

HOW PHOTOGRAPHER MILES ALDRIDGE BROUGHT FASHION TO THE FRONT ROOM

The British photographer's work, including those on view at the Lyndsey Ingram gallery this month, are a cinematic look into childhood

BY [SORAYA GAIED CHORTANE](#) | 16 HOURS AGO

There is something quite endearing about harking back to one's formative years for inspiration. Take Andy Warhol's famous pop-art depictions of Campbell's soup - which he ate every night for dinner - or Edvard Munch's macabre paintings, which stem from the ghost stories his father read to him as a child. More recently, it's [British fashion photographer Miles Aldridge](#) taking inspiration from his younger years.

A compact mirror in his mother's lacquered handbag; a beaten up paisley sofa; an old television set— these are the memories [Aldridge](#) associates with childhood. At 58-years-old, he is among a group of like-minded contemporary artists, who have established themselves through a preoccupation with nostalgia.

Over his 24 year long career, he is both visionary photographer and daydreamer. Shooting the likes of [Donatella Versace](#), Marina Abramović and Lily Cole for the likes of Vogue, The New York Times and Harper's Bazaar. He has worked alongside some of fashion's luminaries including former editor-in-chief, [Franca Sozzani](#). "She was the Pope and I was Michelangelo, commissioned by her to paint the ceiling of Vogue Italia. Without her patronage I wouldn't have been the artist I am today because she gave me a carte blanche."

It was this carte blanche that urged Aldridge to break new ground as an artist– evoking a sense of childlike wonder and imagination through his visually-arresting images. Despite all his successes and accolades, Aldridge still feels somewhat of an outsider. “I think this very much part of being an artist,” he says. “I don’t feel like I’m everyone’s cup of tea and I really wouldn’t want to be because I don’t want to be *that* easily palatable.”

When I speak to him in his lofty King’s Cross studio, he is curious and confident, anticipating his latest online retrospective [The Terror of Domestic Bliss](#). The exhibition, which has just opened at the [Lyndsey Ingram gallery](#), features chromogenic prints, colourful screenprints and polaroids, and will draw upon the themes, “the false promise of luxury, the mysteries of the family and how the surface often belies what’s underneath.” Talking to Aldridge, it is clear he has a strong work ethic and flair for creativity. As well as [The Terror of Domestic Bliss](#), the photographer is set to publish his own book [Please Please return Polaroid](#), a love letter to the photographic medium.

Wearing acidic dresses with perfectly-coiffed bleach blonde hair, women of all ages and body types are staged and shot in a technicolour dream-cum-nightmare. They are, at once, freaky and frightening, but always beautiful. “I recast the models as actresses from films that I wanted to make so instead of modelling the clothes, they were the protagonists in the story that I was creating,” he tells me whilst presenting his favourite print, 3D, a multi-coloured mise en scène of a woman catching an epic at the cinema.



It was this love-affair of film that triggered his initial curiosity in photography. Watching *A Matter of Life and Death* after his parent's split in his neighbour's house, was a seminal moment for the photographer, influencing him on both a professional and emotional level. "The first nine years of my childhood were golden and then I entered reality", he reflects. "I was in a foreign house without my mum or dad and suddenly everything was different. The tea tastes different. The food is different. The bed is different but watching this film, I was taken away into this universe of imagery."

At that very moment, the multi-coloured house he grew up in, with music, psychedelic prints and wacky furniture, had fallen apart. The glorious image of family was shattered and he was left with not only the absence of the father, but a mother left wondering, 'what next?'

Yet the image of the home remains undimmed for the acclaimed photographer - who, soon after, began to translate the memories of his youth into striking visual imagery. Appreciating that the split wasn't a recipe for disaster; rather, productivity and creativity. Portraying women for what they truly are - strong, beautiful and fiercely independent - in domesticated settings, became Aldridges' vocation.

“There’s always an overriding sense of confusion or discontent or uncertainty to the characters in my work. Who they are and how they got there. And that’s how I felt being in the middle of a very fast moving world.”

Aldridge seeks to find beauty in the dark side of human nature. “Somebody once said is childhood revisited, you know? I think images that take you into a dark place but then back out into the light are as old as time. All the art that I like confronts a sort of duality of man in terms of what is troubling and what is beautiful. It’s where you find a meaning in the arts,” he says.

The Terror of Domestic Bliss on now until 27th March at Lyndsey Ingram gallery and his new book *Please Please return Polaroid* will be published by Steidl spring 2023.