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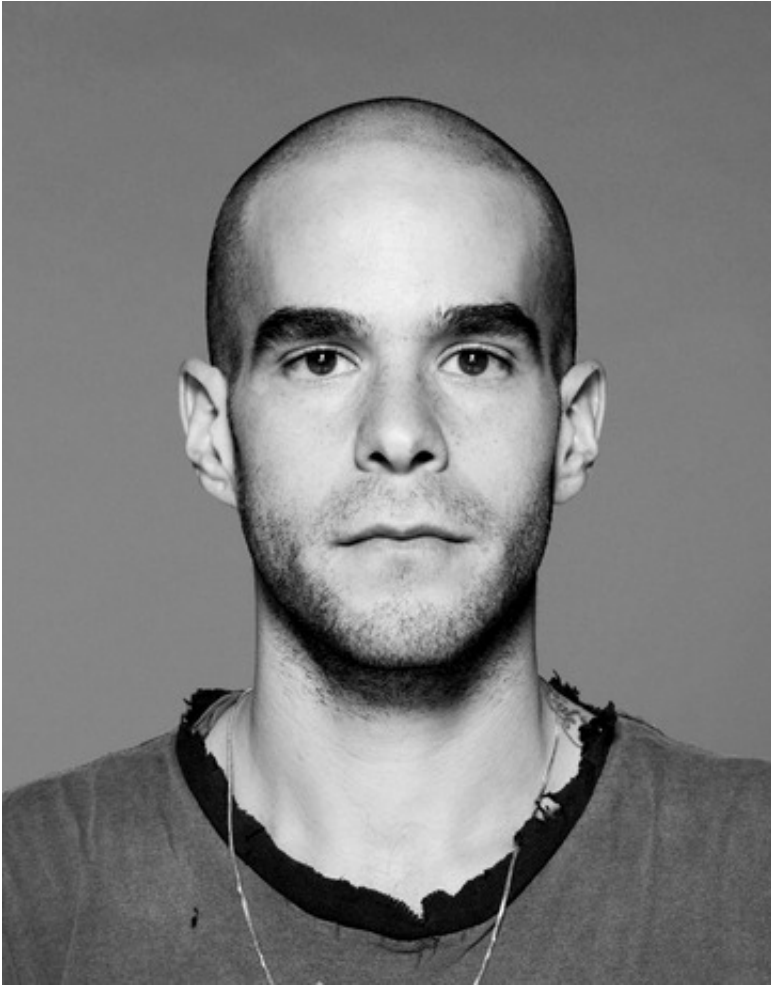
The Nifty 50 | David Benjamin Sherry, Photographer

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By [SAMEER REDDY](#)

| February 1, 2010, 1:53 pm



David Benjamin Sherry

This month, T celebrates the Nifty 50: America's up-and-coming talent.

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The photographer [David Benjamin Sherry](#) spent his early 20s “wondering when it was going to happen,” “it” being his career as an artist. With a recently released monograph, as well as his second solo show, at the [Schlechtriem Brothers](#) gallery in Berlin’s Mitte district, it’s clear that Sherry has his answer.

Born in Long Island, Sherry’s family relocated to Woodstock, N.Y., when he was 5. The hippie-ish environment was a formative influence. His iconic landscapes envisage humans as part of an organic whole, placing them in a natural context and using body paint as camouflage to blur the lines between the body and its environment. Other images deploy psychedelic symbols, from the inverted pyramid to washes of color that mimic an auric field. It’s all very trippy, without the dippy.

His work exhibits a refreshing lack of irony; instead, sincerity seems to be his guiding principle. “There’s truth in the work for me,” he says. “I look to the images for a sense of who I am, and I hope people can sense that. A lot of these pictures have me in them. Some people ask, ‘Are you a narcissist?’ But I don’t think so. ... I’m just dealing with myself.”

Sherry first became interested in making art thanks to a high school teacher who pushed him to explore his potential. After graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design, he attended Yale's prestigious M.F.A. program. Once he left New Haven, Sherry had to adjust to the harsher reality of trying to make it on his own. "You're babied and then you get out there and you don't have a ready-made audience," he says of the world beyond Yale. He seems to have managed, partially by being open to exploring avenues that might scare off other artists. He was approached after his thesis show by an agent from AFG Management, and his work was embraced by the fashion community. He has shot for I-D, Dazed and Confused, Japanese Vogue, Another Man and 032C, among others. He's comfortable with the different intentions that underlie his fashion versus fine-arts shoots, observing that "it's a different type of work. It's people who really want to problem solve, to make this glove or this model look good. Art, on the other hand, can be problem-making."

Pressed about the potential pitfalls of being a young art star in the making during one of the most difficult periods in the history of the contemporary art market, Sherry is optimistic. "I couldn't think of a better time," he says. "It's the end, literally [of a decade] ... and we've entered this whole great moment. It was about how you were living and what parties you were going to, but since the economic meltdown, a lot of artists are now coming up. We can't go back and make work in this sensational money, money, money way. It's a new era." Spoken like a true child of the Age of Aquarius.

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[1.](#)

[Mira](#)

new york, new york

February 1st, 2010

5:27 pm

Ugh! Another Yale photographer 'makes it'. What a surprise. I'll be interested when someone from an unrecognized MFA program is highlighted in your pages...

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[2.](#)

Mark

NY

February 2nd, 2010

4:43 pm

After viewing some of his work, I agree with Mira's sentiment.

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[3.](#)

leslye

ny

February 4th, 2010

10:59 am

DBS is making some of the most brilliant work of his generation, The techniques he uses are old school, non digital.,His use of color, his reference of classic photographers in completely new and different images bring layers of insight, beauty and artistic genius to the art world. He is a rare talent...doing work that has never been done before, and gracing us w/ his vision.

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[4.](#)

Jonathan Samuel

New York

February 5th, 2010

11:30 am

That's like saying, "Ugh! I can't believe another well educated person was elected President." Yale houses one of the country's top rated MFA programs for a reason. After viewing some of his work, it's clear that this photographer pushes convention, frames beauty through extraordinary paradigms, and searches for poignant meaning in phenomenally unique situations. I applaud artists that passionately reach for quality

educations. If an artist has the authentic talent, diligence, and enthusiasm to master his/her craft at an institution that preserves and promotes art as a global initiative-he/she should be praised for blazing that difficult path-not ridiculed for it. If we beat the drum that sings the accolades of the unrecognized MFA programs over the strongest schools-that raises lots of questions. The biggest questions on my list would be... WHY work hard to create the most complex art? Why fund arts in education? Why push yourself as an artist?

Maybe the Photographer in question should throw his amazing education out the window? Maybe he should scream to the world to pay attention to his art because he spent the last decade painting in unrecognized art programs?

No one with a worldly education, should ever hide. Because when that kind of talent goes into hiding-no only does he/she suffer a grave injustice, but society loses too!

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5.

again

ny

February 5th, 2010

11:34 am

Boring photos.

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