

FOCUS FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

**AN ECLECTIC COLLECTION OF
CREATIVE EXCELLENCE.**

**DUNCAN CARATACUS CLARK
HAS CURATED A COLLECTION
OF FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHS FOR
IMAGE WITH DILIGENCE, FLAIR
AND AN INTERNATIONAL REACH.**

Over a long period researching the fine art photography field and its practitioners, I have sought through my perfectionism to find an established single universally accepted definition for this ever-evolving field. The more I tried to grasp and constrain, the more it evaporated in front of me, leaving a sense of overwhelming frustration, and anxiety. Perhaps it is easier to define what it's not, rather than what we think it to be, maybe it is like a weaving country lane at dusk, where the surface changes with every mile progressed and we stumble forward seeking understanding, swaying from side to side avoiding the rough, muddy verges and overgrowing bushes in case we step into terrain where we lack confidence and where menacing shadows lurk.

We can look to leading writers, galleries and artists to assist us in this search, with their guiding torch in hand, hoping that with their greater experience and confident rhetoric that they will lead us into a more enlightened and informed appreciation, perhaps even becoming guides of the medium ourselves.

With this in mind I sought to present *Image* magazine with artworks from a collection of artists from around the world with differing artistic cultures, in the hope that in some way they would present the diversity of the medium and its terrain with all its form, texture and details. Let me take you on a journey...

To begin, I have chosen an Argentinean artist Mumi Trabucco, based in Japan, after coming across her work by chance on the arts networking site, artmesh.org. I was struck by the nostalgic and childlike fun of her body of work *Pleasure Palaces*, and the romanticism conjured up by her use of traditional black & white photography and the pinhole camera.

Pleasure Palaces, Hanayashiki
Amusement Park, Asakusa, Tokyo
© Mumi Trabucco

Mumi Trabucco grew up in Buenos Aires, Argentina and trained as a translator, before moving to Sendai in Japan where she lived until 1995. She returned to Argentina to study photography and contemporary art, before again returning to Tokyo in 2002. The featured image is from the body of work Pleasure Palaces taken using 35mm negative and a pinhole camera. The photographs are printed traditionally to a size of 11" x 14", as fibre based Silver Gelatin prints to archival standards and are limited to 25 editions. www.mumitrabucco.com



From Japan my focus of interest swung to Switzerland where I chose to feature the humourous work of Walter Pfeiffer who will be exhibiting a retrospective titled *In Love with Beauty* at the renowned photography gallery Fotomuseum Winterthur. I am not familiar with his work but I look forward to researching this artist further.

From the exhibition *In Love with Beauty*, 29 Nov-15 Feb, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland
© Walter Pfeiffer 2004

Walter Pfeiffer was born in Beggingen north of Zurich, Switzerland in 1946. After four decades as an underground artist he is now attracting international prominence. Fotomuseum Winterthur will be presenting a chronological summary of his work from this period with previously unpublished artworks that will provide a new enlightening perspective. Pfeiffer worked as a graphic designer, painter and draughtsman and through his use of photography for the preparation of his drawings, he developed a life long passion for the medium. In the early 1970s he began to develop his own trademark style of eroticism and wit and his interest in timeless beauty and fashion. He came to prominence in 1974 as part of exhibition titled *Transformer – Aspekte der Travestie* by Jean-Christophe Amman. He published his first book in 1981 titled *Walter Pfeiffer*. For the rest of the decade his interest fell upon the concept of male beauty and he produced a body of portraits of simple elegance titled *Das Auge, die Gedanken, unentwegt wandernd*. During the early 90s he concentrated again on his drawing, returning to photography later on in the decade and in 2001 he published the book *Welcome Aboard*, a collection of his earlier and most recent work. An exhibition catalogue of *In Love with Beauty* will be published by Steidl. Curators: Martin Jaeggi and Thomas Seelig.

www.fotomuseum.ch



Recently I met with the artists Emma Critchley and Sophie Lewis who were exhibiting their work at the Terry O'Neill Awards presentation evening in Fulham Palace. I was immediately struck by these underwater portraits with their enchantment and ethereal nature. The project *Fear of Falling* for me held a reassuring resonance with the Victorian painter John Singer Sargent.

The Fear of Falling.
© Emma Critchley & Sophie Lewis

The Fear of Falling is a series of timeless, life-size underwater portraits that invite new ways to consider the profound experience of submergence. Exploring our changing relationship to the present moment while immersed, the subject moves away from the ethereal and floaty imagery usually associated with water and offers a more grounded and weighted sense of being.

www.thefearoffalling.com



In serendipitous fashion this conveniently leads me to the work of Norwegian photographer Inger-Lise Garli whose work also plays with the enveloping mystery of water.

Man of Miracles
© Inger-Lise Garli

"I have produced quite a number of photographs underwater in the Oslo-Fjord particularly at two different locations. One of them is a place called 'Verdens Ende' which means 'The End of the World'. It's a beautiful place by the ocean down at Tjøme, about two hours drive from the city of Oslo. The other location I have chosen is in the ocean just in front of Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (Henie Onstad Art Centre) which is one of Norway's most famous Art Centres." I-LG

Returning across the dark North Sea to dock in London again we find ourselves in the affluent borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the Michael Hoppen Gallery. Early in 2009 the gallery will be hosting an exhibition by the Dutch artist Scarlett Hooft Graafland titled *You Winter, let's get divorced*. This body of work with its delightful alchemy, blends performance, sculpture and photography. I am very much looking forward to this exhibition and I look forward to seeing you there.

Lemonade Igloo and Journey from You Winter, let's get divorced exhibiting at Michael Hoppen Gallery, London 5 Feb- 29 Mar.
© Scarlett Hooft Graafland

In this new series, You Winter, let's get divorced, Dutch artist Scarlett Hooft Graafland successfully combines straight photographic practice with performance and sculpture. The resulting work is delightful – visually engaging yet constantly referring to a more profound cultural discourse. Using a surrealist language of intriguing visual jokes, Hooft Graafland wittily alludes to her anthropological interests and environmental concerns. For You Winter, let's get divorced, she spent four months living in Igloolik in the northern reaches of Canada. The beauty of the harsh natural landscape with its infinite snow and ice forms Scarlett's canvas and playground. Although her concerns are serious, Scarlett's childlike palette and informed wit are intrinsic to her work. Bold colour, incongruous objects and local folklore are combined to create an individualistic take on themes such as cultural integrity, domesticity, as well as the dire environmental issues facing the region. Her diptych, from which the show takes its title You Winter, let's get divorced, was inspired by the words of an old Inuit poem, which describes how isolation and alienation caused by long term exposure to the bleak landscape and endless dark begin to affect the Inuit, and to experience warmth and light becomes necessity. Scarlett herself was not immune. "I did not spend the full winter months up there... but even during the four months I spent in Igloolik I started to long for friendlier weather, to see some colour again, flowers, moss, birds."

www.michaelhoppencontemporary.com



From Chelsea we race through the streets of London across town to the studio of Blaize Simon in Bow where we find the artist at work drawing on the paneled photographic montage pieces that make up his latest project. These six foot tall artworks are again produced from the crucible of creativity, layer upon layer of imagery and meaning. The artworks that are stretched over a bold wooden frame use portraits from his early career as a fashion photographer, reworked and then mounted onto translucent paper, drawn upon and then lacquered. I like the freedom of expression and the confidence the artist displays with his work.

The Human Body Narrative
© Blaize Simon

London-born artist Blaize Simon began taking photographs at 15 and he has travelled internationally, including Nigeria and Cuba, to perfect his art. Known particularly for his trademark hand printed, black & white Polaroid images his work has ranged from fashion portrait and music to reportage.

His work has adorned the covers and pages of a raft of contemporary fashion, lifestyle and art magazines, such as Dazed and Confused, Vibe, Arude magazine, Untold and MixMag and he also worked in close partnership with Terry Jones for ID magazine. He has exhibited consistently in London and New York with commissions including works for several household name celebrities.

www.blaizesimon.co.uk



I have purposely not sought to offer critical analysis of the before mentioned artists' work nor have I sought to find what some may say are the leading artists of our age, as I will leave this for you and others to fight over.

And so there the exhilarating short journey ends, a whistle stop tour of contemporary international photography practice... thank you for your company. Duncan Caratacus Clark.



“We get sent faxes of shoot layouts – diagrams, and the client asks us to help figure out how to light it. We say ‘come in, we’ll set up a demo in our studio or car park, you can test the effect before you shoot’. It’s handy because we’ve got the space and all the kit in the warehouse – everything’s right there. Last year we lit a night shoot with a very famous footballer in Manchester. The photographer took me through what he wanted and then together we just figured it out. We ended up sorting the whole job for him and it was massive. Ninety five tonne crane in a football pitch with two hundred kilowatts generator and two dozen Profoto flash packs dangling from it fifty feet in the air! Electricians, truss riggers, crane operators... we crewed the lot.

That one we couldn’t have demo’d in the carpark! But tell you what: if we can do that, we can do anything... big or small: we’re ready for it.”

Steve Knight, Director

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