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The Polaroid Kid

Written by Trippe
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Polaroid cameras rule. Everyone has one or can get one, but few really use them like the people on PLRDS.COM do. This website features some brilliant/ beautiful photography in the polaroid medium and it's creator and main photographer is Mike Brodie (aka The Polaroid kid). He sent me a couple of great homemade books featuring photos from the site, and it's one of my most treasured books. I love to flip through it and gaze upon the perdy polaroid beauty. It rules, so I thought, "hey, it would be sweet to put Mike up on the site". So, here he is. Let's hold hands and make our way through the interview. it's a good one. Don't be rude; say cheers. –Trippe



quick stats: age? Location? Im 20, and am currently living in north philly (off front street by the Berks stop) in this old industrial type building. My bedroom is this old elevator shaft, which sucks at times cause it's surrounded by foot wide 15ft. drops. I dropped my tripod down it the other day by accident and it broke into 2 pieces, but i guess that's just what ya get for getting things from Walmart.

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Were you from Canada originally? For some reason I thought you were. Na, I went to Vancouver one time to visit this kid who I let borrow a \$250 harddrive and he ended up never sending it back, asshole!! The only thing I really remember about the place is getting wasted, stealing lots of food off of the Sea Bus, and the super chill cops. Yeah, I said it - the cops there were chill!! I tell people I'm from the deep south - Pensacola, Florida.



I check out this time Zero film on the web. I couldn't find anything too special about the film. Why did you choose this film? What is it you liked about it? For me, time-zero was just a spin off of the the drugstore films like 600 and spectra. When you think about it the only thing truly special about these films is that they're instant and tactile, and being that up until recently I had never had the desire to learn complete picture making processes like developing and printing and so on it was perfect for me. And it was really affordable, like, I could go to the local thriftshop and snag a polaroid cam, then go to the walmart or any drugstore and just fill my pants with film. And so I was doin the art I want without having to spent any money. It was great. As for time-zero film, the colors are just really nice, and by the time I got into using that I didn't mind ordering it for the 13\$ a pack. It was worth it.

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You sent me an awesome book filled with Polaroids you made about a year ago. Do you plan on making any more of those? (click here to see some of it) Was it the 1st one? Cause if it was there was also a second one which I sold out of. I'm glad you liked it so much. Right now I'm in the process of makin a third one. It will be the last but best one I suppose. I've also finished the layout for a book of my photographs. I guess it'll just be called "the Polaroid kid 2004-2005", stupid huh? The books are hard to make. I couldn't make very many cause all the copies I had to scam from kinkos, and you can only do so many until those copy machines explode. Or until the employees realize your sketchy lookin as hell. Right now I'm just tryin to get hooked up with somebody who's down with helping put out these 2 new books. And I guess I've found somebody. His names Benjamin Trigano, he runs a gallery in LA and we're meeting in New York on the 4th at 10am for approxl'mately an hour and a half. I'm pretty excited but I'll see what happens.



You have a lot of photos of gypsy sort of people. Who are these people and how did you stumble upon them? Friends of yours? Most of these folks were once inhabitants of a small beach side community in Bugress, Maine. Most being adopted children and middle class run-aways. But they're shanty little homes were giving the town a bad image and were forced to be leveled to make room for a blanket of high rise condos. So I guess the handful of polaroids I have of these people would be the only true documentation of the diaspora of this once thriving group of whatever you want to call em.

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Do you know most of the people you shoot? Yes I know most everyone I shoot. I can't really shoot a good photo of somebody unless I know them, but you can get to know somebody just by talkin for a few minutes ya know?



Tell me about your site plrds.com and the group of people who shoot these polariods. Plrds.com spawned from my interest in Polaroid photography and computers. Then just coincidentally meeting people who shared the same interest. It has hasn't reached its full potential and never will simply because I'm getting tired of staring at computer screens for long hours. I guess it's kind of a product of the internet ya know, like bein able to share other peoples art with the world without even having to meet some of em cause they live so far away. I guess it's a good thing but it can get pretty annoying, but as long as your site gets hits that's all that really matters in this life, along with what your 736 friends on myspace are up to at the moment.



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You seem a bit over the internet. I feel the same way sometimes, and I agree that it can get pretty annoying, but I disagree with all that matters is getting hits and whatnot. If that were the case wouldn't plrds.com and F.F. be porn sites or something? Yeah, I was being sarcastic. The internet, I think, is a really great invention at times but it's also just another one of those things to isolate people a little bit more from one another over time. Probably not its intention but it has that affect for sure, like when I used to use the internet a lot like aim and things. I found my self communicating with people more often and more comfortably on the internet rather than in real life, and they lived in the same town as me. And, well, that's just insane! And you can say I guess that it also has just the opposite affects, like it connects people, but if there weren't internet there would be other ways. People just need to get out more. That's the good thing about photography, it's a real incentive to do just that, get out.

Trust me, I feel ya... So What's your camera of choice? For Polaroid shooting use the sx-70 sonar one-step, for sure.

Do you know if they make manual focus polaroid cameras? The thing is my camera is manual focus, but it also has auto focus feature which is what I always use, it gets things the sharpest. And it's not the just click type of auto-focus you have to click to focus it then click harder and it takes a picture, cool huh? It's great for me anyways cause I got real bad eyes.

So they are going to stop making polariod film? Are there places to still buy it? Do you only shoot polariod? What will you do when you can no longer find a roll of film? Only time-zero is going to stop being made, you'll still be able to get it for awhile probably, but it's okay really, I'm already over it although I still wouldn't mind if somebody firebombed the Polaroid corporate headquarters. I shoot 35mm now thanks to the help of a couple a friends in Philly I just met who have been teachin me a lot. I use a Nikon f3 now.



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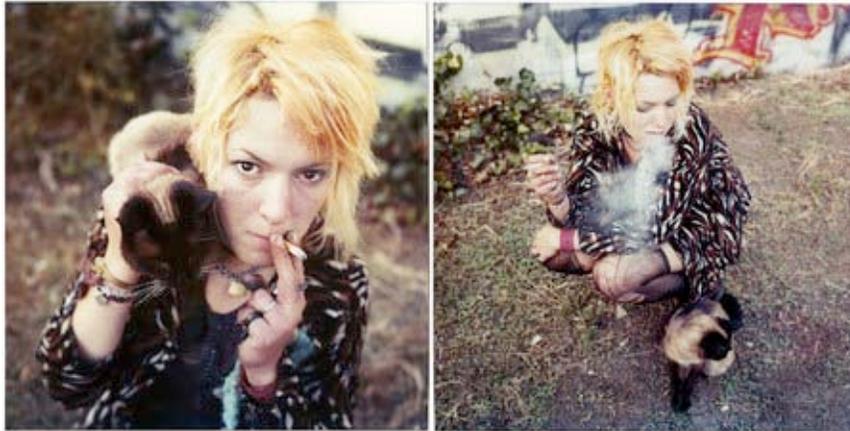


Do you have any inside knowledge on cheap polaroid film hookups? Besides shoplifting, no. The cheapest place ive found is bhphotovideo.com for sure.

What do you do to pay the bills? Random shit, I can't have a job. That's just not where I'm at right now. I've realized that. I need to be able to do whatever the hell I want when I want. Which not havin a job doesn't necessarily guarantee, but it's a start. From march 6th -24th I'll be checked into a pharmaceutical lab and will be takin 450 mgs of arthritis pain medication. If I make it out alive I'm getting a tax free \$3500. Which technically is going to be similar to getting paid \$8.50 per hour, but I get paid for sleeping and eating.

That's crazy. How did you come across something like that and is there any chance of any long term issues with taking that amount of medication? I bet you have to sign some crazy papers for that shit. Yeah, a friend told me about it. The first day I signed my name on about 25 different forms. It's not that bad really. These kind of things have been goin' on for awhile all over the country. This is really the only way pharmaceaudicals can be prescribed. They gotta be approved by the FDA first, and that's where I come in. This particular drug I think can really fuck up your pancreas though, so I guess its better that I'm doing this now than when I'm 40, because I think I have a super buff pancreas right now.

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You mentioned traveling the US and shooting photos. Was this one trip or multiple ones. Tell me about it. Yes, I like traveling. It was multiple trips but the majority of my photos you've seen were taken between June 2005 - January 2006. I traveled various stretches between Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, California, Oregon, Washington, and Pennsylvania, where I am now.

Any last words? What'cha got coming down the line?... Anyone you want to publicly call out besides the kid who owes you money in Vancouver? Yeah, well I got somethin'. It's a project I guess. It's weird because it's something I feel more serious about doing than anything in my entire life up to this point, but I think it's one of those things you try not to think about or talk about too much cause you dont want to be dissapointed when things don't fall right into place. Maybe I'm just scared. But really, I just want to migrate for the next few years, following warm weather and photographing the train hopping youth of america. I think it's one of the most important, overlooked, and temporary underground cultures of modern times....