I received this comment on Friday’s post about Terry Richardson:

I’d love to know *why* you love him. I mean, this is basically soft porn, it’s a pretty girl with her tits out and the photographer pretending to shag her.

Oh, with scarves.

Why do you love it/him? Is it clever in some way I can’t understand? Ironic? Meta? Uhhhh… hotsexyalmostporn and that’s enough?

No, really. Why can you dismiss PamAm for being trashy and yet this is somehow *fashion*?
Here’s my response (below).

1. I love Terry Richardson’s brazen sexuality. I’m not sure if you can even say that about a man, but it’s as applicable an expression as I can think of. I find it fascinating that he’s been able to take his style of photography – which is basically porn – and bring it into the mainstream labelled as fashion/art.

2. I love it how he puts himself in his photographs. Even when it’s all about the subject, it’s always all about him too. It doesn’t matter who he’s shooting – even President Obama – he’ll put himself in the shot. It’s like the ultimate ‘I was here’ graffiti on a toilet wall. He may just be the greatest self promoter of our time.

3. I love it how he polarises people. I think that’s the best way to be – loved or hated. Who wants shades of grey when you can have black or white? I admire his single minded vision.

4. I think his shoots are incredibly hot. And witty and tongue in cheek and ballsy.

5. And for the commenter, the difference between Terry Richardson and Pamela Anderson is how they’ve positioned themselves in the market. I’m not in any way anti Pamela Anderson, I’m anti bringing Pamela Anderson to NZ Fashion Week as a publicity stunt – she has no industry credibility. I’d have more faith in her as a lifeguard than as a designer. Bring Terry Richardson to your Fashion Week though and it instantly raises the credibility of the event. That’s the difference.

I LIKE YOU!
ruby says  
October 27, 2009 at 12:46 am

i actually just burst out laughing when i read the above comment re. nzntm. what a profound response! hahaha.

Reply

Anonymous says  
October 27, 2009 at 12:48 am

Isaac, time to go get a real job! This blog is becoming old, can’t be bothered reading this S*@t anymore!

Reply

charlotte says  
October 27, 2009 at 1:30 am

terry is da man, albeit a creepy man, but i still love him, and his dad! and the fact that angelica huston went out with him (daddy), and his hot gf jen brill, who i love more than him.

Reply

nga waiata says  
October 27, 2009 at 1:43 am

why is so much fashion photography so much about simulating sex, pre sex, post sex, pretty girls pretending to do it to some usually unattractive photographer behind the lens??????

It’s NOT HOT it’s revolting.
"I’d love to know *why* you love him. I mean, this is basically soft porn, it’s a pretty girl with her tits out…"

You just answered your own question there homegirl.

Its art! isn’t that what its supposed to be?

I think it interesting, this Victorian cultural value many so desperately cling to . Photographers are able to compose shots that can convey the whole gamut of human emotion. This is an essential part of the human experience and it’s extremely powerful. It’s how we continue to exist as a species. Anyway, find it attractive or repellant, you notice it. I think it’s beautiful.
AUT studentay says  
October 27, 2009 at 3:58 am

You are sick Isaac, our uni class (including a lecturer) left a comment and you didn’t list it up.. hmm.. We are all laughing now how you don’t put other comments on here for others to see.

Reply

Isaac Likes says  
October 27, 2009 at 4:19 am

@AUT studentay if the comment was on this Terry Richardson post then I didn’t get it. Can you resubmit it?

Reply

Andrea says  
October 27, 2009 at 4:46 am

TERRY RICHARDSON ROCKS! AND ISAAC, UR BLOG TOTALLY KICKS ASS, THE ONE WHO HAS A DIFFERENT OPINION IS TOTALLY FREE TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!

Reply

Anonymous says  
October 27, 2009 at 5:00 am

people fail to realise his dad was also a photographer and a kick-arse one at that. he was brought up around it, in the hedonistic days of more sex, drugs and rock and roll than today. i can totally see the aversion but at least know a little history before taking things at face value ie. an old sleaze promoting ‘amateur’ sex shots. it’s in the blood (quotes a certain bad driving ad….)
Nicole P says  
October 27, 2009 at 5:08 am

I think that terry gets away with what he does because its not trashy, it is in away kind of sexy fashion art. I think some of his photos are quite extraordinary. He takes risks and that's what makes his photography interesting. I mean if he took the same photos as everyone else we probably wouldn't be interested. Sex is advertised in everything else so why not photography?

Anonymous says  
October 27, 2009 at 5:27 am

Students and lecturers hard at work I see.

J says  
October 27, 2009 at 5:38 am

Those students and lecturers were probably taking a well earned break from their analysis of 'Tall Poppies' syndrome in NZ and just wanted to leave some comments on some blogs.

Anonymous says  
October 27, 2009 at 8:38 am
As one of AUT’s past student.. i was shocked on one of student”ay”’s comment above – no wonder AUT this year’s work got no special merit. They should work hard enough like their past alumni..tst tst tst. lecturers and students now days..

Reply

electric feel says
October 27, 2009 at 6:08 pm

brilliant answers!

Reply

Anonymous says
October 27, 2009 at 9:39 pm

yes all brilliant answers; especially the first re top model re runs, nice! you do need to shake your booty issac and blog more and about more interesting stuff, pull those beige socks up

Reply

James says
October 27, 2009 at 9:45 pm

re:sex in photography. it’s not like this is new or anything. nor was there some transition period. he’s a man that has made his mark in the industry, that’s for sure. But it can only be him to do so- followers will fail. and should fail at doing so

you can respect his work, but for some shit that goes down it is blatantly an abuse of the industry. that being said, for someone who has made this mark it is just a norm acceptance.

love it or hate it, black terry/white terry is one of the greatest(funniest) photos of his out.
Anonymous says  
October 28, 2009 at 8:23 pm

To paraphrase Beth Ditto, it is definitely possible to “like art that is made by shitty people” and i can see how a viewer can enjoy terry’s work, I do too 
but here is the perspective of a model who has been shot byTerry, Tia Eckhart, taken from her blog.

“A photograph that is genuinely sexy is one where the camera is worshiping the subject and not the subject as a submissive entity existing for the camera and it’s then undeserving operator!

This is why i have no problem being naked for the likes of Rankin or Justin Smith. You look at their photos and the subject is ultimately being appreciated, adored even, as an object of lust because said subject doesn’t seem to really care as they are smiling mischievously, laughing deliriously or standing hands on hips, stone-faced as a figure of authority even when stripped bare. It’s this same reason, of tone in someone’s work, that also makes me dislike someone’s work or not want to be a part of it. It’s the same reason when after shooting a couple of rolls with Terry Richardson and he suggests taking off my clothes, I suggest he finishes the roll and how about we leave it there. Because though I find a lot of the work of someone like that amusing, the unspoken statement in the final result, deafeningly loud for some of us, is that it’s all for him. All for the artist and not for the art. And definitely not for the subject. Why would you want anyone to see a picture of you- which unless you’re an already established supermodel or celebrity- was clearly only taken because you let him jerk off on your face? Everyone would know why it was there and how you just happened to be the one willing to be that day’s cum-rag.

For the same reasons of trying so damn hard to please someone that’s already taking something from you- your image- I’ve often been more uncomfortable doing things semi-clothed than I have naked. Because again, it’s fitting into that cliche ideal. It’s obviously designed to arouse rather than simply being arousing for just being itself. Or yourself. I guess at the end of the day you have to know who that is and whether you be who you are for you, or the approval of others. I don’t find it to be sexy, so desperately trying to fill another person’s ideals. Consciously or not. And I don’t think a wider audience does either, whether they realise that immediately or not. But as they say, a camera is a thousand times sharper than the human eye and that contextual tone cuts straight through a lens faster than light when you know how to look for it.”
Anonymous says  
October 29, 2009 at 2:50 am

Terry’s just Terry…. take what you will from his work.  
Why are there so many uptight, straight edge, judgemental christians in the fashion industry in this town?? You’re all so busy pointing fingers & casting judgement…. Why don’t you all fuck off & get a desk job??…

Anonymous says  
October 29, 2009 at 7:13 pm

Cause if god forbid someone doesn’t like Terry Richardson’s work (or even just some of it), it MUST be because they’re uptight, religious, hate sex, boring or maybe a feminazi, right?  
Some of Terry’s work is good; witty, clever, original, sexy.  
Some of it is dull, exploitative, disturbing. Increasingly the latter, I think.

k says  
October 29, 2009 at 8:49 pm

1. I don’t really find it fascinating that Richardson’s been able to take his style of photography into the mainstream and label it as fashion/art. It’s everywhere (I am anyone…?). I’m not surprised. People get away with all sorts of sh*t these days. It’s so hard to say what is a ‘good’ photograph. It’s so subjective. And you can talk your way around anything, really.
2. I agree that he is a great self-promoter. But I guess that’s part of his whole thing, y’know? It’s like something that makes you know the photo is his. I’m glad that he has his sort of ‘style’ and sticks to it anyway. I like consistency.

3. Personally, I think it’s ballsy for him to put himself out there like that. I think maybe you wrote that because you’re kind of the same way? Well, in my opinion you are like Terry in the way that you’re into self-promotion, which I think is ballsy. I mean it in a good way. I was saying the other day that I am really impressed by the way you handle criticism. Before I met you, I imagined you to be a bit hippy, but you’re WAY more opinionated than I thought… I don’t mean it in a bad way. Anyone who puts themselves out there is ballsy. I am not ballsy AT ALL.

4. I think you think they’re hot based on the fact that they’re borderline porn. But so what right?

I don’t think they’re particularly clever or ‘witty’ or even tongue in cheek, I think he’s just one of the photographers that people know, and because he’s cool, people will continue to like him. It’s like how people like a song based on who the band is, not based on whether they really think the song is good or not. But I do find that the great thing about him, is that he is a marketing GENIUS. The fact that he has gotten to the level where noone really cares about what level of work he produces anymore, because he’s famous. That makes me think he is a clever man. If you took away the subjects and got him to shoot a picture of a car or something, I don’t know if he’d be as well known as a ‘good’ photographer. But then I guess noone knows what ‘good’ is anyway.

5. I agree.

Sorry for the rant.

Reply

Coco Campbell says
October 30, 2009 at 3:06 pm

interesting how if models are shot nude then its “soft-core porn” but if unattractive people are shot nude its “art. im just sayin’

Reply
1. Sorry, but Terry Richardson is hardly an artist. All he’s been doing is ripping off Juergen Teller’s body of work quicker than the guy could put it out. To suggest that there is any merit in that is to ignore the basic chronology of the last twenty years of fashion photography. Terry Richardson is a prolific commercial photographer, and very successful at that. Juergen Teller’s last portfolio for Paradis was exhibited at Frieze Art Fair, and he has a show out at Lehmann Maupin Gallery in New York, where he is in the company of people like Tracey Emin, Gilbert and George and Erwin Wurm.

2. “Putting himself in the pictures”. I wonder where he got that idea from? I suggest going back through your collection of i-D back issues. Starting with the mid-Nineties, of course, would be a good idea.

3. He really doesn’t polarise opinion as much as he used to. Knee-jerk reaction to his work nowadays seems to be, quite simply, “oh God, not another picture of his cock.” Speaking of which, the use of his own naked self is again a Teller rip-off, except Teller uses it to achieve a much more poignant effect (see his work with Eggleston and Charlotte Rampling).

4) Yawn.

5) Look what Teller did with Pamela Anderson and Vivienne Westwood. Now that’s ballsy.
#900 Why I love Terry Richardson - Isaac Likes

Why I love Terry Richardson - Isaac Likes


@ISAACLIKES_

ISAAC'S CURRENT LOCATION: NYC

Blog Archive