

- **When did you start photographing animals?**

I drew and painted as a child, but it wasn't until I did a one year foundation course before university, at age 18 that I actually picked up a camera. It was for a project I was given, and I shot a roll of film at London Zoo. However, 10 years passed before I was in a better position to more proactively choose the subjects that I shot, without worrying too much about paying the bills.

- **Why do you photograph animals?**

In the simplest sense, I enjoy the controlled chaos of shooting animals. I am also interested in the perceptual divide between sentient beings. There is a sense of awe and wonderment and there is always an uncertainty about what will reveal itself on set. I like to encourage thoughts about how we see each other.

- **When you have worked with wild animals, have you ever felt threatened?**

I always feel aware of the dangers of photographing certain animals, so I try to have a capable team at hand: I ensure that I have animal handlers who are well placed to deal with situations that may arise.

- **What animal would you most like to photograph, and why?**

It's about how I can use photography as a medium, rather than 'what animal can I track down?' My mind is often considering what I'm trying to say, and how I can best communicate that in a relevant way. Although I may like to do something such as the bird of paradise that Sir David Attenborough attempted on several occasions to film, I would need a very good reason for doing it – not just for the sake of the chase. I'd go down that road, but I'd have to be able to justify the potential concepts that I might explore.

- **How do you make your animals appear so human?**

I accept that it is certainly easy to see my work as anthropomorphic, to think that I have endeavoured to make them look like us, but I am actually far more interested in the notion of anthropocentrism; how we humans centre ourselves in relation to animals, and make ourselves the centre of our worlds. In a compositional sense, I will want to lead people to the most empathetic details.

- **How do you choose your subjects?**

Often when I select an animal, it's not only because it is cute or iconic such as the pandas at the National Zoo in Washington, or that have a fascinating case history, such as the featherless chicken I photographed in Israel. I believe that the most interesting photographs come from interesting ideas.

- **Where do you find your subjects?**

I'm increasingly interested in the developments around science and ecology. If I come across something, I research it and find out as much about it as possible, then try to plan a means of photographing it. Sometimes this is easy, but some subjects can be very difficult to track down.

- **What camera do you use?**

I use a Hasselblad H4D-60 most of the time, but it is not the technology, but the ideas that it facilitates which really interest me.

- **What flash do you use?**

I use Broncolor packs which give me great flexibility and the option of fast flash durations.

- **How much do you use Photoshop?**

Although I use Photoshop on most of my images it's mostly to make tonal changes, to help navigate the eye to the areas that interest me and hopefully others.

- **Do you know what picture you are going to take, before you take it?**

I have always liked the Pablo Picasso quote, "I do not seek, I find." I accept that one needs some kind of structural framework on a shoot and I try to know the limitations while trying not to presume to know what will occur. In the realisation of work you could break down the creative process into three stages. The first, is planning, having a loose framework and a working idea. Second is the day of the shoot, when I try and be present and allow things to reveal themselves, and maybe to be surprised by what I find. The third is to understand the resulting image in terms of how it works for me, and for others. The end result will often operate differently to how I expected it to, and I have to be open to that.

- **How do you name your images?**

I often title my images with the animals' given 'human' names, to bring about notions of domestication and to represent the time and emotion devoted to these animals in captivity, such as Jambo the chimp, Sméagol the raven and Hassan the Arabain horse. Of course, sometimes the little old bug doesn't get given a 'human' name, so I might title it by species instead.

- **Why did you choose the title *More Than Human*?**

I chose the title as it relates to my interest in 'human and non human animals', and the nature of our relationship to animals. I am also interested in questions of the soul. We humans think we are unique, but perhaps we are just human animals.

- **Which other photographers are you influenced by?**

Irving Penn, Guy Bourdin, André Kertész, Karl Blossfeldt, and Stephen Shore to name a few. Likewise, a number of painters have been important to me, such as Picasso, though I feel we are always being influenced by the collective culture.

- **Do you consider yourself a wildlife photographer?**

No, I consider myself a photographer who takes photographs of animals. Sometimes the animals I photograph are domestic, sometimes they are wild but in captivity and sometimes not. When I do photograph in the wild, I often take them out of their context. My interest is less in their wild nature and more in what they say about us.

- **Would you say you work in the fine arts or the applied arts?**

My career background has been very much within the applied arts such as advertising, although now I'm more rooted in a practice that reflects my fine art interest in both the public and private space.

- **What is your favourite picture?**

Some of my images I grow away from, and some I grow toward over time. There are however some constant favourites that will always hold relevance for me, such as the fruit bats the wrong way up, and horse mountain.

- **Do you take photographs outside of work?**

If I am climbing a mountain, I like to get to the top, breathe and take in the experience. I don't always carry a camera with me. I like to feel first, and reflect after.

- **Do you have any pets?**

I have two Burmese cats called Hunt and Blue who keep me company while I work, and I'd better not forget my three goldfish!