

MILES ALDRIDGE

Biography

'Miles sees a colour coordinated, graphically pure, hard-edged reality.'

- David Lynch

Miles Aldridge rose to prominence in the mid-nineties with his arresting, highly stylised photographs with references to film noir, art history and pop culture. An acclaimed colourist, he renders elaborate mise-en-scènes in a palette of vibrant acidic hues. These glamorous, frequently eroticised images probe society's idealised notions of domestic bliss where sinister undercurrents swirl beneath a flawless surface. Aldridge has worked prolifically for more than twenty-five years, and today he remains one of the few photographers still shooting predominately on film. His creative output encompasses large-scale c-type prints, Polaroids, screenprints, photogravures and drawings.

Born in London in 1964, the son of famed art director and illustrator Alan Aldridge, his interest in photography began at an early age when he was given a Nikon F camera by his father. He went on to study graphic design at Central Saint Martins, graduating with a BA in 1987. Aldridge initially worked as an illustrator and music video director, before turning his attention to photography. In 1996 he began working with Franca Sozzani, the legendary editor-in-chief of *Vogue Italia*, and their boundary-pushing collaboration would continue for twenty years. In addition to the many international editions of *Vogue*, Aldridge's images have featured regularly in prestigious titles including *Harper's Bazaar*, *Numéro*, *W*, *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*.

Aldridge develops each new photographic narrative by rendering his initial thoughts in ink or pencil sketches with washes of watercolour and pastel. These drawings and storyboards are an essential early stage in his creative process. He believes that 'fiction and theatricality can be more truthful than documenting reality' and translates his sketches into meticulously arranged compositions to create images reminiscent of film stills: frames snatched from a broader story. Aldridge notes that many of his favourite moments in cinema are, as he describes, '*close-ups of a woman's face thinking*', and he shares Hitchcock's ability to create powerful moments of suspense, turning viewers into voyeurs. In Aldridge's *Chromo Thriller* (2012) there is a palpable resonance with David Lynch's neo-noir mystery *Blue Velvet*, where immaculate façades hide darkly strange stories. As one author has noted: '*Aldridge's female protagonists recall the glamour and splendour of Isabella Rossellini's character whilst at the same time remaining suggestive of something more sinister.*'

Only rarely does he allow the real world to encroach upon the imagined realm. Through his lens, even reality appears artificial. In the series *Capital Gains* (2007) and *Open Tour* (2008) the cities of Washington DC and Paris look cleaner and sleeker than ever before. In *The Last Range of Colours* (2007), a lone figure in a children's playground evokes both the Technicolor splendour of *The Wizard of Oz* and the haunting dreamscape of a Giorgio de Chirico painting.

A recurring theme throughout Aldridge's oeuvre is the false promise of luxury. Psychedelic interiors are furnished with the trappings of mid-century suburban comfort: gleaming kitchen appliances, candy-coloured telephones and well-groomed pets denote success.

The work conflates historic and modern motifs and makes subtle reference to the art historical canon. The project *Immaculée* (2007) points to Catholic depictions of female saints in ecstasy, whilst his portraits of *Lily Cole* (2005) and *Maisie Williams* (2017) draw inspiration from Northern Renaissance masters such as Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein. Pop Art tropes feature predominantly: Coca-Cola logos; *3-D* (2010); *A Family Portrait #14* (2011), soup cans and tomato ketchup bottles; *A Drop of Red #2* (2001); *First Impression* (2006) all form a striking part of his visual lexicon.

His fascination with art history led Aldridge to undertake projects with several significant contemporary artists including Maurizio Cattelan, Gilbert & George and Harland Miller. For the project (*after Cattelan*) (2016), he was invited by Cattelan to respond to the Italian artist's exhibition, *Not Afraid of Love*, in the grand neoclassical rooms of the Monnaie de Paris. The resulting series of c-type photographs depicts statuesque nudes dominating Cattelan's hyperreal sculptures in a series of absurdist tableaux. A second series, titled *Love Always and Love All Ways (after Gilbert & George)* (2016), was made with the British duo at their London townhouse. Drawing on the conventions of Victorian melodrama, Aldridge devised a series centred around the story of an enigmatic young visitor staying at the house for the weekend. In a further nod to Victoriana, the images were printed using the nineteenth-century photogravure process, whereby an etched copper plate produces highly detailed intaglio prints. The monotone prints were augmented with blocks of bold colour and hand-painted details to create a contemporary aesthetic.

His most recent collaboration was with Harland Miller, known for his paintings of imaginary book covers that were partly inspired by Alan Aldridge's 1960s designs for Penguin paperbacks. In a satisfying symmetry, Aldridge transformed Miller's paintings into real books, used as props in his photoshoot. The resulting screenprints evoke the grainy colour supplements of Aldridge's youth and were published by Poligrafa, Barcelona's renowned fine art publisher, who launched them at the 2017 edition of Art Basel Miami Beach. Poligrafa went on to publish the subsequent screenprint series *New Utopias*, which they exhibited at the 2018 edition of Art Basel. Most recently, *Tan Lines*, one of Aldridge's largest screenprints to date, was unveiled by Poligrafa at the 2019 edition of The Armory Show, New York.

Aldridge's major museum exhibitions include his current retrospective *Virgin Mary. Supermarkets. Popcorn. Photographs 1999 - 2020* at Fotografiska, Stockholm, solo shows at The Lumiere Brothers Photography Centre, Moscow (2019) and OCA, São Paulo (2015) and *I Only Want You to Love Me* at Somerset House, London (2013). In 2014, he was commissioned by Tate Britain to create a photographic installation in response to Mark Gertler's painting *Merry-Go-Round* (1916). London's National Portrait Gallery houses a large collection of Aldridge's portraits and his work is held in prestigious museums and institutions around the world including the V&A and British Museum in London, the Fondation Carmignac and the Palais Galliera in Paris, the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Massachusetts and the International Centre of Photography in New York.

Selected Public and Private Collections

National Portrait Gallery, London
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
The British Museum, London
International Centre of Photography, New York
Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Massachusetts
Fondation Carmignac, Porquerolles
Palais Galliera Musée de la Mode de la ville de Paris
Nicola Erni Collection, Zug

Solo Exhibitions

2021

Virgin Mary. Supermarkets. Popcorn. Photographs 1990–2020 Fotografiska Museum, New York

2020–21

Virgin Mary. Supermarkets. Popcorn. Photographs 1990–2020 Fotografiska Museum, Stockholm

2020

The Taste of Colour Lumiere Brothers Gallery, Moscow

2019

Screenprints, Polaroids and Drawings Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich

2018

This Side of Paradise Huxley Parlour Gallery, London

Art History Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

2018

This Side of Paradise Huxley Parlour Gallery, London

Art History Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

2017

(after) Lyndsey Ingram, London

2016

Please return Polaroid Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

Please return Polaroid Lyndsey Ingram, London

2015

The Pure Wonder Fahey/Klein Gallery, Los Angeles

A Dazzling Beauty OCA, São Paulo

2014

The Age of Pleasure Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich

One Black & White and Twenty Four Colour Photographs Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

Miles Aldridge's Carousel: Lithograph and Screenprints, Drawings and Photographs Sims Reed Gallery, London

2013

Short Breaths Brancolini Grimaldi, London

I Only Want You to Love Me Somerset House, London

CAROUSEL Brancolini Grimaldi, London

I Only Want You to Love Me Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

2010

13 Women CONTRIBUTED Studio For The Arts, Berlin

New Work Brancolini Grimaldi, Florence

Kristen As seen by Miles Aldridge and Chantal Joffe Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

2009

Pictures for Photographs Collette, Paris

Pictures for Photographs Steven Kasher Gallery, New York

Doll Face Hamiltons Gallery, London

2008

Acid Candy Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

2007

The Cabinet Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

Selected Group Exhibitions

2019

Beyond Fashion Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography, Hong Kong

Pure 'Joy' curated by Invisible-Exports Western Exhibitions, Chicago

2018

The Milky Way Lia Rumma Gallery, Naples

2017

Fashion and Politics in Vogue Italia Photo Vogue Festival, Milan

The Critic as Artist Reading Museum, Reading

2015

Coming into Fashion: A Century of Photography at Condé Nast, Norton Museum of Art West Palm Beach

Sleepless – The Bed in History and Contemporary Art 21er Haus of the Belvedere, Vienna

2014

Slaves of Mimesis: Nine Years On 23rd Street Steven Kasher gallery, New York

The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier: From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk Barbican Art Gallery, London

Beauty of Darkness II Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

2009

Weird Beauty: Fashion Photography Now ICP, New York

2008

Traumfrauen – Beauty in the 21st Century Deichtorhallen, Hamburg

2004

The Beauty of Darkness Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam

2002

The Archeology of Elegance Deichtorhallen, Hamburg