



Grace Lau
Portraits in a Chinese Studio

£25.00

In the Summer of 2005, photographer Grace Lau set up a portrait studio on Hastings seafront. The studio was on a busy route, a few doors away from the Iceland store and the former Borough Parking Office and on the main route into the tourist draw of Hastings Old Town.

Over six weeks, she made 400 photographs: everyone who posed received a free digital print. She called her project '21st Century Types' and the photographs speak volumes about the way we see ourselves and the way we are seen.

“Through this project I am making an oblique comment on Imperialist visions of the ‘exotic’ Chinese and by reversing roles, I have become the Imperialist photographer documenting my exotic subjects in the ‘Port’ of Hastings.... I played the formal photographer, asking them to sit still and look serious while I fussed with focusing... I also asked them to keep their accessories in the pose... all this added a contemporary layer to my old-fashioned studio, compressing history and the present into one eclectic image.” — Grace Lau

These rich, many layered opulent portraits, made in a community centre on a scruffy seafront, by a Chinese-born feminist photographer, more used to portraying the fetish underworld than families with ice creams, are a monument to place, race, people and the passing of time. Acting the part of the stern Chinese studio portraitist, she created a raucous theatre of photography.

This beautifully illustrated publication is edited by Prof. Val Williams, the renowned curator and author who has become an authority on British photography.

Key Selling Points

These works are being shown as part of the 2019/20 touring exhibition, 'Seaside: Photographed' at Turner Contemporary (Margate), John Hansard Gallery (Southampton), Grundy Art Gallery (Blackpool), and Newlyn Art Gallery (Cornwall)

Lau, born in London of Chinese parentage is a photographer, artist, writer and academic who has exhibited widely, including at the National Portrait Gallery and Tate Britain

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