

MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Adriaan van Heerden is an award-winning photographer from Ashtead, he tells *T&L* about his latest photobook project, *Unreal City*...



Adriaan van Heerden



The River Sweats Oil and Tar

Tell us about the *Unreal City* project

Before *Unreal City*, I had mainly focused on wildlife, travel and landscape photography. I have always had an interest in poetry and after experimenting with a number of ideas, I eventually came across *The Waste Land* – a famous poem by T.S. Eliot which became the perfect focus for the new direction I was looking for. The photos I've taken are of a challenging view of London at a highly significant time in its history.

You're now raising money to fund the *Unreal City* book...

Unreal City will be produced as a top quality, hardcover coffee table book and collector's item, to be treasured for years to come. The book comprises 85 black and white photographs, all taken by me, as well as essays. The production and printing costs of an art book such as this are considerable, and many authors now run crowdfunding campaigns to help cover these costs. People are able to

pre-order the book via the campaign page, and there are other once-in-a-lifetime experiences on offer, so do get involved!

Who do you think the book will appeal to?

Each picture tells a story, but it's not just my stories. Everyone I've shown the pictures to have contributed their own interpretation, and it has been very exciting for me to see the project acquire new levels of meaning in this way. In Eliot's poem, London is the *Unreal City* which forms the main environment in which many of the characters in the poem have their entrances and exits. The book reflects many of the themes of the poem: a feeling of alienation between individuals and their environment; people's inability to connect meaningfully; the cruel demands of the city; homelessness, and the waste of young lives due to crime feature as themes in the book. Having said that, the book also holds out a few rays of hope that all may not be lost.

Do you have any favourite places that you like to go to take photos in Surrey?

I enjoy taking clients on photography experience days at the British Wildlife Centre and Denbies Wine Estate, to name just a couple, and in terms of my personal work I've had good results around the local area where I live in Ashtead. I'm currently developing ideas for a future project centred around Ashtead. One of the pictures in *Unreal City* is of commuters walking towards the station on a misty morning in Ashtead, with the caption "Death Had Undone So Many". Lots of people have said it's their favourite picture in the book!

■ For more information on the *Unreal City* photobook project go to uk.gofundme.com/unreal-city-photobook



Unreal City

Death Had Undone So Many

I Have Walked Among The Lowest Of The Dead