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## RCA Photography 2018

Here's a selection of the most interesting artists graduated from RCA this year. We asked them to describe their master project and why they chose photography as their medium.

### [Eleonora Agostini](#)

*A Blurry Aftertaste* focuses on the objects, activities and surfaces that belong to the domestic space, portrayed as an absurd and uncanny theatre defined by the creation of structures and the repetition of labour. Working at the intersection between photography, performance and sculpture, I am interested in alluding to that which is beneath the surface and discover a possible fracture and new meanings within our contemporary domestic experience. In the work, the house becomes a place where memories can be reconstructed, where intimacy and claustrophobia exist simultaneously, a space to investigate how our familiar domestic existence can be reconsidered and redefined, and a platform where I can translate the gestures of everyday memories into new scenarios performed for the camera. The images operate both as observational and directed performance through a collaborative approach between my parents and I, allowing to explore notions of comfort, tension and labour.

### [Rachel Glass](#)

The project *Abstract Negotiations of Intimacy* investigates the real life experience of touch juxtaposed against a psychological narrative, which considers the body as a singular entity in the world. Touch is not just a haptic contact but an emotional bond between ourself and our world. The skin functions as our threshold. It encapsulates us in and allows us to communicate out. Without touch a 'void' emerges – the interaction between body and world become detached. Seeking out platonic human-to-human touch in unconventional and abstract ways has become a resultant ramification for living in a culture of touch deprivation. The portraits divulge where the distinction between inside and out, person and world can become indistinguishable, rooted in the present-day.

*Why did you choose photography?* When I was about 14 I just decided that photography was the 'job' that I wanted to do. I had always loved drawing and art but the decision that photography was the thing I wanted to do just came out of thin air. I honestly had no idea what I was signing myself up for and I'm still not the girl who always has a camera in her hand but I have fallen more and more in love with it as a medium since learning the incredible depths into people's souls that it gives you access too and how it allows me to engage, understand and assimilate in the world around me. Photography gives me literal access into people's real lives and I can conceptually choose how to explore that.

### [Sherry Huang](#)

In the spring of 2011, two months after the passing of my grandfather, I dreamt of him. In my dream, I was climbing up a flight of winding and distorted stairs; my grandfather was sitting at the top. I couldn't help but burst into tears at the sight of him. Grandfather asked why I was crying. I answered, "Because you're not here anymore." He replied, "Then it's not an issue of time." Seven years have since passed. This series of works is my personal inquiry into life. I thought that pictures held the answers to my questions and that they would lead me to the core of life. Yet, I discovered that taking pictures is like shooting bullets in the dark; all I had were eyes that yearn for answers and refuse to be closed. If we can truly communicate via photography, if pictures can be felt by someone on an intrinsic level where the spirit longs to be expressed, then photography is exactly what it ought to be.

*Why did you choose photography?* I am interested in how we look at an image and how photography anchor and/or relay meanings.

### [Gilda Jabbari](#)

*Through the Eyv?n* is a series of mergence of spaces and entities, with the object situating itself within the periphery of the interior and the exterior. The photographs are derived from my fascination with traditional arts, resulting in a contemporary recreation of the 13th to 16th century Persian miniatures. It is further the exploration of the relationship between humans, objects and interiors, as we are constantly immersed in things, interacting with and through them. Consequently elevating the representation of the everyday objects and shapes in a unique form of still life. The choice of the visual aesthetics has been about embracing and celebrating the Persian aspects of my cultural upbringing within the con?icting emotions of abandoning its certain traditions.

## [Yushi Li](#)

My work engages with the question of the gaze, culminating in the investigation of the male representation as an erotic subject in light of digital social networks. In the project *Your Reservation Is Confirmed*, I rent my 'ideal' home through Airbnb, and book my 'ideal' men through a life modelling website to construct my 'ideal' images. By putting myself and male strangers in different domestic place, I try to create a dynamic relationship between the looked-at object, the viewer and the third party that is looking at the viewer. Instead of simply reversing the gender roles of men and women, my work tries to question the binary view of gender and the idea of monogamy and domesticity.

*Why did you choose photography?* As Susan Sontag states, to photograph is "an event in itself, and one with ever more peremptory rights — to interfere with, to invade, or to ignore whatever is going on". The act of photographing/looking endows the photographer/viewer with the power to textualise bodies and to make of the body a possessable, consumable object. In my work, I use photography as an 'invasive' tool of observing, through which I can project my fantasies onto the male figure and examine established ways of staging eroticism and intimacy.

## [Jennifer Martin](#)

*Meanwhile on Set...* centres conditions of acting for British black and black bi-/multi-racial actresses. Actors veer from the filmmaking process, question the context of their surroundings, breakdown, and misbehave like viruses disrupting a system. In wearing full-body morph-suits, they become fully epidermalized. Like the roles that they inhabit, they slip in and out of these skins. This shift functions like a glitch in the cinematic system and wider scopic regime. The project has been jointly developed through moving image and photography. The photographs present the hollowed-out scenarios from within the film, the lead actresses appear in character in isolation and in relation to the film's props and ephemera.

*Why did you choose photography?* In working with photography I am interested in playing with and against its potency. We live in a time of intimate familiarity with this medium that can be subscribed to both an academic and artistic understanding, and a mass-consumerist utilitarian comprehension of the medium. Photography erroneously garners an expectation of neutrality, accuracy, and knowability. In my work, I seek to play against these expectations and tease out the issues that arise from these misconceptions. My moving image work has allowed me to work more in-depth with dialogue, staging, and performance. In unpeeling the experience of black and black bi-/multi-racial British actresses it was necessary to work within the medium that I sought to critique and both work with and against film and other media in popular culture. [Scarlett Plate!](#)

My quest to understand the connection between love, desire and addiction has come to rest in my final show, *Lord Make Me Pure, But Not Yet*. A quote from St Augustine, an early Christian theologian and philosopher. The show plays on a relationship between myth, memory and language. The giant love bird holds a knowledge of ancient knowing. The mothers pass on a secret, and the symbol, the vesica pisces in all its toxic colours, brings the 2 circles about to a middle meeting point, a third new state. As shown in the faces of the woman, there is potential for everything to move in either direction. Towards healing or to total destruction.

*Why did you choose photography?* I find it hard to speak. The lens captures the poetry that I have no words for. It is really that simple, and yet, there is something so complex about hindsight. The moment something is captured, all time that came before it, wells up inside of that second and makes it pregnant with life.

## [Edu Torres](#)

My artistic project has always been orientated around the portrayal of different social classes. In this instance, I am presenting a short series entitled *Accountants*, which shows the space beneath four different desks in an accountancy firm in London. In them, one can see different items, some of them very personal, which appear discarded and are evidently treated with little care, almost like abandoned objects. My initial intention was to present images of "domestic" desolation, through which I wanted to capture aspects such as the passage of time (even the passage of life) and the consequent exhaustion that this type of work often brings with it. However, looking at these images, one can notice that they are also expressing something else, that is the power of photography as a medium to transform reality into a new reality – I would say: into an artistic reality. So that, these photos are also talking about how photography is able to transform objects into pure form; or carelessness into visual appeal; or even disorder into photographic composition.

*Why did you choose photography?* I think that photography is today on the verge of exhaustion. We live in a society that consumes photography relentlessly. Everyone photographs everything in every single way, whilst simultaneously consuming every image on the internet and media. In this sense, photography is the most democratic artistic medium that exists, but this popularity is managing to suffocate it. Digital image manipulation created a breathing space, since its almost infinite creative possibilities have allowed many artists to show a renewed interest in photography. However, access to this technology is also becoming widespread and its use, abusive. The success of photography is a poisoned success, and it seems that its artistic possibilities and ability to surprise are becoming exhausted. Hence, I would say that my interest in photography comes from trying to save it from its own death.

