

JACQUELINE ANNE

FIVE TIPS TO CREATING A MEANINGFUL EDITORIAL

Picture this.

You've just turned up to a styled shoot or editorial. Your camera's are at the ready, and you're walking through all the different poses in your head; the locations, the lighting, the outfits, the details... and yet, you have this little niggling feeling that doesn't seem to subside. You're excited, of course. You want to shoot! You want to collaborate! And at the same time, this little voice inside your head has you wondering if this was a good decision, asking you "did it turn out the way you'd hoped?"

You continue through it, shooting the details that are pretty, but not quite what you'd hoped for. The florals that unfortunately were just too modern, too whimsical, or just too green for the theme you had in mind. The cake that got smudged on the way to the session. You get home later to find that the images are lacking in something. They're pretty, yes. However, you can't seem to see what went wrong.

We've all been there. And well, if you haven't, maybe you've just been lucky!

And yet, what can you do differently in the future?



No.1

Know Your Why

It sounds like an obvious thing but knowing exactly “why” you’re there in the first place will help set out your intentions, and the intentions of others.

It can be difficult to put this into words, but have a look through your current portfolio. Does it include everything that you hope to include? Could you perhaps use another styled engagement session, or a cool new venue? Maybe you would like to showcase the fact that you love a certain type of wedding - everything from formal ballroom style to tented outdoor settings. Or perhaps, you feel like you could benefit from adding something colourful or modern to your galleries.

Before you embark on your creative vision, it can be really helpful to sit down and write out your deepest wishes to ensure you’re meeting your own targets.



No.2

Construct a Narrative

Another thing to sit down and examine is what story you're telling. Stories throughout the ages have been at the centre of our lives as humans, and in fact, it is one of the only things that distinguish us from the rest of the animals on this planet. You can see stories depicted on the walls of caves, in the words of a song or in a painting that hinges around historical events.

Were you inspired as a child by something you'd read or seen? Is there something that really motivates you and you can see it before it comes to life?

Not every styled shoot will have a full on narrative, but consider this thoroughly before reaching out to others. It is likely they will also have been inspired by this at some point or another, which can act as a great jumping off spot when communicating your intentions to other vendors.

There is an influx of beautiful imagery, but having a narrative that goes alongside your gallery will set you apart from the masses.



No.3

Don't Follow the Trends

In this day and age, it is so easy to take inspiration from other photographers and run with it. You might have seen something and thought, “If only I could re-create this”.

I challenge you to think outside of the box. Do something that hasn't been seen before, or something that inspires you deeply. By all means, you can take various concepts and manipulate them to become something of your own, but take a second to consider, “Have I seen this recently published?”

If it's your intention to send it off to blogs, it's likely that that they won't accept your editorial and it won't allow you to fully embrace your Why and Your Narrative.

It might be tempting to take every element of a session you've seen recently - social media is both a blessing and a curse and can force even the best out there to re-create that which has already been created.

Best to listen to your own heart and be true to yourself.



No.4

Stay True to Your Brand

Back to temptation. How often have you been tempted to do something wildly different to the rest of your work? I know, me too. Yet speaking from experience, this will often go one of two ways.

Either it will open your eyes to something that you never thought you'd love, or you'll be sitting at your computer editing those images and thinking, "This just isn't me".

I've been in both camps. Yet at the centre of it all, I try to think about my aesthetic as a whole. What are my brand words? Timeless... Modern... Whimsical?

These have very different connotations so consider the footprints you're leaving behind. If you end up shooting something that is creative, but is too far in one direction and neglects the rest of your brand words, you could be doing yourself a disservice.



No.5

Seek Out Like Minded Collaboratives

Apples and oranges. You know the saying. Find your apples and know that your strengths lie in finding those individuals that think the same way as you do.

It's one thing to work with a creative who is just finding their feet, but it's another entirely to seek out people who are just "available" on the day you're looking to shoot. Sometimes you might have to forfeit something for the sake of the session because one weak link can devalue the process. This sounds harsh, but honestly, some of my best work came from the minds of individuals who value the same things I do.

Is there someone you have dreamed to work with? Someone you look up to? If so, reach out, begin a conversation and go from there.

I was once told that "You never want to be the smartest person in the room". Take this approach and surround yourself with others who will challenge you to be your very best.



No.6

Bonus!

Speak your mind.

I cannot say this enough when it comes to planning a styled shoot. You have to be able to reference images that inspire the session, use words that convey your meaning and thoughtfully articulate your intentions. Take this example, “A pink-hued modern wedding”. I can guarantee that every one of us pictured a different shade of pink.

It can be so easy to say “Yes! Be as creative as you like!” but I caution you with using these terms. This invites ambiguity; it can take someone in another direction that means you end up a million miles from your starting point, or worse - you end up with something on the day that really doesn’t feel true to the rest of the session.

Again, it might be beautifully executed but there is always a huge risk involved when it comes to giving someone you don’t know well with complete creative freedom, and you need to protect yourself and their business to successfully create something that you’re all truly proud of.