

Press release

ANALOG

10 January to 3 March 2011

Private view 9 January 2011

The End of Professional Photographic Darkrooms and Music Recording Studios

The impact of digital technology on print photography and music production is the subject of ANALOG at Riflemaker, Soho from 10 January 2011. The exhibition invites us inside the last of London's photographic darkrooms as well as taking a visit to a working reel-to-reel music studio, courtesy of an installation by Lewis Durham of the band *Kitty, Daisy & Lewis*.

In 2006, when Richard Nicholson began photographing London's professional darkrooms there were some 214 still in existence; when he completed the project four years later only 5 remained. In these labs many of the iconic images of 20th-century culture were processed, from the high-contrast b/w prints of the cast of *Trainspotting* to lith portrait album covers for U2. Analogue aficionado Lewis Durham's reel-to-reel recording studio to be installed at Riflemaker includes equipment from the legendary Atlantic Studios in Muscle Shoals (Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles) along with Elvis Presley's 8-track recorder from RCA Studios New York.

The exhibition will also include familiar objects like laptops and mobile phones, but sculpted in cardboard by artist Clare Mitten who 're-analogue's' them, transforming today's everyday pods back to analogue. In complete contrast, a massive interactive, computational light installation by Zigelbaum + Coelho, winners of the prestigious *Designer's of the Future* award at Miami/Basel Design 2010. Z+C have taken the humble pixel from its onscreen habitat and placed it on the wall, ie back in the physical world. The result is an interactive digital/analogue mix which you the viewer becomes an integral part of.

Photographer Richard Nicholson began to shoot images of professional photographic darkrooms in and around London in 2006. At that time the darkrooms formed the engine of the British photographic industry. Major players like Joe's Basement, Primary, Metro Soho, Keishi Colour, Ceta, Team Photographic and Sky have all closed. Polaroid has stopped making instant film and Kodak and Fuji are discontinuing one format after another. Hardware companies have ceased production of print enlargers and scanners; the recently introduced Canon 5D camera having persuaded many diehard film photographers that digital is the future. Those who remain unconvinced are facing clients who no longer have the budgets for film, Polaroid, clip-tests, contact sheets and prints anyway.

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Many of the iconic images of recent decades were made by so-called ‘master printers’ in the rooms pictured. These include Mike Spry's high-contrast prints of U2 and Depeche Mode for music photographer Anton Corbijn, Peter Guest's black-and-white prints of the Trainspotting cast for portrait photographer Lorenzo Agius and Brian Dowling's intricately masked colour prints for fashion photographer Nick Knight.

Richard Nicholson said: ‘The spaces I discovered were often haphazard and brimming with personal details: coffee cups, CD collections, family snaps, unpaid invoices, curious knick-knacks brought back by globe-trotting photographers. These human elements transformed what might have been a detached typology of modernist industrial design into something more intimate and nuanced.’

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds and The White Stripes have famously chosen to record using analogue equipment but they are notable as exceptions in the digital takeover. Similarly Kitty, Daisy & Lewis is a young band that prefers the process and warmth of sound achieved through analogue recordings. The much-signalled ‘death of vinyl’ has long been held back by DJ culture, but conversely the death of vinyl has led to a growth in vinyl - sales of vinyl recordings increasing by 20% year on year since 2005.

Kitty, Daisy & Lewis and special guests will perform at Riflemaker during the course of the exhibition as well as recording all-comers ‘direct to disc’ in the gallery’s pop-up music lounge. Follow Riflemaker on Twitter to find out how to be part of the audience –

http://www.twitter.com/riflemaker_soho

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Visitor information: ANALOG: 10 January to 3 March 2011

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Links

<http://www.riflemaker.org>

http://www.twitter.com/Riflemaker_soho

<http://www.kittydaisyandlewis.com/>

<http://www.myspace.com/kittydaisyandlewis>

<http://www.richardnicholson.com/>

<http://www.zigelbaumcoelho.com>

Notes to Editors

1. **Richard Nicholson** is a photographer whose clients include Architect’s Journal, Creative Review, Elle, Esquire, Financial Times, GQ, Guardian, Harpers Bazaar, House & Garden, i-D, Icon, Independent, Ku:nel, Madame Figaro, Marie Claire, New York Times, Observer, Onoffice, Ryuko Tsushin, Selvedge, Spurluxe and Vogue. He has exhibited at Photofusion and Four Corners.
2. A **lith print** is a photographic printing process that uses standard black and white photographic paper with lithographic developer (often heavily diluted standard developer) to produce a print with dark shadows and soft, bright highlights. Subtler tones, colours, and hues can be achieved than a standard black and white print.
3. **Kitty, Daisy & Lewis** is a three-piece band comprising the siblings of the Durham family. Their music is heavily influenced by R&B, swing, jump blues, country and Western, blues, Hawaiian and rock ‘n’ roll. They are all multi-instrumentalists playing guitar,

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piano, banjo, lapsteel guitar, harmonica, double bass, ukulele, drums, trombone, xylophone and accordion between them. They have supported artists such as Coldplay, Jools Holland, Mika, Billy Bragg, Mark Ronson and Razorlight. Festival appearances include Bestival, Glastonbury and Latitude. They have featured in Vogue and performed on Blue Peter. The band also featured in the 2008 documentary “We Dreamed America”, about the influence of American roots music on British musicians.

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4. **Zigelbaum + Coelho** is a post-industrial design studio founded by Jamie Zigelbaum and Marcelo Coelho. Operating at the intersection of design, technology, science, and art, their work utilizes physical, computational, and cultural materials to create new, but fundamentally human, experiences. Jamie and Marcelo began collaborating while students at the MIT Media Lab. They have lectured, published and exhibited internationally, taught classes on next generation interface design and fabrication techniques at MIT and organized international workshops and conferences in the fields of transitive materials, reality-based interaction, and tangible interfaces. They are based in the United States, pushing bits, and occasionally atoms, between Los Angeles and Cambridge.
5. **Clare Mitten** studied at the Royal College of Art (MA Painting, 2004 - 2006); University of Gloucestershire, (BA Hons Fine Art Painting, 1998 - 2001); and University of Sussex (BA Hons History of Art with French, 1990-1994). She has exhibited widely across London and the South of England.

Riflemaker is co-directed by Virginia Damtsa & Tot Taylor