



FENTON
Bailey's son
wears John
Lennon

TEAM BAILEY

HE REINVENTED PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE SIXTIES, CREATING SOME OF THE 20TH CENTURY'S MOST ICONIC IMAGES ALONG THE WAY. AND NOW YOU CAN OWN A BAILEY TOO. ELLE MEETS AN ICON

Words **Annabel Brog**

Warning: Contains language some people may find offensive

They don't shoot like Bailey anymore. It's not so much the low-key production (though in this era of huge sets and multiple assistants, Bailey's modest central London studio, staffed by two, is an anomaly). And it's not his lighting, framing or technique - 'all that photography bollocks', he calls it - though he's pretty good at that too. No, it's his people skills. When Bailey's model - say actress Gwendoline Christie, whose shoot can be seen on p258 - arrives at his studio, he inhales them. He's entwined with Gwen on the sofa for over an hour before she even makes it into hair and make-up, and when she emerges, there's another 40 minutes of filthy laughter before he picks up his camera. Personal interaction: that's how he gets the picture. Or, in the gaffer's own words: 'I never really know

what I'm going to do until I start doing it, and if I knew how I was going to do it, I don't think I'd bother because it's a boring exercise.'

It's no exaggeration to say that Bailey reinvented photography back in the Sixties. Before Bailey, it was far less approachable; a rarified world. Then along came the East End boy, all dirty laugh and working-class charm, who introduced street to fashion and shook it all up. He was the first to shoot portraits that were entirely reflective of his subjects' personality, which is why icons like Jack Nicholson, Jean Shrimpton, Mick Jagger, Michael Caine, The Krays (shall I go on?), remain their most memorable through Bailey's lens. Studios back then were not cluttered with make-up artists, fashion editors and stylists: the photographer was God, and he did it all. >

Fenton wears: Denim jeans, £119, Boss. Catherine wears: Denim shirt, £80, Levi's, and denim jeans, £85, Pepe jeans.



CATHERINE
*Bailey's wife wears
Johnny Depp*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID BAILEY

PROFILE

Fifty years later, Bailey works in the same way. No matter who is in front of the camera, the man behind it remains resolutely the biggest personality in the room. Throughout his shoots, Bailey produces his own powder compact to touch up the make-up. He tousles hair. He vetoes certain outfits and entirely restyles others. The ELLE fashion team and creative director are relegated to the sofa with his dog, Pig. 'You know, I do pictures and they [fashion editors] say: "Can you do it like this?" And I say: "No, I f**king can't.'" he says gleefully. 'I fight with magazines all the time. I always say: "If I send you the Mona Lisa, you'll say [adopts a squeaky editor voice]: "Have you got one where she looks friendlier? Did you do a full length?"'" He cackles.

God, Bailey is heaven... everything you want him to be, plus a fair few things you don't. Still gorgeous, his hair is all over the place, his laugh - someone should bottle his laugh - is more than slightly wheezy because he smokes more than a man of 76 should. He's charming, dirty, romantic and a little bit foul - he roundly denies this, but I maintain that when he shot Michael Fassbender for ELLE's December cover, he must have used the c-word over 100 times: to describe a certain part of the female anatomy, to describe his friends and colleagues, and as a term of endearment, to call his son and assistant over: 'Fenton, you c**t, come back 'ere.' But never, to be fair, as an insult.

'When I was growing up, it was a term of affection,' he says. 'It wasn't rude. It was the culture. It's much worse to call someone boring than a c**t [he cackles]. Because a c**t's probably quite interesting. But a bore's a bore.'

Bailey is such a contradiction. He pegs people by their gender, their race, their religion, their background, and yet he is entirely without bigotry. 'I can't judge people. Why do you want to judge someone? You know, when you see a tramp on the road, you think: shit, it just went a bad way for him. He could have been someone else, but life is full of f**king turns...'

This month, Bailey launches his first fashion collection, ©David Bailey, a series of T-shirts featuring his iconic images. They have been graphically altered - under Bailey's beady and critical eye, over a period of the year - by The Bleach Room. Bailey cares a lot about the project, I think, though he downplays it. 'It's not fashion, it's just a T-shirt,' he says. 'Not everyone can afford a print [so] it's a nice way of making [my work available] for everyone. What's the difference between putting it on a canvas and putting it on a T-shirt that everyone can afford? I think it's quite nice that everyone can have a T-shirt that has an image with some history behind it.'

Bailey's relationship with fashion is ambiguous. He doesn't have a great deal of time for contemporary photographers, other than Bruce Weber (asked about Mert & Marcus, he laughs: 'I've heard of them, I call them Morecambe and Wise') and mainly refuses to shoot fashion any more. 'Most fashion photography to me is like window dressing. They make a big set, they put a bird and zebra in it and an upside down Jesus, and stick a girl in the middle.' Shooting his own team in his T-shirts was clearly an exception, and he only agreed to shoot Gwendoline 'because of the girl. I saw her in that thing on television, Crown Of Thorns...[sic].' He cackles.

Balenciaga and Yves Saint Laurent remain his benchmarks for great design, but he is less inspired by the next generation. 'I like fashion when it's someone like Karl [Lagerfeld] or John Galliano. When it's really interesting. I like Galliano very much. His fantasy was

unlimited. I don't know what he's doing now.' Bailey's voice becomes wistful. He maintains that Galliano was a victim of people 'taking advantage of someone [...] pissed and lonely'. He doesn't defend Galliano's comments, but again, refuses to judge: 'No... they're not acceptable. And I don't think he feels that way. I think he was drunk and probably very depressed.'

The wistful side of Bailey is endearing. I glimpse it when he curls his arm around Fenton, and takes his advice on which film to use. When he refers to his old mate, the late photographer Brian Duffy, who died nearly four years ago. Or when his breathtaking wife, Catherine, wanders into the studio and they share tender kisses. Every woman should have a man look at her like that just once in her life, and Bailey's been married to Catherine for nearly 30 years. He says it is mystery that makes a woman beautiful, and he calls Catherine 'the most mysterious woman in my life. Always full of surprises.'

Mainly, though, Bailey's an irrepressible old duffer. Yes, given half the chance he will regurgitate the same old stories (swapping shirts with Jack Nicholson; spotting the genius of a young Yves Saint Laurent and introducing him to then-wife Catherine Deneuve) but after 50 years of journalists asking the same questions, who can blame him? He's a great raconteur, and his tales from his misspent youth in the East End, growing up with his fearsome mum and Aunt Dolly, are hugely entertaining, and responsible for making him the most unlikely of feminists.

'She was quite tough, my mother. When I got beaten up as a kid, she would say, "Hit him back." So I'd go and get beaten up again, and I'd think, "That's the last time I listen to her."'" That cackle again. He doesn't think women have changed in the last 50 years: 'They've just got a voice now, people listen to them. I never understood women's liberation [because] I never understood why a man would be paid more than a woman for doing the same job.' That said, he recoils when I label him a feminist. 'How can I be a feminist?' he says. 'I might do if I had the operation.' Finally conceding that not only females can be feminists, he just says, 'I don't think you should be anything. I think you should just be who you are. I don't want to belong to any club. I think everyone should be given equal opportunities.'

It goes without saying that Bailey adores women, in his own words, 'beyond imagination'. And although he has infamously slept with some of the most beautiful women in history, and married four of them, he loves them as equals. In an era when photographers are repeatedly accused of sexually manipulating young models, he is emphatic: 'I never forced anyone to do anything

they didn't want to do.' And also, as expected, offers a leveller: 'There's going to be scumbags in any profession. When I was a kid a teacher was always trying to stick his tongue down my throat. I couldn't tell my mum as she'd have killed him. I just had to deal with it.'

As I leave, Bailey is mapping out a one-man war against Camden Council, which has had the misguided idea of painting a 20mph speed limit on the cobblestone road right outside his London studio. 'It's visual pollution,' he is ranting. 'This is a dead-end road, and it's put great big horrible signs that are not painted properly, halfway down the mews. If you're going to put it in, put it at the entrance of the mews, not halfway down the f**king road. And do it nicer than a bit of paint fucking slung on like Jackson Pollock.'

I feel a little bit sorry for Camden Council. ●



HANNAH
(Bailey's studio assistant) wears Mick Jagger



SARAH
(Bailey's assistant) wears Michael Caine

ELLE BUY IT The ©David Bailey range is available now, exclusively at selfridges.com and copyrightdavidbailey.co.uk. All the T-shirts are cotton, prices start at £70

SEE IT Check out more of Bailey's exclusive work for ELLE at elleuk.com

SASCHA
Bailey's son wears Boy George



Photography: David Bailey. Styling: Molly Haylor. Make-up: Laurey Simmons. Using Chanel Le Lift and s/s 2014. With thanks to: Camera Eye Ltd. Hannah wears: Denim jeans, £95, Pepe Jeans. Sarah wears: Denim jeans, £125, A.P.C.