

"I AM LOOKING FOR MODELS"

Peter Adams,

STEPHANIE, WENTWORTH FALLS, 2002



PETER ADAMS is searching for new subjects to include in his book of nude photographs *'Under the Skin'*. "I'm not interested," says Peer, "in working with professional models, because when I do I invariably get 'modelly' pictures. I prefer to work with ordinary people. Incidentally, these people are far from 'ordinary'. Quite the contrary. Everyone I photographed for this project has been extraordinary in that none of them had posed naked in front of a camera before, and that takes a bit of courage. All of them found the experience liberating and all have said they would pose for me again. /so, if anyone would like to be included in *'Under the Skin'*, please phone me on: 02-4782-7612 or email me:peter.adams@peteradams.com"

(N.B.: The following article has appeared in several Australian newspapers).



Getting the right exposure

By Joshua Mackenzie

The Gazette caught up with Peter Adams to discuss the secret of what makes a good nude picture and talk about some of the sexist attitudes that still attach themselves to nude photography.

JOSH: Some people would claim that nude photography is an exploitation of women.

PETER: I've heard that many times before and it's rubbish! Making a nude photograph isn't something you can force a woman to be involved with against her will! It's collaboration between the subject and the artist....

JOSH:...you refer to yourself as an artist....

PETER:...in the sense that I am creating something, not copying something, yes.

JOSH: Why nude photography?

PETER: ...A good nude photograph is inordinately difficult to get right. Good nude photography is a 'celebration' of woman – the picture must show the woman in her best light, it needs to be tactile –but not sexual- and it must be well composed.

Obviously, as a photographer, I need to be present but I try not to intrude my presence into the picture. If you begin to think like an average 'bloke'- all tits, bums, and testosterone- then your picture will start to look like Penthouse and Ralph which is a style of picture making that doesn't interest me at all- none of my pictures are in that vein- I make sure I leave my male attitudes at home when making nude images.



LOUISE 'BIRCH TREE', TIMUT 2003

JOSH” Do you always work with professional models?

PETER: Never! All the women in this project are ordinary people who, in most cases, have never posed naked before. Models get paid – I never pay my subjects – but I do give them a selection of six signed art prints which is worth about \$350.

JOSH: And what do you get?

PETER: I get material to include in my forthcoming book ‘Under the Skin’. It’s a long term project and I’m always looking for new subjects.

JOSH” Do you photograph men?

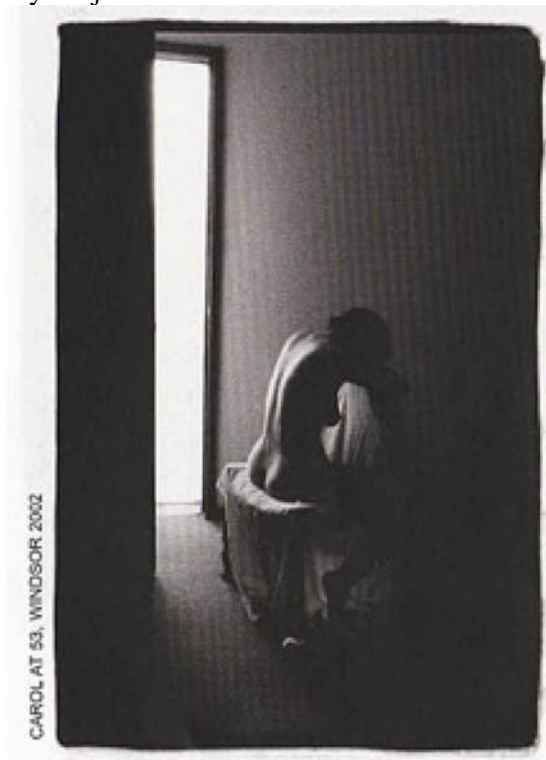
PETER: That’s an interesting question! I find nude photography of men even harder than nude photography women! I would love to find men interested in being photographed but they are very difficult to locate.

A man’s body has to be in good shape and needs muscle definition before they look good in front of the camera.

Strangely enough, a woman’s body doesn’t need to be perfect in order for it to photograph well – from my point of view, this is the major difference between photographing a man and a woman.

JOSH: I must admit, I find it hard to understand why anyone would pose naked or a total stranger?

PETER: Many women want to record their bodies before they think it's all too late and everything starts to head south! Several of my subjects have been



in their 50's. Most subjects approach me – usually as the result of word of mouth or because they have seen my pictures somewhere.

Many had already considered being photographed nude – but were unsure how to find a photographer who would make the best of them.

Once a woman is happy within herself only then will a good nude photograph eventuate. Women are usually very critical of their bodies. I want to show their beauty without showing their imperfections – freckles, scars and so forth. I'm making pictures, not reality.

JOSH: So, what does one say to a total stranger when you want them to take all their clothes off in front of your camera?

PETER: I'm just honest. I show them some pictures, or ask them to look at my web site (www.peteradams.com) and give them a business card. If they like what they see, I ask them to call me. I never take it further without that first call from them - the security blanket is *always* in their corner. Then we meet on neutral ground somewhere – in a coffee shop or whatever – and talk.

JOSH: Who thinks up the locations where the women are photographed?

PETER: This usually eventuates during our coffee shop talk. The environment or fantasy is always their choice – never mine. The idea for a location usually comes from the woman herself. All women are interesting, you just need to listen to them. Most photographers talk too much – they should spend more time listening! A good nude picture comes out of listening! A good nude picture comes out of listening to the subject and finding out her needs. Her preferences. Her fantasies. Not yours. Incidentally, this is true of any portrait – clothed or unclothed.

JOSH: How did the shot of the bottom in the bath with feathers come about?

PETER: Suzanne was around 36 when I photographed her. I often ask a woman what is her favorite way to relax. Suzanne was nervous and replied with all the usual clichés: I like sun baking on tropical beaches, relaxing with friends over good food, being massaged by a Zulu warrior in his Y – fronts, all the usual stuff! Then she added 'and if all else fails, a hot bath or a nice warm bed – sometimes both!'

The picture sort of created itself!

