

Root Ginger

A Study of Red Hair

Idea Generation Gallery



17th February – 1st March 2009

Private View 17th February, 6.30pm

Ridiculed, coveted, derided, loved; a study and celebration of red hair comes to the Idea Generation Gallery

Idea Generation Gallery is pleased to present selected works from the book *Root Ginger: A Study of Red Hair* by the photographer Jenny Wicks. An exhibition, book and film project, *Root Ginger* is a tribute to a trait that is most common in Scotland and Ireland but is scattered around the world.

Red hair conjures up a plethora of images; from the fiery red head to the pre-Raphaelite muse, the pasty, freckled man to the angry Scot. Red hair provokes a range of reactions from people. The photographs explore the social aspect of having red hair and how society views and treats a minority group. For many it is considered the last bastion of political incorrectness and the anecdotes from the subjects of the pictures often go to prove this.

Photographer Jenny Wicks commented, "I was originally inspired by two of my brother's children who have red hair. The book is a tribute to people with hair this colour but it is also an investigation into the genetic lottery that we all play. Most people are aware the ginger hair gene has a recessive characteristic, which is also true for cystic fibrosis, both genes run through my family. For this reason I was interested to explore the phenomenon of recessive genes as well as the human tendency to judge and make snap decisions about people who simply look different to them."



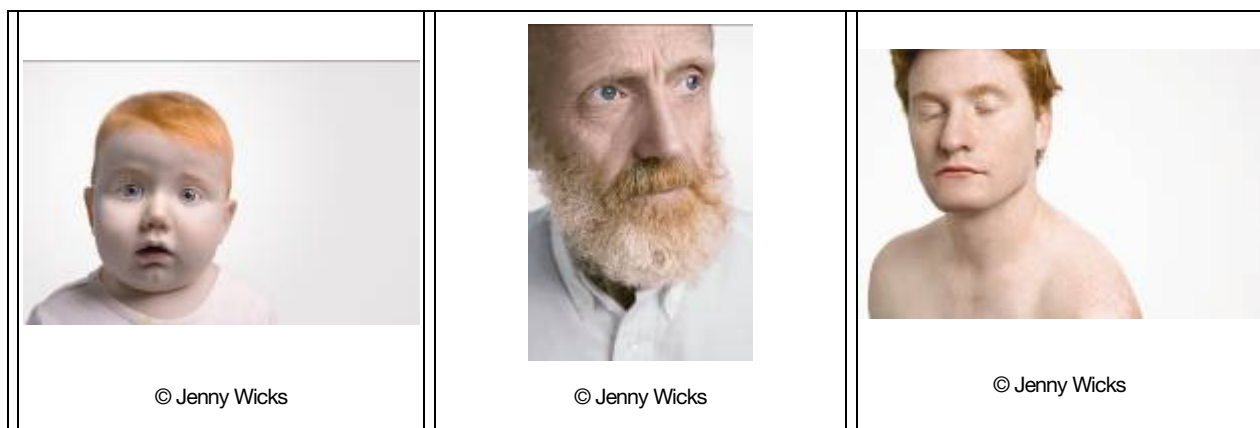
"My mother's reaction to being told her first born was a ginger was to weep uncontrollably."
© Jenny Wicks



"I remember being at primary school and forming a ginger club...it wasn't the biggest club in the world."
© Jenny Wicks



"My Dad had black hair everywhere apart from his moustache, which is the colour of my hair!"
© Jenny Wicks



Jenny’s aim was to capture the otherworldly and beautiful qualities of red hair. Playing on her interest in sub-groups and sects, the images show that the "every day" and ordinary can quickly become fascinating or exceptional when they are looked at in isolation.

Nicola Walters, one of the 62 subjects in *Root Ginger: A Study of Red Hair*, explained that; “being ginger is definitely something that I have grown into. When I was growing up, it always seemed as if I was in more trouble than anyone else – just because I was easier to identify! I wouldn’t change if for anything now.”

Eloise Rowley, gallery manager, “There are often a lot of negative connotations surrounding red hair but we wanted to put on a show that celebrated this hair colour. Elizabeth I, Winston Churchill, Vivienne Westwood and Lily Cole are just some of the famous red heads and so the subjects of these photographs join a very illustrious group.”

The death of Jenny’s mother in 2007 galvanised her into looking into her family’s past, as she felt a strong link to her recent history had disappeared with her mother. The aim was to determine who had carried the red hair gene as it was likely, although, not certain, that she would pass the gene on.

Jenny’s fascination with society’s attitudes to minority groups and in particular red hair, has led to this insightful study of the phenomenon. Her work explores the biological perspective of a recessive gene; how and why red hair and pale skin could become so common when the global average is something very different; how we assume we know more than we really do about our genetic make-up and red hair’s perplexing social stance: is it mockery, learned behaviour, social conditioning, just a bit of harmless fun or historic, it is after all, just hair.

Proceeds from the project go towards the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

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| Dates: | 17th February – 1 st March 2009 | Private View: | 17th February: 6.30pm – 8.30pm |
| Address: | Idea Generation Gallery 11 Chance Street London E2 7JB | Tube: | Liverpool Street or Old Street |
| | | Prices: | Free |
| Opening Hours: | Monday to Friday: 12pm - 6pm Saturday & Sunday: 12pm – 5pm | First Thursdays: | Open to 8pm |

Editor's Notes

Jenny Wicks

Jenny Wicks, has spent many years as a creative photographer. She specializes in studies on sub sets, minorities people on the fringes or groups within groups that have a distinct visual impact or personal style. She is not a redhead herself but has a ginger gene running through her family. Her interest in genetics deepened when she researched the causes of cystic fibrosis after her redheaded nephew was diagnosed with the condition.

Idea Generation

Idea Generation was founded in 2001 around a simple proposition: find something you enjoy doing – and then try to do it better than anyone else.

Seven years on, Idea Generation now stands as one of the UK's leading arts, entertainment and cultural PR agencies - having worked with, for, and in support of some of the most exciting projects, people, institutions, fairs, festivals, tours, exhibitions, books, magazines, films, gigs, auctions, launches, parties and premieres across the UK and the world.

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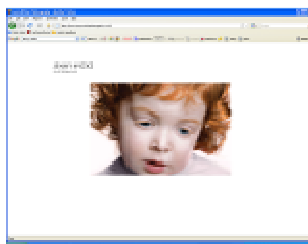
Websites



www.ideageneration.co.uk

For:

- Online Press Office
- Client list
- Company contact detail



www.jennywicksphotography.co.uk

For:

- Information on Root Ginger

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