

q feature: SCOTT CLARE

an interview by gabriel tabasco

Hi Scott. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I grew up in Australia in the 70s and 80s, which was such a cool time to be a teenager. I worked in the insurance industry by day, and by night I was a photographer and budding actor. When my partner got an offshore job in the Cayman Islands, I got to leave my office job and focus more on my photography. Then when we moved to Hong Kong, I went to university to get a Fine Arts degree in photography, which I have just finished.

Congratulations on finishing your degree. What inspired you to be a photographer?

I have always found the Herb Ritts portraits from the 80s and 90s, with rich grey tones and artistic nudes, to be beautiful. Once I bought a Herb Ritts diary (I think I was about 20) and used it as my work diary in a conservative office job. When the image of the nude twins was in the open facing page I had to hide it. Shots like 'Fred with Tyres' made me want to conjure something special in a photograph instead of shooting what I had access to at the time, which was a point and shoot film camera and my friends. I also didn't know myself very well in my early 20s, and to be honest, coming out openly as gay in my late 20s and living my truth as a gay man still inspires my photography, even now I am middle aged.



Which photographers are your inspiration and why?

I have always admired Ellen Von Unwerth for her high contrast sexy burlesque imagery, which are very empowering in a feminist way. Her Beyonce and Claudia Schiffer shots are fabulous. David La Chappelle has a style I wish I could emulate; those richly coloured sets and scenarios with different celebrities. Personally, I am leaning a lot to black and white photography so my heroes are definitely Horst P Horst, George Hoynigen-Huene, Robert Mapplethorpe and Helmut Newton. They owned their styles and made it work commercially for them.

What are the themes you like to incorporate into your images?

My first stop is always an element of erotica. That can be through implied nudity, or actual nudity, or no nudity at all. I try to build on it from there. I enjoy the moment in a shoot when the model and the camera establish that 'conversation' that shows they are relaxed with the scenario and can lead the camera to where they are comfortable going. I may suggest poses and angles, but I am always watching the model's comfort level to make sure I am not pushing them somewhere they do not want to go. The other themes I always want are 'consent' and 'empowerment' - all my shoots, no matter the concept or aesthetic, should show those.

What do you look for in a model?

I have been enjoying shooting nudes of everyday gay men, which, takes more courage than we give credit for. These guys come along feeling unsure and nervous and leave the shoot walking ten feet tall. That is a form of modelling. To me we are all models when we step in front of a lens. Also, I love seeing that wow factor come through that we all have (when we let it). If it's a professional/commercial shoot there is usually a brief/product to sell and that's where the six pack and textbook good looks come into it ha-ha. When it comes to working gigs like that, you do need to be able to work with someone who has a work ethic and is willing to relax when things go slow and bring it when things speed up. But also go with the flow when things go wrong.

What do you dislike in models?

To me the most unattractive quality is a bad attitude, lack of professionalism and lack of care for all the other people working on the shoot, not just the photographer. And it can come across in the

communications leading up to the shoot, so I always find it a bit of a red flag if that attitude comes across. Also, when regular work is quiet you can create some interesting experiments to hopefully test out new lighting and get more work, and you will only call someone who is great to work with for those opportunities. Those experimental shoots can sometimes yield great results.

What was the funniest moment in your photography career?

I am struggling to think of funny stuff ha-ha. I take it all so seriously I think the funny stuff happened and I missed it! I usually try to be the fun one on a shoot to keep it light - I love a happy atmosphere, so maybe I was the funniest moment? God, I hope so!

What was the worst/most cringe-worthy moment in your photography career so far?

I used to shoot weddings to make money (it's so stressful it could usually pay well though). I gave it up the day my close friend was getting married for several reasons. She was marrying out of a horrible family, and I remember trying to get them to stand close together after the service and they wouldn't stand with her. (I couldn't wait to see her free from those assholes). Her parents also withheld half my payment because my makeup artist was 'too gay,' and they didn't think I should be paid for my work. Even though they had okayed the estimate earlier. After spending a day with those assholes, and seeing the bride in tears (because she was a good friend and wanted me to get paid - she ended up paying the rest without being asked). The very thought of them makes me cringe and my skin crawl. Awful people.

Another wedding I shot in Brisbane involved the bride and maid of honour in a physical altercation the night before. They were frenemies and the bride had the maid of honour by the hair and was banging her head on the table. The next day I found the strange mother-in-law going through the drawers looking for things to steal. Weddings? NEVER!!

What saucy stories from photo shoots can you tell us? What happened?

I love that word 'saucy' - it perfectly describes a spice of life ha ha. As you know I shoot nudes. I was recently living in Georgia (USA) for six months and I met a wonderful go-go boy who danced at the local gay club. We set up a shoot and we climbed a neighbour's fence and shot him semi-nude in an abandoned backyard amongst all kinds of yard equipment. When we got back inside and began shooting the underwear section, he got hard, and I can happily say that his partners are very lucky people ha-ha. He was just smiling with an enormous boner. When a guy gets hard on a shoot his first word is usually 'sorry' but once I show them I am perfectly fine with it, that we all get hard sometimes, it usually relaxes them.

If a shoot takes a turn and goes further into sexual imagery, I make sure the model sees the images right there in case they change their mind and do not want those images to exist.

I think it's very risky to cross that line in a shoot where anything takes place other than the shoot. It's always flattering to be hit on, but if a model propositions me, it exposes me to certain liabilities



that photographers need to be very careful about (no matter how sexual/erotic the scenario gets). But it can be very rewarding in a shoot if the images are allowed to be explicit. I have had models relax and get hard, even cum, and with their permission I keep shooting. There are some magical and elegant fine art images showing ejaculation, close ups of body parts the model can't easily see (usually). I once shot a guy wanking and cumming in silhouette by a window and it's so majestic. There is such a magnificent beauty in how our bodies are designed, whether it's to work, to fuck, to sleep, to exercise, we all look different, yet we have the same components. As we grow older our individual components change in our own unique ways, and I find that fascinating and beautiful. With the advent of OnlyFans type sites, you can see people of all ages enjoying showing their sexuality, showing what our wonderful bodies can do.



Where do you want to go from here?

I would love to be renowned as an erotic/fine art photographer along the lines of Mapplethorpe, and Eric Monterrosa so I plan on working more towards that goal now I am back home. I am so fortunate to be friends with working photographers in Hong Kong so I will be looking forward to networking more.

You're from Australia, so if you had to recommend one place for a visitor to see, which would it be? I recommend visiting Central Australia, particularly Uluru. The light, the night skies, the thick red sand, it's so unlike it is in the cities and it's good for the soul to be out where you can just 'be.'

A bit about you:

Favourite city: Sydney

Favourite food: My Husband's cooking (ha-ha)

Favourite singer/band: Marcella Detroit, Chris Cornell

Find out more about Scott here:

Website: www.scottyclare.com

Instagram: www.instagram.com/scottyclarephotography

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