



Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2008 at the National Portrait Gallery

National Portrait Gallery
St Martin's Place, London
WC2H 0HE
020 7312 2463; www.npg.org.uk
Until 1 February 2009

Winning a prestigious portraiture competition and being exhibited at one of the most famous portrait galleries in the world is undeniably a great honour. So how did this year's winner take the news, and what does she think of the other entries? We find out from winner Lottie Davies

GEORGIE WOOF: Congratulations! How does it feel to have won this year's Photographic Portrait Prize?

LOTTIE DAVIES: Thank you! It's obviously lovely to win, and such a surprise. I was completely shocked when I found out I'd won the competition. I genuinely thought Hendrik Kerstens [second place] would win it. His image is so beautiful. Another thing that has stunned me is the amount of attention that it has attracted.

Can you tell me about your winning image?

It's from a series of six I have named Memories and Nightmares. It's based on a project I did with various friends. I asked them if they could tell me their earliest memory or nightmare. My friend Caroline told me this one about being pregnant with quintuplets and it was just so bizarre I had to shoot it.

Would you say portraiture is your speciality?

No, not really. I do all sorts of different work. I do quite a lot of portraiture, and a lot of food photography. I worked on Gary Rhodes' last two books. If I was to really define what I do I'd say I'm a portraiture and travel photographer, with a bit of photojournalism thrown in.

Is this the first time you have entered the competition?

No, I think I've submitted images the last eight years in a row. I managed to get an image in the exhibition in 2005/6. That's the only time I've ever had any success before, until now.

It's one of those competitions that every one has a go at entering. I think it's something that every photographer should do. Competitions really raise your profile.

There are some fantastic entries this year. How do you think the images compare to last year?

Despite my own image winning, I really like the entries. I'm sure the tone of the images changes each year because of the judging, but I really like this year's in particular. It's a bit different; it's more full of life. In past years I think it's been quite north European, and a bit cold. Don't get me wrong, I think they were beautiful images, but I quite like the fact that it looks a little different this year. There seems to be more colour and life.

How do you feel about seeing your image in the NPG?

It's lovely! My mother is delighted obviously! I saw Caroline recently; we went to the NPG so she could have a look. It's great to be able to take people that contributed to see it displayed.



Quints by Lottie Davies, 2008 © the artist.

Taken from her series Memories and Nightmares, this image won Lottie Davies the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize.



Steve McQueen by Chris Floyd, 2008 © the artist.

CHRIS FLOYD

■ **How do you think winning the competition will change your photographic career?**

Well, I'd certainly like to do more fine-art work, so I think it will allow me more of a creative licence to play. And, of course, the prize money means I can do my other six pictures [in the series].

I think it helps to have your work recognised and appreciated by the public; career-wise all publicity is good. It means I can approach clients with less conservative ideas, and they might be more likely to take them on.

I think these days, as a photographer, you need to have something that makes you stand out and any kind of award is going to help with that.

■ **Have you got any tips for next year's entrants?**

Ooh! Well, there's no great secret. To be honest, you can never tell what will

do well. If I was to pass on one piece of advice it would be that I think it's really important to believe in your own images, which I know can be very difficult for some photographers. We're constantly worrying and thinking we could have shot an image differently or better. But I think if you can show someone your photograph and say yourself that you like it and not feel intimidated by others saying that they don't, then you've got an image worth submitting.

I think you have to stick with an image that means something to you and not something you think you ought to send in. I just try to be me when I take my pictures, but it has taken me a long time to do that. I'm a lot more confident with my work now than I ever was. And winning this competition is like another beginning for me. ■

The Diary...

Make sure you keep up with what's going on in your area, with our round-up of the best photographic shows taking place across the country during December and January

ATLAS GALLERY

49 Dorset Street,
London W1U 7NF
020 7224 4192; www.atlasgallery.com

Full Moon

Until 14 February

A celebrated and defining selection of images from the Apollo and Gemini space missions drawn from NASA's own picture library.

DIMBOLA LODGE

Terrace Lane, Freshwater Bay,
Isle of Wight PO40 9QE
01983 756814; www.dimbola.co.uk

Bruce Rae: Silvered Surfaces

Until 11 January

Head of photography at the University of East London since 1996, Rae uses wooden cameras of up to 10x6in formats and traditional wet darkroom procedures. His silver gelatin prints are unrepeatable; most were made on a Kodak Ektalure paper.

Richard Stow: Out of Public View

Until 8 February

Shot over the last five years, this collection of intimate portraits was taken when the subjects are taking a moment to be themselves, not the character they are about to become for a show.

THE LOWRY

Pier 8, Salford Quays M50 3AZ
0870 787 5780; www.thelowry.com

A Long Exposure: 100 years of pictures from Guardian photographers in Manchester (1908-2008)

Until 1 March

The Lowry celebrates 100 years of *The Guardian's* distinctive pictorial style with a display of some of the most memorable images from the last century, curated by Denis Thorpe.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

St Martin's Place, London
WC2H 0HE

www.npg.org.uk

Iconic Images: The Vanity Fair anniversary book

Until 11 January

Marking the publication of a new book by the NPG, this display traces the cultural history of the twentieth century and its leading personalities through the pages of a magazine.

Champions: Portraits by Anderson & Low

Until 18 January

Stunning, iconic, nude studies of leading international athletes form the basis of this portfolio.

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

16-18 Ramillies Street
London W1F 7LW
020 7831 1772; www.photonet.org.uk

Katy Grannan: The Westerns

Until 8 February

Grannan calls her subjects the "new pioneers," a group of northern Californians who struggle to define themselves under the scrutiny of relentless sunlight. The series explores the uneasy relationship between fixed portraiture and the subjects' individual identities.

Soho Nights

Until 8 February

Following on from the earlier exhibition, *Soho Archives*, this display presents photo-archives that offer unique, personal and, at times, surprising insight into the visual history of the heart of London's West End.

V&A

Victoria and Albert Museum
Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL
020 7942 2000

Fashion V Sport

Until 4 January

This exhibition explores the creative connections, tensions and interplay in the recent collaborations between the worlds of fashion and sport.