

A photographic portfolio by Karl Mackie

POINTS OF FOCUS >>

The inspirational nature of Cornwall has been well documented and overtly celebrated by artists of all persuasions: the creative possibilities of the sea, its energy and the people who flock to it are endless.

Karl Mackie follows in this tradition, but with a twist – he has more than one string to his creative bow. A local Newquay boy who likes both riding and capturing the sea’s vibe, he defines his ‘day job’ as photographer, designer and shaper: “Lots of old film photography, mixed with design and shaping – that’s what gets me through the month.”

His three passions feed and coalesce in a synergy born in Cornwall.

First, his pictures – beaches, surf breaks and boards are his subjects of choice: “I live right by my local surf break and couldn’t ask for anything more, it’s a dream really.”

Karl shoots with a variety of kit ranging from prehistoric to post-modern: a 1978 Canon AV1, a 1953 Minolta SR7, Polaroid, Holga and the trusty iPhone. He sources out of date film – preferring lomography – which explains his pictures’ unique hue and old-school feel.

Just as his photography is a collaboration of past and present, he also collaborates in his design and shaping projects, seeing other peoples’ input as part of the deal. His hand-plane art project recently on display in an exhibition at Seed Surf Company in Wadebridge, Cornwall is an example of this. This undertaking brought together an art and surfing collective from all over the world: “I made the hand-planes and, by using social media like Flickr and Instagram, I was able to reach out to more people. The more I did, the more people wanted to contribute. Artists and surfers Maddie Joyce, and Chris Del Moro have all put their creative mark on these boards.”

Karl’s stone-walled workshop at the bottom of his garden is the site of his shaping passion and where he and Noosa local, Tim Crabtree, each made a bunch of boards over last summer – “all retro and throwbacks” – and documented the process under the guise of *The Cornwall Sessions*. All the boards have gone – some sold and some given away, which is a testament to Karl’s quiet commitment to process above product or packaging; to back-yard industry and artistry without an ego trip.

“Shaping is a continuation of my photography and art – all backyard, all hand-shaped, wooden fins, creative artwork and all documented on lomo film,” says Karl, who’s now working on another project, appropriately called ‘Shaping Through the Lens’.

The following selection of images comes from Karl’s recent and ongoing projects.

Rebecca Ritson is a freelance writer based in Cornwall



Left: Javier Ascanio, a stylist and lover of

Left: Javier Ascanio, a stylist and lover of barrels, deep at the heaviest beachbreak in the Canaries.

Main: Eduardo Acosta in a new location down south. Three days with just the seals and virgin waves an epic island mission.





Opposite: Kelly Slater at Long Beach, NY. This is probably the most spectacular air of his whole career – immense pressure in the semi-final against Taj Burrows, who was in the lead with only a couple of minutes left. The beach just erupted when KS reappeared from the whitewater.

Below: This is maybe the heaviest wave regularly surfed on Lanzarote. But be warned, only boyboarders and experts are allowed.

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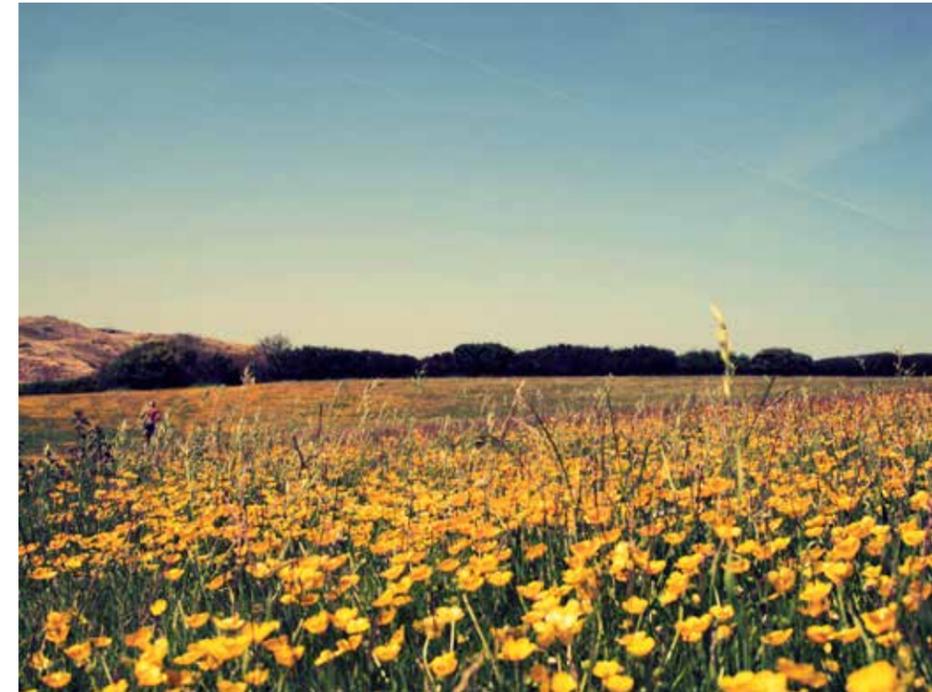
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