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Press

JACK DAVISON

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FT HTSI (UK)
Oct 2022



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OPENING SHOT



VEGOUT

Portrait photographer Jack Davison's latest exhibition reveals a more personal edge

Jack Davison's high-contrast, experimental portraits of famous faces such as Brad Pitt, Glenda Jackson and Adam Driver, as well as his fashion campaigns for brands including Hermès, have made the self-taught 32-year-old photographer a name to know. In his new exhibition at London's Cob gallery, titled *Photographic Etchings*, he reveals a more personal body of work.

The 33 black-and-white images include a teenage self-portrait, photographs of his wife, Agnes, and several recurring motifs – "hands and eyes, animals, vegetables". All are printed as polymer intaglio gravures – a traditional etching process that adds "much more depth, and really hard, dark blacks", says Davison. Some summon the surrealist shades of Man Ray, others the elegance of Irving Penn. "For me, the morrows are like characters, like old men in Italy, sitting outside, gossiping, I just find it funny." **VICTORIA WOODCOCK** *Photographic Etchings is at Cob Gallery, 205 Royal College Street, London NW1, from 7 October to 12 November. Prices from £800 to £3,500.*

Above and right: both *Untitled*, 2022, by Jack Davison



CONTRIBUTORS



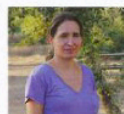
INDIA ROSS

Based in New York, India is a *Financial Times* news editor covering US politics and economics. She has a lifelong love of pop culture so was particularly excited to speak to Pharrell Williams, who is launching an online platform, Jopster, to auction off his designer clothing. "He is something of a personal hero for me – he's been behind so many of the most iconic songs of my youth, so it was a real honour to interview him," says India.



ELLIOTT JEROME BROWNE JR

The abstract works of the American artist and photographer explore notions of privacy and intimacy. He is creating a catalogue of work with Matte Editions from his recent solo show with Nicella Beauchamp Gallery. For this week's *Aesthete* column he shot artist Tschabalala Self, whom he's known for several years. "We hadn't made time to be one-on-one until the shoot, so afterwards we grabbed food and ate train-side on the Hudson station platform in New York."



MICHAL CHELBIN

Teenage angst and the desire for fame are some of the issues addressed by the Israeli photographer. In *How to Dance the Waltz*, published last year, she examined the connection between gender, youth and uniforms. She shot French architect Charles Zana for this week's *How To Spend It*... Tel Aviv not far from where she lives. "It was a pleasure walking around the city with him, he is such a friendly and smart person to talk to."



CHARLIE GATES

The photographer grew up in Somerset and began taking pictures of farmers, friends and dogs from the age of 14. While his camera is no longer focused on canines – he's working on his first book, based around daydreamers – he still brings along his dog, Munchkin, to most of his shoots. For this issue he photographed model Edie Campbell, and was amused to find common ground in American reality TV: "We're both fans of *Below Deck*."

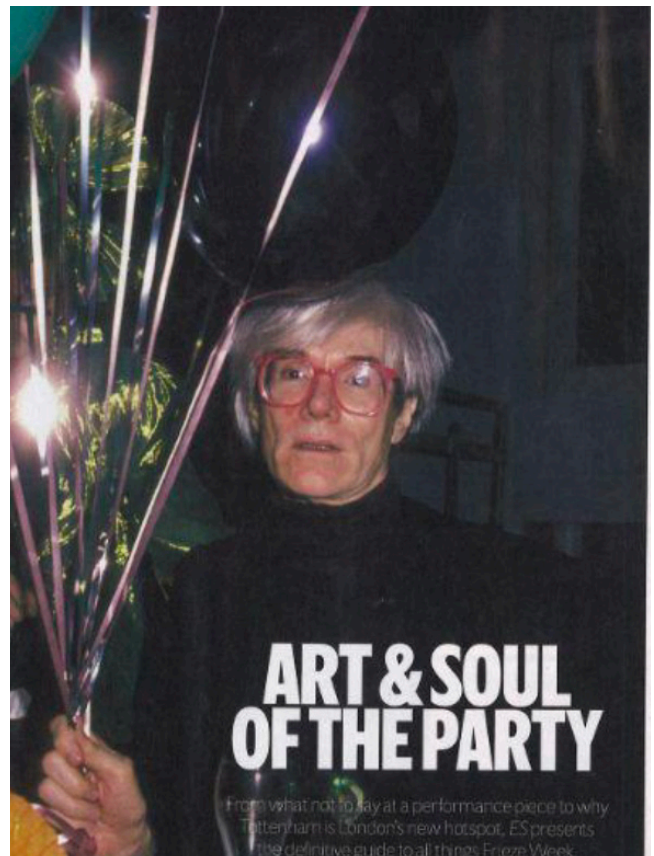
PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLIE GATES © JACK DAVISON; COURTESY OF COB GALLERY; STYLING: HOBBA CONTRERAS

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ES MAGAZINE (UK)
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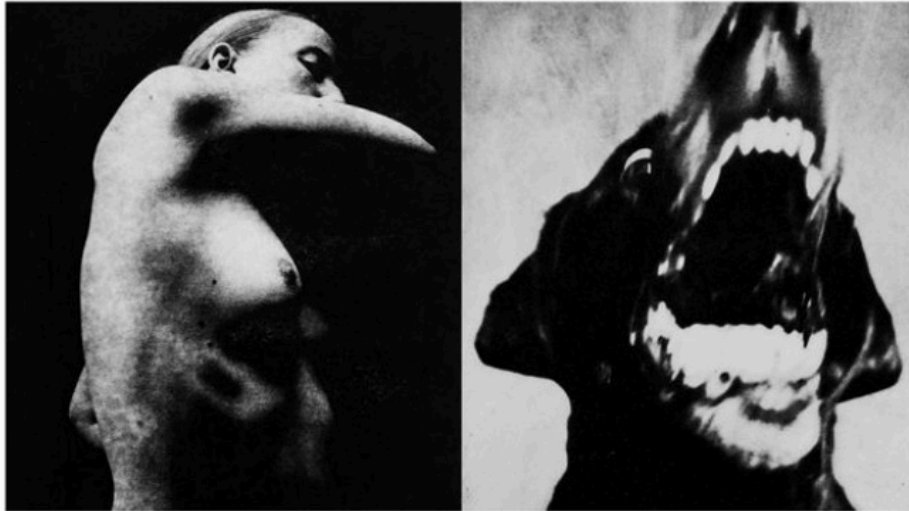
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I-D (UK)
Oct 2022

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i-D

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographer Jack Davison finds light in the darkness

In his new exhibition, the artist embraces his mistakes to create work with a transformative power.

BY ZOE WHITFIELD | 6.10.22

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"There's eyes in the exhibition. There's hands, dogs, still lifes," says Jack Davison, relaying some of the motifs that appear in his new show at London's Cob Gallery. "I never think I'm doing the same things, but as a [photographer](#) you do repeat things." Three years on from the release of his first monograph (*Photographs*, published by Loose Joints and currently in its third reissue), *Photographic Etchings*, his debut UK solo show proper, resumes the photographer's visually erratic approach to curation with 33 standalone images from his archive. "I wanted the book to be a manifesto," he says, "to show the randomness of the imagery, linked only by my eye and the way I see things. It's the same with the exhibition. There's no footnotes, the images are linked by the process."

Born in Essex and based in [London](#), in 2014 Jack was named a "One to Watch" by the *British Journal of Photography*, since championed by the wider industry for his distinctive approach to image-making. When we speak over Zoom, he's just returned from a rare fashion week stint in [Paris](#), shooting his long-time collaborator [Ib Kamara](#)'s first [Off-White](#) show as the brand's Image and Art Director. "I like being in slightly chaotic situations because it's about being reactionary," he tells me. "And the show was amazing, what Ib is doing is special." The exhibition meanwhile, in the works for over a year, arrives with its own sense of chaos, informed by the photographer's personal approach, having hand-printed the entire catalogue himself.

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I-D (UK)
Oct 2022



Jack Davison, Untitled LD-03, 2022 © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

"I always feel it's cheating, getting people to come and see your pictures if you haven't done anything to them, or been involved," he says. "People consume so much imagery through phones and laptops that I wanted to focus on making something that was interesting to see, different texturally." Working both in colour and black-and-white, the images in the show assume the latter, produced via methods of chiaroscuro (an Italian term which literally means "light-dark"), framing and exposure as instruments of abstraction, inspired by a printing course he undertook in Brighton. "I've always loved ink as a medium, since GCSE art. And this process is really hands on," he continues. "As soon as you start throwing ink into the mix, and inexperienced hands, each thing feels different and special. It's adding layers of texture, and a slight risk."

This incredibly IRL format is likewise significant for the photographer, who initially found his creative community online, particularly in digital spaces like Flickr. "There was a John Deakin exhibition that really changed my mind and made me start thinking about the physicalness of a print," he says, recalling how the late photographer — a friend of [Lucian Freud](#) and [Francis Bacon](#) — shaped his own attitude towards displaying photography. "He was a photographer who hated that he wasn't an artist and treated his photography with contempt, leaving prints all over the studio floor. They were walked on and dog-eared, but seeing them [at The Photographers' Gallery in 2014] was transformative." Keen to communicate a human touch in his own work, albeit with a higher regard for the practice itself, Jack's work is the product of making — and perhaps more specifically, embracing — mistakes.



Jack Davison, Untitled LD-03, 2022 © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

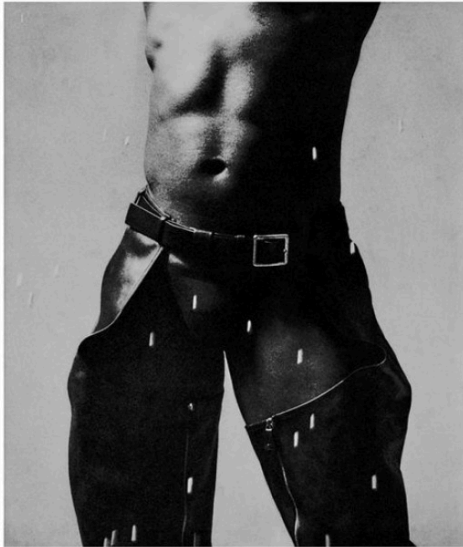
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Self-taught — he began taking photographs in his mid-teens but opted to study English Literature at university, maintaining his practice throughout his degree — Jack only realised that photography could be a career following the advice of a tutor who, seeing his misplaced energy, likened photography to his 'mistress', with English literature his 'honest wife'. "I had no idea of routes into the industry, I just knew that I loved photography. So I knocked on doors, which seems quite shocking now," he says. "There's something powerful about going and seeing people. It's less scary to send an email, but again it boils down to showing physical things. I came to London in 2014/15 and had a massive book of photographs. It was probably nonsensical, but I went and met people, some of whom I've stayed in touch with."

Today the photographer carries four cameras at all times, and has published a further two books, collaborating with Marni on *Song Flowers* and studying rhinos in Kenya for *QL Priests* (an annotated version of *Photographs* also exists). Asked to summarise what he does, he shares that ultimately it's about looking for light. "I live in England, that's why it's so precious. If I grew up in LA I wouldn't be as obsessed with looking for light — here it's a rarity. You're looking for a beam of sunlight on a cloudy day that could lift a picture," he says. "It's about playfulness and experimenting, finding those moments I don't have control over. My great worry is it becoming stale, but I love its transformative power. Photographing something and it becoming something else, or it having different meanings for other people. Just shaping things and playing with imagination."

'Photographic Etchings' is on at Cob Gallery 7th October - 12th November 2022.



Jack Dawson, Untitled (2018), 2022 © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery



Jack Dawson, Untitled (2018), 2022 © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery



Jack Dawson, Untitled (2018), 2022 © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

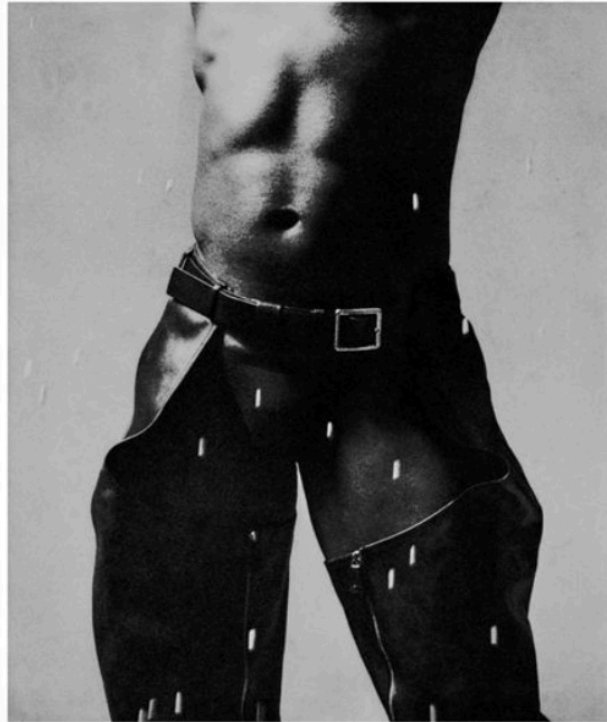
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ANOTHER MAGAZINE (UK)
Oct 2022

AnOther

Jack Davison's Alchemical Photographic Etchings

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / FEATURE



Jack Davison, Untitled (JD-15), 2022 © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

"The whole point is making things which are different from what people have seen digitally," says Jack Davison of his meditative new series Photographic Etchings, which is on show now in London

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ANOTHER MAGAZINE (UK)

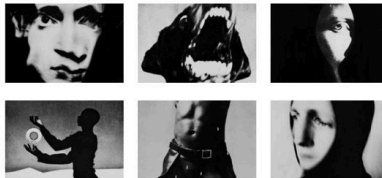
Oct 2022

OCTOBER 07, 2022

TEXT Finn Blythe

"I've never been a darkroom kid," says British photographer **Jack Davison**. "I tried, [but] it just didn't appeal to me." With a new solo exhibition, **Photographic Etchings**, opening in north London's Cob Gallery, Davison is instead reflecting on the tactile wonders and alchemical magic of photogravure, a labour-intensive, high-cost alternative to the darkroom that lies at the heart of this exhibition. "I see it as similar to gardening in some ways," he explains. "There's something about the physicality of the work and having dirty hands that I really like. It's a very meditative process that allows you to play with these images but not overthink them."

Having previously balanced his self-taught photography with working full-time on building sites in his native Essex, Davison is no stranger to hard graft and it's therefore no surprise to hear him extol the virtues of creating images this way. "I like being involved physically, but on set it can be more mentally exhausting. Often my favourite part of the day - if it's gone well - is packing down. Just carrying the stuff and doing all the laborious work really helps the head."



GALLERY / 12 IMAGES

Photographic Etchings by Jack Davison

Evidence of that labour runs through each of the 33 works on show. Grouped by scale across three rooms and spanning some 14 years (almost half the artist's life), they are a thrilling reminder of the medium's ability to defy and confound, combining references to Surrealist greats like Man Ray and Max Ernst with Davison's signature commitment to playful experimentation. Featuring photographs from some of his best-known series of recent years, including his career-launching US road trip series *26 States*, the show grants new life to old work without giving the appearance of anything contemporary.

"I love the idea that these photographs could be discovered in the future and people would find them hard to place [in time]," says Davison. "The whole point is making things which are different from what people have seen digitally." To hear him discuss his approach to image-making is to be pulled free from the daily, Instagram-fuelled idea of photographs as flat, scrollable pixels. Davison thinks of photographs in terms of depth, layers and texture. To him, they are sculptural, multi-dimensional objects; canvases to play with and experiment, whose physical and haptic qualities are as important as any other. The resulting works are best described as feats in optical gymnastics, conjured from a range of technical innovations, which Davison is (understandably) reluctant to reveal. "I love for there to be a sense of mystery," he says. "I want people to look at these images and think, 'I'm not sure how he's done this.'"



Jack Davison, Untitled (20-14), 2022. © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

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ANOTHER MAGAZINE (UK)
Oct 2022

For this exhibition however, Davison spent three years learning the craft of photogravure in order to open up new grounds for experimentation. Working in collaboration with Colin Gale, co-founder of Brixton-based studio Artichoke Print Workshop, Davison honed a gestural use of chiaroscuro more akin to a painter's brush strokes. "I've always drawn - and I've always loved that loads of photographers want to be painters," he laughs. "With this process, you completely cover the etched plate with black ink. Then you rub in the ink a second time and begin to reveal the image. You can choose to rub it completely clean but you can also leave ink in certain areas you want darker. Because you're using a rag, you can have a heavier hand, so you can make it more painterly by brushing less ink away or brushing in a certain way."

"It's kind of that magic of old Polaroid - you don't know if what you've done will work. You've chosen images you think will respond to the process, but there's still that little 'tada!' as the magician's cloak comes up and you reveal the print."



Jack Davison, Untitled (JD-08), 2022 © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

These are the risks and moments of uncertainty that Davison feels obliged to take on, and which for us, the viewer, create a spectacle that lives long in the mind. "For me, photography is about pushing into different spaces and trying new things," says Davison. "I'm a white cis male and if I'm going to try and be in a space that's viewed, I need to be trying to say something interesting rather than just repeating stuff or taking up someone else's space."

Photographic Etchings by Jack Davison is on at Cob Gallery in London until 12 November 2022.

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ANOTHER MAGAZINE (UK)

Oct 2022

q AnOther

FASHION & BEAUTY ART & PHOTOGRAPHY DESIGN & LIVING ANOTHER MAN LOVES ARCHIVE PURCHASE f t i p



The Ten Most Visually Arresting Photo Projects of 2022

From Clifford Prince King's tender portraits of Black, queer intimacy to Renell Medrano's album artwork for Kendrick Lamar's *Mr. Morale & the Big Stepper*, Adam Murray looks back at the best photo projects from the past year

DECEMBER 14, 2022

TEXT: Adam Murray

IMAGE: Lisa Ross, 2022 © Mohamed Bourouassa 2021, Courtney Loose Joins

As I was searching for ten of the best photography projects from 2022, I was struck by how the following series all challenge the culture of instant gratification, individual praise and mass of visual content that we have become so familiar with. These are projects that are testament to the value of time, of reflection, of study, and of collaboration.

New books by Mohamed Bourouassa and Nigel Shatran both feature work made many years ago, yet manage to avoid nostalgia. There are striking similarities in the way photographers Hannah Lister, Katlin Maxwell and Sockley Tessa Mate-Kodjo, all use photography to engage with their everyday experience, despite living and working in different continents. Thaddä Comar and Philip Montgomery's unflinching approach to documenting significant global events encourages viewers to reflect on their importance, whether lensing the 2019-20 Hong Kong protests or the Black Lives Matter protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Renell Medrano and Clifford Prince King both centre their work in domestic space to examine notions of biography, community, and performance, while Jack Davison's debut exhibition explored the material potential inherent in photography.



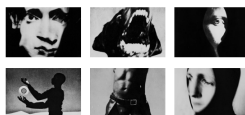
Adam Comar, *Untitled* (2019-20), 2022 © The artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

Jack Davison, *Untitled* (2019-20), 2022 © The artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

Photographic Etchings by Jack Davison

For his debut UK solo exhibition at Cob Gallery, Jack Davison chose to explore his archive of monochrome images that depict the human figure, architecture, animals, objects, landscapes, and lowscapes. As the title suggests, the prints in the exhibition were produced using a polymer photogravure technique. The result changes the way an audience experiences his work: "the whole point is making things which are different from what people have seen digitally," says Davison. This deliberate exploration of the materiality inherent in photography made this an exhibition that needed to be visited in real life.

Read AnOther's interview with Jack Davison [here](#).



GALLERY / 10 IMAGES

Photographic Etchings by Jack Davison

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DAZED (UK)
Oct 2022

DAZED

Art shows to leave the house for this October

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY - LISTS

From Wolfgang Tillmans' new MoMA show to David LaChapelle's larger-than-life photoshoots, we round up the exhibitions you need to see this month

10th October 2022

Text Ashleigh Kane

For this month's round-up, [Wolfgang Tillmans](#) unveils a new MoMA show, photographer Kalpesh Lathigra imagines an alternative reality where his family never left India to live in the UK, and Ian Cheng releases an eight-part anime series featuring his experimental AI BOB. Elsewhere, [David LaChapelle](#) brings his larger-than-life photographs to Fotografiska, and [Frieze](#) returns to London.



07 / 15

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PHOTOGRAPHIC ETCHINGS, JACK DAVISON, COB GALLERY

Jack Davison is one of those photographers whose work allows you to really look. Whether it's down to how he works in the darkroom or the ideas behind the work, Davison's incredible eye has unsurprisingly made him one of the UK's best photographic talents. Despite this, it's just now that he is receiving a debut solo show on home turf – in the UK – at Cob Gallery. On display will be a selection of hand-printed monochrome images that "have more in common with etchings than with the depthless pixels of the digital sphere", depicting everything from architecture to animals.

Runs from October 7 – November 12, 2022

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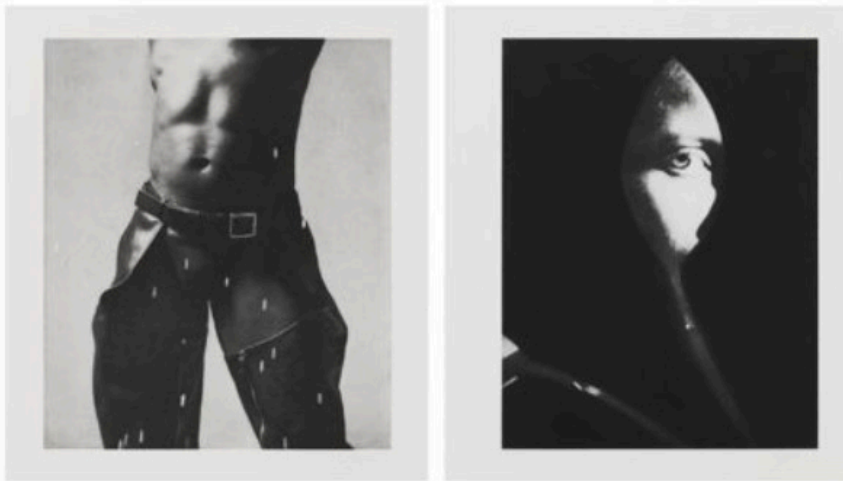
WALLPAPER (UK)*
Oct 2022

Wallpaper*

London photography exhibitions: what to see during Frieze Week 2022

For Frieze Week 2022, we zoom in on the most exciting photography exhibitions in London and around the UK

f t p in ↗



Jack Davison, *Untitled (JD-22)*, 2022, Photopolymer intaglio, Image size 27.5x35cm Paper Size 57x65cm © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

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WALLPAPER* (UK)

Oct 2022

London is never short of creative goings-on, but the city's photography scene is a burgeoning source of excitement, with dedicated photography festivals, galleries and even a new photography quarter at the heart of London's Soho. With Frieze Week 2022 in full swing, stay up-to-date with our ongoing guide to the best London photography exhibitions.

London photography exhibitions

Jack Davison - Photographic Etchings
Cob Gallery
Until 12 November 2022



Jack Davison, *Untitled (JD-15)*, 2022, Photopolymer intaglio, Image size 35x29.5cm Paper Size 76x57cm © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

Now on show at Cob Gallery, Jack Davison's 'Photographic Etchings' achieves a complex feat. Surreal and sensual compositions are clear and crisp at first look with their dramatic contrast, but as the etchings continue to hold the viewer's gaze they dissolve into a melted chiaroscuro, enveloping us into the second wave of surreality. Tumblr and Flickr's formative photographic influence is present too, as the platforms on which Davison first explored the medium while photographing the Essex countryside. Combining his interest in the works of Saul Leiter, Shoji Ueda, August Sander, and Man Ray, Davison creates his own original strange world that blurs seeing and feeling.

cobgallery.com

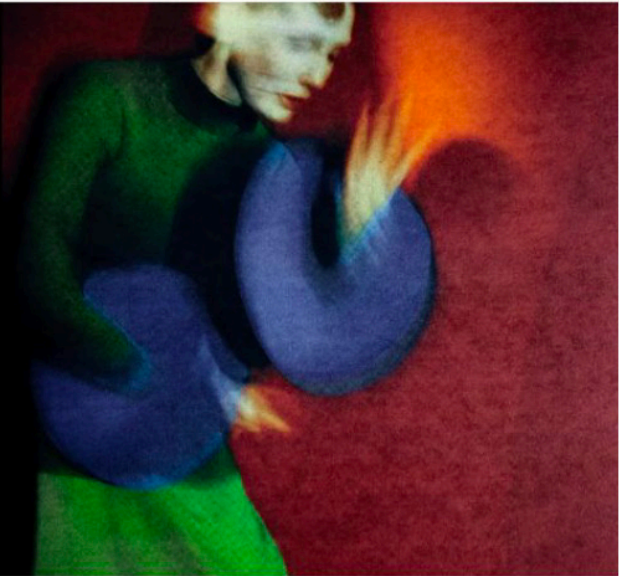
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THE NEW YORK TIMES (US)
Oct 2022

6

Cate Blanchett Doesn't Want to Be Understood

The actress has stayed one step ahead of audiences by constantly being in motion. In her new movie "Tár," she's as inscrutable as ever.



Give this article



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By Jordan Kisner Photographs by Jack Davison
Oct. 11, 2022 Updated 6:11 a.m. ET

About the Photographs When the magazine asked the photographer Jack Davison to create the art for this story, he took inspiration from Cate Blanchett's legendary gift at transforming herself on film. Over the course of a four-hour shoot, across nine different setups, Davison made the fantastical, perspective-bending portraits that appear here.

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Cob.

THE NEW YORK TIMES (US)

Oct 2022

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Cate Blanchett is accustomed to looking the camera dead on. Hers is the kind of face that inspires directors to tight framing — gleaming, as if smoothed from marble, and yet somehow pliant, changeable. But on the occasions she has sat for an artist, she has noticed a curious pattern: “They paint me looking away,” she told the podcaster Sam Fragoso in February. “When that happens once, you go, *oh*. When it happens twice, when it happens three times, you think, *why am I looking away?*” Blanchett saw in this gesture a “not wanting to be captured” and a shade of the self-protectiveness she had to overcome as a young actor. “You have to allow yourself to be seen, and some people have the gift of being comfortable with that really early on. I was not,” she said. “I still struggle with it.”

Maybe for that reason, the breathtaking vulnerability of which Blanchett is capable on film retains a subtle inscrutability. Even in moments of raw emotional exposure, something of the person onscreen remains out of reach — some depth that is sensed rather than seen. “I don’t know how to describe it,” Sarah Paulson, who has worked with Blanchett three times, told me on a call. “She’s almost like mercury rolling on a table, you know? It’s entirely elusive, and yet right there in front of you. And constantly moving and shape-shifting and ... and something one would covet. You want to touch that mercury.” “You just want to watch her face almost in repose and feel something elemental coming through that almost translucence,” says Todd Haynes, who directed her in “[I’m Not There](#)” and “[Carol](#).” Anthony Minghella, who directed her in “[The Talented Mr. Ripley](#),” once described her as “the Bach of acting.”

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BAFTAs, three Golden Globes, the Volpi Cup twice at the Venice Film Festival, an honorary César Award, the Chaplin Award. The best directors in the world want to work with her, or want to tell you how life-changing it was to work with her. She has done Broadway and the West End. Alongside her husband of 25 years, the writer-director Andrew Upton, she has run the Sydney Theater Company in her home country, Australia. She’s a face of Armani Beauty. She’s a good-will ambassador for the United Nations refugee agency. She has also retained the freedom to do weirder, smaller indie projects, like the short film “[Red](#),” by the artist Del Kathryn Barton, in which she plays a female redback spider orgasming and then killing her mate, as female redback spiders do.

Costume and set design: Shona Heath. Stylist: Rebecca Perlmutter. Hair: Ali Pirzadeh. Makeup: Morag Ross. Manicure: Michelle Humphrey.

Jordan Kisner is a contributing writer for the magazine and the author of the essay collection “Thin Places.” [Her last article for the magazine was a profile of the director Jane Campion](#). Jack Davison is a photographer based in London. His work is being exhibited at the [Cob Gallery](#) in London through Nov. 12.



DOCUMENT

Above The Fold

Jack Davison investigates the collective unconscious

Read time 9 minutes



Text by
Camille Sajit Pejcha
Photography by
Jack Davison
Posted
November 10, 2022

The London-based photographer joins Document to discuss the spontaneity of his creative process, the alluring appeal of analog, and finding inspiration in an image-saturated age

"I'm drawn to singular images," says London-based photographer Jack Davison. "The subject, style, and format can shift, but photographs that can hold my gaze are the ones I come back to most."

Davison is, himself, a creator of such images: photos with the power to stop you in your tracks, requiring a second look to decode the mystery of their composition. In his work, light and shadow interplay, illuminating and obscuring in equal measure; arresting details catch one's eye, while large swaths of black awaken the imagination. This elusive quality is intentional: In presenting some aspects and obscuring others, Davison aims to invoke the viewer's subconscious, resulting in photographs that often reveal more about the person viewing them than they do their subject. "I leave space for the viewer's own imagination, thoughts, and prejudices... There needs to be a window for someone else to step in and bring their own viewpoint," he tells Document. "My hope is that the less I give you, the more you will bring to it."

Despite an upbringing spent making digital images, Davison has a deep appreciation for the physical ephemera of the medium: the "dog-eared photo manuals, found family snaps, and thumb-stained pictures" that ground his craft in the material world. It's why his latest exhibition, *Photographic Etching*, sees him dive deep into the tactile aspects of image-making through traditional processes. "Printing by hand is really rewarding, because it brings you closer to the image and the ink," he says. "The process itself pushes you further into abstraction."

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DOCUMENT JOURNAL (US)

Nov 2022



Despite an upbringing spent making digital images, Davison has a deep appreciation for the physical ephemera of the medium: the “dog-eared photo manuals, found family snaps, and thumb-stained pictures” that ground his craft in the material world. It’s why his latest exhibition, *Photographic Etchings*, sees him dive deep into the tactile aspects of image-making through traditional processes. “Printing by hand is really rewarding, because it brings you closer to the image and the ink,” he says. “The process itself pushes you further into abstraction.”

This sense of mystery—of something left unsaid, obfuscated, or outside of the frame—imbues the works in the show with a dreamlike, transient quality. Ongoing motifs like hands, eyes, and the bared teeth of snarling dogs repeatedly surface, yet seem to exist outside of context and time. Tight framing and deep shadows lend a sense of sinister surrealism to what would otherwise be straightforward: a woman stretching, a man’s face, the facade of a building. “I’ve always been drawn to photographers that push the medium to do startling things,” Davison says, speaking of the kind of image he gravitates toward. “I quite like feeling the heavy hand of the author at play.”

Davison’s work has appeared on the cover of Document Journal and other publications, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *W Magazine*, and *British Vogue*. In 2019, his first monograph *Photographs* was published by Loose Joints, and this year, he released another book, *Song Flowers*, in collaboration with Loose Joints and Marni. In the wake of his recent exhibition *Photographic Etchings* at London’s Cob Gallery, the photographer joins Document to discuss his process, inspirations, and advice for making photographs in an image-saturated age.

Camille Sojit Pejcha: The images for your show at Cob Gallery have been traditionally hand-printed. What’s your relationship with the tactile, physical aspects of photography, compared with the more conceptual or intellectual aspects of art-making?

Jack Davison: I try to not conceptualize my practice very much; I find that often an image can feel much less spontaneous and emotive for me if I’m overthinking. I work both with film and digital, but was raised making photographs on my laptop. Despite that, I’ve always had a love for physical ephemera: dog-eared photo manuals, found family snaps, and thumb stained photographs. Printing by hand is really rewarding, because it brings you closer to the image and the ink. You expose a photograph onto a metal plate and then print from that plate directly onto the paper, so it’s closer to a traditional etching than a typical photograph. It’s fun to experiment with the form—the process itself pushes you further into abstraction.

Camille: I’ve read that your work was formatively shaped by online platforms like Flickr and Tumblr. Can you tell me a little bit about this era of your life?

Jack: I was a countryside kid, with patchy internet and not much access to photography outside of that. By chance, I started posting on Flickr, and through that found a community of photographers who were infatuated with daily image-making. It was exhilarating. I could have conversations through pictures with people all over the world instantly, and we’d react to each other’s work—it was all very organic and it really encouraged experimentation and play.

Camille: Having come of age online, how has the proliferation of digital images affected your own creative evolution and what you aim to do as a photographer?

Jack: I wouldn’t say it’s necessarily a negative thing, though there are definitely downsides to our rapid consumption of imagery—cycles of repetition that aren’t helped by algorithms, for instance. A lot of that proliferation encouraged me to be creative, and to take risks and really focus on finishing a photograph: making sure it was strong and singular, and could hold its own if I posted it. I still remember the excitement I had at that stage for working on a photograph, posting it, and the electric feel of it disappearing off into the world. Flickr, Tumblr, Instagram and the like all come and go, but they still remain exciting places to have that instant exchange with people that just wasn’t available before the digital age.

Camille: A lot of your images simultaneously reveal and conceal the subject, pulling some details to the fore and obscuring others through light and shadow. Can you tell me a little about your path to this form of image-making? How did you discover that images can communicate more by showing less?

Jack: To be honest, a lot of the path to finding my practice has been making lots of mistakes, and through those mistakes, realizing the kind of work that you want to make and what excites you the most. For me, that’s imagery that is stylized, with heavy blacks and strong colors. I’ve always been drawn to photographers that push the medium to do startling things. I quite like feeling the heavy hand of the author at play.

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Brett Walker, who tutored me early on, always encouraged us to remove anything from the frame that wasn't important or was distracting, and to really focus on our cropping. And over time, I've realized that you can say just as much without providing the full context of the scene, and that simplicity can be quite powerful.

Camille: Your work mines the tension between perception and imagination, leaving a lot open to the viewer's interpretation. How does the idea of subconscious symbolism—dreams, Rorschach inkblots, and the like—inform your approach to photography, if at all?

Jack: It's always interesting to see what people read into my work; this idea is never something I am consciously pursuing, but I could definitely see it as a throughline to read my work. What's important is that I leave space for the viewer's own imagination, thoughts, and prejudices to flourish. There needs to be a window for someone else to step in and bring their own viewpoint. If I give you all the context and my version to the fore then there is a lot less space for nuance, hence why nothing is titled or captioned in the exhibition. My hope is that the less I give you, the more you will bring to it.

Camille: What is the role of chance in your creative process? What about mistakes, human error, intuition?

Jack: It definitely plays a huge role in many of my favorite photographs. As much as I can have control over a situation, the best things often come to you spontaneously and are totally unplanned. This could be a person walking into frame, the randomness of someone's movement, or the way the sun can shift and change a space. The most important thing you can do as a young photographer, artist, or musician is give yourself room to experiment and stumble into mistakes as they will teach you just as much as your successes.

Camille: I read that as a photographer, you're largely self-taught. How did you hone your eye? Do you think the results would have been different, had you come upon photography through formal training?

Jack: Who knows, to be honest! I feel very fortunate to have found my way to the industry via an English degree, having escaped the formal training route. I don't think there's any correct pathway though, and I am sure I would have loved studying photography.

The only thing I will say though is that when I meet students, they often over-theorize, and aren't taking as many photographs because they feel they need to justify it. That's always my first question to people starting out: how many photographs are they taking?

Camille: If you had to give one piece of advice to aspiring artists, what would it be—and has that advice changed in today's technological landscape?

Jack: I always deliver with my advice with a caveat, which is, please feel free to ignore it. Not all advice is universal, and things that have worked for me don't always have to apply to someone else. With that in mind, here is a bit of a list that I always hold in my head.

Take lots of photographs, hundreds and hundreds. If you want to make color photographs, photograph color. Always be polite and kind. Don't be pompous. Shoot on everything and anything—iPhone, digital, film, it doesn't matter what made it, as long as you're pushing yourself to create. Don't look at what work is being made now, look further back and outside of the industry for your inspiration—and good research is really important. Also, there is no rush, despite what Instagram presents to you. You are much better off taking your time, because one strong project is better than three rushed ones.

Camille: What, to you, makes for a compelling image?

Jack: I am really drawn to singular images that can stand alone. The subject, style and format can shift, but photographs that can hold my gaze are the ones I come back to most.

Jack Davison's latest exhibition, Photographic Etchings is on view through November 12 at Cob Gallery in London.

