

PHOTOGRAPHY
ARCHITECTURE

EYES IN EDITION 19

ENGLAND



**Eyes In Photography - Architecture
The Versatility of Adrian Wilson**

I love having been given a life where I get the opportunity to see things and then express them in a way others can also enjoy. If my life continues in that way, what more could anyone dream for?



For more than 25 years, Adrian Wilson has been considered one of the leading architectural photographers in the entire world, working for impressive clients such as Apple, as well as many of the world's foremost architects. There is so much more to Adrian Wilson, however; his creativity seems to know no bounds.

A native of Manchester, England, Adrian Wilson claims he had no aspirations to be a photographer at all until age 18 and has no formal art education. His father and brother were graphic designers, to whom he credits his "graphic sensibility compositional skills." His mother, an extremely hard-worker running both an antique shop and a catering business, gets Mr. Wilson's credit for his insatiable work ethic.

Mr. Wilson's career really began in the early 1980s when, on a whim, he knocked on a door titled simply "Disco Mirror." Over the next 13 years he worked for the company, shooting a mind-blowing 2,000 venues. In 2003 clients urged him to move to New York City, and he currently lives and works out of Manhattan. His current client list includes aforementioned Apple, as well as Saks Fifth Avenue, Victoria's Secret, Chanel and Architectural Digest, amongst others.

Adrian Wilson is certainly an individual in his work. Although he was one of the first to combine computer graphics and photography, he continues to base his shots on "old-school" composition, preferring not to use digital editing programs such as Photoshop. In 2009, he continued to innovate by using video to accompany his stunning still images of architecture and design.

Mr. Wilson does not limit himself to the disciplines of photography and videography. Wilson is also a well-respected expert in the field of graphic art, and frequently lectures on the subject. In addition, as if that weren't a lot already, Adrian Wilson is also a renowned fashion and design writer, expert, and lecturer.

Mr. Wilson can be described as a self-proclaimed "creative thinker" who owns patented inventions, has pitched a TV show, and even created a Native American-themed restaurant concept. Adrian Wilson, through his enduring career of incredible and innovative thinking, has certainly assured himself a spot in the history books.

When asked about his own innovation, Mr. Wilson responded, "I really enjoy being myself . . ." This clearly shows an outlook on life just as inspiring and unique as Adrian Wilson himself.

You can learn more about Wilson and see his work by visiting his Website at interiorphotography.net.

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A Conversation with Adrian Wilson

As a child, what did you want to become [profession-wise]?

I am always proud to say I am fluent in English and Childish, so I guess I am still a child. But when I was young, I really had no idea until I chose photography when I was 18. I didn't even study art in school.

In which town did you grow up?

I grew up in a small village just outside of Manchester, England where I could be a proper kid, climbing trees and making dams in streams. I always had the big city nearby for bigger adventures.

Which basic elements of creativity did your family teach you?

My father and two elder brothers were graphic designers, so I definitely picked up a graphic sensibility and compositional skill from them. My mother was always keeping busy; running everything from an antiques shop to a catering business. So I attribute my work ethic to her genes.

What inspires you in the job of being an architectural photographer?

It was really by accident. I was the first artist to combine computer graphics and photography back in the early 1980s. One day while leaving an ad agency, I was curious enough to knock on a door I saw titled, "Disco Mirror." I ended up shooting around 2,000 bars, clubs, hotels and restaurants for them as a freelancer for 13 years. That's where I honed my skills.

Do you have a favorite photographer or architect yourself?

My favorite photographer would be Andreas Feininger and my favorite architecture firm would be Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for their many classic buildings and attention to detail.

"He is also a renowned fashion and design writer, expert, and lecturer."

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How did you get the idea for creating your photographs?

I get to see so many amazing vantage points in the city as part of my work shooting interiors. I wanted to record the views people sit with their back to or have become blasé about.

Do you think your background has influenced your current architectural photographic style or design ideas? If so, what specific element(s) in your background is most pervasive?

Again, I think my work is very graphic, so the rectangular, straight lines of New York City streets, buildings and interiors provide me with endless subject matter.

Do you create artwork in other disciplines?

I am a creative thinker and photography is just a part of the manifestation of that. I paint, collect typography, have patented inventions, write, developed a restaurant concept, pitched a TV show and, most creative of all, I have a sense of humor.

Do you follow any philosophical or psychological approach in your architectural photography?

Interesting question. I would say I have enlightenment. My heart, my brain and my eyes are open to the world around me and the more open I am, the more I see and the better are my images.

Are you ever afraid you will run out of inspiration and creativity in your job?

Unless time stands still or I do, there will always be the stimulation from within or my surroundings.

In which way do you consider yourself an innovative creator?

I really enjoy being myself. There are too many people who try to emulate or aspire to something or someone else. I am very content, yet I am always pushing myself to improve. If I have an idea I always do something with it. I am innovative because I am individual, without excuse or reasoning.

What is the most difficult aspect of your job?

Paperwork. It sometimes takes me six months to invoice people.

What is the most fun part of your job?

It is really just meeting the most interesting people from all walks of life. From CEOs to creative directors to cleaners, I love hearing a person's story.

Do you expect your approach to your work to change in the future?

My approach won't, but I will have to adapt. I have been shooting video for about three years. At some point, computer renderings of interiors will replace what I do now, just as it did for car photographers. The future never lets anyone down or causes any problems, so I concentrate more on the present, as I find it makes the future better when it arrives.

Do you have any other creative ambitions or dreams to which you aspire?

I have been working on a Native American restaurant idea for about 8 years now, and it would be tremendous if I could play some small part in giving a culture the recognition it deserves.

Do you embrace the changes in your industry regarding social media and technology influences?

I was the first interior photographer in New York to shoot videos alongside the still shoot, and definitely understand how technology has affected photography. Before digital, the most common format was 4:6, as in 35mm photos, and the standard lens was 55mm. Now the most common format is around 4:3 for iPads, cell phones, monitors, etc. Cell phone cameras are more like a 28mm view, so people think of a wider angle and squarer format as the normal. My work fits into that change very well.

In terms of social media, I am a Google+ "Suggested User" with around 70,000 followers, but I don't really find that it is anything more than a way to share interesting images. Ninety-five percent of my work comes from personal recommendations rather than Web searches or social media posts.

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In which way do you think design, architecture and photography are different and/or similar?

I always think it is ironic that architects take a 2D plan and make it 3D, whereas my plan is to take a 3D building and make it 2D. Architecture is a series of boundaries or frames, which is similar to a photograph, but the viewer can obviously change their viewpoint, whereas a photographer dictates exactly what the viewer sees. Graphic design is more like photography and interior design is more like painting, where the mood and emotion is more important than the object.

Do you have any preferences for an artist and/or for creators of artistic work?

Other than Andreas Feininger, I really follow few people's work. After 26 years as a photographer and despite being asked, I have never exhibited my work. This year was the first time I finally agreed to work on a book for my good friend, Gregg Lorberbaum. I have no need to try and portray myself as an artist when clients commission my work. There is more validity in having a patron than a collector or admirer.

However, "Elevator Girl" by Miwa Yanagi is one of my favorite pieces of art. It is a wonderful idea perfectly executed. The roast duck at the Four Seasons Restaurant in New York is simply the best duck you will ever taste. India is a bigger part of my life than I even realize, and the place where I will release my last

breath. Ralph Rucci is just a splendid example to me of how to remain a true, passionate, creative individual without compromising or selling out. Problems of Life and Mind by George Henry Lewes is an amazing piece of philosophic literature to me. "Midnight Cowboy" should be required viewing for anyone who comes to New York City.

If so, why is that? What special qualities do you like in their work or personality?

I am drawn to those who have dignity, contentment and awareness of life around them and their relationship to it.

Could we feature your favorite designer, author, artist, architect, filmmaker, etc. in our magazine and/or online?

They all have a Web presence.

Do you aspire to collaborate in your creations with a creator from another innovative discipline?

I have always worked alone, and though I prefer to work with the parameters of a patron's request, I always try to take that request beyond their expectations.

What do you consider your masterpiece?

I love the shot of the Citicorp Center in New York, which I photographed just before sunrise on Midsummers Day, the day Stonehenge was built for. It seems the perfect financial monolith in the epicenter of capitalism, yet links back to thoughts of the men who raised those 4,000-year-old stone slabs.

"I get to see so many amazing vantage points in the city as part of my work shooting interiors. I wanted to record the views people sit with their back to or have become blasé about."



Do you have a favorite company or another creator with whom you would like to work?

Ralph Rucci. But there is no way he would, and that's why I love him so much.

What is your favorite building in the world?

One would be the Blackpool Tower in England. It has an Eiffel Tower-like structure on top, has an amazing classic red Victorian terracotta facade, yet holds a circus ring which can fill with water and the most ornate ballroom you have ever seen! It has a giant Wurlitzer that comes out of the floor. What's not to like!

What is your favorite hotel and why?

I love the bathroom design at the Donovan Hotel in Washington, D.C. I love the Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong for the tradition and for the rooftop restaurant. The Pullman London St. Pancras has the best facade in the world. The Sanderson in London holds a lot of special memories, and the smell of jasmine pervading the Imperial Hotel in New Delhi adds to the feeling of a sublime oasis.

What would be your ideal home and why?

I have my ideal home. It doesn't matter the shape or the size, but it is a place where everyone feels at home even if it isn't his /her own, where every object in it has a memory attached, and where, as The Beatles said, "there's nothing to get hung about."

Do you have any other creative ambitions or dreams to which you aspire?

I love having been given a life where I get the opportunity to see things and then express them in a way others can also enjoy. If my life continues in that way, what more could anyone dream for?

Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

I appreciate this interview, but always remember: You should always judge yourself against yourself, not anyone else. Being true to yourself will provide you with an abundance of contentment and creativity, which will lead to a happy life — irrelevant of income or recognition.