

***THE VIEWS OF MERWELENE VAN DER
MERWE AND HER TEAM ABOUT THE
FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY WORKING
ENVIRONMENT***

by

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Table of contents

<i>Abstract</i>	i
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ii
<i>Table of contents</i>	iii
<i>List of photographs</i>	vi
1. Introduction	1
Chapter 1	
Merwelene the person	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Main contents of the interview	3
1.3 Interview with Merwelene	5
Chapter 2	
2. Merwelene the business woman	26
2.1 Introduction	26
2.2 Main contents of the interview	26
2.3 Interview with Merwelene	28
Chapter 3	
3. Merwelene's favourite team	40
3.1 Introduction	40
3.2 Main contents of the interview	40
3.3 An interview with Merwelene about her assistant	41



3.4	Interview with the assistant, Doret van Jaarsveld	41
3.5	Interview about Simoné Venter, the model, with Merwelene	43
3.6	An interview with Simoné, the model	44
3.7	Fashion photographs of Somoné Venter	45
3.7.1	Edgars Red Square calenders photographic session	45
3.7.2	Simoné’s calender session, interview with Merwelene	45
3.7.3	The interview with Simoné Venter	47
3.8	The Sandton City magazine photographic session	47
3.8.1	Simoné’s Sandton City	47
3.8.2	Interview with Simoné, the model, about the Sandton City magazine photographic session at Sossus Vlay in Namibia	48
3.9	Simoné’s interpretation of the following photographs	48
3.9.1	The Sandton City magazine session at Sossus Vlay in Namibia	48
3.9.2	Dali Tambo photographic session for Clothing Range Label	48
3.9.3	Dali Tambo photographic session for Clothing Range Label	49
3.9.4	Edgars catalogue photographic session	49
3.9.5	Playboy photographic session	49
3.9.6	Playboy photographic session	49
3.10	Interview with Marilyn du Preez, the make-up artist and hair stylist	50

Chapter 4

4.	A comparison of two of Merwelene’s “master pieces”	51
4.1	Introduction	51
4.2	The main contents of the interview	51

4.3	The Mariette Chippendale photographic session	51
4.3.1	Interview with Merwelene about Mariette Chippendale	51
4.3.2	Interview with Mariette, the client	53
4.4	Edgars Jeans photographic session	55
4.4.1	The Edgars Jeans interview with Merwelene	55
4.4.2	Interview with Sandy Cambell, the art director	57
4.5	The final analysis of the two photographic sessions	58
5.	<i>Conclusion</i>	60
	<i>Bibliography</i>	61
	<i>Appendix</i>	63

List of photographs

<i>Figure 1.1:</i> “Silhouette of Merwelene in her spiritual house.” ANON.	63
<i>Figure 1.2:</i> “Merwelene in her working environment.” Doret van Jaarsveld.	64
<i>Figure 1.3:</i> “Merwelene and King.” ANON.	65
<i>Figure 3.1:</i> “Simoné’s information card.” ANON.	66
<i>Figure 3.2:</i> “Edgars Red Square calendar.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	67
<i>Figure 3.3:</i> “Sandton City magazine.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	68
<i>Figure 3.4.1:</i> “Sandton City magazine.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	69
<i>Figure 3.4.2:</i> “Sandton City magazine.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	70
<i>Figure 3.5:</i> “Dahli Tambo for Clothing Range Label.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	71
<i>Figure 3.6:</i> “Dahli Tambo for Clothing Range Label.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	72
<i>Figure 3.7:</i> “Edgars catalogue.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	73
<i>Figure 3.8:</i> “Playboy.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	74
<i>Figure 3.9:</i> “Playboy.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	75
<i>Figure 4.1:</i> “Mariette Chippendale for Needle Point Work Company.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	76
<i>Figure 4.2:</i> “Edgars jeans.” Merwelene van der Merwe.	77

1. Introduction

Fashion is seen as a glamorous world full of beautiful people and exorbitant amounts of money. It was decided to get a closer look at this world as seen through the eyes of those who participate. This study consists of two components. A practical component comprising studio and on location photographs and a theoretical component dealing with fashion working environment. As South Africa is becoming a non-sexist society and women are part of the main business stream, it was decided to focus on the highly successful photographic icon of fashion photography, Merwelene van der Merwe. The main aim of the study was to research the interaction between the fashion photographer and the main participants in a fashion photograph, in order to get each individual's interpretation of what makes a successful fashion photograph and fashion photographer. This was achieved through a preliminary interview with Merwelene van der Merwe to see if the aim of the study was feasible. As the first interview was most successful, the decision was made to place more emphasis on Merwelene van der Merwe. Follow-up interviews and a week's stay with Merwelene resulted. Articles, two television interviews and all other available material was researched to get a more comprehensive picture. As Merwelene has a unique way of speaking, the author decided to give her interviews verbatim so that the reader can feel the "electricity" generated by Merwelene. The interviews were done in Afrikaans, Merwelene's home language. In this dissertation, all questions are given in English and Afrikaans. All questions are preceded by a Q and all answers by an A. To get a more comprehensive picture, the following people who form part of Merwelene's team were interviewed: (1) Her assistants Doret, (2) her model Simoné, (3) her hair and make-up artist Marilyn, (4) an art director of an advertising agency Sandy and (5) a client Mariette. The dissertation is divided

into four chapters, the first chapter, Merwelene van der Merwe discusses her background and outlook on life. In chapter two, Merwelene discusses fashion photography as a successful business. Chapter three covers the team she works with and their views. The final chapter concentrates on Merwelene's work as a fashion photographer. Here two divergent photographs are discussed.

CHAPTER 1

MERWELENE THE PERSON

1. MERWELENE THE PERSON

1.1 Introduction

This chapter contains an interview with the photographer Merwelene van der Merwe that expounds aspects of the person. It gives an insight into her background, personality, dreams for the future of fashion photography in South Africa and her own dream for the future.

1.2 Main contents of the interview

Merwelene van der Merwe is thirty-nine years of age. Born in Rosendal which is a beautiful and unique part of the Free State. Her parents were traditional farmers and as a conservative farm girl she wore flower dresses. After a year at university studying for a B.A. in languages, she decided this was not for her. She changed to studying theatre crafts. As a guest at a photographic session she realised that photography was her forte. She studied photography at the Pretoria Technikon.

She went to the Cape to get first hand experience of fashion photographers, where she decided that she wanted to be Walter Ferriar's assistant. After working for twenty-six days without compensation, Walter Ferriar relented and appointed her as his assistant for the next two years. Thereafter she went to America to establish herself as a fashion photographer.

After eight years she returned to South Africa. Her home base is Johannesburg where she has built an ultra modern home. From there she works world wide as a freelance photographer.

Merwelene is a person with a strong personality who radiates love and happiness. A person

who regards a lie as unnecessary baggage. She is an outdoor person with a passion for hard work. She believes that enthusiasm must have its origin within a person for it to be authentic. With black as her favourite colour, one begins to realise she is not your ordinary everyday girl. Her hairstyle and clothes are also unique. This uniqueness permeates into her photography. She normally breaks all photographic rules and follows her own ideas. Her models are not standard. They have the Merwelene van der Merwe stamp on them. She describes herself as dominating, but when one realises that she can cry and care for other people it soon becomes clear that a gentle side is not absent.

Her photographic sessions are usually a success because human relations are given high priority. Everyone is relaxed and everything runs smoothly. Although she is the leader she makes herself part of the team. Her success is their success. To her, a person who admits that success is only possible because of a good assistant, shows signs of good leadership. All this culminates in photographs that are spontaneous in which models portray natural expressions.

For inspiration she just has to look around her. To her a rising sun or a shadow is much more than just isolated occurrences. She always looks at the broader picture. For one person something is a failure but to another it is a success.

She is well known as a fashion photographer but she sees herself as a person whom photographs people. In South Africa where work is seldom specialised, her work covers a broad spectrum from President Mandela to shooting harbours from helicopters.

Although she is a much sought after photographer and well known personality, she remains humble, modest and thankful for her success.

Her dream for the future...? She would like to spend more time on her own photography and develop her own signature as a photographer.

1.3 Interview with Merwelene

Q: Merwelene, wat is jou volle name?

Merwelene, what is your full name?

A: My naam is Merwelene van der Merwe.

Q: Is jy bereid om jou ouderdom te verklap?

Are you prepared to give your age?

A: Ek is 39 jaar oud en word in Januarie 40.

Q: Waar is jy gebore?

Where were you born?

A: Ek is in Ficksburg gebore en het in die Rosendal-distrik groot geword.

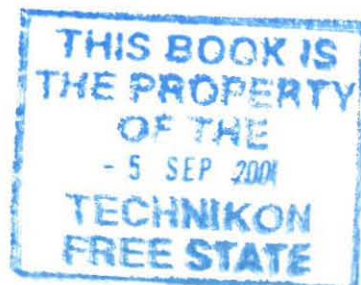
Q: Beskou jy waar jy grootgeword het steeds as jou tuiste?

Is your birthplace still your home?

A: Ek beskou nie my geboorteplek as my tuiste nie, ek glo aan “the sightseeing of the world”, met ander woorde waar ek is, is my tuiste.

Q: Merwelene, waar en wat het jy gestudeer?

Where and what did you study?



A: Ek het eers Bachelor of Arts (languages) geswot en toe kom ek ná die eerste jaar agter dit is B.A. man-soek.

Toe begin ek Theatre Grafting swot, dit is stage make-up and décor designing. Met die tyd kom ek agter dat ek die heelyd behind the scenes is.

Ek het toe nog nooit 'n kamera besit nie. Ek het saam met 'n pel wat fotografie swot op 'n shoot gegaan, en toe ek daar staan, het ek besef dit is ek. Ek is toe Pretoria Technikon toe en het vir drie jaar fotografie geswot.

In my laaste jaar het ek presies gedoen wat jy nou doen, fotografe geswot. Ek het almal se werk goed geken. Ek het nie net op een fotograaf gekonsentreer nie, dit was so in 1980, toe Gareth Surlock en die ouer garde sulke wonderlike werk gelewer het. Ek het geweet ek wil Kaap toe gaan. Ek het die hele jaar in die Kaap drie fotografe dopgehou. Ek het presies geweet wat hulle skiet. Dit is moeilik met ad campaigns, want met editorials gee hulle die naam van die fotograaf, maar met advertising gee hulle net die ad agency se naam en nooit die fotograaf nie. Met my laaste vakansie is ek Kaap toe om al drie te sien.

Die fotograaf wat jy assisteer, moet jy baie van hou, want 'n mens werk nie apart aan 'n ding nie. Ons werk is very personalized, dit is baie emosioneel. Omdat dit baie kreatief is, is dit nie soos 'n 9 a.m.-5 p.m. job nie. Partykeer werk ons twee ure, partykeer werk ons agtien ure saam. Ek het Walter Ferriar vir twee jaar geassist. Sy vrou is Sue Ferriar, die fashion editor van *Elle*. Ek het hom gaan sien en hy het vir my gesê hy het al klaar twee assistente. Ek het geweet vir hierdie fotograaf wil ek werk, maak nie saak wat gebeur nie. Ek is die meisie van die plaas, ek dra net blom-rokkies, ek dra nie lang broeke nie, ek is baie konserwatief. Jy weet, real from the farm, maar jy moet courage hê as jy iets wil doen. Ek het die volgende dag teruggegaan en vir hom gesê: “I really want to assist you next year. I am here for 26 days. I will just sweep the studio, run and get film, I won't be in your way.”

Ná drie weke het hy gesê: “You’ve got a job next year.” Ek het vir twee jaar vir hom gewerk. Uit ’n besigheids-oogpunt het hy my baie gehelp. Al is jy ’n goeie fotograaf, maak jy nie sommer jou eie besigheid oop nie. Dit gaan nie oor jou vermoë nie, maar eerstens oor jou stress levels.

Byvoorbeeld, as jy weet ’n foto kos R30 000, is jy aan die einde verantwoordelik daarvoor.

As iets verkeerd gaan, waar kom al hierdie geld vandaan om jou kostes te dek?

Om my eie ding te doen het ek besluit om Amerika toe te gaan. Daardie dae was dit nie ’n algemene praktyk nie. In onkunde is ek oor sonder ’n groen kaart. Die eerste 4 jaar het ek in restaurante gewerk om te oorleef; toe kry ek ’n groen kaart en bly nog 4 jaar.

★Merwelene made it the hard way. She established a reputation with a company based in San Francisco which works very strictly on the top. The true cliché: “you’re only as good as your last job”.

Dit was ’n wonderlike ervaring, want daar was geen kompetisie tussen die fotografe nie. Almal het saam gewerk om die company te laat survive.

★We are lucky enough to have her right back here in South Africa and with her architect, Gardiol Bergenthuin, she created her new dream home. *(Figure 1.1)*

This dynamic career woman is known for her fabulous house and new ideas. Her house reflects her innovative spirit that characterizes her work. It takes you by surprise.

◇Two essentials for the house were space and light. Her philosophy of less is more had to

★ This part of the interview was conducted in preparation for a television programme featuring Merwelene. (Top Billing, 1998)

◇ This part of the interview was conducted in preparation for a television programme featuring Merwelene. (Pasella, 1998)

be part of the house.

*Talk about a brilliant house forever, it is a path into another world. A big, warm barn of bursting minimalism, with a earthy African light, warm earthy brown and somehow out of this world.

Merweline: “I’ve got a lot of painters arriving for paint jobs telling me this house needs to be finished. I love it this way, because it gives me a timeless feeling and is unpretentious and I don’t get tired of it, I cannot live with a lot of colours around me. I like plenty of open space.”

Merwelene’s unaffected honesty is beautifully echoed in the austere aura of architect Gardiol Bergenthuin’s baroque vision.

It’s vastly effective decoration sought inspiration from everywhere.

*“You take an object with an African heritage and combine it with a modern home. How do you merge the two?”

Merwelene: “I never really saw this space as a modern home. I just saw it as an open, honest, livable and unpretentious space. And everything I’ve got, I just got it.

And it all just fitted in perfectly, it does not clash.”

Take the pool for instance, reminiscent of the livestock trough on her family’s Karoo farm.

“What is it - a swimming pool or a pond or a trough?”

Gardiol: “No it is actually a proper lap pool. We stood here one day and Merwelene said she

* This part of the interview was conducted in preparation for a television programme featuring Merwelene. (Top Billing, 1998)

had to have a pool. I asked, well what stroke do you swim? And she said breast stroke. I said, well, okay, let's take the span of your arms and that will be the width of the lap pool, but promise me you won't grow, because then you won't fit in anymore."

Tell me about the interesting staircase and how it came into being...

Gardiol: "It lay outside between the bricks and I asked Merwelene, "What about this?" So she said, "This is one of the things I picked up on one of my journeys." So we picked it up and measured it and it fitted perfectly."

Merwelene's greatest photographic studio is her hero workspace, presumably because her work is her hero. *(Figure 1.2)*

Full credit to Merwelene because she says: "All I am is in my home." But Merwelene is so brimful of "boere"-preveria that it overflows from herself to the wonderful warm space she's created together with Gardiol Bergenthuin's inspirational instincts.

A series of serene spaces to inspire the soul, it is a lustrous labyrinth of unfolding interiors. Most of all, a clean labor of love.

Merwelene: "I wanted a space that inspired people when they walked in, quite spiritual in a way. When they walk in, they can breathe easily, be calm and just create."

It has a "boere barok" bathroom and bed space with interesting corners and wonderful, delicious head space.

Inside out and outside in, its serene essence of style is absolutely original and yet it is exquisitely home. A room with a view.

❖ **Q: *Hoekom het jy 'n fotograaf geword?***

Why did you become a photographer?

A: Ek kon nooit teken nie, maar ek kon altyd goed sien. So fotografie is vir my 'n wonderlike medium, want dit is waar jy iets sien en dit vasvat. Die “overall process” van fotografie is vir my vreeslik opwindend. Die beplanning en hoe jy dit “execute” en “actually” jou “end result”. So, die hele proses kielie my en laat my net lekker kry.

Q: *Waar is jy gelukkig?*

Where are you at your happiest?

A: Ek is altyd gelukkig waar ek is vandag. “I am very much living in the present.”

Q: *Hoe ontspan jy?*

How do you relax?

A: Ek is nie eintlik 'n persoon wat ontspan nie. Ek speel baie graag skaak, maar niemand wil teen my skaak speel nie, want ek wen hulle almal. Ek is redelik goed daarin. Ek het 'n “computer” gekry met 'n skaakprogram. Ek is lief om te “hike” en doen baie buitelug-goed. So dat dit net nie inmeng met die kunsmatige lewe van die advertensie- en modewêreld nie. Ek is 'n “work-o-holic”.

Q: *Wat is jou stokperdjies?*

What are your hobbies?

A: Ek is lief vir “movies” en enigiets wat visueel en mooi is. Byvoorbeeld “*The unbearable*

❖ This part of the interview was conducted in preparation for a television program featuring Merwelene. (Pasella, 1998)

lightness of being en “*Indiana*”.

Q: *Hoe beskryf jy jouself, persoonlik?*

How would you describe yourself?

A: I am a very honest and straight-forward person. That simplifies life a lot. Dan hoef jy nooit te probeer onthou wat jy gesê het nie.

Q: *Wat sal jy sê is jou grootste talent?*

What is your greatest talent?

A: My greatest talent is my ability to work with people. My menseverhoudings is baie goed.

Q: *Wat is jou gunsteling kleur?*

What is your favourite colour?

A: My gunsteling kleur is swart, vir my is swart ’n kleur.

Q: *Wat maak jou ongelukkig of so te sê kwaad?*

What makes you angry?

A: Wat my kwaad maak, is oneerlikheid. Dit is vir my moeilik om met iemand te werk wat jok. Ek verstaan dit nie. Die wêreld waarin ons woon, is klaar ingewikkeld genoeg om nog ’n klomp stories te vertel. Om die waarheid om te draai, is net ’n “waste of energy”.

Q: *Verskil jy as mens by die huis van die modefotograaf by die werk?*

Is there a difference between who you are at home and the fashion photographer?

A: Ek probeer nou dink aan 'n relationship as 'n fotograaf. You've got to take charge, but people might think you are dominating. Ek kom agter in my relationships dat ek ook dominating is, alhoewel ek nie so wil wees nie. My werk is nie vir my werk nie, werk is my lewe. Ek was nog nooit vir een sekonde spyt in my lewe nie. Niks is ooit 'n mors van tyd nie. Om iets uit niks te maak, is never a waste. Dit is jou journey through life.

Q: *Hoe lank het dit jou geneem om jouself as modefotograaf te vestig?*

How long did it take you to become a well-known fashion photographer?

A: Ek sal sê met my "career" het dit my seker agt jaar gevat om te "start breathing". Volgens my is dit min.

Q: *Word jy senuweeagtig voor 'n fotosessie?*

Do you get nervous before a fashion photographic session?

A: Ek was op tye spyt, omdat ek nie 'n calculator-fotograaf is nie. Ek doen my pre-props en dink oor dit, terwyl party ander fotograawe dit 'n dag voor die tyd sal doen, en toetse sal doen. Al skiet ek in die studio, sal ek my ligte opstel en dit nie te veel daarna verander nie. Ek vat baie kanses. Ek breek gewoonlik alle reëls. So, as jy daai roete gaan, wat beteken it's not the safest, but more exciting roete, dan is jy altyd meer op die edge, want jy doen nie jou calculated safe lighting of film techniques nie. Daar is soveel fotograawe, en ek dink die geheim is om jou eie signature van jou werk te kry. Ek dink self tot vandag toe het ek nie genoeg gewerk aan my signature nie. Jy doen dit soos 'n skilder, want sy styl ontwikkel in sy skilderye. Ek dink baie te danke vir my vordering aan my signature, is my human skills, en dankie daarvoor is die jare in Amerika, waar dit rêrig tough was.

Q: Merwelene, hoe hanteer jy druk?

How do you cope with pressure?

A: Ek hanteer druk very easy! As 'n kliënt 'n shoot het, was ek al op 'n stadium waar ek gehuil het voor 'n shoot, want ek het gedink dit is te veel vir my. Veral as ek dink aan die budget en hoeveel hulle spandeer. Dan gaan sit ek en dink, "what can make it easier?" Easier is facing the work. As elkeen op die team die beste is wat ek kan kry, weet ek my eindresultaat gaan ook beter wees. Aangesien jy die image aan die kliënt vertoon, is die eindresultaat nog steeds jou responsibility en pressure. Hier is menseverhoudings baie belangrik. Elke persoon moet gemotiveer word om sy beste te gee. As jy die foto sien, is dit nie my foto nie, maar ons foto, want almal het daaraan gewerk. Modefotografie het 'n groot ego-probleem, maar vir my was ego nog nooit 'n probleem nie. Gelukkig dink ek, ek weet ek is nie die kat se snor nie. Die feit dat jy dit in die verlede gedoen het, verminder die druk. In die begin is die druk maar hoog. As jy jouself nie in 'n prentjie opwerk nie, maar weet, "this is actually what I'd love to do", dan gaan alles perfek uit kom.

Q: Hoe hanteer jy jou mislukings?

How do you handle disappointments?

A: Ek hanteer mislukings baie goed, want dit kan op verskillende maniere geïnterpreteer word. "To one it's a no and to the next it's a yes." Ek analiseer my mislukings baie, om te sien waar ek verkeerd gegaan het, want "we are all just human". Ons kan nie altyd perfek wees nie, jy het jou bes probeer "and that's that".

Q: Waar kry jy jou inspirasie vandaan?

Where do you get your inspiration?

A: My inspirasie kry ek om my die heelyd, deur visuele goed om my te sien. Byvoorbeeld as die son opkom en ek sien watse skaduwee hy teen die mure gooi.

Q: *Hoe het jy gevoel oor jou eerste suksesvolle ervaring as modefotograaf?*

How did you feel about your first successful fashion photographic session?

A: Ha, ha! My eerste fashion-ervaring was wonderlik, “it’s a high that you can’t describe”, en die ding is, ek kom nooit agter ek is “high” as my pels my nie vertel nie. Mense wat my “surround” kan dadelik hoor, jy weet, ’n mens voel “on top of the world”. Dit is die lekkerste van alles.

Q: *Wat is jou sterk punt as modefotograaf?*

What is your strong point as a fashion photographer?

A: My sterk punt as fashion-fotograaf is my menseverhoudings. The way I handle the models. Ek dink uit ’n styling point of view het ek ’n goeie oog. Styling is die klere, die skoene, en om dit met die regte make-up te kombineer. Die make-up artist loop in, dan sê ek: “this is what we are going to do, how are we going to do it?” Ek hou van ’n “elastic skin”. Moenie vir my ’n gepoeierde wit masker gee nie, want dan laat ek die gesig dadelik afwas. Ek wil ’n gesonde vel hê, en baie moderne make-up. Die make-up artist kyk altyd na die nuwe fashion trends, soos ons ook maar doen. Soos in my portfolio gooi ek alle foto’s uit wat ou styling en make-up het, anders lyk dit outomaties oud. Ek het ’n baie sterk sê in make-up. Hare is baie belangrik. Waar make-up maklik is, is hare ’n nightmare, want hare is ’n very personal affair. Hare gee shape en gee die finale afronding.

Q: *Wat is die kenmerk of “trademark” van jou modefoto’s?*

What is the trademark of your fashion photographs?

A: My trademark sou ek sê is in die expression van my modelle. Hulle expression is altyd spontaan. Hulle uitdrukkings is vol energie, “like a real laugh or real tragic, moody look”. Daar is geen faked expression of oë wat staar nie. Ek glo ’n shot moet emosie toon, maak nie saak watterse emosie dit is nie. Dit kry jy net deur die expression van die model. My metode is om vinnig te skiet, ek fiddle nie. Ek dink die rede vir ’n suksesvolle shoot is wanneer jy daardie “natural expression” kry.

Q: Wat was jou moeilikste opdrag tot dusver?

What has been your most difficult assignment?

A: My most nerve-racking shoot was toe ek Mandela se campaign-poster geneem het. Ek was baie bang. Ek was intimidated deur hierdie persoon. Met modelle en kliënte kan ek joke en aangaan, maar hier was dit vir my moeilik. Dit is by die African National Congress (ANC) se hoofkwartier geskiet. Dit was voor die ANC ’n party was en dit is ook hoekom ek in die Republiek van Suid-Afrika aangebly het. Om politieke redes het ek vir die eerste keer gevoel ek wil in Suid-Afrika aanbly en my deel doen. Ek is deur ’n ad agency gevra om die shoot te neem.

Q: Wat was jou grootste sukses?

What was your greatest success?

A: My grootste sukses; daar is verskillende dinge. ’n Mens kan die grootste job hê in die vorm van ’n lang tydperk wat jy daaraan spandeer. Ek het byvoorbeeld al vir ’n maand lank geskiet. Ek het ’n kalender vir Portnet geskiet, dit is al die hawens en lighthouses. Ons

het twaalf shots gedoen vir elke maand op die kalender. Ons het drie dae aan elke shot gespandeer, ons het die land vol gevlieg. Van die shots is uit 'n helikopter geneem.

Q: *Het jy al slegte fotosessies gehad, en hoekom? En hoe hanteer jy dit?*

Have you ever had a bad photographic session? How do you handle that?

A: O ja, ek het al baie slegte sessies gehad. Die laaste een waaraan ek kan dink, was vir 'n computer company, waar ek hulle executives moes afneem. Tien ouerige mans... and normally I am good with them. Een van hulle het ingeloop en gesê: "I hope you know what you're doing." Ek het hom net so gekyk en ignore. Die hele sessie was 'n nightmare, so partykeer is dit goed buite jou kontrole.

Q: *Ek het gedink jy skiet net modefoto's...*

I thought you were strictly a fashion photographer...

A: Ek shoot mense, maar die ding is jy kan nie welgesteld word met net fashion nie. Van die begin af het ek geweet ek gaan lank op my eie wees. Ek kan altyd kinders hê ná veertig en ek wil nie 'n styling artist wees nie. Ek wil geld maak, that will give me the freedom to do what I want to. Hierdie jaar wil ek aan 'n boek begin werk en as jy nie geld het nie, hoe kan jy dit doen? Daarom vat ek very highly paid shots, want dit gee jou die freedom om te skiet wat jy wil skiet.

Q: *Wat laat jou so entoesiasies bly oor modefotografie?*

How do you remain so enthusiastic about fashion photography?

A: Ek dink entoesiasme starts inside, jy moet entoesiasies wees as 'n persoon, entoesiasme is hard work. Jy moet die heelyd aan jouself werk. Veral as ek 'n kliënt se

mode moet doen en dit is nou rêrig lelike klere. Nadat ek uit die French *Vogue* gesien het wat ek eintlik wil skiet, moet ek nou hierdie klere skiet en iets daarvan maak. Dan is tyd modelling immediately, jy sien die kwaliteit van die klere, maar that's not what it's all about. Dit is wat hulle vir jou gee, om die beste daarvan te maak.

So, die entoesiasme must start inside, en dan natuurlik kies ek modelle om dit op te jazz en hair, make-up and stylist om dit beter te doen. Elke shot is 'n challenge vir my. Ek dink nooit daaraan dat 'n kliënt boring, old fashioned or out of time is nie. Ons hele *trade* as fotograawe, wat die meeste fotograawe nie besef nie, is ons moet kliënte educate soos jy sou wil. As jy na mense toe gaan, sal hulle die heelyd kla oor how misunderstanding the client is and it is so difficult to do good work, dit is nie waar nie. Ek vat vir hulle 'n brief en die kliënt beduie wat hulle wil hê.

En as die konsep wat hulle wil hê, "mediocre" klink, dan begin ons dit so te skiet en ek begin my eie expressions te gee, met ander woorde ek skiet safely and exactly what they want. All lyk ditsleg, dit is wat hulle wil hê. Daarna push jy hulle vorentoe, want hulle weet mos nie wat gedoen kan word nie. Nege uit die tien keer gaan hulle vir jou treatment. O, maar entoesiasme is 'n key word.

Okay, kom ons kyk hoeveel mense werk die hele dag: die fotograaf, sy assistent, die stylist en hulle assistent, hair and make-up artist, art director en sy assistent, die kliënt en miskien iemand anders en dan miskien drie mans. So, dit is dertien mense om jou as jy werk. Alles begin by die fotograaf en as jy nie entoesiasme toon nie, vergeet maar, dan gaan almal so lê. Dit is baie belangerik, daarom as 'n persoon moet jy goed voel met mense, innerlik.

Q: Hoe affekteer dit jou om 'n bekende gesig te wees?

How does it feel to be a well-known person?

A: Die media het my begin te notice, because I am an individual. Ek doen my eie ding en volg nie almal nie, ek dink nie dit is die mode nie. Dit faze my eintlik nie, dit laat my net besef 'n mens het sekere responsibilities. Daarom is dit vir my lekker dat jy hier kuier, want dit is my responsibility to give a little something back that I have received. Almal is so goed vir my. Ek kry nooit 'n air of 'n flair as daar 'n artikel in 'n magazine van my is nie. Dit is nie nou: "Oh, my gosh, I am the special of the month," nie, I'm just grateful people notice me for what I am doing. As dit kon gebeur, then I am grateful. So, om nooit te veel aksent op "ek, ek, ek" te sit nie, want al ons "ekkies" is klein vormpies. Ek hoop jy kry 'n overall picture, en om af te sluit op hierdie vraag, sal ek sê as jy te veel attention op jousef sit, dan verloor jy.

Q: *Wie is jou gunsteling fotograaf en waarom?*

Who is your favourite photographer and why?

A: Helmut Newton (1970), hy het altyd sulke black and white, very extravagant shots. Dit lyk soos German prostitutes en die 1930's styling. A lot of nudity en amper so lesbian feeling wat so amper controversiaal is. Byvoorbeeld, as 'n vrou kaal staan en die ander vrou 'n wit suit aan het. So absoluut en 'n vreeslik style line, unimaginable. Sy werk is nie vreeslik high key nie. Ek ken eintlik baie min shots wat hy van mans geneem het. Altyd nudity style wat 'n S&M-streek het. Dan is dit a kind of nudity with a harshness, jy weet so controversiaal. Ek koop van sy boeke so nou en dan. In oorsese modetydskrifte sien ek nogal baie van sy mode-editorials. Ek spot dit sommer dadelik.

Q: *Watse effek het jou voorkoms by die werk? Met ander woorde, het jou kleredrag ensovoorts enige effek op die mense waarmee jy werk?*

Does the clothes you wear affect the people you work with?

A: My kleredrag of my klere spreek “your individual style” uit en wat dit is, is wat jou gemaklik laat voel. Dit is mens en ek het nou al probeer om my hare te laat groei om meer vroulik te lyk. Jy weet jy doen dit vir jousef, dit is die belangrikste.

Q: *Watter eienskappe moet ’n goeie modefotograaf hê?*

What makes a good fashion photographer?

A: Jy moet emotional wees in ’n controlled way. Jy kan nie op almal skreeu nie en baie mense doen dit. Jy moet ’n sense vir mense hê, want dit is mos met wie jy werk, nie met dooie persone nie. Models vir my is baie meer as models. Ek probeer die mense agter hulle sien, want dit is wanneer foto’s vir my begin te werk. Your human skills must be so good and communicational. Jy moet ’n oog hê. As ’n make-up artist daai gesiggie aansit en hierdie model loop op die set, dan moet jy up to date wees en weet dit is negentien toet se ou make-up daai. Jy moet overall in touch wees met die trend changes, want dit is waaroor ons industrie gaan.

Q: *Wat sal jy sê is jou volgende groot uitdaging?*

What is your next big challenge?

A: Om minder te werk en meer om my persoonlike goed te skiet. I lost track there, want ek was te besig om “commercial” werk te doen. Ek moes dit doen om die plek te bou en om seker te maak die bank vat dit nie terug nie. Dit is ’n praktiese kind of period waar jy iets sacrifice to get something else. Jy weet ’n mens kan nie altyd alles kry op die selfde tyd nie.

Q: *Watter tipe model verkies jy om mee te werk?*

How would you define your favourite model?

A: Ek hou van 'n unusual look, met ander woorde dit is byvoorbeeld 'n meisie met swart kort hare met 'n krom neus, met cheek bones en pronounced eyes. En 'n androgynous look is not male, not female, very tall and almost anoreksies, ek hou daarvan. A general blue-eyed, pretty look is not my style.

Q: *Wat is jou visie vir die toekoms?*

What is your vision for the future?

A: Ek dink, now more than ever, word ons meer exposed to the outside world. Ons is nie meer so afgesny nie, en daarom is ons nie meer so colonial nie. Ons raak meer global en daar is meer foreign models en fotografe wat inkom. Modes wat inkom en oorsese tydskrifte soos byvoorbeeld *Elle* en *Marie Claire* wat terugkom, so alles gaan okay. Hopelik raak alles meer exciting, I can't see why not.

◇ **Q: *Wat glo jy lê in jou persoonlike toekoms?***

What do you see in your own future?

A: Ek glo ek is 'n "late bloomer". So ek is seker ek sal nog 'n familie en kinders hê, al is dit "after 50". En ek gaan skiet totdat ek stok-oud is eendag. En een van my grootste begeertes is om eendag 'n "holistic nudist colony" te hê.

◇ This part of the interview was conducted in preparation for a television programme featuring Merwelene. (Pasella, 1998)

◇ *Q: Waar vind nudisme 'n plek in jou lewe?*

Where does nudism fit into your life?

A: Nudisme speel 'n groot rol in my ontspanning en in my geestelike ontspanning, want dit is die enigste tyd wanneer ek rêrig gemaklik is en na aan moeder aarde is. Ek vergeet van werk en dinge, en dan kom goed rêrig in perspektief vir my. Daar is 'n saying wat sê: "It is totally irrelevant what happens to you in life, what's relevant is how you handle it."

Q: Watter raad sal jy iemand gee om in modefotografie in te kom?

How would you advise someone to get into fashion photography?

A: Om hulle oë oop te hou op enige fashion-tydskrif wat uitkom. Om ook byvoorbeeld in Exclusive Books al daai oorsese tydskrifte deur te blaai, want hulle is te duur om te koop. Die heelyd jou oog op boeke te hou en weet watse look dit is, want daar is spesifieke looks. Om uit te vind watse fotograaf jy baie respekteer en ook hulle werk and the way they run their business. En om te gaan assisteer.

Q: Is daar genoeg werk in Suid-Afrika?

Is there enough work in South Africa?

A: 'n Mens moet besef die land is baie klein en jy kan nie net mode doen nie. As jy net mode wil doen, dan moet jy Kaap toe gaan, maar dit is baie tougher daar. Jy moet by 'n punt begin en jou end result kan mode wees, maar jy moet ook inbetween dink. Ek sou sê die Kaap is moeiliker, want daar is meer fotograawe en daar is minder werk. Daar is meer foreigners soos foreign students wat daar assist, they are hot and happening.

◇ This part of the interview was conducted in preparation for a television program featuring Merwelene. (Pasella, 1998)

Q: Hoe vergelyk Suid-Afrikaanse fotografie met die buiteland?

How does South African photography compare with photography overseas?

A: Ek dink nie sleg nie. Om nou vir jou 'n voorbeeld te gee: In Januarie het ek en Doret vir 'n Londonse ad agency gaan skiet in die Kaap. Dit was vir Johnson & Johnson skin care, maar die kliënt is in Switserland en die ad agency is in London. Hulle het 'n commercial hier kom skiet. Toe doen ons die silk. Ek het gedink my job was nou nie so wonderlik nie. Toe bel hulle ons terug vir 'n two year buy-out. Hulle gebruik dit orals in die wêreld, in London en Duitsland vir magazines en billboards. So, dit self het vir my baie gesê.

Q: Jy voel seker goed oor jouself...

Do you feel good about yourself?

A: Jy weet, 'n mens raak nog baie insecure, want die ding is partykeer dan dink ek ek werk te veel commercial. Jy raak so lief vir jou kliënte dat daar 'n loyalty is. As ek besig is, probeer ek hulle nog accommodate, want almal werk onder sulke deadlines. Dan begin jy jouself 'n bietjie verloor, want ek het baie lanklaas vir myself geskiet. Which is very bad.

Q: Is jy patrioties en sien jy jou toekoms in Suid-Afrika?

Are you a patriot and will you stay in South Africa?

A: Not necessarily. Ek dink ek is 'n "citizen of the world", want ek kan gelukkig wees any where. Jy weet, of dit nou Parys in die Vrystaat is of "Paris in France".



Q: ...but Merwelene does not only live for herself. She is embroiled in the fight for the copyright of professional photographer photographs...

A: Ja, dit is 'n baie interessante storie, want ek was assigned deur 'n ad agency om 'n fund raising campaign vir die African National Congress (ANC) te skiet. Dit was voordat hulle nog 'n political campaign was, en dit was die international fund raising campaign, met ander woorde hulle het 'n brochure geprint met al die ANC se informasie om so geld vanaf oorsee te kry. En dit is waarvoor ek dit geskiet het. En toe ek my oë oop maak is die poster orals op die pale vir die presidential campaign en dit word vir stamps gebruik en in New York word dit vir phone cards gebruik. En die tragedie in Suid-Afrika op die oomblik nog steeds is, ons is een van die enigste lande waar 'n fotograaf nie copyright het nie, met ander woorde as jy 'n shot vir 'n kliënt doen kan hulle dit gebruik vir enige ding. Maar ons is nou in die process om deur die constitution dit te verander, want as 'n kliënt jou assign om 'n spesifieke shoot te skiet, byvoorbeeld bill boards, dan is daar 'n spesifieke fooi vir dit in vergelyking met magazine ads. So, ek dink dit was die begin om fotograwe aware te maak, like we've got to wake up and we've got to conduct this in a professional way. Nêrens in die wêreld kan hulle net met jou foto's doen wat hulle wil nie. Byvoorbeeld 'n model, die model agentskap vra 'n fooi byvoorbeeld, Simoné, op 'n kalender. As ons hierdie foto vir enige iets anders gebruik, word die model weer betaal en as ons dit vir bill boards gebruik, word sy weer betaal. So, fotograwe kry nie die copyright wat modelle het nie, wat ons in die proses het om te verander. Hulle verander dit nogsteeds, ons het copyright lawyers wat fotograwe represent, so hulle werk dit uit. Nog geen resultate, want hierdie lawyer is nou net Switserland toe, hy is eindlik Noorweë toe of êrens in Noord-Europa ek is nou nie seker presies waar nie. Om baie informasie te kry het fotograwe geld donate vir sy onkoste en hy is nou verlede week terug.

So, ons gaan nou sien wat daar gaan gebeur, maar deur hierdie Mandela storie het dit my 'n bietjie laat wakker skrik om te besef wat ons situasie is. So, dit is nou die copyright se storie.



To conclude this chapter other items she did not mention during the interviews include the following...

Who is Merwelene when she is at home? She drives her second Mercedes. Her first Mercedes is a story on its own. She went to see a fortune-teller who advised her to sell her car as it was going to give her trouble. On arriving outside she found it stolen.

Her Mercedes is a 350 SE, which is still in its original condition as it was imported from Germany. The only concession is a state of the art radio and compact disc player. You will always see her driving with her two children, one at each back window. Incidentally, King and Captain are her two dogs. **(Figure 1.3)**

Her favourite restaurant is Cracks in Rosebank where she always orders mussels and Thai whiskey.

She is respected and well liked by the ad agencies. Old Shanghai even named one of their special fish in a fishpond after her.

Her material instinct often surfaces. She is one of the few if any who will see to it that the crew receives food and the necessary refreshments during a photographic session.

Everything leaving her house is specially packed, such as personalised card, raffia and a fresh rose from her garden.

CHAPTER 2

MERWELENE THE BUSINESS WOMAN

2. MERWELENE THE BUSINESS WOMAN

2.1 Introduction

The interview with Merwelene in this chapter concerns the running of her business and the accessories she uses. It gives an insight into the pre-production of a photographic session, how an actual session takes place and the preparation of the final product.

2.2 Main contents of the interview

Merwelene van der Merwe believes in being a freelance photographer. Even though she is well known, she does not want to rest on her laurels. Many prospective clients still request her portfolio. Her business motto is that by staying up to date with fashion trends and technological developments one will remain in demand.

To her, an assistant is an absolute necessity. Merwelene is not interested in an assistant's portfolio or her ability to take photographs. The assistant's personality is of the utmost importance. The assistant is consistently in close proximity to the client and Merwelene herself. He/she must have the ability to bond with both. Finally, the assistant must be prepared to work hard for long hours.

All Merwelene's work is on a daily or half-day basis. Quotations are given for all work and this includes all expenses incurred. In this business there are no fixed hours. Often, photographs are taken from before sunrise until after sunset.

Merwelene grew up with a Hasselblad, but later changed to a 35mm Nikon. There is a strong tendency to change to Canon overseas and Merwelene has followed suit. Merwelene has a wide range of cameras, backs and lenses for every conceivable type of shot. She even

has an ultra modern purple Hasselblad camera. She usually takes photographs with the camera in the automatic mode and has more time this way to concentrate on the photographic session itself.

Merwelene has no preference when it comes to the type of film she uses. She likes to experiment.

The use of natural or artificial light depends on the session but she never uses a flash on location. She believes there are enough other aids to assist her.

All developing and printing of colour photographs are left to the professionals but Merwelene believes black and white is very personal and these pictures are printed in her own dark room.

Every photographic session goes through a basic process. Either the advertising agency or client will give Merwelene the brief for the photographic session.

Together they will discuss the location or it will be left to her discretion. Merwelene has one of the best-equipped studios. If time is of the essence, then a “reecee” is used to find a few ideal places. But Merwelene will always inspect the location and make the final decision.

One of the prerequisites is that the light must be good. Merwelene will not make drastic changes to the location as she feels the model is central and the location just gives the mood.

The pre-production preparations are like second nature to Merwelene, for instance booking the stylist, hair and make-up artist and model.

Some clients specify a certain model but normally Merwelene chooses the model on her own. The photographer usually knows the models better and whether there are foreign models in town or not.

models in town or not.

Clothing is a very specialised area, for fashion editorials in magazines much research has been done on the clothes. For more general photographs the stylist will choose the clothes, wherefore the hair stylist and make-up artist add the finishing touches.

At this stage the most important cog in the machinery comes into action, Merwelene the photographer. She “goes into a photographic high” and this “vibe” works through to the whole crew. All rules are thrown overboard and the gut feeling of Merwelene takes over. All the advice and instructions given are thrown overboard and Merwelene does her own thing. She believes she is the one looking through the eye of the lens and is ultimately responsible for the photographic session. The final task is the editing of the negatives and to give the final product to the clients.

2.3 Interview with Merwelene

Q: *Werk jy vir iemand of is jy 'n vryskut-fotograaf?*

Do you work for someone or are you a freelance photographer?

A: Die beste fotografe in die land is altyd vryskut, want dit beteken jy word nooit “one time” net deur een kliënt gebruik nie, jy het jou verskillende kliënte. En so kan jy jou werk begin kies.

Q: *Jy soek seker nou nie meer werk nie...*

I presume you don't look for work anymore...

A: Weet jy, hulle “request” tans my portfolio. Dit is hoekom hy nie hier is nie, hulle

“request” hom nog die healtyd. Ek wil nou nie sê ek gaan soek nou nie meer werk nie, maar jy moet nog jou rondtes doen. Dit is hoe ek myself sien: “I might be this month’s favourite flavour of the month, but not necessarily next month.” So, ek kan nooit te gemaklik raak nie.

Q: *Watter kwalifikasies moet jou assistent hê?*

What qualifications must your assistant have?

A: Kan ek 100% eerlik wees? Sê nou hulle adverteer tien fotografe se name om te gaan sien. Jy weet baie mense kom hier werk soek, dan kom hulle my hulle portfolio wys. As ek ’n assistent kies, kyk ek nie eintlik watse werk jy doen nie, “because it is unimportant in the job”. Ek kyk watter tipe mens jy is of jy my kliënte goed sal hanteer, en hoe ek van jou hou. “It is on a very personal basis.” Later on gaan jou werk meer belangrik wees. As ’n assistent is dit nie belangrik of jy ’n goeie oog het nie, dit is meer belangrik hoe opletterend jy is en hoe vinnig jy is en hoe “sharp” jy is.

Q: *Hoe werk die vergoeding, per uur of per sessie of...*

How are you paid?

A: Ek werk net per dag of per halfdag.

Q: *Betaal jy enige reiskostes?*

Do you pay any travelling expenses?

A: Nooit.

Q: *Wat is die tydsduur van die fotosessies en is daar rustye tussenin?*

How long are your photographic sessions and do you have rest periods in

between?

A: As dit 'n "fashion shoot" is en ons begin 6:00am te skiet as die son opkom, dan begin ons 4:00am. Gewoonlik 'n lunch break, maar 'n lunch break kan 12:00pm of 4:00pm wees. Ek "insist on a reasonable lunch break, midday", anders is almal oormoeg en geïrriteerd.

Q: *Watter tipe kameras het jy en hoekom?*

What kind of cameras do you have and why?

A: Ek het altyd 'n 35mm Nikon gebruik. Vir vyftien jaar was dit net Nikon, maar nou het ek oor geslaan na Canon. Canon se lens het mos nou ultrasonic motoring in die lense en hulle focus is nou much sharper and faster. Ek het Canon-fotograwe gehad wat hierdie studio kom huur het. Almal skiet Canon en hulle sê Europa is vol van die beste Nikon en nobody shoots Nikon, veral in die modewêreld. Dan skiet ek ook Hasselblad, ek gebruik 'n tripod, maar skiet freehand most of the time. Hasselblad is 'n goeie kamera, maar as gevolg van die square, 'n bietjie uncomfortable for magazines en ander goed. Ek het die kamera van my studentedae, nou hou ek dit maar aan.

Q: *Watter tipe lense het jy en hoekom?*

What kind of lenses do you have and why?

A: Ek het verskriklik baie, every range. En die ding is in Amerika huur alle fotograwe equipment. Vir elke assignment huur jy specialized gear. In Amerika, vir agt jaar, het ek nooit 'n kamera gehad nie. Die ou Hasselblad wat ek nog mee gesvot het, het ek nie aan geraak nie. Hier in Suid-Afrika is die mark so klein, so daar is

nie rental houses nie. Die fotografe het hierdie enormous layouts van natural layouts vir equipment, wat 'n mens so laat agter voel. Daarom is daar ook 'n cut-off line. Ek het gear, maar ook nie te veel nie. Ek is nou nie 'n talk-crazy nie, want baie mans-fotografe wil enige ding hê wat uitkom. I am happy with my old stuff.

Q: *Gebruik jy jou kamera op outomaties of “manual” en hoekom?*

Do you use your camera on automatic or manual and why?

A: As ek fashion skiet, outomaties, want ek is op motor drive, dan is ek klaar. My eie goed, manual, of dit hang af van die subject matter. Die ding is ek moet konsentreer op komposisie en expression. Ek dink met vandag se tegnologie, hoekom moet jy dit self doen? In die begin toe alles self-fokus was, was ek so bang. Hoe gaan die kamera weet waar ek wil fokus? Met my Canon het ek vyf spots, ek kies of ek op jou oë of voete wil fokus.

Q: *Watter tipe film gebruik jy en hoekom?*

What kind of film do you use and why?

A: Ek speel baie met film en ek dink dit is baie belangrik, 'n film is baie “personal”. “I use cross-process and backup stops I even push.” Hierdie foto was op ¹RTP vir die “saturated colour”.

Q: *Hou jy van natuurlike of kunsmatige beligting of 'n mengsel van die twee?*

What kind of lighting do you prefer?

¹ Fujichrome 64 professional tungsten negative film.

A: Dit is subject matter. Ek is baie goed met nudes en ek kry vreeslik advertising work met nudes. Ek dink omdat ek 'n vrou is, boek hulle my, want die models voel baie tuis. As ek na jou tieties kyk, is dit of ek na jou oë kyk, dit is dieselfde vir my. So, daar is geen overtone nie. Alle mans-fotogawe sê weer: “you’re losing the sensuality throughout, because you don’t look at it that way”, maar nie vir my nie. Sensuality moet so subtle wees, jy moet dit amper nie kan sien nie. Dit moet net so getouch word en vir bodies, definitief studio, sodat jy dit kan belig. Of dit 'n kaal man is of 'n kaal vrou, it’s the same to me. Ek treat dit soos 'n subject matter. Ek het 'n sterk gevoel daarvoor.

Q: Gebruik jy baie “flash”?

Do you use a flash?

A: Op location gebruik ek nooit 'n flash nie. Baie mense sê 'n mens het 'n bietjie flash nodig, maar ek werk nie so nie. Ek gebruik baie reflector boards, groot wit reflectors van die son af. En 'n diffuser wat die lig cut. Jy sien in son gebruik ek baie silk, dit is daylight balance vir silk. Sê nou jy het sterk sonlig op die model en jy het die diffuser, is daai skin flawless. Om te help met die equipment, kry ek grip guys. Grip guys is mense wat op movie sets werk, want dit is groot reflectors veral as die wind opkom. Dit is moeilik.

Q: Wie doen die ontwikkeling?

Who does your developing?

A: Beith, wat 'n professionele “lab” hier is, hulle doen baie goed hier.

Q: Is daar enige afwyking van die normale metode van ontwikkeling?

Are there any variations on the normal method of developing?

A: Ja, ek clip altyd my films, want die ding is elke skin treat ek differently. Ná al hierdie jare wil ek spesifieke skin tones vir sekere girls hê. So, ek knip die eerste stukkies en die meeste van my films push ek. Ek hou van die saturated kleure en clear skins. Ons print die black and white self, because it is too personal. Kleur is nie so personal nie. Jy weet, meestal skiet ons transparencies of reversal negatives.

Q: Het jy enige sê oor die gebied waar julle buite skiet?

Do you have any say about the location where you shoot outside?

A: Ons chat so, jy weet, jy discuss nou, dan dink jy nou waar is 'n exciting plek. Dan kom hulle daarmee deur. Ons sou 'n shoot gaan doen het vir De Kat in Prague, dit is toe gekanselleer. Hoe dit met tydskrifte werk, jy kry 'n airline en 'n hotel wat jou sponsor. Magazines het nie geld nie. Daar is 'n hotel, ek het vergeet wat dit genoem word, waar dit omtrent R900 kos om daar te bly. So, dit is baie duur en onmoontlik vir die kliënt om dit te bekostig vir 'n hele crew. Dit is like R1400 'n aand en ons is daar vir vyf dae. Dan het hulle gewoonlik 'n uitruilskema met hierdie plek in Sandton City, jy weet mos, dit is hoe dit gaan. Hulle betaal jou.

Q: Hoe besluit jy op die tipe lokaal vir jou foto?

How do you decide on a location?

A: Soos byvoorbeeld, die *Marie Claire*-shoot waaraan ons nou werk. Hulle sê vir my dat dit 'n winter-issue is en dit is tweed en coats. So, natuurlik met tweed dink ek aan die tekstuur en dan dink ek aan 'n ou kerk of verkrummelende mure. Dan begin ek te dink aan watter tipe model die klere moet dra. Die model, die location en die klere gaan alles saam.

Q: *Het jy al die lokale voorheen verander?*

Do you ever change the location?

A: Die meeste van die tyd werk dit as jy met 'n lang lens skiet en ons skiet tog nie die location nie. Die location contribute aan die mood. Ek skiet tog die model en die klere, so dit is die hero. Die belangrikste throughout is goeie lig, en ons skiet met baie groot skerms en goeie diffusion. Groot skerms en goed huur 'n mens somer by professionele plekke.

Q: *Besoek jy die lokaal vooraf?*

Do you look for a location beforehand?

A: Ja, voor ons skiet. Partykeer met heavy jobs kry ek 'n reece-persoon. R.e.e.c.e.e, ek het nooit geweet hoe om dit te spel nie. 'n Recee-persoon is iemand wat net locations gaan soek. As ek vreeslik besig is, kry ek iemand om 'n location vir my te gaan soek. Dan sê ek, ek soek 'n groot palmboom met 'n bankie daaronder. Daarna kom hy terug en dan sê hy hier en daar en dan gaan check ek op die ou einde. As jy baie besig is, het jy nie twee dae om rond te ry om iets te soek nie. Maar ek verkies om dit self te doen.

Q: *Wat is jou volgorde vir voorbereiding?*

What is the sequence of events of a photographic session?



A: Volgorde is natuurlik, die pre-production. Die bookings van die artist en dit is die modelle, hair, make-up and stylists. Ek boek almal so, dit is die voorbereiding. En dan natuurlik dink ek aan die location of studio en die beligting en watter tyd van die dag. En dan dink ek aan die treatment. Ja, 'n mens het voorbereiding, maar as 'n mens dit so lank doen, dan is dit vir my second nature.

Q: *Is modelle deel van die opdrag, of kies jy haar self?*

Is a model part of the assignment or do you choose her yourself?

A: Dit hang af van kliënt tot kliënt, omdat die fotograaf die heelyd met modelle werk en nie die kliënt nie. Hulle weet nie hoe die “town” is nie, want daar is baie oorseese modelle wat net vir 'n maand hier is. So, jy moet “up to date” wees met al die nuutste “looks” en van wie hier is vir 'n rukkie. En die meeste kliënte weet dit mos nie, maar sommige kliënte kies hulle eie modelle vir die “pretence”. Ek verkies om my eie model te kies.

Q: *Behels jou opdrag klere of nie?*

Do you choose the clothes?

A: 'n Fashion editorial in 'n tydskrif plaas goed wat die mense wil sien, hulle doen baie research. Dit is nie net jy gaan tel 'n rokkie op en neem dit af nie. There is a whole story behind it. Hulle kyk what is coming in the next season, jy werk vooruit seasons. Met modes gee hulle vir jou die klere, want dit is daai klere wat verkoop word. Dit is nie dat jy nou net mooi klere kies om te skiet nie. Of jy kry 'n stylist wat klere gaan kies, want as fotograaf het jy nie tyd om alles te doen nie.

Jy moet onthou daar is 'n spesialis vir elke ding. Daarom moet jy goed connect met wie jy

werk. As die stylist nou sulke tannie-kampeerpakkies hier aanbring, sou daar nou baie works gewees het. Jy weet hulle moet dit kan toepas. Om goed met mense te werk, is baie belangrik.

Q: *Kry jy 'n reeks klere om van te kies of net een stuk?*

Do you get a range of clothes to choose from?

A: Daar is gewoonlik 'n keuse, most of the time. Dan bring die stylist die klere en stoom dit ook. En trek die meisie aan en pin it right terwyl sy voor die kamera sit. As ek sê “tuck in the blouse at the back”, dan doen sy dit alles. Ek bepaal hoe die kledingstuk moet vertoon, byvoorbeeld verlede week het ons 'n catalogue geskiet. Dit was die lelikste goed, want die jackets het net so gehang. Dan moet jy nou 'n innovated ding probeer kry. Ons het daai ding gesteam, ek het ander ligte probeer, maar dit het nog sulke kinkels gewys. Daarna kom ek agter hy moet maar net in 'n skaduwee val waar daar 'n bietjie detail is.

Q: *Wat van die grimering?*

What about the make-up?

A: Met make-up sit jy nooit donker oë en donker lippe nie, then they compete. As jy 'n strong mouth het, het jy 'n naked eye. Dit hang natuurlik van die location af. Ek sit baie donker aan as ek in die studio skiet en ek wil die model se vel uitblaas. Dit hang af watter light source. Gewoonlik sê ek vir die make-up artist dit is natural light, it is early morning, hard midday, diffuse light, studio tungston of flash. Ek doen body paints ook baie. Daar is nogal persoonlike goed waarvan jy hou, soos vir my skin texture en appelwangetjies. Soos 'n healthy country girl lyk, maar dit is persoonlik. Ek hou nie van 'n up-do met baie los hare

nie. Ek hou van 'n messy do, maar clean. Ek dink die meeste van my shots speak of simplicity. Nie verskriklik aangaan nie, want altyd less is more.

Q: Hoe projekteer jou gedagtes die foto?

How do you project the photograph beforehand?

A: Alles gebeur om my spontaneous, instantly. Ek kan iets visualize, soos ons het die vorige dag gaan ry om te sien hoe dit lyk net om die feeling te kry. Die meeste van die tyd weet ek ook nie wat ek doen nie. It just happens en die ding is jy moet jou gut feeling trust. Jy kan nooit die heelyd sê, is dit nou reg, is dit nou nie reg nie, want jy weet nooit nie. Totdat jy nou sê almal stop, hier gaan ons, loop 'n bietjie, kom ons begin. And then it just happens. Terwyl jy deur die kamera kyk, het ek een make-up artist se skadu daar gesien. Toe roep ek almal om in 'n lyn te staan. Jy weet, so het dit ontwikkel, voor die tyd het ek nie gedink ek wil sulke goed create nie. Simoné ken my baie goed en dit is my favourite model. As ek net na haar kyk, dan weet sy hoe om te move. So is dit when you are truly connected. The more enjoyable die hele shooting process is, the better the results. Almal moet dit geniet.

Q: Is daar enige vereistes met die uitbeelding?

Are there any requirements for the depiction of the photographs?

A: Ek dink dit het meer te doen met advertising. Waar daar 'n konsep is, maar met mode is dit mainly image. So jy create an image en hulle probeer jou in 'n boksie druk. Jy laat jou nie affekteer nie, ek luister wat hulle sê en ek ignore hulle. As ek na 'n image kyk, kan ek dan nie sê, "maar die kliënt het gesê jy moet so staan" nie. Wie kyk deur die kamera? Niemand maar jy nie. Daar is niemand om te blameer as jy iets dislike nie, behalwe jouself.

Q: *Beeld die model die opdrag natuurlik uit, of moet jy haar help?*

Is your model a natural or must you assist her?

A: As 'n model se look klaar is, sal 'n professionele model vir haarself in die spieël kyk. "If she knows what she relates to", dan vra sy vir my: "...what mood do you want?" Dan sê ek: "I want a very tragic, moody, star-feeling." Met ander woorde ek wil nou nie 'n tiener hê wat op en mensig is vir 'n smile nie. Dit is nie die look wat ek soek nie. En dan probeer sy haar daarin inleef. Ek gee haar 'n guideline dan begin ons te skiet. Ek glo daaraan om 'n mens nie te veel te kritiseer nie, want dan breek jy die hele mood. Ek skiet selfs as dit nie reg lyk nie, met ander woorde ek sal incrop. As haar voet byvoorbeeld verkeerd is, just to let the energy flow. En ná die eerste rol sal ek sien nee, dit is nou transformation, 'it is not going to work". Dan roep ek haar aside, dan sê ek: "You know, this is actually what I want. I want more emotion in the shoulders and your eyes to talk more to me. Let's try it again." 'n Model spesialiseer in wat sy doen, so ek wil nie 'n model overdirect nie. Ek het mos my job om te doen. Partykeer kry jy modelle wat nie weet wat om te doen nie. As 'n model nog nie verstaan nie, sal ek haar vra: "How long have you been doing modelling, what are you getting paid for, why are you here today and you are wasting my time." Jy weet, want elkeen het 'n job om te doen.

Q: *Waarna kyk julle om die regte foto te kies?*

What do you look at to find the right photograph?

A: As ek edit, is die eerste ding waarna my oë gaan die gesig en die expression. Ek kry net die gesig en expression waarvan ek hou en dan kyk ek hoe die klere val en hoe sy staan en hoe die location lyk. Hoe die lig val en haar expression, dit is hoe ek edit. Niemand gaan na 'n foto kyk as sy soos 'n ou koei lyk nie en haar rok lyk wonderlik.

Q: *Moes julle al iets oor skiet?*

Have you had any re-shoots?

A: Ja, maar dit is gewoonlik nie oor fotografie nie. Dit is gewoonlik as dit 'n verkeerde rok is of hulle hou nie van die model nie. Dan verander jy die model of styl, daar is baie “elements that count”.

CHAPTER 3

MERWELENE'S FAVOURITE TEAM

3. MERWELENE'S FAVOURITE TEAM

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains interviews with the people Merwelene usually works with. They are her assistant, a model and a hair and make-up artist. Each person describes how he or she experiences Merwelene as a fashion photographer.

3.2 Main contents of the interview

Merwelene's assistant is an extension of herself, because without her she would be lost.

A model who is able to divorce herself from reality and to act a role. A person who is very professional and experienced. To her, time is money and must not be wasted. She is a model in demand with a special booking rating. She works with the very best.

A hair and make-up artist who does not have to be coaxed all the time. She is quick to grasp what is needed and does an excellent job on the model.

How do they feel about Merwelene? For Doret the assistant, Merwelene's personality and ability to work with people is her greatest success. Everyone is part of the team and knows exactly what is transpiring. Merwelene treats Doret as an equal and not as a subordinate.

To Simoné the model, Merwelene is not just a photographer but a friend. By continually communicating, Merwelene gets the best out of every participant. Merwelene is not dominating but guiding.

Marilyn, the hair and make-up artist feels that Merwelene's direct approach is one of her greatest assets. Marilyn knows exactly what is expected of her and Merwelene's enthusiasm

with the final product makes it all worth while.

Three different views but for all three Merwelene is the greatest to work with.

Merwelene takes over. She believes she is the one looking through the lens and is ultimately responsible for the photographic session.

3.3 An interview with Merwelene about her assistant

Q: Merwelene, wie is jou assistent?

Merwelene, who is your assistant?

A: Doret is my assistent. ... ek skiet nie op my eie nie. 'n Assistent is vir my 99% van my besigheid, dit is vir my vreeslik belangrik. Ek was lucky om haar te kry. 'n Kliënt wat die editor by *Rooi Rose* is, het my gebel en gesê sy ken iemand wat 'n job soek. Die assistent bly gewoonlik vir twee jaar. Die vorige outjie is London toe en het daar gaan toer. Ek laat altyd die een assistent die ander een 'n bietjie wys. Miskien sal ons aan 'n ander assistent vir volgende jaar dink, omdat ons nou die computer ook het. Kan jy nou glo hoe moeilik dit vir my was om die computer te koop, want ek moes dit finansier en ek weet niks van computers af nie. Ek het in Miami gaan skiet en toe het Doret 'n course gaan doen. Sy is lief daarvoor en sy wil dit graag doen.

3.4 Interview with the assistant, Doret van Jaarsveld

Q: How do you feel about Merwelene as a fashion photographer?

A: She is wonderful with people, which is very important in fashion photography.

Through her complimenting she makes everybody feel at his or her best. Phrases like stunning, beautiful, I like that, that is working well and you are looking good are continually

being used. It is unbelievable what an effect these compliments have on people. Merwelene will walk into the make-up room and say this is really good or the make-up looks really beautiful or this is exactly what I want. Suddenly the final product surpasses all expectations. The way she works with people makes her very popular. People want to come back and work with her again. Without Jackie Beele, Merwelene's second assistant, the team would not be complete. Jackie is the secretary, housekeeper and the general handyman. To her it is important that everything in and around the house must run smoothly, so that Merwelene can concentrate on her work.

Q: How do you experience Merwelene at a photographic session?

A: Merwelene has a lot of energy, positive energy. She will say nice things the whole time. She will become very excited and people will stand around her. As the session starts, the people standing around will get more and more excited as well. As she builds up the vibe, they experience everything she sees through the lens, then she will be saying she sees this and that and it is so, so beautiful. Everyone feels as if they are looking through the camera and taking the shot themselves. She really extracts the best out of everyone. The excitement and vibe she generates is just unbelievable. She has an exceptional lot of energy. She shoots fast so that nobody can get bored. She picks it up immediately if a model is uneasy. She speaks to them, soothing them, she is very considerate. If they are uneasy about something, she will say it's okay, we are not going to do it. Everybody must feel good and enjoy the photographic session. With her every photographic session is a pleasure; she makes it so much fun.

Q: Does Merwelene restrict you or does she give you a free hand to do your thing?

A: Together we work as a team. The fact that she is my boss does not feature. There is no such thing as a boss and worker relationship. With the Polaroid photo's she always asks what I think and how I feel about it. If I want to say something I will say it. She will never let me feel stupid about my idea. She wants me to say whether I like something or not. If I think something is very good, I will say let's go for it. She will do it and we will see what it looks like. She continually involves me with the photographic sessions. She is definitely not a person who feels you work for me and you must do as I say. I am part of the team and it is just unbelievable to work for her.

3.5 Interview about Simoné Venter, the model, with Merwelene (Figure 3.1)

Q: Hoekom is sy Merwelene se gunsteling model?

Why is she Merwelene's favourite model?

A: Simoné is 'n Afrikaanse meisie en 27 jaar oud. Sy is 'n international model en deel van *Next Models* op die special bookings.

Simoné, first of all as ek nog nie eers aan haar appealing look dink nie, is sy extremely professioneel en sy is my favourite model. Sy kyk verskriklik goed na haarself, jy kan dit aan haar vel sien. Sy verstaan klere, sy werk met klere. Sy sal iets aantrek, spieël toe loop en presies kyk watse image ons create het. Hoe haar grimering lyk en hoe sy daai karakter aanvat. En of sy nou swimwear doen of aandklere, sy beweeg volgens dit. En Simoné is nie 'n model wat 110 poses doen nie, soos wat jong modelletjies dink hulle moet doen nie. She just moves naturally, daarom lyk alles altyd reg, want sy is confident. En ek dink sy like haarself as a person and she's got peace with herself. Dit is nie net dat sy 'n uiterlike gevoel moet project nie. En haar gesig-struktuur hou ek vreeslik van, a square jawline met high

cheekbones, full lips, big eyes, flawless skin. Ja, and just very professional.

3.6 An interview with Simoné, the model

Q: Where does Simoné come from?

A: I entered for model of the year at RAU (Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit). After that one thing led to another and then I started working for Merelin Gautere in Paris. At that stage I was 20 years old. In Paris you get a lot of inspiration.

Q: How do you experience Merwelene as a fashion photographer?

A: I have never really seen her as a photographer. The way she creeps into a person's heart makes her a very good friend. She is an absolutely amazing and exceptional photographer. She breaks all barriers between people. She is just general love and openness. Her openness is actually her success. She has a way of manipulating you to get the best out of you. This is the main reason for her success.

Q: How do you experience Merwelene at a fashion session?

A: Merwelene gives you an easy environment in which to work. She uses music to create the mood and set the tone. Being an extrovert makes it easy for you to know what she wants. She makes you feel exceptional at a photographic session. She is confident and this rubs off onto you. She is continually communicating and gives you feedback. A model must always be at ease and Merwelene makes you feel at ease. During a photographic session she radiates a type of love and peacefulness. She knows her work. The changing of the lights and settings are simple and flowing. She works fast and does not dwell on one shoot. All elements work together to create success.

Q: *Does Merwelene let you use your own initiative?*

A: Before a photographic session I am briefed. Just before the session I look at myself in the mirror, see the clothes and make-up and become the character I see and was briefed about. It is a lot like acting. In other words I come into a frame of mind. As I walk out onto the setting my creativity takes over. I must make the product work so it can sell. I have my own space in the session and Merwelene does not try to limit me. She normally does not interfere with my facial expressions unless the client is not satisfied and then she will gently steer me into another direction. Merwelene is the mouthpiece of a photographic session.

3.7 Fashion photographs of Simoné Venter, the model

3.7.1 Edgars Red Square calendars photographic session (Figure 3.2)

3.7.2 Simoné's Edgars calendar session, the interview with Merwelene

Q: *Wat het die opdrag behels?*

Tell me about Simoné's Edgars calendar photographic session

A: Edgars het twaalf fotograawe in Suid-Afrika gevra om enige image te produce vir die kalender. Die enigste vereiste was jy moes die square wys in jou shot, somehow, die Edgars Red Square. En toe het ons besluit om dit in die vorm van blomme te doen, wat hulle nog nooit gedoen het nie. En dit is net unpredictable.

Q: *Wat was jou eerste reaksie met die opdrag?*

What was your first reaction towards the assignment?

A: Die reaksie was my eie reaksie, want dit was my eie idee. Jy kon gedoen het net wat jy wou, al wat jy moes uitbeeld was 'n "square somehow". "So the image tells it for itself."

Q: *Wat was die vereiste van die model?*

What type of model was required?

A: Daar was total freedom geen vereistes van iemand nie, die enigste vereiste was my eie vereiste. Ek wou dit graag na die negentigs laat lyk het, met ander woorde natural and quite fragile, meer soos 'n movie actress as 'n model. Soos jy kan sien, is haar hande en voete baie emotional, dit is nie te perfect en te beautiful in die unpredictable way nie.

Q: *Beskryf die algemene agtergrond van die foto*

Describe the natural background to the photograph

A: Met die Edgars Red Square, hoekom ek spesifiek Hasselblad hier gebruik het, is omdat die kalender se formaat square was. Hier het ek ²EPP gebruik met 'n blou filter en EPP is mos E6 en dit word in C41 geprocess en die processing ook +1, cross-process. Want ek wou die groen en blou orals hê, maar die rooi nog behou. Die rooi het 'n bietjie koud geword, maar dit staan nog baie goed uit. Ek het 'n Hasselblad 80mm lens gebruik omrede dit appropriate vir die formaat was. En die model requirements, wou ek nie 'n tipiese beautiful blondine soos Annelien Kriel hê nie, maar meer 'n aktrise-gevoel. Daarom sal jy sien, ek het nie eers 'n gesig nodig gehad nie, ek wou net eenvoudig nie 'n gesig vir hierdie foto hê nie. Dat jy meer 'n sensitiewe gevoel in die hande en voete kry. Jy sal sien sy het net 'n deurskynende reënjassie aan waar die breast en pubic net subtle deur wys, maar it is not too much in your face. En toe Edgars my approach het om dit te doen, het ek dadelik

²Kodak Ektachrome Professional Colour Reversal Film.

geweet die Red Square wil ek in 'n roos-vormpie hê. So die idee hiervandaan is dat al die boompies nou van blare is. Hier is die rose 'n square gesny en dit is hoekom dit so square onderval. Die canvas het ons laat paint, want ek wou dit soos 'n ou muur laat lyk. En dit sommer buite op die deck geskiet met water wat ons van bo gesproei het, dat dit soos 'n bietjie reën lyk. En die deck met die reversal, reflect baie mooi as hy ook nat is. Ons het die deck geolie en toe nat gemaak.

3.7.3 The interview with Simoné Venter

Q: How did you experience the Edgars Red Square photographic session?

A: I had just returned from Millan when this photographic session took place. I was very tired, but fortunately Merwelene did not need my head in the photo. I concentrated on my body's movement. My body had to create the emotion. The expression of my hands and feet was very important for this shot.

3.8 The Sandton City magazine photographic session (Figure 3.3)

3.8.1 Simoné's Sandton City magazine photographic session (Sossus Vlei – Namibia), the interview with Merwelene

Q: Wat het die opdrag behels?

What instructions did you receive for this photographic session?

A: Dit was 'n vier dae shoot en ons het net mode gaan skiet.

Q: Wat wou jy uitbeeld?

What did you want to depict in this session?

A: Ek wou 'n poskaart “empty landscape” gewys het en ek wou gehad het sy moes 'n dramatiese “Asian” gevoel gehad het. Dit lyk of dit op die maan kon wees.

Q: *Wat was jou eerste reaksie met die opdrag?*

What was your reaction towards the assignment?

A: Very exciting! Ek wil weggaan, ek wil Sossus Vlei toe gaan. Charge that plane. Let's go, let's do it, come.

3.8.2 Interview with Simoné, the model, about the Sandton City magazine photographic session at Sossus Vlei in Namibia

Merwelene created the line, wind and background. It is absolutely amazing in the desert. It feels as if all the elements are present. I felt everything must be plain and simple. I must stand like a statue and do nothing. I just felt like a beautiful creature.

3.9 Simoné's interpretation of the following photographs

3.9.1 The Sandton City magazine session at Sossus Vlei in Namibia (Figure 3.4.1 & 3.4.2)

It was not necessary to pose, as I felt simple, pure and natural. As an animal, I felt close to nature. An animal does not pose to be beautiful, it just is. The clothes were just right. All I had to do is create the mood. The photo with the long lines suits my type of work. The running sand brought me closer to nature.

3.9.2 Dali Tambo photographic session for Clothing Range Label (Figure 3.5)

I love an artistic shoot. This being one makes it one of my favourite photos. It was

absolutely amazing. The main thing with nudes is you have to deliver the goods.

Fortunately the photographer was my choice. Most of my nudes are with Merwelene. I do not click with a male photographer on a nude shoot. The male model in this shoot was shy and uncertain. To get him to relax I told him we had our own space and not to worry about anything. I will do a lot to get the right picture.

3.9.3 Dali Tambo photographic session for Clothing Range Label (Figure 3.6)

This did not feel like a nude shoot, as I had to stand at the back. I was just fortunate to be part of Merwelene's artwork.

3.9.4 Edgars catalogue photographic session (Figure 3.7)

This is a black and white filmed in an old building. In underwear I don't want to feel sexy. I don't want to pose. I just want to have a feminine feeling. The setting helped to make the photo sophisticated.

3.9.5 Playboy photographic session (Figure 3.8)

This was my first nude shoot and it went really well. I felt very comfortable with Merwelene and I am glad that Merwelene was part of my first nude shoot. To me it was something new and I had to project my body the correct way. The character had to learn, experience and explore. I think this shot was something different for *Playboy*.

3.9.6 Playboy photographic session (Figure 3.9)

This photo was taken at the same shoot as the previous Playboy photo. At this stage I accepted all the work that came my way. Shapes are important with nudes and not the pose

her. I know my body very well. I know exactly how to stand to look good.

3.10 Interview with Marilyn du Preez, the make-up artist and hair stylist

Q: How do you experience Merwelene as a fashion photographer?

A: Merwelene is a very enthusiastic person on a fashion shoot. She knows exactly what she wants. With hair, make-up and styling she will tell you immediately if it is not right. She is very direct, which I like. You will never get a half way brief but you will know exactly what she wants. If everything is spot-on then Merwelene becomes very enthusiastic. She gets very excited and jumps up and down. I love this energy because not many people have such energy. It is very excitable.

Q: Does Merwelene let you use your own initiative?

A: It depends on the job. Sometimes she lets you do your own thing. She will say make it beautiful or do what you think. Sometimes it is a tight brief and they want an exact image. Then Merwelene will tell us what is expected. With men you can't really do anything, it is rather basic.

CHAPTER 4

A COMPARISON OF TWO OF MERWELENE'S "MASTER PIECES"



4. A COMPARISON OF TWO OF MERWELENE'S "MASTER PIECES"

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter two divergent types of fashion photographs are described and compared. With the first type Merwelene is the creator of the final product. With the second type she carries out the assignment given to her. Interviews are done with Merwelene herself, a client and an art director of an advertising agency.

4.2 The main contents of the interview

Two divergent photographs coming from the camera of Merwelene are to be discussed. The aim is to illustrate that no matter what is expected of her, she is up to the task.

The Cippendale photograph places Merwelene at the centre of the creative process. Her responsibility stretches from the concept to the final product. For all practical purposes, Merwelene was given carté blanche.

With the Edgars photograph, Merwelene was just a cog in the machinery, even though a very important cog. The advertising agency negotiated the concept with the client and then briefed Merwelene.



4.3 The Mariette Chippendale photographic session (Figure 4.1)

4.3.1 Interview with Merwelene about Mariette Chippendale

Q: *Wat het die opdrag behels?*

What were you commissioned to do?



A: Sy verkoop carpets, petty-point carpets, so dit is haar produk. As jy in tydskrifte kyk, sal jy sien die meeste campaigns is baie uninspiring and boring. Daarom wou ons dit 'n twist gegee het en iets nuuts doen, want met tapyte sien jy nooit models in dit nie en jy sien ook nie die kliënt self daarin nie. Die assignment self was nie om die produk so spesifiek hardcore in a sales way te sell nie, maar om 'n image op te bou vir haar.

Q: *Was daar enige vereistes met die uitbeelding?*

Where there any specific specifications for the photographic session?

A: Sy verkoop carpets, maar die vereiste is om 'n image vir haar te create. Die meeste ads is hard sell, met ander woorde waar jy elke stekie in 'n mat moet wys, for that matter, maar vir haar het ons net 'n image create.

Q: *Wat was jou eerste reaksie met die opdrag?*

What was your reaction towards the assignment?

A: Baie exciting, want baie min kliënte laat jou 'n image create. Omdat hulle so sales driven is, wil hulle altyd alles skerp sien. En met haar kon ons net gespeel het, so sy is vir my 'n baie exciting kliënt. Want sy gee jou die vryheid om op te kom met wat jy wil.

Q: *Hoe is die grimering aangewend om jou opdrag uit te beeld?*

How was the make-up applied?

A: Die vereistes was om haar familiewapen te gebruik, wat die Chippendale-wapen is. Wat ons getattoo het op haar rug. En die rose in die hare was 'n sterk vereiste om die rose weer uit te beeld wat in die carpets is. Jy weet dat dit deurgetrek word.



uit te beeld wat in die carpets is. Jy weet dat dit deurgetrek word.

Q: *Beskryf die algemene agtergrond agter die foto...*

Please describe the general background behind the photograph...

A: Mariette se carpet shoot, hierdie was haar eerste campaign. Ons wou 'n image create en terselfdetyd die definisie op die matte wys. Hierdie het ek op 'n Hasselblad 80mm lens geskiet. Die rede daarvoor was die perspektief was reg vir die lens. Ek wou nie 'n lang lens gebruik het waar jy dan shallow depth of field kry nie. Hierdie het ons op Fuji ³RDP geskiet vir saturation. Ons het RDP Fuji geskiet en hier het ek dit push +1 gedoen, met ander woorde under-exposed and overprocess om saturated kleure te kry en om dit warmer te maak. En ons het tungsten-ligte gebruik aan die agterkant, wat natuurlik geel op daylight-film verskyn. Ons wou die gelerige gevoel gehad het. Die tungsten lights was blond wat 2000 watts is en hulle is nie baie sterk in comparison met 'n flash nie. Toe het ek flash op haar gebruik, met die exposure op 4th of a second sodat ons haar kon vries. Toe het ek die flash convert na tungsten toe met filtration. Die requirement vir die hare en make-up hier, sal jy sien, was daar is 'n kind of Renaissance-gevoel in die matte wat ons in die hare deurgebring het. Daai goue koord met die rose. En toe basies net haar familie crescent agter op haar getattoo. En hierdie was quite forward as 'n mens dink 'n kliënt wat in 'n shoot gebruik word, wat in die nude sit. Maar dit is baie subtiel gedoen, jy sal sien haar bene en liggaam was meestal in shadow. En dit is net die interresante hare en 'n bietjie van die crescent wat belig is.

4.3.2 Interview with Mariette, the client

³ Fujichrome Provia 100 Professional Slide Film.

A: I have known Merwelene for a few years, but have never used her. On her return from overseas, I contacted her. I wanted the best for my campaign and Merwelene is the best.

Q: *What was the idea behind the concept?*

A: As all the carpet ads are the same, I wanted something different. I wanted to make an impact by shocking the people of South Africa. I wanted to market an image.

Ads in the magazines are all the same, but in New York I saw a nude advertise Versace clothes. I knew that is what I wanted to do. I went to Merwelene with my ideas. It had to be very classical. The image had to make an impact and also sell. It had to be completely different from any other designer's ad. My carpet campaign is unique.

Q: *What makes your carpet campaign different?*

A: I am the sole supplier of hand made petty-point carpets in the country. I doubt there is a client who will take off his or her clothes for an ad shoot.

I do my own marketing. As such, I cannot use anybody else for the ad shoot but myself. If I had done it, it would have changed my whole image.

Most people were mad about the ad. One or two thought it was maybe a bit too much.

I design my own carpets and Chinese families overseas make them for me. It is done with a petty-point stitch. I wanted to use my name and body as a signature.

*Merwelene's work is as wonderfully witty as her playpen. As in the shoot with Mariette Chippendale, it puts a whole new prospective on needlepoint creations. Her exquisite range

* This part of the interview was conducted in preparation for a television programme featuring Merwelene. (Top Billing, 1998)

of carpets has certainly taken off. Mariette felt the need to take off on another plane altogether. There is not one quite like Merwelene as she waited to test the points and keep Mariette's inspired idea of taking a naked body in a natural form and adorning it with her unusual tapestry with our funky photographer.

4.4 *Edgars Jeans photographic session (Figure 4.2)*

4.4.1 *The Edgars Jeans interview with Merwelene*

Q: *Wat het die opdrag behels?*

What were you commissioned to do?

A: Dit was basies om jeans te skiet, maar dit is baie interessant. Ek dink dit het iets te doen met the hand police confiscating jeans from a very badly dressed girl, met ander woorde hulle wou 'n Benoni-special girl in die agtergrond gehad het, jy weet soos wat sy lyk en die hele storie is hoe hulle, die jean police, haar jeans confiscate. The copy is punchy and quite touchy. En ons het dit by die begrafplaas geskiet, want daar was die enigste regte borne.

Q: *Was daar enige vereistes met die modelle?*

Where there any specific specifications for the models?

A: Daar was definitief vereistes met die modelle. Ons moes twee patrolling police, die jean police, wat lang meisies moes wees, gebruik, omdat dit jeans is, lang, majestic, natuurlike jeans girls, met ander woorde body girls. En die meisie in die agterkant moes groot breasts gehad het en blond, soos hulle sê, so 'n Boksburg-Benoni-special.

Q: *Hoe is die grimering aangewend om jou opdrag uit te beeld?*

How was the make-up applied?

A: Ja, jy sal sien die make-up is quite sterk. Ons wou hulle majestic en hoe sal ek dit noem, ons wou hulle very striking en hard gemaak het soos die police. Jy sal sien die make-up is quite heavy and smokey on the sides. En die Benoni-poppie-special in die agterkant is rooi lippies en blou eye shadow and over the top. Over the top in a bad way.

Q: *Wie bepaal hoe die kledingstuk vertoon moet word?*

Who decides how the clothing must be displayed on the model?

A: Ek dink nie daar is 'n woord soos bepaling nie, dit is hoe dit fit. Maar 'n mens kry 'n stylist wat eers die, byvoorbeeld daai jeans word eers aan die meisie gefit voor ons dit skiet. En sien vir wie dit die beste pas. Die vereiste natuurlik as jy klere verkoop is dat dit die beste moet pas. En as dit nie pas nie, kan jy dit deur die kamera sien. Almal kan sien as 'n kledingstuk nie reg is nie, die kliënt, die stylist...

Q: *Die algemene agtergrond agter die foto...*

The general background behind the photographic session...

A: Hierdie Edgars police storie, die hero moet natuurlik die jeans wees. En lang bene wys jeans baie goed af, so ek het met 'n wide angle 17-35mm geskiet. Om die perspektief reg te kry en van onder af te skiet om hulle bene te verleng. Jy sal sien die grimering is aangewend sodat hulle streng lyk, hulle lyk gracious, maar streng. In vergelyking met die overdone poppie-special in die agtergrond. Jy kan sien die styling pas heeltemal by haar aan, met ander woorde hier met haar rooi bobby socks en wit skoene en pose met die geblonde, gepermdde hare is nou 'n totale kontras van die twee voorste meisies. En dit is wat dit moes gewys het. They've got a lot of taste and she's got nothing. Hier het ek ook reversal geskiet, unfiltered,

ek het weer ⁴EPP gebruik en dit in C41 geproces. Ek push die processing altyd +1 met reversal veral. Ek wou white skin tones gehad het en 'n cool shot gehad het, maar nie 'n kleur nie. More natural white skins, but with blue. Om die jeans te accentuate. En ons het na bome gesoek en gesoek wat die sky heeltemal dominate en toe kry ons dit in die begrafplaas. Gelukkig kan jy nie die grafte langs die kant sien nie.

4.4.2 Interview with Sandy Cambell, the art director

Q: How do you experience Merwelene as a fashion photographer and at a fashion session?

A: She has a great personality and is an excellent fashion photographer. She is a person who is very easy to work with. Merwelene has a very good eye for fashion. Her ability for composing shots is very good. Merwelene is very professional at her work.

Q: Does Edgars give the concept or do they leave it up to you?

A: Edgars briefed us on the clothes they wanted to advertise. The creation of the concept and the impression the reader was to see was left entirely to us.

Q: Why did you decide to use Merwelene for this photographic session?

A: She is the best fashion photographer in Johannesburg. If I wanted to use someone else I would have gone to Cape Town. I have used her a lot and know her style.

Q: What was the concept behind the photographic session?

A: It is an attitudinal concept. It has to do with the attitude of the young. A fashionable

⁴ Kodak Ektachrome Professional Colour Reversal Film.

A: It is an attitudinal concept. It has to do with the attitude of the young. A fashionable person wears these jeans, whereas an unfashionable person does not wear these jeans.

Merwelene did not make any changes to my ideas.

4.5 *The final analysis of the two photographic sessions*

The basics of the two photographs are worlds apart. The one is a large company, which is not interested in the finer detail. The other is a single person company where the owner is involved with the whole process.

Money is the essential difference; Edgars wants to reach the nation. It is a high budget photographic session. Chippendale wants to reach an elite group of people. It is a lower budget session but by no means a second class session. The end product is on par if not better than Edgars.

With Edgars Merwelene will know who the client is but there is no direct contact between client and photographer. Edgars uses an ad agency. The ad agency co-ordinates the entire photographic sessions. The concept is their responsibility. They determine all the requirements for the session. The final concept is given to Merwelene to work from. On the set Merwelene might make some finer adjustments but as a whole she works according to the specifications given to her. The final product is discussed and given to the ad agency. As Merwelene so aptly states it: “Jy verstaan dit is so a chain reaction.”

With Chippendale it is very personal. Merwelene and the client work together from beginning to end. The client comes with a request or an idea. Merwelene will refine the concept to a workable final product. From the model to the clothes, make-up and set are Merwelene’s responsibility. Right throughout the process there is a close relationship

between client and photographer. At any stage of the process changes can be made by either.

Concerning the photographs - they are both selling a product, but that is where the similarity ends. Edgars is editorial fashion and is selling the specific product as shown in the photograph, namely that make of jeans.

Chippendale is selling petty-point carpets, but what you see is just the point of an iceberg. Edgars is a faceless company selling these “wonderful jeans”.

By posing in the photograph herself Chippendale says this is her product. “I am proud of it and I want to share my experience with you.”



5. Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the main aim of this study was to research the various perceptions of the photographer, the client, the photographer's assistant, the model and other members of a fashion team about the fashion environment. Combined, these divergent perceptions together form an understanding of how a fashion "masterpiece" comes into being. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, which gives a unique in depth view of the fashion industry. Merwelene's honest, direct answers show her love and passion for fashion photography. Even though Merwelene is a person of many facets, a main theme which runs through all the interviews conducted is that her success can be attributed to plain hard work. There are no short cuts. Nothing is left to chance. Every click of the camera is planned well in advance. Merwelene is the perfect example of the "total" businesswoman and friend. Her background and upbringing are very different from what she is today. There were no proverbial easy stepping stones to her carving a niche in the fashion world for herself, with the result that she is often referred to as a doyen of fashion photography. The interviews conducted in the course of this study contain many aspects of the fashion photography working environment which were not fully explored. However, the reason for Merwelene's successes as a person was discussed in full. To determine the reasons for the high quality of Merwelene's photographs a more detailed study of her fashion photography and as in depth look at the equipment used by Merwelene would be needed. In view of the vast amount of fashion photographs in Merwelene's possession, one realizes that two photographs only scratch the surface of Merwelene's ability as a fashion photographer. In the final analyses, the exact reasons for a talented and successful career cannot always be determined by research.

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Appendix

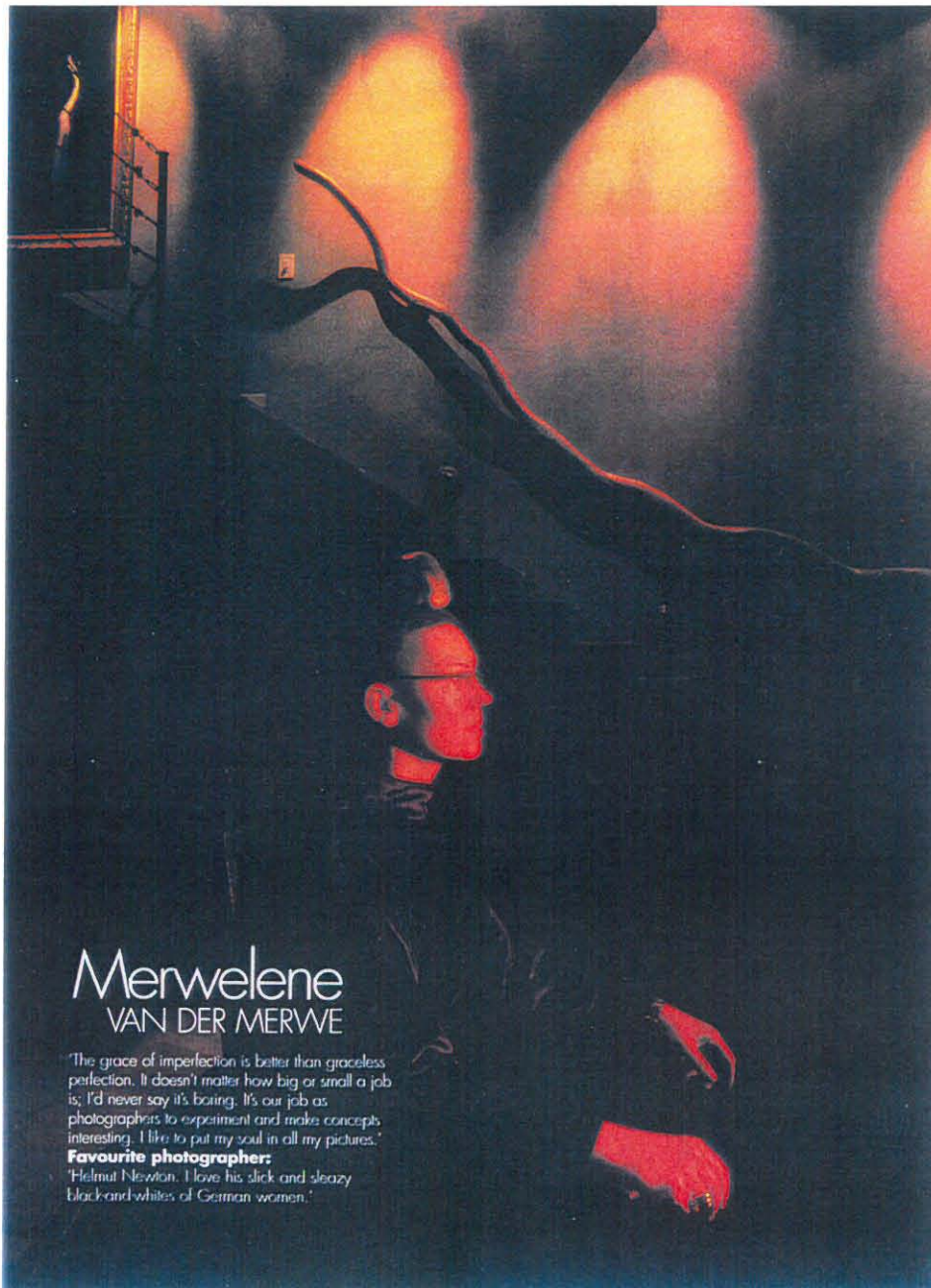


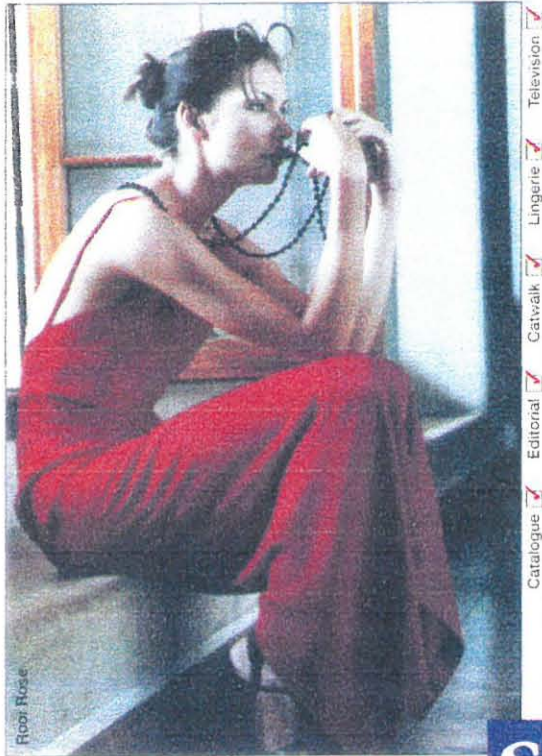
Figure 1.1



Figure 1.2



Figure 1.3



Rooftop Rose

Television
Lingerie
Catwalk
Editorial
Catalogue

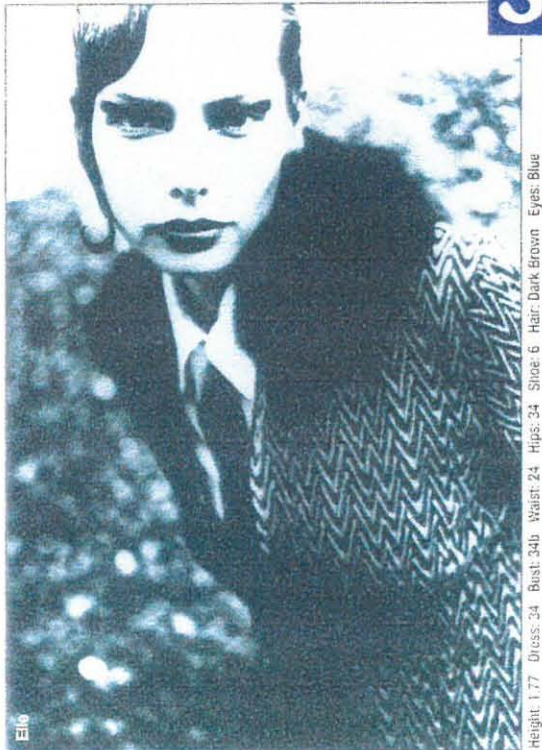
Leana Clumless-Ross



+27-11 883 9593/4 +27-11 883 9597



SPECIAL BOOKINGS



Elle

Height: 1.77 Dress: 34 Bust: 34b Waist: 24 Hips: 34 Shoe: 6 Hair: Dark Brown Eyes: Blue

Payrot

Figure 3.1



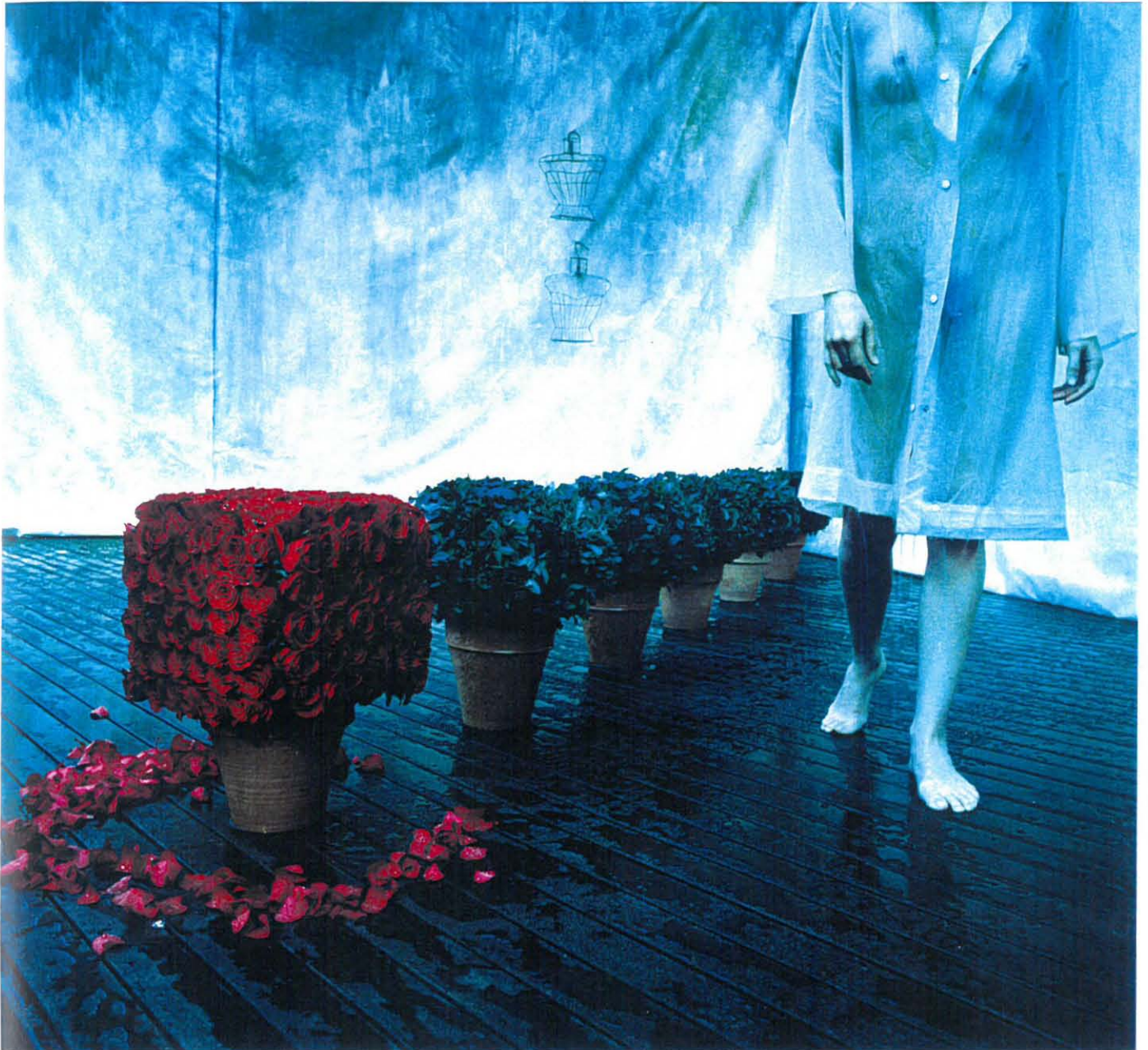


Figure 3.2



Figure 3.3

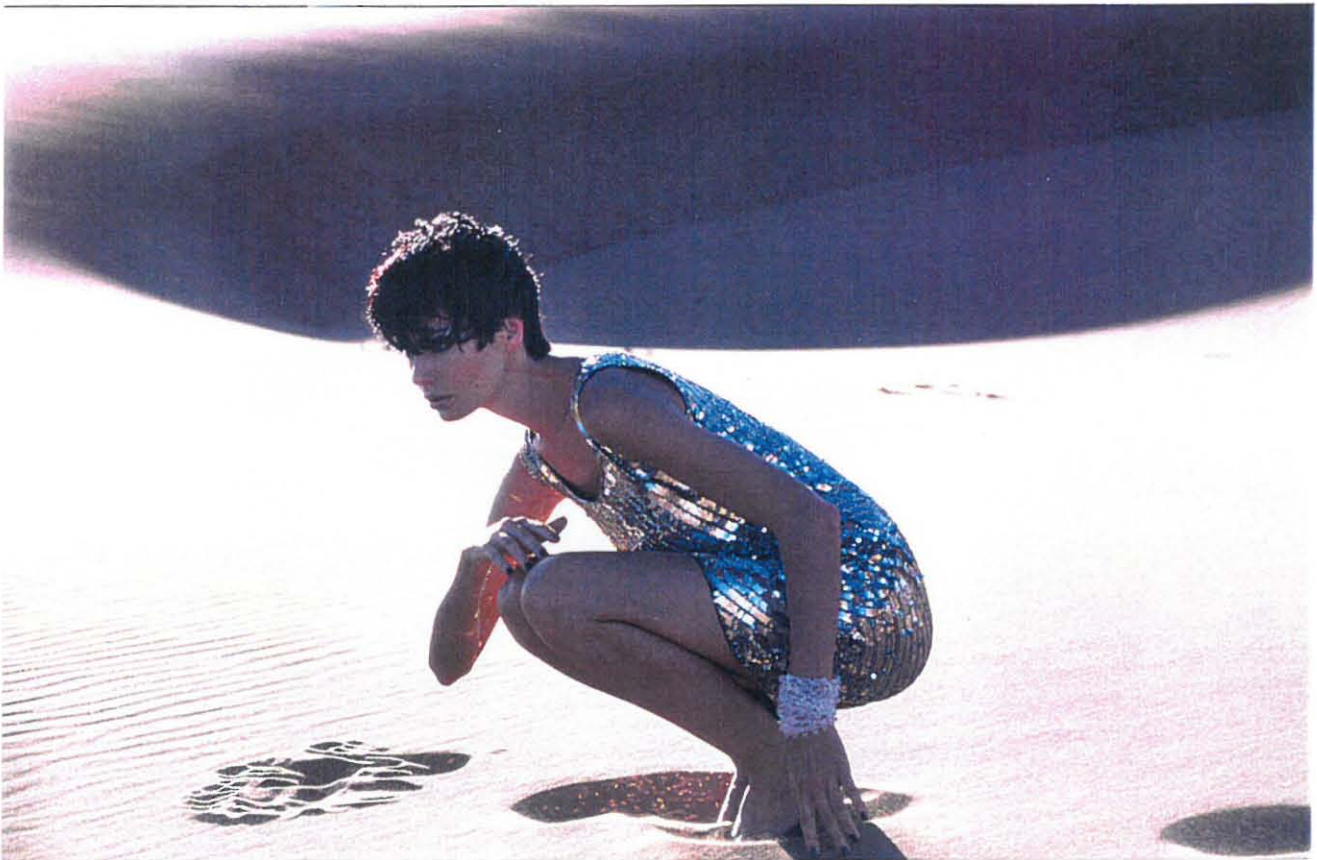


Figure 3.4.1

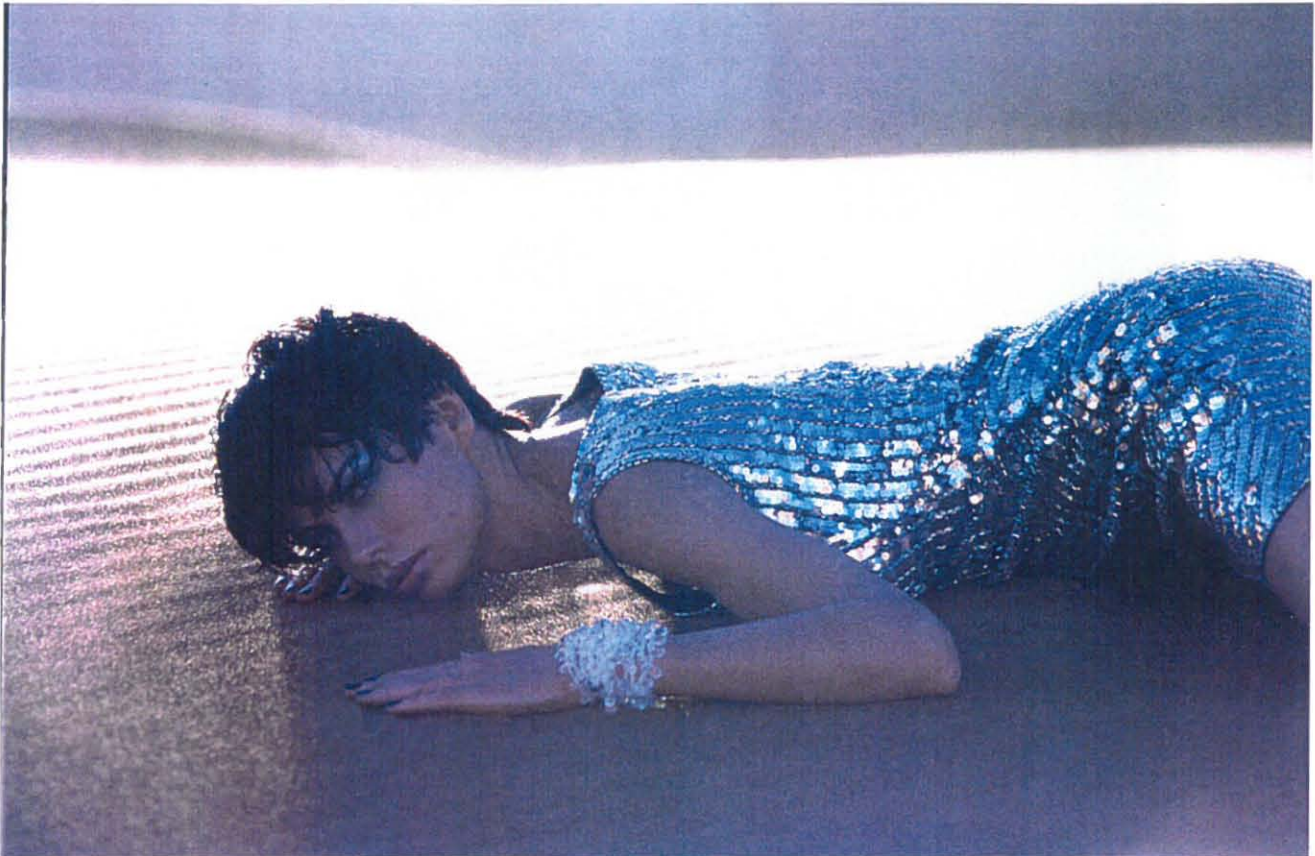


Figure 3.4.2



Figure 3.5

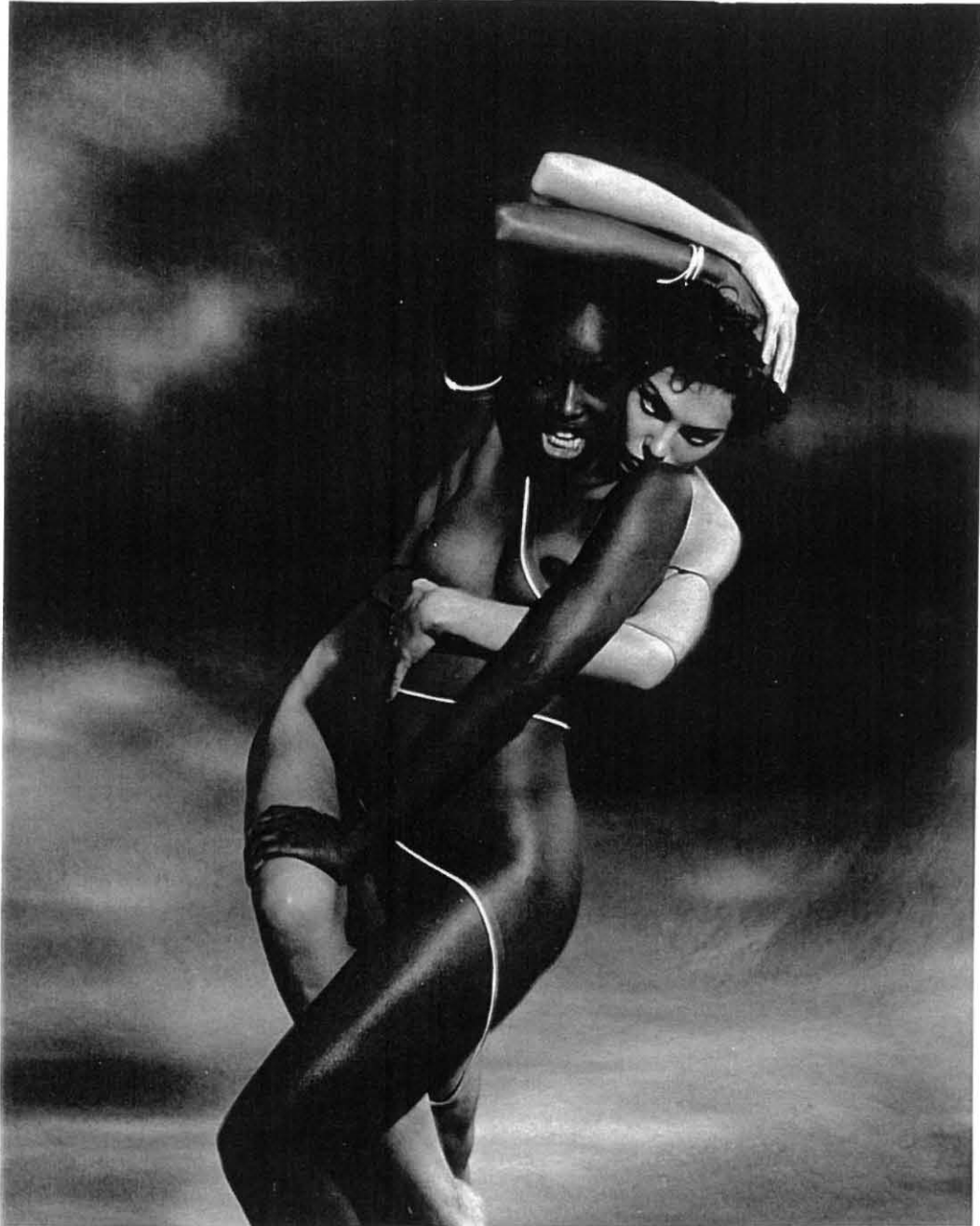


Figure 3.6



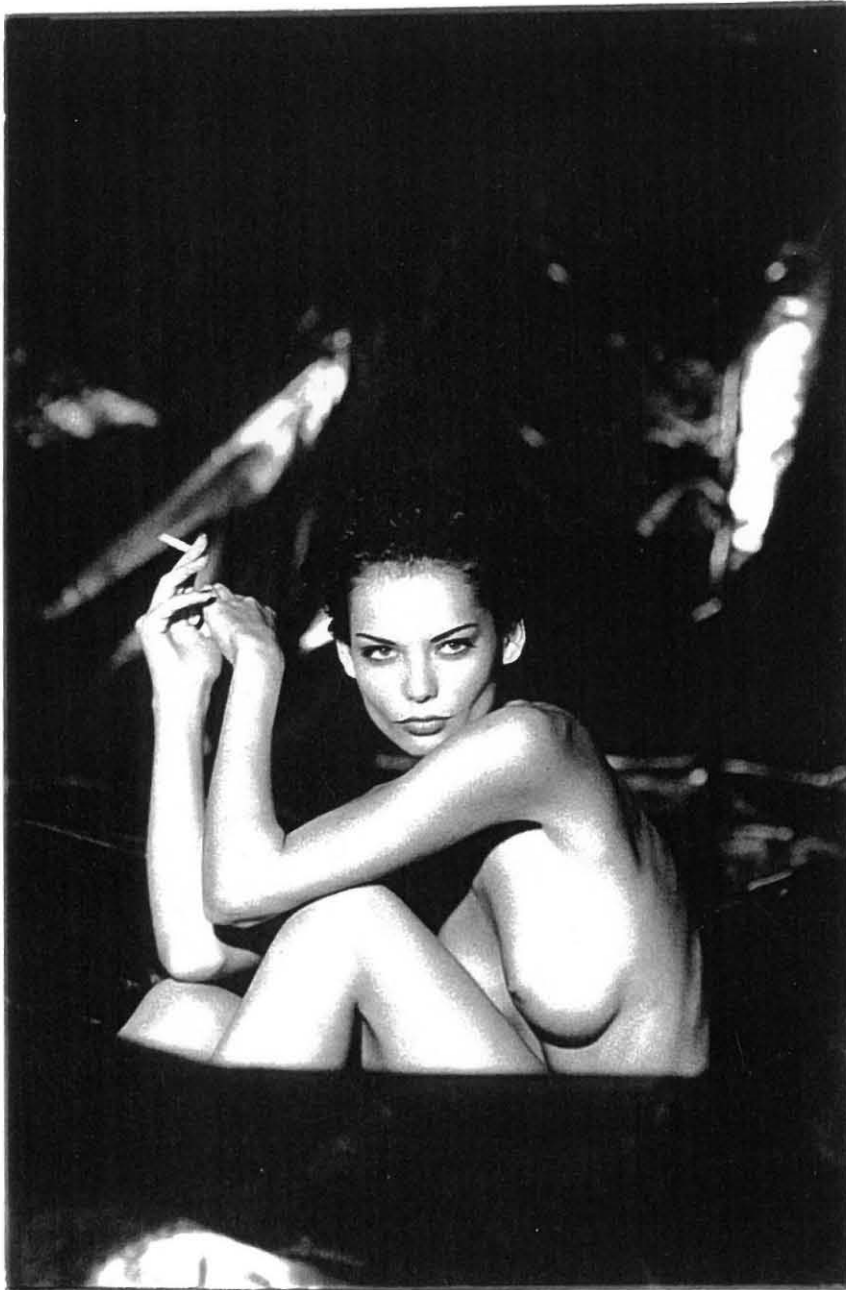


Figure 3.8



Figure 3.9

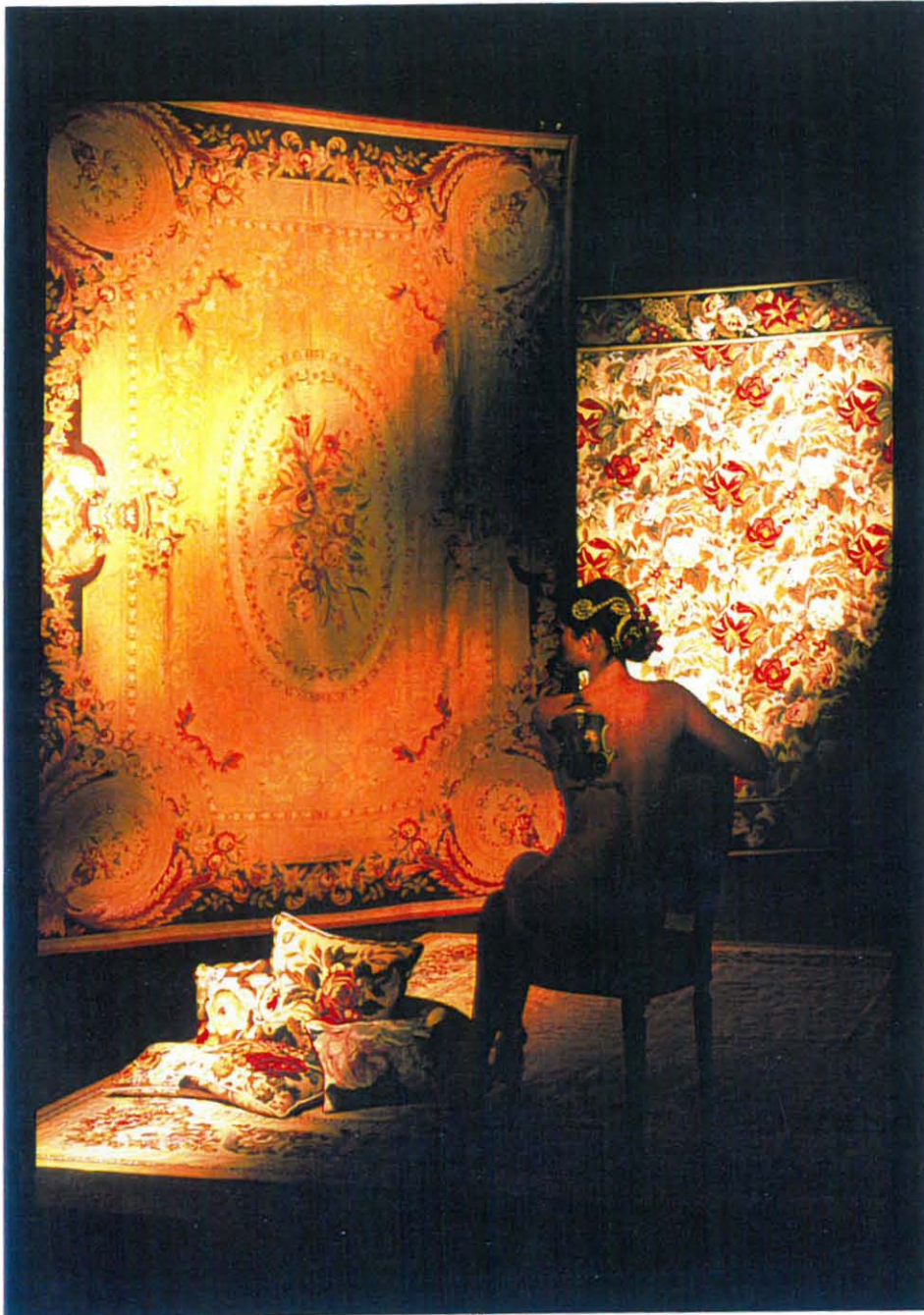


Figure 4.1



Figure 4.2