

to Be

Revelations

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THIBAUT GREVET: BENEATH THE *BLURRY LINES*

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photography THIBAUT GREVET

Thibaut Grevet's vision extends beyond his subjects. The French photographer and filmmaker is concerned with the formal components of image-making: the interplay of forms, colours and lines to create the illusion of movement. Recollecting his early motocross memories in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, Grevet captures fleeting moments with unwavering precision.

I have vivid memories of my mum reading fashion magazines while in the bath. As a young girl who hadn't yet learned to read, I used to retrieve her crinkled copies of *Vogue* from the bathroom floor. Sitting down against the basin, I immersed myself in the multitude of fashion images. Within those dreamy photographs, refinement permeated the senses. I could feel the photographers' meticulous intentions and boundless creativity. I could perceive their longing for aesthetic excellence.

As I journeyed through life, my fascination with fashion photography persisted. I came to realise that exceptional photographers cultivate a distinct visual atmosphere, one that is instantly recognisable and uniquely their own. Consider British photographer Tim Walker, known for his enchanting fisheye compositions, or renowned French artist Sarah Moon, celebrated for her evocative blurred black-and-white imagery.

In one of the most striking images from Moon's portfolio—taken for Christian Dior's Spring-Summer 1999 campaign—model Andrea Gutierrez is adorned in an oversized kite-like hat. The hazy and grainy images closely aligned with the abstract artistic movements of the time. Ethereal and fleeting, the photographs of the young French photographer and director Thibaut Grevet evoke the same artistic tradition. In his works, Grevet advocates for a type of

photography that transcends mimetic praxis, stillness and a singular point-of-view.

Centred around the principle of movement, Grevet's photographs prompt us to reconsider our understanding of aesthetics. When we view the photograph *Red Car*, we are captivated by the vehicle's speed as it races through the frame. Shocked by the vibrant intensity, we are then awestruck by the kaleidoscope of colours—the oranges, yellows, browns, reds and pinks that dance across the paper. As we immerse ourselves in this exploration, we are presented with a vision of beauty—an experience that beckons us into the French photographer's rapid and evolving world.

Raised in a village in France's Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, Thibaut spent most of his teenage years on a BMX bike. Armed with his mother's retro VHS camera, he would document the motocross trails that he and his friends would ride. He cherished this countryside upbringing and the community that introduced him to riding. His passion for speed and extreme sport came full circle in his adult life when he crossed paths with photographer, film director and amateur motocross racer, Dimitri Coste. In 2015, Grevet released his first visual work, *Coste Contemplation*, a two-minute film exploring Europe's BMX subcultures. Narrated by Coste's own two children, Paz and Zephir, the film presents an endearing portrait of Coste's dedication and courage in the world

of motocross. His primary focus seems to revolve around crafting a concise narrative or visual poem. A story that skilfully navigates the delicate balance between reality and fiction.

Grevet honed his aesthetic during his Graphic Design studies. Throughout this time, he mastered the manipulation of contrast, the expansion of frame compositions and the effective saturation of dull and muted tones. He fondly recalls dedicating extensive hours to studying various references, an exercise that significantly refined his artistic sensibilities. It can be said that engaging in diverse pursuits proved invaluable to his development as a photographer.

Grevet directly applied his graphic design skills when he first forayed into fashion photography. His early photoshoots were marked by extensive preparation, ranging from meticulous briefs and strategic planning, to casting and makeup. He left no detail unturned. His series *Age of Imagination*, crafted for the Autumn 2022 edition of *Dazed*, breathed new life to his fascination with motocross. Ignited in sprint, models dart across a dynamic arena of lines and colours. Leveraging long exposure and motion blur techniques with a camera typically reserved for competitive sports, Grevet infused life into the traditionally static medium. During the editing process, latent elements within the images were expertly extracted, enhanced and then interwoven to construct a narrative that transcends the confines of the frame. In 2022, Grevet ventured into the world of book curation, presenting a captivating compilation of images titled *Blurred*. Spanning three years of the artist's photographic work, the 232-page book

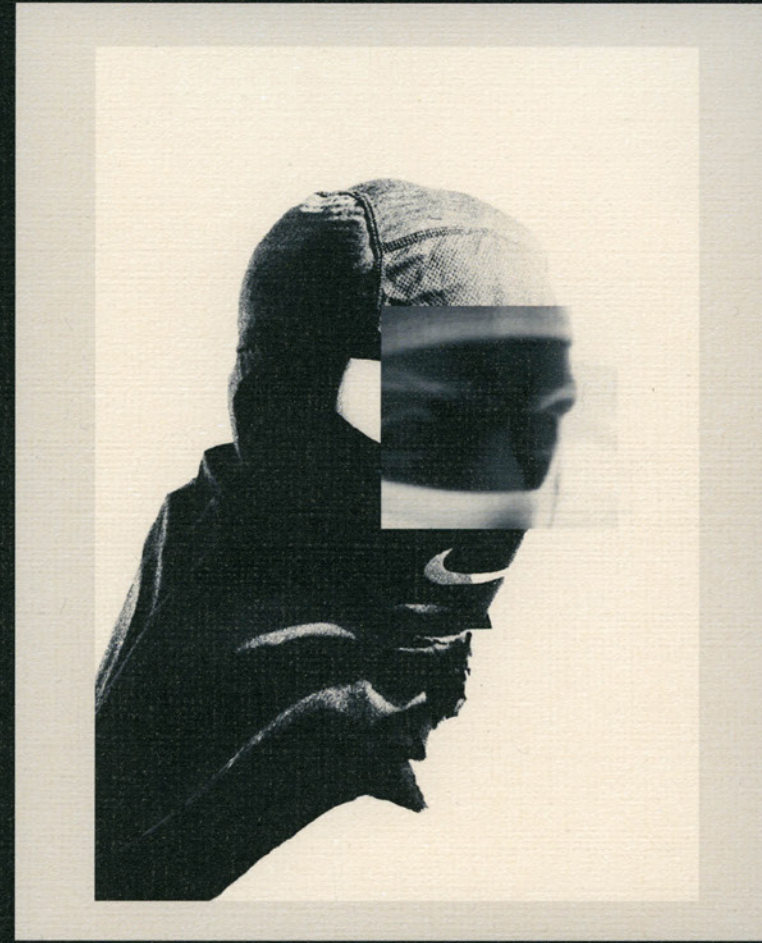


showcases images of figures and subjects that are intentionally concealed or moving. Much like an impromptu performance, Grevet's visual world unfolds dynamically in time with the turning of the pages.

Grevet's fascination with velocity also found expression in his cinematic endeavours. In *Love Letter*, a film for luggage manufacturer RIMOWA, a young man and woman engage in an epic sprint towards each other. Creating a sense of exhilarating motion in Vans' *Capitale* campaign, skateboarders Joseph Biais and Val Bauer careen through the streets of Paris. Then, in Calvin Klein's *Performance* campaign, models seamlessly transition between

displays of strength and moments of stillness. Each video oscillates between the robotic and the rhythmic, delivering both predictability and unexpectedness. It is no surprise that Grevet eventually transitioned into directing music videos. Most recently, he collaborated with English singer and songwriter James Blake to produce the graphics and video for *Playing Robots into Heaven*. Unlike his fashion films, the pace of the video is slower, almost dreamlike. While still firmly rooted in his enduring affection for the run-and-gun style of motocross riding, Grevet now embraces low-fi aesthetics, remaining faithful to his knack for capturing fleeting moments.

When I contemplate Grevet's work in this manner, I experience the same exhilaration I felt on my mother's bathroom floor. Once again, I can discern meticulousness and creativity. Like Walker's or Moon's, his photographs are distinctive, vivid, brimming with energy. Is the thrill I experience a result of the rapidity of his enigmatic work or the echoes of his racing interests? Regardless of its origin, I sit and write in celebration, awestruck by his fast-paced, limitless compositions. **[EXEUNT]**



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