

The Guardian

Thursday 23.11.06

Photography

PHOTOGRAPH: LORETTA LUX



Loretta Lux's best shot 'Dorothea and the cat are waiting for eternity. The cat cooperated very nicely'

I took this picture last year. It is one of the few pictures I can elaborate on, but I don't really want to tell too much because it would spoil the image. It's a picture about time, and timelessness. The girl and the cat are frozen in time. For me, they are sitting on the sofa as if they are waiting for eternity.

The model is a girl called Dorothea, the daughter of friends of mine. I have worked with her many times, starting when she was only two years old. She has this kind of aristocratic look, like you find in the paintings of Velázquez.

I started with an idea about a girl sitting on a sofa and waiting for nothing in particular, and the cat came into the idea later. I love cats, and I had tried to incorporate cats into my images for a long time and never managed it, but this time it worked extremely well.

I think a professional photographer would find my studio very uncomplicated. I don't use many kinds of lighting, but producing this picture was a long process. From the idea to

the finished image took two months. I took some time photographing the cat; you can't plan exactly how animals will pose, but the cat cooperated very nicely.

However, I did have to repeat the shoot several times, and I retouched it on the computer as well. I need to have control over images, and I take a lot of care with the composition. I take time organising the forms and colours. I also save versions of an image and compare them and analyse why one is better than the other. I spend a great deal of time doing that.

I trained as a painter, and I still love painting, but eventually I became aware that the physical aspect of painting didn't really suit me. I didn't enjoy working in the medium. It's very messy. I prefer to have it clean, with a nice computer.

Interview by Leo Benedictus

Curriculum vitae

Born: Dresden, 1969

Studied: Academy of Visual Arts, Munich (painting and art) 1990-96

Career high: Receiving the Infinity Award for Art from the International Center of Photography in 2005

Career low: Not being allowed to go to art school in East Germany

Inspirations: August Sander, but I draw my main inspiration from the history of painting, and especially from Bronzino, Velázquez and Runge

Pet hate: Carrying a camera

Ambition: Creating an amazing cat portrait of art-historical value

Dream subject: I don't really have one, because I don't really take pictures – I create them at my leisure

