1 ADVERTISEMENT FOR TERYLENE, 1960
Commissioned by the Mather and Crowther agency and photographed in London, 10 March 1960
'Donovan's male fashion pictures were like film noir; this later became commonplace but he was doing it first in the Sixties'
DAVID BAILEY

THE GENIUS OF DONOVAN

Photographer **Terence Donovan**'s pioneering style and relentless work ethic ensured he remained at the peak of his profession for 40 years. On the tenth anniversary of Donovan's death, designer Paul Smith pays tribute with an exhibition of his work; and here, we remember an innovator whose shoot for GQ's Great British Issue remains a fitting memorial
Story by **James Mullinger**
Photographs by **Terence Donovan**

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2 JARVIS COCKER, 1996
The cover of GQ's iconic December 1996 issue which celebrated the revival of Swinging London. Vanity Fair followed suit the following March with its infamous London issue which sealed the prominence of Cool Britannia

3 TERENCE DONOVAN, 1996
This self-portrait was photographed in 1996 for GQ's December portfolio and is the final existing image of Donovan. It was used by most newspapers to illustrate his obituary that same month.

4 CELIA HAMMOND, 1962
A test shot of Donovan's favourite model. Hammond, along with Donovan and David Bailey, was inspiration for the 1966 film, 'Blow-up.'
'Celia Hammond was to Donovan what Jean Shrimpton was to Bailey' ROBIN MUIR, FORMER PICTURE EDITOR, VOGUE

Terence Donovan's portfolio of British male icons for the December 1996 edition of *GQ* marked what many assumed would be the beginning of a new era for the photographer who – alongside his fellow working-class-lads-turned-fashion-gods David Bailey and Brian Duffy – had practically invented Swinging London 30 years previously.

Instead, on 22 November 1996, the legendary magazine photographer who had built an unparalleled body of work from fashion shoots and celebrity portraiture to gritty reportage, was found dead in his west London studio less than three weeks after the publication of this much-anticipated return to editorial photography. He was 60.

The 1996 *GQ* photos offered a compelling snapshot of British masculine style, and included Shaun Ryder, Bryan Ferry, Jarvis Cocker and a remarkable self-portrait – the last photograph of Donovan.

Diana Donovan, his widow, remembers his delight at working with *GQ* again. "He was thrilled to be commissioned to do that shoot," she says. "He liked talking to and photographing people who were as passionate about their work as he was. I have still got all those pictures framed."

Robin Muir, a former picture editor at *Vogue* and a leading writer on photography, agrees that the *GQ* shoot was a fitting swan song to an enormously influential career. "It's a great shoot and it would have been his passport back into editorial photography," he says. "It was such an amazing thing for *GQ* to commission. At this point, he'd made enough money and everything was going well. It's tragic what happened."

The archive Donovan left behind contains more than a million prints and negatives spanning a career that lasted nearly 40 years. Muir was the man entrusted to sift through the mass of images. He recalls: "Diana Donovan phoned and said she needed help trying to make sense of what Terence had left. He had always kept the copyright to every image he shot so we have an archive that runs from TD negative No.1 right through to 4,220 which was the *GQ* shoot just before he died."

Terence Donovan was born in Stepney in east London on 14 September 1936, and took his first photo at the age of 15. Having set up their own studios in their early twenties, Donovan and his best friend, *GQ* Contributing Photographer David Bailey, set about creating the look of the Sixties as well as breaking down class boundaries, socialising with royalty, actors, comedians and musicians.

Bailey insists that the pair's legendary carousing did not get in the way of the hard work he and Donovan put in. "This idea that we were all living the dream is journalistic jargon," he says. "All it meant was getting up early and working hard. People get confused by what they think the Sixties were, but everyone who was successful worked extremely hard."

Donovan famously said of his work: "Bailey and I have worked out that there are about 450 things that can go wrong [when taking pictures]. But we must be doing something right, since there are about 25 million cameras in this country and only about 50 or 60 of us who can use them."

Donovan shot for many fashion magazines, including *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*; it's for his photographs of Jean Shrimpton, Julie Christie and Claudia Cardinale, among others, that he is best remembered. He explained their appeal: "For the first time ever, we photographed those high-fashion pictures in a sexy way." Julie Christie believes that it's Donovan's photographs of her that launched her career: "I'd done a screen test for *Billy Liar* and hadn't got the part. Then the director saw a magazine cover that Terence had taken of me and I landed my first film role. Who knows if I would have ever got into films if it hadn't been for him?"

Diana Donovan attributes his success in fashion to his attention to detail. "He had a way of shooting women in clothes and the fact was that while the women looked lovely, you could see all the clothes so clearly," she says. "They were so beautifully photographed that you completely understood what the clothes were supposed to look like when worn."

Later, it was Donovan's royal work – specifically his photographs of Diana, Princess of Wales, and the engagement photos of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson – that ensured his fame. It is less well-known that he was the first photographer to shoot men's fashion in interesting locations, most notably for *Town* magazine in the early Sixties.

The use of the exterior locations that we see photographed so lavishly on the fashion pages of *GQ*, *GQ Style*, *L'Uomo Vogue* and other upmarket men's titles had never been seen before. Bored of the constraints of shooting ▶

'WHO KNOWS IF I WOULD HAVE EVER GOT INTO FILMS IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR DONOVAN?' JULIE CHRISTIE

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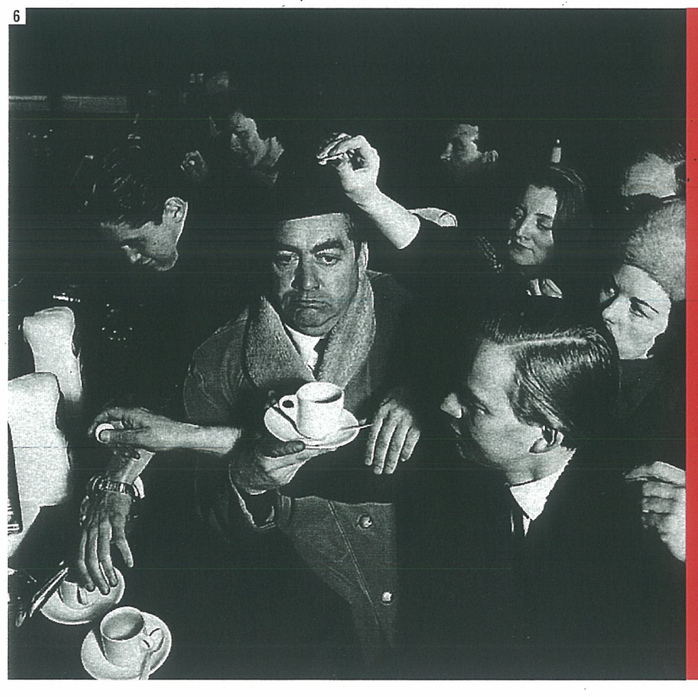

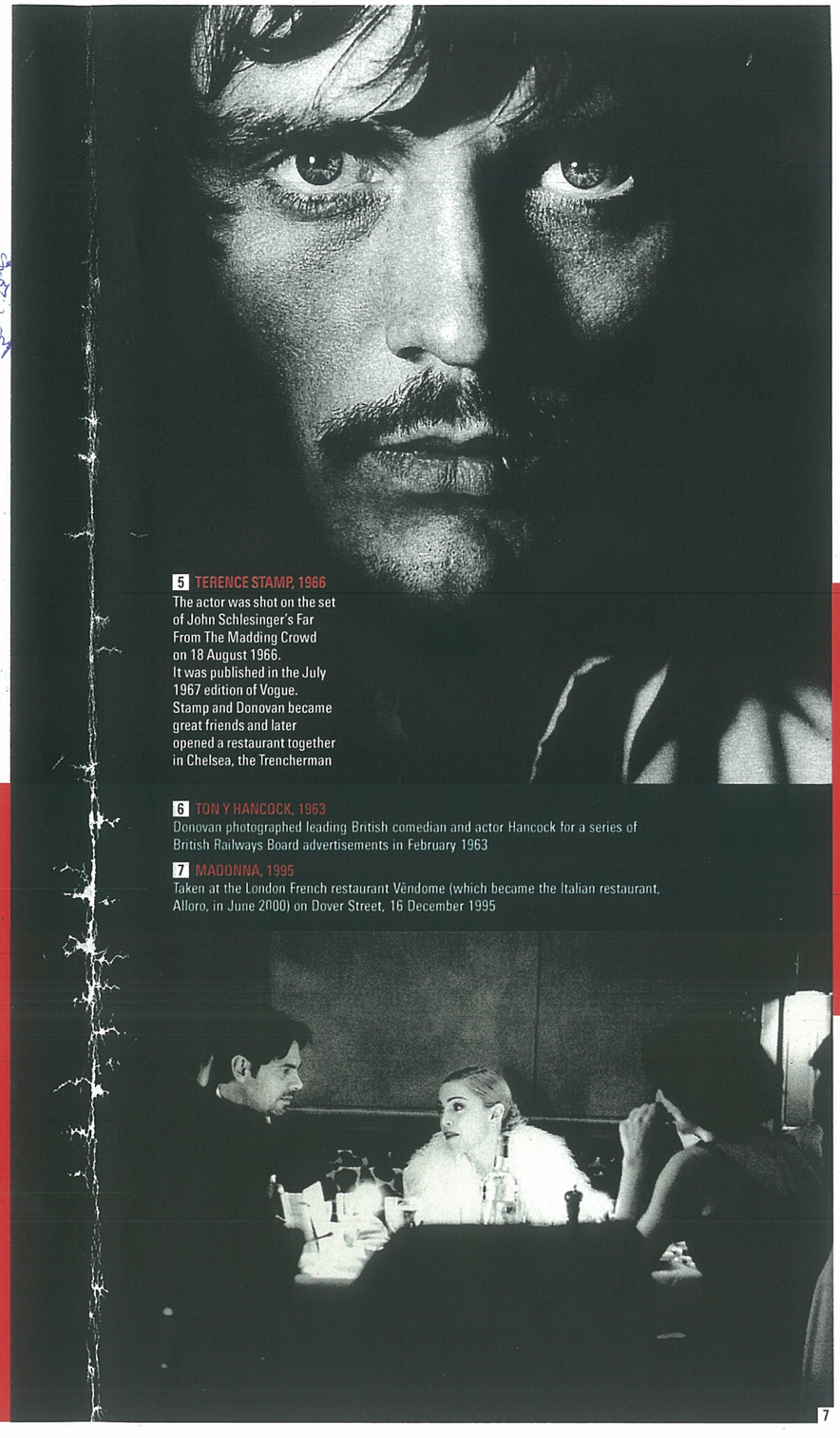

5 TERENCE STAMP, 1966
The actor was shot on the set of John Schlesinger's Far From The Madding Crowd on 18 August 1966. It was published in the July 1967 edition of Vogue. Stamp and Donovan became great friends and later opened a restaurant together in Chelsea, the Trencherman

6 TONY HANCOCK, 1963
Donovan photographed leading British comedian and actor Hancock for a series of British Railways Board advertisements in February 1963

7 MADONNA, 1995
Taken at the London French restaurant Vendôme (which became the Italian restaurant, Alloro, in June 2000) on Dover Street, 16 December 1995

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TERENCE DONOVAN

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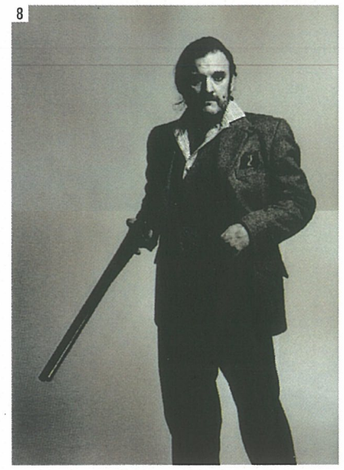

8 LEMMY, 1996
The lead singer and bassist for Motörhead was shot for GQ's December 1996 portfolio at Donovan's studio in Mayfair, London, in June of that year

'Lemmy was very specific about what he wanted. He requested Holland & Holland shooting attire, shotguns, greyhounds and a plate of cold meats'

JO LEVIN, CREATIVE FASHION DIRECTOR, GQ

9 CINDY CRAWFORD, 1988
The supermodel was shot at Donovan's Bourdon Street studio, London, 26 April 1988; and published in Vogue, August 1988

'While Donovan changed the roll of film, Cindy leant forward to relax her position. Donovan looked through the lens and clicked the shutter. It was one of those rare moments when one knew precisely which was the image of the session. Terry's timing was immaculate'

ANNA HARVEY, FORMER FASHION DIRECTOR , VOGUE

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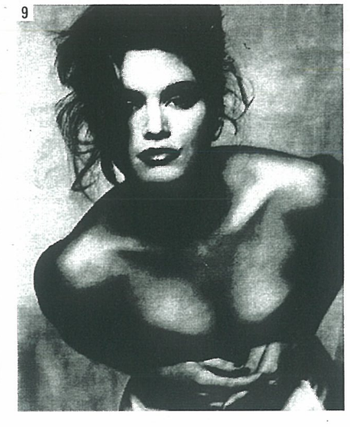


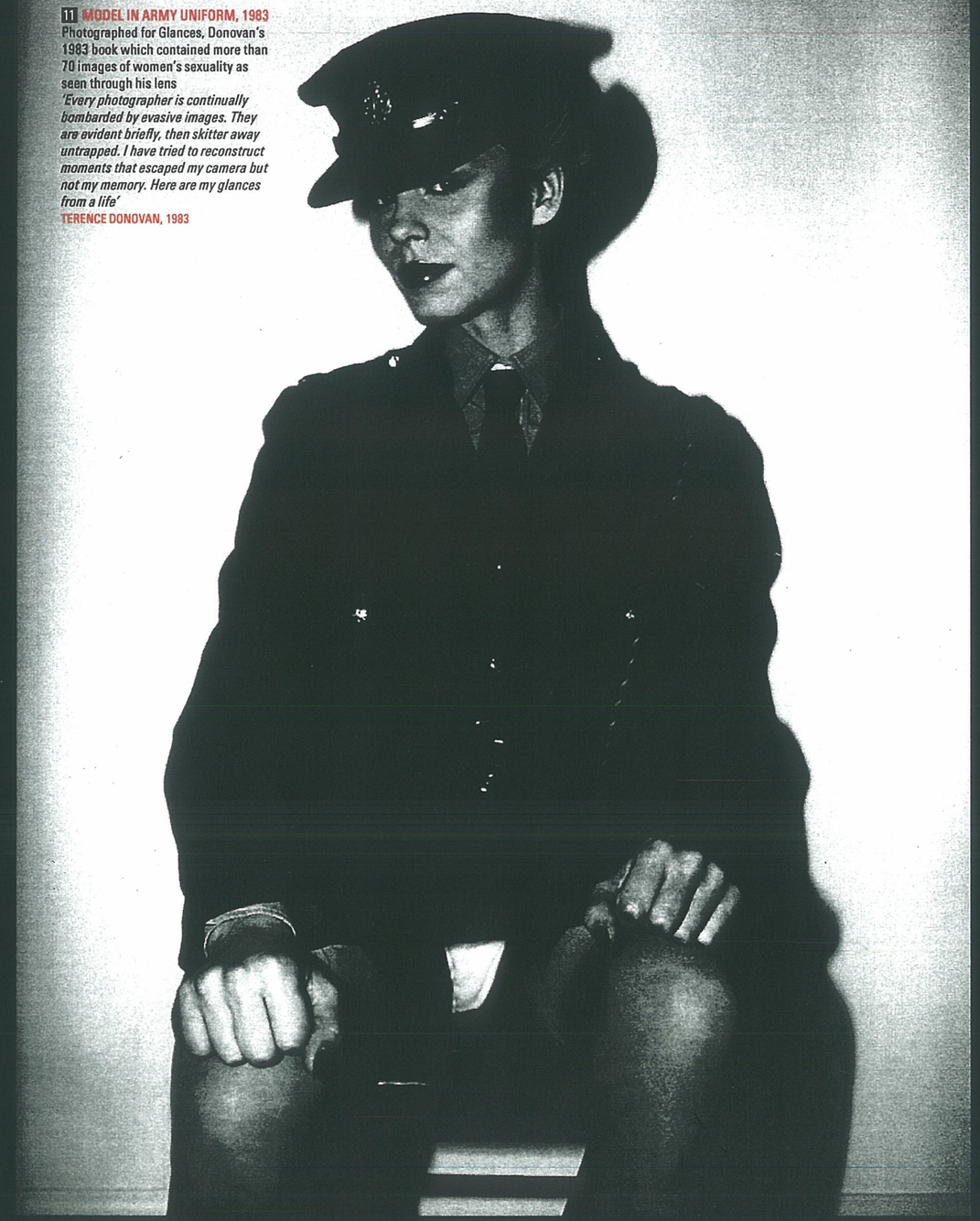
10 RALPH RICHARDSON, LAURENCE OLIVIER AND ALEC GUINNESS, 1980
Photographed on 26 August 1980 in London for the December issue of *Vogue*. The magazine published separate portraits of each actor, but not this shot of the three of them together

'The photograph of the three knights, Richardson, Olivier and Guinness is a miracle. To get the three of them to be photographed together was an astonishing feat – something Terence really enjoyed'
DIANA DONOVAN

'DONOVAN'S PICTURES OF MEN ARE HIS MOST POWERFUL' **DAVID BAILEY**

11 MODEL IN ARMY UNIFORM, 1983
Photographed for Glances, Donovan's 1983 book which contained more than 70 images of women's sexuality as seen through his lens

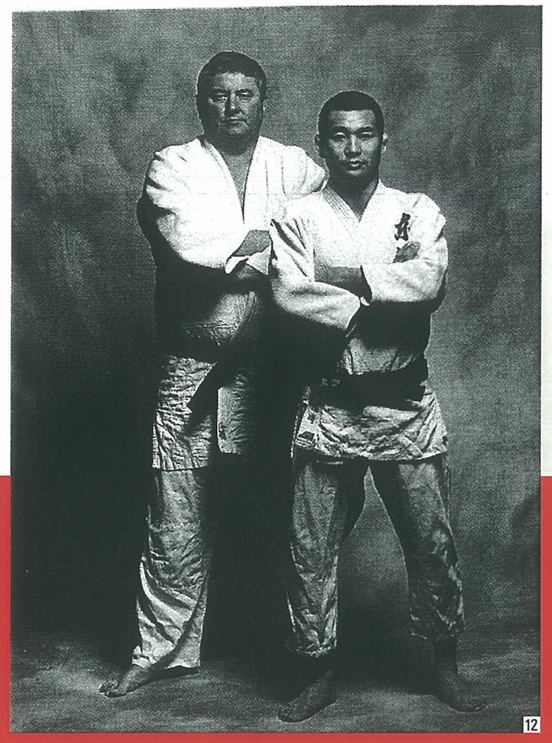
'Every photographer is continually bombarded by evasive images. They are evident briefly, then skitter away untrapped. I have tried to reconstruct moments that escaped my camera but not my memory. Here are my glances from a life'
TERENCE DONOVAN, 1983



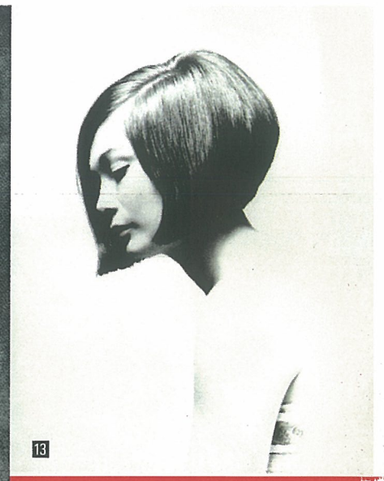
SIXTIES ICONS IN PERSPECTIVE

In 1964, Terence Donovan published *Women Throooo The Eyes Of A Smudger* which included photos of Celia Hammond and Susan Hampshire (*below*). One of the few copies of the book still in existence is owned by designer Paul Smith, a long-term friend and admirer of Donovan's work. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of Donovan's death, Smith is exhibiting images from the book at his Mayfair store. "I feel very privileged to be granted access to this archive," Smith told *GQ*. "Donovan's work always impressed me, especially the compositions and the sense of spontaneity. I was honoured to know him."

Thirteen images will be available to buy in a limited series of six (from £3,500). The Terence Donovan exhibition is at Paul Smith, 9 Albemarle Street, London W1 from 14-28 June 2006. 020-7493 4565, www.paulsmith.co.uk



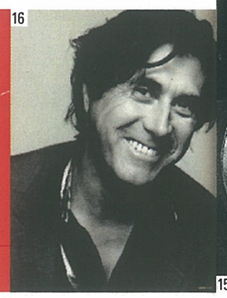
12 TERENCE DONOVAN AND KATSUHIKO KASHIWAZAKI, 1984
A black belt in judo, Donovan poses here with the judo champion on 2 April 1984. This image was used as the back jacket image for Donovan's 1985 book, Fighting Judo

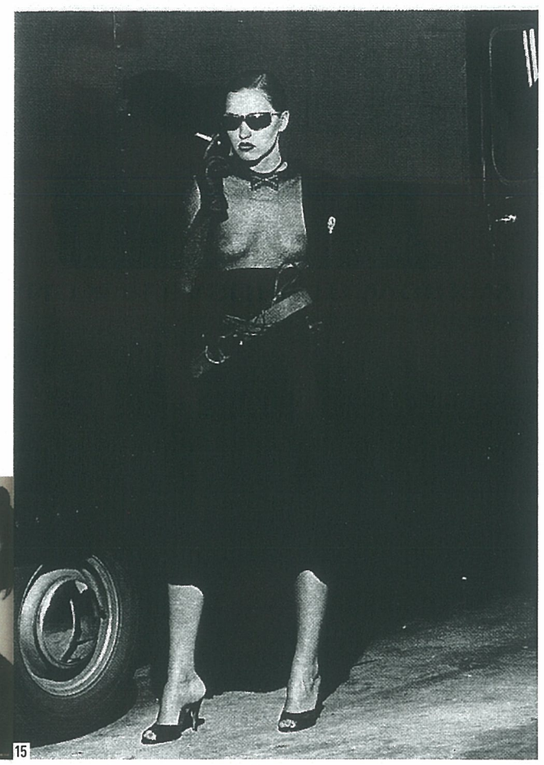


13 NANCY KWAN, 1963
This photo of Nancy, with a new hairstyle by Vidal Sassoon, was taken on 9 August 1963, and published in Vogue in October that year

15 MODEL, 1978
Josephine Front photographed at the Grosvenor Hill Car Park in Mayfair, 21 August 1978. It was published in Boulevard – the first of the truly independent and edgy style magazines – in October 1978. Donovan later used the image in his 1983 book, Glances, and captioned it: 'Mayfair inhabitant at night – 11.30pm'

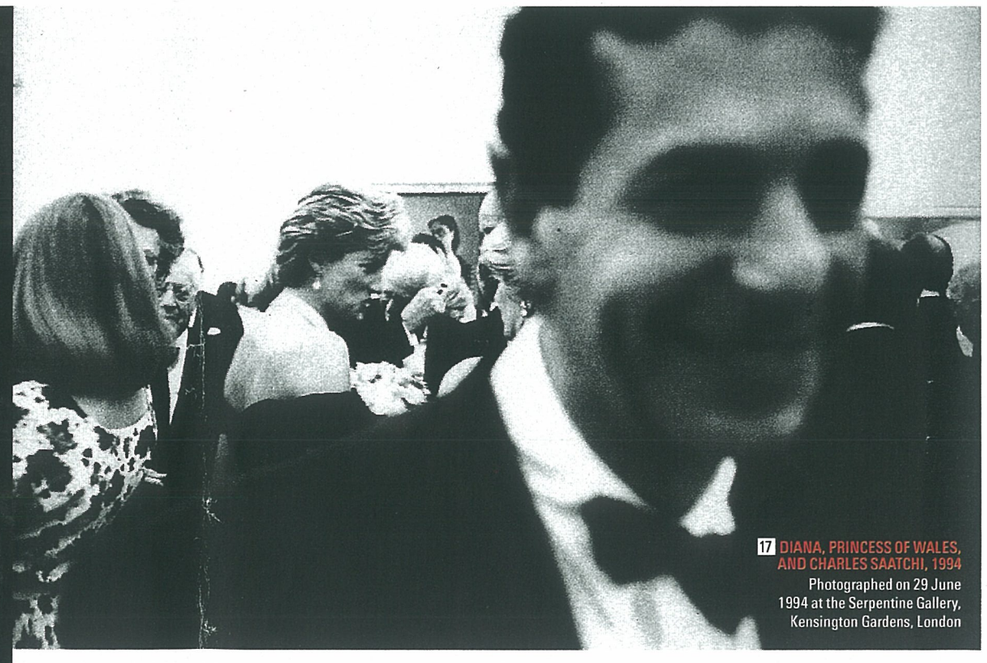
16 BRYAN FERRY, 1996
Photographed for GQ, at Donovan's Mayfair studio, London, June 1996





'TERENCE DONOVAN WAS INCREDIBLY AMUSING, CHARMING AND A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH' BRYAN FERRY

14 MODEL, 1983
Photographed for Glances
'[She's] relaxing in a fur coat on a chair made in Sussex by a man who had one eye but somehow had become a brilliant darts player'
TERENCE DONOVAN, 1983



17 DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES, AND CHARLES SAATCHI, 1994
Photographed on 29 June 1994 at the Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London

► in studios, in 1964 Donovan told a journalist, "Not long ago, the only way you photographed [men's fashion] was on a shooting stick in Regent's Park. So I thought, 'Right, we'll get on to this – we'll go to the gasworks.'"

Donovan took to the streets using a 35mm camera, and for Muir this is Donovan's most enduring legacy: "All he wanted was to take pictures of girls, so having to take pictures of men in suits – he realised he couldn't do it in the studio, so he went to the industrial landscape of his home town and started a new genre of men's fashion photography."

It is this innovation that David Bailey admires most. "His work on *Town* with art director Tom Wolsey was totally original. Taking men to a bomb site and a disused factory in the East End later became commonplace but Donovan was doing it first in the Sixties. His men's pictures are really his most powerful."

In the latter part of the Sixties, Donovan briefly moved away from photography, directing more than 3,000 commercials and the 1973 movie, *Yellow Dog*, starring Robert Hardy. He also painted, made documentaries and directed music videos, including Robert Palmer's 1986 hit "Addicted To Love". The strutting mannequins epitomised everything that Donovan represented – an ironic and humorous understanding of what was sexy and desirable in the glamour-obsessed Eighties.

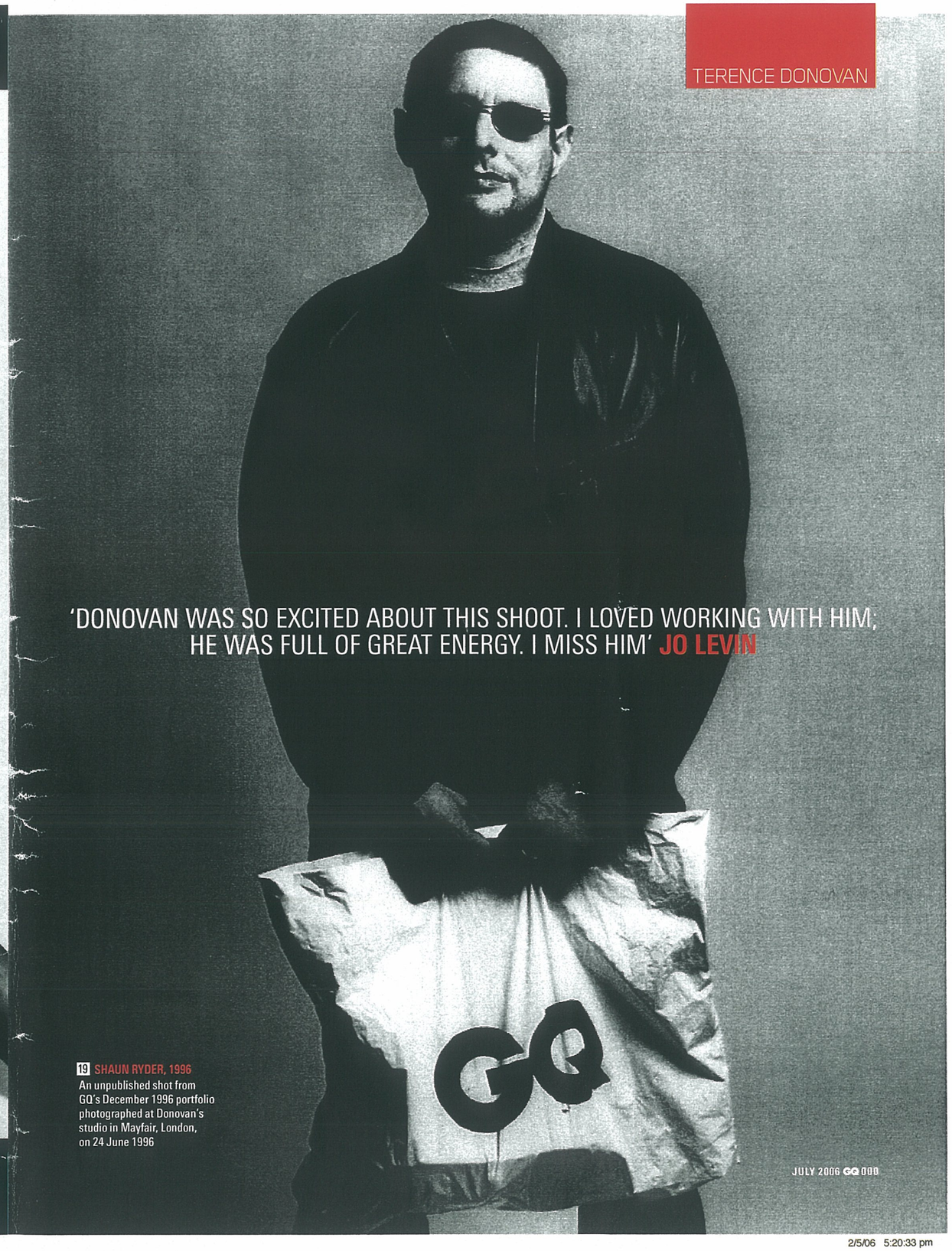
Donovan's other great passion was judo. A black belt in the sport, he wrote a book about its origins, *Fighting Judo*, considered definitive by aficionados. But it is for his pictures, of course, that he will be remembered – especially by those lucky enough to have been one of his subjects.

"I'll never forget that *GQ* shoot in 1996 because [his portrait of me] is one of my favourite pictures," Bryan Ferry told *GQ*. "It's one of the only shots that I'm actually smiling in, which really tells the story of the shoot because Terence was very proactive and made me react to what he was doing. He was incredibly amusing, charming and a real pleasure to work with. He obviously loved doing it. That picture shows my cheeky grin – which no other image shows."

No one knows why Donovan chose to take his own life a few weeks later. At the inquest, it emerged that he had been taking steroids to treat a skin condition, which had caused him to have depression. Whatever the circumstances, however, the photographs live on.

Bryan Ferry remembers the closing moments of that final shoot for *GQ*. "Terence turned to me and promised me dinner at the Connaught. I regret that I never got to take him up on that offer and spend more time with him. Not only would I have liked to have seen a lot more of him socially, I would also have liked to have seen more of the work he had in him." GQ ►

18 POLICEWOMAN, 1983
Photographed for Glances
'Her hands seemed tough and capable. The shoes were not regulation, she put them on for the picture. She was a very able and likable girl. Perhaps she will marry a nice man and live happily ever after, but I don't think she will ever forget the overpowering rush of adrenaline that comes when the blue light rotates and the siren screams'
TERENCE DONOVAN, 1983



'DONOVAN WAS SO EXCITED ABOUT THIS SHOOT. I LOVED WORKING WITH HIM; HE WAS FULL OF GREAT ENERGY. I MISS HIM' **JO LEVIN**

19 SHAUN RYDER, 1996
An unpublished shot from GQ's December 1996 portfolio photographed at Donovan's studio in Mayfair, London, on 24 June 1996

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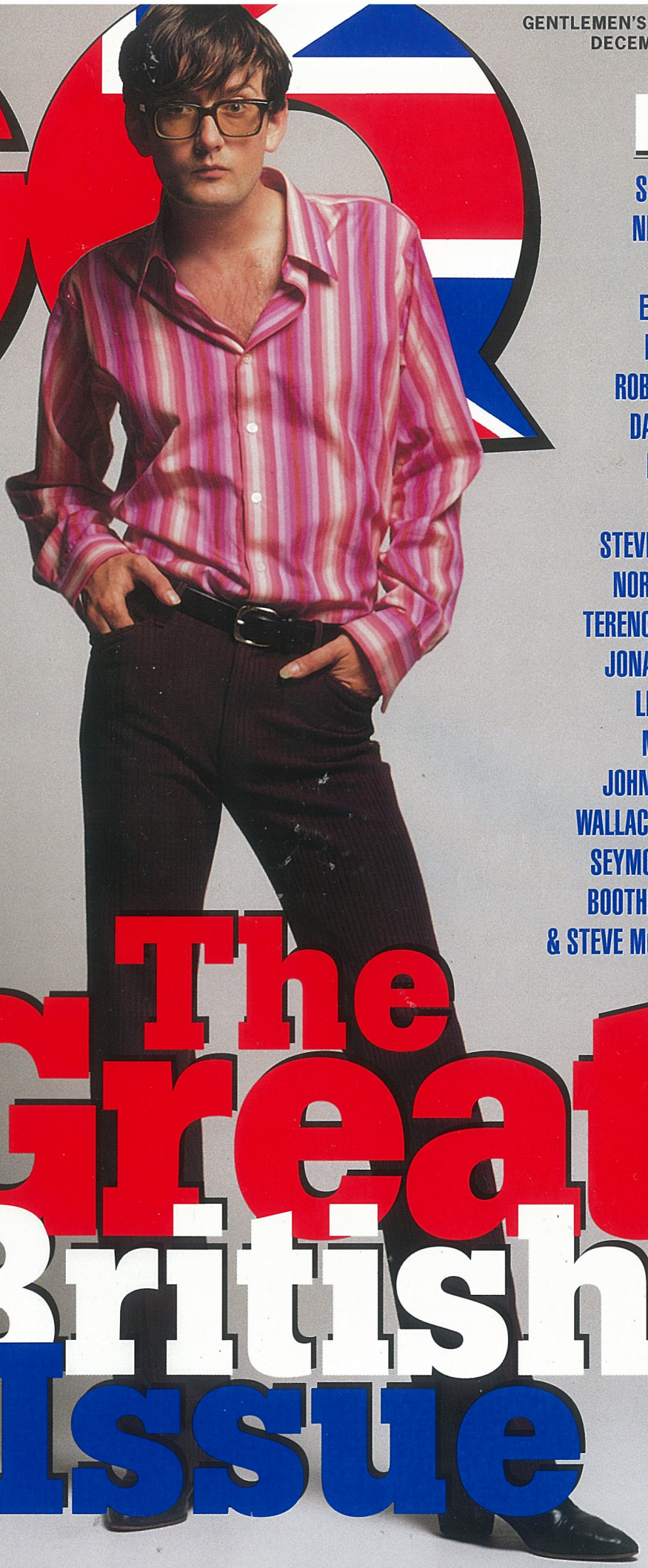

ool Britannia

Jarvis Cocker

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DWYN COLLINS
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EORGIE FAME
RYAN FERRY
OLDIE
ERRY HALL
AZZIE B
IATT JOHNSON
VILKO JOHNSON
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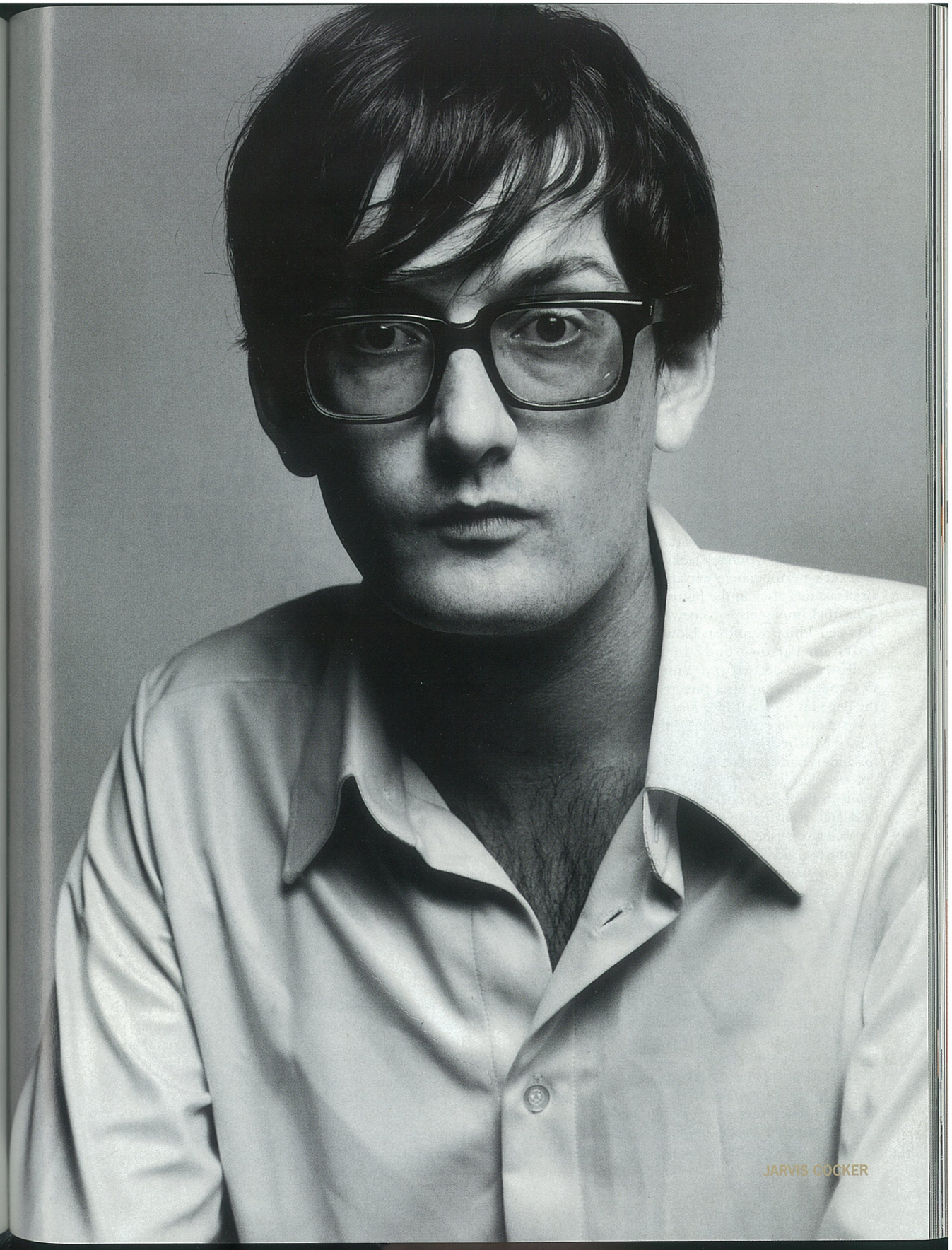
Photographs by **Terence Donovan**



JARVIS COCKER

Jessica Berens falls for a boy who'll never be one of the common people. Overleaf, Jarvis Cocker writes about the good and bad in GB

He's a train-spotty love-god dancing around his satchel. He wears ties so entertaining they should get their own agent. He is all Bri-Nylon static, but he crackles with that exuberant dandy weirdness that only the British can still sell as sex.

It is easy to imagine that making love to Jarvis Cocker would be like leaping naked into an old wooden rowing boat, but he has purveyed his physical failings, and now they are not his failings, they are his point. Cocker has observed that you might get a smack in the mouth just for standing out, but now SPECS R US. Women know that the mouth is mightier than any muscle, wit is an aphrodisiac, and if you are going to cavort, you must cavort on your own terms. We will always fall for a man who describes Jean Paul Sartre as "a boss-eyed get", and who understands that, in pop, there is no depth, only cranny observation and dark candour alongside an understanding of the joke.

Maverick prowls. Blind without his glasses, he dresses like Brian Jones, sometimes writes like Morrissey, and thinks like a woman. A four-eyed, Silk Cut-smoking, Martel-drinking showy-off antidote to the healthful aesthetic, he is an irritant to the plastic pretension described by the *Billboard* chart and symbolised by Michael Jackson. Cocker's performance art at the Brits takes its place in the history of great rock moments – somewhere between Philip Kaufman blowing up Gram Parson's body in the Californian desert and Sinéad O'Connor tearing up a picture of the Pope on *Saturday Night Live*.

His past smells well hard. Father left. Mother emptied fruit machines. Little Jarv wore lederhosen to school. Later, he flounced about in turquoise shoes with pink laces and a Sheffield yob pushed a kebab into his face. He once fell out of a window trying to impress a girl (you, too, should try this at home), then went on stage in a wheelchair. Buddy Holly meets Randy from *Crossroads*. The songs were about inadequacy and reality – orgasms faked behind Dralon curtains, girls who charge fat men £5 to look up their skirts, and brothers who slept with their mothers.

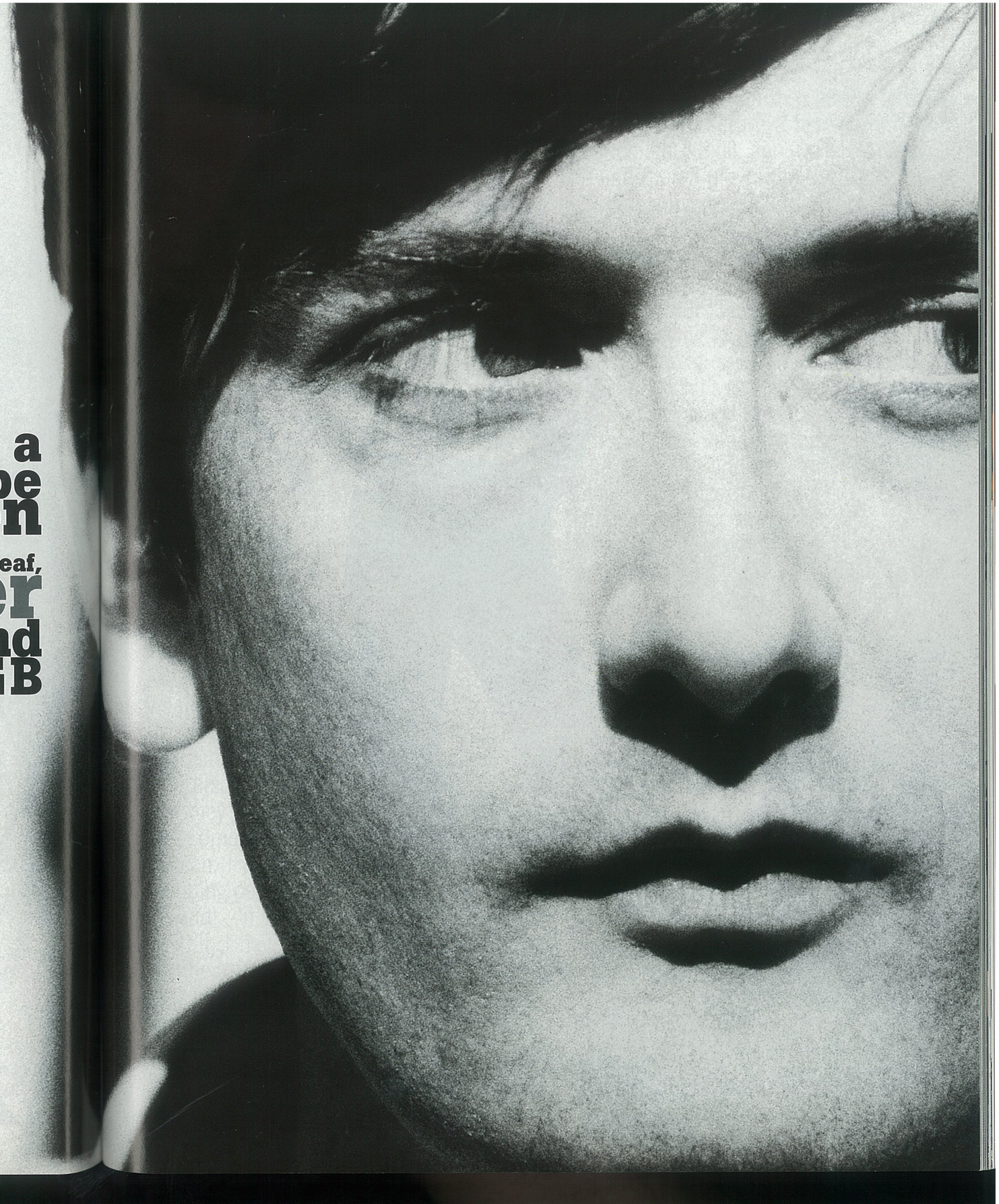
He spoke of and to Deborahs and Carolines and dressed them in the esoteric romanticism of one who could have been a victim if he had not been tall and clever. Jilted Sarah, who sold her story to the tabloids, did him little harm. "He satisfied my every need," said she. The *News of the World* "exclusive" told us that "the oddball singer was no nerd between the sheets". "Misshapes" (the future is owned by those who are different) is the song of his success.

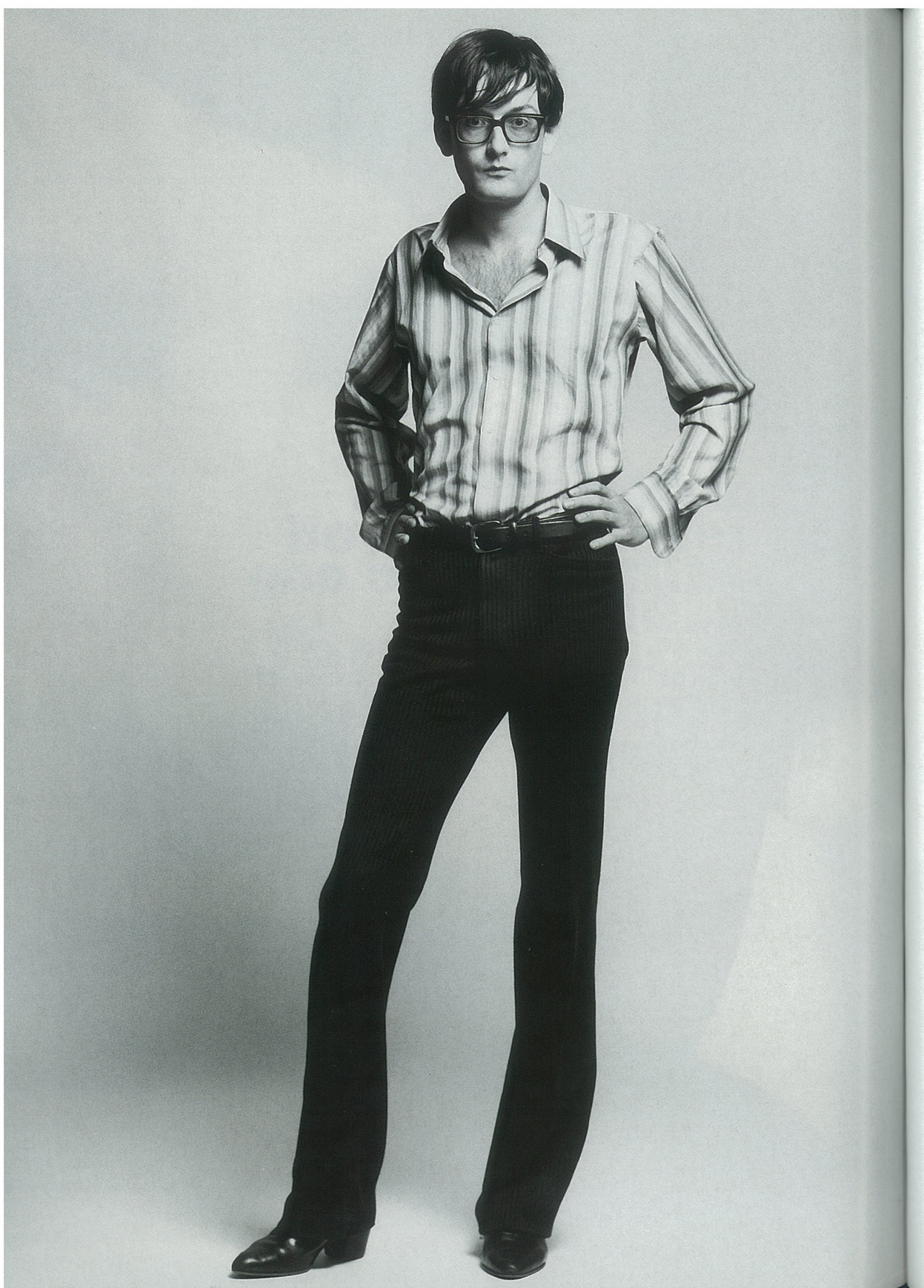
One cannot see him doing the washing-up, and this is good. One cannot see him pushing a push-chair, and this is good. The same cannot be said of Jon Bon Jovi. Cocker's friends say that he's clumsy and falls over a lot, but he is always "on". Even when he was young and worked in a fish market, he could persuade old ladies to buy more crab claws than they needed. This also is good. There is nothing sexier than an amusing player. He takes the responsibility. It's a form of sweeping you off your feet.

In the end, though, it doesn't really matter what he is like in real life. As an icon, he represents an aspect of sexual promise that says: "I will bring my imagination to bed with me, I will see you and know you and I will not be a bore in the morning." The same cannot be said of Jon Bon Jovi. Cocker's image illuminates self-obsession; his lyrics do not. His lyrics tell of a Peeping Tom eternally fascinated by knickers and groans, nighties and fumblings, fascinated, in fact, by women. He has kissed your mother and now he is working on your dad. He really loves it when you tell him to stop. He'll show you how you're doing it wrong. He'll be around when your boyfriend's not in town. He's the nightmare who chases other men's wives just because it is exciting to get caught.

In England a certain kudos is still allowed to those who dare to be themselves. Reverence is reserved for the oddity. He will not necessarily "shift units" or "sell in America" but, in the sea of freaks who must play the Mellotron and Mycromoog, he represents the face of British youth culture, a pop pool from which the world still steals ideas. Foppery has long kept us on the map.

He could become just another glam *minceur*. Laugh at his wide-boy suit, see him drive away in a Hillman, and make mine an androgyne. He could grow into an old auntie with a nervous tic. He could drink too much Martel and lie on a pink lilo in a swimming pool in Sunningdale. But as a sex symbol he serves to remind the mob that the weeds can always take over the garden.





"I have to say that I'm not really in the habit of eulogising this place we call the UK – jingoism and flag-waving make me sick (they really do). But, having been out of the country for most of the past year, I have to admit there are a few things about Britain that I've missed or thought kindly about. Here's a few of them (cue "Land of Hope and Glory" playing in the background, general Last Night of the Proms atmosphere, streamers, etc)...

Double-decker buses (I have my own private fleet now, of course); concrete bus shelters (becoming rare – good places to kiss on cold autumn evenings); chips (that's chips, not fries, OK); the BBC (yes, pay yer bleeding licence fee you tight gets – and if I could just add my tuppence worth to the debate on the future of the World Service: leave it alone. Now that Radio 2 is having to play Radio 1's cast-offs, the World Service is the only BBC station you can listen to at night when you want to fall asleep. I mean, have you tried falling asleep to Tina Turner? It's not nice); *Top of the Pops*, as long as it's on at 7pm on a Thursday. That's THURSDAY, as in "Not Friday" – do I make myself clear?; pointless exercises such as train-spotting, plane-spotting (in Sheffield they even have tram-spotting) – see also stone-cladding and the half-timbering of Portakabins; televised snooker; bitter shandy; Simpsons of Piccadilly; proper cafés; *Radio Times* trivia machines; Day Nurse; DG "Old Jamaican" ginger beer; Marmite; PG Tips (can I have that sponsorship deal now, please?); the fact that you still have to get to know people a bit before they'll tell you anything personal (ie not like in the US). Yes, if I put my mind to it, there's quite a lot about this country that I like – but you wouldn't find me admitting that in public. I mean, that just wouldn't be British, would it?

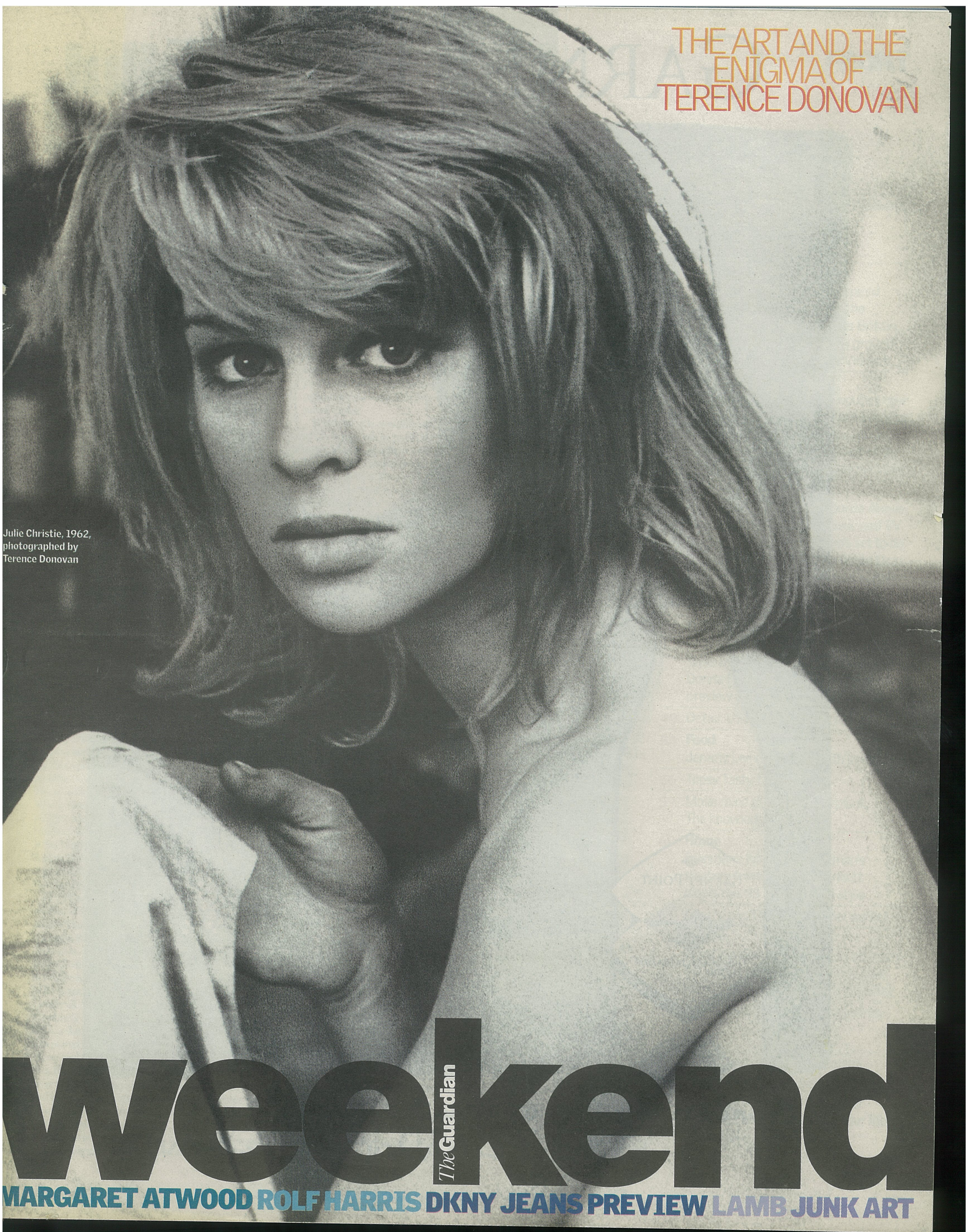
But I didn't ask to be born here, and there's lots about Britain that I don't like. Nowhere else in the world, for example, do you get as much abuse if people think you're wearing something "weird"; it's like it's a personal insult to them, as if you're wearing it just to spite them. This intolerance to difference is one of the sides to the British character that I find very unappealing.

It also depresses me when people think they're part of some Great British heritage and they've got a God-given right to go ahead and beat people up if they can't get a pint and some chips at ten o'clock at night. It all came out again during Euro 96, didn't it? I mean, I was excited by England's performance and I really wanted them to win, but stabbing people after the match because they've got a German accent or they're driving an Audi – it's not really on, is it?

Still, I have to admit that I can't really imagine being from anywhere else. I think it's the unpleasant things about Britain that force people to create the good things. The reason that Britain has produced so much innovative music is that if you come from a crappy nowhere town (and most of the best music does) you have to create something to compensate for the lack of anything going on. The key to Britain's musical prowess is boredom. Music is probably the biggest area in which we piss on the competition, but in the world of art, books and design I think we're ahead too.

Pity about the food." ■

THE ART AND THE ENIGMA OF TERENCE DONOVAN

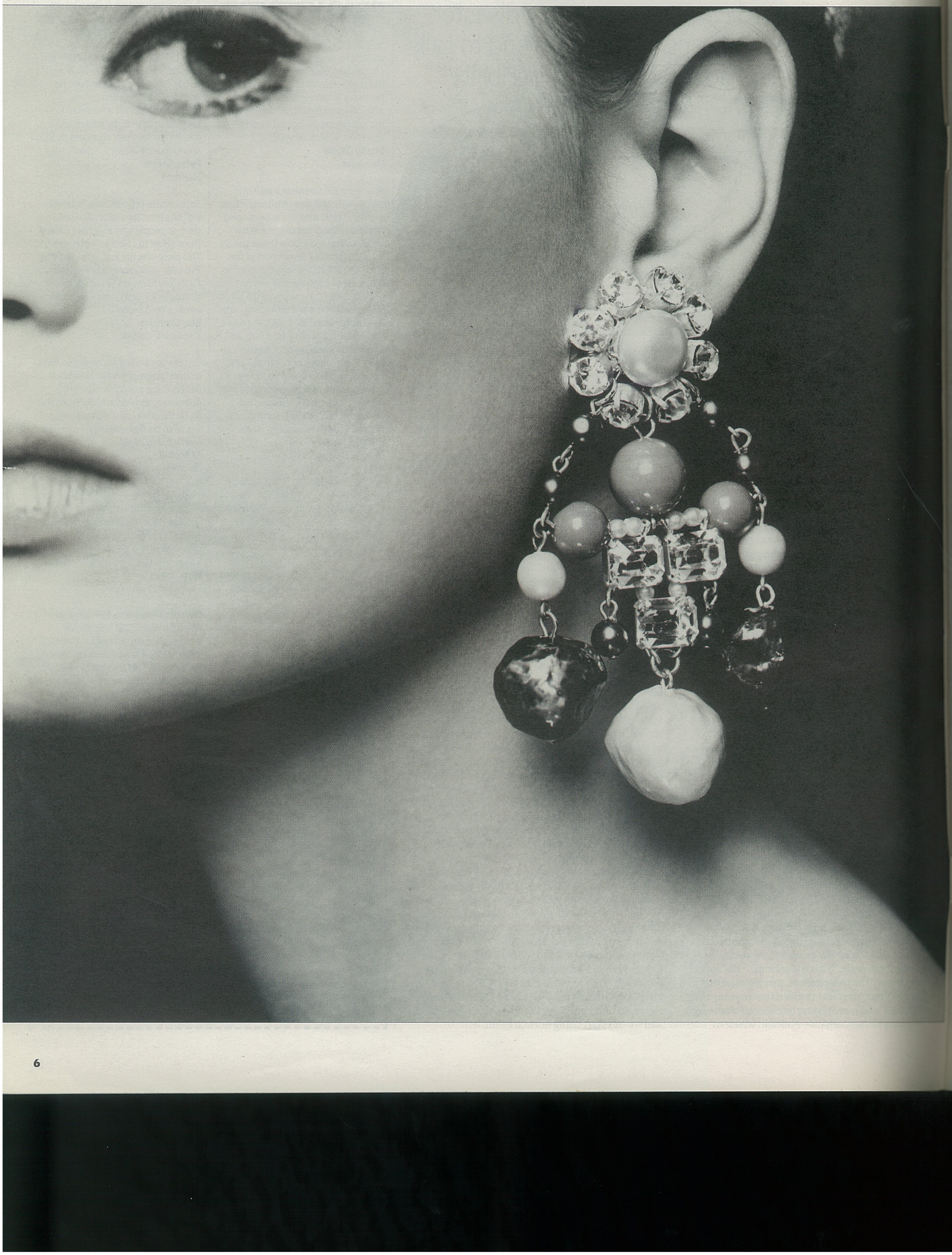


Julie Christie, 1962, photographed by Terence Donovan

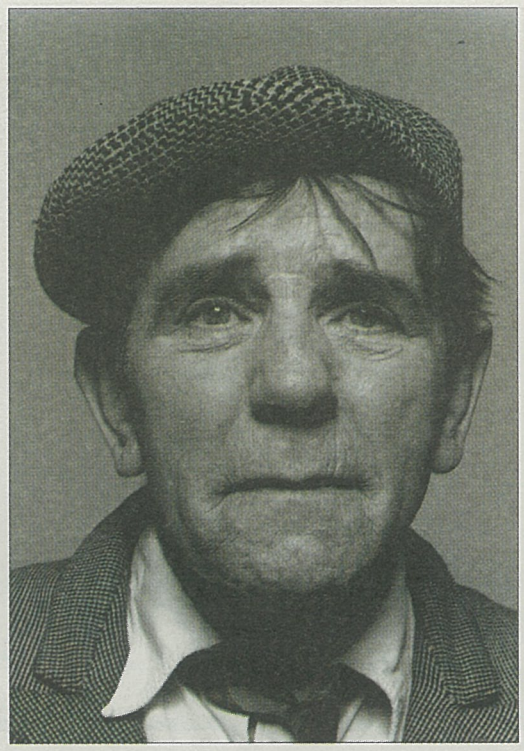
The Guardian
weekend

MARGARET ATWOOD ROLF HARRIS DKNY JEANS PREVIEW LAMB JUNK ART

Sharp practice: Donovan insisted he was a craftsman, not an artist. His technical brilliance is evident in this 1976 photograph of Celia Hammond, one of his favourite models

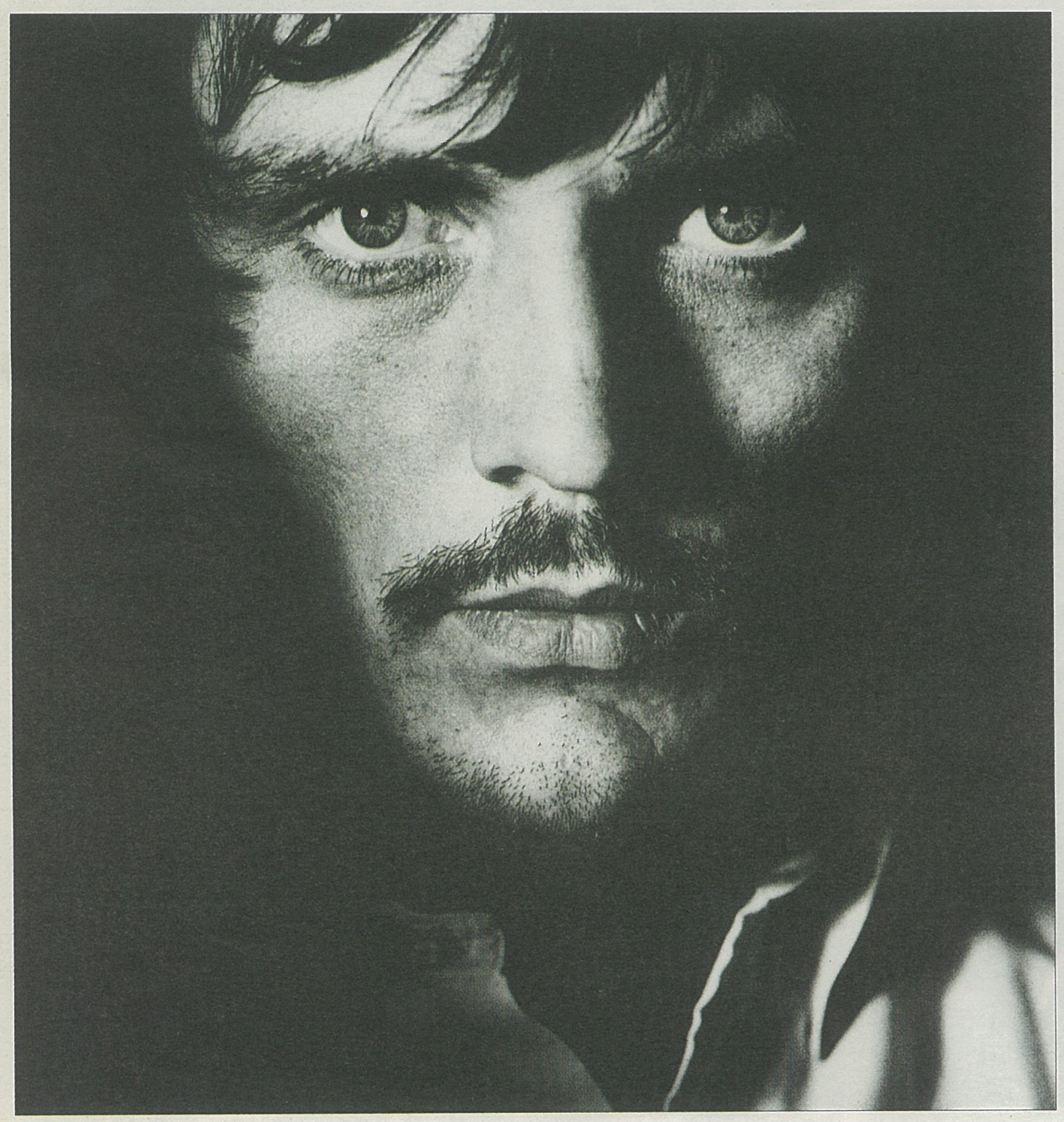


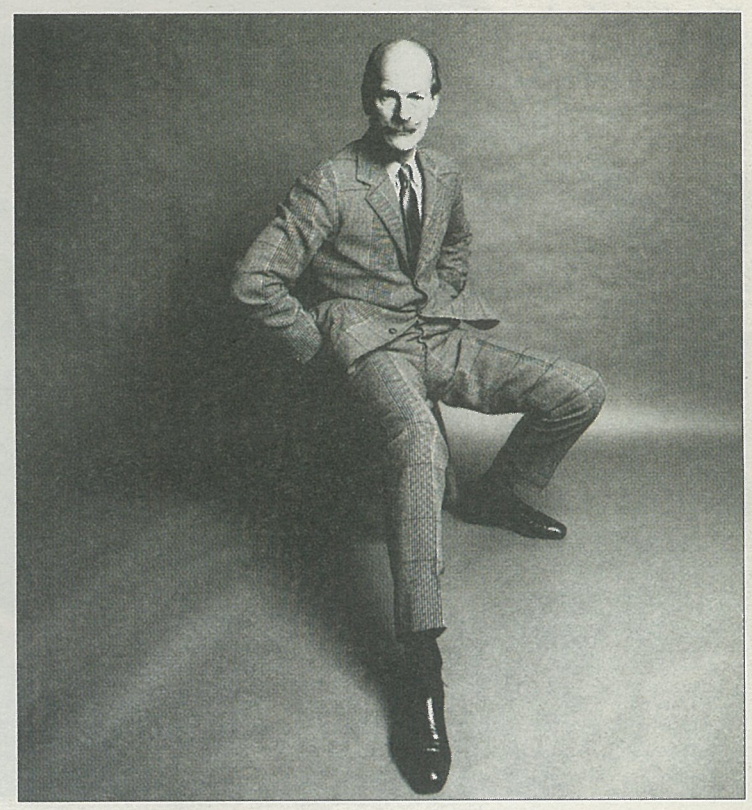
Look me in the eye: (clockwise from below) Norman Wisdom, 1988; Susan Hampshire, 1967; Diana, Princess of Wales, 1995; Norman Parkinson, 1960; Terence Stamp, 1966



Terence Donovan was a photographer who created the look of the 60s and then moved on. His legacy has been his wonderful portraits, faces of their time, and a mystery that even his wife, Diana, has not solved, as she reveals in her first interview since his death four years ago. By Sally Vincent

AGAINST THE GRAIN





AGAINST THE GRAIN

The 60s were not all they are cracked up to be. It was just that things looked different. And the look was invented, as it usually is, by the fashion trade, the print media, by models and those who style and photograph them, but dictated by money and whose pockets the money is in.

Mid-20th-century man was either poor or he had a tailor. Model-man was Nigel on the knitting pattern, captured by the potting shed with his teeth clenched, his sartorial splendour dependent on his old mum's willingness to buy wool and have a stab at Fair Isle. His female equivalent, known as the mannequin, was a lady of indeterminate age and equine physicality, a highly cosmeticised parody of the sort of middle-class, middle-aged married woman thought to have the wherewithal to purchase cocktail frocks by the score.

As the second half of the century shifted, as it were, its gear, we miraculously became young. The Pill, the proliferation of specialised further education and the erosion of class barriers produced a new generation of wage earners, which meant the young were now a market force. As though by imaginative design, the natural gawkiness of extreme youth replaced Nigel and his lady as an idealistic frame for the display of consumer goods. A new breed of iconographer emerged, superseding the elitist gentleman-portraitists of high-societal aspiration; working-class boys who could see in the darkroom, talked all any'ow, drove flash motors and used their cameras like penis extensions.

What they produced was heady, sexy stuff, technically flawless and as limitlessly promising as the midnight chimes of Hogmanay. Glossy magazines became biblical in terms of the compulsion of their imagery and influence. The young believed in what they saw, as though they were looking into a mirror and recognised themselves as both real and invincible. It was no longer inevitable that they would replicate their parents in form or in content. They made the rules. They also made what the media were pleased to call the generation gap. They were on their own. And at the epicentre of their quasi-revolution were three photographers, David Bailey, Brian Duffy and Terence Donovan, a sort of holy trinity of modernity, unchallenged arbiters of all that is true and beautiful.

The problem for those who innovate at sub-culture level, who literally make things look different, is that they tend to get impaled on their own cutting edge, enshrined for future decades in the awesome reputation of the cult they subscribed to. If you imply revolution, show that something that seemed to be indelible is washed out and something else has been born, you set a date for yourself and others. The higher you hoist your petard, the more unequivocal its salute, the quicker the imitators move in to date you. That is the nature of sub-culture. Bailey knew this, hung on and survived. Duffy knew it, fancied he heard the muffled march of the philistines coming to trample him and buggered off to pastures new before they came anywhere near. Donovan knew it and railed against it till the day he died. "These are the 90s?" he'd ➜

A new breed emerged: working-class boys who could see in the darkroom and who drove flash cars

Utterly 60s: (clockwise from top) Maggie Smith, 1964; a fashion shoot for Man About Town, 1960 — Donovan pioneered the movement out of the studio on to the streets, or even to an industrial setting; Harold Macmillan, 1961

roar at anyone remarking upon the celebrity of his youth. "That was then, this is now."

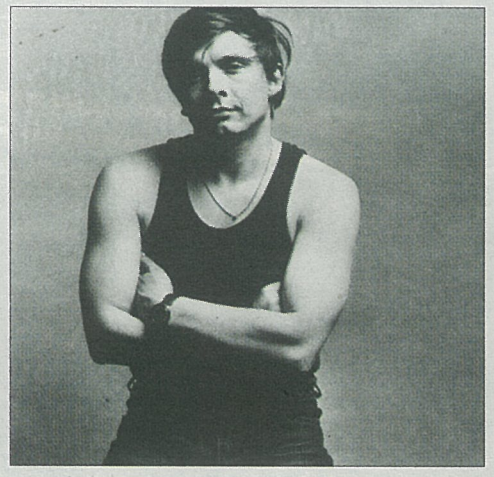
It is questionable that he would have much relished the resurgences of his work in exhibitions and coffee-table collections since his death four years ago, all of which somehow serve to increase rather than mute the enigma of his personality. His widow Diana, his colleagues and their friends have collaborated to produce these memorials as though they themselves were looking for a better understanding of the man himself. The morning after his death was announced, with the chilling undertow of its self-infliction, five men counting themselves as members of his most intimate circle telephoned each other in utter consternation. Anyone else, they said one to another, one times five and five times one, anyone else but Donovan. They'd have understood if it'd been a man with observable volatility. Just not Donovan. Not in a thousand years. He was too controlled, too balanced, too centred in his own skin, too philosophical, the very obverse of a suicide. They say so to this day. The more astute of them conclude that, perhaps, he was simply unknowable, that the sweet, equable, funny, generous, diligent, well-mannered Terry they knew merely chose consciously to guard his private self from all-comers. There was nothing they could have done . . .

Diana Donovan prefers not to dwell on the circumstances of her husband's death. To this effect she raises a slender white hand, palm outwards, and affirms, in a curiously well-bred version of the Jerry Springer show vernacular, that she will not go there. Suffice it to say that one day she wandered into his studio and found him casually perusing colour transparencies and muttering "every one a Bruegel" as he dropped them in the bin, and another day she went there and saw that he was dead. Her devastation is her own affair. She has negotiated her own emotional survival by concentrating on the positive, happy aspects of her marriage and by immersing herself in the task of bringing the enormous diversity of Donovan's contribution to the visual arts to a forgetful public.

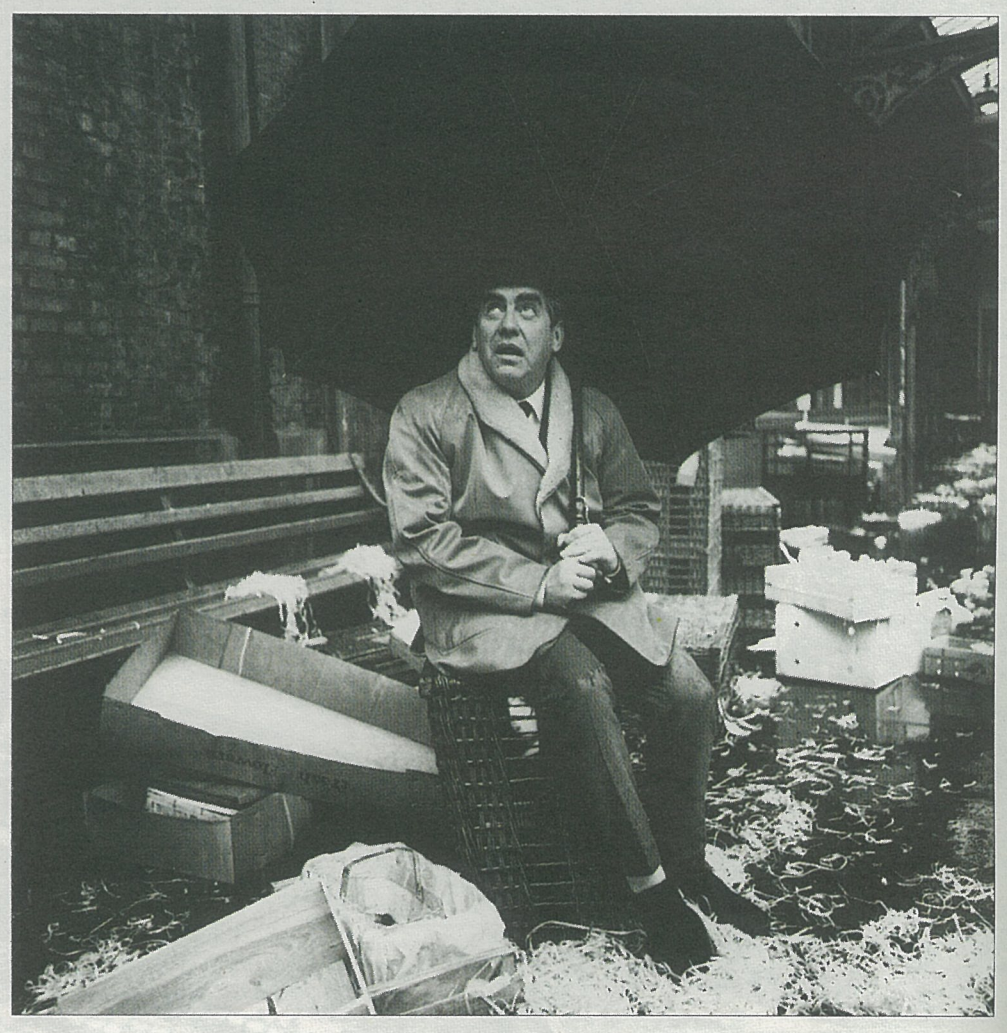
Her account of their first meeting is succinct and quaintly illuminating. You have to imagine the pair of them. She wasn't a model, but she was pretty and tiny and blonde and very earnestly middle class, thrilled to have landed a job as picture editor for one of the many hopefully seminal glossies that came and went in the mid-60s. He was, well, he was Terence Donovan, *the* Terence Donovan; built like a brick outhouse, spoiled for choice sex-wise, unreconstructed East End accent, open-top Bentley with white-wall tyres parked outside, Savile Row suit all buttoned up, minions bearing equipment, the full monty. They wouldn't normally have afforded him, but he was a friend of the proprietor and a jolly nice bloke, and besides, they were saving on model fees by using the girls in the office. They combed their hair, did their lipstick and dressed up in raincoats and sou'westers and did what they were told.

When the session was over he offered her a lift home. She thought that was rather splendid until they got to Knightsbridge and he said that's it, we're home. As she lived ➜

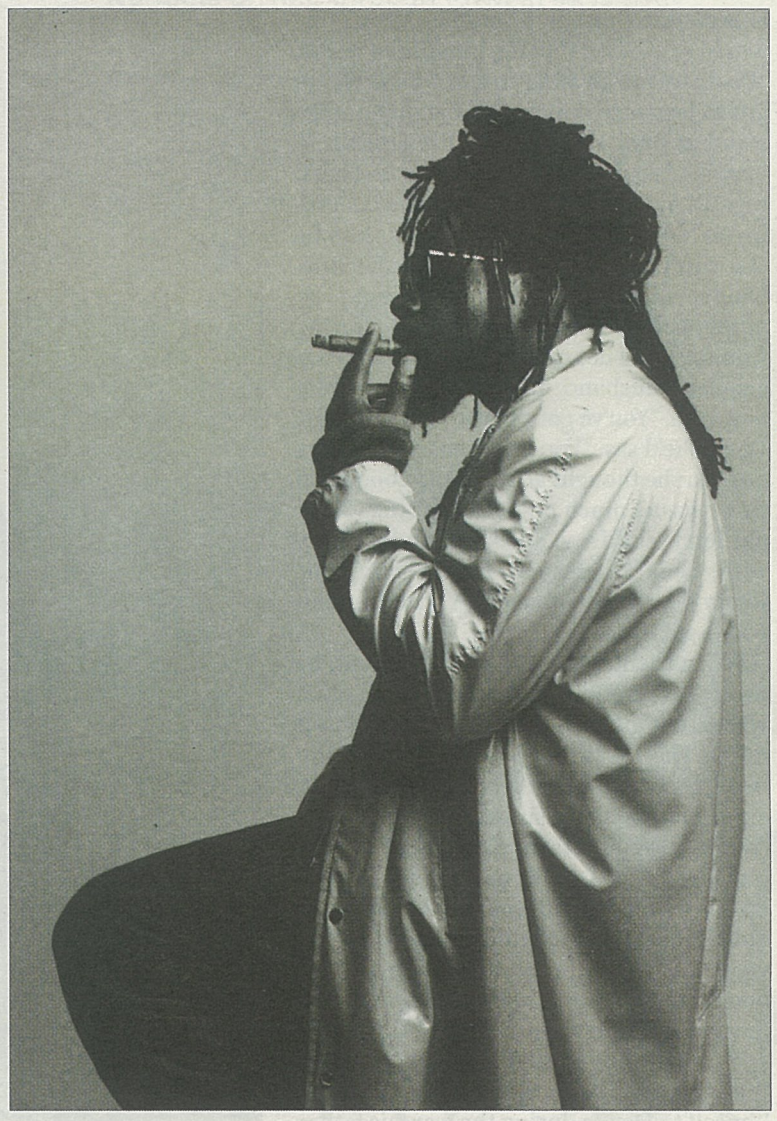
He was the Terence Donovan, built like a brick outhouse, spoiled for choice sex-wise, Savile Row suit all buttoned up



Catch the moment: (anti-clockwise from above) Joan Collins, 1966; David Bailey, 1964, Donovan's friend and fellow photographer; Tony Hancock in a British Railways ad, 1963; an ad for Terylene, 1960 — though the look would be equally at home in the men's magazines of today



Donovan's value system was founded on the Protestant work ethic, which is all the more potent for being tacit



in Earl's Court at the time, she pointed out that it wasn't her home. No, he said, but it is mine. So she thanked him, got out of the car and took a bus the rest of the way. No, he didn't ask her in. No, definitely not. And no, she wasn't remotely offended. All gifted people are eccentric, she reasoned with the impeccable logic of one who would doubtless attribute ego-centricity to the same gesture by a non-gifted person. You had to accept it from such a great photographer.

Years later she accepted the rules of their engagement in a similarly deferential manner. No holidays, he said to her. No shopping. Perfectly reasonable, she thought. She is particularly delighted with the episode of the graphologist. While debating with himself whether or not to propose marriage, he sneaked a recipe she'd jotted down in her kitchen and sent it off to a pal of his who interpreted handwriting for the edification of Scotland Yard crime-busters.

The resultant report, ill-spelled and typed on a manual typewriter from which the bogeys had not been removed from the "a"s and "e"s, she continues to treasure as an intuitive and accurate character analysis of herself. It describes a young lady of exceptional taste and refinement, particularly good at colour matching; self-reliant, detached, practical, discreet, loyal and instinctual, an ideal partner for an artistic, enterprising, active man. It is anyone's guess what Donovan made of it; the western equivalent of a gentle geisha, perhaps, but at all events he popped the question, doubts dispelled.

He was never nebulous about his ➜

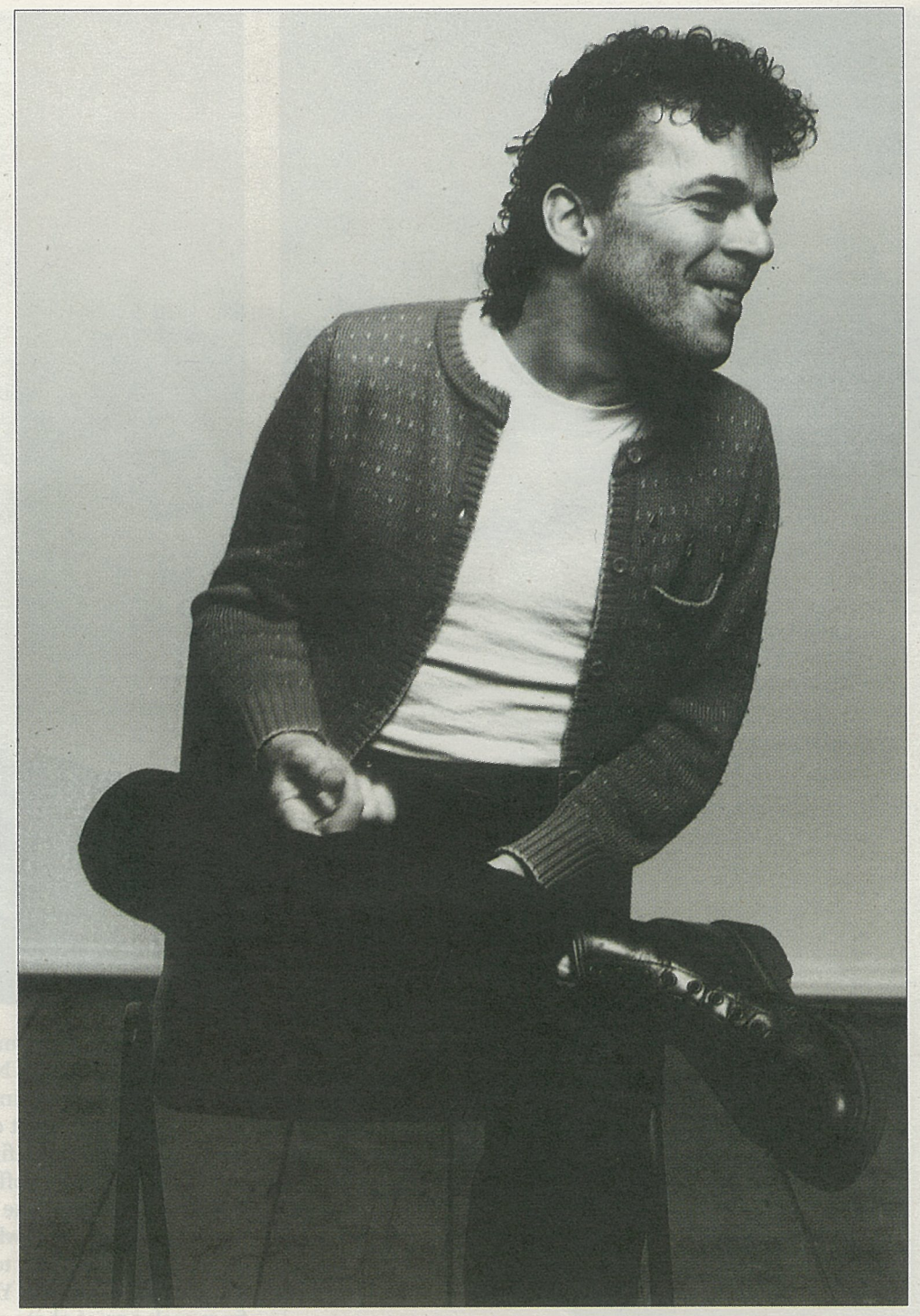
On the hoof: Donovan is renowned for the perfection of his studio shots, but he could wing it, too — he caught Sophia Loren on the set of The Fall Of The Roman Empire in 1963; the photograph of Peter Anthony, 1960 (top), has an uncontrived look, but clearly wasn't — it's an ad for Acrilan; Jazzie B, 1996, is a return, in the year of Donovan's death, to the more stylised portrait

expectations of her as a wife. "Di-di", he would say to her, it being his special name, "Di-di, we are all alone in this world. You've got to learn to be alone." She didn't understand at first. Having been brought up to imagine that marriage meant an indissoluble togetherness, a belonging with and belonging to, she found it a little daunting to be thrown on her own resources while her husband spent his days in the exclusive company of the world's most beautiful and alluring women. It did not pass her by that her newly acquired husband might easily acquire a new wife. "You've got to think about things, Di-di," he'd say. "You've got to think things out." So she thought about it and concluded there wasn't much point in whining. "Poor old Terry," she'd say, "stuck in a studio all day with Celia Hammond/Jean Shrimpton/Cindy Crawford/whoever. Ah well, somebody's got to do it."

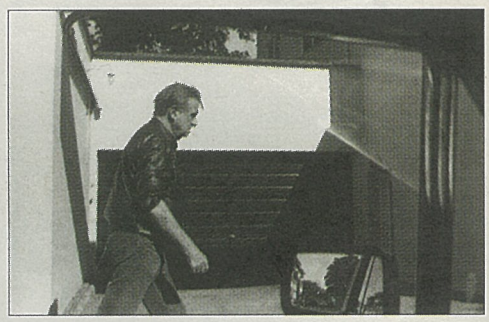
When their first child was imminent, he drove her to Queen Charlotte's Hospital, walked her into reception and drove himself home. There was never any question of him being there. No point in being sad about it, either. It was her business, childbirth. The doctor woke him from a deep sleep to tell him his son had been born. That was just the way he was. Horses for courses, sort of thing. She felt he wanted a family, wanted in some way to replicate the closeness of his childhood family group, with mum and dad downstairs, and Aunt Doll and Uncle Bill and Cousin Roy upstairs. Not that he saw that much of them. He was evacuated by himself to Devon during the war, his father was a long-distance lorry driver and his mum worked full time as a Woolworths floor walker and Cousin Roy was too old to be a companion. So he was very much a loner. He did his very best to train her, as she puts it, in the same mode. And she's grateful now, she really is. It wasn't always easy. Sometimes, she'd fly off the handle about something, get rattled and express anger. "Hang on," he'd, say, "let's get the right perspective on this. Let's get the whole picture. Let's not pretend it isn't what it is or it is what it isn't." And, of course, she'd sometimes feel like giving him a slap, but he was always right, always correctly focused.

She never really understood his religious proclivities. Not then, anyway, perhaps a little more since his death. They didn't scrutinise each others' psyches, you see. He was a Zen Buddhist, she was Roman Catholic. These things are private, and besides, he always said there wasn't much difference between the two, apart from the guilt. So far as Diana was aware, he'd been to see The Seven Samurai at about the same time he did his National Service and came out of the cinema with an abiding passion for Japan and all things Japanese. It happened to a lot of people in the 50s. You either fell for La Dolce Vita or, if you were of a more deeply romantic, soulful stamp, Seven Samurai did it for you.

Like all morality tales, it is about suffering humanity and what it takes to struggle through this vale of tears with some degree of dignity. The fact that orientals appear to have a different physical centre of gravity from ours, particularly noticeable when ➜

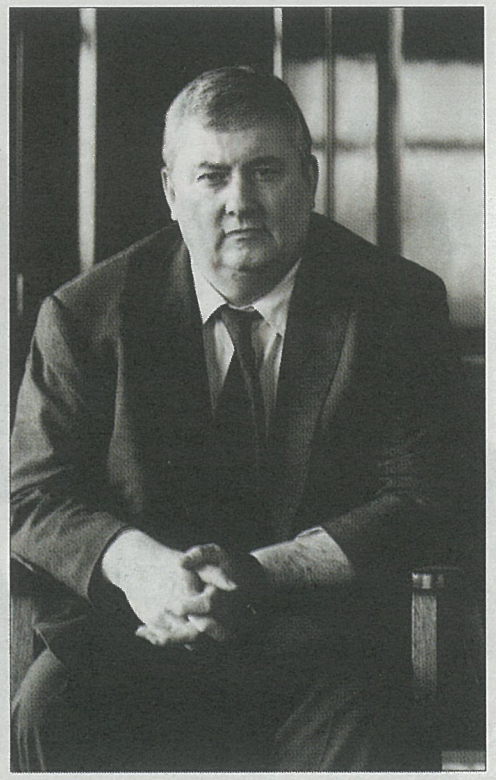


Donovan adored Margaret Thatcher. They got on like a house on fire; the grocer's daughter and the lorry driver's son



All-comers: (clockwise from above) The informality of the portrait of Ian Dury, 1981, contrasts with the Annigoni polish of Donovan's study of Mrs Thatcher, or Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven, 1995, as the picture is titled; Francis Bacon, 1990; Vidal Sassoon, 1959; the photographer's daughter, Daisy Donovan, c1978

AGAINST THE GRAIN



The Donovans: Diana photographed by her husband in 1981, and the man himself, 1988

they're running about bashing each other with sticks, makes it all seem new and exotic, but the messages are all there, all the good old enduring, universal clichés, writ large and bleak in subtitles beneath the seething paddy-fields of another time and another country. There is strength in unity. Selfishness makes you weak. Don't stew in your own juice. A problem shared is a problem halved. If you need help, ask for it. Defence is more difficult than attack. Choose your own battlefield. The enemy is as afraid of you as you are of him; use this against him. Courage is only an attitude you strike. Bravado is better than nothing. Pride goes before a fall. You can't win 'em all. Don't be a willing victim. Kill or be killed. Go down fighting. The next world is a very nice place; there are no bandits there.

In effect it is the philosophy of the judo mat. And Donovan was a black belt. The tenets of Zen are so amorphous, as much about what they're not as what they are, you are in danger of ballsing up any attempt to verbalise them. The original Buddha, bless him, never wrote anything down, he just sat there minding his own business until he was good and ready to go public with whatever part of his tangled web he was weaving. This probably accounts for the plethora of bastardised versions that prevailed in the 60s, vapid souls who imagined their personal path to enlightenment lay in expanding their self-consciousness, babbling about their innermost f-f-f-feelings and being bloody rude to everyone with their home truths. What was so difficult to assimilate was the yin and yang of it, the balance: the pesky fact that we are all huge bundles of contradictions, polarised monsters whose backs are always exactly and invariably as broad as our fronts.

Top and bottom, though, it means we're supposed to try to be good. According to Diana, this was Donovan's avowed intent. He just wanted to be a good man, to help and not hinder his fellows. He would also argue ad nauseam with himself and with anyone who'd listen about the meaning of good. "He could," Diana said with something akin to maternal pride, "tie you in knots."

Donovan was never ostentatious about his Buddhism. So far as Diana ever knew in their 28 years together, he didn't meditate so you'd notice, nor did he light incense sticks and make a song and dance at an altar, chanting and what have you. Every evening, though, he went to the Budakwai to practise his judo and just be in a safe place, nobody asking him to account for himself, a man among other men trying to up the grade of their judo belts, trying, literally, to better themselves. White belt, yellow belt, green belt, brown belt, black belt; all very Mickey-Mouse on the face of it, but it took hard work and dedication.

The hierarchic structure of his chosen discipline made sense to him so there is no paradox in the fact he was politically Conservative. He adored Margaret Thatcher. His portrait of her owes something to Annigoni's highly romanticised painting of the young Queen Elizabeth; noble, heroic, yawningly portentous. He enjoyed her company and, unsurprisingly, she enjoyed his. He had all her party political broadcasts with no hint of cynicism. They got on together like a house on fire; the grocer's daughter and the lorry driver's son, escapees of obscurity, subscribers to the principle of "If I can do it so can you and if you can't you have only yourself to blame."

Donovan's value system was founded, like Thatcher's, on the Protestant work ethic, which is all the more potent for being tacit. Work hard, and you get rewarded; idle, and you don't. Pure pragmatism. Donovan had no patience with lazy students in his teaching days. Right, he'd say, anybody not feel like buckling down, sod off out of it. As the 70s and 80s dripped by and his profession was over-run with would-be Donovans, his scorn was boundless. Look at them, he'd say, running off 90 rolls of film in the hope that one of them will have a picture on it. Not one of them has seen the inside of a darkroom and most of the buggers don't know how to load a fucking camera. And he was right.

There is nothing morally wrong with having the Midas touch in Zen ideology. In a way you're duty bound to make as much loot as you can so that you can redistribute it where it's needed. Terry would empty his pockets for anyone down on their luck, Diana says. He never passed a beggar on the street . . . Donovan made a great deal of money. His business ventures always came good and a quarter of a century spent making commercials for film and television made him a rich man by anybody's standards. His money wedge, he called it — as in "You all right for wedge?" — also defended him against disparagement.

Once, while mooching around the National Portrait Gallery, he was greeted by an upper-class aesthete of his acquaintance. "Why Terence," said the man, "fancy seeing you here! I didn't know you were interested in this sort of thing."

"I'm not," Donovan replied, whipping out a hefty wedge. "These are all the portraits I'm interested in."

A lot of loyal friends felt that Donovan compromised his artistic integrity with so much commercial work. He always insisted he was a craftsman, not an artist. Perhaps he longed to be contradicted. His advertisements were technically brilliant, of course, they had the requisite style and punch, but they could always only be a triumph of form over content. And even a craftsman wants to say something louder than Wear Tuff Boots or Drink Guinness. His foray into feature film making was singularly unsuccessful. He made a movie about a Japanese spy in London. I haven't seen it. Very few people have. Those who had the privilege variously opine "He was having a joke", "It was fantastically interesting" and "Crap". Donovan had no option but to shrug it off. "I believed in it," was all he ever said. He did not invite sympathy, nor did he get much.

It is considered axiomatic that a man who gives the impression of being completely in control of himself is somehow immune to the anguish of disappointment. Particularly if he has a sense of humour. There was an unseemly hoo-ha, for instance, over his Robert Palmer promo. For this effort he gathered together a tribe of his favourite models, the thin but bosomy types who precursed the supermodel, dolled them up in next to nothing and had them zombying about like a bunch of identical, porny automatons. By way, I imagine, of ironic comment upon the socio-sexual mores of the pop scene. How would I know? At all events, those more deeply entrenched thereabouts than I took a certain umbrage. Surely this was insulting to women? Not only were they showing their bits, they were clearly inept musically since they weren't really playing their guitars. It was rather as though Donovan had taken it upon himself wilfully to pimp the wretched promo. Then the supreme irony came as various seedy entrepreneurial hopefuls began their moves to book the backing group, which was nothing if not unconsciously Zen of them.

When Donovan decided to return to still photography, he found that art editors, like policemen, had become absurdly young. "They've never heard of me," he confided to his peers. "Or the Beatles. What a load of wankers." But he had been right all along. These really were the 90s. During their course he privately — intensely privately — took himself back to the drawing board and embarked on the process of becoming what he always said he wasn't, an artist. As though laughing at himself before anyone could get a snigger, he was overtly shy and wry about it, but obsessive, earnest, perfectionist. They're all in storage now, packed away in a warehouse somewhere with their faces to the wall, evidence of years spent trying to nail his concept of Japanese art to his own flag-pole.

Perhaps he had chosen, at the unpromising hour of mid-life crisis, to take himself back to the original passion of the lonely, teen-aged boy who wanted to be a Samurai warrior, to focus finally on the place inside himself he liked the best and cut out the middleman of technology. Diana Donovan remembers the day he sold a painting. It hadn't been for sale, none of them was, but an acquaintance saw it, liked it, wanted it and a deal was struck. It's a funny thing, Diana said, but she had never seen him so thrilled to have earned money in his life.

In 1996, the year of his death, he was working for the glossies again, bad-mouthing picture-desk wankers and generally doing what came naturally. In his spare time he keyed in his word processor to capital letters and began to write. He planned a series of vignettes, apparently, to expose his thought processes to a wider public and have a bit of a laugh. In one of them, which he has archly entitled The Curious Power Of Yellow, he rails against the complacency with which the British have allowed their beautiful cities to be fouled up by madmen who rush about scribbling ugly yellow lines on our lovely streets. What has happened to our British fighting spirit? Are we fit only to be footie-drunks? Why aren't we ashamed not to be more like the French, who boldly put a stop to vehicle clamping by the simple expedient of roughing up the clampers in the first week of their incarnation and throwing their stupid gadgets into the Seine?

Another heart-cry centres upon the freedom and ease with which middle-class Englishmen abuse women. The abuse he pinpoints is the mindless, aggressive "joshing" manner with which certain "pink-faced twits" who are not "secure in their souls" make derogatory personal remarks to pretty girls who don't know how to defend themselves. Then, with Samurai precision, he outlines the remedy for this offence of offences. What you do, he wrote (in capital letters), is this . . . Place the left hand firmly on the back of the abuser's neck. With the finger and thumb of the right hand firmly grip the windpipe. And pinch.

The abuse, he concludes with the penchant for overstatement possessed of all keen amateurs, "WILL STOP WITH A SLIGHT GURGLE AND NEVER OCCUR AGAIN"●

Photographie

PLUS GRANDS QUE LE VENTRE

Dans *Desert Flower*, le film qui relate la vie et le combat contre l'excision de la top model somalienne Waris Dirie (*lire son interview dans Le Vif Weekend du 12 mars dernier*), on voit le flegmatique Timothy Spall (le Peter Pettigrew d'*Harry Potter*) jouer le rôle d'un photographe subjugué par la beauté solaire de la mannequin black alors qu'elle astique le carrelage d'un fast-food de Londres. Dans la réalité, celui qui a découvert celle qui allait devenir une des icônes des podiums dans les années 80, c'est Terence Donovan (1936-1996), rejeton mal-né de l'Angleterre ouvrière qui finira, revanche ultime, par tirer le portrait de Lady Di et autres ducs d'York. Si on vous raconte cette anecdote, c'est parce que la galerie bruxelloise NKA* photography montre actuellement, et pour une des premières fois en dehors de la capitale britannique, une série de tirages vintage de celui qu'on appelait « the eye that never sleeps » – on dit que Terence Donovan a réalisé près d'un million de clichés. Metteur en image du Swinging London, il est surtout connu pour ses séries fashion publiées par la crème de la presse magazine, *Vogue*, *Marie Claire*, *Harper's Bazaar* en tête. Avec David Bailey et Brian Duffy, il passe d'ailleurs pour un avant-gardiste du genre, injectant une dose rafraîchissante de réalisme et de naturel dans cet exercice jusque-là généralement coincé du derrière. On peut jauger cet aspect de sa carrière à l'occasion de l'expo de Bruxelles. On peut aussi apprécier son art du portrait de stars, rapproché, en noir et blanc, évidemment sans retouches et d'une expressivité sans fards qui fait vraiment du bien à nos yeux un brin fatigués par le tout au glossy. Voir ce plongé dans le décolleté de Cindy Crawford, cet arrêt sur rictus échevelé de Ron Wood, vériste comme un tribun antique, la belle gueule de Bryan Ferry. Et last but not least, on apprécie tout particulièrement la pierre que Terence Donovan a apporté à l'édifice du nu, une discipline qu'il gérait avec une gourmandise palpable au premier regard. Il aimait manger, du reste, et ça se voit. **BAUDOUIN GALLER** ■

Terence Donovan, *galerie NKA* photography, 108, chaussée de Charleroi, à 1060 Bruxelles. www.nka-gallery.com. Jusqu'au 26 juin prochain.*