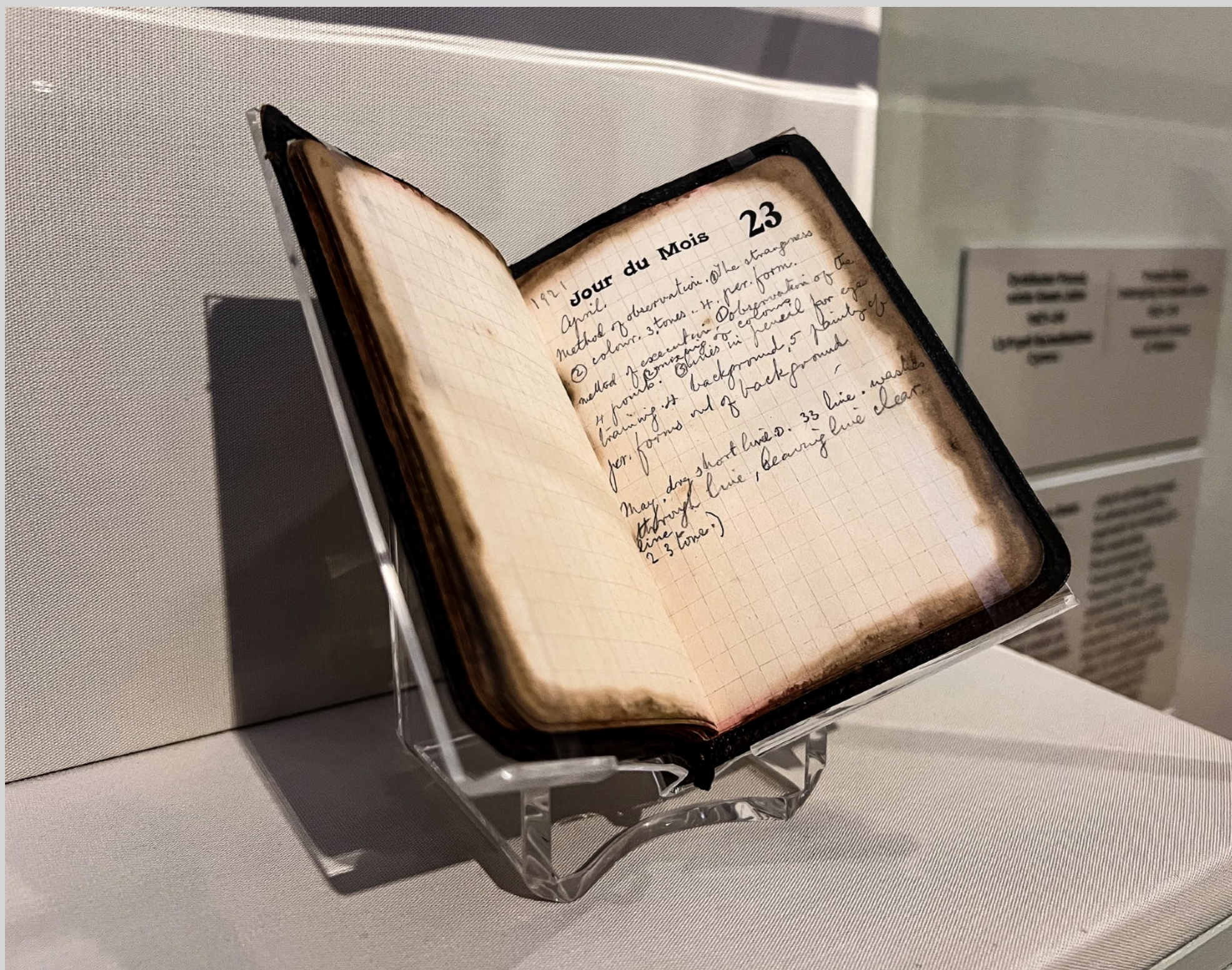


Photographers' Lists & Manifestos

Lists and Manifestos

Over the years, many photographers have kept lists or written manifestos, whether for general reflection, self-improvement or as a statement of praxis. This can be a useful exercise, an ongoing self-examination: what am I doing; how can I improve; if Tesco are out of limes again, will lemons suffice?

I have collated a few of them here, to discuss and then as the basis for a task.



Gwen John

**Dyddiadur Poded,
eiddo Gwen John
1921–24
Llyfrgell Genedlaethol
Cymru**

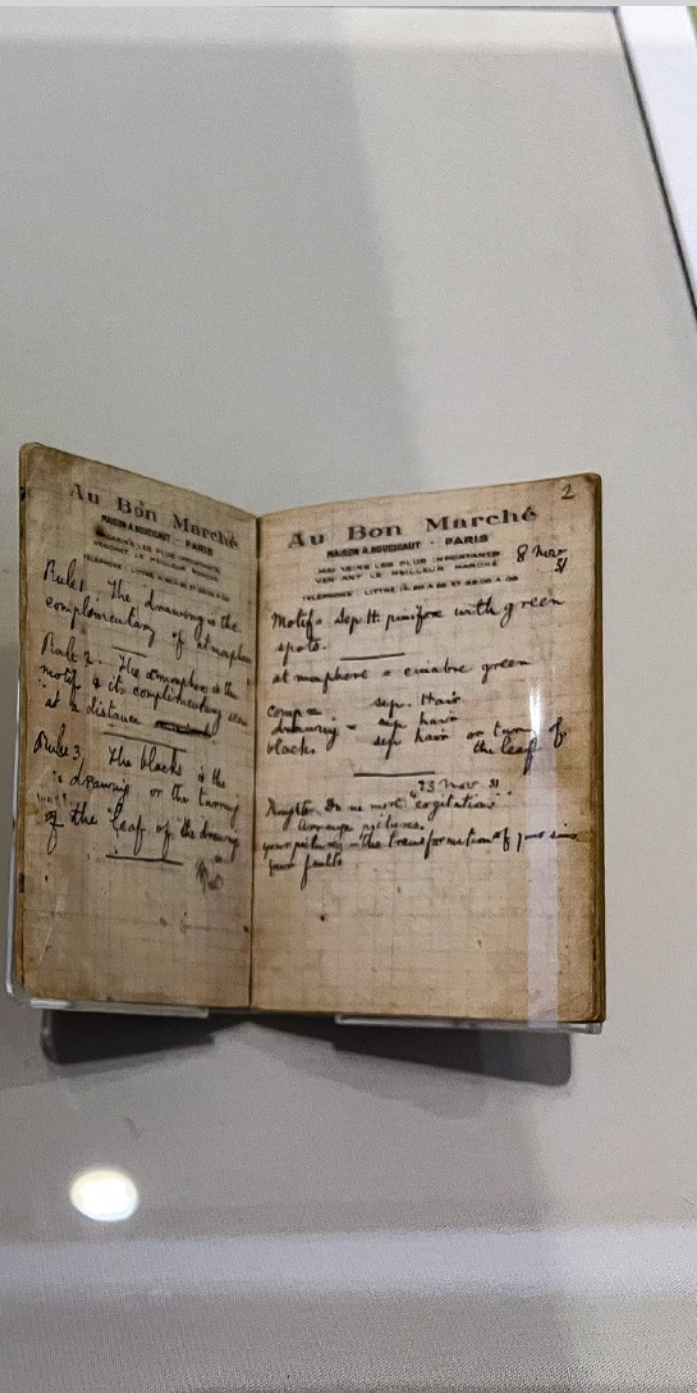
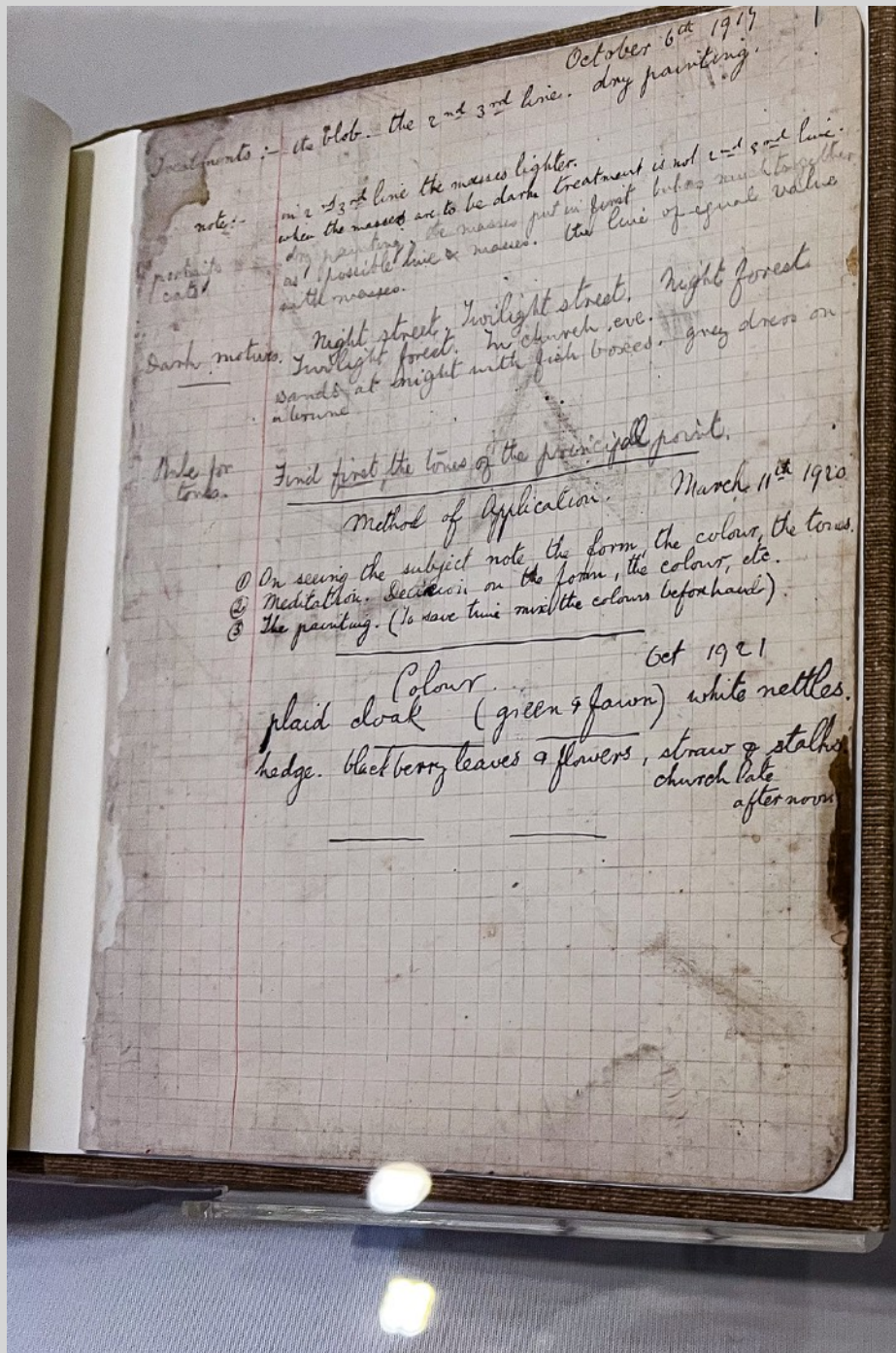
**Pocket diary
belonging to Gwen John
1921–24
National Library
of Wales**

Yn ei nodiadau mae Gwen yn rhannu ei phroses yn gamau 'arsylwi' a 'chyflawni', sy'n dangos dull gwyddonol bron o baentio. Byddai hi'n cysylltu'r 'hynod' â'r arfer o arsylwi'n fanwl a bwriadol. Mae'r nodyn yn awgrymu ei bod hi'n ceisio dad-ddysgu arferion arsylwi a chanolbwyntio ar yr hyn sy'n anghyffredin am y testun.

John's writings reveal an almost scientific approach to making art. She separates the processes of "observation" and "execution" and associates the quality of "strangeness" with a practice of close looking. Her note suggests an effort to undo ingrained ways of seeing and to focus instead on what is unfamiliar.

**1921 Ebrill
Dull arsylwi.
1. Yr hynod 2. lliw
3. arlliwiau
4. ffurf y person
Dull cyflawni.
1. arsylwi ar y 4 pwynt
2. cymysgu lliwiau
3. llinellau pensil i ystwytho'r llygad
4. cefndir 5. paentio ffurf y person allan o'r cefndir**

**1921 April
Method of observation.
1. The strangeness
2. colour 3. tones
4. per. form.
Method of execution.
1. observation of the
4 points 2. mixing
of colours 3. lines in
pencil for eye training
4. background 5.
painting of per. forms
out of background**

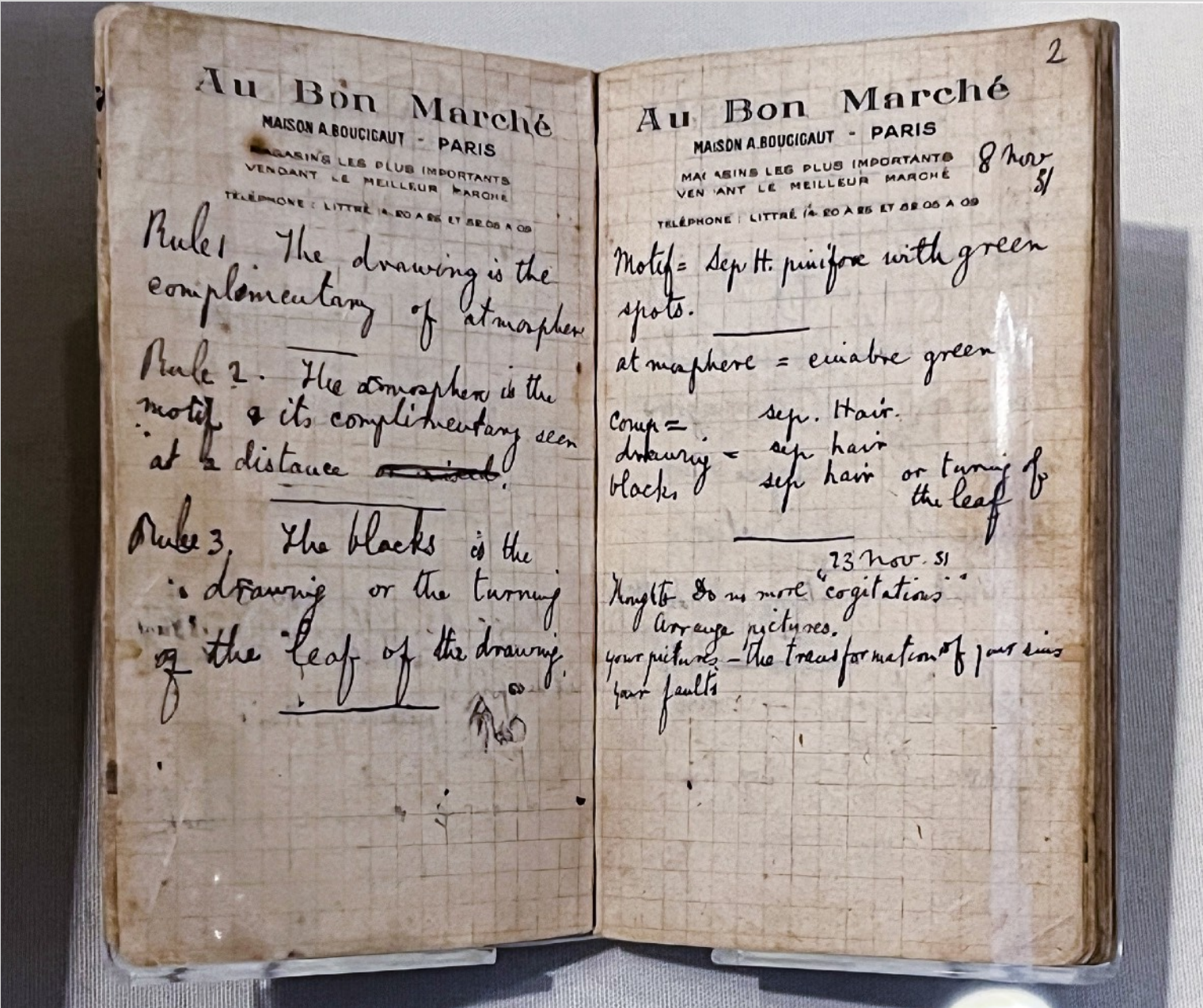


**Llyfr gwaith, eiddo
Gwen John
1917–25
Llyfrgell Genedlaethol
Cymru**

Exercise book belonging
to Gwen John
1917–25
National Library
of Wales

**Ar y dudalen hon mae
Gwen yn amlinellu amryw
reolau a dulliau. Mae'n
esbonio sut bydd hi'n
myfyrio cyn paentio, ac
yn cysylltu lliwiau gwyrdd
a llwydfelyn clogyn
plad â danadl gwyn.**

On this page, John
outlines various rules and
methods. She details her
process of meditating on
a subject before painting.
She connects the colours
of a green and fawn plaid
cloak to white nettles.



**Dyddiadur poced, eiddo
Gwen John
1931–35
Llyfrgell Genedlaethol
Cymru**

Pocket diary belonging to
Gwen John
1931–35
National Library
of Wales

**Byddai Gwen yn aml yn
creu rheolau i gynhyrchu
celf. Yn y nodiadau hyn
mae hi'n cysylltu lliwiau
â naws, ac yn disgrifio
creu celf fel achubiaeth.**

John often made rules
for making art. In this
notebook, she relates
colour to atmosphere.
She describes making
art as a form of salvation.

Tony Ray-Jones



Tony Ray-Jones's List

Approach

Be more aggressive

Get more involved (talk to people)

Stay with the subject matter (be patient)

Eat breakfast (it's the most important meal of the day)

Take simpler pictures

See if everything in the background relates to subject matter

Vary compositions and angles more

Be more aware of composition

Don't take boring pictures

Get in closer (use 50mm lens)

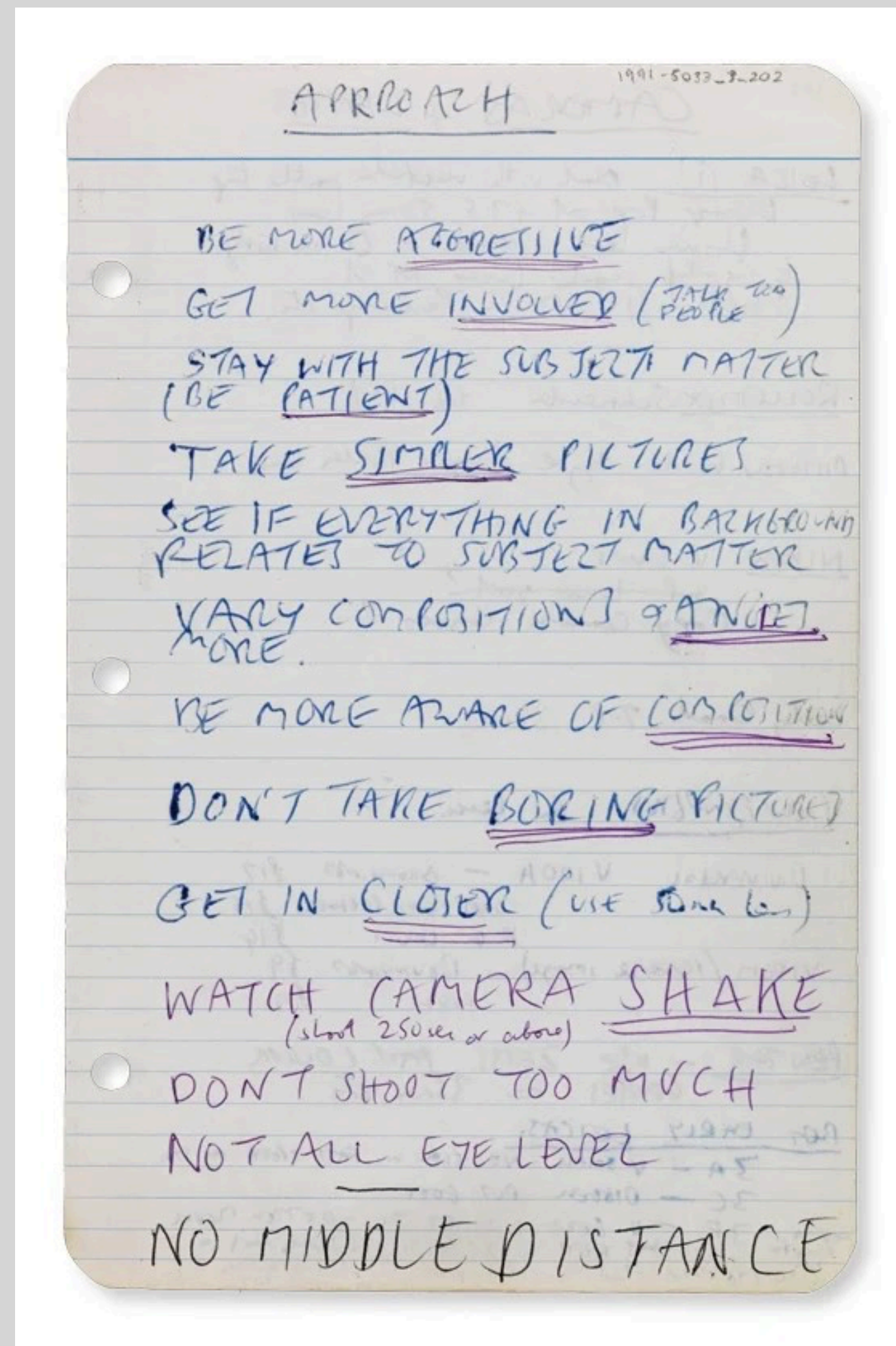
Watch camera shake (shoot 250 sec or above)

Don't shoot too much

Not all eye level

No middle distance

Tony Ray-Jones's List



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Not all eye level

No middle distance

APPROACH

1991-5033-9-202

BE MORE AGGRESSIVE

GET MORE INVOLVED (TALK TO PEOPLE)

STAY WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER
(BE PATIENT)

TAKE SIMPLER PICTURES

SEE IF EVERYTHING IN BACKGROUND
RELATES TO SUBJECT MATTER

VARY COMPOSITION & ANGLE
MORE.

BE MORE AWARE OF COMPOSITION

DON'T TAKE BORING PICTURES

GET IN CLOSER (USE LONG LENS)

WATCH CAMERA SHAKE
(shoot 250mm or above)

DON'T SHOOT TOO MUCH

NOT ALL EYE LEVEL

NO MIDDLE DISTANCE



Tony Ray-Jones



APPROACH

Be more aggressive
Get more involved (talk to people)
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Take simpler pictures
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from
the notebook of
Tony Ray-Jones

Tony Ray-Jones



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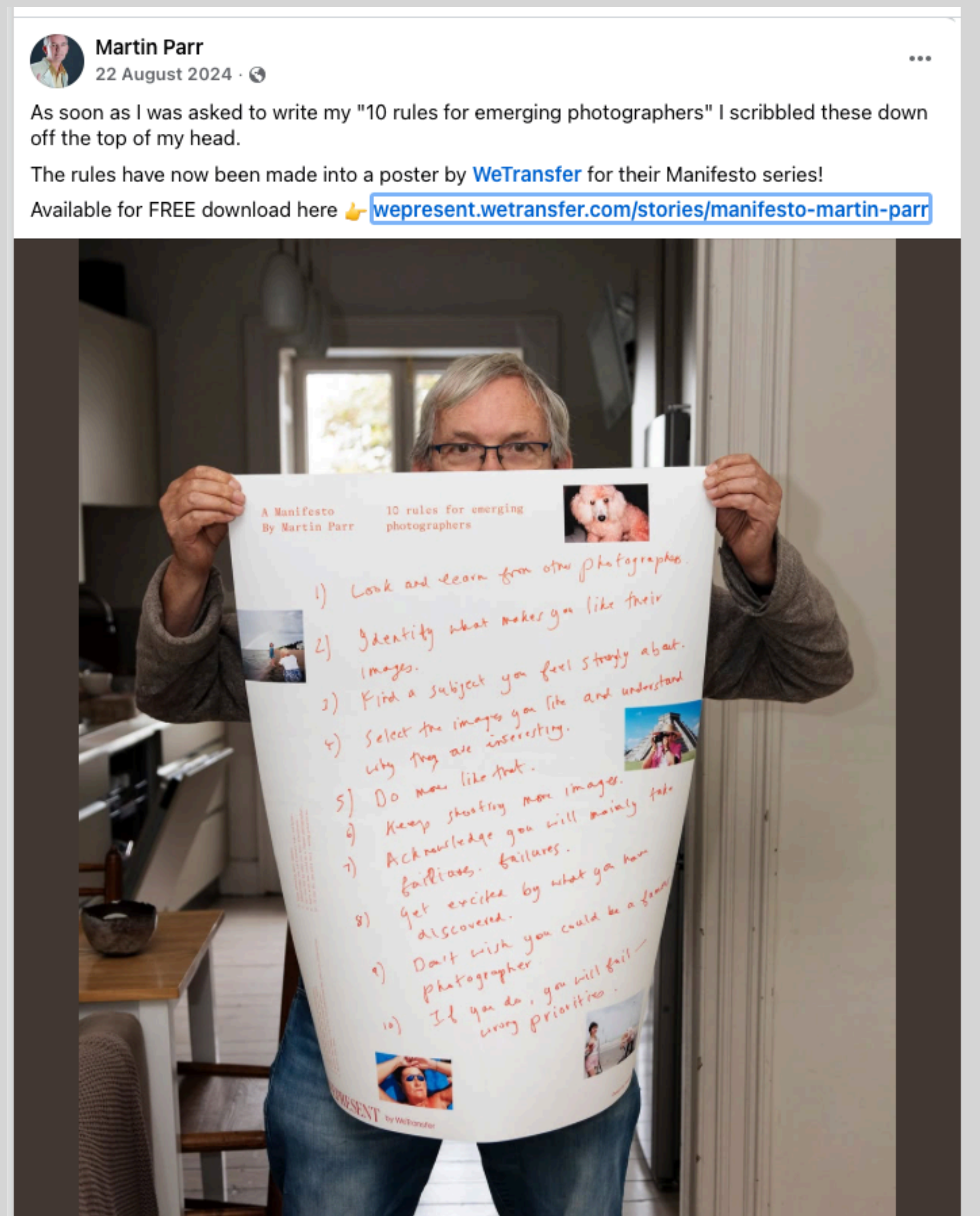
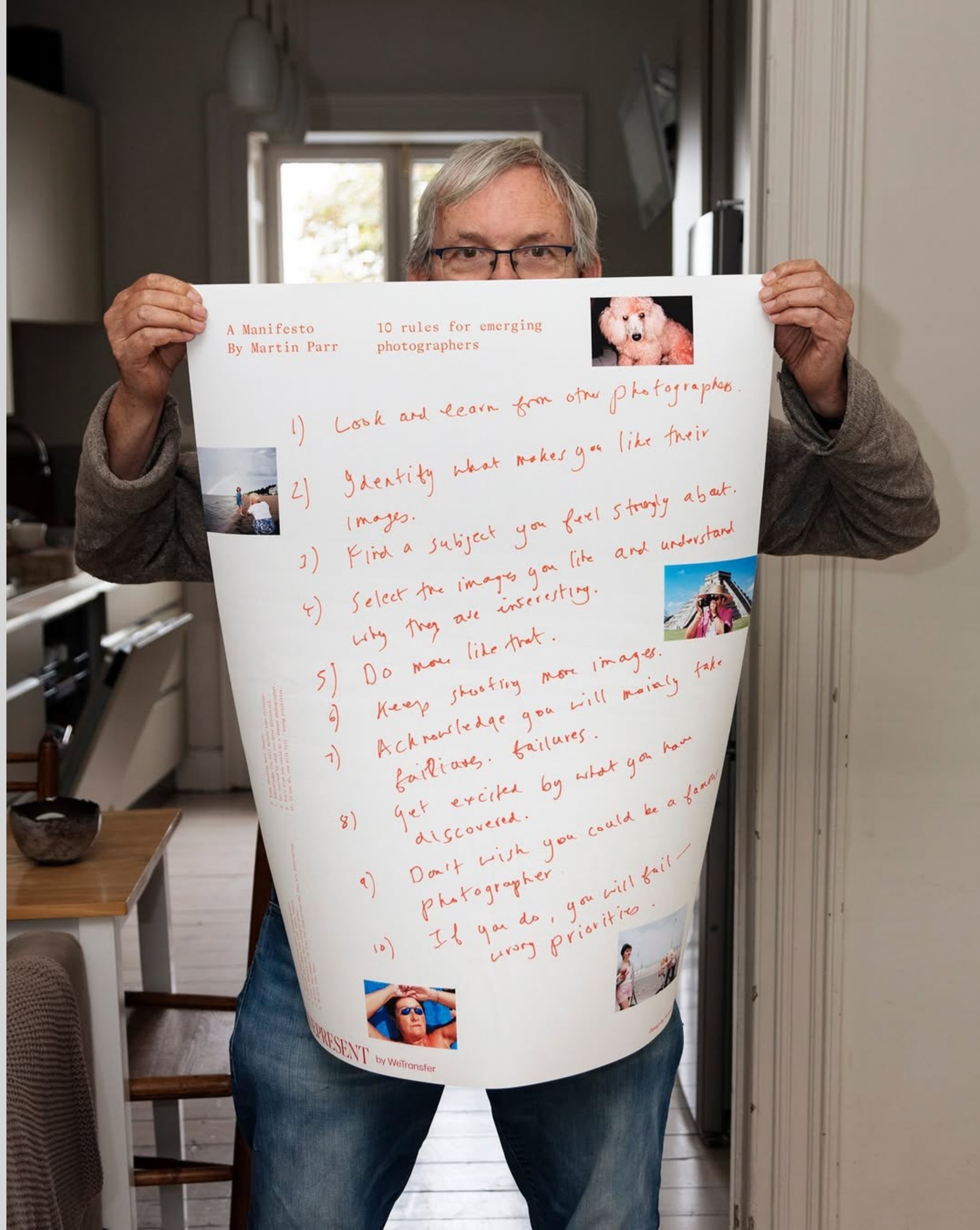
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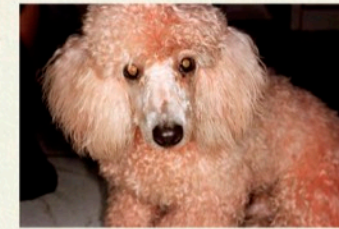


Ten rules of photography.

- 1) Look and learn from other photographers.
- 2) Identify what makes you like their images.
- 3) Find a subject you feel strongly about.
- 4) Select the images you like and understand why they are interesting.
- 5) Do more like that.
- 6) Keep shooting more images.
- 7) Acknowledge you will mainly take failures.
- 8) Get excited by what you have discovered.
- 9) Don't wish you could be a famous photographer.
- 10) If you do, you will fail — wrong priorities.

A Manifesto
By Martin Parr

10 rules for emerging
photographers



1. Look and learn from other photographers.
2. Identify what makes you like their images.
3. Find a subject you feel strongly about.
4. Select the images you like and understand why they are interesting.
5. Do more like that.
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I talk a lot about photography, write about it and teach it. Therefore, I often find myself answering the same questions, saying the same things and explaining the same beliefs. So, I decided to compile a manifesto based on those beliefs and conversations. Please share it, use it and print it out if you find it of use.

The Photographers Manifesto

- 1. Ask questions and don't expect many answers.**
- 2. Listen, read and watch.**
- 3. Look for the light.**
- 4. Don't worry about cameras but understand the one you use.**
- 5. Photoshop is not photography.**
- 6. You are only as good as what you show, not what you make.**
- 7. Editing is choosing and it is an art.**
- 8. Know the history, to inform the present and shape the future.**
- 9. Style is transitory, language is not. Storytelling requires language.**
- 10. Photography looks easy, it is not.**



Grant Scott

The Photographers Manifesto

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Anita Corbin

(Learning from Raissa Page)

What did you learn from Raissa in the early '80s? And what do you think a young photographer today could gain from studying Raissa's body of work?

A list:

- High standards
- Top quality
- Respect for your subjects
- Tenacity
- Going the extra mile
- Making connections before taking photos
- A strong work ethic
- Integrity
- Research, research, research
- Look to the ordinary
- Human first, photographer second
- Focus
- Be the best you can be
- Believe in yourself

I also learned how to make Macedonian stew! Raissa was always making sure I was eating properly and looking after myself, even though she smoked like a chimney.

April 26, 2011

The Fine Art and Documentary photographers take great pride in thinking themselves superior to the other main genres of photography, such as the family snap shooter or the amateur photographer, as personified by camera club imagery. However, after 30/40 years of viewing our work, I have come to the conclusion that we too are fairly predictable in what we photograph.

I include myself in this, and have been very careful to try and think of new territories to explore, but recognise that very often I also indulge in the list outlined below. I am aware of the basic rules, which dominate our work, and want to now attempt to group some of the more dominant strands of contemporary practice.

This core subject matter and approach is also constantly shifting and changing as new photographers arrive and have an impact on our accumulative photographic culture and language. I have a rapacious desire to look at new work and do this through books, magazines, and of course exhibitions. Most of the work I see is generic; in so far I can read the influences. It is when the inspiration and lineage is not clear that my attention is alerted. I used this as a guiding principal for the recent curating of the Brighton Photo Biennial, and made freshness of approach to the subject matter a major criteria for selection.

Let me try and outline the basic genres that can be found.

1. The above ground landscape with people.

This is a relatively recent development with the major influence of Gursky, being the starting point. You take a high vantage and place people within the frame setting them in a larger urban or even rural landscape.

2. The bent lamppost.

You see this a lot in the USA, where they are blessed with many bent lampposts. The scene is urban and generally quite run down. This can be traced back to Stephen Shore amongst others.

3. The personal diary.

Nan Goldin gave this genre a major boost with the famous " Ballad of Sexual Dependency " project, but there are predecessors with the likes Larry Clarke and Ed van der Elsken.

4. The Nostalgic gaze.

Photographers love to shoot a factory, a shop, a club or some institution that is about to close. We, of course, welcome and praise the sense of community that is threatened.

5. The quirky and visually strong setting.

In terms of documentary we are much more likely to see a project done on a circus than say, a petrol station. The simple reason is that photographers love shooting situations where there is an inherent visual quirk. So we see plenty of this type of subject such as mental hospitals and animal clinics.

6. The Street.

Street photography has evolved in recent years, with many more humorous scenarios now making the edit, and of course the shift to colour. In Britain we also have the great tradition of shooting on the beach, but this has declined in recent years because it is tricky to do this now, without being accused of being paedophile.

7. The black and white grainy photo.

Daido Moriyama is, if you like the Godfather of this school of photography, and he combined the imagery of Andy Warhol and William Klein to arrive at this groundbreaking photographic language. The subject is combination of cityscape and personal.

8. The New Rich.

Think Tina Barney and of course all those rich kids who attend Yale who turn their cameras on their own families. Nearly always shot in large format, and often involve taking clothes off too.

9. I am a poet.

This is the riskiest school of photography of all as it takes real panache to pull this one off. Many of the images can find their roots in the likes of Bill Eggleston and Rinko Kawauchi.

10. The modern Typology.

The Bechers and the Dusseldorf school have had a major impact on our photographic landscape and naturally the success of these students has also had a major impact. Many of the B division Becher students shoot typologies and run down buildings, beach huts, whatever can be found frequently.

11. The Staged photo.

With the increasing difficulty of shooting on the street and the desire to control the photo and the people in them, staging has found a new wave of popularity. Gregory Crewdson has given this genre a major boost with his Hollywood style, staged scenarios.

12. The Formal portrait.

One of the great traditions in photography and recently revived by the likes of Reneke Dijkstra and Thomas Ruff. Smiling is banned and this genre often needs the structure of repetition. A tripod is also a prerequisite for this method of shooting.

13. The long landscape.

Panoramic cameras are the latest fad for shooting landscapes, and a good view of icebergs and, or, fjords are a perfect subject for this treatment.

I could go on, but I think you will get the gist of what I am saying. I know many of you will now be thinking, “What a cynic”, but firstly there is much work that falls into these categories that I really respond to, indeed nearly all the work I like could have a grouping that feature in my list. I think the point I am making is that we need to consider our subject matter more carefully. When I am looking through student folios I often say these things, and usually people look at me as if to say “how dare you question what I am shooting.”

But if we think of what is going on in our world, there seems to be many subjects which are avoided, because we all need that echo of familiarity to help us have the confidence to make a body of work. We want to emulate the impact that these images had on us, and this can be as restricting as it can be liberating.

Martin Parr Nov 2010.

Paul's List

Paul D's List

1. Don't be a ... (insert expletive of choice). This could say 'be nice', but that sounds too bland; 'people skills' in management speak.
2. Find the light (if it won't find you).
3. Wear good shoes (a favourite of David Hurn's and many other photographers).
4. Inspiration: Look at books, exhibitions, websites, attend lectures by photographers, YouTube etc. Find artists to follow; learn your subject.
5. Learn to light - it separates us from the beasts.
6. When you don't have a camera, photograph with your eyes (in reality, your mind).*
7. Skills are vital; if inspiration deserts us, skills remain - a reliable back-up.
8. *Carry a small, high quality camera at all times (not just a phone).
9. Move! Are you sure you want to stand there? A bit to the left, a bit to the right; higher and lower; closer and further away - compose.
10. Make lists - write - to educate, inspire, problem solve, research, record, reflect etc. Learn yourself; learn your subject.

Task for Next Week

Write your own list or manifesto.

Stick to 10 points.

Write it for yourself - reflect on how you see yourself but also who you want to be,
or...

It could be more general: 10 things that all photographers would benefit from abiding by. Maybe a bit of both.

Bring in a document sporting your list.

