



# Lone Rucquoi

Lone Rucquoi grew up on an old torpedo boat on Hayling Island, Hampshire with her grandfather, who was Head of Sculpture at St Martin's School of Art. Influenced by her creative background, at one point it was unclear whether she would pursue art or music. Art won out: "It was always part of my life but to follow it up seriously was quite strange." She gained a first class degree in textiles from Goldsmith's College in 1998 and began her career as an artist by setting up a heat transfer business. She travelled extensively and eventually decided to focus on her photography art, with striking results. Lone's photographs both attract and repulse the viewer, making use of prosthetics, costume, make-up and theatrical backgrounds to create surreal situations and characters.

Lone researches her images thoroughly, finding appropriate objects from the local Devon countryside including birds' eggs, feathers and limbs. She also makes prosthetics and elaborate costumes to fit the mood of the image. "I have a very fixed idea of what I want a photograph to look like but there is an element of spontaneity. It depends on what the model brings to the shoot in terms of gestures or sometimes their own jewellery. They're not professional models, which I like." Lone takes her inspiration from many aspects of life, including personal relationships and

clothing as a form of communication. She respects the work of Leigh Bowery and David Bowie, both of whom explore the changing nature of identity.

Lone's fascination with language is reflected in the titles of her work. These often make reference to animals and slang terms for women. "I use them as a tiny bit of narrative but I don't want to lead people too much." She also uses language in terms of material and often looks up the dictionary definition of an object she is using in order to take the word apart. Lone finds the hardest part of being an artist to be working on her own — keeping buoyant and positive, but she enjoys every part of the image — making process. "The actual building of an image can take months from conception, making prosthetics etc. I enjoy finalising the photograph, bringing it all together."

Lone's photographs are theatrical, unusual and thought provoking. With her ability to shock and repulse the viewer, she has experienced some strong negative responses to her work. "I was fairly surprised by people's reactions. I know the images are deemed controversial, but I never set out to be sensationalist." However, she feels that as long as she is causing emotive responses and debate among viewers, she is achieving her aims as an artist.

Lone's images are very personal on a subconscious level and many are influenced

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by her experiences as a woman in society. She is inspired by feminine psychology, perceptions and misperceptions: "My photographs deal with womanhood, motherhood, life, death, birth, fertility... I don't like the word feminist, but the issues that make people feminist are very interesting to me." Her current exhibition, *Birds, Fishwives and Bunnygirls* consists of 13 large colour portraits of women and three self-portraits. Lone used to do a lot of self-portraiture, which she puts down to being young and self-exploratory. "There was going to be more in this project, but I realised I'd moved on. I love dressing up and the metamorphosis of it all but I prefer to be in control of the final image."

Lone is currently putting together a proposal for the Arts Council, which is another large photo project. "There will be more people involved and I'll take it out on location." She also hopes to collaborate with a filmmaker friend. For more information on Lone's work, please see: [www.ionerucquoi.com](http://www.ionerucquoi.com).

Alexis Somerville