

Need to Know

This month we look at photoshoots, the new version of Quark and digital asset libraries

01 Photographer **Carl Fox** has worked with musicians such as Roots Manuva, Badly Drawn Boy and Muse (shown here)

02 Part of a pitch by Fox and a large cosmetic brand's creative team

Successful photoshoots_

The secrets of art direction

Executing a photoshoot requires communication, planning and creativity. **Graeme Aymer** talks to the experts about the factors to consider

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but there's a lot to get right in a photoshoot if the imagery is going to justify the time and cost. A good session will add sparkle to the faceless shopfronts that surround the average high-street shopper, creating ads that inspire aspiration and desire.

Alan Lee, a partner at London design agency Uber, sells the idea to reluctant clients like this: "We look at existing sites, cover up the logo and say, 'Who does that belong to?' Then we'll look at the superbrands such as Apple and Nike, and cover the logo and say, 'Who does that belong to?' And straight away it's Nike or Apple. Then we'll say, 'You need to establish your own style of photography, [and that] they'll have free usage for other marketing channels as well.'"

Whether it's through pretty persuasion or a commissioned project, the art direction team is the difference

between triumph or tragedy as far as the shoot is concerned. They pick the photographer, understand what the client needs, and know how the project should look when complete. And it's important that the team gives the photographer enough room to be creative without sabotaging the brief.

Planning and personality

Getting it right is a matter of chemistry and planning. "When we have an idea about the tone of voice we want to get out of the work, campaign or ad we're working on, that steers us towards a series of photographers," explains Ben Callis, an art director at Ogilvy London. "We have a vague idea of the way we want it to look: the style, if it's humorous, if it's really obviously set up. Most of the time it starts off as a sketch on a pad. That's what you present to the client."

Sometimes it's a matter of gently advising the client that the imagery they've supplied won't do their product justice. Alan Lee took on Ferrari when working on a project for its Owners' Club material. "They had lots of shots of Italy, and general dealership-style shots," he explains. "We said, 'Come on! Your customers own cars, so they see these images all the time – they have brochures. We need to create something new to get them excited.' It's easier to get the budget when you get them to help

you come up with ideas and buy into the whole process."

It's choosing the right photographer, though, that's key to any shoot. "The art director and photographer need to be a team," says London-based photographer Carl Fox. "That's what makes for a good shoot. They should be bouncing ideas off each other all the time. Not to the point of detracting from getting any work done, but they should be in tune with each other."

So while it's essential to choose a photographer based on portfolio and style, there must also be an element of that all-elusive chemistry. "When we start, we go for gut instinct on their style," says Alan Lee. "We look at a number of photographers' books and get them in," adds Ben Callis – though he reveals that he doesn't stick too rigidly to his criteria because he likes a photographer to bring something fresh to the equation.

Once a photographer has been selected, the agency's creative team plan the photoshoot carefully with them.

"Before every shoot, I'll meet the art director from the advertising companies in a pre-production meeting, in which we discuss the details related to the shoot," says Beijing-based photographer Quentin Shih. "They'll tell me their ideas and I'll provide mine as well. I understand my job is to transform their ideas into photos and they are paying me to do this, so if there's any strong disagreement, I usually go with their decisions."

"When I see the layouts of a new job, my producer will give the ad agency a quote, which includes details of payment, copyrights and usage," he adds. "I don't get directly involved in discussing those issues. When an agreement is reached, I will start working on the project and start discussing the shoot."

Planning can take many →



01

03 Ogilvy worked with photographer **Lee Powers** on a campaign for Ford of Britain for the Commercial Vehicle Show, held recently at Birmingham's NEC. The campaign was

designed to be a tongue-in-cheek take on typical industrial vehicle advertising



The photographer's perspective

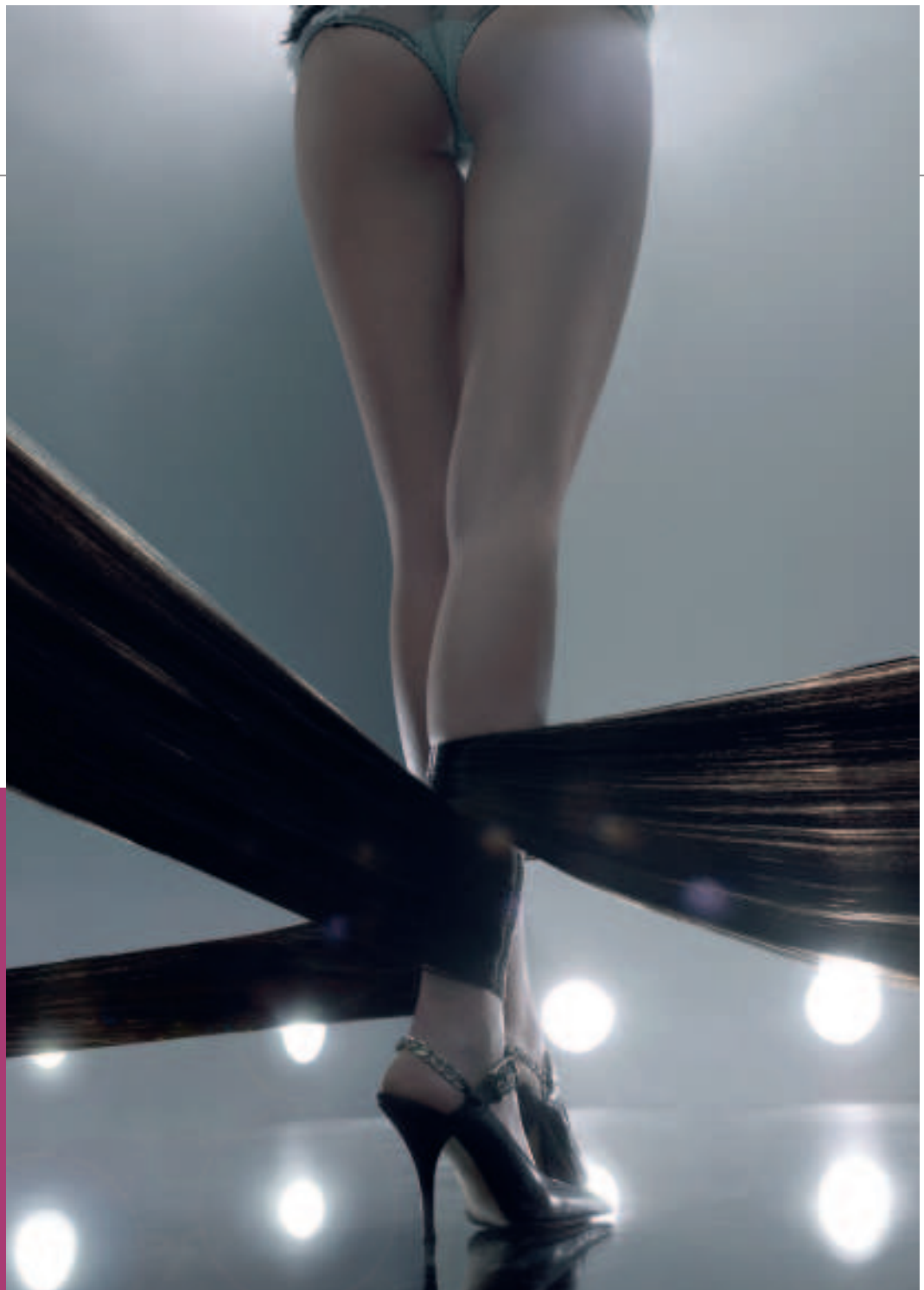
Name: Carl Fox

Job title: Photographer

Website: [www.carlfox](http://www.carlfoxphotography.com)

[photography.com](http://www.carlfoxphotography.com)

"A good shoot is a good idea well executed with a team that's free to share constructive criticism and ideas. If everyone is keen on what they're doing and thinks they're doing a good job, you can't go wrong. A bad shoot is most often an over-ambitious idea without enough budget or time, or a shoot when a key element is wrong – for example, if someone says the key to a shoot is to get a feeling of joy and happiness, and you pick a team that's morbid and shoe-gazing."



02



Whoever you are, whatever you do, we've got the vehicle to suit.

03



Budget brilliance

Name: Ben Callis

Job title: Art director

Website: www.ogilvy.co.uk

"For the Ford of Britain

project we didn't have a huge amount of money and there wasn't enough time to go on location, so we spent all our money on an absolutely brilliant photographer, and didn't spend any on casting. So it features myself, Justin Barnes, the copywriter I work with, and two other guys from our office at Ogilvy. Using a painted backdrop with the images gave it a look and style that was slightly different, and you could tell it was a gag straight away. We like the energy – it's like a collage. It's a bit rough around the edges but I think that adds to the energy and humour."

Photographers will want to deviate slightly. This can lead to some pretty good shots. Let them wander, but within reason

Alan Lee Uber

→ forms, including sketches, moodboards and storyboards – thorough preparation can make the most impossible jobs possible. Alan Lee at Uber found this when commissioned by Eastman Innovation Lab to photograph The Angel of Independence in Mexico City. Budgetary constraints prevented the creative team from travelling to the site for a recce or to accompany Juan Carlos, the commissioned photographer, on the day of the shoot. Furthermore it's not an easy subject to

photograph. "It's smack-bang in the middle of a roundabout," Lee explains. "We used a lot of pictures from Flickr and Google Images to establish the location."

These shots also revealed that aerial pictures didn't have to be taken from an expensive helicopter – the client was able to secure the presidential suite of a hotel overlooking the monument. Precise storyboarding showing the angles of all the required shots and the photographer's professionalism resulted in a very successful shoot.

But for the most part, the creative team will accompany the photographer on the day. The art director must make sure that everything the client requires is captured. Ben Callis explains: "We'll have had meetings with the client and they'll have said what they want out of it: they

want the people smiling; they want them happy; they want them to look positive; they want them aspirational. These are all vague statements, so you have to try and establish as much as you can in pre-production before the shoot, and make sure what was agreed in the pre-production meeting is carried out."

Communication is everything

It's vital to make sure that every single shot agreed on the shot list is covered, but without stifling the photographer's need to experiment. "In our 18-year career, there have been three or four photoshoots that were a complete disaster because the photographer was being a complete prima donna. They didn't listen to what anyone was saying, and went off down some avenue," says Paula Benson of London agency Form. It's vital for everyone involved to communicate properly. "Sometimes hair and make-up can just bring something and make a shoot come alive," she adds. "But if you haven't met the people before and they don't know the brief, they don't know the creative vision. It's all about preparation and discussion beforehand really."

Form recently created a guide entitled *Sex: How To Do Everything* for Dorling Kindersley, commissioning Rankin for the photography. His experience and attitude made him perfect for the job.

Benson says of him: "Having been a magazine creative director at *Dazed & Confused*, he'll always ask before the shoot, 'Is this portrait or landscape? What kind of size is it being used at?' So many photographers never ask. They get so fixated on making the shot look good that they forget that its end context could be a square record sleeve, or a portrait or a landscape book. It's always a good tip to bear those things in mind, and remember to tell the photographer that it's going to be used in a square format, and it might possibly be used on a billboard so you need the images at 120MB."

"They'll want to take certain shots for their portfolios and deviate slightly," adds Alan Lee. "This can lead to some pretty good shots. Let them wander sometimes, but within reason. You've got to make sure you get the shots you've documented in your shot list."

Lee keeps photographers on

track in a simple way. "On the day of the shoot I'll take along an SLR. I'll work with the photographer and help establish some of the shots," he says. If there's too much deviation, the imagery captured on the SLR enables him to gently get the photographer back on track: "You don't want to come across as a prima donna."

For *How To Do Everything*, it was a combination of Benson, Form partner Paul West and Rankin's production team that secured locations, though typically this is the sole responsibility of the photographer and their agent.

But don't be put off shooting somewhere with a bad reputation. Photographer and street artist Eddie Otchere is known for his distinct style of urban imagery. He has an intimate knowledge of street life around the world and uses this as a backdrop for his shoots.

"For me as a graffiti artist, you know that some parts of town are just quiet," he says. "In a really evil area, the crackheads don't get out of bed until one in the afternoon. So you do your shoots earlier in rough areas. Peckham's completely dead after 9pm, whereas Brixton isn't. Brixton's an open-air asylum. But it's really quiet on a Sunday morning, apart from all the ravers going home."

There's one more thing to remember thanks to the ascent of digital photography. "We get a hundred times more shots than we would have when we were shooting on film," says Paula Benson. "That makes the editing process hard. Personally, I find it difficult to edit on screen. Sometimes you need to see a comparison of ten pictures in front of you on the table at any one time. We always ask photographers to give us contact sheets. That's rarely budgeted for, and then you get into argy-bargy about whose responsibility it is to produce the print-outs. We always allow at least two days for editing after a major shoot."

Despite the number of factors to consider, shoots are to be enjoyed and that's when the best results will be achieved by the team. Careful planning and bags of enthusiasm will ensure that's always the case.

04 The versatile **Quentin Shih** believes that photographers should be able to work with a wide range of clients and subjects



04

05 Uber convinced **Fiorano Ferrari** to go ahead with a shoot for materials to be used for Owners' Club marketing, rather than generic imagery. By bracketing HDR shots, Uber achieved a textured, brooding feel, despite the location being brighter than expected

06 For the Rankin-photographed book *Sex: How To Do Everything*, Paula Benson and the **Form** team planned each day of shooting with absolute precision

07 With up to 8,000 pictures shot in total, Form built in plenty of time for editing and post-production

Shoot checklist

Food

Make sure you bring along healthy snacks. Days can be long and chocolate biscuits consumed in large quantities will do more harm than good.

Music

The right music can help to achieve the right vibe.

A quiet place

Make sure there's somewhere for you or the photographer to go to think if the day's demands threaten to overwhelm.

Shot list

Print it big and tick off every shot agreed in pre-production meetings. This will take the pressure off and provide time for experimentation if everything is on schedule.

Sketches

Bring storyboards and moodboards to refer back to so that everyone stays on track with the brief.

Tape

A roll of masking or duct tape is always good to have around for temporarily securing backdrops and props.



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Sexual olympics

Name: Paula Benson

Job title: Art director

Website: www.form.uk.com

"The Sex book was a 10-day photoshoot, and on each day we had 10 to 15 set-ups for different shots that we needed to capture, which is a hell of a lot. Before the shoot, we sat down and discussed each and every shot so everybody on the set knew what was going on. Every hour or two of the day was mapped out with what we wanted to achieve, though obviously we had to be flexible. This was a big production number so there were a lot of people involved in making it all come together."



07