

Printagram

Alright Chef!
Portraits of top
chefs at work



Featuring guest
article by Jeremy
Smith

The magazine of Douglas Kurn, photographer



Douglas Kurn photographer



What's your Story?



Douglas Kurn is a location based photographer who creates environmental portraits and uses reportage photography to provide a strong visual narrative that underlines his client's message. Mostly working with real people Douglas quickly puts them at ease to capture engaging, dynamic images that are used in corporate reports, on websites, in brochures, across social media and on advertising boards.

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Behind the scenes in one of Compass's many kitchens.

Alright Chef!

pg. **19**

Chefs are behind the scenes characters, often hidden away in hot busy kitchens.

Compass Group commissioned Douglas Kurn to bring their executive chefs to the fore, by creating portraits and capturing them at work.

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First Frame



Grab yourself a cuppa and take a few minutes out to have a look through this inaugural, not so instant, magazine, which I hope you'll enjoy. Please feel free to share it with colleagues, or if you want to keep it for yourself, point them in the direction of my website, where a PDF version is available for download.

If the magazine format isn't instant enough you can always check out my blog, or see what I am up to on Instagram.

Welcome to this first issue of

Printagram, my sporadic and randomly released magazine. I'll be honest, like many of my ideas, it was conceived one evening over a bottle of red wine.

This début issue is a collection of features about various photo shoots, both commissioned and personal work. The keen eyed amongst you might notice that several of these shoots have appeared on my blog, for which I make no excuse other than it was a very convenient way of quickly putting the magazine together, before my Cabernet induced enthusiasm wore off.

I am hoping that it will be so well received that I have to do it again and I have some ideas for diversifying the content to include more historical features but, like processing film (remember that?) you can't rush these things.

So what's in this issue? Chefs, athletes, journalists, guns and trips to the seaside. I was also presented with an opportunity to photograph an artist's house shortly after she sadly passed away, but before the house she had lived in for over 60 years was sold. Take a look at page 11 onwards, and see a truly eccentric home.

If you enjoy this issue please do let me know as that may give me the impetus to do it again.

Douglas Kurn
Photographer

Going Backwards Fast

Behind the scenes with elite athletes, and enthusiast rowers



Rowers heading out at sunrise

No, that's not a comment on the recent political shenanigans; it's a reference to my latest project, where I try to understand why a group of people get up at 5am and go rowing in the dark – backwards.

I've been spending time at Molesey Boat Club in Surrey photographing the rowers and coaches as they set about their training programs. The club consists of elite athletes and top drawer enthusiast rowers; the elite athletes are there daily, rowing, working out and consuming

bucket loads of calories. The enthusiasts have to fit rowing around their daily lives, which brings me to The Breakfast Club, as they are known at MBC. These are a group of individuals who get up at 5am and head out on the water for a training session – all before breakfast. As they often row in teams of 2, 4 or 8 having a sneaky lie in doesn't make you any friends. In the winter it is pitch black at 5am (not to mention freezing cold) and they

row backwards in to dark nothingness. When they get back off the water a couple of hours later they head off to work.

Before you ask, yes I went out on the water with the Breakfast Club; admittedly I had to wait for the Spring/Summer seasons to arrive so I had some light (honest – it was all about the light; nothing to do with it being freezing cold and having to be still in a boat close to water on exposed rivers!)

Before I started this project I imagined that

there would be a lot of individual rowers going out on their own (sculling as I learnt it's called), but in reality there are mostly teams and I was struck by the camaraderie of the rowers – even first thing in the morning. As to why they get up at 5am and go rowing backwards, I'm still in the dark...

“ When they get back off the water a couple of hours later they head off to work. ”



- 1** Arran, on the banks of the River Thames at Molesey in Surrey.
- 2** Lucy at Molesey Boat Club in the Tank Room
- 3** Jens, preparing to go sculling on the Thames
- 4** Ben, in his Superman hat one cold winter's morning.
- 5** Sam, inside the boathouse, looking "bad ass" (his words!).





The M25 Motor Wey

Thirty years living on a long boat beneath Britain's busiest motorway



Above: Chas, next to his boat with the M25 above him

Opposite, inside the long boat



I am often asked where I find my subjects for some of my personal portraits; the answer is simple - if I see someone interesting I go up and ask them!

Take Chas for instance; I have regularly cycled passed his long boat on the Wey Navigation just underneath the M25 motorway bridge, and often thought he would probably make a great subject, but the problem was his boat was on the other side of the canal so it was difficult to make contact with him.

So in the end I had to use a well known aerial map app to find a way of driving to his mooring (It's not easy) and then went and knocked on his gate (it's a secure mooring) and asked if he would let me photograph him.

Now when I say he lives under the M25 I mean it; that's the M25 bridge crossing the water just behind him in the photograph on page 8. Chas has lived there since the 80's and has a photograph of the bridge straddling the canal but without being attached to the main carriageway when the M25 was being built.

I asked Chas how he managed to stand the noise, and he replied that you get used to it; in fact you notice when it goes quiet, so Chas will pick up the phone and report an accident on the M25 to the police! I must admit that I stopped being aware of the noise after a couple of hours photographing Chas.

This is the first in a series of posts about the stories behind the shots. You can find more by selecting the Life With A Lens category on my blog.

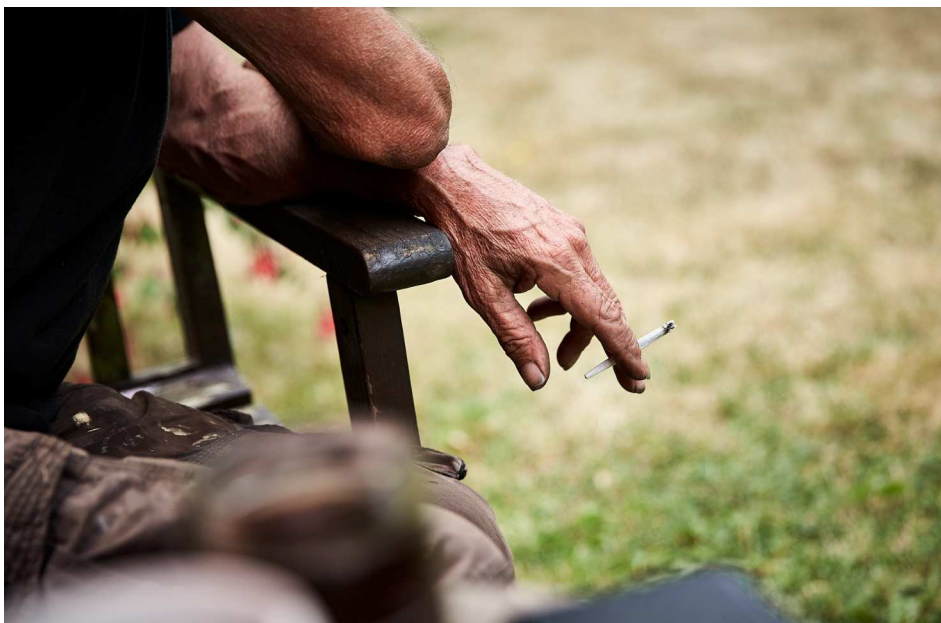


Mick, one of the other boat owners on the moorings under the M25



“

*Now when I say
he lives under the
M25 I mean it...*



A Potter's Place

A journey through Brickfields, a house with a treasure trove of art



“ Oh, and she had a collection of kitchen graters and grinders too!

With age, art and life become one



Hand painted clogs in the blue room

At the end of last year I had been hoping to photograph potter Mary Wondrausch OBE in Brickfields, her fabulous home for over 60 years. Sadly Mary passed away on Boxing Day, before I could photograph her, but her family were keen for me to try and capture her spirit in her home; she made all the curtains and fabrics and had hand painted the walls, doors and ceilings as only an artist would.

Brickfields was furnished with pottery and art, both made by herself and collected from other artists down the years. Oh, and she

had a collection of kitchen graters and grinders too!

Brickfields was in a permanent state of restoration and was anything but symmetrical which made getting the verticals upright really quite challenging, and those of you who know me will be aware of the issues I was having with that!

There was so much stuff in every room (although she never had a TV) that it was difficult to know where to start (or where to finish) so I left everything pretty much undisturbed

whilst I worked my around Brickfields. Mary's final piece of art, which she was working on to get completed for her exhibition in Watts Gallery in Compton, Surrey was still on it's easel in her daylight studio.

Although I never met Mary I do feel as though I know something about her and her zest for life. On her studio door were written the words: "With age, art and life become one", and that, I would say, summarised Mary perfectly.







The living room at Brickfields, where there never was a television.



Mary's last painting on the easel in her daylight studio.



The blue bedroom



The kitchen with pots and pans and a lovely old dresser.

The Picture That Changed My Life

Guest article by Jeremy Smith

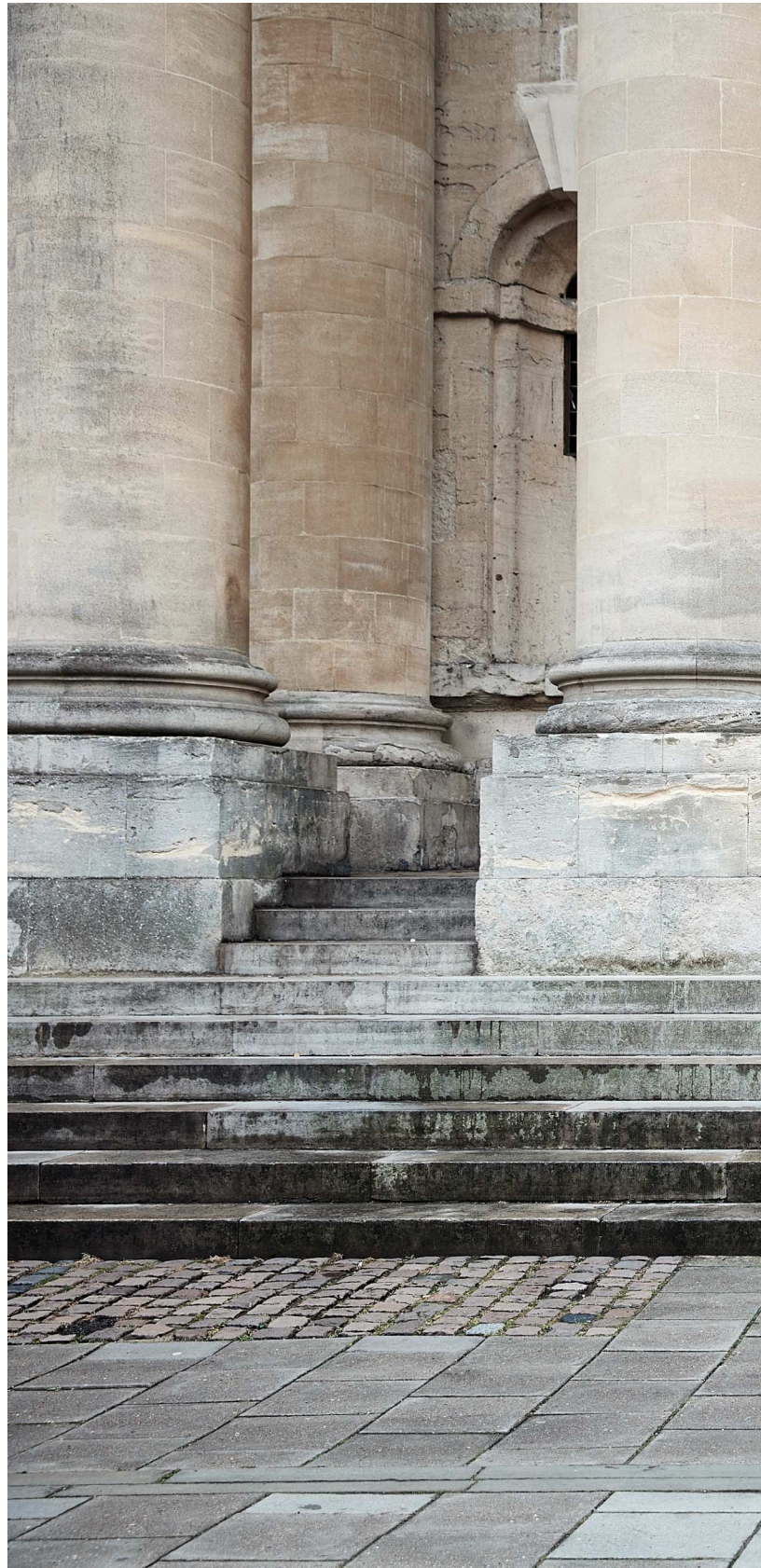
The following 10 performers, scientists, artists and political icons have all been famously defined by a single, iconic image: Albert Einstein, Raquel Welch, James Dean, Betty Grable, Jim Morrison, Marilyn Monroe, Che Guevara, Farrah Fawcett, Audrey Hepburn and Salvador Dali.

Think of Monroe and you can immediately visualise her standing across a ventilation grate, her dress blowing up. Think of Hepburn and she has a cigarette holder perched elegantly in her fingers, and think of Albert Einstein and he's playfully sticking out his tongue. You may not be familiar with all these individuals' fame or achievements, but you will, undoubtedly, be familiar with these portraits.

Why? Because these are pictures that define so much more (a whole universe more in fact) than the two-dimensional profiles they present. I, thank god, am neither famous nor, sadly, an outstanding talent, but I do share something in common with these icons of science, art, cinema and music: I have a photograph. In my case, a photograph that embodies a microsecond of existence yet also a whole lifetime of success, failure, ignorance, enlightenment and resurrection. It was taken in June of 2016 and has, quite simply, changed my life.

There is great speculation, yet its precise inspiration remains obscure. Not that it especially matters: "a picture is worth a thousand words" simply endures as one of life's great truisms. But until June 2016 it held little personal relevance. It was a Monday morning, and save for the fact the sky was blue and a slight chill lingered in the air, it was ordinary. I was about to be photographed and sporting a wardrobe I had spent more than a week clinically appraising. Not that it was a fashion shoot or anything so alluring. Just a shoot of me attempting to own, rather agreeably, my recent disability.

WRITTEN BY **JEREMY SMITH**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DOUGLAS KURN**





JEREMY SMITH *outside the Bodleian Library on Oxford.*

“

I remember every breath of that early revelation and like many revelations and life-changing moments today, it came via email. And what I saw made me cry.

In my head, of course, I envisaged it as infinitely more profound: a statement, if you will, of everything I had fought to overcome since falling so gracelessly 18 months earlier. You see, the slip, the trip, the tumble of 40 feet which had left my frame so scrambled had left me wheelchair-bound (and that, trust me, was an unimaginable bonus – it had looked for many months as if I might remain bed-ridden). But I didn't, I'd persevered and I was proud of what I'd achieved. But 'proud' perhaps in a way that was slightly atypical. I hadn't wanted to use sport to redefine my rehabilitation, as so many spinal injury patients do. I wanted to use attitude, and I don't mean defiantly or grittily. What I wanted to do was nail my colours to the mast sartorially.

Even I wasn't sure exactly what that meant. Spinning in my head since the early weeks of my trauma was the (doubtless morphine-induced) sense that my journey to recovery was to be as aesthetic as physical. Yet I couldn't then (nor do 16 months later) crystallise what that meant. It was just intuitiveness without form or substance. However, on this particular morning I had been more doubtful than excited. I had explained to photographer Douglas Kurn the 'statement' I was after (and yes, I now cringe at how pretentious I must have sounded). He in turn had simply acknowledged my grand ambition by readying the location (Oxford's Bodleian Library) and appraising my physical prowess. Clearly, I could stand but for seconds rather than minutes. And to complicate matters even further, I wanted to cross my legs. I think we both knew from a clinical perspective that it was unwise but I was adamant it would pictorially translate as 'rakish' and felt buoyed by my outlandishly arrogant percipience. And so it was after several false starts, spasms and near falls that Douglas's camera came alive.

Naturally, my perpendicular fragility allowed for a window of maybe only a few seconds, but within such a constrained time frame, Douglas invented, initiated and improvised blurrily. I'm guessing this shot took only 10 minutes from start to finish and although quietly confident about the result I expected, I was depressed too by the sudden, all too apparent naivety of my design. After all, how could I hope that such an everyday morning could be transformed into something so visceral and life-affirming?

Indeed, that is how sceptical I remained. Not cynical or pessimistic, but frustrated and impotent by the sheer folly of what seemed such an illusory goal. Heck, if I couldn't put into words the sense of what I so desperately wanted to project, how could I expect Douglas to capture it? Not that I had long to wait...

I remember every breath of that early revelation and like many revelations and life-changing moments today, it came via email. And what I saw made me cry. Openly and unapologetically. It was me alright, but as I'd dreamt me – stylish, savvy and oh-so-chipperly defiant. And today, almost 10 months on, it still makes me cry. Appropriately, there are no words that can capture my joy.

Pictures? Yes. Plenty of them, which explosively chart the recapturing of dreams, hopes, and faith (in me). But none that will ever match this one, defining millisecond out of 475,000 (approx.) grasped, lived, and wasted hours. Douglas Kurn's photograph quite simply embodies the best of me. It's truer and more honest than any epitaph (one doesn't even need to look closely to see the vanity, the arrogance, the childlike dream to better myself), and for that I will always be eternally grateful.



Alright Chef!

A wander through kitchens in and around London



I learnt recently that if you have run your own restaurant you've earned the right to be called "chef" by your peers – it's a matter of respect; even if it is a bit confusing in a kitchen full of "chefs", with each duly calling the others "Chef"!

Why was I surrounded by culinary creators? It was a commission for Compass Group who were completely revamping their

corporate website, and they needed new portraits of their top executive chefs.

For a few days my nostrils were filled with the aroma of spicy, tangy and sweet food, and my stomach rumbled and growled, as we travelled to various kitchens in and around London, setting up lights and trying to stay out the way of the very busy kitchen staff.

I'm guessing the lack of Gordon Ramsay-esque profanities hurled in our direction meant that we managed it, or maybe they were just too busy to care!

I managed to get some tips on how to pan fry salmon (dry it first and put in a hot pan if you're interested). I also learnt that doing the cooking at home doesn't earn you the right to be called chef.....



Plating up is an important part of the presentation





I Saw On The Seashore

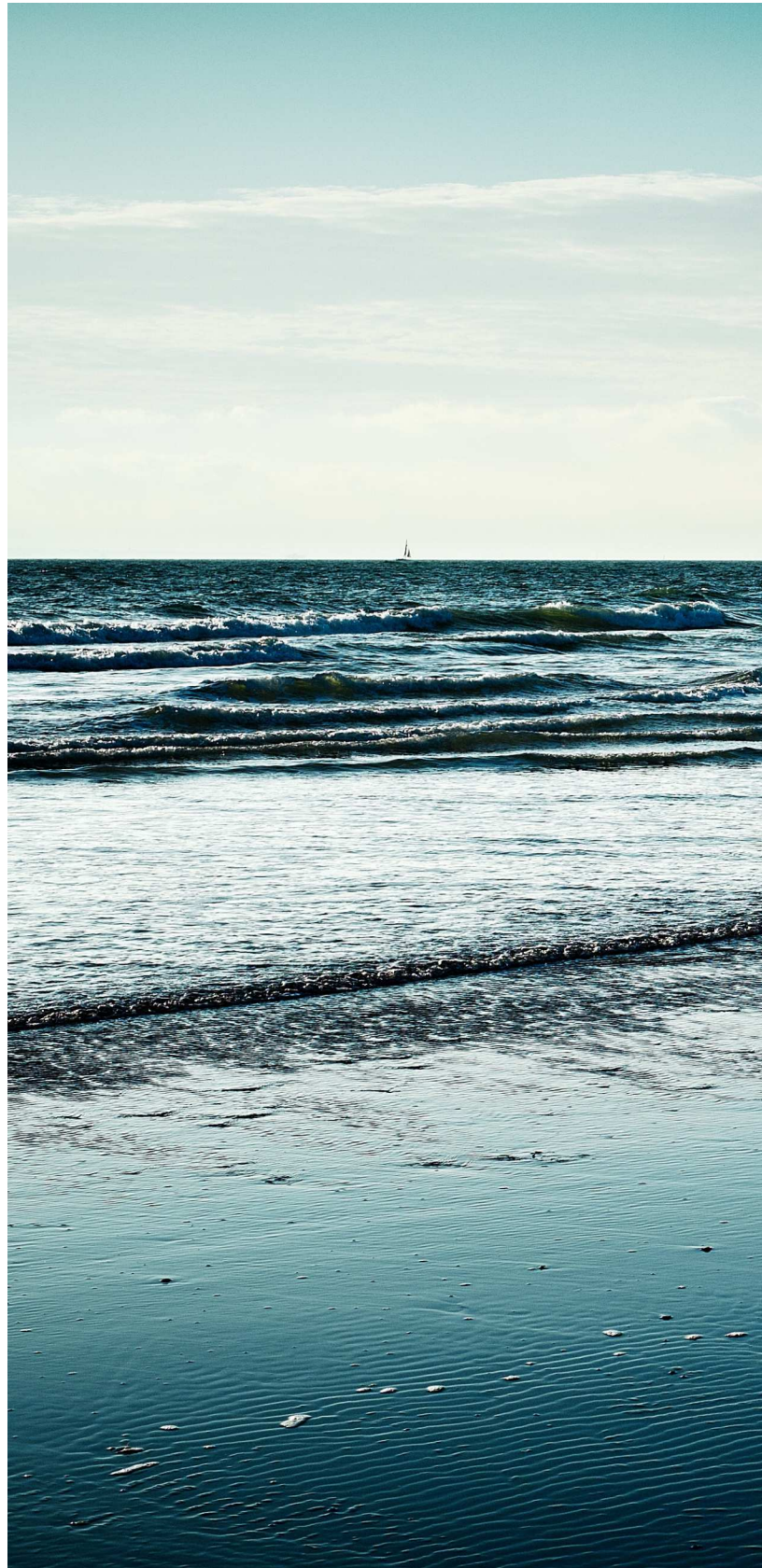
Fun and games at the seaside

I love the seaside – almost regardless of the weather, which has been just as well this summer! There's something in the air, apart from salt and the smell of seaweed. People seem to change when they are at the seaside; they become more relaxed and develop a sense of play.

I visited several beaches on the South Coast from Kent to Dorset, to try and capture that sense of play.

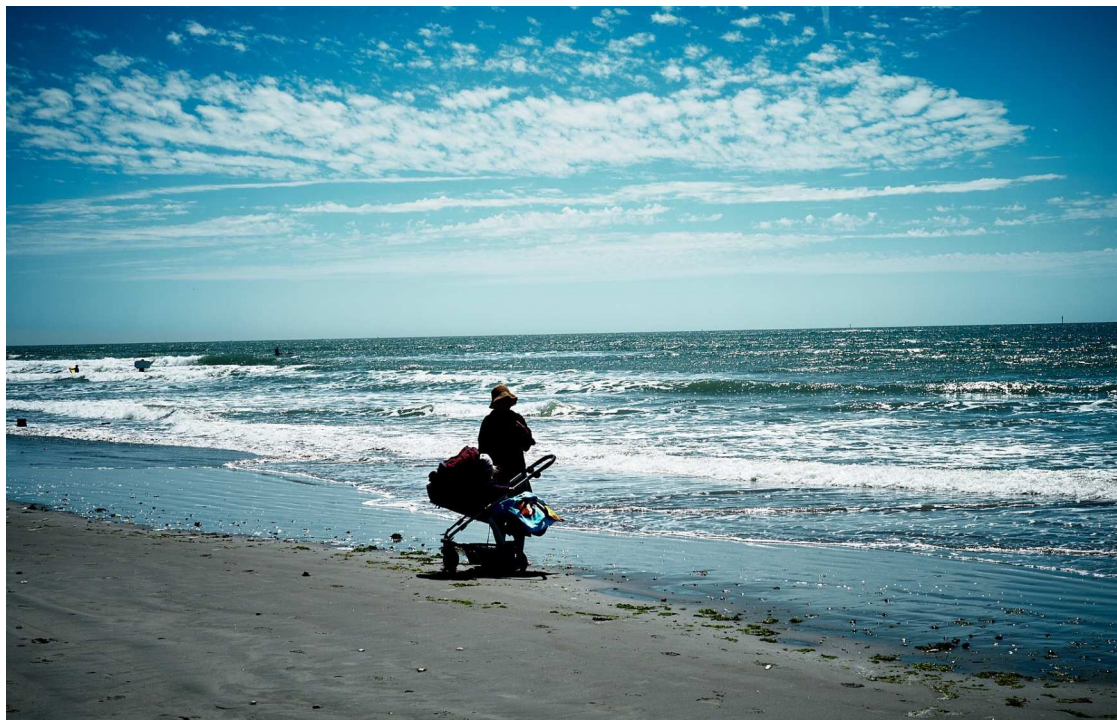
It was a tough job visiting beaches on sunny days but I had to take it on. Taking some inspiration from LS Lowry I created images where the people were small and indistinguishable but their sense of involvement with the sea was clear.

Now if I could just sell my prints for the same price as Lowry.













Shooting A Shoot





When I was commissioned to photograph a pheasant shoot in North Wales, I had mixed feelings about it; I grew up in the countryside so knew about these things as well as some of the people involved, but I am also aware of people's sensitivities towards this subject.

I was allowed to shoot some behind the scenes imagery with the head gamekeeper, which was an eye-opening experience and I was struck by how integral to the local economy this shoot was. The village pub's survival was based on it and many local people worked on the shoot in various capacities outside of the shoot days.

There was an odd contradiction in the way the gamekeepers would

spend months looking after the pheasants and their habitat, feeding them and providing clean water regularly, as well as protecting them from predators such as foxes and rats. The pheasants are given free rein in a large wood which is fenced off using wire netting, and again the 'keepers patrol the fence daily to ensure that there are no breaches that would mean a fox may have got in to the wood. They would lay traps to catch rats and grey squirrels which eat the food that they put out for the birds, and to keep crows away who can eat the young birds (as well as attack lambs). The effects of the 'keepers efforts generally help the survival of other non-game bird species, as well as helping lamb farmers protect their flock.

Although it's not my job to judge things I certainly came away with an alternative perspective, but I still wouldn't want to be a pheasant.



Empty gun cartridges amongst leaves



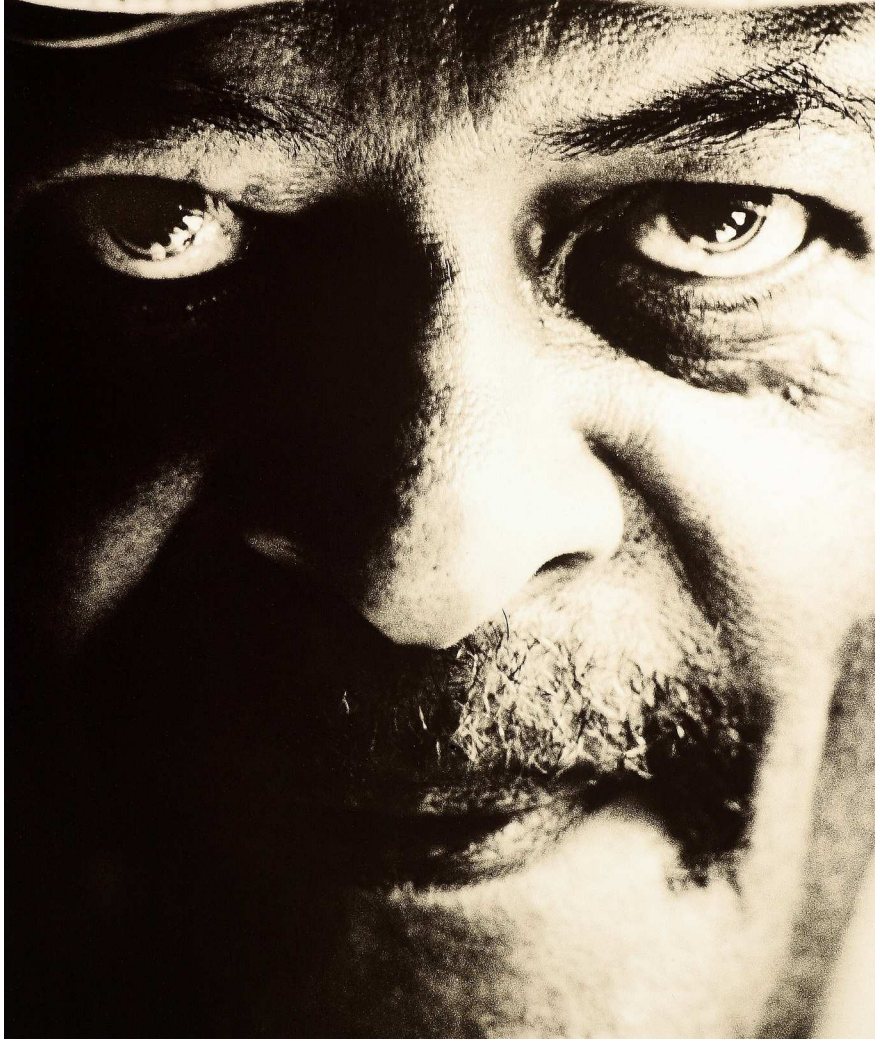


Right: The gamekeeper in a Gillie suit - designed so he can hide in the grass and wait for predators.



Left: A gamekeeper patrols the fencing in search of breaches.

That's A Wrap



When I left college I moved to London where I started working as a freelance assistant, which involved contacting photographers trying to find work - it was tough but my choice, and to make ends meet I spent evenings and weekends working in a pub in South East London. On one of my first nights there I was joking around with one of the girls behind the bar, when this man came in wearing a cap with his head tilted down so you couldn't see his eyes. As he got to me behind the bar he lifted his head slightly, looked me straight in the eye and snarled "Are you chatting up my daughter?" I froze; locked in his gaze, for once completely speechless. The he roared with laughter and shook my hand; this was my introduction to Collin and his party trick!

Over the months I worked there I saw Collin do this to several other people and got to know him very well, and arranged to take his portrait, which I did in the pub using my Mamiya RB medium format film camera (that was later stolen and never recovered). I shot it next to one of the pub's fabulous large windows, and when I got the contact sheets back I arranged to have a lith print done of my chosen image.

When I showed Collin the print he asked me who it was, and refused to believe it was him. Everyone else I showed it to (who had also received Collin's "welcome") said "That's it, that's Collin's look!"

He didn't do it so often afterwards....



Douglas Kurn photographer



BP Pagoda, from the series The Spirit Of Brooklands

What's On Your Wall?



Porto Santo Waves



Sandbags On Portobello Beach



Misty Trees

A range of limited edition and open edition prints are available from photographer Douglas Kurn's print sales web site. Limited editions include The Spirit Of Brooklands, a project to capture the remains of the World's first ever purpose built racing track, shot exclusively in the still of the night.

Douglas can also be commissioned to create images specifically for your own walls.

Ice Cream Dream

