

I've taken too many photos

At this year's Hyères festival, the presentation of the work was sometimes as inventive as the photography itself

The Hyères Festival of Fashion and Photography is held each year at the Villa Noailles in the small town of Hyères on the Cote d'Azur. The house is a modernist classic commissioned by Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles in 1924. Notable patrons of the arts, the de Noailles approached designers, artists and filmmakers to help furnish their villa and supported and funded musicians, dance troops and fashion designers throughout their lives, so it is an apt venue for a festival of fashion and photography. and it's a particularly appropriate place to look at applied and commissioned art.

Like the de Noailles, the Hyères festival also hopes to nurture young talent, so it includes two exhibitions of emerging photographers and fashion designers. Both are pitched as competitions and there is one winner in each, but the opportunity to show their work and discuss it with the professional juries makes getting to Hyères a reward in itself for the shortlisted. The festival is also generous to its winners – the winning photographer from one year gets a solo show at the next, for example, and there's a commission to photograph the next year's fashion collections. For 2012, that meant Dutch photographer Anouk Kruithof had the exhibition, and Ina Jang shot the fashion.

If there's a back-and-forth relationship between art, creativity and commerce, it's one that Jason Evans has successfully exploited throughout his career. His exhibition, *Commercial Photography*, gathered images shot on commission, from his break-through fashion story, *Strictly*,



published by i-D in 1991, to much more recent portraits of musicians such as Keiran Hebden. Despite the name and subject of the show, Evans prefers not to distinguish between so-called personal and commissioned work, arguing that all his photography is creative and important to him, and this came across in his exuberant photographs of jewellery-eating hamburgers and prints made from

hole-punched negatives.

Evans opted to show his work at modest size and pinned directly to the wall, minimising the photograph as object and emphasising the images as images, able to move from one context to another. His layout did something similar, each shot visually linking to the next despite having been taken years apart on very different commissions. A simple

photograph of a white line painted on grass led to one of spoons lying on grass from Simian Mobile Disco's first album cover, for example, which was followed by a shot of a woman in a green dress, and so on. For Evans, this visual unfolding suggested the Surrealist game 'exquisite corpse', another link to ideas of playfulness and to the de Noailles, who supported artists like Dali and Man Ray. ▷



◀ Facing page: One of Jason Evans' portraits from his Strictly fashion story for i-D, 1991. Stylist: Simon Foxton.

◀ Left: Deathburger, Hanatsubaki, 2011 by Evans (far left). Art direction: Masayoshi Nakajo; and Inez van Lamsweerde & Vinoodh Matadin's Well Basically Basuco is Coke Mixed with Kerosine, The Face, 1994.

▼ Below: Anouk Kruihof's 'I've taken too many photos/I've never taken a photo' installation at the Tour des Templiers in Hyères. Visitors are given mirrors to view the photographs hung from the ceiling of the building. © Olivier Amsellem, 2012



↳ Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin's exhibition promised a similar insight into creative working practices, projecting 666 images from their editorial work on one wall and their more recent fashion films and pop videos opposite. Van Lamsweerde and Matadin made their name in the early 1990s with futuristic fashion stories that used then then-cutting-edge Quantel Paintbox software to create super-slick models, or superimpose them onto unlikely real-life backgrounds (as in *Well Basically Basuco is Coke Mixed with Kerosine*, 1994). But in recent years they have moved towards more celebratory images of fashion and portraiture. Their videos show how far the mainstream has moved towards their once outlandish aesthetic,

meanwhile, with five 'fashion films' shot for Lady Gaga's *You and I* track showing the popstar as a mermaid, or wearing a mechanical arm. For me though, this exhibition felt like a slightly wasted opportunity, and I would have liked more connections between the films and stills.

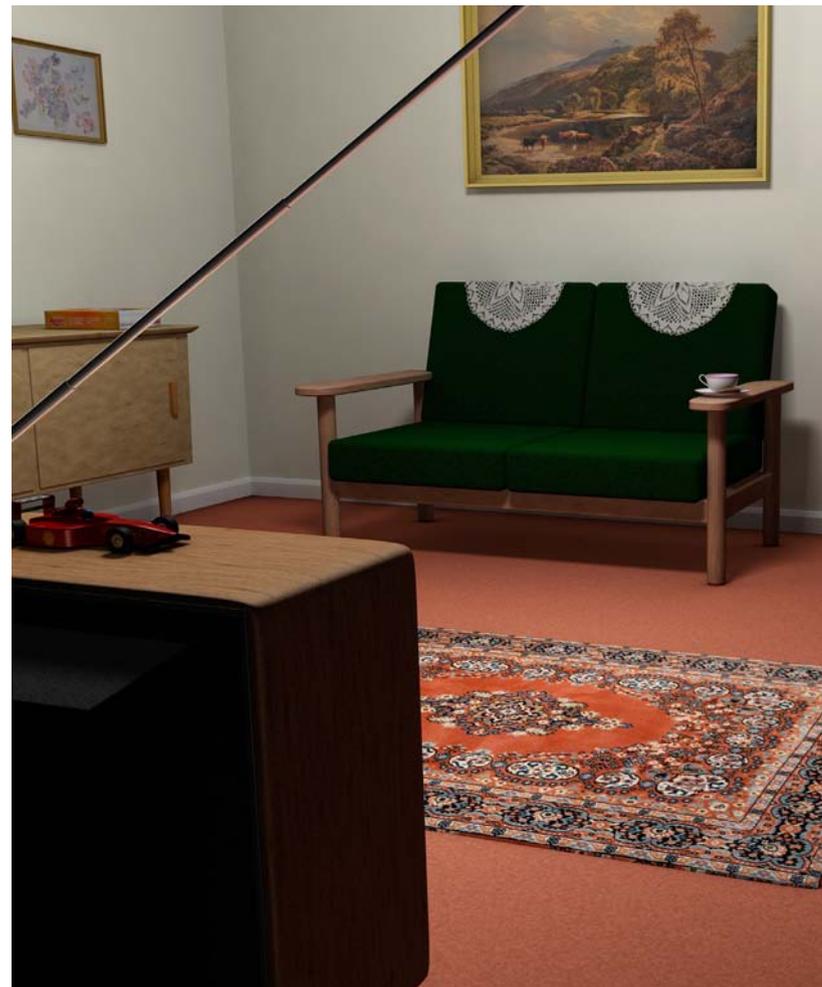
Anouk Kruithof took staging to the next level, fixing her images in a lattice-like ceiling inside the stunning 12th century *Tour des Templiers* in central Hyères. The first thing visitors do on entering the building is look up at its vaulted ceiling – so it was the obvious thing to do, she said. This layout also fitted the spirit of the exhibition by emphasising the mass of images over individual shots. Deciding she had taken too many photographs, Kruithof stuck posters

▼ Below, left: From Akira Somekawa's *Houescapes* (2010) series of cut-up photographs of Japanese houses. The series name blends 'house' with the theme of an 'escape' from modern life.

over her neighbourhood in New York looking for someone who had never taken a picture. Having found a young man called Harrison, she asked him to go through 300 images languishing on her hard drive and pick out 80 for the show. Worried about her viewers' necks, she then provided mirrors to look up at the lattice, allowing them to create their own frame of reference, and commenting on the second-hand nature of our interaction with on-screen images. Witty and democratic, this was a nice exhibition to put on in such a central location.

▼ Below, right: Richard Kolker's *The Game Work* from his *Lost in Space* series (2008). Kolker uses 3D modelling techniques to create mundane rather than fantastical depictions of everyday life

Back up at the Villa Noailles, the ten emerging photographers' work was on show in three large rooms in the basement. With exposed brickwork and vaulted ceilings, it's a space with a lot of personality, and some of the photographers came off better than others – Akira Somekawa's enigmatic exhibition of old Japanese houses was shown on two opposing walls, for example, with Manuel Vazquez's shots of Spanish commuters providing an incongruous break in between. For me, Olga Cafiero's images worked best as an installation, gathered together into



clusters linked by visual correspondences. For her, a dog and a grinding machine go together because they're similar colours, and bags of bones with plants because they're similar shapes. Her project is called Curioso and I found it intriguing.

The photographers' exhibitions weren't intended as the final say on their work though – they were present and happy to chat throughout the festival, showing larger portfolios of images alongside the prints. Florian van Roekel deliberately opted not to display the 'greatest hits' from his acclaimed book *How Terry Likes His Coffee*, for example, instead selecting a handful of shots illustrating central themes and hoping to draw attention to the publication. It was a brave approach, but his delicate look at

“Kruithof stuck posters over her neighbourhood looking for someone who'd never taken a picture”

▼ Below: From Jessica Eaton's Cubes for Albers and LeWitt series which, she says, “explores the possibilities of manipulating time, space, perception and, in particular, the additive system of colour”. In reality,

Dutch office life is well observed and deserved to win the LVMH Digital Photography Award.

Namsa Leuba also picked up a prize, a Photo Global scholarship to The School of Visual Arts in New York. She was exhibiting a project called *YaKalaBen*, in which she created living representations of sacred fetishes in Guinea-Conakry, and while I liked it I was more impressed with the three books she was displaying, showing everything from life in small-town Poland to present-day re-enactments of the

her subject is monochromatic; the photographs “use a set of cubes and ground options painted white, two tones of grey, and black.” Eaton won the Photography Jury Grand Prize

Black Panthers' activities. I wasn't surprised to see the latter, *What We Want What We Believe*, pick up a nomination for the International Photobook Dummy Award 2012.

Hanna Putz's exhibition had a great premise – how to shoot people without posing – but for me the project is still in its formative stages; so far the images don't cohere, but it'll be interesting to see where it goes. Perhaps similarly, Richard Kolker's 2D shots of computer-generated 3D images have started to take a new and more abstract direction, providing an increasingly oblique look at a world still dominated by big production shoot 'em up video games. Brea Souders already has a distinct new voice (her work is on the cover of this issue of CR), which she has used to bring together a wide variety of images exploring her European ancestry. Yasuyuki Takagi's *Gardens & Forest* images are black-and-white shots of wild woods and urban yards, and are technically accomplished but for me a little dry. You can't win them all.

It was left to Jessica Eaton's confident, ambitious series *Cubes for Albers and LeWitt* to win the big award, The Photography Jury Grand Prize, and deservedly so. Using simple white cubes and coloured gels she's testing analogue photography to its limits, repeatedly exposing the same negative to get the maximum information out of it. Eaton plans to make a book of the project but says she needs to work on it for at least another couple of years, so it's good to see her getting some of the support she needs. Good job, too, that the Hyères festival is such fun; if creativity and commissions can go hand in hand, it seems business and pleasure can also be mixed. [\[a\]](#)

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