

# Eric Howard

Eric Howard was born to a working class family in Bermondsey inner city London 1951; after leaving his secondary school he became an assistant photographer at the age of sixteen.

## **1969-83**

At eighteen, and without attending college, Eric became a professional photographer. Only two years later his clients already included: The Times, IPC Magazines, National Magazines, Virgin Records, Phonogramme Records, and RCA Records. He also sold original prints through Sotheby's and The Photographers Gallery.

## **1983-86**

Eric decided to branch out into the publishing of calendars. He designed a totally new calendar presentation system using plastics. Amongst the calendars published were: Lamb's Navy Rum, The Tate Gallery, Agfa, John Swannell, Bob Carlos Clarke and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

## **1987-90**

Eric then returned to creative photography producing pure Art, Portraiture and Equine photography. Clients included Lord Palumbo, Viscountess St.Germans, Mrs Sally Cadbury, The Royal Photographic Society and The Financial Times.

Eric also designed and manufactured the Demi-case, a simple attractive carrying case for Artists & Photographers made from a lightweight corrugated plastic. He sold the copyright, and it is now a common-place product.

## **1991-92**

Upon request by Mary Gibson, founder of The Romanian Orphans Fund, he covered the orphanage crisis after the collapse of communism. The resulting photographs were featured in "Time Magazine", raising many thousands of pounds for the fund.

## 1993-94

Frustrated by the Arts Council who only funded galleries that promoted non commercial work whilst most British Photo artists struggled to survive, he created the publication "PhotoArt for Sale Magazine". He personally designed the magazine and brought on board many fellow photographic artists and all its sponsors including: Christies, Hamilton's Gallery, Agfa, Contax, Nikon, Ilford, Conservation Resources, Stephen Cohen Gallery Los Angeles, Leica Cameras, Fuji Film, Kodak and Polaroid. Two years later Eric's magazine was sold onto another publisher who later rebranded it into its own style, unfortunately dropping the aspect of selling photographic originals.

## 1995

The Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme asked Eric Howard to help organise a charity photographic auction at Coutts Bank in the Strand London, where he was singled out for thanks by Prince Edward who was the Royal representative on the night.

During this year Eric won the prestigious "Royal Photographic Society Gold Medal" for "Portrait of Walter" against the competition of thousands of other established photographic talents world wide.

## 1996-2000

Eric Howard devoted most of his time during this period to help protect our rural communities which were under threat from the ban on hunting. He personally wrote to over 300 Labour MP's and his images were widely published to illustrate how key hunting & shooting was to country communities. A permanent exhibition of Eric's work hangs in the boardroom of The Countryside Alliance headquarters in London.

In 1997 he met Debra Palmer, who had just dropped out of her doctorate and was twenty years his junior, they instantly fell in love and married in Chelsea a year later. A number of exhibitions took place during this period including:

Major exhibition at the international consultants "McKinsey & Co" who thereafter decided to buy the entire exhibition for its own collection.

Major exhibition at London's premier South Bank venue Cotton's Atrium "The **Late** 20<sup>th</sup> Century"

## **2001- 2005**

After deciding to start a family Eric and his wife bought two derelict farms in Co.Kerry and moved to Ireland. There he spent three years regenerating the farms, their cottages and landscaped the side of mountain which was part of their land in preparation for his forthcoming new studios.

Eleven days after 9/11 Charlie O'Brien Howard was born, later to be diagnosed as being profoundly deaf.

Eric then went onto to design and build his large Eco Super House being 3500 sq ft incorporating his 6 metre high studios overlooking the Kerry Mountains. Despite its size, the house's carbon footprint was only 10% of a normal domestic house. It is now considered to be one of the best designs on the famous Bera peninsula.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 2003 a daughter Amber Elora Howard was born, but within weeks also declared to be profoundly deaf. The strain proved too much for Eric's young wife who left the marriage and returned to England, taking the children with her.

## **2006 - 2007**

Eric decided to walk away from the near complete Super House & farm to follow his children. Now sharing custody and living on the beautiful Stourhead estate in Wiltshire, he is planning the next chapter of his creative life which of course will include pursuing his photographic art: central and fundamental to everything that has gone before.

Recent exhibitions: Chelsea Art Club, London and Wiltshire's Rye Art Space.

***By Louise Cleveland freelance journalist Southampton of University***