN MARK ON THE PORTRAIT AND THE MOMENT (APERTURE, 2015)

Learn about Mary Ellen Mark's creative process for portraiture, covering issues such as gaining trust, taking pictures that are controlled but unforced, and compelling composition.

Book recommendations

MIKE DISFARMER, THE HEBER SPRINGS PORTRAITS, 1939-1946

A fascinating collection of studio portraits of the townspeople of Heber Springs, Arkansas.

NAN GOLDIN: THE BALLAD OF SEXUAL DEPENDENCY (2014)

An emotive and confronting visual diary chronicling the struggles for intimacy and understanding among the friends and lovers of Nan Goldin. First published in 1983, this monumental work remains relevant today.

PIETER HUGO, THERE'S A PLACE IN HELL FOR ME & MY FRIENDS (2012)

A series of close-up portraits of the artist and his friends, all of whom call South Africa home.

READ THIS IF YOU WANT TO TAKE GREAT PHOTOGRAPHS OF PEOPLE (2015)

This practical book features technical tips as well as starting points for those new to the genre. Readers are given practical insights into the ideas and techniques of a wide range of historical and contemporary photographers.

ZANELE MUHOLI: SOMNYAMA NGONYAMA, HAIL THE DARK LIONESSE (2018)

This monograph by Aperture features over ninety of Muholi's evocative self-portraits, each image drafted from material props in Muholi's immediate environment.

WILLIAM EGGLESTON PORTRAITS (2016)

This book features Eggleston's masterful portraits, including the artist's first color photograph. There are many other familiar and beloved images as well as some previously unseen photographs from his long and productive career.

Film recommendations

WHAT REMAINS: THE LIFE AND WORK OF SALLY MANN (2006)

One of America's more remarkable photographers uncovers the details of her life and creative process as she begins working on a photo series on death and decay.

RICHARD AVEDON, ON DARKNESS AND LIGHT (1995)

Helen Whitney's documentary film about an artist who revolutionized the very concept of fashion photography.

ABSTRACT: THE ART OF DESIGN: EP 7 PLATON (2017)

Part of a Netflix Original Series, this episode follows portrait photographer Platon, giving an insight into his unique studio shooting and printing process.

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ: LIFE THROUGH A LENS (2007)

An American Masters documentary about celebrated portrait photographer Annie Leibovitz, through the eyes of subjects including Whoopi Goldberg, Kiera Knightly, Mick Jagger and more.

GUEST OF CINDY SHERMAN (2008)

Cindy Sherman talks about being the master of disguise through her photography role-playing, and delivers an intimate look at her artistic methods.

THE WOODMANS (2010)

A peek into the life of Francesca Woodman, a young photographer known for her self-portraits and photos of other women, usually nude.

Film recommendations

CHEVOLUTION (2008)

A documentary about the famous portrait Cuban photographer Alberto Diaz made of Che Guevara, one of the most recognizable snapshots in photography.

NAN GOLDIN - I REMEMBER

YOUR FACE (2014)

Documentary filmmaker Sabine Lidl observes photographer Nan Goldin through interactions with the friends who became her subjects.

Portrait Projects

ANASTASIA TAYLOR-LIND

Stay

ANYA MIROSHNICHENKO

Ana loves you

ALICE MANN

Drummies

ALMA HASAR

Cosmic Surgery

ATONG ATEM

Self-Portraits

BIEKE DEPOORTER

Night Walks With Agata

CLAUDIO RASANO

South Africa Everyone Live
In The Same Place Like Before
Black White &

DANA LIXENBERG

Imperial Courts (2003 - 2015)

DELPHINE BLAST

Cholitas, the revenge
of a generation

EMILY BURL

Marilyn

ERICA NYHOLM

We are Temporary Reality

HUMANS OF NEW YORK

HARUKA SAKAGUCH

The Original New Yorkers

HENDRIK KERSTENS

Paula: Silent Conversations

Portrait Projects

HODA ASHFAR

Under Western Eyes

INGVAR KENNE

Citizen & New Citizen (from 2012)

JR

Inside Out

KATERINA KALOUDI

Genogram

KREMER JOHNSTON

Craigslist Encounters

LISE SAFARTI

She

LI KEJUN

The Good Earth

JONO ROTMAN

Mongrelism

MASSIMO GIOVANNINI

HENKO Variable Light

MEDINA DUGGER

Chroma: An Ode to J.D. Okhai
Ojeikere

OLIVIA ARTHUR

Jeddah Diary

PIETER HUGO

1994

PIXY YIJUN LIAO

Experimental Relationship

RAPHAELA ROSELLA

You Didn't Take Away My Future,
You Gave Me A New One

VASANTHA YOGANANTHAN

A Myth of Two Souls:
Hand Painted Photographs



© Medina Dugger

LensCulture is one of the most popular and far-reaching resources for discovering the best in contemporary photography around the world.

We believe that recognition and exposure are key for photographers of all levels to move forward creatively and professionally. Our mission is to help photographers succeed and, after nearly 15 years, we're proud to offer career-changing opportunities alongside advice, inspiration and recommendations through our awards, online magazine and free guides like the one you've just read.

**Go on, get out there
and make remarkable
portraits.**

lensculture.com

