

FURIES MAGAZINE

A PUNK REVOLUTION IN MAGAZINE FORM

Featured Artist: Jonathan Brooks

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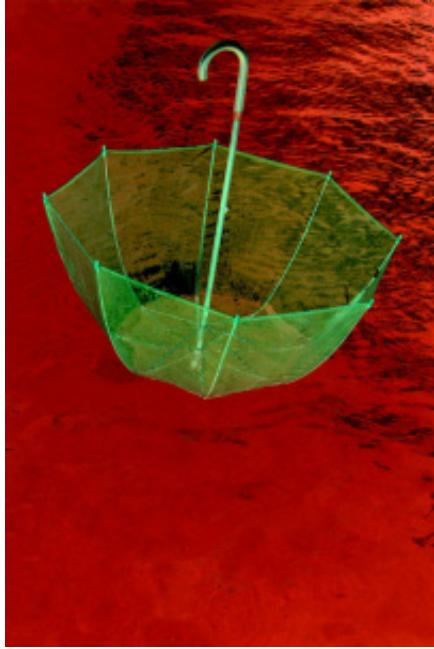
I'd like you to meet Jonathan Brooks – photographer.

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Furies Magazine: When did you get your start as a photographer?

Jonathan Brooks: *Late in high school I had a couple of friends that took photography classes and I soon found myself their subject. Being artistic in nature I totally threw myself into the art directing aspects of those shoots. Years later, on a trip to England, I found myself grabbing my friend's camera and experimenting behind the lens by taking a few shots of completely contrived and crazy scenarios as a way of rebelling against the traditional touristy shots people take (which I then detested). Soon after, I picked up some tips from a glamour photographer I was dating and I became obsessed with portrait photography. I then when back to college to study Advertising and Fine Art Photography.*

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FM: What inspires you?

JB: *I'm inspired by the beauty around me and by creating beauty. I love truth, drama, mystery, fantasy, glamour, and entertainment. I've always been fascinated with Black & White images, they have a way of boiling things down to the most basic of elements and sometimes can take an okay photo to a remarkable piece of work. I learned using traditional film photography and with the advent of digital I sometimes shoot in Color knowing full well that the end result will be in Black & White. It takes a completely unique approach and way of thinking to create an image that is strong in both. If it makes sense... I also attack my Color Photography with my Black & White sensibility.*

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FM: What grabs your attention?

JB: *A strong classic image that makes you think or gets stuck in your head. I'm a stickler for composition and lighting, but also love when you know how to break the rules and still make it work. The old adage "you gotta know the rules before you can break them" is oh so true. Show me something I haven't seen or show me something I've seen in a way I haven't. I despise technically perfect photos that you've seen done a billion times or that you forget about seconds later...it's gotta be memorable and stand out.*

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FM: What types of projects do you look for?

JB: *I tend to stay away from projects where someone wants a photographer to come in and create an image or images to their precise specifications. I like having trust and creative control. Not to say that I don't like input or suggestions, but ultimately I need to be the driver. I enjoy challenges as well, like when someone comes to me and says they've never had a decent portrait taken of themselves. Or trying to create work that helps create awareness of a cause near and dear to me, while staying true to myself artistically. I'm*



currently working on a collaborative project called the Collective Stream of Consciousness, where each photographer takes the next photo in a series that will ultimately tell a story. Not knowing what image you will follow or where the story will take you makes the project fun and exciting.



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FM: Do you prefer models that are more like rag dolls or models that have their own ideas?

JB: I think somewhere in the middle is good because either of those extremes could definitely be a nightmare.

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What's your work space like?

JB: LOL... work space? What work space? I'm very untraditional in that way. Whatever is around me becomes my workspace. I love shooting in spontaneous locations and can create studio looking shots in places others would never dream of. Sometimes a lack of work space makes a photographer think more creatively because there is no alternative. I'm infamous for concentrating so much on physically creating the shot that when it comes time to actually taking the picture I'm yelling "where the fuck is my camera?"

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FM: Do you have a place that you escape to when you really need to focus?

JB: A great movie in the middle of a rainy afternoon in an empty theater is relaxing and charge you up to take on creative work.

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FM: What kind of music do you listen to when you're working?

JB: I find music inspiring and always have something new to get the creative juices flowing. I'm an avid music buff with an extremely large cd collection and I always have something to fit a mood. I love to turn on my subjects to new tunes they've never heard before because it always reminds them of shooting with me. I've been known to turn youngsters on to Blondie and elders on to some up-n-coming group they didn't know existed. I listen to everything from Patsy Cline and Elvis to Grace Jones and the B-52's to Chris Isaak and Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers. I grew up with the sounds of the 70's and 80's, but think every era has their musical



geniuses and I use them to the fullest extent. And when I'm dealing with someone who needs a boost in the self-esteem department, I can surely remedy it with Bette Midler's *I'm Beautiful*.

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FM: What has been one of your favorite or most memorable projects?

JB: I think having the photos and story detailing the renovation of my condo appear in a national magazine was one of my favorite moments. And I was just recently part of Artists Wanted's Art Takes Time Square and had my work up in New York's Time Square, that surely is memorable.

You can find Jonathan's work on his [tumblr](#) or you can purchase prints in his [Etsy shop](#).



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