

Podcast transcript: Art and Alchemy Perry Ogden in conversation with Grace Coddington

Sinead Rice 0:12

Hello and welcome to the National Gallery learning podcast, a series of programmes designed to take us beyond the Gallery walls. My name is Sinéad Rice and I'm the Head of Education at the Gallery. I have a varied background in art practice, history and education. But, my first and my enduring love is photography.

This podcast series is inspired by two temporary exhibitions of photography at the Gallery - *Moment in Time: A Legacy of Photographic Works from the Bank of America collection*, which presents iconic photographs from Henri Cartier Bresson, Robert Frank, Dorothea Lange, and many more. And our other exhibition, *A View of Ireland: Collecting Photography*, which presents a selection of works from the Gallery's growing photography collection in an Irish context, with works by national and international photographers, including Amelia Stein, Eamonn Doyle, and Morath. Both exhibitions demonstrate the magic of this art form and include a myriad of techniques, processes and prints.

In this third and final episode, renowned photographer and filmmaker Perry Ogden meets the legendary creative director at large of American Vogue magazine, Grace Coddington, to discuss the magic of photography and the role it has played in Grace's life.

From her days as a model in late-50s London, to her role as a fashion editor at British Vogue, and then creative director of American Vogue, Grace has collaborated with many of the great fashion and portrait photographers of the last 60 years, including Norman Parkinson, Helmut Newton, Guy Bourdin, Bruce Weber, Annie Leibovitz, Peter Lindbergh, and Steven Meisel, creating images for Vogue, some of which now sell at auction for very high prices.

This episode was recorded on location in Grace's apartment in New York in January 2020.

Perry Ogden 1:49

Okay, so I'm very happy to be sitting here with you, in your apartment in New York, that you share with your longtime partner Didier. And we're surrounded by amazing, beautiful photographs from all periods.

Grace Coddington 2:04

So much stuff. It's crazy. I can't cram any more in now.

Perry Ogden 2:10

But tell me first I'd like to take you back in time to your childhood, really, to Anglesey in Hollyhead, a town that I pass through from time to time.

Grace Coddington 2:21

Do you come by boat from Ireland?

Perry Ogden 2:23

Sometimes, sometimes if I do a shoot, I go with my equipment and cameras and drive. And I enjoy that.

Grace Coddington 2:30

It's so funny because I, you know, I lived in Trearddur Bay, my parents had a hotel there. And it's 3 miles from Hollyhead. And you can almost see Island across. But I never went to Ireland until so many years later, after I moved to London, left home and things and I never took the opportunity to take the boat that was right there.

Perry Ogden 3:01

Did London seem a long way away?

Grace Coddington 3:04

Oh, yes. Yeah. I mean, I think I went there the first time when I was about 17. And it was very glamorous. I hardly moved at all when I was a child. You know, we had a perfect situation because we had this hotel, which was a sort of holiday hotel. And it was right on the beach. I spent my, I spent my days there and, you know, summer holidays, you're certainly not going to go somewhere else. Today, you probably would, you'd have to go to, I don't know, somewhere very far away, India or something. But, in those days, one didn't take holidays even away from home. I mean, you might have gone to my place for a holiday but you wouldn't go very much further. You stayed within England if you were English, or Wales if you're Welsh or whatever. But, so I spent my time there. And I had a little sailing boat. All summer I just sail backwards and forwards. And then in the winters it was very, very rough and bleak. And everybody was gone, you know, because it was really just a holiday destination. And it was really only for the month of August. But I have to say I love the winters and their bleakness and their roughness and I just used to sit on the rocks and watch the waves crashing. And it's, you know, it's hypnotizing you just - I sat there for hours on my own.

Perry Ogden 4:50

So you'd be very at home in Ireland. And tell me, how did fashion magazines find you? Or how did you find them?

Grace Coddington 5:01

Um, well, I think, I think my mother and then my sister, they used to get Vogue. I mean, they used to get, my mother used to get Picture Post, National Geographic and The Lady. And then occasionally Vogue. So I think I started looking at those pictures and

dreaming and realizing there's another world somewhere, you know, as I grew up, and then I started getting it. But as I've been quoted saying so many times, you know, it was probably about 6 months late by the time we got them. But still, it didn't really matter, because, you know, the pictures were the same. I remember being completely transported by them, and thinking this is kind of wonderful. I didn't really think I would ever be part of them. But it was, you know, was good to look at them and dream.

Perry Ogden 6:12

Can you remember any of the pictures that, that particularly touched you at the time?

Grace Coddington 6:17

I think I think there were a lot of Norman Parkinson that I remember. And I do remember when it was, it was just when I was thinking of coming to London. There was a model competition. They talked about, you know, how Parkinson used to discover models on the street and things like that. There were these pictures of this beautiful woman called Nena von Schlebrügge. And I thought she was amazing. He'd found her in Sweden, and she became a big model that he worked with. She, of course, was the mother of Uma Thurman. And they do look very alike, and that they had those very wide set eyes. And, you know, many, many, many years later, I worked with Uma when she was, like, 14. And she was such a beauty and just gorgeous.

Perry Ogden 7:19

At tell me, so it was in 59 that you entered this competition, in the model competition. And you won the young model. And basically became a model.

Grace Coddington 7:32

Yes. Well, you know, if, if you have an introduction into Vogue, it really does mean something. So I started working for them. And I've worked with Parkinson, you know, which was - I actually worked with him just before the competition, because I worked in a coffee bar in London. That's how I earned my living. And this guy came in one day and said, You know, I have a good friend called Norman Parkinson. I went, Oh, my God, Norman Parkinson. He said, Yes, I think you should meet him, you know, have you done any modeling? I said, No. I was I did, in fact, do a model course, with a lady called Sherry Marshall. But they had told me that I would never make it as a model. I mean, maybe I could be a runway model, but forget the photography bit. I would be no good. Anyway, he said, Would you like to meet Norman Parkinson? I said, Absolutely. So he set up an appointment. And I had some not very good pictures taken because it was all part of the model course. You get these photos to take with you to show photographers. He's like, I don't want to see those pictures, just turn around, okay, you got the job. And I'm like, Oh, fantastic. He said, Are you free on Saturday? I say, Yeah, you bet. And he said, Well, actually, it's a nude, you know, are you fine with that? And I didn't really register, I just knew that I was going to be photographed by Parkinson. I thought that was so incredible. So I said, Oh fine, yeah. The, of course, when I got there on the Saturday, it

was out in the woods where he has a house, or had a house, in the south of England and I had a lovely day.

Perry Ogden 9:48

So you were very fortunate to have Parkinson is one of your first -

Grace Coddington 9:52

Yeah, because then when when the model competition came along, you know, he'd already met me. So, I had a bit of a jumpstart, if you like.

Perry Ogden 10:04

And later when you became an editor and a stylist, was he one of the first people you worked with?

Grace Coddington 10:10

Um, pretty much. Yes. Yes, because it was - well he did all the trips and things at that time. And he did amazing trips. And you know, it happens, it happens, now it happens. There's a rotation of people, and they get older, and they get older, and they're not so good at traveling and things. And then the young ones come along, and they take everything from the old ones. And, you know, that's kind of what happened to me, because there were some lovely editors at British Vogue, and one in particular, called Sheila Wetton. I don't know if you've ever met her, but she is quite an extraordinary woman.

Perry Ogden 10:52

Yeah, I remember her.

Grace Coddington 10:53

I mean really extraordinary. And she used to be a model for Molyneux. And then she worked as an editor for many, many years. And she was there until Anna Wintour took over. The old editor, Beatrix Miller, suggested that perhaps it was time to retire. I mean, I think she was maybe 72, 73 or something. Because things would change. And they did. You know, and it's just as well she left. But anyway, she was getting too old to travel. And, there was another one called Melanie Miller, and she was also old. So, what they had you do at that point is the older editor would get the clothes for you. And then you, because you have, you're young and have the energy, etc., you would go off on the trip. So that happened to me with Parkinson very, very soon. We went to Jamaica. And I've never really traveled you know, I'd been to Paris. Yeah, and I've been to Italy. I've been to Sicily, but that and Germany because I went to Germany a lot modeling but, but I haven't really traveled. My first trip was to Jamaica, and I've never been to the Caribbean and I have to say as I stepped off the plane, when the warmth hits you, it's quite extraordinary. And I kind of fell in love with the Caribbean from then on. You know, Parkinson loved the Caribbean because he had a house in Tobago.

Perry Ogden 12:32

There was a beautiful series that you did in the Seychelles. I've always, I've always loved that one picture on the beach of the girl dressed in black and then a white hat. You're seeing her sort of slightly from behind, you don't see her face and her arms are out. And I remember that making a big impression on me.

Grace Coddington 12:51

The Seychelles was fabulous trip. Yes, we, we built this story. He was, he was, he was the beginning of me loving doing photo shoots as narratives. I guess that was probably one of the first narratives because we made up this story that the girl had been washed ashore with a trunk full of clothes. And we went to the Seychelles at a point, I think it was like the first inaugural plane that came in. I mean you could get there before but you had to go by boat. And this was the first plane and I think in those days that it happens a lot in fashion photography, you were on inaugural first flights to here or there. I mean there's nowhere to go now that you could be first because everybody's been everywhere but then the Seychelles was quite difficult to get to.

So we had this - you know we, you used to go a week in advance to do a recce, as Parkes would say. And you just drove around looking for your pictures, you know, that fit into the story. He had this idea he wanted to - he heard about the Coco de Mar, the big coconuts they have, and they only have them in the Seychelles. And he wanted to do this picture which was like a Rousseau you know, the one in the jungle with the tigers and things coming up. But they actually don't have any animals. You know, he had this dream to create this jungle scene. So we took a taxidermy tiger with us. We carried it all over the Seychelles.

It was so crazy and at that point, it was very difficult to get from island to island so we wanted to go to Bird Island, which is a picture I just adore. We had to, we chartered a fishing boat. And it took, I want to say, like, 7 or 8 hours or something. And we were all so seasick, we were like throwing up over the edge. And eventually, we got to this Bird Island, which you think is a dream. And you look at the picture, and it's like a dream. But as we were coming in, you could smell because it's a bird sanctuary. It's nothing but birds. I mean, now, I think there's a hotel on the island. But at this point, there was nothing. It was, you know, you were actually not really supposed to go there. And it smelled so bad. Holding our noses and taking these pictures, but they're, you know, they turned out beautiful.

And then there was another thing that was so funny, because his other thing that he wanted, apart from the jungle, is he, he wanted a picture of her standing on a teeny island that had one palm tree. Nothing else. So we went everywhere looking to see if we, you know, it's like a cartoon island picture. One day, Wenda, his wife, came back, because she was going in one direction, we were going in the other. And she said, I found it, I found it, I found this island. So we went back to look at it. And of course, the sea had gone out or something, and it was actually joined. So it wasn't an island. But we

found out when the tide came back up we did this picture. And she's standing on that little cartoon island with one tree. And it's so cute. But those kind of stories were so fun to do. But you need time.

Perry Ogden 13:56

Yeah. And nobody will give you that time now. I mean, I even remember in the late 90s doing a story with Italian Vogue and going to Mississippi for a week to recce. And then coming home for Christmas, and then going back. But, you know, you're allowed, you're able to explore these ideas in a way that's very hard now.

Grace Coddington 17:30

And also, you know, you would go 3 or 4 days in advance with the model so that she could get a tan and be relaxed, and so on and so on. And, you know, now everything is done by looking at pictures of the place, but you can't really know what it's like, you don't know what it is, you know, a few degrees to the left and right. And you don't know what the light is really at which time of day, you can guess. But there's nothing better than to drive through it. And with Parkinson, we always drove through it and did a, you know, a run through, so to speak. And then, you know, we made sure we came back at that time because the light is there, or whatever.

Perry Ogden 18:19

And tell me, Grace, in those days, the crews were much smaller. For example, on that trip, would you have had hair and makeup?

Grace Coddington 18:24

No.

Perry Ogden 18:26

The model did her own?

Grace Coddington 18:26

Yeah. Well, and I didn't have an assistant and he had one assistant. And he took his wife with him and she wrote the travel story. And they always went with a travel story in those days. Now you're lucky if you get a small caption, shot in wherever. But it made it interesting because you read about the place.

Perry Ogden 18:50

Grace, just going back to your modeling days. Who were the other photographers, apart from Parkinson that kind of made an impression on you?

Grace Coddington 18:57

Now, I always wanted to work with Guy Bourdin. I saw his pictures and French Vogue, really, they were remarkable and something very different. They had an intrigue about them that really spoke to me. But I liked working with Parkinson, you know, because, because. I didn't work with him very much actually, when I was really a model and

Bourdin, I didn't really work with until I was no longer a model but he photographs me several times when I was an editor. That happened, several photographers. Helmut Newton I worked with and again, I worked with - I have, there's more pictures of me taken after I stopped modeling than before. I mean certainly you won't know any of the pictures that he took of me when I was a model.

had, I had funny career, really. I was a very 60s girl because I, you know, I was close to Vidal Sassoon. And he, I have very good hair. So he liked to do haircuts on me, he did that very famous five point cut on me, which really got me a hell of a lot of work because you didn't need a hairdresser to come along to the shoot because it didn't, you know, it was perfect, always. And so, I was part of that, you know, worked a bit with Bailey. But you know, I can't say that I was like a Jean Shrimpton or Sue Murray or Penelope Tree. But I worked with him and I worked with all those, you know, the bad boys, Duffy, Donald, Donovan and Bailey. And I hung out with them and went for dinner with him. And it was very much part of the scene then.

Perry Ogden 21:06

And what was that, that was that time like in terms of - I imagine you just all took it for granted.

Grace Coddington 21:12

Yes. But on reflection, it was a fabulous time to have lived through, you know, you used to go to nightclubs all night, and things and get up in the morning. And I never got into this drug thing or anything, but I had a fun time, it was, was good. I didn't travel very much. I mean, just Paris and back, Paris and back, which was lovely. But I had a car crash in the middle. So that stopped my work for about two years. I smashed my face and that was the first time I smashed my face. But then I went back to work after it was somewhat healed. And then I lived out the next 4 or 5 years, you know, by which time I was getting a bit older, and all the younger ones were coming on. It was suggested, in no uncertain terms, that I was getting a bit long in the tooth. But at the same time, I was, I was offered a job at British Vogue. And so I, you know, I've had such a lucky life of being in the right place at the right time. And that was a fun time to start being an editor also.

Perry Ogden 22:53

So when you became an editor, Grace, were you able to choose who you wanted to work with?

Grace Coddington 22:58

Yeah. Beatrix Miller was an extraordinary editor at Vogue, editor in chief. And I think she developed a lot of young talent, you know, not just editors, but writers and photographers, and everybody adored her. I think she certainly made Bailey's career, too, you know. And they all worked for her. And she gave you your head that, you know, you were able, I was able to find my style, if you like, or, you know. She never said you have to do this, or you have to do that or you have to work with him. And everybody

came to her with ideas. You know, I came with a lot of different photographers. And I stayed with her for, I think it's 19 years, you know, a long time until she retired.

Perry Ogden 24:05

And you started working with a number of the photographers that you'd model for, like Helmut. Guy Bourdin. And others.

Grace Coddington 24:15

Yeah. I mean, one I worked with as a model, but I didn't really work with as an editor after is David Montgomery, I worked quite a bit with him. He actually did the very well-known picture of me with a five point haircut by Vidal, I think was in Queen Magazine.

Perry Ogden 24:38

And how did things shift through the 70s? Because when I first started looking at Vogue when I was still in school, it was probably that period in the mid-70s. I remember the Guy Bourdin photographs you did with the car, the Cadillac, was it?

Grace Coddington 24:58

Three girls, actually and I was one of them.

Perry Ogden 25:02

You hadn't given up modeling.

Grace Coddington 25:03

No. Well it was cheaper if you use me, so. I quite often got into my own pictures.

Perry Ogden 25:11

Well the famous one is of you in the pool, with Helmut, which is a wonderful series.

Grace Coddington 25:16

Yeah. I like that.

Perry Ogden 25:18

Would it be right in saying there was a little bit of a shift in British Vogue that it, it sort of went a little bit American and very daylight?

Grace Coddington 25:24

Yeah. Well, I think it started taking younger photographers. And it was that whole scene of those guys that lived in Paris, but they went to New York, you know, and there was a group of them, and it was Alex Chatelain. And Patrick Demarchelier. Michael Reinhardt. Who else was that? There were a lot of them. But those are the ones I think that worked for Vogue. And Bill Cunningham, the lovely street photographer guy. They used to call them the Frenchies, but as I said they weren't really all French. I mean, Patrick was French, but I think he was the only French one. And somewhere in there came Arthur Elgort, too, you know, that was the beginning of when I started working with him.

Perry Ogden 26:31

And dance and daylight, and Esme, I remember.

Grace Coddington 26:35

Yeah, and 35 millimeter and, yeah. Yeah, no, Esme, yes. I took her to China with Alex. And I'm very, very, I mean, actually, American Vogue had just been, but they went actually with Arthur Elgort. But they photographed Nancy Kissinger. They didn't do fashion. So I went and we did fashion with Esme. I mean, fashion, I don't know, talk about freedom. I just, I was it was - it was such a visual moment, when you step off the plane, and you see 10 million people all dressed the same. They're all in, they were still in uniform. You know, it's a hideous thing to say, but I thought it looked very beautiful. I've always kind of like uniforms anyway, but. So I went off to the number 1 department store and bought a pair of pants and a little jacket. Well, I bought several actually for myself and then we photographed Esme on a train in this little outfit. And another one, which was a take on the Mao picture standing by the water. So, I mean, I mean, we did intermingle it with some other ridiculous fashions that I had taken with me that were very Chinese, except they weren't.

Perry Ogden 28:09

But that's wonderful to be able to respond in that way and to be able to do what you -

Grace Coddington 28:14

I mean, a lot, then, one used to buy accessories or something from wherever you were, like, jewellery or something that added, that made you really feel you were where you were, which was fun. And you had time to do it, which now you go to Africa for a day or something. You don't have a whole lot of free time..

Perry Ogden 28:38

And tell me, in the early 80s you started working with Bruce Weber. And I think the early pictures are quite folksy, natural, nature, daylight. And then I remember the story you did inspired by Edward Weston.

Grace Coddington 28:57

Oh, yeah. I have an amazing book that he made for me from that. I should show it to you. Unfortunately, it's sort of curling at the edges but it's, it's it's a wonderful memory.

Perry Ogden 29:12

That seemed to me a sort of paradigm shift in fashion photography, that moment had a huge -

Grace Coddington 29:18

Yes. Because up until that point, everybody was wearing you know, they were shooting in very, very big 2k lights and hard lights. And so they had very heavy makeup on and it was all very pink and, you know, but it was heavy. And hair was very, at that moment, it was different. I don't think it was a very pretty moment in fashion. Big shoulders,

working girl, all that sort of stuff. And Bruce came along and he, you know, he just ruffled the hair and scrubbed the faces clean and put everybody in antique clothes, you know, all those white Victorian night dresses and things that you know, basically, that whole look kind of created Ralph Lauren. And at the time he was doing the campaigns for Ralph. So everything is very intermingled and one thing feeds the other thing and, and so on. And yes, it changed everything. And then, you know, the girl came through which, before they were like a model, which is -

Perry Ogden 30:45

Almost like they were dressed up. This is late 70s, early 80s.

Grace Coddington 30:46

So dressed up. Yeah. And -

Perry Ogden 30:51

- then Bruce took all that away, obviously, with you. And tell me how did you meet Bruce? How did that opportunity-

Grace Coddington 30:57

They did sort of go side by side for a while, you know, there was the one side of the style and then the other side. And people used both and until, you know, slowly, it went into-

Perry Ogden 31:11

Shifted all the way across.

Grace Coddington 31:13

And it was also, I mean, I'm probably jumping forward, and I'm not very good at dates. But then the same thing when it came from that whole opulence of a lot of jewellery and stuff, which, you know, Bruce might put a lot of jewellery in his pictures because he, but he liked all that turquoise Santa Fe stuff. But then along came grunge. And that did a kind of reverse, as well, another shift, but it was sort of, in a way the same shift as Bruce is it was just a different take on it.

Perry Ogden 31:54

How did you meet Bruce? How did you start working with Bruce? How does that happen? You saw something in him.

Grace Coddington 32:00

I well. I used to work with another photographer a lot called Barry Lategan. And he moved from England. I mean, I worked with him as a model as well. And he moved from England and came to live in America. And he had an agent called Nan Bush. And he kept saying, You must meet Nan and she has this other guy who is a photographer and you must meet him. And it was Bruce.

But, actually, the person who started working with him quite a bit before me was Liz Tilberis. She totally fell for him and his style. I mean, she had been, just before,

completely immersed in that very fake 70s, 80s crazy makeup thing. And then she met Bruce and completely did an about turn. She started working with him and she loved it because he had all these people and these boys and I was always intimidated by doing the shoots I did with him. If there were a lot of people, and I hated dressing boys. So it was hard for me, but she loved it. Boys, children, more the merrier. So she did a lot of incredible shoots with him before me.

And then one time he was supposed to shoot the - I mean, I met him. I loved him. He showed me his book. He had, I think, one fashion picture in it. And the rest were pictures of dogs. I remember meeting him, I was in Barry Lategan's apartment in this little basement, somewhere around here. And he was really sweet and, and you know, and he was very serious about it. He said, This is what I love. And there no fashion pictures in it. I think there was a picture of his old Chevy, dogs and as I say I think it was one picture of a girl. Anyway. He was supposed to shoot the couture with Liz and at the last minute her husband had an accident and so she couldn't go. So I went and I shot the couture. I think that was the first time I worked with him and it was so much fun. We shot the girl, Tulisa. Didier was the hairdresser. He cut her hair off in this Louise Brooks thing that became really famous. And we did these really fun pictures with a load of poodles.

Perry Ogden 34:57

I think I'm seeing one of - oh yeah, with the poodles. I remember that one. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then later I'm looking at a picture here. I'm pretty sure Didier did this too, with the twigs.

Grace Coddington 35:08

Oh, the twigs? That's much later. Yeah, I think it's much later. Yeah.

Perry Ogden 35:13

That's a memorable shoot, too.

Grace Coddington 35:14

Yes, it is. And you know, it never really saw the light of day.

Perry Ogden 35:20

Why was that?

Grace Coddington 35:20

This one that you're looking at. Well, it was actually done for Karl Lagerfeld for his line that was called Karl Lagerfeld. And Karl really liked Bruce. And so he booked him to do this. And I, he had me as a stylist or whatever.

And we went to his place, he had a chateau outside Paris. And it was so beautiful. And he had, he just moved in. So it wasn't really very done up. It was quite empty, the actual chateau, but the woods around were, you know, carpeted with bluebells. And they were very, it was very beautiful.

And then the girls from Karl Lagerfeld came with all these clothes which were so fashion, which of course freaked Bruce out. And he started doing nudes and things. And Karl's like, Oh, it's fine, it's fine, you know, do whatever, do whatever you want. You know, it's very inspiring. Then, so we managed to put a couple of dresses on. And then Bruce said, You know, I need some guys. And in a way it will be good thing. We can get rid of the, the women from Karl Lagerfeld. Let's have them go and find some guys. And we're in the country in France. And we shoved them off in my car. And they came back, like a couple of hours later, with these two guys, which were kind of army guys. And they didn't speak English. I think they thought it was an orgy or something. I don't know.

Anyway, they came back and they were sort of pretty hideous looking. And I'm looking at them and I say, you know, Bruce, what am I supposed to dress them in? And he said, Well just, you know, put some twigs over them or something. So I'm like, Oh god. And they're stripped down to their underwear. And I get all this ivy and wrap it around. And you know, Didier is there and he's helping me and then he gets completely carried away and he starts putting, you know - I see him go for this log. And he picks up this log, puts it on the girl's head, and it went from there.

And the pictures are, I think extraordinary. But the people from Lagerfeld were freaked out and hated them. I think they appeared once in Womenswear Daily or something, they escaped. And then it was shut down. And the advertising became pictures from the runway. But Karl loved them. He loved them, but he couldn't overrule his company. So yeah, so, you know, that was such a frustration that we never saw them printed.

So then, sort of around the same time, Beatrix Miller said, Oh, for the Christmas issue I want to do the English woman and her garden, you know, maybe Bruce should do it. And so we went off and did that. And that became lots of pictures with flowers and you know, to be fair, Cecil Beaton did it, you know, everything comes from somewhere, you know. It's a big circle in photography and fashion and everything and that's what the, the, the subject is at the Met coming up in May, is that it's, you know, it keeps coming back. You know, it's like the 70s or the 30s or the 20s keep coming back.

Perry Ogden 39:31

But the greats reinterpret, make it fresh.

Grace Coddington 39:34

Yeah, it's very different, too, because I think Cecil Beaton's, things, were in a very studio situation, pretty much, with sort of crinkly paper in the background or whatever. And, but they were inspiring, you know, and he loved garden and he loved flowers. So, yes, but then -

Perry Ogden 39:58

Because we've seen people try to do it since then. And the first thing you might say is Oh, yes, they're trying to do Bruce. And yeah, when you, when you look at Bruce's, you don't necessarily say, Oh, he's trying to do that. So you have to know.

Grace Coddington 40:10

Yeah, yes, yes. Well, I think Bruce has went beyond Beaton. You know, I just, I know he liked the Beaton scrapbooks and things, because actually, for that shoot, he had wanted - when we got the pictures back, which were fabulous, they were all cut up and made into a collage and I flipped out. And there was an artist with me, I forget his name, who Bruce brought along, and he did lots of drawings at the same time. And so there's this huge collage, but there were no fashion pictures anywhere. And, and Bea Miller flipped out. And I flipped out because I thought, after all that work, you know, and the pictures were gorgeous. So we said, Well, maybe not the collage. And I think Bruce was a bit upset. I know he was, but he did. He was good. And he printed the pictures, just as the pictures, and they were fabulous. And they ran like 20 pages and in vogue. And yes, they have become very copyable. And they keep, it keeps popping back in. I see it even - there was some covers of Beyonce and things with big flowers on her hair recently.

Perry Ogden 41:33

And tell me, it's just this idea of collaboration and the people you've chosen to collaborate with? And how do you, how do you find that? How do you - just there's that, you know, obviously, as you will know, from our experiences, you know, there are times when things really work. And it's almost like you're a band on the road? Yes, just everything's magic. And there are other times when it doesn't quite click or for some reason, or, something doesn't quite happen? But you seem you seem to find the magic, more often than not.

Grace Coddington 42:09

Well, I think it's a lot to do with, you know, how you get on with people. You know, and I also feel, you know, I don't like being - okay, this is my shoot, and everyone's going to do what I'm going to say. It has to be a very collaboration, same, everybody's input is totally valuable. And, you know, nothing can happen when you take one piece away, and it becomes a totally different shoot. It's about relationships with people. So you take one person away, and the conversation is different. So I think that's how, why people have their teams, you know, they stick with the same hair and makeup people if they can, and, you know, continue with the same model. And I think that's kind of what's missing today. Because it's just like, everybody stabbing at everything. And, you know, let's bring in another young photographer or another, and now we'll try it with him and give him some actress or something. And there's no relationship. So the only person I know it still goes and works in that way is Steven Meisel. You know, he has his team of hair makeup, Pat and Guido, and, you know, they get they work with him every day. And they have done for many years. And you know, that they have a conversation and it's an ongoing conversation and one develops and the other develops and it's, it's kind of magical.

Perry Ogden 43:55

He is one of the very few that's managed to maintain that, hasn't he?

Grace Coddington 43:59

Yeah. Well, it's very stubborn.

Perry Ogden 44:00

Because it has changed. I mean, there's been another paradigm shift in a different way. I mean, to my mind, digital has caused that to some degree.

Grace Coddington 44:12

I hated when that happened. I remember the moment and all the photographers suddenly starting to use it because they realized that if they didn't, they'd be left behind. I remember on a shoot with some Craig McDean, and you know, he was fumbling because it was the first time he used it and he did it with a little card and then you know, you'd have to stop and look at all the pictures that were on the card and it's so, you know, you, you lost the momentum. I mean, he sorted out how he does it now and they're all sorting it out how they do it now,

Perry Ogden 45:00

It was a major leap, wasn't it?

Grace Coddington 45:01

It was a major leap and the whole mood changed. And I don't know, you know, everybody, nobody looks at the girl anymore, they only look at the screen. And she's like, doing all these things. Even the photographer a lot of the time doesn't look at her. It's crazy. So that kind of relationship has gone. And it's like, a guy with a camera would seduce a girl, sometimes literally, but you know, they don't do that anymore because they're not really, they're looking - even if they're for the second looking at the girl afterwards, they are really judging the picture by what's on the screen and not from the picture they took a few seconds before. And also you, you can manipulate it so much. And it's, you know, the depth of field is forever.

Perry Ogden 46:04

And the sharpness.

Grace Coddington 46:04

And it's the sharpness and it's it's funny because I think we didn't work with Bruce for a while. And then we worked with him and his pictures came around. And of course, he was not digital. These pictures came in. And Anna was like, They're all out of focus. I said No, they're not. This is film. This is the difference, you know. And it's funny, and your eye just got so used to looking at that perfect sharpness, which has been retouched like crazy to even when they say it hasn't it has, you know.

I remember, I remember talking to Peter Lindbergh, and his sort of smudgy film, which was, you know, there's so much atmosphere in it and things and, and I said, I like that sort of, can we do it? You know, can you use film can we do? He said, Oh, I can do it

digitally. It's not the same. It's not the same and his pictures changed. When he became digital. The soul, you lose a soul.

Perry Ogden 47:11

I think you can tell a digital picture 99 times out of 100.

Grace Coddington 47:14

I mean, then, you know, there's, there's people that use digital for digital and they didn't work before, and then they went straight to digital. And then it's, somehow it's okay, because it makes sense. It's just, unfortunately, if you compare before and after, of a photographer, usually the ones before are better. I mean, there's, there's one photographer I work with. I thought the pictures when I used to work a lot were amazing. And now it's so digital. And so people are moved around. It just doesn't have the same thing. I mean, it's still really good pictures, but it doesn't have that sort of passion about it.

Perry Ogden 48:14

Tell me a little bit about Steven Meisel, because, to me, he's possibly the greatest fashion photographer of the last 20 years in some ways.

Grace Coddington 48:24

Yes, you're right.

Perry Ogden 48:25

And he has managed to make that work for him.

Grace Coddington 48:31

Yes, he's funny, you know, he, in a way, he stays very isolated. He stays in his own little bubble. He won't travel anywhere. And he won't, he won't do a picture that takes more than 45 minutes to get to. And there was a moment where he could only do it where if you were allowed to smoke in that place or something. He doesn't want anyone seeing what he does. He doesn't talk to anyone. It's kind of difficult. It's difficult to work with him because he, it's difficult to discuss it beforehand. You know, he does, he seems very closed, but he sees so much. I don't know how he does that. I think he gets his information from other people. And he has an extraordinary knowledge of fashion photography. I mean, I've always wanted to do an interview with him because occasionally I've sat down at lunchtime or something and talked to him and it's fascinating.

Perry Ogden 49:43

He seems to have a real knowledge of fashion and understanding.

Grace Coddington 49:48

And a love. Yes, he does. A complete understanding which so many photographers these days don't. You know, they have no clue, wouldn't know a good dress if it stood up and hit them. But, which is sad.

Perry Ogden 50:06

Yeah, where do you think that will go? I mean, it seems that a few years ago, everyone was saying, Well, magazines are gonna die. There won't be any magazine stuff. But of course, as it turns out, there have never been so many men.

Grace Coddington 50:18

I know. Well, a lot doesn't mean good. You see?

Perry Ogden 50:23

No. But I think that one of the reasons the magazines have to stay is that those companies will never get that advertising revenue online. That they, that they get from a hardcopy.

Grace Coddington 50:38

Yes, but I don't think they make their money from that anymore. I mean, I don't know exactly. Money doesn't really interest me, but.

Perry Ogden 50:47

But in terms of magazines, the sort of the survival of the magazine, and fashion photography, even photography, there's so few -

Grace Coddington 50:53

Well, I worry about fashion photography, that it can disappear altogether. I mean, even within myself when I'm working, and I work for several different magazines now. And, you know, what I love to do now is, it's very kind of reportage. I want it to be very real. And it's difficult to put fashion into a very real, because how often do you see a girl walking on the street, you know, completely decked up in Prada or something, and we need out, you know, she got sneakers on the bottom or whatever it is.

Perry Ogden 51:33

Grace, I'm interested in sort of how fashion photography has changed as an art form, in the sense that nowadays, some fashion pictures are reaching huge prices at auction, and not just one or two photographers. And not just, you know, for example, Helmut Newton, there was a picture of his that went last year for \$300,000. There was a diptych of his from there dressed naked series, two very large prints that went for \$670,000 a few years ago, so this is, you know, art, or is being sold as art.

Grace Coddington 52:14

Yes. Well, I think in some instances, like Kim, I think it's, I think it's fine and good. But I think when it's down the line and anybody takes a picture and sells it for \$100,000 it's

ridiculous. I mean, a good picture is a good picture, whether it's a fashion picture, or an art picture or any picture, it's a good picture. So it's a measure of how good that picture is, really, for me. And if you want to call it, call it art. My big beef is don't call it fashion. If you can't see any clothes.

Perry Ogden 52:59

That's always been very important to you.

Grace Coddington 53:00

Yes. And, you know, isn't that why we're here? You know why I'm here. It's very important. I work with fashion photography, I don't work on art photography. I mean, I could, and I would, if, you know - I would help an artist or, or something if I could, because if I like the photographer, both him and his picture.

For instance I was going - I don't really like working with art photographers. And there's a lot of that going on now. Because there's the one side of them where it's not expensive to work with them, because they don't have that fashion mind of let's have three winnebagos and etc. But there's the other side that costs more. And that's the one that I got involved with.

Gregory Crewdson, who - I love his pictures. I mean, they, I guess, they were all those things I said, I'm sort of complaining about him that it's been sharp forever. But, but I like his mind and things. And I was going to do a series of pictures with him for Vogue, and then it, it became too complicated, because I could see that you weren't gonna see the clothes. In fact, his idea was just take all the clothes off and leave them in a heap on the floor. I don't think that's going to go down too well, particularly as it was gonna cost an unbelievable amount of money. It was going to cost what it costs him to do one of his pictures, which is a lot, and he only likes to photograph on, you know, at five o'clock on Tuesday on the end of August or something. You know, he's very specific about the light and things and when he works and how he works. He keeps saying, Oh, it'll be cheap because I'll get the house from a friend of mine or something. But actually, you know, he has to light it like a mile away. Everything is lit almost more so than in a film. So it became kind of, it wasn't gonna work.

Perry Ogden 53:00

Too expensive.

Grace Coddington 54:05

Too expensive. And then, you know, I could see them saying, She's not smiling, or something. You know, and I, I certainly couldn't say to him, Could you have her smile? You know, I would feel embarrassed. So. So I said, You know, I think we should just cut loose. Yeah, I don't think it's going to work. I was sorry. Because I like him. I like his pictures. And that's art, you know, that I think is art. But that. Yeah, it is art, because that's what he does. He doesn't do fashion.

But there's a lot of more art photographers that are doing fashion more and more, as I say now, and they shouldn't. Because I think it's ruining them. They're becoming too commercially minded. It can happen, you know, alright, it sounds good. It sounds good. You're working for Vogue? Yeah, that's exciting. And you become known, even, you know, faster if you're young. But I don't think it's necessarily good for you. Because they start being given all the things they can't do. And as an artist, I think you should not have those limitations. And actually, their fashion features are not that good.

Perry Ogden 56:16

But the lines have become blurred, haven't they?

Grace Coddington 56:18

Very much.

Perry Ogden 56:19

And I guess it's, you know, when people see particularly young people who don't have the experience, but they see the prices that some of these pictures are going for.

Grace Coddington 56:26

Yes, I mean, their eyes are out on stalks, I'm sure.

Perry Ogden 56:30

Particularly as there aren't really the budgets anymore that we used to have, let's say, in the mid noughties, before the crash, when you could say that, you know, people are spending a lot of money to create shoots. Be it magazine, or an advertiser designer.

Grace Coddington 56:49

I mean, certainly a lot of pictures that I've worked on are unbelievably expensive. And I just had to close my ears to it, because you think of all the things that that money could do. Those pictures can't be done without, without those budgets. You know, a lot of pictures I worked with Annie on like, a series I did for Alice in Wonderland, which are incredible pictures.

Perry Ogden 57:16

Amazing pictures. Yeah, with all their designers.

Grace Coddington 57:18

But that budget was like 2 or 300,000, you know.

Perry Ogden 57:22

And nobody has that anymore. Not even Vogue.

Grace Coddington 57:24

No. Least of all Vogue. Now they don't. Or if they do they don't want to spend it. I don't know.

Perry Ogden 57:32

I don't think we'll see those budgets coming back ever.

Grace Coddington 57:35

No. You won't, you won't.

Perry Ogden 57:37

So that's had an impact on the kind of photos.

Grace Coddington 57:40

Absolutely. You're so limited. You know, you tend to do it in the studio, because you can't afford to go anywhere else. I think advertising still has a few big budget things. But I'm not even sure they're producing that interesting a picture that you know, they want to see the bag, the bag is like just a picture of a bag. And they might shoot it in the Bahamas or something. So it costs money to get there. And that took 50 people to do that picture for some strange reason. So, you know, obviously, it costs a lot of money. But it's a boring picture.

Perry Ogden 58:22

You know, think from a photographer's point of view, those commercial jobs used to pay towards the budget of the editorial jobs. So for example -

Grace Coddington 58:32

You know, people you would do something on the back of if you went to somewhere.

Perry Ogden 58:36

And even, you know, in the days when I was doing Italian Vogue shoots, you'd get \$6,000 for your shoots. So if you spent half a day in a studio, you'd probably break even, yes, but if you were going to Mississippi, or -

Grace Coddington 58:49

You wouldn't break even.

Perry Ogden 58:50

No. You wouldn't. But you weren't bothered, because it was a time when you knew that something would come out of that story.

Grace Coddington 58:57

And it did. You know.

Perry Ogden 58:58

And it always did. And now, I'm not sure that anything comes out of an Italian Vogue story in the same way or any magazine story.

Grace Coddington 59:07

Or any magazine, really. And I'm not sure who's looking at them now. I mean, now the most important thing is the celebrity that's in the picture. And that's where the money goes. Because I think maybe they're still get paid a lot of money. If it's advertising, not for editorial, obviously.

Perry Ogden 59:28

Yeah that's interesting, because quite a lot of the photos that are selling for high prices at auction are celebrities. Nudity. It's a little bit like Instagram.

Grace Coddington 59:41

Yes. That's obvious. Yeah.

Perry Ogden 59:43

But that's selling for 40, 50,000. Yeah.

Grace Coddington 59:48

Oh, it's Madonna. Yeah, so fine. I mean, who cares? Well, everybody does. I don't.

Perry Ogden 59:55

So that's impacted what we do. Celebrities suddenly become, well not suddenly, but it has become a key word. And I'm not that interested in it.

Grace Coddington 1:00:07

Yes. Poor old models that are really suffering, you know, I could never do a cover anymore. They're always celebrities now. And models from doing covers used to get makeup contracts and things like that. But so since they can't, they don't. Anyway, the celebrities have gone into advertising as well. So they're very busy.

Perry Ogden 1:00:35

Tell me just one, one more thing. I wanted to talk about, just backtracking a little bit. The September Issue, when they were making that film, the documentary in which you feature. Did you have any sort of, have any sense of what sort of impact that would have?

Grace Coddington 1:00:52

No, absolutely none, no, I didn't. I think was sort of at the time my book came out, my first book came out - they were filming that for a year. And for a year, I slammed the door in their face, I would not - and I, you know, to me, it spoiled everything.

Firstly, I don't think you should see behind the scenes. But secondly, everybody speaks differently if they're on camera. So, you know, they would be around Vogue. And I would be going to see Anna with a very important question or something. You know, suddenly, I'd turn round, and they were following me into her office. So I turn around and walk away again. I'd go back to my office and slam the door and wait for them to go to lunch or something. Because I did not want to ask questions and have that - because

once you've got the answer, you've got the answer. You can't go back and say, Oh, by the way.

And I know, you know, couple of times Anna said, Oh, well, you know, I was just making it interesting because I've been miked. Oh god, this is such a waste of time. So I wouldn't do it. And only at the very last, I don't know, a couple of weeks that they were there. And she said you have to be in this because you're kind of a big part of Vogue. And it would be very strange not having you. I mean I literally was not on anything. Everybody was walking around very dressed up with makeup on and things because they thought they might be in the film. I wasn't in it. So except for, I think, one time when I was in Paris or something.

By the way, there's a very funny moment when we were going to visit Gaultier and I'm in the elevator with Anna that's really uncomfortable. Because the camera man's in there too. Anyway, eventually, I was told I had to. And they said, Oh, you know, he's going to come on your Meisel shoot. And I thought, Oh, good, because Meisel won't have them. Sure enough, he wouldn't, so that I got out of that one. And then when I, you know, when I was really forced, I decided the only thing to do was to make friends with everybody. So I took them all out for lunch, got them all drunk. And I started talking to the camera man who was really interesting and really nice. So they filmed a little bit of me. And then they said, Oh, can we do an interview in the summer? I said, okay, but you have to come to my house in Long Island. And they came, I gave them lunch. And we had a really fun time. And I like them very much. And now I really like R.J. Cutler, and hoping to do a project with him.

Then, you know, they disappeared. And they were in the editing room for, I don't know, nearly a year I think. And they said, Oh, we can, now we can show you a first thing of it. I remember we all went to a screening. There were two screenings. There were one screening for the very intelligent editors at Vogue, like features and people. And then there was another screening for the fashion editors and the dimwits like me. And Anna, wasn't at either of them.

When I saw it, I could not believe there was so much of me in it. I said, I think that's a big mistake. That's really terrible. So, you know, Anna called us in and said, You know, what did you think? And I said, Well, this is way too much of me. And you know, can you get them to cut it out? It's kind of stupid. Anyway, it didn't get cut, it played out. And it was sort of at the same time when my book came out, which, you know, played very much to my favour. But it was, it was extraordinary. I remember a friend of mine said, You know, once this film comes out, you'll get that everyone's gonna recognize you. And no one before I was - no, no, I barely had a name. It was, I mean, just people in the business knew me.

Perry Ogden 1:04:58

You were very well known in the business. But I guess the film made you a household name?

Grace Coddington 1:05:03

Yeah, I walked out of here. And people were like shouting from across the street. And it was like, who, me? And I'm not being coy. You know, it's, it was really funny. And they were always very nice. You know. So I, you know, little by little, I began to accept it. And then in the end, you know, you use it to your advantage. But it's funny, I get stopped all the time still now. And they talk about that film, which is now 10 years old. Oh, I saw it last night, or I saw it on a plane or, you know, it's one of the first of those documentaries that became a well known documentary in a way.

Perry Ogden 1:05:48

It was very well made.

Grace Coddington 1:05:48

Yeah. I think the Valentino one came out at the same time. And that was good. That was the same sort of -

Perry Ogden 1:05:55

But you're right, there been quite a few since then. Yeah. It started something.

Grace Coddington 1:05:59

Really. And all of fashion, people like McQueen, you know, they've all done those. But that still remains one that everybody remembers.

Perry Ogden 1:06:08

And before that, I find that -

Grace Coddington 1:06:10

They're funny. I mean, they, you know, wasn't supposed to be about me at all. And it wasn't, was almost not really supposed to be about Anna, it was supposed to be about the Met and the making of the Met and the making of, you know - afterwards, they did another film called The first Monday in May, which is what the original film was supposed to be. But they were given access to the Met or to the Met ball, to everything. And, you know, they didn't use very much of that footage. And they saw a dynamic between myself and Anna, and they sort of honed in on that. And it you know, I guess that's why it had this appeal. But now I had, I had no idea. But, you know, it enabled me to do so many things since like, write a memoir and do several other books.

Perry Ogden 1:07:05

Wonderful. And think, though, it was very real, as you said. It showed that dynamic between the two of you and it showed, it did show what goes on behind the scenes. And I feel a lot of the fashion movies, well not that there have been that many, but they're pretty silly.

Grace Coddington 1:07:22

Really dumb. Really stupid. I hate them.

Perry Ogden 1:07:25

I mean, you have to go back to Blow Up to find something with a fashion content that actually -

Grace Coddington 1:07:29

Means something.

Perry Ogden 1:07:30

It is a great piece of work.

Grace Coddington 1:07:31

Yeah. Now all this Devil Wears Prada and Ben Stiller movies and things like that.

Perry Ogden 1:07:39

The Robert Altman, which was surprising.

Grace Coddington 1:07:43

Yeah. Oh, I hated that. Yeah, it was embarrassing. And for me it was embarrassing for fashion. But, but it's there. And it doesn't go away. And people remember.

Perry Ogden 1:07:55

Tell me a little bit about the shoot you did in Ireland with Annie. Which was a big spread.

Grace Coddington 1:08:00

Yes. Well, I had decided to take Daria, because she bought a house in Ireland. And I love her and she's beautiful. And she's really like a woman. And we also decided that we shouldn't do any hair or makeup. But then we decided that we would take a hairdresser, Julian, anyway but that he wasn't allowed to do anything. And then we said, we'll just work out of the back of a car, which I don't think really happened. You know, it's all those things trying to cut down to become like - because I think she said that she wanted to move around Ireland a lot. And obviously, if you've got a big bus, you can't.

So, but in the end, we were like six cars. So it was the same thing, it was a pain in the arse. And she brought a whole team of people. But she didn't want anybody else to bring a team of people. No one was allowed assistance. I think I had an assistant because I had to do the packing and the unpacking and things. I think it was too quick. You know, I've seen quite a lot of Ireland and that I feel that we missed most of it. You know, I think we could have seen so much more. But she had it in her head from the set person. And they just discussed everything and I was left out of it, which made me mad that they were going to do this, this and this and it was decided before they went and I think that was not a good thing.

But you know, Daria is always beautiful and I had her suggest who she wanted to take. And she said, Well there's this actor I think is really fabulous. And I've seen amazing Girls. I never watched Girls so I didn't know what she was talking about. She showed me a picture. And he's such a funny looking guy. And he's Adam Driver who is now in

Marriage Story and, you know, in so many movies and it was such a weird person, in a way, for her to pick. And so I said, Okay. So we did. And then we had to dress him, and he's like 6'7" or something. But he was so amazing and funny. And we had, we had a really great time. Daria came in her own little mini, and we were driving all over. And he was in it, and he'd hardly fit in it cause he's so tall. I don't know if there's any memorable pictures out of that. I wish there had been, there should have been, you know, you don't always make it.

Perry Ogden 1:10:33

Yeah. As you as you say, time is very important. And it's very rare now, to be allowed the time, to be able to make the time.

Grace Coddington 1:10:42

And even if, you know, time is money. And, you know, no photographer or model or anybody wants to be away from being able to make advertising money or something, you know, so they will only give you a day or two days, if you're lucky

Perry Ogden 1:10:58

Tell me one more thing, Grace, just working, having been a model yourself. And seeing it from that side. How does that impact on how you work with models? Now from the other side?

Grace Coddington 1:11:09

I think it gives me an understanding, I mean, you know, I had a much easier time when I was a model. And I certainly didn't get on a plane every other day. But so it makes me appreciate if someone flies in specially for me.

You know, the agents are terrible, they push those girls and they have them come off a flight from somewhere and go straight to set on a red eye flight. Yeah, which I, you know, I'd never had to do myself.

But, you know, you do understand how they feel if it's very cold, or very hard, or shoes are too small or whatever, you know, so I think I'm maybe, you know, some people insist or get annoyed if the girls complain, but, you know, I don't like it if they complain, but I will sympathize if it's a real, genuine complaint and try to change it or make it better.

Perry Ogden 1:12:12

And what do you look for in a girl? When you're casting for a story.

Grace Coddington 1:12:16

I look for a girl that's brave. And I look for a girl that is different, she doesn't have to be classically beautiful. I do like redheads. And I like them, you know, to be tall. Because it's much easier to put clothes on them. If they're tall, than if they're small. I mean, some girls are smaller, and they're very successful, like Kate Moss or something, but it's just easier.

But some girls are very good at managing things that don't fit them. And you never know, like, Linda Evangelista could make any dress work, it could be a hideous dress, and she can make it look beautiful just by twisting or turning or whatever. And if it didn't fit her, she could somehow stand in such a way that you would never know. And that's a good model. And there's not too many of them. Because there's a million little girls who are very beautiful. And all they can do is stand there.

Perry Ogden 1:13:15

I mean, the ones who really make it are the ones that give you, they give a lot.

Grace Coddington 1:13:19

Yeah, they're brave. They don't, you know, they're quite happy if you photograph the back of their head. There are some girls that will twist their neck around. If you have them walking away, they're like, Ah! But there are some that are smart and realize that, you know, if the pictures are on the back of your head, it doesn't really matter.

Perry Ogden 1:13:39

And they can really make the picture.

Grace Coddington 1:13:40

Yeah, there's so few of those girls, and particularly now, because no one's given the training anymore, you know, because the celebrities are doing it.

Perry Ogden 1:13:49

And then it becomes something else entirely.

Grace Coddington 1:13:51

Yeah. And then it's dictated by them. And you have to go to LA because that's where they are. And they'll give you two hours. And they'll come with their own hair makeup. And then I don't find it interesting. I really don't if they're dictating what you're doing. I don't find it interesting.

That's why, you know, I personally almost never work with celebrities. Sometimes the men I do because, particularly if they're English because, the English ones are much more forgiving in a way. They don't come with an entourage or all the English boys are better. Adam Driver's an exception.

Perry Ogden 1:14:36

And Grace, do you think there's a future for magazines? And what does that look like?

Grace Coddington 1:14:40

I think it's really tough. I can't see how they can go on. But then they, somehow you need to have a magazine that you know drives the website or the whatever, you know, because if you don't have that, then what's it based on. It's, you know, the ones that have just gone digital or whatever. It's cold. I don't know how long they'll last. Well, I'm very not a digital person. So I can't really measure because I never look at anything

online or. So I don't know what exists and what doesn't. And it doesn't end, I can't feel it, touch it. I like a magazine. I like paper. I love books.

Perry Ogden 1:15:22

But even Vogue, which has been so much a part of your life, and which has had such an influence.

Grace Coddington 1:15:29

Yes, they're having a really tough time. I mean, all of them, all the Vogues. And, you know, American Vogue used to be the one with the huge budgets, and they could do anything they wanted. And now they can't, you know, they have to think of ways around it so many that I think, you know, in a way the magazine doesn't come first, because they have to rationalize.

And it's very hard to have to think of all the different ways they can make money from a shoot, you know, so the shoot has to mean so much more than just a shoot that's an honest, still picture. And that is like multitasking. Which, fortunately, the new generation can do. Personally, I can't.

Perry Ogden 1:16:20

That seems to be with the new generation, as we call them, there seems to be a fashion, a fad for going back to film. Have you seen this much?

Grace Coddington 1:16:32

Yes. There's a lot of the English photographers use film, and young ones even. I don't know if it'll solve the problem. But you know, you've still got all the other problems like no money.

Perry Ogden 1:16:49

And film is more expensive.

Grace Coddington 1:16:50

I don't know.

Perry Ogden 1:16:51

Yeah, I think it's more expensive to use film and print and, and scan than to do. I mean, digital -

Grace Coddington 1:16:56

Right. It is already there.

Perry Ogden 1:16:58

Seems to be cheaper. In the budget, in the budget stakes.

Grace Coddington 1:17:04

But then digital, they tend to retouch so much. And that's expensive.

I don't know about magazines, I almost don't want to, you know, put my hand up and say, It's over. I keep feeling it is. And then they're still there. And I keep thinking, you know, what could happen that would suddenly bring them all back? I think they have to get on the same. - think the transition time is not working, where two generations meet. And the one generation doesn't understand the other generation working both ways. I think that doesn't make for a happy result. But let's say if everybody is young in the composition, then it'll work for their people.

Right now we're trying to please everyone, we're trying to please the old market and the new young market and their thoughts are so divided. But how can you possibly have one thing that makes both people happy? You cant. I feel a great rift, and I just, you know, it's even with like my assistant who's obviously a lot younger than me. And she speaks a different language to me. You know, her whole lifestyle is different. It's how you go shopping, you know, they don't need shops anymore.

I mean, if you do a magazine, where do you buy it? You can't find anywhere to buy it anymore. And books are suffering terribly which is awful. I mean, all those - so many bookshops are closing down. And then people try to say, Well, what are people, this is what people want. They want it to be more commercial more this in here. And then they you know, that doesn't sell either.

Perry Ogden 1:17:01

Yeah, it's a strange time.

Grace Coddington 1:19:16

I mean, it will work through and something else will come in its place. But, for now, this the, you know, the two things working together to me are not working. They're not complementing each other. They're choking each other. I mean, the ones that seemed to be doing much better, except I don't know what much better is, is all the sort of individual magazines that you know -

Perry Ogden 1:19:44

The independent magazines that come out maybe twice a year. Yeah.

Grace Coddington 1:19:47

Yeah. Well, that makes sense. Yeah. That makes sense. I mean, yeah, and also, even the way fashion is that they have so many collections now and it's stupid because they're all the same. You know, there's just done in different colours or one's in cotton and one's in wool. But they're - everyone's being forced to do so much too much. And every place.

Perry Ogden 1:20:12

And everyone wants content. And now, and lots of it for nothing. How does one make that work?

Grace Coddington 1:20:20

You can't. You can't. I mean that, you know that the shoots I do now, for like, many independent magazines, like I work for document. They don't pay me and they don't pay anybody else. And that's okay. But you can't put money into it if you're not making any money.

Perry Ogden 1:20:47

You need them to pay the expenses, to cover the expense, which they don't always do. And I don't think photographers can continue to pay.

Grace Coddington 1:20:57

No, they can't. They could in the beginning, because they still had the old money from the old money. But now they, they don't want to do that. Yeah, it's run out. Because they themselves are suffering from getting advertising.

Yeah. I mean, I think everything's going into film, movie film. That's what's happening. But when I look at, you know, I don't know what they are, websites or something. Is it websites where they're online? And those movies they do. They're just embarrassing. They're as bad as *The Devil Wears Prada*. Actually, they're a lot worse, because they're amateurs doing it.

Why can't it just be beautiful? I don't understand what, what's wrong with beautiful. It seems to be a dirty word now. They've got to be turning cartwheels and laughing in a dress that could not really turn a cartwheel. That's ridiculous.

Perry Ogden 1:22:01

People are trying very hard to do something.

Grace Coddington 1:22:04

Yeah, too hard. Sit back and relax.

Perry Ogden 1:22:08

Grace. Thank you so much for talking with me.

Grace Coddington 1:22:10

Thank you.

Sinéad Rice 1:22:12

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