

Erik Blair | Editor, New Vistas

PICTURE PERFECT

New Vista's editor, Erik Blair, meets UWL alumna, Claire Williams, – whose work adorns the front cover of this volume – to discuss her photography and her passion for a great image

After being inspired by her travels and wishing to capture those special moments, Claire Williams decided to study for a degree in photography. A top student who immersed herself in the learning experience, she eventually left the University of West London in 2012 with a first class degree in Photography and Digital Imagining.

But Claire wasn't just studying, whilst at the University she also started to develop her own business – she gained contacts across the institution; applied for various schemes; hunted down every lead she could, and since graduation she has barely stopped. Her work is crisp and bold and full of vivid texture. The lines draw you in and her work creates a strong visual narrative. When meeting with Claire, it is hard to decide what it is about her that is so special and why she is so successful. For me, it is the mix of talent and drive. But speaking with Claire, it becomes clear that she is just looking for the perfect picture, "Sometimes I just see something and I think, 'Oh my goodness'. I am constantly looking for the perfect picture. I wish I had a camera implanted in my head."

Chatting with Claire about photography is an interesting experience. When Claire talks about photography her language is littered with words such as 'love', 'passion' and 'inspiration' and she tells me that, "If you do something you love then you will be successful and I knew when I started with photography that I just loved it!"

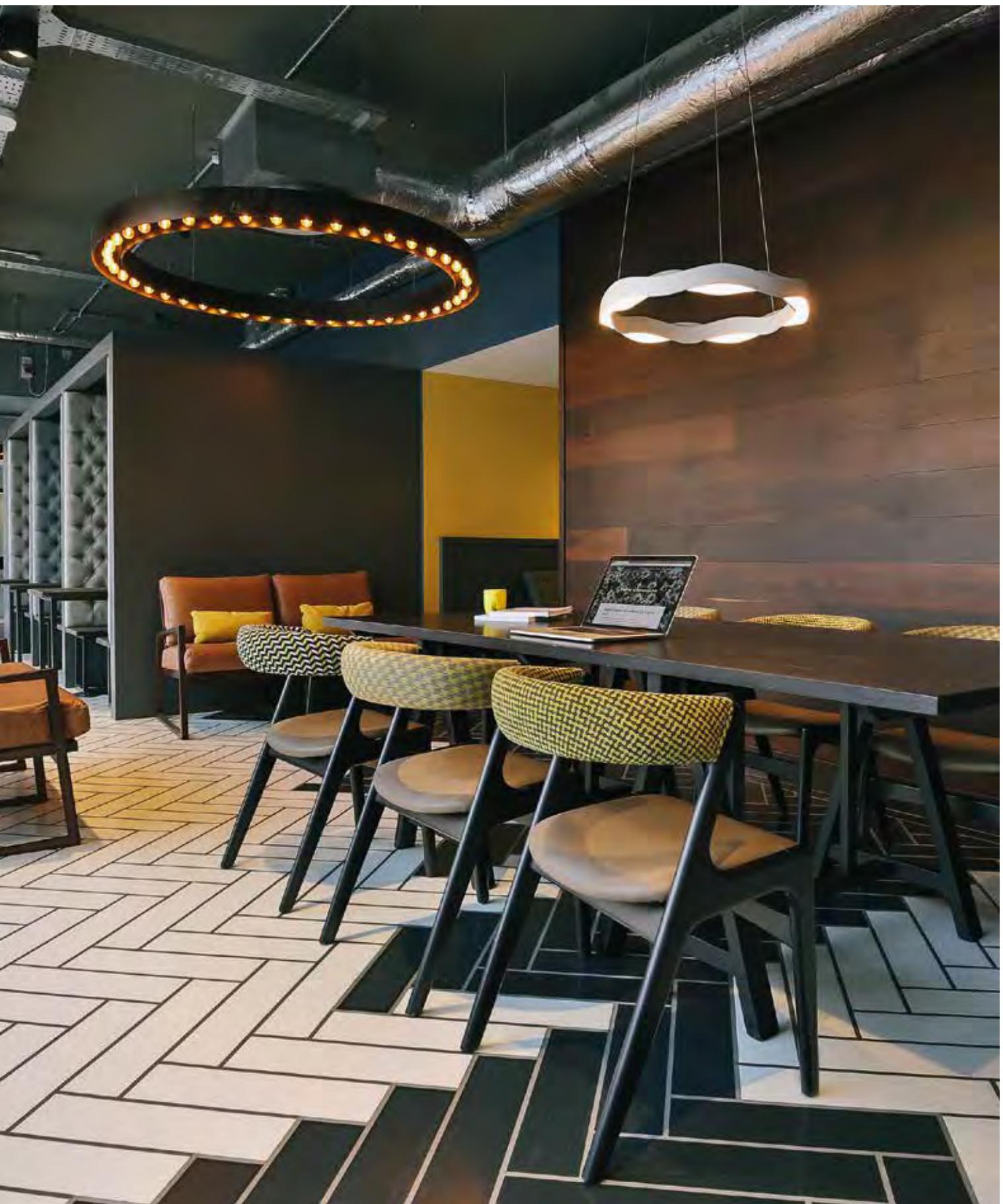
In her own words

Tell us about yourself?

I'm Claire, an interior photographer. In 2004 I spent 18 months travelling in Australia and South East Asia, it was then that I decided I wanted to become a photographer. When I returned to the UK I started my studies, part-time in Oxford. I then worked as a project photographer with Raleigh International in India before coming back to the UK in 2010 to study at UWL.

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Why do you do it?

I love photography and running my own business. I've definitely found my passion. I'm very fortunate that my business is flexible and I can spend time with my daughter, I now shoot two days a week whilst she is at nursery.

What makes a great photograph?

Lighting and composition are obviously key to any photograph and when taken correctly give the image a perfect balance. There are rules within photography which will also enable the image to be pleasing to the viewer.

What is your connection to UWL?

I studied BA Photography and Digital Imaging at UWL and graduated with a 1st in 2012. I'm very grateful to UWL and wouldn't have a successful business if it hadn't been for my studies with them. Whilst I was studying I linked up with many key people at the University and still photograph for them today. There were also lots of opportunities to work with businesses around West London, one of which linked to the Arts Council, resulting in my work being taken to Vietnam for an exhibition celebrating 400 years of Shakespeare. I am forever grateful to UWL for kick-starting my career.

What advice would you give others?

Believe in your dream and believe that it's possible, there is enough work out there for everyone and anyone who is willing to work hard towards building a business or career within the industry.





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As Claire was setting up her business she encountered plenty people telling her that she shouldn't bother and that photography was a saturated market. But looking around, she saw that people are now driven to document their lives. Much of this may be quick selfies but there is also a desire for people to capture more precious and more thoughtful moments. Claire's website is full of such images: with luxurious interiors full of balance and light. We asked Claire to shoot some images for New Vistas and the results are amazing – there is a kind of peace to her work that encourages the viewer to take their time and really ponder the moment. You can see this in her images of the University of West London, where her inquisitive eye captures engaging angles and exciting new perspectives. I'm delighted that Claire has agreed to shoot our cover page and I am sure our readers will be inspired by her story and her talent.

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